



Significant emotional messages often emanate from architecture, design and styling. Fatally, therefore, PT often suffers from worn-out, clumsily styled and even downright ugly vehicles and installations. Quite the reverse is true of PT's main competitor: the automotive industry is using ever more polished interior and exterior designs as selling points and strives to associate a vehicle's appearance with the buyer's awareness of life. Certainly in view of the fact that a person's choice of transport mode is not only a rational decision, but one that also involves a high degree of emotion, creative issues therefore need to play a far more important role than before within PT. This is one of the goals being pursued by UITP's "design and culture" working group.

Corporate Design as part of a corporate identity strategy

Corporate design (CD) is a term that encompasses all of a company's visual forms of expression. The aim of a corporate design concept is to come up with an easy-to-remember image for the company by using formal styling constants (logo, colours, typefaces, styling pattern) in product design and communication. The trick is to reduce constant design elements to such an extent as to guarantee re-recognition capability and conciseness, but at the same time make it possible to adapt to totally different situations, target groups, media, and so on.

Corporate design forms part of a comprehensive corporate philosophy and/or corporate identity (CI) that reflects self-image in respect of the services on offer and working method. Corporate identity pursues the goal of coordinating the form and content of all company activities with regard to the general public (behaviour, communication and appearance) in such a way as to depict the company in as clear, uniform and sympathetic a way as possible and in keeping with its chosen strategic orientation. Other sub-areas and/or instruments of CI alongside corporate design are corporate behaviour (attitudes towards staff and the public) and communication strategy (corporate communication).

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Therefore, corporate design is part of a strategic concept and is deployed in order to improve the company's market position.



Corporate Design – an important action area for public transport companies

Corporate Identity and the concepts stemming from it are also of great benefit to public transport companies. It is all a matter of:

- achieving a competitive position – above all in competition with the car, but increasingly with other Public Transport operators;
- making Public Transport use easier for customers.

Within this meaning, a Corporate Design concept takes on a dual function in the case of Public Transport companies: on the one hand, it is of practical benefit to the customer; on the other hand, it helps create a positive image for Public Transport and/or the PT company.

Image especially is one of the decisive factors in a person's choice of transport mode: is Public Transport perceived as a positive service, or does it have a "loser" tag? Do citizens identify with "their" Public Transport, or is it just something for people who do not have a car?

The aim of a working 'Corporate Design' concept adjusted to an overall 'Corporate Identity' concept is that of:

- creating uniqueness and re-recognition capability in respect of both the company as a whole as well as its products. At a glance, it must be clear who or what is behind certain products or data. In this respect, a continuous Corporate Design concept makes it much easier for customers to find their way around a complex PT system and generates a feeling of routine and security;
- portraying the company's personality and fostering an emotional bond between customer and company. How is the PT company's self-image? What image of the company is conjured up in the minds of customers?

Public Transport makes specific requirements of corporate design as it has an eminently heterogeneous set of customers. On the one hand, Corporate Design must satisfy the bulk of passengers, yet on the other hand allow specific groups of them to be targeted (e.g. "cool" adverts for young people). Furthermore, Public Transport services are produced mostly within networks. Here, the concern is to develop coherent interplay between the individual structural demands of single companies and a necessarily uniform depiction of the system (e.g. as regards passenger information).

Üstra Hannover

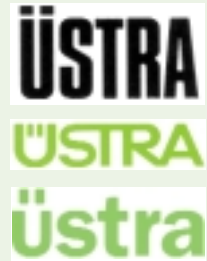
Üstra was the first German PT company to develop a CD concept. Certainly, no other German city had implemented as comprehensive and as strikingly different a company 'look' as far back as the mid 1970s – an entirely deliberate break with the past that was designed to clarify the dawning of a new era as much as the presence of public transport. The starting premise was the introduction of a new light rail system whose new vehicles, tunnel sections and high standard of development marked a leap forward in quality compared to the earlier, conventional tramway system.

Starting out from the design of a new light rail vehicle in 1973, a total concept was developed in collaboration with the Hannover-based firm of designers, Lindinger & Partner, the linchpin of which, alongside high structural quality and a deliberately modern appearance, was the striking and unusual colour green. The core elements were:

- a new üstra logo;
- a full redesign of communication media (letter headings, brochures, timetables, etc.);
- wholesale replacement of furnishings at stops (waiting rooms, stop signs);
- adaptation of the new colour concept for light rail vehicles in the case of all new bus acquisitions.



What colour is public transport? Every Hanover resident will tell you that the colour green means either "üstra" or "public transport". The shade referred to in local parlance as "üstra green" has been present in virtually all elements of üstra's company appearance since the 1970s. After a great deal of public debate, its uniqueness and stringent use soon established it as a positive recognition symbol of new quality in public transport.



The üstra logo down the years (before 1974, 1974 – 1996, since 1996)



During the 1990s, again in direct association with vehicle-fleet replacement, the entire üstra CD concept was itself overhauled. In keeping with the mood of the times, the green was considerably lightened in tone and is now used more as an accent colour, with silver adopted as the new lead colour.

