Using the Concept of Transvaluation in the Branding Process to Create Essential Stickiness - a case study of the launch of O, the Oprah Magazine: how embedding brand character changes the function of the product in the eyes of those who live the brand

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Using the concept of transvaluation in the branding process to create essential stickiness - a case study of the launch of O, the Oprah Magazine: how embedding brand character changes the function of the product in the eyes of those who live the brand

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Major: Graphic Design

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Using the Concept of Transvaluation in the Branding Process to Create Essential Stickiness

a case study of the launch of O, the Oprah Magazine: how embedding brand character changes the function of the product in the eyes of those who live the brand

Chapter 1

Introduction

Katherine McCoy asks, “How can user experience design create that essential stickiness, developing branded character rather than superficial veneer? This must be an organic, inside-out process, an outgrowth and culmination of intrinsic, embedded character to achieve any authentic brand identity. An integration of the designed product affordances and the user’s response, utilization, appreciation and participation creates an effective branded identity.” [McCoy 2006]

How can user experience design create essential stickiness? What is the difference between embedded brand character and superficial veneer?

Essential stickiness, the kind to which McCoy is referring, is different than the kind of stickiness Malcolm Gladwell discusses in his book The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference. [2002] Gladwell’s stickiness means memorable, something that makes a lasting impression. Any advertising campaign can be memorable and stick in our memories for decades, e.g. Wendy’s “Where’s the beef?” or the Maytag repairman. The essential purpose of these types of connections is to grab your attention. And if they are powerful enough, or repeated enough, they may stick in your memory. But these types of memorable moments will not necessarily make you love the product/service or business behind that product or service. The consequence of Gladwell’s type
of stickiness does not necessarily lead to premium pricing (see Figure 1) or for that matter create sustainable business value.

*Essential* stickiness, in industry, is the kind of memorable experience that, in the eyes of the consumer, transforms the value of something from the status of object (or commodity) to something that genuinely matters to that consumer. The consequence of essential stickiness is premium pricing, sustainable business value and customers as advocates. Creating essential stickiness requires either starting with or changing the function of a product/service in such a way that the value of that product/service is increased in the eyes of those who need or desire that product/service.

In his book *Beyond the Brillo Box*, Danto looks at works of art that began as simple objects from the real world and were transformed into artwork. He establishes that, in the end, it is the function of the work of art that determines its value. When the function changes, so does the value. Danto calls this concept of changing the value of art ‘transvaluation’. Danto uses Warhol’s *Brillo Box* and Duchamp’s *Fountain* to illustrate how artifacts from the real world, such as a Brillo box or a urinal, can transform into works of art. He says that by reappropriating the meanings of the artifacts, the artists were able to transform the artifacts into objects that embodied thought and content, which increased the value of these objects in the eyes of their audience. The objects no longer existed as objects of use, rather as the material embodiment of Warhol’s and Duchamp’s thoughts and values. [Danto 1998]
Another important concept that Danto offers is that simply putting objects from the real world on display in an art type setting does not change the value of the object. He uses the example of a museum director hanging an African net at the entrance of an African art exhibit as a way to connect the audience with the exhibit. The function of the net was to help link the viewer with the exhibit.

Danto says making the audience aesthetically responsive to an object does not transform the object into a work of art. There is a difference between art and artifact and the circumstance of display itself does not affect the value. By adding the net to the exhibit, the value of the net did not change. Its value only existed in that system, at that time, and in that space. In industry, one might say the net was a value added proposition. Whereas, the value of Warhol’s *Brillo Box* and Duchamp’s *Fountain* is in the broader social context in which the objects exist. The value of their artwork is in their social value. When the function of the object changed to an object that exists for the greater good of society (and the viewer/audience believes this), then the value changes and essential stickiness is created.

\[
\text{Object/commodity} + \text{social value} \triangleq \text{the function} = \text{essential stickiness}
\]

*Essential* stickiness connects the customer in deeply emotional ways, on all levels throughout the designed experience supply chain and changes the relationship between the product/organization and consumer [Brunner & Emery 2008].

User experience design creates essential stickiness by embedding social values via the brand into the commodity or business. Today, businesses are using the concept of ‘brand’ as a vehicle to create emotional bonds through holistic experiences, which adds
value to their product or service through the brand’s intangible rewards. These brands are more meaningful and more difficult to imitate, but harder to deliver because they require integrating the brand values into all of the internal and external actions of the organization (refer Figure 2). Building a great brand requires a commitment to align a company’s business with its external expressions and its internal culture [Wheeler 2003]. This type of commitment does not come from or begin with the marketing department or an in-house design department. It begins with the vision or direction set by the CEO. He or she decides whether to establish a business where all aspects of the organization are aligned or driven by the brand and whether the essential purpose of the business is wealth creation or social cohesion (for the greater good of society) [Meads & Sharma 2008].

In their 2008 study *The Socio-Cultural Role of Brand in Business Value Creation*, Meads and Sharma introduce the brand system model (see Figure 3) which illustrates how the brand vision directed by the CEO and C-level executives, creates the essential
purpose of the business (the vision); which is sustained and balanced by the emergent culture, and results in a cumulative story. On the surface their discussion focuses on how the essential purpose (or vision) determines whether the brand will create sustainable business value in the eyes of the consumer. On another level the study confirms that if all aspects of the organization are aligned and driven by the brand an authentic story about those brand values will be told.

In the Fall of 1998, Ellen Levine, then the editor-in-chief of *Good Housekeeping* (a magazine published by Hearst Magazine), approached Oprah Winfrey about transferring the synergy of her very successful talk-show into a magazine. Other publishing companies had approached Winfrey, but in June of 1999, magazine mogul Hearst won the battle when Winfrey signed on, after Ellen Kunes convinced her to go into print media. Kunes, O’s first editor-in-chief, said “what we need to offer is a personal-growth guide for women for the 21st century.” [Granatstein 2000]

From the beginning, Hearst Magazine and Harpo Productions hoped to produce a magazine with a vision rooted in social value while redefining the conventional magazine formula by trying to create more meaningful connections between the reader and the magazine. Under the direction of Hearst appointees, Ellen Levine, the person responsible for developing the editorial content and design of the new magazine, and Ellen Kunes, the editor-in-chief, a plan for the magazine’s “personal growth” focus and a strategy for translating the magazines’ function ‘Live Your Best Life’ was developed. They formulated a magazine in new and unconventional ways by adding things like “portable inspiration” quotations, journal-like writing exercises and good-deed checklists. It appeared as though the joint partnership had all it needed to create a magazine with the kind of essential stickiness that would transform the magazine from a commodity into something that truly mattered to its reader (audience).
Yet, in the case study that follows, an analysis of the voice and visual language of
the magazine discovers that within the first few months of publication, under the direction
of Hearst Magazine, the values of the Oprah brand were not embedded into the designed
product affordances. Rather, senior management at Hearst relied on Oprah (not her val-
ues) to link the reader with the magazine. The voice and visual language in the premiere
issue, screamed “This magazine is Oprah’s and she is the queen of talk”. Winfrey was a
value added proposition.

To those outside the Oprah brand, the magazine probably looked and felt like
Oprah. But having the ‘look and feel’ of something does not create meaningful connec-
tions. As Danto points out, the circumstance of display itself does not affect the value
[Danto 1998]. Creating essential stickiness requires embedding brand values, the intangi-
ble rewards, into the product, service or organization. What truly matters to those inside
the Oprah brand are her values, not the fact that she is a very popular talk-show host.

By July 2000, (three months after the first issue hit the newsstands) there was a
change in senior management. Harpo appointed Amy Gross, a fashion magazine veteran,
as editor-in-chief. By December 2000, (six months after the first issue hit the newsstand)
small changes in the voice and visual language of the magazine told a different story. The
case study that follows will show that the changes were minute, hardly noticeable, but
focused on embedding the essence of the Oprah brand into the voice and visual language
of the magazine and the essential purpose for which that brand exists.

Within today’s business climate, simply designing, building and managing assets
or communication channels is no longer enough to create lasting connections with today’s
consumer. The process of branding has evolved to include the integration of embed-
ded brand character into the sum total of the user’s experiences and interactions with the message, the product or service and the business itself. The brand is no longer just representative as an identifier of product but now is representative of the business [Meads & Sharma 2008]. Lord Browne, CEO of BP, takes the concept of brand one step further. He says that the brand is about “the values that underpin everything that you do and every relationship that you have.” [Wheeler 2003] Today brand management goes beyond managing assets to synergizing the brand throughout the organization. [Meads & Sharma 2008]

“In a branding best-practices study conducted in 1995, two-thirds of senior executives interviewed stated that the single greatest threat to the future health of their brand was senior management’s lack of understanding what their brand stood for.” S.M. Davis, Brand Asset Management for the 21st Century Study (Chicago: Kuczmarski & Associates, 1995). And in Prophet’s 2002 Best Practices study, 45 percent of the respondents still considered senior management’s lack of understanding of the brand to be a threat [Davis & Dunn 2002].

Therefore, if the c-level executives do not have a clear understanding of what the brand stands for, the emergent business culture will result in a different, or (as in this case study of O, the Oprah Magazine), the wrong story being told.

This study seeks to discover how to create essential stickiness. Along the way it hopes to gain a better understanding of the difference between superficial veneer (an artifact) and embedded brand character; how to translate brand values into actions; and whether there is a formula for embedding something that is intangible (values or abstract thoughts) into something tangible (the message, product or service). This study will look at the concept of transvaluation in the fine art world and will attempt to draw on this
process as a model that demonstrates how changing the function of a product/service can lead to sustainable business value creation (or essential stickiness). It will begin by looking at the difference between art and artifact, with regards to value creation and how the circumstance of display itself does not affect the value [Danto 1998]. The case study that follows looks at how *O, the Oprah Magazine* changed from a magazine with the ‘look and feel’ of Oprah (superficial veneer) to a vessel that embodies the abstract values of the Oprah brand.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Embedding brand character must be an organic, inside-out process

Embedding brand character into the sum total of the user’s experience with the product/service or business itself must happen from inside the organization. It is an inside-out process that is driven from the top and embedded in the business culture of the organization. The business/product is brand-driven, which means the business and the brand are developed simultaneously. The focus is on creating holistic experiences, internally and externally, in the lives of those who live the brand.

