L&M

Design Sense

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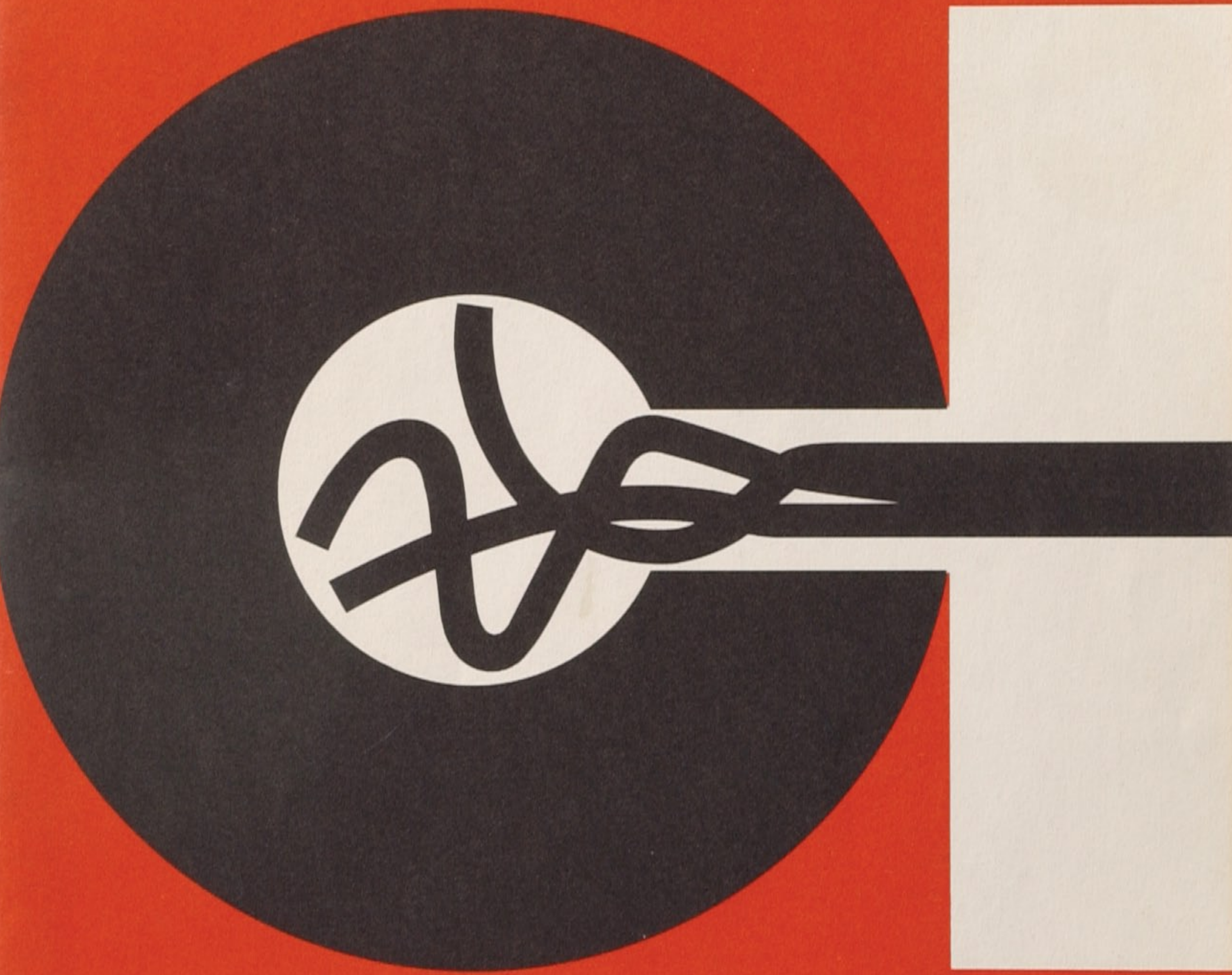


Corporate Identity
Part 2

A publication on design as it affects
marketing, merchandising, package and product
planning, research and store planning.

Lippincott and Margulies, Inc.
Industrial Designers
430 Park Avenue, New York 22, New York

L&M

14

CORPORATE IDENTITY PART 2 THE SYSTEM AT WORK

Last month's issue of Design Sense discussed the subject of Corporate Identity in broad terms — what it is, how it works, the relationship of Corporate Look and Corporate Nomenclature to the Corporate Image.

This month we have spent most of this issue showing Corporate Identity Systems at work, in big companies and small, in programs created by L&M, and in programs created by other designers. Of necessity, we have had to be brief in our coverage, and we have had to forego mentioning other examples of fine Corporate Identity Systems now under way at such companies as Union Carbide, Container Corporation, Arnold Bakers, United Van Lines — to name a few that quickly come to mind.

