

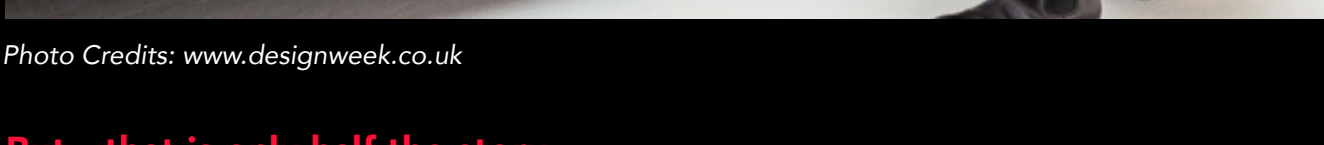
THIS MONTH...

The art of great design and why
paying for a pro pays back

It can be said that people are far more aware of 'brands' and their identities through the prolific use of advertising and marketing. We see them every day, everywhere, often without even realising. The subconscious bombardment of marketing from large conglomerates is something we grow to generally phase out day-to-day, but in reality (if done correctly) they leave an indelible mark on us.

Just think of those big billboards in London, the sides of busses or the unskippable adverts in-between your favourite TV drama. The brands themselves rely on the public to see them and consequently form a visual link with us 'the public'. You simply need to see the logos of these companies to identify who they are!

When we get thirsty, we may think "ooh a coke would go down well right now!" That's because for years probably since you learned how to see, Coke's advertising has been in your eye line. Together tastes better, right?