John Moore begins by explaining that, with regards to Starbucks Coffee, it was all about building a business that focused on the coffee and the experience; it was never about building a brand. They built the brand on the inside, in the thoughts and actions of their employees and in the development of the product. “As David Packard, cofounder of Hewlett-Packard, once said, ‘Marketing is too important to be left to the marketing department.’ Marketing, though a distinct department within the company, is still a part of everyone’s job, a part of everything the company does. Starbucks has ‘baked’ marketing into its business by weaving passion for its product in everything it does.” [Moore 2006]

Outwardly Starbucks built the brand by creating coffee-centered experiences or ‘moments.’ “Everything about the Starbucks experience marketed the Starbucks business: the coffee in the iconic white logo cup; the personal interaction between a customer and a Starbucks barista; the plush chairs, the in-store color scheme (all themed to reflect the four stages of the roasting story: growth/greens, roast/browns and reds, brew/blues and aroma/pastels); the music playing overhead; the welcoming smell of the coffee; and the feeling customers had during their Starbucks ‘moment’.” [Moore 2006]
Over time it becomes hard to distinguish between the brand, the product or the experience, because the brand becomes embedded in the products.

Leander Kahney wrote, “Marketer Marc Gobe, author of Emotional Branding and principal of d/g worldwide, said Apple’s brand is the key to its survival. It’s got nothing to do with innovative products like the iMac or the iPod. ‘Without the brand, Apple would be dead,’ he said. ‘Absolutely. Completely. The brand is all they’ve got. The power of their branding is all that keeps them alive. It’s got nothing to do with products.’” [Kahney 2002]

Gobe separates Apple products from the Apple brand, which is difficult to do in an arena driven by a brand, because the product/business, the brand and the experience are one. Apple develops innovative and simple products for people who want innovative and simple things, and they market them through innovative and simple experiences. Guided by the values of innovation and simplicity, a system is set up that strives to achieve these values in the behaviors throughout the whole organization. “These values are implicit in the culture, which facilitates agreement to achieve common objectives, align values and engender group motivation.” [Meads & Sharma 2008]

Because the brand is developed simultaneously as the business is developed and woven into the culture of the organization, over time it becomes difficult to separate the brand from the products. The brand character becomes embedded into the some total of the user’s experience with the product/service or business itself.

Embedding brand character differs from developing Brand Identity
Embedding brand character (or brand values) into the sum total of the user’s experience is an inside-out process and differs from the process of developing Brand Identity. The purpose for developing Brand Identity is to mark ownership, while differentiating the product or business from the competition.

Dr. Robert Sevier, Vice President for Research and Marketing for Stamats Communications, says the relevance of a brand goes in two directions: towards the outside, as a link between the product (or service) and the consumer, and towards the inside to help boost the members commitment to the product. [Schudel 2006]

Defining a brand as a mark of ownership or a link, focuses on communicating (whether outside or inside) the product’s value add (or in other words, the tangible product and its advantages and/or attributes). Thought of in this respect allows the process of developing the brand to occur outside the organization and limits the opportunity for the business/product and brand to develop simultaneously.

Currently the business arena accepts the notion that the process of developing a brand can lie outside the organization. In her book Designing Brand Identity, Alina Wheeler says that most brands are developed by outside design firms. These firms have “the experience, staffing and qualifications to develop new branding strategies.” [Wheeler 2003]

Today, as in the past, many in industry get the process of ‘focusing on the brand’ confused with developing advertising campaigns. For the most part, they believe that the brand is owned by the advertising agency or design firm and the freshly minted MBA, who’s true interest is in making his mark on the brand before he/she moves on to another assignment in eighteen months [Davis & Dunn 2002]. This is certainly one of the
drawbacks of outsourcing brand development to outside firms or agencies. This also, perpetuates the concept that the brand is the advertising icon (like the Maytag repairman or the Marlboro cowboy) or a logo (like the Nike Swoosh) or a tagline (like “Where’s the Beef?”), and so on [Davis & Dunn 2002]. The organization starts to define the brand as the tangible outcome or the communication channel – the brand becomes an artifact.

Defining a brand as a link and allowing it to be created on the outside or confusing a memorable advertising campaign with branding perpetuates the concept of the brand as an artifact. “An artifact implies a system of means and its use ... is its meaning.” [Danto 1998] Artifacts are shaped by their function. In this sense, the brand would not exist without the product and the brand will always be an artifact. Where as, in the broader social context, character or values exist with or without industry. Embedding brand character is not about making something ‘look and feel’ better or reiterating its tangible rewards. Embedding brand character, (or the values that underpin everything the organization does), is about integrating the intangible rewards of that organization into every relationship the organization has.

In the end, businesses/products that are driven by their brand could be said to have double identities. They exist not only because they are objects of use (or of industry), but also they are objects of use with broader social value. Examples of these types of organizations/brands might be Apple, Starbucks Coffee, IKEA, etc. Put another way, they are vessels that embody the thoughts and actions of those who live the brand – the ‘spiritual meaning’. The term spiritual meaning combines Hegel’s definition of art as the Absolute Spirit (where art gives material embodiment to spiritual content) and Danto’s definition of a work of art (to embody thought, to have content and to express meaning). Spiritual meaning is the abstract thought and content that the creator is trying to express at the time he/she produces a work of art. With regards to the Brand-driven product/business, spiri-
tual meaning is the essential purpose which the business ultimately seeks to contribute to society through the production of the product. “Businesses do not exist in a vacuum but interact with larger society [Mecroft, Sanchez & Heene (2002)].” [Meads & Sharma 2008]

Brand-driven products/ businesses have double identities. These organizations produce objects of use and vessels that contain spiritual meaning. These products and organizations exist in a broader social context and tell a more holistic story, which in the end can add more value to the product/business, opens the door for premium pricing and sustainable business value.

From Formula to Transvaluation

The value of a product is embedded in the tangible and the intangible. Business models and formulas work well for developing and producing tangible products, the object of use, but fail when trying to prescribe a formula or process for the intangible - the spiritual meaning.

In his book, The Future Beyond Brands, Lovemarks, Kevin Roberts, CEO Worldwide, Saatchi & Saatchi, says brands are out of juice. Brands are worn out from overuse and are no longer mysterious. [Roberts 2005]

Roberts says brands have been captured by formula. “I lose patience with the wanna-be science of brands. The definitions, the charts, tables and diagrams. There are
too many people following the same rulebook. When everybody tries to beat differentia-
tion in the same way, nobody gets anywhere. You get row upon row of what I call ‘brand-
diods.’ Formulas can’t deal with human emotion. Formulas have no imagination or 
empathy.” [Roberts 2005]

Where better to look for models of imagination and empathy than in the fine art world. As addressed earlier in this study (page 2) Danto establishes that, in the end, it is the function of the work of art that determines the value. When the function changes, so does the value. Danto calls this concept ‘transvaluation’. By reappropriating the meanings of artifacts into objects that embody thought and content the artists are able to increase the value of the objects in the eyes of their audience. Rather than thinking of the brand as a link, or trying to explain the process of branding in a chart or diagram, maybe looking at how the artist is able to transform objects into the material embodiment of their abstract thought will preserve the imagination and empathy that should go along with the branding process.

The goal of embedding brand character in the sum total of the users experience with the product/service or business is not to aesthetically link consumers with products/services or organization, but rather to use the product/business to link the consumer with the broader social values. As in the artwork of Warhol and Duchamp, the value of the brand is in their social value and in their ability to create lasting connections with their audiences.

Simply designing, building and managing brand assets is no longer enough to create lasting connections with today’s consumer. The process of branding has evolved to include the integration of embedded brand character into the sum total of the user’s experiences and interactions with the message, the product/service and the business itself.
The brand no longer represents the business, the brand is the business. Like Duchamp’s urinal and Warhol’s Brillo Box, these objects do not represent the artist’s values, they are the material embodiment of the artist’s spirit.

Like an artist, the CEO is responsible for setting the organization’s direction. He or she decides whether to establish a business where all aspects of the organization are aligned or driven by the brand and whether that vision will be based in value add (the rational/tangible level of value creation) or social value (the emotional/intangible value creation) [Meads & Sharma 2008].

The Brand System Model (Figure 3) shows that the brand vision, directed by the CEO and c-level executives, creates the essential purpose of the business; which is sustained and balanced by the emergent culture, and results in a cumulative story. [Meads & Sharma 2008]

Whereas the Brand System Social Value Scale Model (Figure 5) emphasizes how
coherent and consistent delivery of vision-to-value builds a strong brand on coherent stories of reputation and trust. The growth spiral from the extrapolated brand system of vision-culture-story steers toward the resultant level of social brand value. The lowest social level aligns to the rational (tangible) level of value creation, and the highest degree of social value aligns with the system’s emotional (intangible) value creation level. The higher the level of social value, the more permanent and sustainable the intangible brand value created. [Meads & Sharma 2008]

This model demonstrates the vision rooted in a broader social context can transform the value of the organization/brand in the eyes of those who live the brand.

**Vision - culture - story – in the end what story is being told?**

An organization’s strategic direction comes from the CEO. From this direction, C-level executives determine a brand vision and develop a culture that results in a cumulative story [Meads & Sharma 2008]. With a business/product that is driven by the brand, the brand is developed simultaneously as the business is developed and is woven into the culture of the organization; over time it becomes difficult to separate the brand from the business/product. The brand is the business.

