

Know your brand's design DNA: Introduction of a profiling scheme to capture the aesthetic attributes and symbolic associations of individual products and product portfolios over time

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Abstract

A distinct design DNA has often been suggested to be crucial for unifying the visual perception of a brand. Designers and brand managers alike would benefit from a thorough understanding of a brand's design DNA for managing a brand's design language across a product portfolio and for developing new designs, which are firmly rooted in a brand's design heritage. However, a clear definition of "design DNA" or a tool for its holistic assessment are lacking. With this article we contribute to design theory and management 1) by providing a definition of a brand's design DNA, which emphasizes its two-dimensionality its long-term nature, 2) by proposing a comprehensive profiling scheme for assessing the aesthetic attributes and symbolic associations characteristic of a product, and 3) by recommending a step-wise procedure of how to assess a brand's design DNA based on the product profiles derived from that scheme.

Keywords: *design DNA; design language; product design*

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