DJ DEELUXX IDENTITY PROJECT

BY

JOY FIDEL

Department of Art and Design

College of Liberal Arts

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

DECEMBER 2009

Abstract

A highly competitive industry that requires constant marketing is the industry of DJ

entertainment. DJ Deeluxx was lacking an identity system to effectively promote its

business. Thus came about this project to design an identity that would promote the

business and meet both the needs and expectations of the client. The design procedure

entailed general research of the DJ industry to gain familiarity and inspiration. A major

portion of the design process required continuous sketching and studies with type and

color prior to the digital work. The process required persistent sketching and digital

refinement, sketching and refining again, at which the cycle continued until the objective

goals were met. As a result of this intensive process, I achieved designing a logo and

business identity that well represents my client's image and business. I have learned that

the research involved was crucial to the development of the logo that drove the rest of the

identity. This project in hopes will immensely help promote the DJ Deeluxx business.

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Chapter I – Introduction

DJ Deeluxx is a local DJ business steadily growing at a slow rate in Santa Maria, California. It has been in business for approximately three years, servicing the local community and the Central Coast. The client, known as DJ Deeluxx, services any occasions ranging from nightclub and corporate events to weddings and children's birthday parties. His services are open to all ages, though his primary audience is local residents ranging between the age of 25 and 35 living in Santa Maria. A secondary audience is between the age of 16 and 21. Currently, the town has a population of roughly 90,000 people.

Statement of the Problem

DJ Deeluxx is growing at a slow rate mainly in part that it is in need of a business identity. The business is lacking a logo and business system, necessary to market the business and the client's services.

Purpose or Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study was to design an identity that represented the business in goal of promoting it and meeting both the needs and expectations of the client. One primary objective was to create a versatile mark that can be reproduced at a range of sizes and can be printed on various component materials. Secondly, was to brand the business as part of the DJ industry.

Limitations of the study

Two limiting factors are time and the client's budget. Currently, the business does not have anything to brand itself and is in need of various components from business stationary to display items that will be used to market the business. However, a small budget will keep the design as simple as possible and will be printed on basic materials for all components designed. Only the components needed at this time will be produced and printed in small amounts.

Glossary of Terms

- **LED levels:** indicates variations of ongoing music
- **Master of ceremonies/microphone controller/emcee (MC):** The person who presents and makes announcements to the audience during an event.
- **Scratching:** the physical act of making special sound effects on turntables.
- **Turntables:** primary equipment (the latest versions are digital today) used to physically create unique sound effects and transitions during and between mixed songs.
- **Waveform:** Indicates the sound variations of ongoing music.

Chapter II – Review of Research

The DJ industry is a highly competitive field of entertainment and requires constant

promotion to keep a business going. Commonly, a DJ is hired to entertain at weddings,

corporate events, and other various types of occasions of the like. The DJ entertainer not

only provides entertainment using music technology but also emcees at events and

generally can help one to connect with organizers to plan for a specific occasion. Typical

equipment that DJ entertainers use are a mic, turntables and music software that mix and

scratch music, allowing for continuous music play and unique transitions and sounds

during and between songs. It is amplified through sound systems and speakers with

simultaneous lighting and special effects that coincide with the beats and mood of an

event. Some DJ businesses have additional props such as projectors and fog mists.

DJ Deeluxx is competing amongst local competitors such as radio DJs like Paradise

Entertainment, DJ Sol, and Platinum Entertainment. These are the well-known

professional DJ businesses of the Central Coast that DJ Deeluxx would like to be

associated with, which justifies the direction of this study. Most popular DJs seemingly

are branded as club entertainers and often carry a trendy new techno image that by first

account may not communicate the range of events that the business caters to. Though my

client would like to be specific to a club DJ he wants to remain as neutral as possible yet

carry a sophisticated image as a professional. It is highly important for him and the

growth of his business to cater to all types of occasions because he is servicing to a fairly small community in which there are already a few well-known competitors.

The design methodology I have taken is to design a simple logo and identity that would be easily communicated and understood for what it is, meaning that it would be associated as a music business. I have taken the approach of simply integrating a manipulated new techno style typeface and a familiar image of LED levels (that indicate the sound variation of ongoing music) to generate an effective logo that communicates a professional music business. Parts of the logo can also be used as separate marks as well. For example, the double EE's with the LED levels above can stand alone as a logo mark or likewise, the logotype can be used alone. In addition, the use of the LED levels creates an interesting pattern appropriate for use throughout the identity as an enhancing design element to the entire project. The rationale behind the chosen colors: black, white, gray and yellow- green is that the black and white represents night and day as in the events that DJ Deeluxx services, the gray represents the titanium colored equipment and the yellow- green resembles the actual color that the LED levels appear as on screen.