“The within great branded companies, all employees clearly understand what their brand’s promise is and what role they need to play in bringing that promise to life. This understanding allows each employee to know what decisions or actions reinforce the brand or denigrate the brand relative to their day-to-day responsibilities [Davis & Dunn 2002].” The challenge in industry is to get all employees to work in a cohesive and consistent way to support the brand and its promise [Davis & Dunn 2002].
In the next three Brand System Value Scale Models (Figures 6 - 8), Meads & Sharma show that simply having a vision rooted in social value does not automatically produce a business culture that will tell a story that supports that vision. This does not mean that the story being told is not authentic. On the contrary, the thoughts and actions of the emergent business culture is telling an authentic story about the values of the organization. The question becomes whether the essential purpose of the business is authentically reflected in the vision prescribed by the CEO.

Meads and Sharma ethnographic research was conducted on three New Zealand businesses: Pacific Aerospace Corporation, Zespri International and Navman New Zealand. They studied each business with regards to their brand values, how these values were projected and if the values were in the form of tangible or intangible rewards.

In the study, they described the vision of the Managing Director for Pacific Aerospace Corporation (PAC) as “strategic opportunistic”. “PAC employees speak in abstract and non-emotive words and phrases - *proprietary intellectual property, maintain, continuous improvement*. Meanwhile it imbues all need-driven benefits with brand values such as ‘simple’, ‘robust’, and ‘cost-effective’, showing little sensitivity toward intangible benefits. The brand values are thus not reflective in the abstract words about intellectual property vision.” In the end, Meads and Sharma determined that while the vision aspires higher toward “product and service leadership,” the company’s overall story aligns towards wealth creation (Figure 6). “This disconnect demonstrates how PAC’s brand values are all tangible ones and do not align with a vision that is more intangible.” [Meads and Sharma 2008]

Meads and Sharma found that ZESPRI International had a CEO with a highly
strategic vision. (Figure 7) “ZESPRI employees speak in emotive terms of “being number one”, “the preferred choice”, “the leader”, “at the forefront”, and “respected”. ZESPRI International’s brand values of “good food, good life” have multiple meanings. The
vision is intangible and almost aligns to the intangible value...” In the end Meads and Sharma determined that the strategic direction of ZESPRI International is brand-driven, which develops a brand-committed culture, where a common understanding of the concept of brand aligns peoples behavior around the brand values. “Employees understand the meaning of the brand and align their behaviors around its values instinctively and naturally, perpetuating the brand-driven culture. ZESPRI International’s brand vision and story resonate toward’s ‘corporate social leadership’. ” [Meads and Sharma 2008]

On the other hand, Navman New Zealand was founded by Peter Maire, a “dynamic” visionary. Employees speak of the organization’s vision coming first and use patriotic and quantifiable tangible terms such as “New Zealand-based” and “billion-dollar revenue”. Although the business was founded on the core value of innovation, it is united around the vision and tangible goal of becoming the first billion-dollar electronic company in New Zealand. In the end, Meads and Sharma determined that while the corporate vision aspires towards “product and service leadership,” the story told by the emerging
business culture aligns with ‘consumer protection.’ (Figure 8). [Meads and Sharma 2008]

In these three models we see that the CEO creates the essential purpose of the business (the vision); which is sustained and balanced by the emergent culture, and results in a cumulative story. For the purposes of this study, these models demonstrate that, in the end, an authentic story emerges. Whether the brand is used for wealth creation or social cohesion is decided more in the business culture created by the CEO and senior management and not in the prescribed vision. In the end, the thoughts and actions of the employees will tell the story of the organization’s brand values and essential purpose.

**Vision - culture - story at O, the Oprah Magazine**

From the beginning, redefining the conventional magazine formula by trying to create a more emotional connection between the reader and the magazine was the goal of senior management at O, the Oprah Magazine. But under Hearst’s direction, the cumulative story told in the voice and visual language in the first three months was different from the story told in the next five years (after a switch in senior management). Either senior management did not understand what the Oprah brand stood for and the intangible rewards that it promises to those who live the brand, or the vision that Hearst Magazine had for O, the Oprah Magazine did not align with that of Harpo Productions. Later, in March 2001, an article written by Noreen O’Leary for Mediamark, Cathy Black, president of Hearst Magazine, shares, that in the end, the essential purpose that the joint partners had for producing the magazine differed. “Winfrey’s philosophy provides inspiration and aspiration. ‘We’ve just capitalized on what she stands for.’” The business culture that emerged in the Hearst-driven phase of the magazine told a story that conflicted with the vision for the magazine. For Hearst, the essential purpose behind producing O, the Oprah Magazine was rooted in wealth creation.
A vision based on Changing the World is more valuable

We begin by developing the brand from the inside. Stop thinking of the brand as a link, but rather as the spiritual meaning behind the organization. Understand that if all the thoughts and actions of the employees are aligned with the spirit/vision, which is directed by the CEO, than a culture centered around that vision will emerge and an authentic story will be told. If that vision is rooted in social value than the value of the organization, its products and services becomes more valuable to those who live the brand (or share those values).

According to Caroline A.A. Meads, the Global Brand Design Manager for Holcim Group Support Ltd, businesses that exist in a broader social context tell a more holistic story and create brands that in the eyes of their customers have more value. John Moore, in his book *Tribal Knowledge* refers to the concept of broader social context as ‘change the world’. “There is only one worthwhile reason to start a new business or launch a new product, and that is to change the world.”

Meads and Moore agree that beginning with visions rooted in social value and developing business cultures or “tribes”, (a term Moore uses to describe business culture) that revolve around that value, tell a more valuable story to the customer. Starbucks passionately sought to create an appreciation for a better cup of coffee, and in the process they created a brand. The process was simultaneous, an organic, inside-out process, that resulted in authentic brand character embedded in the sum total of the user’s experience.

“Businesses do not exist in a vacuum but interact with larger society [Morecroft, Sanchez & Heene (2002)]. This ‘whole system view of value’ integrates business and
economic models with ‘the fabric of society and the web of life’ [Allee (2003)]. In other terms, purely meeting the needs of the market is no longer sufficient in itself – business must be good corporate citizens and participate in adding value to greater society [Hilton (2003)]. Purposeful systems are value-guided systems, where the values are what the purposeful behaviors strive to achieve. These values are implicit in the culture, which facilitates agreement to achieve common objectives, align values and engender group motivation.” [Meads & Sharma 2008]

Vision and the emergent concept of ‘brand’ are united through culture in a purposeful system. The vision creates essential purpose and is sustained and balanced by culture. The values guiding culture can be determined from the extent of internalization of the values. Thus the concept of ‘brand’ comprised of vision, culture and story may be visualized as a social-purposeful system that is reinforced and balancing. A living brand is a collaborative performance and every person in the business is an actor. Aligning the vision and the culture through the values brings the ‘brand’ to life [Interbrand (2005)]. When enough individuals arrive at the same ‘gut feeling’, a business may be said to have a ‘brand’ [Neumeier (2003)]. Reinforced over time, people instinctively begin to live the brand [Davis & Dunn (2002)].

By embedding brand character into the product/service, the product or service will take on a double identity; it is an object of use and a vessel that contains the spirit and vision of the organization, and in the end, they will tell a more holistic story. When the vision of the organization is rooted in social value, the story told becomes more valuable to the consumer because it is the personal connection with these values that the consumer is purchasing. The goal should be to use the product to connect the consumer with the broader social values.
How do we create that essential stickiness and embed brand character into the user’s experiences with the organization and its products and services?

This study began with the intentions of discovering how to put a brand into action and found along the way that the single greatest threat to a brand-driven organization is senior management’s lack of understanding what the brand stands for. From the beginning, redefining the conventional magazine formula by trying to create a more emotional connection between the reader and the magazine was the goal of senior management at *O, the Oprah magazine*. But under Hearst’s direction, because either senior management did not understand what the Oprah brand stood for and its intangible rewards; or the vision that Hearst Magazine had for *O, the Oprah Magazine* didn’t actually align with that of Harpo Productions; the cumulative story told in the voice and visual language was different from the story told after a switch in senior management. This study will show that after the switch a more holistic story was told within the editorial content and design of the magazine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Values of the Hearst-driven and Harpo-driven Phases at <em>O, the Oprah Magazine</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearst Magazine (the Hearst-driven Phase)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen of Talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual defined as saintly or religious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguous and Vague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic, Cold and Edgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animated</td>
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</tbody>
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Chapter 3

Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative research approach with a case study as its strategic process of inquiry. Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretative and includes analyzing data for themes or categories and making interpretations or drawing conclusions about its meaning, personally and theoretically, stating the lessons learned and offering questions to be asked.

The Case Study of *O, the Oprah Magazine*

The single greatest threat to an organization trying to align all of its actions around their brand is senior management’s lack of understanding what the brand stands for. For the most part the first issue of *O, the Oprah Magazine* has the same components as the sixth issue. The changes that are going to be addressed are:

- Minor
- Happened in the first six months of publication
- Endured until January 2005.

The following case study involves a comparison of issues Number 1, 2 & 6 of the first Volume, as well as, data gathered from articles written on the launch of *O, the Oprah Magazine*.

The belief is that through an analysis of the magazine’s semiotics and semantical language as well as the preverbal, subverbal and subconscious experiences, changes can be identified that resulted in a more authentic translation of the Oprah brand within the pages of *O, the Oprah Magazine*. This will then help us gain a better understanding of what embedded brand character is, and how the editors and designers at *O, the Oprah*
Magazine were able to translate their brand into action.

This study uses Danto’s concept of transvaluation from the fine art world and Meads and Sharma’s study on the socio-cultural role of the brand in business value creation to answer McCoy’s question - how can designers embed brand character into the sum total of the users experiences with the product?

