Master in Food Design,
the Creation of a New Brand Identity

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Abstract. This article aims to address the issue of the importance of the creation of a new brand identity for a new master course. It’s intend understand the complexity of the creation of a new identity and what topics are needed to evaluate before the creation of his graphic representation. As a case study we bring the creation of a new brand identity for the master’s in food design, a new master’s of the Estoril School. The presented work was developed in the first year of the Digital Identity Design masters of Portalegre Polytechnic.

Keywords: Master · Food design · Identity design · Brand mark

1 MsC in Food Design

The Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies launches the 1st edition of the MsC in Food Design, a completely innovative and differentiating study cycle in the areas of Design and Food in Portugal, starting in January 2021. Along with the worldwide evolution in academic research on food studies, ESHTE presents the MSc in Food Design, one of the few masters that worldwide addresses the intersection of Design methodologies and tools with food issues, from of this new discipline: Food Design.

Food Design is the “domain that can manifest itself in all areas of the practice and knowledge of Design and Food. It is a domain oriented towards the past because it studies and analyzes its historical dimension as a reflection of the present; and it is also oriented towards the future, because it is related to innovation and food creativity. It is mainly aimed at the interaction between the diner and the food itself – whether it is a product, a service or a experience”. Food Design “looks at the food system through a holistic view”. (Bonacho 2019, 368)

At a time when the paradigms of public health security with the COVID-19 pandemic are being questioned and the emergence of a deep economic crisis affecting all sectors is increasingly relevant, especially with food, it’s crucial that future professionals in the food industry are creative and have the capacity to reinvent the current food system.

The master program in Food Design thus highlights a holistic perspective in the development of food products, services and experiences with special application in the needs and problems of the food system. Based on processes, tools and methodologies specialized in Design and food innovation, students will have the contribution of different disciplines with different approaches and backgrounds that allow the development of...
their project activity. Tourism, restaurants and the food industry increasingly demand critical and creative thinking and accordingly the main objectives of the course are: 1) train design professionals in the field of Food Design for the development of products, services and eating experiences, capable of exercising their professional activity in different scenarios of the food system; 2) explore the boundaries between design and food by combining design processes, methodologies and tools with food science, innovation and technology in an inter and transdisciplinary context; 3) promote students’ reflection and critical creative thinking on specific issues of the food system, which allow them to conceive, develop and implement projects at scale (local, regional and global) in the development of products, services and food experiences; and 4) adopt an approach to design as a project activity that promotes the use and consumption of food in a responsible and sustainable way, and in this way develop Food Design projects in a real context and in collaboration with public and private entities, in the field of food.

The way the study cycle is structured allows students to understand the current food system. The combination of food and design creates a food designer capable of: managing complex processes, methods and workspaces that require innovative solutions, where products are processed, distributed and consumed; manage food production from an aesthetic, communicational and representation point of view; create and develop creative and innovative methodologies to manage equipment and tools used to prepare and consume food and manage communication and promotion of inter/multidisciplinary products, services and food experiences.¹

2 The Challenge of a New Visual Identity

The brands are everywhere, just like the graphic brands. The creation of a new identity has several axes, according to Costa (2011, 87) the notion of identity involves an intrinsic dependence on the three elements it contains: substance, function and form.

It is in the symbolic form as a starting point in the planning of the communication identification process of the brand, (Raposo 2008, 16) that we focus on this article.

A new graphic brand in a universe that contains several brands, in a world where visual culture is globalized represents a huge challenge. To create an iconic and effective graphic brand Airey (2015, 22) proposes the following elements: keep it simple, make it relevant, incorporate tradition, aim for distinction, commit to memory, think small and focus on one thing. From each of them we can rescue fundamental concepts for identity design.

Agreeing as a starting point that the logo is as instrument of pride and should be shown at its best. If in the business of communications “image is king” the essence of this image, the logo, is the jewel in it’s crown. (Rand 1993), is the face of the brand or institution, and through it you can build the relationship of trust with your audience by helping people to remember the experience they have with the brand, through the way it presents itself.

¹ Description of the course kindly provided by the head of the course and briefing previously exposed, Professor Ricardo Bonacho.
3 Create a Visual Identity

To create the brand mark for a new Master’s course that has in its genesis Food Design represents at first the dive in a universe of color, flavor and various sensations.

Organizing and establishing a methodology became fundamental and strategic for an outcome that seemed to the course leaders and promoters of this project the appropriate start for an effective visual identity system.

One of the first steps, after the presentation of the project and briefing, was the application of the Graphic-Semantic Expression Map (GSEM), as we will see below. Through this method, the most appropriate chromatic palette, typographic font and symbolic forms were found. From these results it was time to cross inspirations and designs. In the following points we visited the various steps for the creation of this graphic brand which also aims to stimulate the senses and reinvent itself through its applications.

3.1 Graphic-Semantic Expression Map

For the development of the brand mark, we applied the Graphic-Semantic Expressions Map (GSEM), a methodological tool proposed by Rijo (2019) to help in the process of creating brand mark. This map allows the graphic and semantic analysis of the images collected in the initial phase of the development of a design project. This methodological tool is based on the moodboard, a technique often used as a way of relating and visualizing the various images that are collected in the research and inspiration phase.

GSEM is divided into three major phases: the phase of collecting images related to the topic under study, the phase of researching elements that inspire the realization of the project and the phase of the concept. It is intended that in each of the phases a moodboard is carried out for further analysis.

