



Corporate Design – the key to a consistent image

Consistent and recognisable – that’s how all the material emanating from one organisation/institute/company should be. The key to success is a corporate design (CD). But developing and establishing CD takes some planning. CD concerns science communicators more than scientists, so this article addresses mainly them. But since a CD has to be used by everyone working in an organisation, this article offers some background for all people working with a new CD.

The foundation of CD: the corporate identity

A corporate design is but one aspect of the corporate identity. So, before thinking about graphics, it is necessary to think about the mission of the organisation. The key questions are “Who are we?”, “What do we want?” and “How do we achieve it?” The mission statement answers these questions and usually is formulated in a long process in which all people working for an organisation are involved. During this process, it can be useful to expand on the mission statement by coming up with some useful adjectives that describe the aim of the organisation. They help to describe what the CD should be like. They may be words like “reliable”, “transparent”, and “modern”.

Before creating the CD

Before starting to come up with a CD – which is best done using the principles of project management – the following steps are advisable:

- Make sure you have the support of management!
- Make sure you have the support of your colleagues!

Collect all available data on existing publications and materials of your organisation – this proves useful when addressing the different requirements for the CD! The list can include everything from letters to the internet, from exposition booths to books. And it gives the unique opportunity to assemble a full portfolio of materials – and to throw some out. In addition, it reveals who deals with which materials and which processes need to be taken into account. Some examples: Who does the layout of books and deals with printing shops? What kind of letters are used in your organisation, who prints them and what kind of printer and paper is used to print them?

That one idea

As soon as you have prepared everything and have found the right partners – most likely a company specialized in CD – the search for the key idea starts. Here the adjectives mentioned above, or the design of some example materials, might help.

Logo and key visual

The development of a logo is a central, and time-consuming, part of the CD process. A logo should communicate all aspects of the mission statement and it must be unique. A key visual useful for various purposes can be a good addition.

Style guides

All ideas and definitions of a CD should be available in style guides covering all kinds of materials of the organisation. And they should be available for all colleagues working with those materials – who are best involved in advance. Before printing the style guides, check whether the rules they establish work in practice. And never publish anything that isn't finished, because nothing sticks as good as interim solutions.

Project finished – CD established?

After all definitions are made and all style guides are printed, the effort to bring all your publications into line with the new CD isn't over. Because the imagination of your colleagues is unlimited and everyone has his or her own opinion about taste, it is best to make sure that someone checks all materials before publication. This is the only way to maintain the standards that you and your team have worked so hard to develop.

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For further information about science communication, the “Handbuch für Wissenschaftskommunikation” (in German) of the Raabe Verlag is recommended. For further information

see www.wissenschaft-kommunizieren.de