Investing in your B2B brand identity

Part 1:
How to spend the same money and build better results

BASE ONE

With increased pressure on budgets and more focus than ever on justifying spend, it's essential to define what parts of your identity you are investing in: in effect, defining what your visual strategy is and sticking to it.

Visual strategy could be described as prioritising what the most suitable visual choice is for your brand it means that alongside the short term gains you get from month on month campaigns, your work builds brand recognition and develops those elements as long term sustainable assets.

The most basic choices for your visual strategy would be:

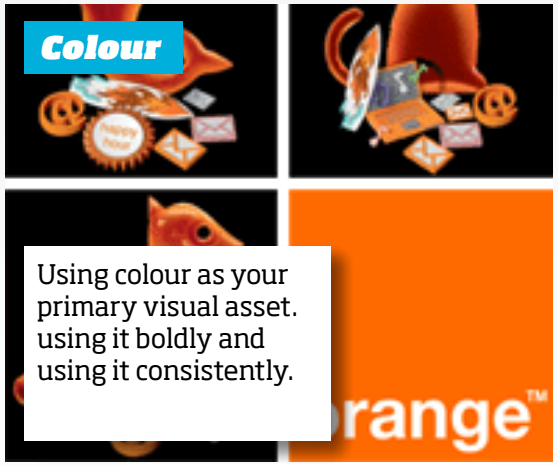
Font / Colour / Image / Graphic

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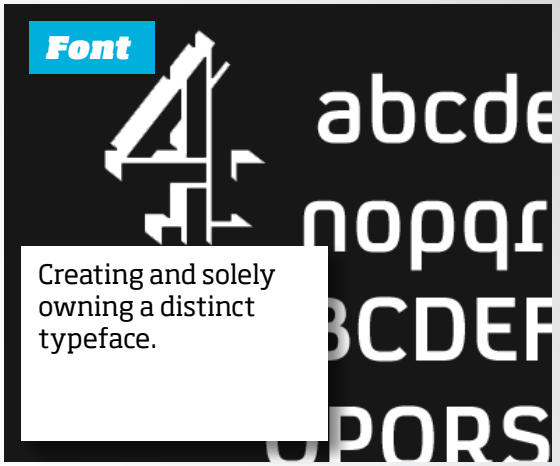
How to spend the same money and build results

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Basic strategy descriptions'



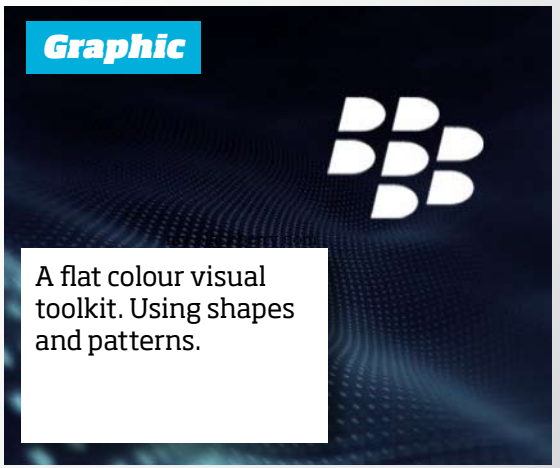
Using colour as your primary visual asset. using it boldly and using it consistently.



Creating and solely owning a distinct typeface.



From capturing images in a specific style, using illustrative elements to create iconography.



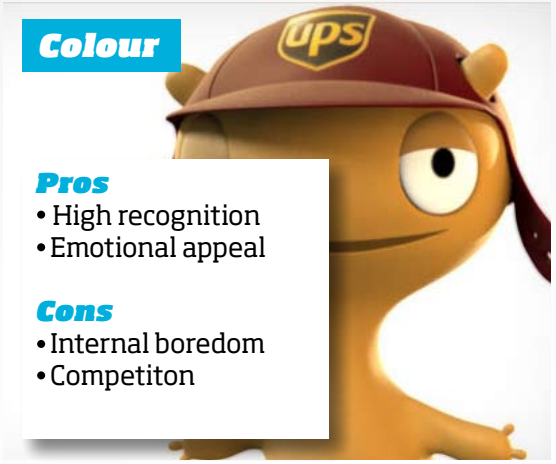
A flat colour visual toolkit. Using shapes and patterns.