There was also a move away from the idea of being able to determine the company's CD in an all-embracing design manual. Of course, there are a range of structural specifications, in particular relating to graphic design. The basis for the modern-day CD concept adopted by üstra is now provided by continuously high demands in terms of structural and functional quality. Even more tangibly than beforehand, this demand extends beyond the company's graphic image and also covers vehicles and installations. The aim is to produce a tangible identity courtesy of recurrent design elements and the sophistication of blueprints and materials – in other words, a "corporate style" more than a uniform "corporate design".

For üstra, aesthetic quality denotes an inviting gesture that it is possible to create without any major additional costs for all products, from vehicles through to ticket machines via the actual station itself. Independent of whether the customer finds all aspects of the design pleasing, it is important for he or she to sense the wholehearted efforts on the part of üstra in terms of the quality of appearances. It is all a matter of increasing people's readiness to identify themselves with üstra products and of presenting PT not merely as 'practical', but also as 'chic'. For that reason, since the mid 1990s üstra has been busy introducing art and design in various areas on a scale unparalleled for a company of its size.

The new TW 2000 light rail vehicle developed with the help of the British designer, Jasper Morrison, sets new benchmarks in terms of both its functionality as well as its design. The same is true of the new üstra 'StadtBus': because standard models offered by industry failed to satisfy either design-related or functional demands on the part of üstra, a totally revamped vehicle was designed and developed by James Irvine. This is helping to bridge the quality gap between bus services and rail services and to draw attention to the bus.

Within the framework of an art project, the company commissioned nine international designers to come up with new surface stops. These bus stops have become a world-renowned symbol of Hanover, and there cannot be a book about the city that does not contain a picture of at least one of these stops. A great deal of value was also attached to the design of elevated platforms so that multiple new, positive points of emphasis could be placed in the road area and criticism of them from the urban development angle combated. In Hanover as in other cities, the redesign of ancient metro stations is an important issue. Here again, the city has gone its own way: graffiti, for example, has transformed one station into a giant comic strip ('Hanover New York Express'), while the Italian designer, Mas-simo Iosa Ghini, came up with the concept of totally refurbishing the central 'Kröpcke' interchange courtesy of vast, tiny-detail mosaics and stylised lighting.

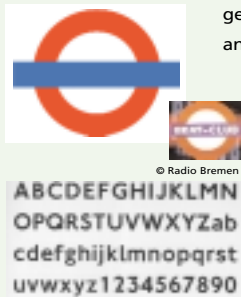


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London

In every sense, London provides a classic example of comprehensive corporate design within PT. Inextricably tied in with this is Frank Pick, who recognised as early as the beginning of the twentieth century the benefits of a coordinated, stylish appearance for companies and passengers, and whose work between 1906 and 1940 characterised PT in London and has made it so distinctive to this day.

Pick was behind the development of the two most famous elements – the ‘roundel’ logo and standard ‘Johnston’ typeface – and used both in order to forge a common identity and common brand image both inside (in respect of staff) as well as outside (in respect of customers) the ninety or so Underground companies that came together in 1933 to form London Transport. The world-famous ‘Tube’ map was also developed under his patronage.



The roundel, left, is a virtually- ideal, typical example of a successful symbol: simple form, striking colours, general and consistent application over time. The roundel has become the symbol of mass transit in London, and is almost the 27th letter of the alphabet for Londoners. Even more impressively, it has become a cult object and one of the world’s most familiar symbols. For instance, not only does it adorn innumerable London souvenirs, but also many things associated with London. For example, it was used as a logo for the TV pop show, “Beat-Club”, which showcased English pop acts on German television from 1965.

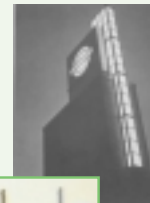
On the left, the standard ‘New Johnston’ typeface (a refinement of the ‘Johnston’ typeface in use from 1916). This, along with the roundel, is inseparable from PT in London.

Pick’s claim to fame extended way beyond the graphic design aspect alone. The aim was to create a comprehensive “fitness for purpose” corporate style for stations, vehicles and so on. At the same time, he also brought in elements from the world of arts and crafts, for example the Underground art posters that have become an essential component of PT’s image in London.

Even though other striking design elements have also characterised PT in London since the Pick era, with the red London Routemaster double-decker bus being one particular icon worth mentioning in this regard, many traces of Pick’s work have, however, been covered over or lost forever. Only recently has there been a harking back to his original ideas and a return to strong, functional design in preference to ‘decoration’.

Interestingly, the original function of the roundel and ‘Johnston’ typeface are regaining in significance specifically in connection with public transport liberalisation: a linchpin for the development of various organisations, which are now separate entities once again, and for presenting public transport as a coherent system.

www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/ ; www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/about/corp-design/index.shtml



Repro. London Transport Museum