Our point in picking the examples we did was twofold: first, we wanted to show the wide variety possible in the development and application of C.I. Systems. Second, we wanted to suggest that, no matter what you make, or what kind of service you provide, a good Corporate Identity System can be a powerful force for better visual public relations, more effective selling.

J Gordon Lippincott Walter Margulies

CORPORATE IDENTITY IN ACTION

Because they discovered the power of integrated visual and verbal communications — and then did something about it — some companies have already begun to reap the benefits of a carefully planned and implemented Corporate Identity System. One classic example: IBM.

Under the creative direction of Eliot Noyes, and a design triumvirate consisting of Paul Rand, Charles Eames and George Nelson, IBM has managed to project the Look of a company as advanced and efficient as the machines it makes. And at IBM, the program has been a total one.

The company name has been shortened (at least in popular usage) from the somewhat unwieldy "International Business Machines" to the initials "IBM" — which, incidentally, *sound* as crisp and business-like when spoken as they appear in the precise letterforms of the re-designed trademark.

The new mark is used everywhere — on nameplates, booklets, matchbooks, ads — even on the carbon paper used by the secretaries who operate IBM's smartly designed electric typewriters.

IBM's computers and other Think-ing machines have the "look" of efficiency. And the look is echoed in the crisp, modern architecture of its factories, the decor of its offices and showrooms.

Consistency of impression over a period of years has given IBM a "Look" that is uniquely its own — a Look, we might add, that is all the more believable because it truly reflects the personality of the corporation.

IBM is an industrial giant. But a Corporate Identity System can work just as effectively for a smaller manufacturer. One example: Associated Spring Company, of Bristol, Connecticut.

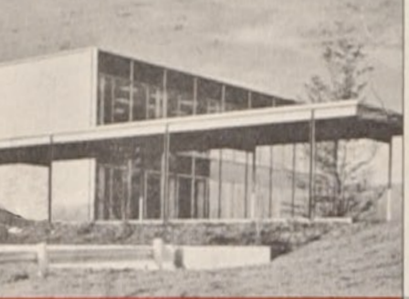
C.I. CLARIFIES A COMPANY'S STRUCTURE

Associated Spring makes precision mechanical springs and cold-rolled specialty steels. Formed in 1923 as the result of the merger of three spring manufacturers, the company today has twelve manufacturing divisions in the U.S. and Canada.

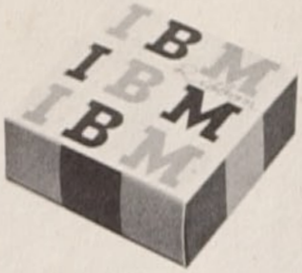
Because each division had a high degree of autonomy in its operations, each had, in effect, its own special Image. Some (like the Wallace Barnes Division) were better known than the parent company. Others were plagued with name-similarity problems (i.e., Barnes-Gibson-Raymond Company, Raymond Manufacturing Company, William D. Gibson Company. Pervading the whole structure was an uncalled-for sense of "looseness" which gave the corporation a dual personality in the minds of its customers and suppliers. Many thought of Associated Spring as one entity, and of the Divisions as separate entities. The former was regarded as remote and impersonal; the latter were thought of as close at hand, intimate partners.

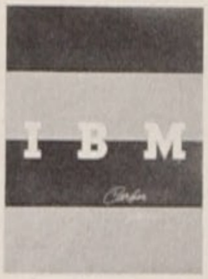
The goal of Associated Spring's Corporate Identity program was to clearly establish the relationship between divisions and parent company. First step in L&M's assignment was to develop a uniform system of Nomenclature, and a master plan for implementing it which would provide for a logical progression from the existing diffuse name structure to a simpler, more consistent one.

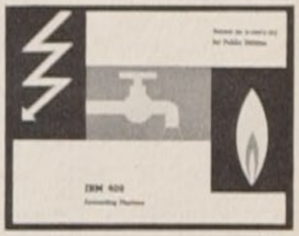
In the process of revamping the company's Corporate Nomenclature, the need became apparent for a trademark which could serve as the unifying element during

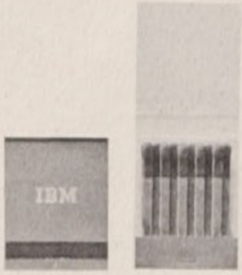


IBM









IBM
Executive

the transition period — a mark that could act as a shorthand symbol for the company, and one that would also reflect, graphically, the quality and precision of Associated's products.