Meads and Sharma answer McCoy’s question from the perspective of business/industry using their Brand System Social Value Scale Model; while Danto answers the question from the perspective of the fine art world. Each using a slightly different vocabulary to tell very similar stories. To understand this study, one must be aware that the following parallels have been made:

- McCoy’s superficial veneer and Danto’s definition of an artifact are similar.
- McCoy’s embedded brand character and Danto’s definition of a work of art with double identities are similar.
- McCoy’s essential stickiness and Meads and Sharma’s sustainable business value are similar.

This study finds parallels within the following concepts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study or Author</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Embedded Brand Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McCoy</td>
<td>Superficial Veneer</td>
<td>Embedded Brand Character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danto’s Process of Transvaluation</td>
<td>Artifact</td>
<td>material embodiment of intangible values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meads and Sharma</td>
<td>Tangible, rational, value add</td>
<td>Intangible, emotional, social value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O, the Oprah Magazine</td>
<td>May/June 2000 Hearst-driven phase</td>
<td>July/August 2000 Transitioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>December 2000 Harpo-driven phase</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Scope of Research**

In order to narrow my focus the following decisions were made:
1. This thesis begins with the assumption that integrating branded character into products and services will make the users experience richer and more meaningful. It does not attempt to define the target audience of *O, the Oprah Magazine* or whether the experiences of this audience was/is richer with the brand character of Oprah embedded into the voice and visual language of the magazine.

2. The case study of *O, the Oprah Magazine* was narrowed to three issues produced from May/June 2000 to December 2000 - numbers 1, 2 & 6 of the first Volume.

3. This study breaks *O, the Oprah Magazine* into two phases, the Hearst-driven Phase and the Harpo-driven Phase. The decision to separate the magazine into two phases is based on:
   a. data collected from articles written between 1999 to 2003
   b. on the changes identified in the voice and visual language of the magazine.

4. From the beginning, redefining the conventional magazine formula by trying to create more emotional connections between the reader and the magazine was the goal of this magazine. A plan for the magazine’s “personal growth” focus and a strategy for translating the magazines’ function ‘Live Your Best Life’ was developed. The editors and designers at *O, the Oprah Magazine* formulated the magazine in new and unconventional ways, adding things like “portable inspiration” quotations, journal-like writing exercises and good-deed checklists.

5. The focus of this study is to gain a better understanding of what an embedded brand character is, and how the editors and designers at *O, the Oprah Magazine* were able to translate the Oprah brand into action. It should be noted that *O, the Oprah Magazine* has been successful and continues to thrive. In a March 2001 article titled “*O Positive*” for *Mediaweek*, Noreen O’Leary sum-
marizes the success to date (March 2001). For Hearst and Winfrey’s Harpo Entertainment, the business opportunity “has become nothing less than awesome. With little advance marketing, the initial newsstand issue of 1.6 million virtually sold out. It didn’t take long for 1.9 million subscribers to sign up, and at Christmas another 420,000 gift subscriptions rolled in. Advertisers lined up as well, with the book carrying 905 ad pages in its six issues for 2000. O’s initial conservative rate base of 500,000 has already been increased to 1.3 million and, with the July issue, it will go up again, to 1.9 million….. In the last half of 2000, O averaged more than 1.2 million single-copy sales.” [O’Leary 2001] This happened at a time when other celebrity branded magazines had either run their course or ceased to exist. In a February 2003 article written for *Folio: the Magazine for Magazine Management*, Simon Dumenco gives us his thoughts on the subject. “I’ve been thinking about O lately because we’re supposedly in a post-celebrity-branded-magazine era. The (painful) memory of Rosie is slowly fading, Martha Stewart Living continues to wobble, and Martha’s Everyday Food spin-off has launched with her name and image largely absent from the packaging. And yet O thrives.” [Dumenco 2003]

**This case study:**

- Ends with the January 2005 issue.
- Found that the function of the magazine did not change.
- Analyses changes in the voice and visual language of the magazine.
- Found most changes occurred in the first six months of publication, (May/June 2000 issue - December 2000)
- Focuses on changes that sustained through (and possibly beyond) the January 2005 issue.
- In some situations, changes occurred after December 2000, but these changes
were within the subset of the section broached.

- Besides the magazine itself, this study analyzed data from articles and reviews, published from 1999 – 2005. This data focused on the direction of the magazine, interviews with key players (c-level executives) and critiques of the editorial content and design.

This study identifies seven areas within the magazine that changed from May 2000 to December 2000. These changes, although small, sustained until at least January 2005. The discussion that follows attempts to illustrate how the editors at *O, the Oprah Magazine* changed the voice and visual language of the magazine so that the thoughts and values of the Oprah brand were embedded in the pages in the magazine.

Parts of *O, the Oprah Magazine* that changed from May 2000 to December 2000

1. Photos of Oprah
2. The cover photo
3. The Month’s Mission
4. The Table of Contents – divided into two categories
   a. Voice
   b. Visual language
5. The ‘O Calendar’ divided into three categories
   a. Hierarchal positioning
   b. The format
   c. The formula
6. The ‘O Interview’
7. The magazine as a whole
   a. Larger Photos
   b. More Expressive Typography
   c. A Kibosh to corny Illustrations.
   d. Illusion and Constructed Realities
Ethical Considerations

It must be said that this author knows Winfrey only through her brand – television show, magazine, website, books, movies, and current research. Because of this, it would be impossible to say what the core values and attributes of the Oprah brand are. Yet an analysis of data for themes concluded that from the perspective of Harpo productions, the Oprah brand is based on the following values:

- Tell the truth without hype
- Create a sense of connectedness that crosses all age, race and class lines
- Honor the spirit of every individual.
Chapter 4

Case Study

How important is understanding what the brand stands for with regards to the external message?

The Transvaluation of O, the Oprah Magazine

At the time of this study, O, the Oprah Magazine was (and still is) a joint venture between Hearst Magazine and Winfrey’s company, Harpo Productions (Harpo Entertainment Group). In the beginning, Hearst was responsible for producing and developing the magazine, which included development of the editorial content and design. After three months of publication there was a shift in senior management. The outgrowth of this shift is evident in changes in the voice and visual language of the magazine. In March 2001, Cathy Black, president of Hearst Magazine, concedes that in the end, the essential purpose for Hearst to produce O, the Oprah Magazine was based in wealth creation. “Winfrey’s philosophy provides inspiration and aspiration. ‘We’ve just capitalized on what she stands for.’” [O’Leery 2001]

From the beginning, Hearst and Harpo agreed on the vision of the magazine - a self-help guide to help women live their best life. Yet an analysis of the preverbal, subverbal and subconscious messages discovered that the story told in the premiere issue of the magazine was different from the story told in the magazine eight months later.

On the surface, the formula and content of the magazine appears to be identical, just as Warhol’s Brillo Boxes appeared to be identical to the Brillo boxes on the supermarket shelves in 1960. Yet below the surface, the function of the magazine changed. A transformation occurred, changing the magazine from an object of use to an object with
double identities or dual functions – both an object of use and the material embodiment of the Oprah brand.

The belief is that in the first few months of publication, after a change in management, the magazine went through the same transvaluation process that Danto claims Warhol’s *Brillo Box* and Duchamp’s *Fountain* went through after the artists reappropriated the meanings of the objects. The belief is that just as Duchamp and Warhol changed the meaning of a Brillo box and urinal, the new senior management at *O, the Oprah Magazine* reappropriated the meaning/function of the magazine. The magazine was no longer simply a self-help guide for 21st century women, but a self-help guide for 21st century women that told the truth without hype, created a sense of connectedness without regard to their age, race or social class, and honors who they are as an individual, independent of traditional, mainstream or conventional beliefs.

This study found that by the December 2000 issue of *O, the Oprah Magazine*, the intangible rewards of the Oprah brand were embedded in the pages of the magazine, changing the value of the magazine in the eyes of those who live the brand and giving them a more holistic experience. More holistic experiences adds value and opens doors to premium pricing and sustainable business value.

From the beginning, Hearst and Harpo agreed on the vision of the magazine, but when the editorial content and design was directed by senior management appointed by Hearst, the story told did not reflect the spirit or values of the Oprah brand, but rather used Winfrey as a link (or artifact) and defined her as the ‘Queen of Talk’. Hearst knew how to produce and develop a new magazine; they simply did not have a clear understanding as to what the Oprah brand stood for. (See Appendix 1 - Background Information)
From object of use to object of use with embedded brand values

1. Photos of Oprah – the Queen of Talk

The premiere issue of *O, the Oprah Magazine* has seventeen photos of Winfrey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May/June 2000 (Hearst-driven Phase)</th>
<th>July/August 2000 (Transition)</th>
<th>December 2000 (Harpo-driven Phase)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Photos of Winfrey 17</td>
<td>Total Photos of Winfrey 15</td>
<td>Total Photos of Winfrey 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First oprah.com Ad (4 photos)</td>
<td>‘Your Opinions’</td>
<td>‘We Hear You’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Let’s Talk’ (2 photos)</td>
<td>‘Let’s Talk’</td>
<td>‘Here We Go’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second oprah.com Ad</td>
<td>Oprah’s Personal Growth</td>
<td>First oprah.com Ad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summits Ad</td>
<td>Summits Ad</td>
<td>‘O Interview’ intro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘O Interview’ (3 photos)</td>
<td>Healthy 4 2000 (2 photos)</td>
<td>‘O Interview’ (2 photos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscribe to O Insert (2 photos)</td>
<td>‘O Interview’ intro</td>
<td>Subscribe to O Insert (3 photos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature Article: Books That</td>
<td>‘O Interview’ (2 photos)</td>
<td>Second oprah.com Ad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made a Difference</td>
<td>Feature Article: Guess Their</td>
<td>‘What I Know For Sure’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘What I Know For Sure’</td>
<td>“Real” Ages</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Subscribe to O Insert (2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>oprah.com Ad</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘What I Know For Sure’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Six of these photos are in three advertisements, (two ads for oprah.com and one for Oprah’s Personal Growth Summit). Within the magazine industry, it is common practice to have the advertiser submit finished art to the magazine. With that being said, it is safe to say that Hearst probably wasn’t involved in the photo or art direction of these images.
Generally speaking, the magazine itself is not involved in the development, design or production of the advertisement. Comparing the three images of Winfrey interviewing Camille Cosby, which were directed by Hearst, to the six found in the advertisements the following discoveries were made:

- In the three of Winfrey interviewing Camille Cosby - Winfrey is engaged in conversation (the Queen of Talk) but she is never touching Camille Cosby. In fact, of the nine photos that in all likelihood were directed by Hearst, Oprah is never physically engaged, touching, or connected to another person.

