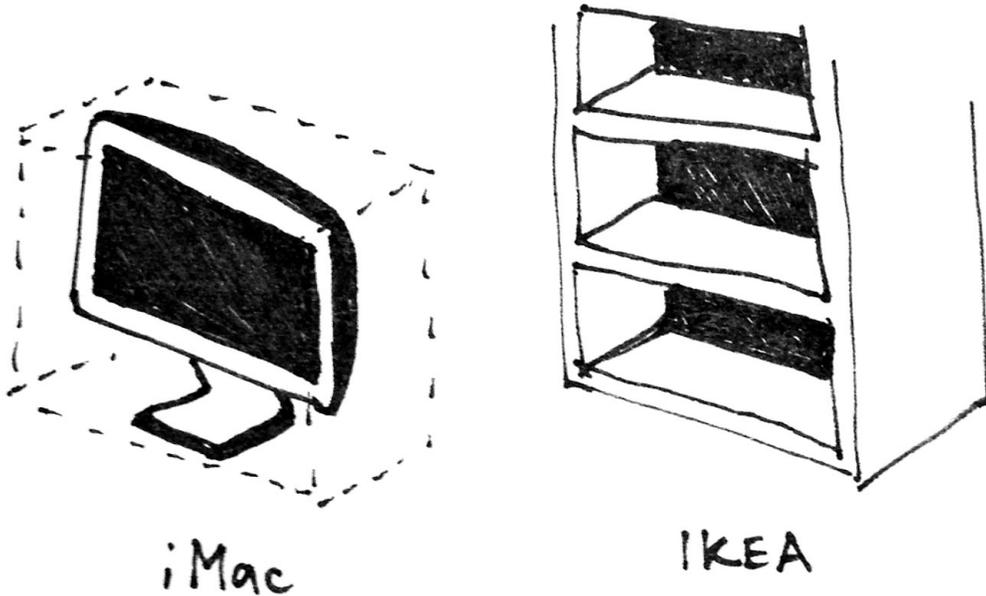


Designcommunication

What do you think when you see and iMac's packaging? Probably that it's beautiful.
And what about a standard IKEA flatpack? Functional, isn't it?
But what do they communicate to us about the product?

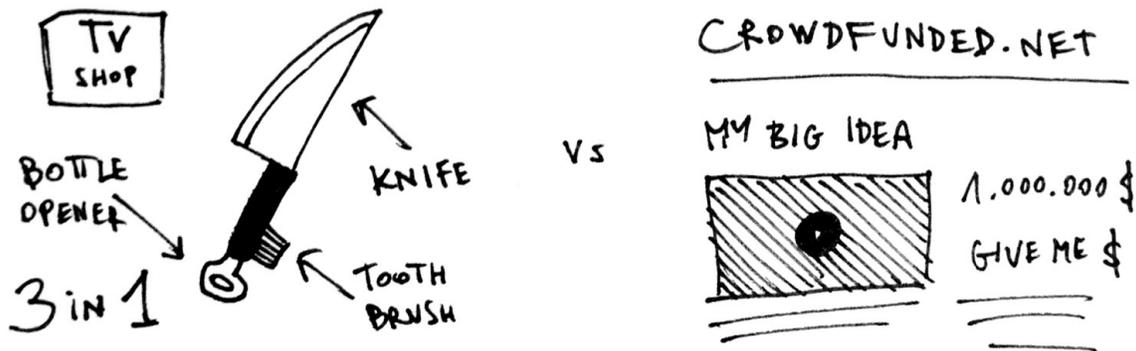


A couple of years back, one of my colleagues (Attila Cosovan - <http://coandco.cc>) was working on his thesis as an extension of his design philosophy, "Designcommunication". Actually the word itself describes the term expressively, but also has a very definitive description: "Communication integrated into development".

The design of a product or basically anything begins with an idea. I believe the need to be able to pierce this basic idea through the product, and get it to the user is crucial, because the long and exhausting process of development may quickly end in losing scope. Too much thinking on functions, adding more and more features, timeline and other distracting elements can cause this idea to even completely vanish from the product. Development should be focused and functional of course, but the whole process must include this see-through channel for the communication.

It's good to see where you're going.

I think the most common mistake is not seeing the idea clearly enough. Without describing the idea, its values and achievements, it's nearly impossible to make a product work. An other mistake is to lose this idea during the development process, and create something, that does a function (maybe even good), but you don't know exactly what the goal is.



No concept vs. only concept, examples we all know.

Importance to save this idea as stable as possible is clear, yet this concept can be easily overdone. If you have a very strong idea, a solid message, it's basically good for the whole project, on the other hand if you only concentrate on the communication approach you may ruin it with a mistake that is bigger than the idea, and may cover it from some views.

An iMac packaging vs. IKEA flat packs. Transporting air is the most expensive thing.

The main thing here (as always) is to find the balance.

Functional design - product is a tool to fulfill the desired functionality as best and clean as it can.

Designcommunication™* - product is a tool to communicate an idea as best and clean as it can.

It seems that the two goes well together. There is no (good) product unless it's functional, and if the communicational approach was right, people should get the purpose without any extra investment.

Design itself gets to be the idea, and product itself is the communication. The development process is the functional part, where the lot quoted 10 principles of good design from Dieter Rams are more than needed and acceptable.

So how to communicate the essence of the idea through a product? I guess it depends on what you design, the designer and the context. There are no strong principles how to do it, but from the lines above and below, you can get some advice:

- Get the idea, get it strong and clear! (Not just words, an essence)
- Try to channel it through every bit of the product and development.
- Don't overdo development! (Make/Keep the product functional)
- Don't overdo design! (Keep the purpose in mind)
- Don't overdo communication! (If the product is clear enough, why bother?)

sources:

http://issuu.com/cosovan/docs/ca_disco_synopsis_theses_en

http://issuu.com/cosovan/docs/designkommunikacio_ca

http://coandco.cc/dinamic/disco/20/CC_DISCO_prezi_hu_en_short_TTM.pdf

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Functional_design

<https://www.vitsoe.com/gb/about/good-design>

*Szabadalmi Közlöny és Védjegyértesítő - 113. évfolyam 12. szám I. kötet, 2008.12.15.
Lajstromszám:196961