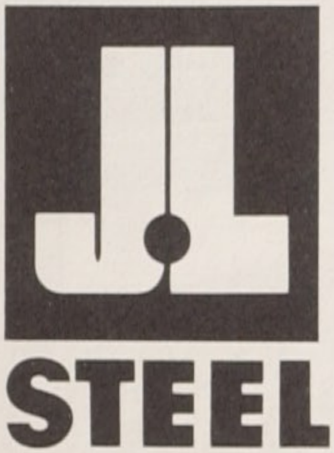
This necessity mothered the invention of Associated's new Corporate mark. This was deliberately designed to convey a strong "A" connotation to associate it with the initial letter of the corporate name. But it also suggests precision and tension in the points of the triangle and in the inward coil of the base line. Its uniqueness and simplicity make it a highly memorable mark — and one easily adapted to many uses.

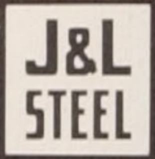
Final step was to establish the ground rules for applying Associated's new Nomenclature and Look to the company's visual communications. These were set down in a detailed "Corporate Identification Manual" which shows how the trademark and logotypes are to be applied to everything from letterheads, ads and packages clear through to signs and company trucks.

FROM PACKAGE TO CORPORATE MARK

A Corporate Identity System can work for consumer-oriented companies, too. In fact, many successful Corporate Identity Systems can be traced to a new label or package for a consumer item.

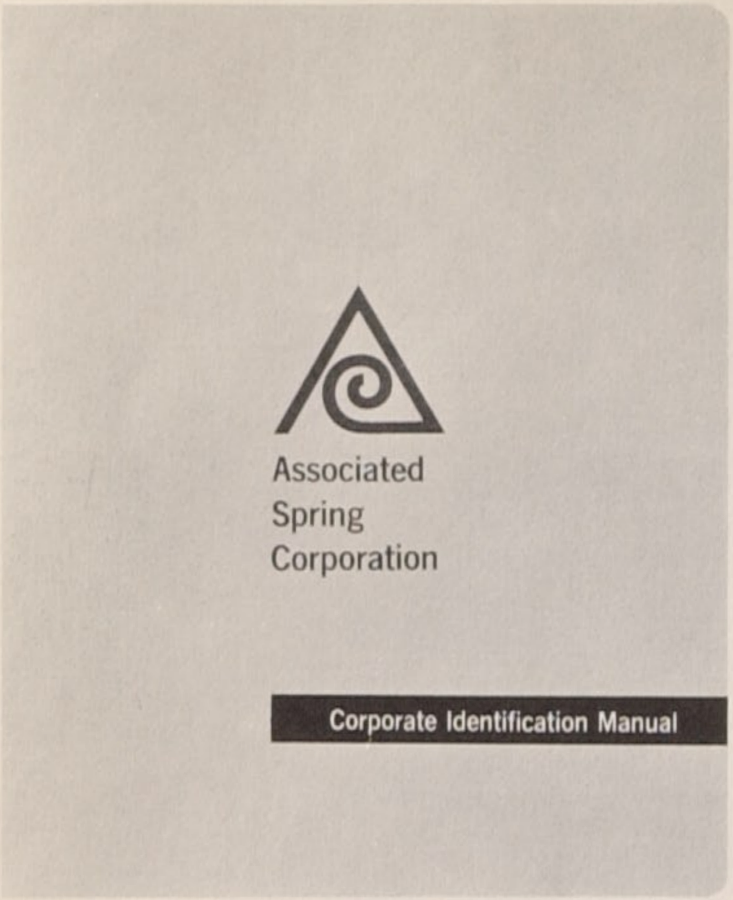
This was the case with the Bavarian Brewing Company of Covington, Kentucky. Here L&M's assignment was to design a new label to replace the one its bottles and

