

CORPORATE IDENTITY SYSTEM IN SHAPING THE VISUAL IDENTITY OF AN ORGANIZATION

Formación del entorno visual mediante la identidad corporativa

Chebotarova Iryna¹, Mahilina Valeria¹, Hrozian Semen²

¹ Department of Media Systems and Technologies, Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics.

Iryna.chebotarova@nure.ua, valeriia.mahilina@nure.ua

² Staff Product Designer, Speak, USA.

s.grozyan@gmail.com

Abstract

The formation of a coherent visual environment has become one of the central objectives of contemporary visual communication and design practice. In the context of rapid digitalization, globalization, and the expansion of multimedia communication channels, organizations increasingly rely on corporate identity as a strategic instrument for establishing visual consistency, strengthening recognition, and building emotional connections with audiences. Corporate identity is not limited to a logo or decorative visual solutions; rather, it represents a complex and systematic structure that integrates typography, color palettes, graphic elements, spatial design, and digital interfaces into a unified communicative system. This article examines the role of corporate identity in shaping a coherent visual environment and analyzes the interaction of its key components in physical and digital spaces. Particular attention is devoted to the influence of visual consistency on usability, navigation, emotional perception, and brand positioning. The study emphasizes that the systematic implementation of corporate identity contributes not only to the recognizability of organizations but also to the creation of meaningful user experiences and sustainable visual communication.

Keywords: corporate identity, visual environment, branding, typography, color theory, digital design.

Introduction

In contemporary society, visual communication plays a dominant role in shaping human perception of information. Individuals are constantly exposed to visual stimuli through digital interfaces, urban environments, advertising systems, and multimedia platforms.

As a result, organizations face increasing challenges in maintaining consistent and recognizable communication across diverse channels. Corporate identity has emerged as a strategic solution to this challenge. It functions as a structured visual system that represents the values, mission, and personality of an organization. More importantly, it ensures the creation of a coherent visual environment that allows users to recognize and emotionally engage with a brand across different contexts. A visual environment formed through corporate identity is not limited to isolated graphic elements. Instead, it represents a holistic system that integrates logos, typography, colors, imagery, and spatial design into a unified communication structure (Olins, 2017).

This integration is essential in both physical and digital environments, where users expect seamless and consistent experiences. The importance of corporate identity has significantly increased with the development of digital technologies. Websites, mobile applications, and social media platforms have become primary communication channels between organizations and users. Therefore, visual consistency across these platforms directly influences usability, trust, and emotional perception. In addition, contemporary audiences often evaluate organizations not only through products or services but also through the quality and coherence of their visual communication.

A well-designed corporate identity can strengthen brand positioning, improve audience recognition, and contribute to long-term emotional connections with users. The purpose of this article is to analyze how

corporate identity contributes to the formation of a unified visual environment and to examine the role of its key elements in shaping communication efficiency and emotional engagement (Wheeler, 2017).

Corporate Identity as a System of Visual Communication

Corporate identity represents a structured system of visual elements that communicate the essence, values, and mission of an organization. It includes a coordinated set of design components that ensure consistency across all forms of communication (Babiak & Vovk, 2022). Historically, corporate identity developed alongside industrialization and mass communication, when companies recognized the importance of recognizable and unified visual representation. Over time, branding evolved from simple logos into comprehensive identity systems that integrate typography, color palettes, graphic elements, and digital communication strategies (Figure 1).