Photo Credits: www.designweek.co.ukPhoto Credits: www.designweek.co.uk

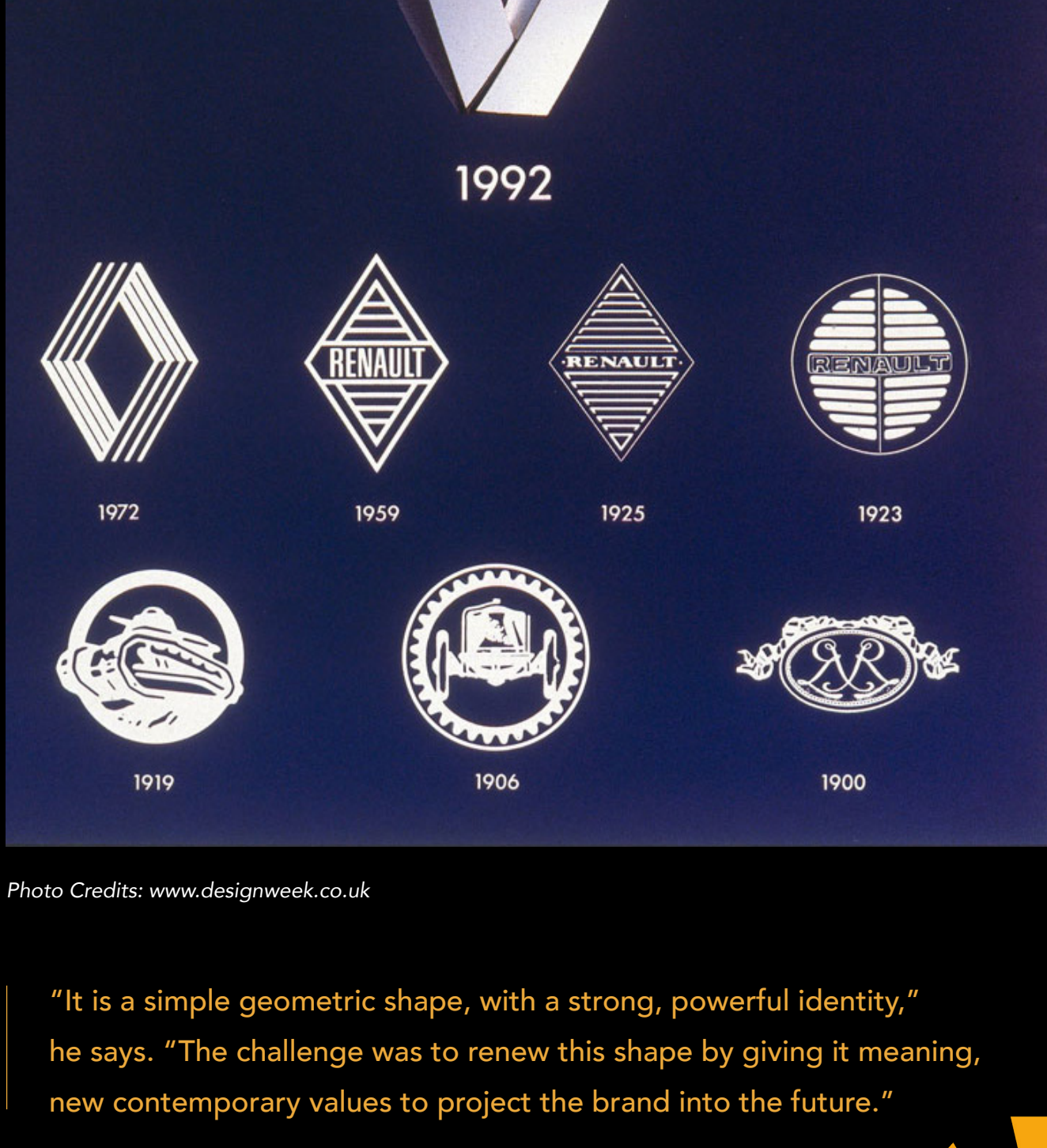
But...that is only half the story

When you think of a good example of an iconic mass market brand, you will be aware of the big names in the automotive industry.

Renault revived

Back in 2020 Renault decided to evolve their long-standing branding to something that resonated with their creative vision for their company. Something that would personify their forward momentum into future technology and sustainability.

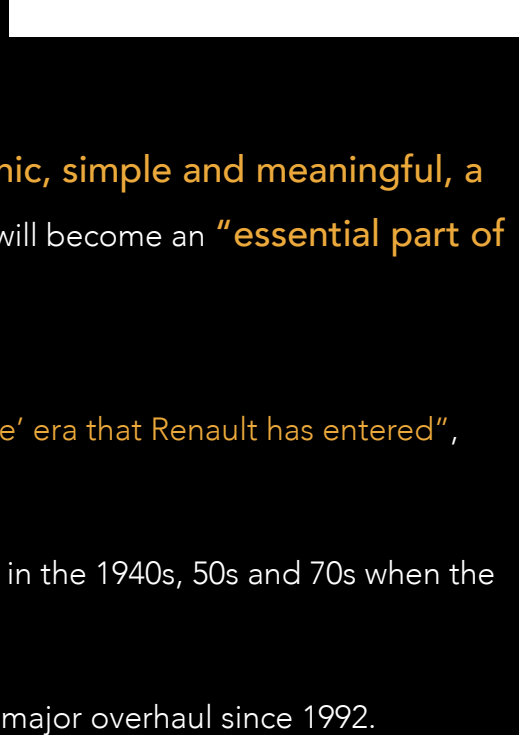
The original mark that originated in 1920 had not had a major overhaul since 1992. The new flat logo comprises two intertwining diamond shapes which can be animated for digital media. It appears without a wordmark and can also be lit-up on vehicle grilles. The new logo was designed in-house at Renault and hopes to meet the needs of a modern brand in a digital world, according to the brand's design director Gilles Vidal.

Photo Credits: www.designweek.co.uk

"It is a simple geometric shape, with a strong, powerful identity," he says. "The challenge was to renew this shape by giving it meaning, new contemporary values to project the brand into the future."

Vidal says that the "symbol of the future" strikes a "balance between recognition of the brand's heritage and entering a new era". It also seeks to accompany the changes at the marque, Vidal explains, as Renault expands further into the fields of electrification and wider mobility.

The black and white logo appears without any of the typography that has appeared on previous versions.



"We have rethought it to become more iconic, simple and meaningful, a true timeless signature," the designer adds. It will become an "essential part of our graphic heritage, "

The geometric logo "perfectly embodies the 'New Wave' era that Renault has entered", the designer explains.

He adds that the design is a call back to Renault's logos in the 1940s, 50s and 70s when the marque used a line to add detail to the logo.

The original mark that originated in 1920 had not had a major overhaul since 1992. The new flat logo comprises two intertwining diamond shapes which can be animated for digital media. It appears without a wordmark and can also be lit-up on vehicle grilles.

The new logo was designed in-house at Renault and hopes to meet the needs of a modern brand in a digital world, according to the brand's design director Gilles Vidal.

"With the line, it is a question of telling a story, that of a symbiosis, a cycle, a path between two lozenges which are intertwined by an optical effect, creating a complementarity and the impression of continuous movement," Vidal says.

By 2024, the entire Renault range of vehicles will bear the new logo, according to Vidal, and it will start to appear on vehicles from next year. The new logo can be seen on the grille of the Renault 5 prototype, where the headlights appear to echo the geometric design.

But would the Renault rebrand be such a success story if
a professional designer had not been involved?