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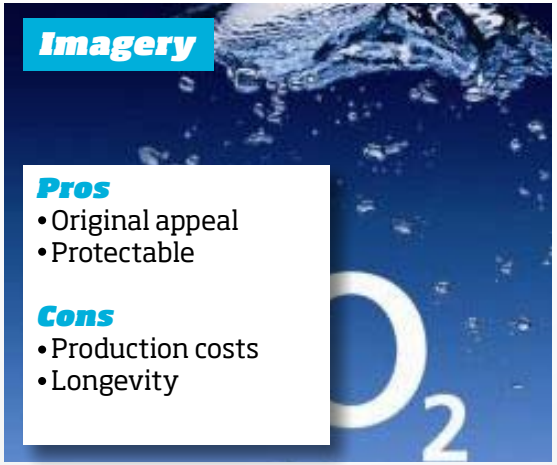
How to spend the same money and build results

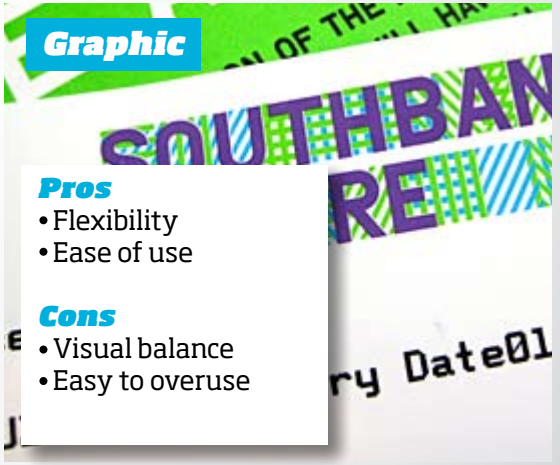
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All of which have unique ***Pros and Cons***









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The decision on which route to take can only be based on;