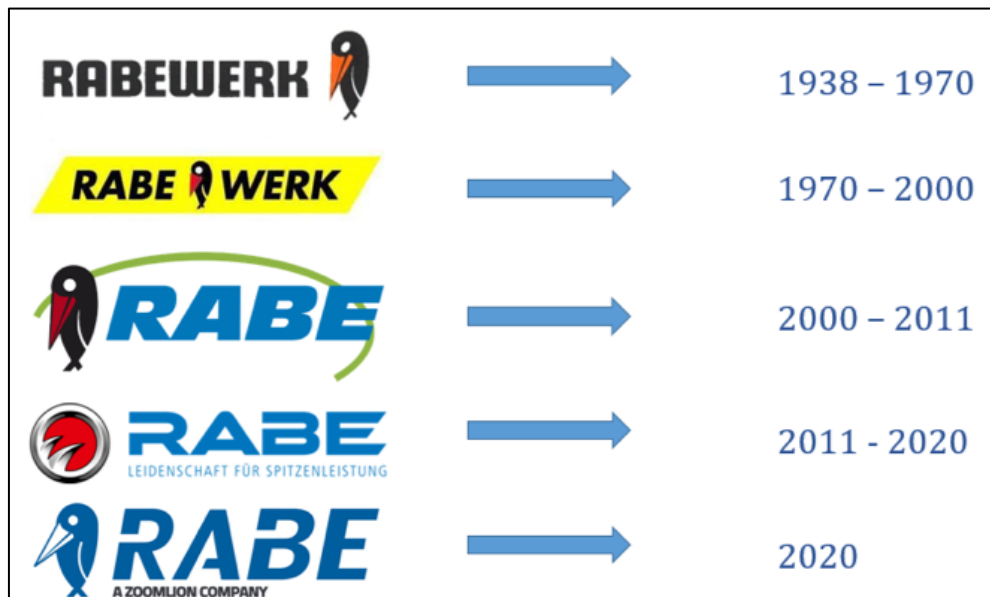


Figure 1. Example of the evolution of corporate identity systems through logo development.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Today, corporate identity performs several important functions. First, it ensures recognition and differentiation in highly competitive environments where audiences interact with large amounts of visual information every day. Second, it improves communication efficiency by creating familiar and coherent visual structures that users can easily interpret. Third, it strengthens trust and credibility, since visual consistency is often associated with professionalism and reliability.

Corporate identity also functions as a symbolic system that communicates organizational values and emotional messages (Olins, 2017). Visual elements such as shape, composition, and typography influence audience perception and create specific psychological associations. The logo, as the central component of corporate identity, serves as the primary visual identifier of a brand. Effective logos are characterized by simplicity, memorability, and adaptability across various media platforms. In contemporary digital environments, logos frequently exist in responsive and adaptive forms that maintain recognizability while adjusting to different screen sizes and interface conditions (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Adaptive evolution of a corporate identity system (case study: Wikimedia Foundation logo development).
Source: Wikimedia Foundation, Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA).

In addition, corporate identity contributes to the formation of a coherent visual environment that integrates both physical and digital communication spaces. Websites, mobile applications, printed materials, packaging, and environmental graphics all become part of a unified visual system. Through the systematic application of identity elements, organizations create stronger emotional connections with users and improve the overall communication experience.

Typography, Color, and Visual Language

Typography and color are two fundamental components of corporate identity that define how visual information is structured, perceived, and emotionally interpreted. Together, they form a visual language that ensures consistency and recognizability across all communication channels. While typography organizes information and establishes hierarchy, color reinforces emotional meaning and strengthens visual memory.

Typography plays a key role in shaping the personality of a brand. Serif typefaces are often associated with tradition, authority, and stability, while sans-serif fonts communicate modernity, clarity, and minimalism. Through consistent typographic systems, organizations create a recognizable visual rhythm that enhances readability and improves user experience. Hierarchical structures such as headings, subheadings, and body text guide the viewer's attention and improve information processing efficiency (Figure 3).

Color, in turn, operates as an emotional and psychological tool. Different color schemes evoke specific associations: blue is linked to trust and professionalism, red to energy and urgency, green to balance and sustainability, and black to elegance and sophistication. The careful selection and consistent application of a color palette ensure visual harmony and strengthen brand recognition across different media environments (Chebotarova & Sushkova, 2024).

The combination of typography and color creates a coherent visual language that extends beyond static design elements. It influences how users interpret messages, navigate interfaces, and emotionally connect with organizations. In digital environments, this visual language becomes even more significant, as it directly affects usability, accessibility, and engagement. Consistency in typography and color usage ensures that users can instantly recognize the brand regardless of platform or context.



Figure 3. Typographic classification and visual hierarchy in corporate identity systems.
Source: Visual Capitalist (n.d.).

Corporate Identity in Digital Environments

The development of digital technologies has significantly transformed the role of corporate identity in contemporary communication. Organizations no longer operate only through printed materials or physical advertising; instead, they communicate simultaneously through websites, mobile applications, social media platforms, digital interfaces, and multimedia systems. Under these conditions, corporate identity functions as a comprehensive communication framework that ensures consistency across both physical and digital environments.

Websites have become central communication platforms where organizations present their services, values, and visual image. The structure of a website, including its typography, layout, navigation system, and color palette, directly influences user perception and interaction quality. A consistent visual identity improves usability because users become familiar with recurring visual patterns and navigation principles.