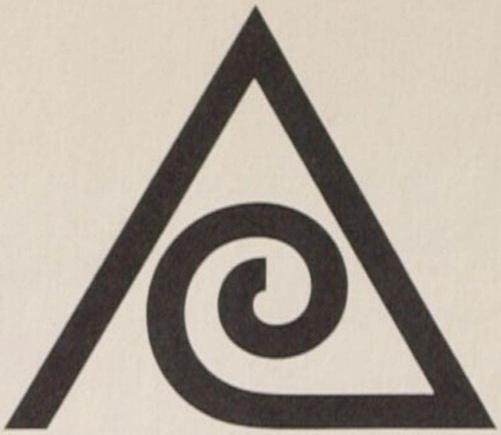


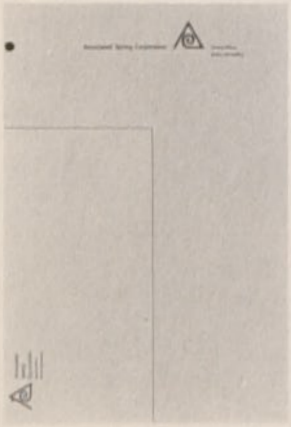


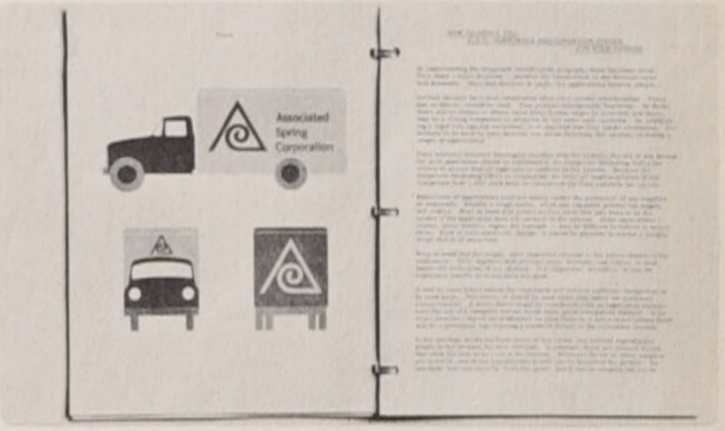
For Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp., designer Gerald Stahl altered the type style, moved the word "Steel" outside the square and replaced the ampersand between the "J" and the "L" with a small circle biting into the letters on either side. Visual testing confirmed the effectiveness of the re-design; the new mark is 71% more legible than the old, has more than twice the eye-attention and retention power. Equally important, it retains the recognition equities of the old mark, but, in its new form, conveys a feeling of the strength and modernity of the company and the products it makes.

Introduced a couple of years ago, the new mark has been gradually applied to J&L's visual communications by the eminently practical method of substituting it for the old whenever new supplies were ordered or equipment repainted.


Associated
Spring
Corporation
Corporate Identification Manual




Associated Spring Corporation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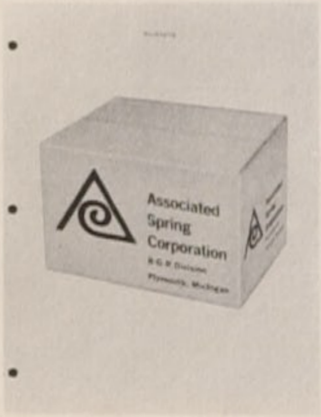

Associated
Spring
Corporation
Plymouth, Michigan

Up with the Whirlybirds . . .
Associated Spring Corporation

Spring
Design
and
Selection . . .
in brief
Associated Spring Corporation

cans had carried for many years. Brand image research established the directions: First, the new label should make a strong brand statement; second, it should represent the company to its customers — and particularly to a younger generation of customers — as a modern company, alert to new ideas.

The new label captures this contemporary feeling in a colorful juxtaposition of red, blue and yellow triangular forms. Stylized symbols inside the triangles carry the message of the company slogan, "Time, Tradition, Skill." And because this graphic brand statement proved to be as true for the company as it was for the product, it was a natural second step to carry this brandmark over as the focus of Bavarian's Corporate Identity System.

Today this distinctive design can be seen not only on bottles, cans and six-packs, but on the company's trucks, posters, advertisements, stationery and point-of-sale materials. It has become the cornerstone of the company's marketing plans.

What worked for Bavarian in the brewing field, has also been put to work for a company which has long been a household word for household products — Johnson's Wax, of Racine, Wisconsin. Main difference between the two programs: Bavarian's proceeded from packages to corporate mark; Johnson's has proceeded from corporate mark to packages.

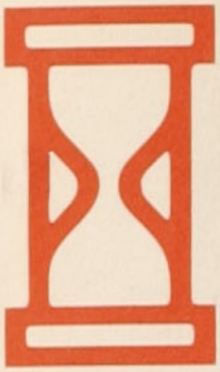
Through the years, Johnson's Wax had used a number of symbols to identify its products. Among the most recent were a representation of a Carnuba Palm, and a sketch of Johnson's famed research tower complete with a globe to suggest the company's world-wide services.

Appropriate as these were, the real "identifier" for the company in the minds of millions of people were the words, "Johnson's Wax." These had come to mean more than just a product name. They had come to convey something of the tradition of quality, dependability and progress which people attributed to the company. In spite of this equity, the words themselves had some built-in drawbacks.