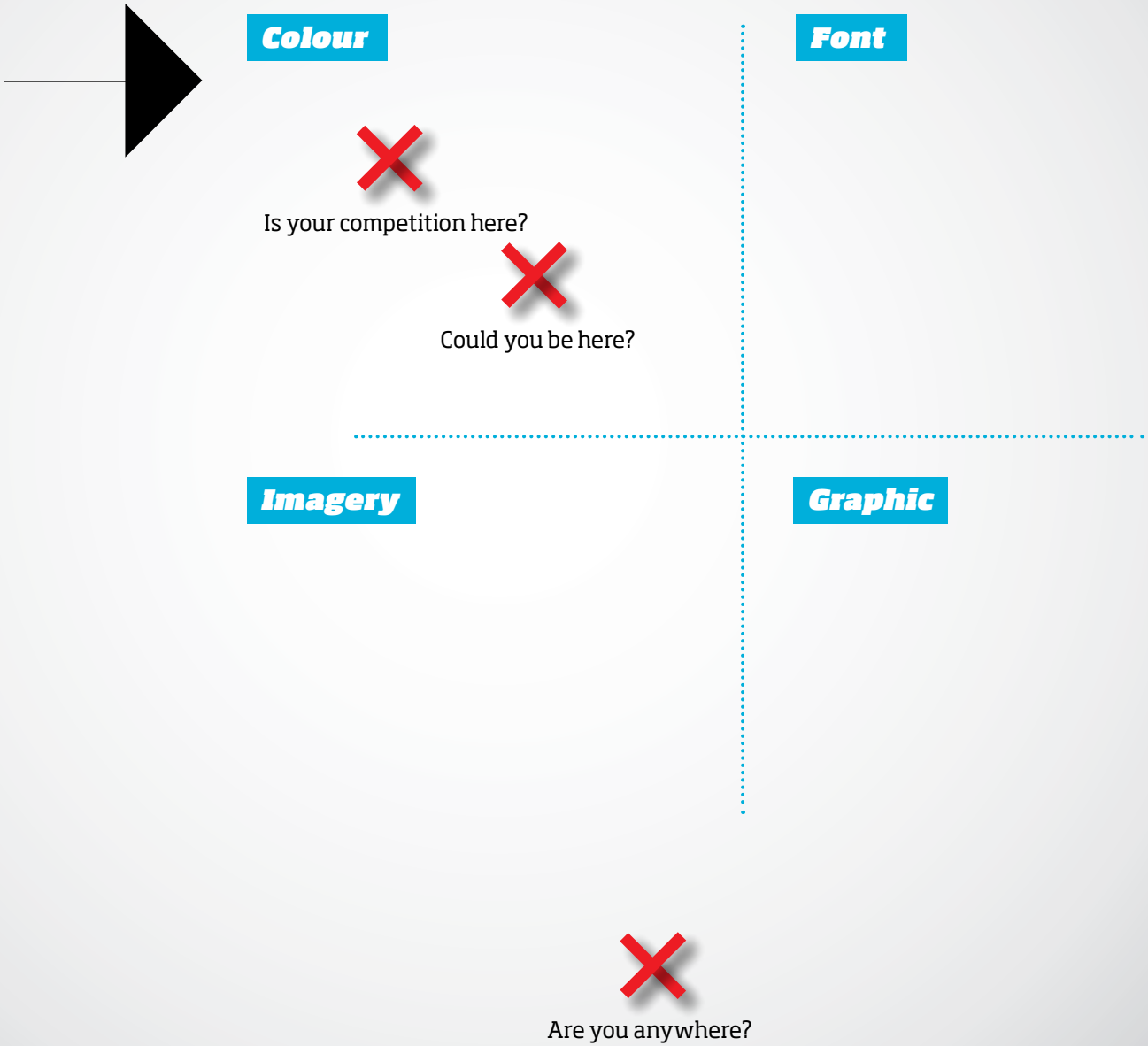
what's most suitable for your brand

and

the visual strategies of your competition

Doing a quick visual audit of your competitors positioned on something like the axis on the following page is a good place to start. However, it may be more than a little tricky to accurately chart as there's a chance that they, like many companies, don't have a visual strategy as such and have given everything from colour to image the same priority.

Visual strategy possible positioning



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The reasons why many companies don't appear to have considered what their visual strategy is seems to come from a mix of short term focus, a confusing distinction between 'brand work' and 'lead gen'... and from the huge disconnect between the 'logo' part of their identity and the 'look & feel'.

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How to spend the same money and build results

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dynamobel













If you're lucky enough to have the remit to re-brand, the ID work from Saffron for Dynamobel shows how much more powerful, flexible and effective the whole identity is when the logo is part of a larger identity system that works together rather than 'logo + look & feel'. Compare this to many other companies where the visual ID system is so weak that the logo is expected to carry an inordinate amount of recognition weight. The visual strategy of Dynamobel being the flexible use of graphic shapes.

http://saffron-consultants.com

In part 2:
The visual strategies of the top 50 B2B companies and some sector colour studies.

If you, like many, don't have the money to re-brand, just by doing a little focusing on what brand assets to give priority to and invest in creates real long -term value. A well defined visual strategy, along with intelligent application, makes every communication not only serve its purpose but also build

sustainable value

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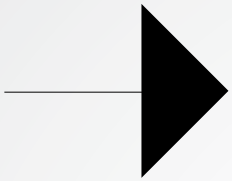
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Part 2:
What the others are doing

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Top 50 B2B brands





Investing in your B2B brand identity

what the others are doing

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Quick colour strategy studies in sectors reveal some interesting facts

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what the others are doing

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Companies selected from 'Official top 500 B2B Superbrands 2010'

