Art from Scrap: Rebranding & Marketing

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Addressing a Gap

Art from Scrap is a creative reuse store that provides low-cost supplies for all kinds of craft-related hobbies (Explore Ecology, 2024). In general, art supply thrift stores help divert thousands of pounds of usable materials from landfills, and makes creative hobbies more accessible in terms of cost (Remainders, 2024). Art from Scrap’s initiative to extend the life cycle of craft supplies helps reduce unnecessary waste, however they currently do not have strong branding, and their limited marketing materials are inconsistent.

Importance

Art from Scrap’s sustainable model relies on donations from both businesses and individuals, so in order to stay open and run smoothly, they need people to recognize and favor their brand in order to continue doing business. It is also important to create a space that encourages new customers to continue coming back, whether it is to purchase supplies, donate, or both, as this will keep the cycle continuous. Creating consistent branding and marketing materials is important, as it can increase customer trust and loyalty, help stand out from competitors, and build brand authority (Mailchimp, n.d.). Doing so for Art from Scrap will allow them to continue making hobbies more accessible and sustainable for everyone.

Measuring Success

First, I will create a new logo and branding for Art from Scrap that is responsive and represents the business accurately. Then, I will utilize this new branding to update their website and create marketing collateral including business cards, stickers, and informational brochures. In terms of measuring success criteria, I will begin by surveying individual’s opinions about the old website
and branding. This includes asking how easy they are able to find information, how cohesive the branding looks, how likely they would be to visit, if they think the branding matches the business, etc. Towards the end of the project, I will conduct another survey asking the same questions, except this survey will be looking at the new proposed branding. This survey will also contain a few new questions comparing the branding before and after.

**Schedule and Plan**

The project topic and problem statement will be selected during the first week. From there, I will start my research and finalize the proposal, which will be reviewed by my peers and experts in the following weeks. During the third week, a first draft of the branding will be complete, as well as a survey gathering people’s views on the original Art from Scrap branding. The following two weeks will consist of curating a literature review, finalizing the branding, getting feedback on the branding, and starting to create the website and marketing materials. The eighth week will consist of a rehearsal and gathering of materials for the showcase during the ninth week, which will allow for last minute feedback in preparation for the reflection and final submission.

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**Results**

My final project consisted of new branding guidelines for Art from Scrap including responsive logos, colors fonts, patterns, and illustrations. Using this new branding, I created a variety of new
marketing materials with various purposes. First, an informational brochure covering the basic need-to-know information about the brand. Next, a donation-specific brochure for both print and web that lists out accepted items since Art from Scrap receives the most questions about donations. Lastly, I created stickers, a business card template, an Instagram profile mockup, and a website template to help maintain consistency and create a stronger community of Art from Scrap supporters.

After gathering information from my peers in GRC 462, respondents found the consistency, accuracy, and visual appeal of Art from Scrap’s branding to be stronger with the new branding created compared to the original branding. Throughout the process, I did my best to gather as much feedback as possible in terms of the actual design elements. Some feedback I incorporated into my project includes sticking with blue and green as the main brand colors so that existing customers can still identify the brand, incorporating the idea of using different typefaces for each letter while making it look less dated, and including more photographs to show more emotion and better connect with audiences.

Literature Review

We are surrounded by branding whether we consciously notice it or not. Consistent branding throughout a brand’s marketing materials can help the brand increase customer loyalty, stand out from competitors, and build brand authority. Overall, branding has a strong impact on how others perceive and value brands. But what specific elements contribute to successful branding, and how do they influence people's perceptions and decisions?
Branding can be defined as “a set of tangible and intangible attributes, symbolized by a trademark (name, logo, etc.) which when operated properly, creates value and influence. The term value has various means: the promise and the fulfillment of an experience (in terms of marketing), guarantee of earnings in the future (in terms of management) and is regarded as a distinct component of intellectual property (legal perspective)” (Todor, 2014). Essentially, branding is the combination of many aspects, from tone of voice to color palettes to mission statements. In Graphic Communication, the focus is typically on the visual aspects of branding such as logos, images, and colors, although all elements should still tie together cohesively and seamlessly with their non-visual counterparts. People typically think of writing and speaking as the main forms of communication, however visual elements have a major influence on perception and can help communicate ideas more quickly and memorably than text or speech. When branding is consistent, accessible, and accurate in reflecting the brand it represents, it has a better chance of building customer loyalty, standing out from competitors, and building brand authority.

**Accuracy**

Branding has the opportunity to communicate a brand’s personality and intentions to others, so it is important that the visual elements match up with the brand’s mission, purpose, and services in order to prevent dissonance. In a study searching to understand how color and typeface can influence the emotions people feel towards a brand, a conclusion was made noting that color had “a marginal significant effect on perceived emotion. This means that if an unknown company wants to evoke positive feelings in their potential consumers, it is important to invest in marketing in order to show the general public what the brand is about” (Magalie Stolvoort, 2020). Although this study focused on how color can influence perception, there are many other
visual factors that have influences as well. For example, a thin serif font can communicate luxury, close proximity between graphic elements can communicate a group, and images that are blurry or pixelated can be seen as unprofessional. When creating visual branding, it is important to gather research in order to make sure people’s perceptions match what the brand wants to communicate to them, which requires knowing the brand and the customers in and out.