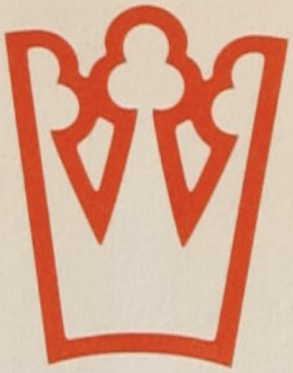
For one thing the name "Johnson" is less than unique. Not only is it among the top five most popular names in the Social Security files, but well over a hundred other U.S. companies use it as part of their corporate name (i.e., Johnson & Johnson, Johnson Motors, etc.). For another, the promotional, packaging and advertising material coming from Johnson's Wax varied in the way the company was identified. Sometimes it was "Johnson's" . . . sometimes "Johnson's Wax". . . sometimes "S. C. Johnson" . . . sometimes "S. C. Johnson & Son." As a result, the company feared that its Corporate Image was not as clear-cut as was desirable.

FOR A DIVERSIFIED COMPANY: A UNIFYING SYMBOL

L&M was asked to create a new visual symbol which would impart to all Johnson products and promotion the contemporary character that distinguishes the company today. The symbol also had to be a visual tool which would effectively unite the varied production, distribution and selling activities carried on by the company's many divisions and subsidiaries in the U.S. and 70 foreign countries.