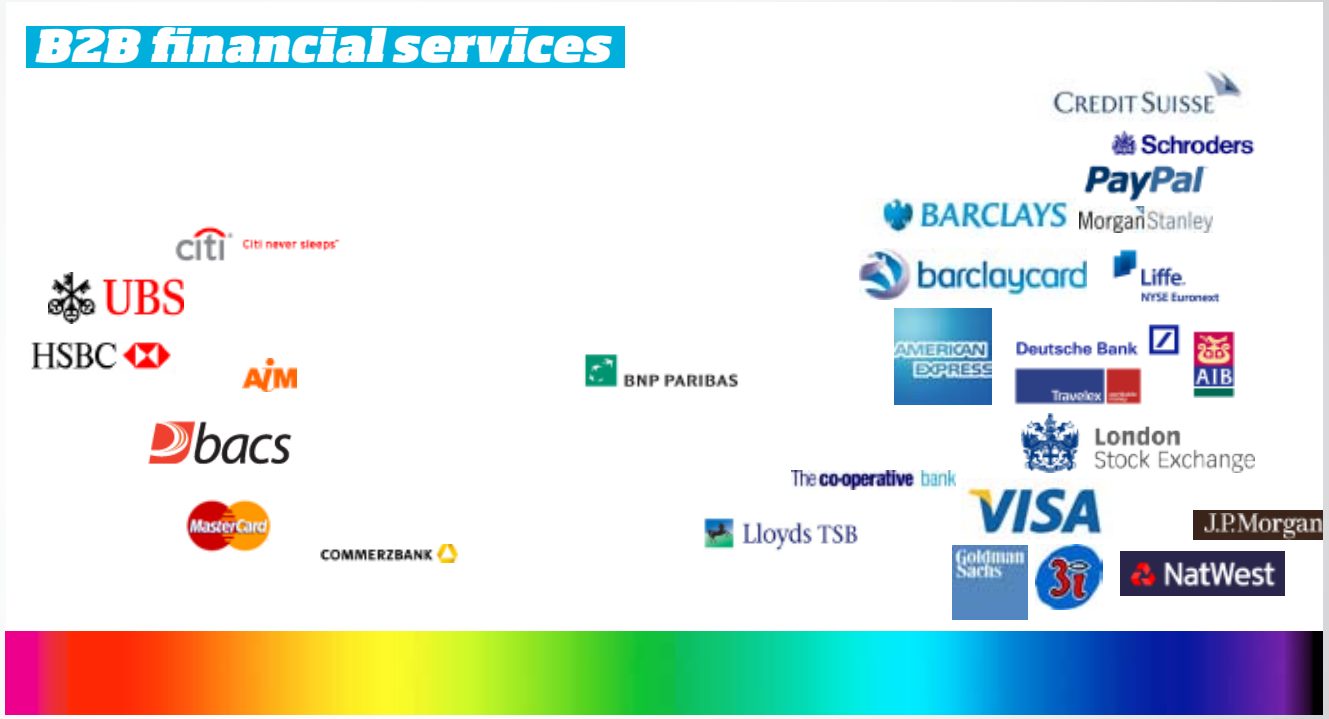
B2B telecommunication services



The big players in the telecoms market understand the necessity to have a colour differentiator. Colour strategy in this market is a good option and delivers good defendable recognition. Not all adopt it as a primary choice but still use it; with O2 opting for an iconic imagery-based approach and Cable and Wireless opting for a graphic approach - both backed up with a very limited colour palette.

Companies selected from 'Official top 500 B2B Superbrands 2010'

B2B financial services



Contrast the previous slide with the financial industry where trust is a bigger issue and blue is the expected colour of choice. Deviation from the expected is high risk. Colour strategy within the overcrowded blue area wouldn't be an easily defendable position. Natwest went for 'font' which in its time was quite a brave move. Lloyds TSB are holding their ground with an illustrative approach but are probably running close to the end of the rope.

Companies selected from 'Official top 500 B2B Superbrands 2010'

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what the others are doing

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