Mobile applications require even more adaptive identity systems due to smaller screen sizes and interactive touch-based interfaces. Logos, icons, typography, and interface elements must remain recognizable and functional under different technical conditions. As a result, many organizations simplify visual systems for digital environments while preserving their essential identity characteristics.

Social media platforms represent another important area of visual communication. Audiences often interact with organizations through fragmented visual content such as posts, stories, banners, and advertisements. Therefore, consistency in imagery, typography, and composition becomes essential for maintaining recognition in rapidly changing information flows.

Corporate identity additionally shapes physical environments such as offices, retail stores, exhibitions, educational institutions, and navigation systems. Branded interiors, signage, environmental graphics, and spatial orientation systems contribute to immersive user experiences and strengthen organizational identity. Through the integration of graphic design into architecture and public spaces, organizations create environments that are both functional and emotionally recognizable.

The combination of digital and physical identity systems forms a holistic visual environment in which users encounter the organization across multiple contexts. This continuity strengthens trust, improves navigation, and enhances communication effectiveness. Interaction design and motion graphics also play an increasing role in digital identity, transforming static systems into dynamic and interactive experiences.

Comparative Analysis of University Corporate Identity Systems

To complement the theoretical discussion of corporate identity and demonstrate its practical application in the formation of visual environments, a comparative analysis of logos used by selected Ukrainian higher education



institutions was conducted. The analyzed sample includes universities representing different educational profiles and branding approaches, ranging from traditional heraldic emblems to contemporary minimalist identity systems, as shown in Figure 4 (Dmytrenko et al., 2017).

Traditional university logos are primarily based on heraldic principles and contain a large number of symbolic and decorative elements. Examples include Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University, Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs, and National Technical University “Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute”. These visual identities incorporate architectural imagery, shields, historical references, institutional symbols, and commemorative dates. Such design solutions emphasize academic heritage, institutional authority, and continuity of educational traditions.

A second group consists of universities that employ simplified visual systems based on geometric forms, abbreviations, or stylized graphic marks. These include Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman, the National Aerospace University “Kharkiv Aviation Institute”, and Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics (NURE). Compared with traditional emblems, these logos contain fewer visual elements and are better suited to contemporary digital communication environments.

Particular attention should be given to the corporate identity of Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics (NURE). In contrast to many traditional university logos, the NURE visual mark is constructed as a geometric lettermark with a minimalist structure. The logo integrates stylized letterforms into a compact graphic sign that remains recognizable at different scales and across different media platforms. The restrained blue-gray color palette reinforces associations with technology, innovation, reliability, and scientific development.

The conducted analysis demonstrates a gradual transition in academic branding from complex heraldic compositions toward more flexible and adaptive identity systems. While traditional emblems effectively communicate historical and cultural values, simplified visual identities provide higher scalability, better usability, and greater adaptability to digital interfaces. Therefore, the corporate identity of NURE may be considered an example of a contemporary visual communication system designed to function effectively in both physical and digital environments.





Figure 4. Logos of selected Ukrainian higher education institutions used for comparative analysis; a) Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute; b) Lviv Polytechnic National University; c) National Technical University "Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute"; d) Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv; e) Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman; f) Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs; g) O. M. Beketov National University of Urban Economy in Kharkiv; h) Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University; i) National Aerospace University "Kharkiv Aviation Institute"; j) Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics.

Source: developed by the authors based on official websites of Ukrainian higher education institutions.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Visual Characteristics of Ukrainian University Logos

University	Identity Type	Symbolic Content	Visual Complexity	Digital Adaptability
Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute	Heraldic emblem	High	High	Medium
Lviv Polytechnic National University	Geometric symbolic mark	Medium	Medium	High
National Technical University "Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute"	Architectural emblem	High	High	Medium
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv	Heraldic emblem	High	High	Medium
Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman	Typographic logo	Low	Low	High

Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs	Heraldic shield	High	High	Medium
O. M. Beketov National University of Urban Economy in Kharkiv	Decorative emblem	Medium	Medium	Medium
Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University	Heraldic emblem	High	Medium	Medium
National Aerospace University "Kharkiv Aviation Institute"	Lettermark	Low	Low	High
Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics	Geometric lettermark	Medium	Low	High

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that the majority of Ukrainian universities continue to rely on traditional emblematic identity systems characterized by a high degree of symbolic content and visual complexity. Such logos effectively communicate institutional history and academic status but may face limitations when reproduced in digital environments and small-scale interfaces. By contrast, logos based on geometric structures and lettermarks demonstrate greater adaptability to contemporary communication platforms. These systems provide improved scalability and maintain recognizability across websites, mobile applications, social media platforms, and multimedia content. Consequently, simplified corporate identity systems correspond more closely to current trends in digital branding and visual communication.

