



thinking. As is the case in the processes of design, this constructive activity navigated between more rational moments and more creative moments, in an articulation of scientific theory with interpretive reading.

The method, systematized to create a precise diagnostic of the discursive identity of a product (the object and its communication), maintains this same dynamic process. Our starting point is the conviction that a product's communicative dimension is conditioned by its coexistence with, and—why not be clear about it—its confrontation with other products of its kind. For this reason, an analysis of the product and its competitors in the spaces where they are inscribed, that is, in the contexts where they are located, becomes a fundamental step.

The spaces in which a product is inscribed reveal the conceptual universe to which it belongs. This universe is governed not only by the values and conventions of the buyers, but also, and above all, by a kind of “culture” specific to the category itself. The main impasses occur when the aesthetic solution, in its choice of codes, ignores the conceptual universe. To cite just one example, the minimalist style, elaborated within the codes of the cosmetics universe, may be inappropriate when dealing with food—which is not to say that there cannot be a minimalist aesthetic solution appropriate to that universe. Rather, this demonstrates the possibility of having a unique stance and, at the same time, a competitive discourse in its segment.

The study of the effects of context makes it possible to evaluate the assertiveness of a brand's values as embodied in concrete expression, incorporated, bringing very different results from when we take these values as generic definitions, isolated from their actual manifestation. By incorporating other players in the study with equal rigorosity, it was possible—in addition to conducting this assessment—to establish a comparative metric capable of bringing new insight into the marketplace. By new insight, we mean that, in addition to the mastery of data about the volume of sales, it is possible to understand which of the players has the most competitive, the most forceful discourse, and why.

Recently we have had very positive return with regard to the involvement of semiotic studies in innovation processes. Major consumer goods companies have been questioning themselves as to the future of important brands, dealing with the mixed emotions that come from wanting to take a step forward and being apprehensive about losing part of their history. In these cases, the integration of semiotics in our methods has contributed to defining pivotal new lines of action, expanding the scope of innovation and increasing the argumentative repertoire. It has represented a new perspective for analysis, capable of revealing the riches inherent in the simplest of things, bringing a quasi “psychological” dimension to Designers' and corporate members' knowledge of the object.

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