**Consistency**

In an age with plenty of physical and digital channels, it is important to keep branding consistent so consumers can recognize the brand from anywhere. Consistency helps build “trust and recognition; hence, a company’s visual brand should speak the same language as what is said in its text, audio and video” (Dang, 2018). Similar to how consumers enjoy a consistent experience any time they visit a store they know well, consumers enjoy consistent and seamless experiences when it comes to figuring out what a brand that is new to them is all about. For example, if you go to the same coffee shop every morning and order a small iced vanilla latte, you would expect it to look the same, taste the same, and take the same amount of time to make every time you order one from that coffee shop. This way, you don’t have to think about anything else, and can expect something you like every time. The same thing goes for consistent branding. No brand should have consumers spending lots of time trying to figure out who they are. This is why many brands have a set of brand guidelines they follow outlining colors, imagery, typography and compositions unique to their brand in order to create a consistent look (Bradford, 2018). Utilizing branding guidelines correctly can make things easy to identify and saves time for both the customers and employees. Many companies also typically have a responsive logo, meaning it can exist in multiple spaces while still maintaining the same important elements (Maffei et al., 2019). For example, a logo on social media has a different size and aspect ratio than a logo on a
billboard, so in order to make sure that the brand is still identifiable in both scenarios, a different version of the same logo may be needed for each. In doing so, it is important that uniformity is maintained, in order to make sure people perceive the brand as the same across all channels, even if small elements are tweaked slightly.

**Accessibility**

Another important aspect of branding is accessibility. Accessibility can be defined as everyone having the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services in an equally effective and equally integrated manner. (US Department of Education, 2023). From a brand’s perspective, the more people that can identify and engage with their brand, the better. From a consumer’s perspective, if someone is unable to read, access, or understand information that others can, it can be very frustrating and will likely leave a bad impression associated with the brand. In terms of Graphic Communication, accessibility can look like choosing legible typefaces, making sure colors have enough contrast, having alternate text for images on a website, using Navilens codes on packaging, and more.

Choosing legible fonts with high color contrasts at a large point size is a great way to ensure that as many people will be able to read your text as possible. “Color contrast is important because people often have difficulty perceiving content when there isn’t sufficient contrast” (University of Colorado Boulder, 2021). Colors with high contrast are much easier to distinguish without difficulty, and colors with low contrast can lead people to miss important information or strain their eyes, especially in environments with extreme lighting conditions. Choosing a font that isn’t too decorative and making it large enough to read from a distance can also help make text easier to see. Certain fonts like script fonts and gothic fonts have intricate elements that can be
very difficult to read, even at a large point size with high contrast. If people are unable to read or see important brand information, their association with that brand will most likely be negative, making it difficult to build brand loyalty and authority. When it comes to images on websites, including alt text is “required by law in many countries, including the United States, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act” (AbleDocs, 2023). Alt text helps visually impaired people understand what an image is showing, can help search engines understand image contents, and will appear if the image cannot load. For those who may not be familiar, NaviLens codes are a type of printed QR codes specifically meant to help visually impaired individuals access and locate information and interact with the environment around them. (NaviLens, 2024). These codes work with an app that enables people to identify information through sound and touch, making services, experiences, and products more accessible to everyone.

Conclusion

Overall, it is important to keep branding consistent, accessible, and accurate. Because Art from Scrap is a store that makes hobby supplies more accessible to people, it is important that their store carries that accessibility throughout their visual branding as well. It is also important that people see them for what they are, which is a small donation-based art supply thrift store that wants to offer affordable supplies, keep unnecessary waste out of landfills, and build a community that shares the same passion for creativity and sustainability. By focusing on creating strong branding, Art from Scrap has the potential to grow their business because of positive customer perceptions, which will help both the community and the environment.
Reflection & Limitations

At the beginning of the project, my plan was to create new branding for Art from Scrap, and showcase this new branding on various marketing materials including stickers, a brochure, and a website. In the end, I was able to complete everything, except the website I created was not fully finished. However, I did complete enough of it to showcase how the branding could be used in a digital format, which was the main goal of my project, so overall I am proud of the work I completed. I also pivoted and created two different brochures as well as a business card, so I feel that made up for the unfinished website.

I learned that creating new branding takes longer than I expected, especially when collecting feedback along the way. It also becomes tricky when the feedback is split between two different directions and a decision has to be made. The main limitation I ran into with this project was the lack of time. Typically, branding alone can take months and multiple rounds of feedback to perfect. However, I had limited time and would have loved to get more feedback and have a few more rounds of revisions. My next steps to complete this project include collecting all of the assets I created, sending them to Art from Scrap in a usable manner, and adding the final project to my portfolio.
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