- In the four images in the oprah.com advertisement (Figure 10): three out of the four images show Oprah engaged and physically connected. Oprah is squeezing Dr. Phil’s hand in a sort of ‘I’m with ya buddy’ fashion, high-fiving an adolescent at some sort of rally and communing with a group of young women.
Oprah is physically engaged, touching and connected to individuals and other women. Effectively emulating one of the values of the Oprah brand - creating a sense of connectedness that crosses all age, race and class lines.

Three other images in this premiere issue attempt to show Winfrey in a moment or an instant. Yet of these, none defines her environment nor give a clue as to the situation with which the viewer may be interrupting. Because of this, the interruption is not authentic but fake, which does not tell the truth about the moment. To tell the truth without hype is one of values of the Oprah brand.

In this premiere issue, Winfrey tells the reader that the magazine is about spirit. The last photo of Winfrey in this issue (Figure 15) appears to be an attempt to put the intangible concept of ‘spirit’ into something tangible. The angle at which the photo is shot, Winfrey appears to be floating, which could be interpreted as in the clouds, (once again the actual environment is vague). Her hands are outstretched with a bouquet of freshly cut tulips. The soft blue background, her soft periwinkle outfit, and the peaceful surroundings seems to create the illusion of a heavenly place. There is a difference between construct-
ing a situation so that an object (or person) represents a spirit and constructing a situation that is spiritual. In the former case the object is used to link the viewer to the concept, in the latter, the object is the concept.

The other four photos of Winfrey in this issue (Figures 17 - 20) also have a soft and peaceful feel to them, yet because of the camera’s perspective, Winfrey’s manufactured pose and the focus of the photos, they seem to be more reminiscent of portraits, portraits of 15th and 16th century aristocrats or monarchs (Figure 16). They have the same impersonal feel that a portrait of an aristocrat or monarch has – an isolated subject with an emphasis on the figure’s most expressive parts – the head and the hands. Although, in these instances, the hands are not engaged or connected to any-
thing, they are simply poised to exemplify a sense of self-assuredness, confidence, power, and influence – the Queen of Talk.

Yet, in contrast to the portraits of the 15th century aristocrat, where much effort would have gone into illustrating the subjects wealth via his/her dress and other iconography; in these ‘portraits’ of Winfrey, there is an obvious attempt to underscore Winfrey’s personal dollar value and accentuate the concept that she is an ordinary human being. Dressed in studied casual elegance, her bright smile radiates the attributes of contentment and confidence. The cover photo gives us no clue as to where she is sitting, yet the casual style of the natural wicker chair in which she sits and the peaceful blue background of the photo gives the viewer the feeling that wherever she is, she is relaxed and has plenty of breathing space.

Quiet, peaceful spaces to breathe and ponder are all words that come to mind when looking at the portraits of Winfrey in the premiere issue. There is an obvious attempt to show the subject without artifacts, in undefined environments that whisper Winfrey’s presence. Winfrey talks about how important quiet time and breathing space are as she introduces the magazine to the readers in ‘Let’s Talk’. “You will find articles about looking good and feeling fit. We live in a world that observes our external selves. What’s significant, however, is finding deeper meaning so that your life has a sense of balance and wholeness. Taking time to be quiet is the best gift you can give yourself - so every month, we are going to give you a moment to do just that, with a feature called Breathing Space (page 258).” (Figure 21)
In the next issue of O, the Oprah Magazine (July/August 2000), a reader responded to this feature. A Moment to Breathe is the heading. ‘‘I love, love, love the magazine,’ writes Regina Beischer of Park Ridge, New Jersey. ‘- especially Breathing Space. When I get stressed or have trouble sleeping, I visualize the photograph and I’m there – on the lake, by the mountains.’’

No other editorial photos or spaces in this premiere issue (other than the cover shot) lend themselves visually to the idea of a sense of balance, wholeness or quiet time. The May/June 2000 cover shot leans more towards the sense self-assuredness, confidence, power, and influence, while creating a sense of balance and peacefulness.

Just as the portraits of the aristocrats and monarchs from the 15th and 16th century often provided us with the artist’s interpretation of the subject matter; these photos of Winfrey, from the camera angles, to the constructed settings, and the inclusion or absence of artifacts, provide us with insight as to how the editors at O, the Oprah Magazine defined the magazine and/or the Oprah brand. After this analysis, it is determined that below the surface, Hearst is defining the brand through the eyes of the mass media, an audience which has branded Winfrey as the ‘Queen of Talk’, rather than through the eyes of the magazine’s stakeholders. Authentic brand character is not defined by the masses, but in the thoughts and actions of those who live the brand.

2. The cover photo

“Clearly, the cover is the most important component of the magazine. It’s what readers see first and last and it serves as an identifier of the book ... covers function as
a window into the interior of the publication, while concurrently imparting a message about the magazine’s personality, image, mission, voice, and contents. That’s a tremendous amount to communicate almost instantaneously, which is precisely what covers are expected to do because the audience is often moving past the publication at a newsstand, bookshop, or airport magazine rack. To be sure, the cover is the hook, and as such, it often determines how many copies are sold.” [Ryan & Conover 2004]

The change from the first issue, May/June 2000 to the second issue, July/August 2000 is dramatic. (Figures 22 & 23) On each cover the subject matter is the same - Winfrey looking directly at the viewer. (Winfrey has appeared on every cover of O, the Oprah Magazine - a topic that will be addressed later in this thesis.) In both covers, the photo works as an indirect or ambiguous identifier for the stories and/or theme in that issue.
The May/June cover shot gives us a sense of Oprah as self-assured, confident, powerful, and influential, along with the creating a sense of balance and peacefulness. These attributes are being applied to the subject matter. The subject matter is Oprah, Oprah is the tangible object, linking the reader to the values of self-assureness, confidence, power, and influence. Winfrey is the link, just as the Maytag repairman was the link to the appliance or Susan Vogel’s net helped connect the viewer to an exhibit at the Center for African Art in New York.

Add this to the situation of the shot - Winfrey sitting in a wicker chair against a blank blue wall. Other than Winfrey’s smile, (which seems forced and manufactured) the photo is void of warmth and emotion. To borrow an analogy from Coury Turczyn in *Graphic Communications Today*, it looks like the cover designer assigned to this premiere issue was fulfilling the dictates of the industry, “not unlike the paint person on an auto assembly line.” [Ryan & Conover 2004] Change the masthead to *McCalls* or *Good Housekeeping* and from the newsstand, the viewer wouldn’t know the difference.

Because this cover is obviously monochromatic – the meaning of the color blue must be addressed. From a web site called color wheel pro, the following definition was given for the color blue-

“Blue is often associated with depth and stability. It symbolizes trust, loyalty, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith, truth, and heaven.

“Blue is considered beneficial to the mind and body. It slows human metabolism and produces a calming effect. Blue is strongly associated with tranquility and calmness. In heraldry, blue is used to symbolize piety and sincerity.

“You can use blue to promote products and services related to cleanliness (water purification filters, cleaning liquids, vodka), air and sky (airlines, airports, air conditioners), water and sea (sea voyages, mineral water). As opposed to emotionally warm colors like
red, orange, and yellow; blue is linked to consciousness and intellect. Use blue to suggest precision when promoting high-tech products.” (url address: http://www.color-wheel-pro.com/color-meaning.html).

Contrast this photo to the cover shot of the July/August 2000 issue, and there are obvious questions, such as was the same person directing these photos? In March 2001, O’Leary gives us a clue as to who directed this change. “Winfrey decides what she wants to wear for the lush shots and where she will be photographed.” [O’Leary 2001]

The July/August 2000 cover is a full shot of Winfrey in an environment – on a sailboat with blue skies and calm waters, and large red letters ‘Live in the Moment’. Interestingly, the camera appears to have caught Winfrey in a moment, an instant that gives us the feeling that we are there with her. You can see, (almost feel) the wind blow past you and catch her jacket. It is warm, inviting and alive. And we are all there sharing in it. The photo does not directly identify a theme of the magazine; it indirectly invokes the issue’s mission “Live in the Moment”. The subject matter is no longer Oprah, but what Oprah is doing - her thoughts and actions.

The use of the color red against the bright blue background, the diagonal lines from the boat deck and its riggings, and the contrast between the organic and inorganic lines bring this cover to life. While placement of the horizontal shape of the ship in the background at the horizon line keeps the eye from wandering off the page. These designed affordances not only engage an audience, call them to action, energize and excite them, they reiterate the essential purpose or mission of the magazine - to help you ‘Live Your Best Life.’

On the surface, this cover tells the story of living in the moment. The focus is off
Winfrey and on what Winfrey is doing. Below the surface, the July/August 2000 cover starts to tell the story of the intangible rewards (the brand values) gained from reading this magazine. It is the first clue that a change in the direction or function of the magazine might be happen.