Table 2. Characteristics of the Corporate Identity Elements of Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics

Corporate identity element	Characteristics	Contribution to the visual environment
Logo	Geometric lettermark based on the university abbreviation	Recognition and visual differentiation
Color palette	Blue-gray color scheme associated with technology and innovation	Formation of a coherent institutional image
Typography	Contemporary sans-serif typefaces	Readability and visual consistency

Corporate identity element	Characteristics	Contribution to the visual environment
Digital implementation	Adaptable use across websites, social media, and digital interfaces	Improved usability and brand recognition
Printed and promotional materials	Unified application of visual elements	Consistency across communication channels

The analysis confirms that the corporate identity of NURE reflects contemporary principles of visual communication, including simplicity, adaptability, and consistency. Unlike traditional university emblems that emphasize historical symbolism through complex graphic compositions, the NURE identity system focuses on functional communication and digital applicability. This approach contributes to the formation of a coherent visual environment that supports effective navigation, strengthens institutional recognition, and enhances communication across both physical and digital contexts.

Evolution of the NURE Logo as an Element of Corporate Identity

The development of the NURE corporate identity reflects broader trends in contemporary visual communication and academic branding. Figure 5 illustrates the evolution of the university logo from a traditional emblem-based structure to a more simplified and adaptable visual system.

The logo used before 2016 (Figure 5a) was based on a circular composition that combined the university abbreviation with the full institutional name. The graphic structure relied on horizontal lines forming the central sign and emphasized institutional identity through textual information. While the logo provided strong association with the university, its visual complexity limited scalability and reduced effectiveness in small digital formats.

In 2016, NURE introduced a redesigned corporate identity system (Figure 5b). The new logo retained continuity with the previous visual image while significantly simplifying the overall composition. The graphic sign was separated from the full institutional name and transformed into a compact geometric symbol. This approach improved readability, scalability, and adaptability across various communication channels, including websites, mobile interfaces, social media platforms, and printed materials. The alternative logo concepts presented in Figures 5c and 5d demonstrate intermediate stages of the identity modernization process. These variants explored different levels of abstraction, volumetric effects, and graphic simplification. The concept shown in Figure 5c utilized a three-dimensional visual treatment intended to create a more dynamic appearance. However, such solutions may reduce flexibility in practical applications due to increased visual complexity and dependence on specific rendering conditions. The concept shown in Figure 5d represents a highly simplified interpretation of the corporate symbol. The reduction of visual elements and the use of gradients correspond to contemporary trends in digital branding. Nevertheless, excessive simplification may weaken the connection with the established institutional identity and reduce historical continuity.

The official logo adopted in 2016 successfully balances recognizability, simplicity, and functional adaptability. It preserves key visual characteristics associated with the university while meeting contemporary requirements for digital communication. As a result, the redesigned logo became an important element in the formation of a coherent visual environment that integrates physical and digital communication spaces.



Figure 5. Evolution of the visual identity of Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics: a) logo used before 2016; b) official logo introduced in 2016; c-d) alternative logo concepts developed during the identity modernization process.

Analysis of the NURE Corporate Identity System

The corporate identity of Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics represents a comprehensive visual communication system that extends beyond the logo itself. The identity system includes a unified color palette, typography, promotional materials, environmental graphics, digital media, and branded merchandise. The consistent application of these elements creates a recognizable visual environment that supports communication with students, applicants, academic staff, and external stakeholders, as illustrated in Figure 6 (Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics, n.d.).

A key characteristic of the NURE identity system is the use of a simplified geometric logo combined with a restrained blue-gray color palette. Such a solution corresponds to the technological profile of the university and reflects contemporary design principles focused on clarity, adaptability, and functionality. The visual identity avoids excessive decorative elements, allowing it to remain effective across a wide range of media formats.