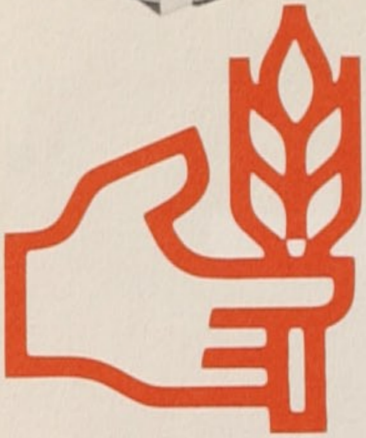


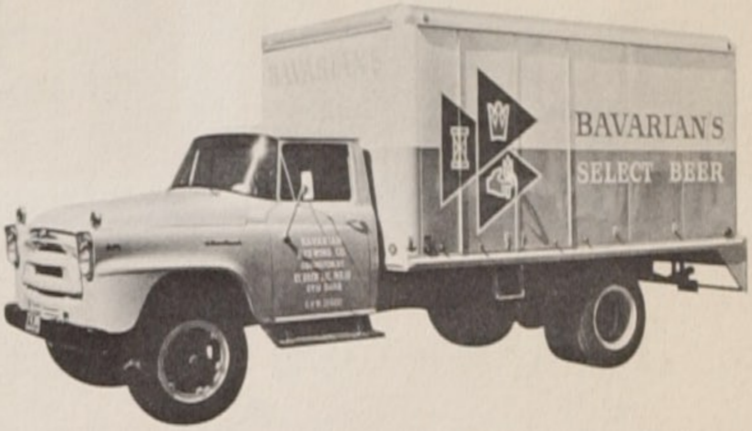
BAVARIAN'S
SELECT BEER
6-12 OZ. CANS

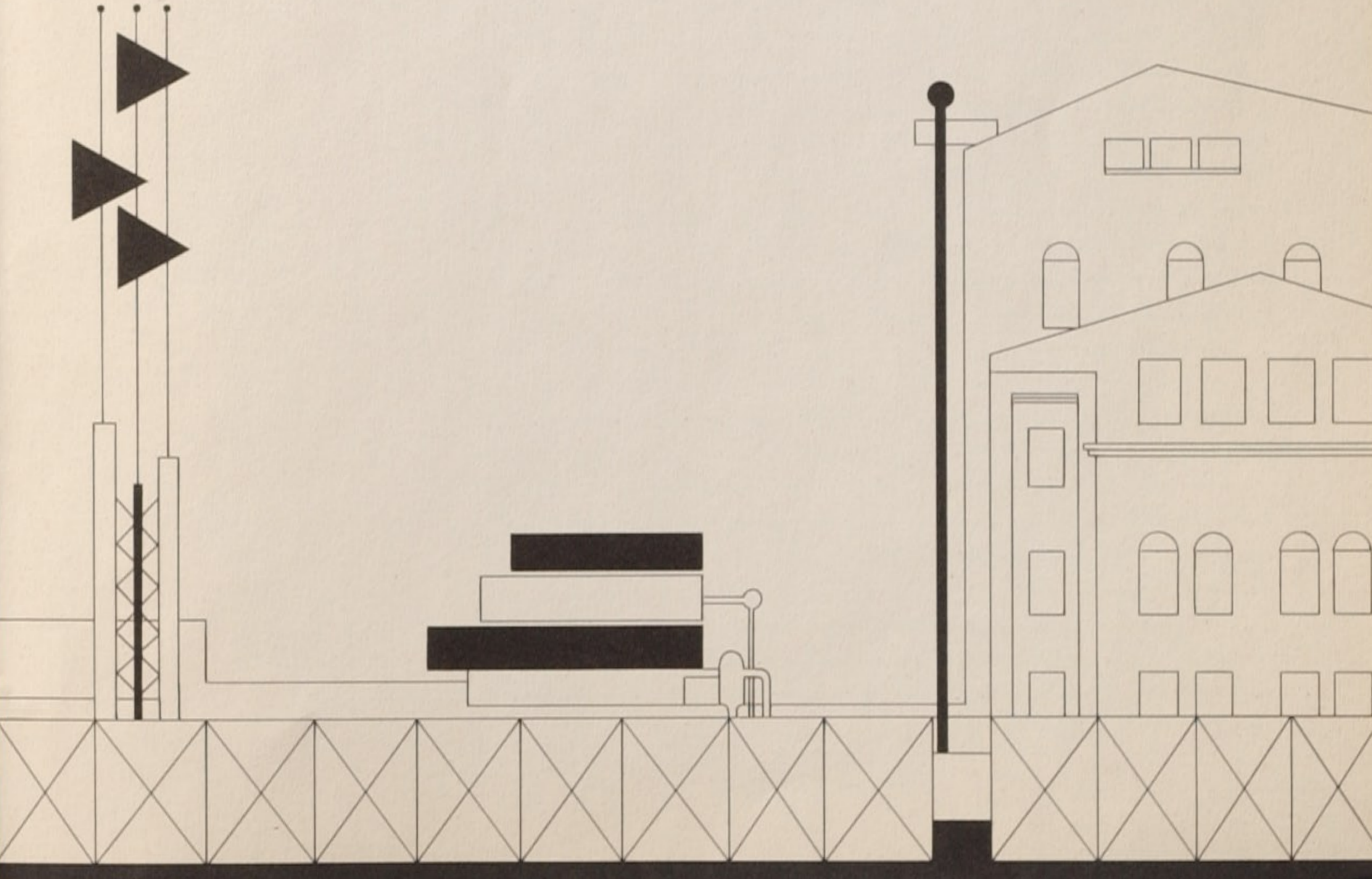


BAVARIAN'S
SELECT BEER

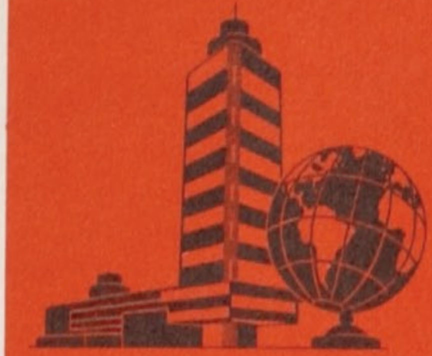
BAVARIAN'S
SELECT BEER




BAVARIAN'S
SELECT BEER



JOHNSON'S
WAX



JOHNSON'S WAX

L&M's design team created hundreds of designs, including a variety of abstractions, crowns, ovals, triangles and also modifications of the tower-and-globe mark. More than 80 of these were presented to Johnson's Trademark Committee. Here the 80-plus were reduced to nine, then to three finalists which, together with the Committee's recommendations, were presented to the company's management.

The symbol adopted includes the all-important name "Johnson's Wax" separated by a colorful and distinctive abstract "mark". This consists of two vertically-opposed free-form "diamond" shapes which flow together to form a symbol with a feeling of power and movement. Although the symbol contains faint suggestions of both reflective and protective qualities — and, in shape, are slightly reminiscent of floor tiles — these connotations are sufficiently subdued to permit the new mark to be used appropriately for any of the company's products.

Commenting on the use of the new symbol, Mr. W. N. Connolly, Johnson's Vice President for Public Relations, stated, "It will appear . . . in all Johnson advertising in the future . . . in magazines, newspapers and the trade press. On television it will be used in a variety of ways. You will see it animated, you may see it as a backdrop for a demonstration. It will be used with every Johnson product and, so, we hope, will help to establish quickly in the minds of our customers that the new wax and non-wax products we place on the market from time to time are all members of the Johnson family of products."

Advertising is by no means the only place the public will see the new mark. It will appear on the company's letterheads, invoices, business forms as well as on trucks and warehouses. It will also appear on all the company's packages, and on the shipping cartons which carry them to market.