“This tool proposes crossing the collection made in the research phase, the design concept and the elements of inspiration with the typography, color and shape. It’s a methodological map, which will assist the process of synthesis expressive code and also boost the relationship between graphic expression and semantics in design practice”. (Rijo 2020, 255)

In the “concept” phase, we use an auxiliary tool, called the Expressive Categories Map, develop by Rijo and Sanches (2019) for fashion design students and adapted by Rijo (2018) for graphic design students.

In the application of GSEM for the project in question, in the research phase we collected several of brand marks of master’s degrees in Food Design, brands mark from other master’s degrees (not specifically from the area in question) and finally, brands related with Food Design (Fig. 1).
In the inspiration phase, the mood board presented is the result of collected images that could be a source of inspiration for the creation of the brand mark. These inspirations can be in terms of color, shape, style of graphic representation but not only, according to Rijo “inspiration can be originated by the most diverse sensorial elements: music, environments, spaces, patterns of clothes, among others” (2019, 704).

In the concept phase, the main concept was “Master’s in food design” and three sub concepts were defined: sensory, creativity and knowledge. These concepts were those that seemed to us the most suitable to represent the master in question. Subsequently, four images were selected that represented each of the concepts and the Expressive Categories Map was applied (Fig. 2).

At the end, each of the phases was analyzed individually at the level of typography, color and shape and later the information obtained was crossed to obtain the final guidelines. As shown in Fig. 2, the guidelines resulting from the application of the methodological tool suggest the use of a light or regular non-serif font, the use of CMYK colors in pastel tones and the use of geometric, straight or circular shapes for the representation of the symbol.

**Fig. 1.** Application of the GSEM. Author’s image.
3.2 Brand Identity Design: The Development

The application of GSEM was essential for the creation of the brand mark since, despite the results obtained allowing numerous solutions, they were very useful guiding elements in the graphic representation of the idea. Also, the analysis of the mood board regarding the elements of inspiration was very useful because it helped to define the path regarding the type of graphic representation that was wanted to be adopted for the brand mark.

With that in mind, development were found through the drawing the shapes, strongly inspired in the preparation of the food. In the cutting and transformation of the body that does not lose its identity. As in the example below. The potato, despite assuming various forms, textures, flavors, smells and “sounds” is still a potato. It is the potato that prevails in the memory of the experience (Fig. 3).

![Fig. 2. Application of the Expression Categories Map, adaptation of Rijo (2019). Author’s image.](image)
And so the letters came out of their original form and merged into geometric shapes, thus resulting in a logo of strong symbolic value. Among what the shapes represent and how these shapes will be representative of the object, the Msc in Food Design. The duality between the graphic symbol must contain conceptually and what it must convey, while at the same time embedded in the values and reputation already pre-assigned to the organization is one of the designer’s major challenges. (Barradas 2015). Each of the letters has recognizable shapes in gastronomy, the potato, the watermelon, even a hamburger, but all these shapes will be identifiers of Msc in Food Design in the sense that they will be built as they exist. This idea is explored by Paul Rand about the IBM logo in Heller (1999) in the same way that there’s nothing inherent in horizontal lines or vertical lines that says “computer” except what you read into because of association with a good company. It takes time to grow. Brands need time to align their corporate image in the sense that this is the junction of their culture, their products, their services, their quality, their ability to communicate, to innovate, etc. (Costa 2011).

In order to facilitate the symbolic value and communication of the brand at a launch phase, the course designation was introduced in Helvetica, acting as a reinforcement that may or may not last like the fixing part of the dynamic brand mark. (Figs. 4 and 5).

Fig. 3. Drawing the brand process. The potato experiences. Author’s image.

Fig. 4. The geometric shapes. Author’s image.
3.3 A Dynamic Brand

The desired sensoriality and visual context in which the Food Design brand is inserted, which culminated in a geometric brand capable of unfolding, resulted in a graphic brand capable of becoming a dynamic system. As stated in (van Nes 2012, 7) “Creating a dynamic identity requires much more freedom than just movement (…) one or more of the components could consist of different variables, adding flexibility to the identity”.

Movement has been tested in an animation that accentuates the versatility of the brand mark and attributes the desired emotion and distinction. Below we see frame by frame the construction of this logo (Fig. 6).

3.4 Applications

The applications, although based on simulations, support the perception of the graphic brand, predicting and testing the brand in its context. Showing your designs in context is key to helping your client visualize how great you can make the company look (Airey 2015).
They also serve the designer to predict behaviors and eventually correct issues of proportion and size. Below are the suggested applications in which the relevance of the choices in the needs of the brand typology is highlighted (Figs. 7, 8 and 9).

**Fig. 7.** Graphic brand applications. Author’s image.

**Fig. 8.** Graphic brand applications. Author’s image.
4 Conclusions

This article aimed to explain the processes adopted for the creation of the brand identity for the new master’s in food design. At the beginning of the most difficult thing was the definitions of the criteria’s that were important the brand represent because the master did not exist. The definition of the mission of the master’s and the application of the GSEM were essential for the options for the graphic representation. Since the beginning that we aim a brand identity that was dynamic and that translate the sensorial feeling, that is one on the most outstanding features of the food design masters. Another important aspect was the concern that the graphic representation needs to work well in the different environments: print and digital ones. Because of that we have to be very careful on choose of typography and the symbol representation for the brand mark had to be strong enough to survive in such different supports.

In the end we conclude that the initial goals were achieved: the creation of a brand identity that standout from de other brands and that represent the spirit of this new master’s in Portugal.

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