The analysis of branded materials demonstrates that the visual identity is consistently implemented on stationery products, flags, clothing, souvenirs, digital content, and promotional materials. The repeated use of

identical visual elements strengthens recognition and creates a coherent visual experience across different communication channels.

The identity system also contributes to environmental branding. Through the use of unified graphic elements and color solutions, the university establishes visual continuity between physical and digital spaces. As a result, users encounter the same visual language regardless of whether they interact with the university through websites, social media, printed materials, or branded objects.

The NURE corporate identity therefore functions not only as a branding tool but also as a mechanism for organizing and structuring the visual environment. Its systematic implementation improves recognition, strengthens institutional image, and contributes to more effective communication in contemporary multimedia contexts.



Figure 6. Examples of the application of NURE corporate identity elements on branded materials and promotional products.
Source: corporate identity guidelines of Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics.

User Experience and Emotional Engagement

Corporate identity significantly influences user experience because visual communication affects both emotional perception and interaction quality. In contemporary multimedia environments, users expect visual consistency and intuitive communication across all platforms. A coherent visual environment creates familiarity, reduces confusion, and strengthens trust in organizations (Wheeler, 2017).

Emotional engagement emerges through the interaction of multiple visual elements, including color, typography, composition, imagery, and graphic structure. These components influence mood, cognitive response, and psychological associations. Warm and harmonious color palettes may create feelings of comfort and openness, while minimalist visual systems often communicate professionalism, clarity, and technological innovation.

Visual consistency also contributes to usability. When users repeatedly encounter the same visual patterns and navigation structures, they can process information more efficiently. This reduces cognitive load and improves the overall interaction experience. Inconsistent visual systems, by contrast, may create uncertainty and reduce communication effectiveness.

Corporate identity additionally functions as a storytelling mechanism. Through visual language, organizations communicate narratives about their values, mission, and cultural positioning. Users often associate visual symbols and styles with personal experiences and emotions connected to brands. Consequently, corporate identity becomes not only an informational system but also a cultural and emotional medium.

In physical spaces, environmental branding improves orientation and memorability. Navigation systems, signage, and branded architectural elements help users interact with complex spaces more intuitively. In digital environments, responsive interfaces and adaptive identity systems improve accessibility and interaction efficiency.

The emotional dimension of visual environments is particularly important in the digital age because users interact with brands continuously through screens and interfaces. Consistent visual communication creates smoother experiences and strengthens long-term emotional connections between organizations and audiences.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of corporate identity extends beyond aesthetics. It shapes perception, supports communication, and contributes to the creation of meaningful user experiences in both physical and digital contexts.

Conclusion

Corporate identity plays a fundamental role in the formation of a coherent visual environment and serves as an essential tool of contemporary visual communication. The conducted study confirms that corporate identity should be understood not merely as a collection of graphic elements, but as an integrated system that combines logos, typography, color schemes, and visual communication principles into a unified framework.

The theoretical analysis demonstrated that corporate identity contributes to brand recognition, strengthens communication efficiency, improves usability, and supports emotional engagement between organizations and their audiences. The increasing importance of digital communication environments further emphasizes the need for adaptive and consistent visual identity systems capable of functioning effectively across multiple media platforms.

The comparative analysis of Ukrainian university logos revealed two dominant approaches to academic branding. The first is based on traditional heraldic and emblematic compositions that emphasize institutional history and academic heritage. The second relies on simplified graphic structures and geometric forms that provide greater flexibility and adaptability within digital environments. This tendency reflects the broader transformation of visual communication in higher education institutions.

Particular attention was devoted to the corporate identity of Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics. The analysis of the university's visual identity system and the evolution of its logo demonstrated a transition from a complex emblematic structure toward a more concise and functional graphic solution. The logo redesign introduced in 2016 improved scalability, readability, and adaptability while preserving the recognizability of the university brand. Furthermore, the analysis of branded materials confirmed that the systematic application of visual identity elements contributes to the formation of a unified visual environment across digital platforms, printed materials, promotional products, and environmental graphics.

The obtained results indicate that contemporary corporate identity systems should balance symbolic meaning, visual simplicity, and functional adaptability. In the case of NURE, the implemented identity system successfully supports communication objectives while creating a recognizable and consistent visual environment. Therefore, corporate identity can be considered not only a branding instrument but also an effective mechanism for organizing visual communication and strengthening institutional positioning in both physical and digital spaces.



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