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HOW TO DESIGN A REPRESENTATIVE LOGO FOR A CITY

Abstract: It is not easy to create a logo, as identity graphic representation for a city. It is a work of study and graphics, using many information about the theme. And, of course, symbols, signs and colours to convey an interesting message to the people. This paper presents an experience of the authors concerning the designing an identity for a city, by creating a logo. As it is known, logo is like a signature of something and has a power" to make present the absent" [5]. It was a challenge to put together in a creative graphic representation the past, the present and the future of the city and to harmonize the rules and the demands of the competition to this representation.

Key words: Logo design, graphic competition, city, tagline.

INTRODUCTION

We are sure that there are people who asked themselves what is a logo. Because along times there were a few words about this identity element: seal, badge, emblem. In our day's logo is a recognized term used all over the world in graphic design [1], [2], [3]. There are different symbols involved in the logo concept, as representational, which express the area of activity, or abstract, as special graphics [4]. We have noticed that is not necessary for a symbol to represent the domain of activity but, in many cases, it is absolutely necessary. To create a graphic identity element for a city means to solve a lot of demands and to understand what are its special symbols.

2. WHAT ARE THE MAIN STAGES TO CREATE A REPRESENTATIVE LOGO FOR A CITY

2.1 The message

From the first step is important to understand the message which will be integrated in a graphic representation. That means a right message in a right graphics. For this purpose, is very important to obtain a lot of information about the past and the present of the city. It is necessary to realize a long trip along the streets and boulevards to understand the culture of it, to feel „the heart" of the citizen in their town. In this stage of documentation, the designer makes a temporal and spatial map very important for his future steps in creation. Also, the public library and the archives of the town may offer interesting information about the town. The designer has to answer to a few questions: What is the story of the city? What are the symbols of it? To whom is addressed the message? What has to be the components of the message? Is the message written as a tagline with a graphic representation? These few questions need good answers. This is a stage of accumulation of information [6], [7].

2.2 The preliminary graphic construction

In this graphic concept stage the designer draws a few sketches concerning the graphic and visual language for the logo. He has to decide what is the best of graphics: a modern, a vintage or a combination of them. And, of course, what is the adequate typology of logos to identify the city: a logotype, only an iconic representation or a complex logo. These sketches will be the start point to create a final graphic representation. In this stage the designer has to prove the ability to draw a logo concerning the three main aspects: simplicity, uniqueness and symbolism [8]. Having these directions in his design work it is possible to create a memorable, an effective and a special logo in a crowded world of logos. That is why the research study is important because he may identify the right elements to express a right message. If the symbol is strong and legible, the story created by drawing is true for the people. It is interesting to notice that people need to be bounded to the definition of their town using logos. There are a lot of towns all over the world which express themselves by a graphic representation. By a logo, of course. This is an important level of designing a logo because the designer is supported by information about the subject and it is his creativity to assure a wonderful graphic representation. This is a stage meaning from pencil to computer. Because the computer may help the designer to concept logos using the main principles of logo design.

2.3 The final logo design stage

The first two stages have drawn a graphic point of view about symbols and words for the city. To have a final decision it is necessary a brainstorming analyse which allows to select the right graphic variant [9]. This level of designing is very important because is the final decision to be assumed to be presented to the gainer.

3. THE GRAPHIC COMPETITION FOR THE CITY OF ORADEA

This was a challenge for us to participate in a graphic competition having the theme: *Building the logo of Oradea.* This is a town from Romania, Europe, nearby the west borders of Romania. We have participated designing 3 logos in accordance to the rules indicated by the Tourism Authority of the city. The authorities have presented the city of Oradea as an important, opened to investors and peaceful town, with an efficient local

administration and a lot of Art Nouveau buildings. Also, a city of young and old people which live and work together for the benefits of the town. A city where everyone could be oneself again.