**Oprah on the cover.**

Winfrey appears on every cover of *O, the Oprah Magazine* and on the surface (and to audiences that exist outside the brand) the message being conveyed could be one of self-indulgence and self-absorption. Below the surface, and to audiences that exist within the Oprah brand, Winfrey appears on every cover of *O, the Oprah Magazine* as a signifier or indicator. William Ryan and Theodore Conover in their book *Graphic Communication Today* and Kit Henrich suggest that the magazines nameplate and logotype are important sales tools when it comes to the marketing of magazines. “Regular readers should be able to spot your cover and nameplate immediately, even in a sea of other magazines on the racks of a newsstand.” [Ryan & Conover 2004] “The personality of a magazine is most uniquely defined by its cover – first, through the logotype. Like any good brand mark, it must capture the feel of the publication, and it must be able to work with different subjects over a long period of time.” Kit Henrichs [Ryan & Conover 2004]

Why rely on the nameplate alone when you could capture the feel of the magazine and the viewer’s glance with a 9” x 12” glossy. An image of Winfrey brings the essence of the Oprah brand to life. No need for direct identifiers sending the message of what is inside; a portrait of Winfrey on the cover assures the reader that the content found in the magazine will revolve around the values of the Oprah brand:

- Tell the truth without hype
- Create a sense of connectedness that crosses all age, race and class lines
• Honor the spirit of every individual

There may be two other reasons for a picture Winfrey appearing on every cover of *O, the Oprah Magazine*, (especially when you are trying to launch a new magazine):

1. Economic - A picture of Winfrey on the cover sells more magazines. Before there was an *O, the Oprah Magazine*, *Good Housekeeping* and other magazines sold more magazines when Winfrey’s picture was on the cover – “*Issues with Winfrey regularly are among the magazine’s best sellers….the December 1998 issue with her on the cover sold 1.4 million copies on the newsstand, compared with the title’s average newsstand circulation of 1.2 million.*”  
[D’Orio 1999]  Once Winfrey had signed with Hearst in June 1999, there was an effort to keep her image off other magazine covers. In her article in *ME-DIAWEEK*, Lisa Granatstein asks Winfrey, “*Will you be exclusive to “O”, or will you also continue to appear on the covers of other magazines?*” Winfrey answers, “*Well, I’m not exclusive, but I’ve certainly cut back. I’ve been asked several times already this year to do things, and I just thought they were inappropriate, considering I’m coming out with my own magazine. It’s confusing. I haven’t done anybody’s cover for almost a year now for that very reason--because I was gearing up for this. I was on the cover of People [last December] because they put me on the cover--I did not pose for it.*” [Granatstein 2000]

2. Commitment - It is similar to the artist signing a painting - (for example, Duchamp putting his signature on a urinal); putting your picture on the cover communicates the message that this magazine is unmistakably about who you are, what your belief system is and everything you stand for. “*…for me, it is my life, it’s the way I live my life and everything I stand for.*”  
Oprah Winfrey, Baltimore Sun, April 17, 2000. [Lawrence 2005]  Having Winfrey’s picture on every cover indirectly communicates a message of courage and rugged
individualism. It is simply another way the editors at *O, the Oprah Magazine* are able to bring the brand values of the Oprah brand to life. The Oprah brand honors the spirit of the individual, right or wrong, and independent of traditional, mainstream or conventional beliefs.

3. The Month’s Mission - a clearer definition

Each issue of *O, the Oprah Magazine* has a mission – usually an intangible thought or broad concept like Intimacy (October 2001), Truth (January 2002), Mothers & Daughters (May 2003), Confidence (May 2004) or Happiness (March 2004). This mission appears to direct the content of that issue.

In the May/June 2000 (Hearst-driven phase) and July/August 2000 (transitioning) issues, this mission is not as clearly defined, visually or verbally, as it is in the December 2000. However, in the December 2000 and thru January 2005 and possibly beyond issues (Harpo-driven phase), the mission is printed on the center of the spine of each issue, usually repeated on the cover as the typographic focal point and always the first words read at the beginning of the Table of Contents on page two.

This is not the case with the May/June 2000 issue (Hearst-driven phase) where the mission is Courage and absent from the spine or cover; or July/August 2000 issue where the mission is Live in the Moment and absent from the spine. The mission printed on the spine of these issues is ‘Live Your Best Life’, which is the essential purpose or function of the entire enterprise, the vision which ultimately seeks to contribute to the greater good of society and guides every issue of *O, the Oprah Magazine*. 
4. The Table of Contents

This study looks at changes in the voice of the magazine primarily through an analysis of the Table of Contents. “The table of contents is perhaps second only to the cover in terms of importance to the book. …It’s an invaluable logistical tool to the reader because it provides a detailed mapping of all the magazine’s parts: departments, letters page, columns, standing articles, preview page, and reviews – as well as all the new articles, photo essays, features, and other components.” [Ryan & Conover 2004]

Changing the Voice of the Table of Contents via Organizational changes

The Table of Contents in the May/June 2000 issue breaks the content of the magazine into three broad Sections: First Words, Features, and …And More. The Table of Contents in the July/August 2000 issue breaks the content of the magazine into five sections: First Words, Live Your Best Life, Enjoy Yourself, Features, and … And More. The Table of Contents in the December 2000 issue breaks the content of the magazine into nine sections: This Months Mission: Generosity, Live Your Best Life, Style, Fashion, Beauty, Great Food, Minding Your Body, Features, In Every Issue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May/June 2000</th>
<th>July/August 2000</th>
<th>December 2000</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Words</td>
<td>First Words</td>
<td>This Months Mission: Generosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Features</td>
<td>Live Your Best Life</td>
<td>Live Your Best Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>…And More</td>
<td>Enjoy Yourself</td>
<td>Style</td>
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<td>Features</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
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<td>… And More</td>
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<td>Features</td>
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<td>In Every Issue</td>
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From superficial veneer to embedded brand character
Using ambiguous and vague terms that look and feel good like ‘First Words’ (as the heading for the ‘O Calendar’, the contributors for that issue, the letters to the editors, columns by Dr. Phil and Suze Orman, etc.) or ‘Enjoy Yourself’ (as the heading for the articles on Fashion, Beauty, Health, Food, etc.) is a device that one might implement when trying to connect with an audience that is interested in spirituality, but lends itself more to what Winfrey calls “‘pie in the sky’ stuff.” In an interview in April of 2000, Winfrey addresses the difficulty of defining spirituality to people not familiar with her definition of spirituality:

“A lot of people think when I talk about spirituality that I’m talking some pie-in-the-sky stuff,’ says Winfrey. ‘But it’s not. I’m talking about how you get women to look at their lives differently and see that through the stories of other people.’” [Granatstein 2000]

Ambiguous and vague section heads could be a solution for connecting with an audience interested in an ambiguous and vague subject matter. To some, ambiguous and vague could describe the mission of *O, the Oprah Magazine* – Spirit. Yet one of the values of the Oprah brand is to tell the truth without hype. In this case, ambiguity would be defined as hype. Devices or hype are hurdles the reader must jump over before they can connect with the stories inside the magazine.

In her book, *Your Attention Please*, Alison Davis says that within today’s landscape, audiences are too busy for devices like these and your communication needs to be “...easy to use – accessible, easy to navigate, quick to digest and completely clear” otherwise your audience will not participate. Participation or connectivity is an attribute of the Oprah brand and one of the goals of the magazine - to connect people to what deserves priority and to bring meaning to their lives. [Brown & Davis 2006]
That being said, it is no wonder the headings changed after the staffing changes occurred in July 2000. It is one thing to say you want to create a magazine that talks about spirituality, and quite another to understand how a magazine talks to a spiritual audience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>May/June 2000 (Hearst-driven Phase)</th>
<th>December 2000 (Harpo-driven Phase)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>‘First Words’ (ambiguous and vague)</td>
<td>‘This Month’s Mission: (mission of the month)’ (clearly defined and more direct)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>‘Let’s Talk’ (Queen of Talk)</td>
<td>‘Here We Go’ (The Truth without Hype - sharing the journey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>‘Your Opinions’</td>
<td>‘We hear you’ (creates a sense of connectedness)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **‘This Month’s Mission’ replaces ‘First Words’**: Each issue has it’s own mission; the use of the word ‘mission’ rather than ‘First Words’, more clearly speaks to the values of the Oprah brand and gives the audience an opportunity to quickly connect with the purpose. Add to this the idea that a spiritual audience may connect with the word mission on several levels - mission with regards to a goal, purpose or task, or mission with regards to a campaign of religious work. Comparing this to ‘First Words’ and the fact that in some religions the term Word is synonymous for the bible or gospel; we start to see that once again Hearst may be confusing Spirit with religion or Godliness. While the Oprah brand is about spirit, it is not about religion. Rather it is about an individual’s spirit, their intuition, the culmination of their live values and experiences that makes them unique as well as uniquely human.

2. **‘Let’s Talk’, (Winfrey’s one to two page letter from the editor) becomes ‘Here We Go’**: ‘Let’s Talk’ implies an intimate conversation between the reader and Winfrey and is an appropriate heading for a person branded with the title Queen of Talk. Yet, the words ‘Let’s Talk’ imply a two-way conversation, which in this medium or
format would be impossible. You simply cannot have a two-way conversation with a magazine. Whereas, it is possible for Winfrey and the reader to take the same voyage through the magazine - they are simply doing it at different times and places. ‘Here We Go’ replacing ‘Let’s Talk’ is a great example of what Noreen O’Leary meant when she said Winfrey tells ‘the truth without hype’. [O’Leary 2001]

3. The department titled ‘Enjoy Yourself’ is broken down into better defined sections ‘Style, Fashion, Beauty, Great Food, Minding Your Body’

4. ‘Your Opinions’ (letters from readers to the editors) changes to ‘We hear you’: In a broad sense ‘We hear you’ creates a sense of connectedness between the reader and the staff at O Magazine. Note the phrase isn’t Oprah Hears You. This sense of connectedness crosses the boundary of time and connects all those living the brand - the reader and employees of the magazine.

