

# PROBLEM SOLVED

How to recognize the nineteen recurring problems faced in  
design, branding and communication and how to solve them

MICHAEL JOHNSON



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Older brands, companies and countries can become so caught up in their past that it overtakes them. Only when faced with extinction do they realize that they need to challenge perceptions head on.

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Sometimes plain old flat, straight and normal isn't enough to get people to sit up and take notice. How can you create the illusion of something that isn't really there?

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The brief most professionals dread is the one that focuses on price. Dealing with a cheap 'n' cheerful message is tough, but communicating 'expensive' and 'exclusive' has as many pitfalls.

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It's the holy grail – an opportunity arrives in a marketplace where a big idea can really make a difference. But breaking out of the mould can be a difficult and frustrating process.

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It's the default setting of many creatives. There's no doubt that humour makes people warm to a person, a product, or an ad but can it get in the way of the real message?

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Communicators often resort to shock tactics to get their message across. But is it legitimate, and does it work? What if it's just shocking for shock's sake and has little to do with the actual product?

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Very few ideas, brands or identities survive unchanged forever, but it's often easier to evolve a brand than to revolutionize. How do you decide which is the right route?

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Some brands just don't appeal to a younger generation. So companies create new, 'junior' brands under assumed names and hope that no-one will notice. Does it work?

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We are subjected to thousands of marketing messages every day, but filter out all but the essential. So information has to be presented in a way that the public will absorb, not ignore.

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Can you make something seem like it's been around for ever, even when it hasn't? It helps if a product or service has legitimate heritage – but sometimes brands are created out of thin air. Does it work?

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Design and art direction sometimes gets in the way. Spent too long agonizing over a layout or picking a typeface? The viewer can often tell – try un-designing it.

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You'd expect the design profession to be infinitely varied, with new problems to solve every day. But often designers are faced with re-interpreting the same elements, over (and over) again.

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A creative may think they've come up with the best idea in the world. But that won't help when showing it to a client trying to second-guess their boss, or a manager who refers every design decision to their family.

## 266 WORDS

*The NOBODY READS ANYMORE problem*

The theory goes like this: ours is an increasingly visual culture, no-one's got time to read anymore. So stop writing lots of words and concentrate on the pictures. But is the theory right?

## 288 FLEXIBLE IDENTITY

*The ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL problem*

Identity design used to be simple: a new logo sat happily in the corner of an ad or a poster. But now we're in the midst of an explosion in brand designs that turn and twist, modulate and flex.

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