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Communication Design Theory

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First Paper

Design theory has been used throughout history whether it's in paintings, design furnitures and even graphic design. Designers used the influence of the theories until this day and probably continue. These theories were Gestalt psychology, linguistics, semiology, and/or the avant-garde art movement.

The logo IBM was designed by Paul Rand in 1972 and is currently used today. Rand has also developed countless designs using the IBM logo within them from packaging designs to posters, annual reports, stationeries, fabric/wallpaper, cartridges and so on. Such designs have caught my eye, especially his packaging family designs. His packaging designs are an eye catcher due to the fact of the colors he applies and their layouts. It is like he sticks with the same layout but at the samet time they all look kind of different in a good appealing way. IBM is an IT company in the United States established in 1889. It concentrates in developing software and hardware. The IBM logo is a professional icon that is designed specifically for a corporation, on the other hand, IBM name was only introduced in 1946 since there was another name for it which was called CTRC (Computing-Tabulating-Recording Company).

The company went through so many name and logo changes, in 1924 the abbreviation was transformed to "International Business Machines". In addition to that, it was not designed as an abbreviation just yet but was created in a globe like where the words were squeezed in there. By 1946 and 1956 the logo was refined into the abbreviation of today's design, the sky blue was the same, sitting there behind a clear white background.

During the year of 1967 the logo got more of a refinement by adding a few small white stripes horizontally crossing the letters making it look like a clean pattern. 1972 was when the logo was finally modified, the colors and typeface stayed the same while the white stripes across the letters became more separated from each other making them equally spaced out and easier for the eye to comprehend and look at.

Paul Rand's IBM logo design has used a theory and that theory I believe is the gestalt psychology, not only does the logo use that theory but his packaging designs as well. Gestalt psychology was created by famous Herman psychologists named Kurt Koffka, Wolfgang Koehler and Max Wertheimer. They came up with theories of visual perception to examine how people put together various items into one whole phenomenon. Furthermore, in this visual perception theory, there are the gestalt principles that include Proximity: when different objects are laid out near each other making them belong to one whole group, Closure: when making something real, Similarity: when items with common visual characteristics are immediately taken to be related , Multi stability: the ability of the eyes to see two things within one image and continuity: when objects are aligned next to each other. These principles are used greatly in the design world especially in logos.

The IBM logo uses Proximity which I mentioned above that uses items to be laid out close to each other making them into one whole group. As we look at the IBM logo, we see blue and white stripes going horizontally across the letters which help us combine them to create the IBM image in our head. Since the logo uses proximity the package designs uses a different gestalt principle and that would be Similarity which is when objects with common visual characteristics are automatically taken to be related. Within the package family is a design called Ribbons and Carbon paper. This design consists of the IBM logo being repetitive along the front of the package and applying fours colors on each IBM letter; white, green, pink and the original color blue. The font of course stayed the same, making it have a strong familiar look to us. Going through Paul Rand's designs I noticed that he uses the gestalt psychology theory quite a lot and I think that is very interesting because I learned about visual perception but seeing a famous professional designer use it, is significantly fascinating and I have become more curious to learn about this theory.
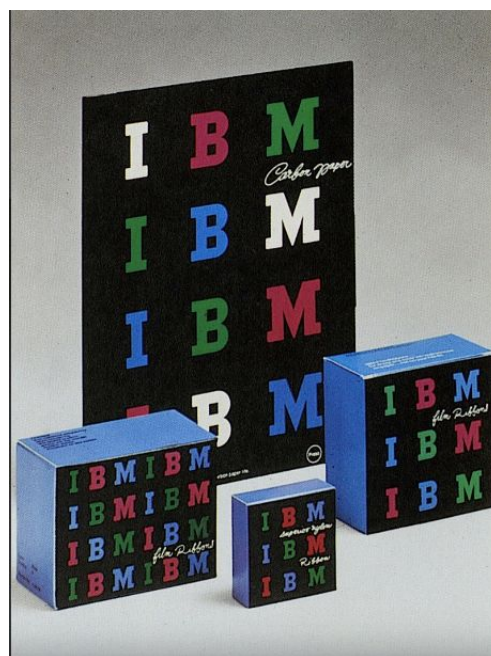
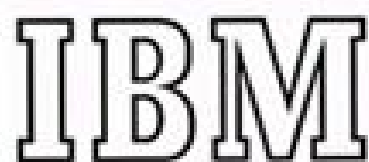International Time Recording
Company (1888)

Computing Scale
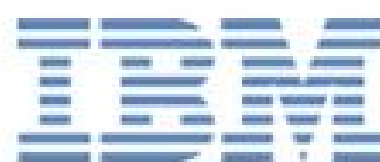Company (1891)

Computing-Tabulating-
Recording Company (1911)

International Business
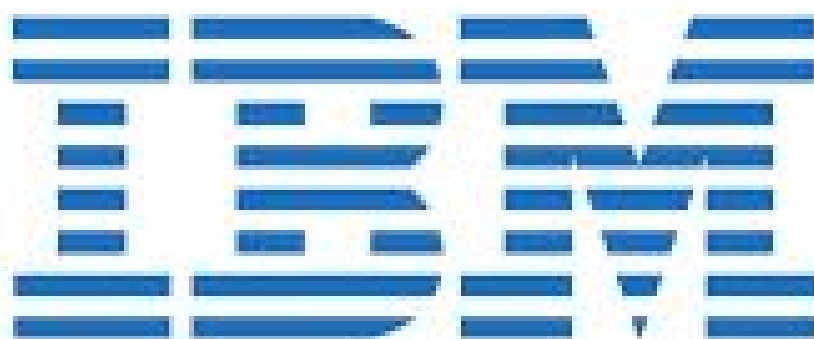Machines (1924)

1947

1956

1972

SHAPE

COLOR

FONT

designhill

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