Shortly, the competition was addressed to everyone who wanted to create a logo for Oradea. There were a few indications to follow in this design work, namely:

The logo will represent the new identity of the town;

The design models have to be in accordance to tradition and the culture heritage of the town;

The logo has to be addressed to the citizen of the town, tourists and investors;

The logo will be significant for past, present and future.

Of course, the organizer has explained some rules about the final working creative idea, as follows:

A color logo on a white background;

A monochrome and bi-colored logo and a black & white variant;

A short explanation using words and images of the creative idea;

Figures have to be made in high quality, which is suitable for reproduction and print;

Don't include photos.

At least 3 applications of the logo on different objects. These were the requirements of the competition organizer. We have applied the two working stages (The first is Preliminary, a theoretical and information study, and the second, the Creative Graphics).

First, we have made an investigation concerning the past and the present of the city to understand its culture. In our researches we have identified the significant symbols of the town to use them as graphic representation in a logo structure (The State Theatre, The City Hall, The Black Eagle Palace and a representative business centre).

Also, the sketches drawing in our travel in the city were very important to realize what representative building has to be in the city logo. Working hard on observation and drawing, the result was defined in three logos.

Figure 1 presents the first one. For this logo the main element is the pentagonal shape of the medieval fortress of Oradea including the graphic representations of four symbols of the town, mentioned above.

In the corners of the pentagon there are directional arrows to show the desire of the city to be connected to other towns. In figure 2 (a, b and c) are presented the stages to draw the first logo.
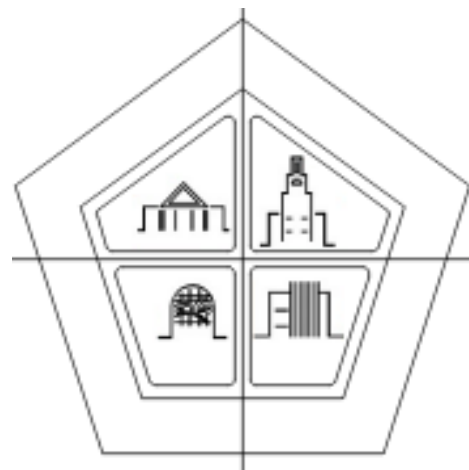
The green colour is about the parks and the gardens of the town and the brown colour talks about the walls of the fortress.
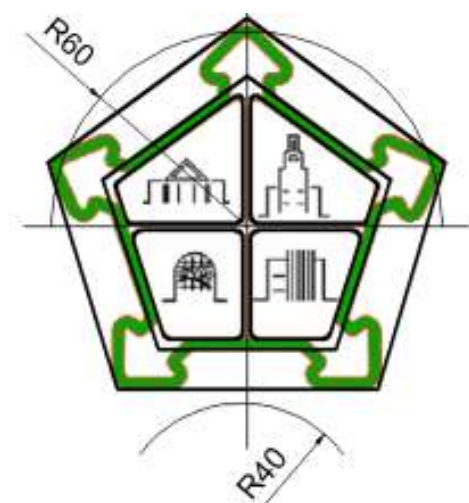
The name of the city is written in three languages (Romanian, German and Hungarian) to see the multicultural of the town and the past of it.
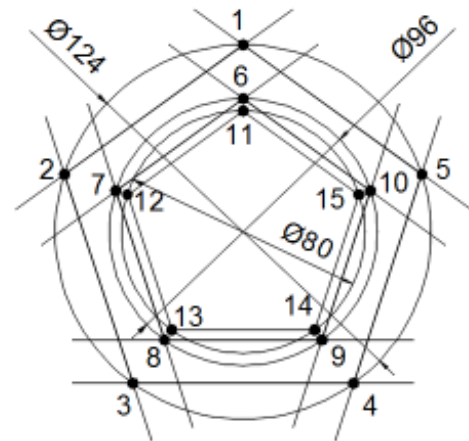
a.

b.

c.

Fig. 2 Stages to design the city logo.

Fig. 1 The first logo designed for the competition.

In figure 3 is presented the same logo in different variants required by the organizer and figure 4 „talks" about the applications of the logo on different objects.