WHERE DO C.I. PROGRAMS COME FROM?

Though every Corporate Identity System is different (just as every corporation is different) they all have a common beginning in *management awareness* of the importance of visual communications. But even this "awareness" comes differently to different companies.

Take these examples — about which we can speak since they concern L&M clients:

1. Noland Corporation's C.I. System grew from a realization that its fleet of trucks in seventeen different warehouse areas were all painted different colors.

2. Associated Spring's program came about after a top executive of the company had reviewed the letterheads of its nine divisions, and in doing so, was struck by the fact that they were all surprisingly dissimilar and visually old-fashioned.

3. The U.S. Steel program (not discussed in this issue because magazines like Business Week and Industrial Design — and other issues of Design Sense — have already covered it in detail) began with the company's advertising agency. Seeking a modern format for Steel's advertising, it found a jarring inconsistency in the old-fashioned look of the corporate trademark and signature. Clearly, re-design was needed. This triggered the Politz trademark study, which, in time, expanded to become the full-scale U.S. Steel Corporate Identification program.

In short, Corporate Identity design programs almost never start out as Corporate Identity design programs, but rather begin with some other "visual" problem. This means, in turn, that the problem presented to the design consultant initially is usually *not the real problem.*

This puts a double responsibility on the design consultant. First, he must endeavor to find out what the real problem is. (The greatest disservice a designer can do a client, we feel, is to expend effort solving wrong problems). Second, he must be able to communicate to management not only what the real problem is, but be persuasive enough to *convince management that it needs solving.* Indeed, unless management is sold — unless it enthusiastically wants a C.I. System — its chances of success are small.

And even when this problem is solved, there remains the even greater, long-term problem of communicating the aims and enlisting the support of the many other people who will be responsible for the program's success.

RAISING A C.I. PROGRAM FROM SCRATCHPAD

Once management understands how effective a Corporate Identity System can be in influencing public attitudes, then, at least, the climate is right for beginning. But where to begin?

A sensible first step for any company to take is to define the desired Corporate Image *in writing.* This should be kept as simple as possible; management should not get the idea that the company can have an Image of service, precision, strength, honesty, progressiveness and Big Research Budget all at once. The task of management is to determine the single outstanding Image the company should strive to cultivate, and possibly one secondary Image, compatible with the primary one. For example, a steel company might well wish to be thought of as a strong *and* progressive company. A food processor might want to have consumers associate the firm with high quality *and* taste appeal.

It is also wise to recognize, at the very beginning, that the firm's Corporate Identity System must not only be created, but must also be carried forward, consistently, year after year after year. This long-range mission is best accomplished by forming a permanent committee — a Task Force — responsible for Corporate Identity, and selecting as its chairman someone who reports directly to the president of the firm.

Structuring the program in this way places the chairman in a position to cut across the normal lines of communication within the corporation (something he will frequently have to do) and it gives his job, and the concept it represents, the stamp of top management's approval. Clearly, this means picking the chairman very carefully. Not only must he be able to guide the development of the overall Corporate Identity System, and see that it is implemented effectively — he must also be capable of doing this job without disrupting morale or pre-empting existing departmental responsibilities. In sum, this man must be an organizer, a salesman, an idea-generator, an enthusiasm-builder . . . and a master diplomat.

Once the program is structured, the next step is to determine "Where are we now?" — in other words, what is the existing Corporate Image. This means gathering all the motivation and consumer research that has been done on attitudes towards the corporation, or, if this is too sketchy, conducting research to provide the needed facts. The importance of such an "Image Audit" is obvious. It will show whether people really do consider the firm "service oriented" . . . . whether it actually has a reputation for leadership in research . . . . whether it is thought of as a growth company going places, or a company on the downhill side of success.

While this Image Audit is being carried out, the present Corporate Look should be analyzed by competent designers, and the present Corporate Nomenclature reviewed by competent management executives. The point of such a two-way analysis is to provide yardsticks against which to measure the results of the Image Audit.

1

STEP 1
Management awareness of need, and retention of C.I. design consultant

2

STEP 2
Audit of existing image and written definition of desired image

3

STEP 3
Form Corporate Identity "Task Force" and develop proposed C.I. System

4

STEP 4
Research the effectiveness of proposed System, and final design refinement

5

STEP 5
Task Force presentation to management and management approval of System

6

STEP 6
Implementation of C.I. System throughout all echelons of Company

Should the existing Image prove disappointing, it then becomes a fairly easy matter to put the finger squarely on those elements of the existing Look and Nomenclature which are responsible for its shortcomings.