Chapter III – Procedures and Results

Week 1

The initial phase of design requires preliminary background research in order to get a general sense of direction for any given project. Hence, designers must compose a creative brief, a written outline or report that lays out expectations and needs of a client(s) and set ups a framework for the project to be designed. Primary components to a creative brief include a background or overview of a project, who the target or primary audience is, objectives and priorities of the project, the message that would like to be communicated, mediums to be used, limitations, budget and schedule. Meeting with my client to gather information to write a creative brief was the first procedure to this project. He gave me some background information about his business and how it is doing in the local industry. Most importantly we discussed who his clients were and his target audiences, competitors, and what his needs and expectations were considering all the background information he had given me. Then we discussed his current a business card (printed and custom designed from an online source), and talked about what and how he wanted to be represented as well as the style he wanted and appealed to that would best suit his target audience and what the business is about. With the client's small set budget of $200 a month, only essential components for the business including a logo, business stationary, and some necessary promotional materials (banner, T-shirt, CDs, stickers, etc) for such a business would be designed. We both agreed that anything more in addition to

what was requested at the initial meeting could further be designed outside of the senior project course, as he will be signing off final execution.

To get a sense of the type of service my client does and to gain some inspiration for the project, my client introduced me to equipment used by DJs. For example, he showed me the capabilities of turntables, DJ software, speakers, etc. and I took photographs for later reference. I then further researched the local DJ competitors in the local area, general DJ equipment and existing logos of the DJ industry. This gave me an idea of whom my client is competing amongst and what common image and styles are successful to the DJ business today. All of this prior research is part of conceptualization process and gives justification for the final outcome.

After thorough research and clarity for the project, the second phase of design is to do preliminary ideation sketches. This is the time to sketch and jot down any ideas that may arise, including generic ideas that could be further conceptualized later and potentially pursued. Sometimes the simplest ideas are the best ways to get a message communicated. This was my design approach for this particular project. My preliminary sketches are of variations of wordmarks and symbols for DJ Deeluxx that was directly inspired by DJ equipment. Specifically, my sketches were derived from the software my client uses, his turntables and the general DJ style of my client.

After the preliminary sketch phase for a logo, typically designers do type and color studies. I searched for typefaces and did type studies that led to me to do more developed sketches of my preliminary ideas and concepts which I then scanned in and narrowed my ideas down to ten concepts that I felt were conceptual strongest as far as simplicity, professionalism, and had the most potential to be expanded as an identity as well. Out of these ten concepts, I chose three of them to digitally render, resulting in three logotypes that could be used solely as just a wordmark or even without the type could stand alone. I designed digital variations of the four ideas and of the ones that I felt was not as strong I eliminated and outputted color and black and white versions of the logotypes that I did feel was successful. Feedback I received was that the logotype with the LED bars was communicated as the most professional and sophisticated out of the bunch. However, it was currently too trendy and that the type needed be simplified more. Some ways that were suggested to do so was to take the serifs off of the existing typeface and to modify the double E's in Deeluxx so that that they were not as heavy and illegible. I decided to pursue this concept after my client approved of it as well. My client had also chosen this particular concept out of the others I proposed to him.

Week 2

To find the right typeface required me to do more type studies and experiment with ways to make the existing typeface unique. It required more sketching and physical manipulation of the existing one to simplify the type.

One of the ways that I experimented with the type was by using a strobe light that pulsated to project the logotype. Though my idea was not executed as planned due to the limitations of the basic strobe light itself that is not intentionally made for such projections, consequently I discovered that as the logotype was sized down for clearer projection, the negative spaces within the double E's were getting lost and the smaller the logotype became, those spaces disappeared. It was evident that those areas needed to be fixed in order for the logotype to be scaled at various sizes. As so, my sketches included variations of E's and ways to make the type unique by changing parts of letters and making them different from what they currently were. Some were more legible than others but the purpose of further type studies is to discover a range of possibilities and then further develop the ones that best suit the project.

My first attempt to simplify the type, as suggested from the first critique of the logotype, was to remove the serifs on the existing typeface. Just that simple change simplified the type so that it was not as trendy. From there I manipulated the E's to achieve an outcome that would result in those letters being more legible and could withstand being sized down. I achieved this by opening the spaces within the bars of the E's that allowed those letters be more easily identifiable as E's and also allowing them to be sized down without losing any necessary aspects of the letters themselves. Some of the vectorized logotypes ranged from experimenting with dropping parts of the E's to create open space to combining the double E's and even connecting the E's to the other letters of the logotype.

For example, extending the bar of the top of the second E to connect with the letter L in DEELUXX.