Fig. 3 Variants required by the organizer.

Fig. 4 Supporting objects for the first logo.

The second logo is presented in figure 5. We have tried to connect the town to the European Union (EU) using the EU flag (of course, only few stars and the blue colour). Only three representative buildings were drawn, the name of the town was written in the languages used in the first logo. The new element was a tagline "Enjoy our friendly town!" as an invitation to citizen, tourists and investors. The figures 6 and 7 were presented in accordance to the requirements of the competition rules.

Fig. 5 Our second logo for the town.

For the third logo, in figure 8, we have used a rectangular shape for each symbol (The State Theatre, The City Hall, The Black Eagle Palace, the Business Centre building and the EU flag-only few stars and a blue colour). In each shape is presented a letter, in succession O, R, A, D, E, A to realize the name of the

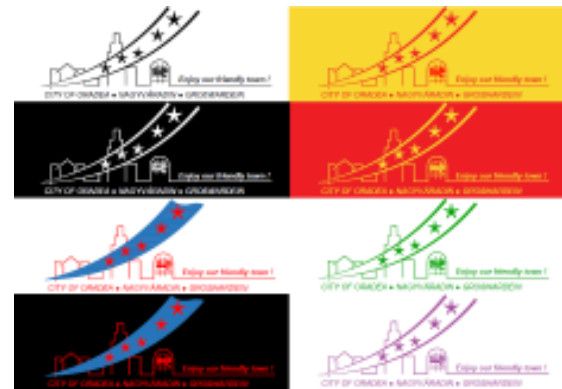city. Of course, the logo is accompanied by the tagline from the second logo.

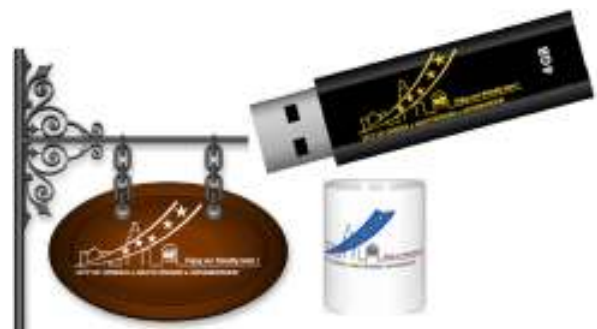**Fig. 6** Variants for the second logo.

Fig. 7 Supporting objects for the second logo.

The blue ribbon behind the rectangular shape is about the river which is flowing along the town. It is a representative element for the city and we have involved it in the logo structure. For this logo, we have presented in Figures 9 and 10 what the organizer has required.

Fig. 8 The third logo design.

Fig. 9 Supporting objects for the third logo.

Fig. 10 Variants for the third logo.

4. CONCLUSIONS

First, we think it was very important to participate and to be selected in this competition.

This was an opportunity for us to understand and to apply the design stages on a demanded theme.

To realize a logo for this town we have thinking to create graphic representations bounded to something specific for it. And in all these representations was included the name of the town.

In spite of the situation (nobody was declared as a winner) it was interesting to be involved in a creative process which has meant observation, collecting information, drawing many elements of the logo structure [10], walking in the streets „to catch" the symbols of the town.

Also, during our work we have learned what are the differences between the requirements from a local administration of a town and a private demand of a company concerning logo design.

The creative work is different related to the requirements. For a town, for a public entity, is important to have a global message to the people, to identify the citizen of the town to the symbols used in its logo.

Working for a private company, to realize a logo for it, there are the same stages (to collect information, to draw sketches, to choose the right colours, to create a computer graphic representation etc.) [11].

As an identity element for something, a logo has to be legible, memorable, resistant in time, simple, distinct, relevant.

If somebody is looking in the world of logos will see many of them which observe the attributes of logos.

To create a logo is a challenge for a designer and an opportunity to learn more and more about the universe of these graphic representations.

In a few words: this graphic competition was an interesting and lovely adventure for us.

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