Once the existing Image, Look and Nomenclature have been determined, creative design can be undertaken with a clear target, with the design directions established and with management's approval of the goals.

THE ROLE OF TOP MANAGEMENT IN DESIGN DECISIONS

During the course of the creative design process, it is sometimes valuable to show management how the company would "look" if it went in one direction, design-wise; how it would "look" if it went in another direction; and so on. The purpose of a presentation at this intermediate stage is *not* to get firm decisions, but to make management part of the creative process . . . to get their ideas . . . to bring to the total effort the best thinking available from every possible source.

These ideas are evaluated and, if appropriate, worked into final designs. Then comes what, in our experience, is the most critical stage in any C.I. program: the final presentation. At this point it is vital to remember that the Task Force personnel are responsible for clearly determining what kind of an Image the company should strive

to convey . . . and the Look and Nomenclature which will best convey it. They should come thoroughly prepared. Their proposal should be completely researched and documented. It should be skillfully presented. *And they should seek a "Yes-No" decision on their recommendations.*

This concept is important, because once a *final* presentation degenerates into a nit-picking session about colors and type styles, the result is invariably a compromise Look and Nomenclature — and a compromise Corporate Identity System.

IMPLEMENTATION, KEY TO SUCCESS

Once top management has given final approval to the Corporate Identity System, a clear policy must be firmly established for carrying it out. Obviously, procedures will differ from company to company, but the most important fact to remember about implementing any system is to clearly distinguish between those elements of the system which *must* be mandatory, and those in which a certain amount of individual freedom can be allowed.

If we attempt to make too much mandatory, we end up hamstringing the creativity of advertising agency people, or staff designers, architects and others who will be charged with carrying out the program. If we do not make enough mandatory, people will start playing around with the trademark, or injecting their own ideas into other vital areas of the program. In time, the company is likely to be right back where it started — communicating a garbled message to an increasingly confused public.

Major element in the implementation program, therefore, is a Corporate Identity Manual which shows how the new Look and Nomenclature are to be applied to all visual media in order to achieve absolute consistency of impression. This must be skillfully written in order not to discourage creativity among those who must implement the system. It should explain the thinking behind the system; clearly differentiate between what is mandatory and what is not; and be profusely illustrated so that there can be no loophole for semantic misunderstanding. Above all it should have the stature of a policy directive.

Final ingredient in every Corporate Identity program is patience — and, of all, this is perhaps the most important. Because the Corporate Image is composed of so many elements — and because the human mind stubbornly persists in holding fast to imbedded impressions — the process of influencing the Image takes time.

In short, it is patently impossible to change a Corporate Look today and expect a new Corporate Image to exist in the mind of the public tomorrow. Such an overnight metamorphosis may work for butterflies; it does not work in the field of Image-influencing through design.

If you are aiming at sales tomorrow, a Corporate Identity System started today won't help. But if you are aiming at the markets of the next five years — of the fast-approaching Sixties — then a Corporate Identity System which combines the *right* Corporate Look and Nomenclature can surely help. And in the most effective kind of way: like a clean, sharp knife, Corporate Identity design can cut through the growing confusion of mass communications to give your customers and prospects an unmistakable visual impression of you and the quality of your products.

We are proud to number

among

our clients

ACF Wrigley Stores, Inc. (store planning)

Acme Visible Records, Inc.

American Express Company

The American Seating Co.

The American Tobacco Co.

Associated Spring Corp.

Burry Biscuit Corp.

The Carling Breweries, Ltd.

Ceribelli and Company

Clairol, Inc.

Continental Baking Co.

Dairy Queen National Development Co.

Dow Corning Corp.

Fairmont Foods Company

Falstaff Brewing Corp.

First National Stores (store planning)

R. T. French & Company

General Foods Corp.

General Mills, Inc.

Gray Drug Stores, Inc. (store planning)

Imperial Tobacco Co. of Canada, Ltd.

International Silver Co.

S. C. Johnson & Son, Inc.

Kirsch Company, Inc.

The Kroger Co. (store planning)

The Lavoris Company

Lewyt Corporation

Noland Company, Inc.

Ortho Pharmaceutical Corp.

Pacquin, Inc.

Penn Fruit Company (store planning)

Praver & Sons

C. Schmidt & Sons, Inc.

Schultz Brothers Co. (store planning)

Seabrook Farms Company

Seeman Brothers Co.

Steinberg's Ltd.

Stroehmann Bros. Co.

Sylvania Lighting Products Div.

Union Carbide Corp.

United Shoe Machinery Corp.

United States Steel Corp.

Weyerhauser Timber Co.

L&M