**Changing the visual language of the Table of Contents via visual hierarchy. From superficial veneer to embedded brand character**

Section heads and column/article titles are more clearly defined in the December 2000 (Figure 26), than in the May/June 2000 (Figure 24) and July/August 2000 (Figure 25) Table of Contents. By implementing a hierarchal system using changes in typographic styles and paragraph formats, the reader is given a more detailed map of the magazine’s parts. Changes that were implemented are:

- Typographic changes in color
- Typeface, style and size changes
- The use of all caps verses upper and lower case in section heads
- Whole section indents
- Page numbers flush right with a leader

A photo of Winfrey is the focal point of the Table of Contents in every issue of
O, the Oprah Magazine. The change in the style of this photo is another example of how one might visually put the thoughts and values of the Oprah brand into action.

The images used in the May/June and July/August 2000 issues are of Winfrey in a manufactured pose, looking at the viewer. These are inarguably appropriate visual identifiers for the ‘Let’s Talk’ approach in the first issues. However by the December 2000 issue, when the magazine changed from ‘Let’s Talk’ to ‘Here We Go’, the photo becomes a shot or memory of a moment Winfrey had while engaging in the journey that that issue promises. The photo is usually, (but not always) of Winfrey laughing, engaging or connecting with whomever the ‘O Interview’ was that month.
The Oprah brand has the ability to connect with their audience. O’Leary says that Winfrey creates an emotional link with the readers. “‘In my 15 years of dealing with people and their dysfunctions, day in and out,’ says Winfrey, ‘I’ve learned that the word that most defines this decade, even this century, is disconnect. What this magazine does is reconnect people to what deserves priority and to bring meaning to their lives.’” [O’Leery 2001]

If a magazine is trying to translate the core values and attributes of a brand into action and those values are connectedness and involvement, using photos of people connecting and involved would be imperative to the voice and visual language of that magazine.

5. The ‘O Calendar’

The purpose of the ‘O Calendar’ is similar to a daily devotional; it is a month long guide to intimacy, courage, or whatever the mission is that month. It gives the reader journaling exercises, projects and inspirational quotes. For instance, Day 9 of the May/June courage calendar instructs the reader to ‘Ask yourself, what was I created to do? Write the answer in your courage journal.’ And Day 22 says ‘Invite to lunch an acquaintance you wish you knew better.’

Three specific areas changed with the ‘O Calendar’ when the magazine crossed the boundaries from superficial veneer to embedded brand character:

• Changes in the hierarchal positioning of the calendar
• Changes in the format
• Changes with the formula.
Change in the Hierarchal positioning of ‘O Calendar’

In the May/June 2000 (Figure 29) and July/August 2000 issues (Figure 30), the ‘O Calendar’ falls under the section head ‘This Month’s Mission’. Hierarchically, it appears to be given great importance in the magazine, as it is found after the Table of Contents, but before the list of editors and publishers, and ‘Let’s Talk’ (the letter from the Editor – Oprah), and the Contributors’ page.

In December 2000 (Figure 32), the ‘O Calendar’ falls under the section titled ‘This Month’s Mission: Generosity’; and is found after the Table of Contents, the list of editors and publishers, the Contributors’ page, ‘We Hear You’ (the letters to the Editor) and ‘Here We Go’ (the letter from the Editor – Oprah). The hierarchal change in the position of the ‘O Calendar’ in the December 2000 issue appears to diminish the importance of the calendar itself. Yet, because of other structural changes (that will be addressed later), the calendar’s emphatic presence is retained. Also, the change of the calendar’s hierarchal position does not appear to change the significance of the calendar itself, but rather has increased the significance of the issue’s mission. Furthermore, this increase in the significance of the mission happens concurrently as the emphasis of Oprah as a person diminishes. As the calendar’s hierarchal position was diminished, the importance of the magazine’s mission increased. This reiterates Danto’s statement that the circumstance of display itself does not affect the value.
How is the significance of the month’s mission increased? It is placed on the spine of the magazine (Figure 34) and in the typographic and textual treatment in the table of contents (Figure 35).

The Format of the ‘O Calendar’

In the May/June (Figure 29) and July/August (Figure 30) 2000 issue, the ‘O Calendar’ is a two-page spread with the focal point of the two-page spread, the mission of the month – Tap Your Personal Courage (May/June 2000) and Live in the Moment (July/August 2000). There is no explanation or introduction as to how to use the calendars (other than in Oprah’s Letter from the Editor in the May/June, where she explains the calendar’s purpose and encourages readers to use it) or any clear explanation of what the month’s mission is.

Contrast this with the December 2000 calendar (Figures 31 & 32) – a three-page spread, with the first page identifying the month, reiterating that month’s mission – (Generosity) and including an explanation of how and why to use the calendar.
The Formula of the ‘O Calendar’

First, although the calendar appears to be an actual monthly calendar, it is not. This could be because it is serving as the calendar for two months May and June or July and August; but the December 2000 calendar is not an actual representation of the month either, as December 1, 2000 fell on a Friday. An actual calendar would have five rows and seven columns. Sometime in 2001, the calendar starts to represent the actual month, starting on the actual day and with five rows and seven columns.

From superficial veneer to embedded brand character

Second, note the illustrations - this is probably one of the biggest changes that occurred in the process of transvaluation. In the first issue (Figure 29), the formula for illustrating the look and feel of the content is pen and ink drawings. By the second issue (Figure 30), the illustrations become a little more ‘real’ with the addition of color. By the December 2000 issue (Figure 32), the illustrations are non-existent, they have transformed into photographs.

6. The ‘O Interview’

Changing the Voice and Visual Language of the ‘O Interview’

Typically at the beginning of a magazine there is an introduction from the editor. Often this letter welcomes the reader to the issue while making a point to tempt the reader to continue reading by luring him or her with morals of stories or interesting tidbits of information from articles in the issue. Sometimes this letter/introduction is a page, sometimes a half page. In the Hearst-driven phase of O, the Oprah Magazine, this page
is titled ‘Let’s Talk’, and in the first issue, this introduction is two pages.

After this first issue, the page that functions as the editor’s introduction or letter, seems to find a new position in the magazine – the page before the ‘O Interview’, which is towards the middle of the magazine.

There is still a letter from Winfrey at the beginning of the magazine, but this letter is focused solely on that issue’s mission. The focus of the letter is broader and speaks to the mission, explaining why this subject matter is important at this moment in time and the relationship, experiences or memorable moments Winfrey has had with the subject matter.

The ‘O Interview’

In almost every issue, there is a feature article in which Winfrey interviews someone. In the first issue, Winfrey interviewed Camille Cosby, the second - Jane Fonda, the December 2000 – Maya Angelou. The magazine has included interviews with Bill Clinton, Barak Obama, the Central Park Jogger (who continues to remain anonymous), Alicia Keys, Condoleezza Rice, Bono, etc. In the May/June and July/August 2000 issues this article is titled ‘Oprah Talks To’, with a little typographic stamp/brand identifying the article at the top of the subsequent pages. By December 2000, the title of the article has not changed; it is still titled ‘Oprah Talks To’, but it is identified or branded as the ‘O Interview’. The visual language of the brand is light and airy, giving the reader space to breath and comprehend, as opposed to the condensed, stamp like brand in the first two issues.
There is an obvious change in the size and type of photograph used in the magazine as the magazine transitions from a magazine that represents Oprah to a magazine that embodies the voice and values of the Oprah brand. The ‘O Interview’ is one area that easily shows this progression. The title page of the ‘O Interview’ article in the first issue of the magazine (Figure 37), uses the method of repetition of shapes to implement the design principle of Emphasis, (or grabs the viewers attention), through a repetition of similar sized photographs. The photos are of Winfrey talking to Camille Cosby during the interview. Although the two are engaged in conversation, they are certainly not connected. The snap shots seem to feel more like documentation of the event moments, as opposed to catching the two in a memorable moments.

The title page of the ‘Oprah Talks To’ article in the second issue grabs the viewer’s attention with a waste-up shot of Winfrey with her arm around Jane Fonda. The photo is a full page bleed. The ‘feel’ of the photo lends itself to portraiture or a posed snap shot. There is an attempt to show connectedness, although the pose does not lend itself to being engaging.

By the December 2000 issue (Figure 39), the ‘O Interview’ begins with a special moment between Winfrey and Maya Angelou that the camera has captured. The two are engaged, connected and laughing. The full-page photograph crosses the gutter and fills 1/3 of the next page. While capturing Winfrey and Angelou in a memorable moment, this photo invites the viewer to share in the event. Winfrey’s humbling position on the floor makes the moment more authentic and more real to the viewer. The target audience, women 25 – 54, can probably relate better to this passive role, which helps create that sense of connectedness that crosses all ages, races and class lines, which is one of the intangible rewards of the Oprah brand.
Simply comparing the manufactured pose from the premiere issue’s cover shot (Figure 22) to Winfrey’s subservient position on the floor in this photo, the new editorial staff at O magazine seems to have made a conscious effort to dethrone the ‘Queen of Talk’.

These three events - the first photos in the ‘O Interview’, (Figures 37 - 39) come closer to any others at demonstrating how the magazine transformed from an artifact to an object that embodies thought, has content and expresses meaning - Danto’s process of transvaluation: from the May/June photo, which documents an event in an engaging but not connected way, to the posed snapshot in the July/August photo that represents connectedness but is certainly not engaging, to the
capturing of a memorable moment in the December 2000 photo.

The value in the first two photos is in their tangible rewards; they are documenting an event, Winfrey interviewing Camille Cosby or Jane Fonda. The value in these photos is in their use – their ability to document. Danto would call these first two photos artifacts, the value of artifacts is defined by their use or function. The value in the third photo is in its use, documentation, as well as its ability to express meaning. This third photo has dual functions or double identities. Not only does it document, but it embodies thought, has content and expresses meaning (Danto’s definition of a work of art). The focus is off the tangible reward, a magazine about Oprah, and on the intangible reward’s of the Oprah brand. These intangible rewards are expressed in Winfrey’s thoughts found in the verbal messages of the magazine and in her actions found in the visual messages of the magazine.