After I felt that I had a successfully modified the logotype, I researched DJ lighting as a source for color concepts since LED bars are lighted aspects of DJ equipment. I explored various color combinations that were derived from images I found of DJ lighting at events. Three common colors I felt were appropriate to use for my client's business were yellow-green, red and blue. Combined with swatches of black, white and gray created color palettes that reflected colors of DJ equipment and best represented my client's services. My rationale for going with the yellow-green is that typically the LED bars are lighted as that very color. Secondly, the black and white represents night and day as in the types of events DJ Deeluxx services to that are both night and day events. Lastly, the gray is a representation of the titanium color of the equipment that is used. For example, my client uses titanium colored laptop, which the gray was specifically derived from.

With a compilation of the research I had thus far, I was able to gather images that were inspiring to me to create a mood board. A mood board is typically used as a source of reference that drives the outcome of a project. It usually includes images that have something inspiring for the project that could potentially be used or included into the project or are also examples of what a designer has in mind for the outcome of a project. My mood board is DJ-specific and includes imagery of DJ equipment and lighting, imagery that appeals to my client as well as his target audience that sets the mood of a DJ

event. Also included are a few logos that I though was clever and inspiring for the design of this project's logo.

Week 3

I continued to revise the logo by opening up the spaces between the LED level bars. My main concern was that the bars would not hold up as individual shapes and would blend together as one. By opening up the spaces, this enables the logo to be recognizable even when it is sized down. Increasing the spaces too much looked awkward so I tried to keep the spacing at a fair minimum that would not make the bars look like they were floating one on top of the other.

After the logotype was refined again, I was then able to start sketching layouts for various components to the identity such as the business system (includes a business card, letterhead, envelope), banner, T-shirt, and so on. Through the sketching process I have kept in mind that this logo can be broken up into other logos that can be used as well. For example, the entire wordmark minus the bars can be used or the double E's with the bars above them can be used as a mark alone. Some sketched ideas use the entire logotype and some use the mark only. I also explored with the LED bars alone to create a pattern that could be used consistently as a design element throughout the identity. Simply by flipping and rotating the grouped bars (as they are in the logo), I found ways to juxtapose them to create pattern tiles.

Weeks 4 & 5

To finalize the logo, I closely examined the previous logotype for areas of needed

refinement. I precisely aligned the diagonals, evened out the spacing between the letters

and bars, slightly adjusted the rounded corners, modified proportions, and dropped the

point on the end of the "L". After these refinements, I shrunk the logotype, testing its

readability at a scaled down size. Considering that the logotype contains some thin areas

of spacing, it holds up well. Taking feedback from the previous week's critique, the final

touch to the logo was to explore different colors for the type. With its current color

(black), it was too contrasty next to the yellow-green and on a white background. I

substituted a charcoal gray in replace of the black, trying different tint percentages. I

discovered that a 90% gray worked the best.

I also continued to work on generating a pattern design. I came up with a solution that

utilizes negative space within the pattern and uses different values of colors to give more

depth to the pattern. I have used the yellow-green bars to accent the pattern, carrying bits

of color throughout the pattern design. I then placed the pattern on a black background,

which added depth to the pattern and makes the color pop forward.

Prior to starting the business card design, I did type studies using "Club DJ" in different

typefaces. I decided that using a sans serif typeface would work the best to keep a

contemporary look. I ultimately chose to use the typeface Verdana because its letterforms

are not too round nor too narrow like some of the other typefaces I studied. It is also an

appropriate typeface for a future website. Some of the characteristics I liked about this typeface are the bar that hangs off of the letter J and the unique @ symbol that is more squared and does not slant. These characteristics seem to make the typeface a bit more masculine and still contemporary.

At this point I have designed a basic business system. On the business card I have incorporated the pattern design on the backside of the card. The pattern on a black background gives a nice contrast to the front side (white) of the business card. It makes sense to have this contrast because it goes along with the concept of using black and white to represent the day and night events that my client services. I have designed three versions of a letterhead. Out of the three versions, I feel that the centered version keeps the identity consistent since the other components are centered also. A centered design format is typically considered too standard but because the logo is dynamic enough with its diagonals, a centered format seems to give the design stability. Because envelopes have mailing restrictions as to where graphics and such can be placed within certain boundaries, the envelope design was limiting on creative placement of the elements but with the row of bars (as so on the letterhead) included on the backside flap, the envelope design keeps consistent with the rest of the identity. All components to the basic business system including the envelope have the same size logo on each piece.

