

Three Dimensional Branding (Excerpt)

**The following is an excerpt from the Herman Miller Research Summary:
Three Dimensional Branding: Using Space as a Medium for the Message (2003).**

“The notion of branding an office environment may sound like an experimental concept, but in fact it has been practiced for years—at least on a limited scale. That’s why law offices look different from banks, banks look different from ad agencies, and ad agencies look different from high-tech start-ups.

Now, however, architects and designers are digging deeper, seeking ways to showcase how one law office, bank, or ad agency is different from all the others.

“Every built project should start with the intent to communicate the brand,” explains designer Kiku Obata of Kiku Obata & Company in St. Louis. “All elements that comprise a place—architecture, interiors, lighting, graphics, landscape—should be integrated to create an intuitive brand experience. This is not about applying the company logo as an afterthought. It is about branding in 3-D.”

The Case for 3-D Branding

For many companies, three-dimensional branding makes perfect sense. Their rationale? The physical space used to conduct business— whether a store, satellite office, or world headquarters—is simply too visible and costly an asset to leave out of the brand-building equation.

Consequently, if brand is the message, space should be viewed as a medium for getting it across—sort of like a huge, dynamic billboard or perhaps an especially ambitious extension of product packaging. After all, the decisions that go into creating a company’s physical environment—size, shape, materials, colors—share much in common with those that go into its packaging. Why, then, shouldn’t both play a role in communicating brand?

The fact is space does play a role—an unavoidable one. A company’s physical environment communicates a message whether intended or not. The only question is whether that message is carefully crafted to reinforce brand identity or left unattended to weaken it.

Another way to look at it: Based on other branding efforts, visitors bring certain expectations to the front door. What they see and experience inside will either validate or shake their preconceptions. If a company says it’s efficient, its workplace better be, too. If it boasts about being innovative, it better not be making do with outdated technology. And if it wants to be seen as the affordable alternative, it might want to keep expensive artwork to a minimum.

For the complete text of this research summary, please CONTACT Thomas Interior Systems.