A False economy?

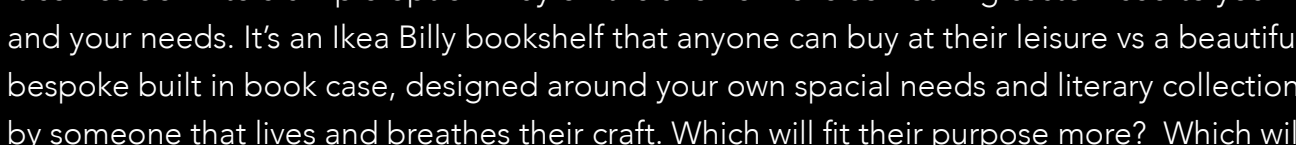
Most people have a vague notion of what graphic design is and what a graphic designer can do for their business.

When asked "what is graphic design for?", the answers you'll get will probably be something along the lines of creating logos for businesses, creating a poster for an event, or making magazine ads.

All of these answers are correct. Designers do all of these things — but they're only elements of a much bigger [beautifully designed] picture.

Businesses both large and small now have the option of choosing companies such as Fiver or 99 designs or even Wix for 'logo designs'. They all offer logos that are 'cheap' or 'affordable'. But what you may not know is that these are often templated designs with only slight changes to typography or small elements within the logo, or are created by people with no formal training or expertise. These designs are not tailored to you or your company in any shape or form. That means, somewhere, out there, someone else could have an almost identical logo to you.

It takes many years to not only learn the innumerable creative software that we designers need to use day to day, but it is really the creative thinking behind the finished result that takes time to hone and master. Think of the Fedex logo...have you ever noticed the directional arrow hidden within the 'E' and 'X' of the logo? (marked here in black).

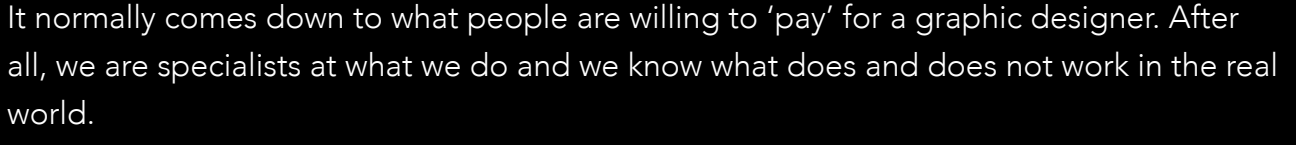


It is the designer's imagination teamed with skill that made this happen. This sort of intrinsic value cannot be simply taken from a list of drop-down menus and thrown together to create something that may be visually 'ok' ultimately does not tell a 'brand story'.

It comes down to a simple option. Buy off the shelf or have something customised to you and your needs. It's an Ikea Billy bookshelf that anyone can buy at their leisure vs a beautiful bespoke built in book case, designed around your own spacial needs and literary collection by someone that lives and breathes their craft. Which will fit their purpose more? Which will have a longer shelf life? Which will be more remarkable?

An example of my own work that rests on this ethos is Different Dog. A small dog food company based in Shropshire that required a rebrand to push their products into the mainstream. The process of design involved simple shapes and overlapping elements that combine to form an anthropomorphic dog character that also utilises the two D's within the name.

This is illustrated below:



Check out www.nineworthy.com for more inspo!

It normally comes down to what people are willing to 'pay' for a graphic designer. After all, we are specialists at what we do and we know what does and does not work in the real world.

Research by The Design Council in 2005 found companies that put an emphasis on design did way better than the ones that didn't. It determined that for every £100 a company spent on visual design, be it in marketing or a product or service, there was an increase of £225 in turnover. Since, various studies, such as this one, have shown the same thing. So good design is an investment that pays back.

A couple of other things to consider when deciding to
use, or not to use a graphic designer

First Impressions matter

Once you've lost one potential customer, it's much harder to get them back. Whether it's a website, a logo, or the content of an email signature, potential customers will judge a business in just a few seconds based on visual appeal alone. As they say, you only have one chance to make a first impression.

The long term

When businesses don't take graphic design seriously in the beginning, they will more than likely go through a design overhaul eventually—in some cases, more than once. Quality design, however, has longevity. Paying for great graphic design one time is far less expensive than paying for subpar design multiple times.

So the next time you (or your business) is reviewing the cost of quality graphic design and you flirt with the idea of doing it yourself, or cutting corners – remember that unique, effective and engaging graphic design comes at a price because it's worth it.

If you pay peanuts, you might just get monkeys! Messy business working with animals.