On the additional components (banner, T-shirt, stickers/decals, etc.) the logo varies in size. For the T-shirt, I comped up a front and back design on three different shirt colors:

black, white, and gray. For the front of the T-shirt I used the mark (double E's with bars above) blended in a row among additional LED bars. The logotype is used on the backside of the T-shirt so that when the client is wearing it he could be identified from behind. I placed these T-shirt designs onto vector images of T-shirts to get an idea of how they would appear, especially on the different T-shirt colors. For the black T-shirt, I had to invert the color of the logotype. I have used a light color (10% gray) so that under a blacklight the logotype will glow and still remain visible. For the white and gray T-shirts, the logotype remains in dark gray. After designing T-shirts, I made a simple banner design with the logotype enlarged and below that leaves room for a tagline to run across. The dimensions of the banner (24" x 60") was determined by my client's turntable set up since he will be displaying it in front of his equipment. The bumper sticker is of the same design that is on the banner without the tagline. The equipment decal is the logotype printed and cut out as individual sticker pieces to adhere to my client's laptop.

Week 6

As the logo took weeks to refine, likewise the business system needed fine tuning as well. I adjusted the placement of the pattern on the back of the business card and flipped it so that the yellow-green bars were no longer upside down. On the letterhead, I have increased the opacity of the bars at the bottom of the page to make it cohesive with the rest of the design. On the backside flap of the envelope, I moved the line of information in closer proximity to the bars above it. For the additional components, I made minor

tweaks in color, making sure that the contrast between colors remained the same among all the designed pieces.

Continuing with sketching additional components, I sketched layouts for a CD cover and CD label for music demos. Though I narrowed down my sketched ideas to to a few that I was going to digitally render, I ended up referring back to the other sketches and digitally rendered another sketched version of the CD label design because the initial one was not working within the circular CD shape. The final version I designed for the CD utilizes the pattern well within the circular space and also created interesting negative space around the pattern's edges. In addition to the CD, because DJ Deeluxx was also lacking a service rates card so I sketched layouts for one to be designed. The dimension for this piece is a quarter page flyer size, typically associated with the DJ industry for promoting events. I used plug-in rates (not real accurate rates) to get an idea of what a designed layout would look like until replaced with actual business rates and additional information as to how many hours are included per rate. Initially, I attempted to make the layout more visually exciting by laying out the rates at a slant that was parallel to the diagonals within the logotype. Later, the slanted layout was changed upon suggestion because it was too subtle to make the connections. Contact information was left out of this initial rates card design but was added later. My next task was to sketch a wedding reception songbook layout and start laying it out digitally.

Week 7 & 8

After sending my client previews of the designed files via email, I came in contact with my client via the phone. He was very pleased and excited about the whole identity. I accomplished convincing him to create a new email address specific to his business for professionalism. I got his actual DJ rates and music demo song tracks for the back of the CD cover and immediately implemented those into the designs. We also brainstormed ideas for a clever tagline, coming up with "Experience the next level," which goes off of the incorporation of the LED levels simultaneously with the idea that the DJ Deeluxx experience is a level(s) above the everyday DJ.

I continued to improve the layout of the wedding reception music book by adding black backgrounds to highlight the heading of each section and carried the pattern design throughout the book more to make it more exciting. I also changed the listing numbers to hanging numbers to organize the text in a clean and effective manner that is more presentable.

Week 9 & 10

At this point I researched various print services for the different components and compared prices. I spent a considerable amount of time prepping files for print, making sure that they were in formats suited for the different print services. I have discovered that the printing of these components has become a huge expense and that typically, for identity components you nearly always have to buy in bulk. I have discovered that

typically, the components to an identity nearly always have to be bought in bulk. The printing of these components has become a huge expense. Thus, I had to comp up most of the components myself because not all of the components are printed on final substrates.

Through this intensive process, I have designed an identity that well represents who DJ Deeluxx is. The final outcome has accomplished meeting my client's expectations and needs for the business and my client is very pleased with the results.

Chapter IV – Summary and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to design an identity that represented DJ Deeluxx primarily to promote the business since it did not have one. This was accomplished by creating a versatile mark that can be reproduced at a range of sizes that was then applied to the various components. The approach I have taken to integrate a new techno style typeface with the familiar image of the LED levels effectively communicates DJ Deeluxx as a professional. It is successful in that within the logo mark can be taken out of it and can be used alone. Furthermore, a pattern design was derived from the existing elements of the logo that carries through the identity and enhances the image of the DJ Deeluxx. The DJ equipment was inspiring to the development of the logo at which led to the entirety of the project. The design procedure entailed getting familiar with the DJ industry and gaining general knowledge through research. The process of design required continuous sketching and refinement and making many revisions one after the other. The final outcome was a success because the client's expectations and needs were met, in hopes that his new identity will help his business to grow.

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