7. The magazine as a whole

Changing the voice and visual language of the magazine as a whole with larger photos, more expressive typography and a kibosh to corny illustrations.

Larger Photos and more expressive typography - Contributors

The down side to larger photos and more expressive typography is the cost of adding more pages, note two pages devoted to contributors in December 2000 (Figure 42) as opposed to one page in May/June (Figure 40) and July/August 2000 (Figure 41). The upside, more white space and more breathing room.

In their book, Do you matter? How great design will make people love your company, Robert Brunner, Stewart Emery and Russ Hall summarize that the emotional
elements are not something that can be eliminated because of costs. “You have to figure out how to do it. Same thing in manufacturing. The selection of quality materials and how parts go together (fit and finish) must be an integral part of design. Companies can’t view it as ‘Oh we’re spending an extra 50¢ – let’s cut that out.’” Organizations that are driven by their brand values allow the values to shape the product, instead of producing a product and them trying to find ways that the values will fit into the product. [Brunner, Emery & Hall 2008].

Additional pages for non-essentials things such as contributors, adding more white space (or breathing room), extra large photos that bleed off the page, increase the cost to produce the magazine, and often times are considered wasteful. Yet, it is changes and additions like these that adds to the overall user experience and helps bring about the transvaluation of the magazine in the eyes of those who live the brand. Simon Dumenco, originally a consulting editor for the launch of the magazine, wrote an early critique of the magazine commenting that the magazine was focused too much on Winfrey. Then
in 2003, Dumenco takes another look at the magazine and asks why does O, the Oprah Magazine thrive at a time when other celebrity-branded magazines are struggling. He answers “…it’s a pretty decent magazine. It’s service content is brisk and doesn’t overpromise. It’s elegantly designed and photographed, it’s effortlessly multicultural, the ‘Oprah talks to’ interview is always irresistible, and perhaps most remarkably, it’s literate.” [Dumenco 2003]

From the beginning, O, the Oprah Magazine had the advertising dollars to support luxuries like larger photos that bleed off the page and more white space. In October 1999, nine months before the first magazine hit the stands and before a prototype of O, the Oprah Magazine was ever produced – Hearst Publication “got commitments for $20 million in spending in the first six issues of O. The premiere will carry 322 pages, of which 166 are ads. Charter advertisers include GM/Cadillac, Toyota, Avon, Morgan Stanley, Dean Witter and Tommy Hilfiger.” [Granatstein 2000]

With regards to the challenge of finding advertisers for the publications, the publisher, Alyce Alston said, “‘I went for a couple that didn’t have a print campaign or even a women’s effort, [including] Microsoft. ’O did not accept weight-loss or cigarette ads, and only one liquor ad (Rums of Puerto Rico) is in the premiere.’” [Granatstein 2000]

“‘Advertisers who bought in up front were not put off by the fact that they did so before a prototype of O was produced. ‘We really did not have any concerns because the magazine is about Oprah,’ says Lori O’Rourke, vp of advertising at Liz Claiborne.” [Granatstein 2000]

In 2000, the first six issues of the magazine carried 905 pages of advertising. [O’Leary 2001]
Larger Photos and more expressive typography - Beauty and Fashion

Figure 43 - Beauty
May/June 2000
Hearst-driven phase

Figure 44 - Fashion
May/June 2000
Hearst-driven phase

Figure 45 - Beauty
December 2000
Harpo-driven phase

Figure 48 - Fashion
December 2000
Harpo-driven phase
Figures 43 - 46 illustrate the concept of larger photos and more expressive typography by showing the contrast of beauty and fashion articles in the premiere issue (May/June 2000) compared to the December 2000 issue.

One of the values for which the Oprah brand stands is to honor the spirit of every individual. Corny illustrations like the ones found in the article “Make the Web Work for You”, by Stephanie Saulmon (Figures 47 & 48) do not honor the spirit of any individual. They are nonsensical and certainly not meaningful. These types of illustrations may work in a situation where the content is nonsensical and not meaningful, but this is not the case of O, the Oprah Magazine.

In his 2003 article, Dumenco writes, “O doesn’t have the “please-your-man sex content that gunks up other Women’s magazines.” [Dumenco 2003] The subject matter in O, the Oprah Magazine mimics that of other women’s service/lifestyle magazine, except it looks at it from a different perspective - how the subject matter might help the reader live their best life. The content in
the article, “Make the Web Work for You”, is a great example. The subhead says it all … “Get set to learn how to get the good stuff on-line. No, we don’t mean shopping, but simple strategies for tracking down the information you need, connecting more closely with those you care for and otherwise enriching your life via the Internet.” The article is not about how to shop online, information one might expect women to find interesting, but rather focuses on how to use the Internet to enrich the reader’s life. The visual message is in stark contrast of the verbal message. Corny illustrations of gawky, elongated women with rosy cheeks and rubber band arms seem horribly inappropriate when attempting to visually tell a story about how to seriously improve and enriching your life. Images like these are anything but enriching. From a design perspective, probably one of the greatest changes made in the transition from the Hearst-driven magazine to the Harpo-driven magazine is in the elimination of artificial illustrations.

That is not to say that the Harpo-driven editors at *O, the Oprah Magazine* have not used illustration to assist in telling the story (Figures 49-53). But these illustrations are not cartoons; rather, they are more like illusions or constructed realities, with a more thoughtful and conceptual tone. (Because the December 2000 issue did not have a good example of what is meant by illusions or constructed realities, illustrations from later issues of the magazine are used. These illustrations fall within the criteria of the Harpo-driven phase – from December 2000 – January 2005.)

In an interview with Norma O’Leary in 2001, Amy Gross, *O, the Oprah Magazine*’s Editor at Large in the Harpo-driven phase of the magazine says Winfrey and she both agreed on what was wrong with the magazine in the Hearst-driven phase. “The writing was uneven,” she recalls. “We wanted it more consistent. I wanted the images to be larger. Oprah likes pictures that bleed off the page and are in-your-face. She doesn’t like pictures that are cold, Nordic, edgy.” [O’Leary 2001] Figures 54-57 attempt to visu-
Is This Any Way to Have a Baby?

Thousands of women are taking fertility drugs, but no one is telling them they’re putting their lives on the line. We asked Barbara Seaman—the reporter who alerted the world to the dangers of birth control pills and hormone replacement therapy—to investigate the risks of pushing the reproductive envelope.

Figure 53 - Illustrative style after December 2000
Harpo-driven phase

Figure 54 - Cold, Nordic, edgy Illustrative style used during Hearst-driven phase

Figure 55 - Cold, Nordic, edgy Illustrative style used during Hearst-driven phase

Figure 56 - Cold, Nordic, edgy Illustrative style used during Hearst-driven phase

Figure 57 - Cold, Nordic, edgy Illustrative style used during Hearst-driven phase
ally define cold, Nordic and edgy and what Gross meant when she implied the images were too small.

Illusions and constructed realities

It appears the Oprah brand is fully aware that magazines, like television shows and photographs, are well-designed illusions and constructed realities. Not only do they understand this, but they also realize that in today’s landscape, their audience also understands this.

That being said, how does a brand, whose core value is truth, handle the contradiction between truth and constructed realities? One way is to expose the illusion.

An example of how *O, the Oprah Magazine* exposes the illusion was published in an article in the March 2001 edition, titled “Blowing Our Cover”. This article revealed, both visually and verbally, just what it takes to create a cover girl. The transformation that occurs between the Oprah before 7:55 a.m. and Oprah as cover girl, talk show host and
Emmy/Oscar award winning Actress is unbelievable.

Two months later after exposing the illusion the magazine’s audience praised Winfrey and *O, the Oprah Magazine* as being truly honest and inspirational, as indicated by these letters to the editor:

“I loved the March article “Blowing Our Cover.” It was great to see that Oprah is a down-to-earth person. Thank you for showing me how easy it is to be happy with the way God intended me to be – natural. I now feel better about going without makeup. I love my looks, and by the way, you look great, too, Oprah.”  Dawn Dvorak, Brainard, Nebraska

“I am relaxing in bed reading the March issue of *O* and can’t believe the article “Blowing Our Cover” – I loved it. Seeing Oprah without makeup and drinking tea was so refreshing. Brilliant!”  Heather Mears, Dallas

“How gracious of Oprah and her outstanding staff to share “Blowing Our Cover” – complete with photos! It was a wonderful experience for all your readers.”  Maureen Carney, Eden Prairie, Minnesota
Chapter 5

Conclusion

Katherine McCoy asks how can user experience design create that essential stickiness by developing branded character rather than superficial veneer? This case study sought to answer this question and in the process discovered the answer is not simple.

First, there needs to be a paradigm shift, from the brand as an artifact, the tangible outcome, the advertising icon (like the Maytag repairman or the Marlboro cowboy) or a tagline (like “Where’s the Beef?”) to the brand as the intangible values that underpins everything the organization does and every relationship the organization has. The brand is the spiritual meaning behind the organization and the message, the product, the service, the business and all of its employees are the material embodiment of those values. Thought in this way, the brand no longer represents the business, the brand is the business, and is defined in the thoughts and actions of those who live the brand.

Second, it is possible to embed intangible values into tangible objects. Using objects as vehicles to express abstract thoughts or values is what artist have been doing for centuries. The artwork of Duchamp and Warhol exemplify how the value of an object can change when the function of that object changes. This is also true with products and services that are driven by the brand, when the function changes so does the value. In the end, brand-driven products or businesses have dual functions or double identities. They are objects of use and the material embodiment of the values behind the organization.

Third, embedding brand character is an inside out process. Brand–driven organizations allow the brand and the product or business to develop simultaneously from in-
side the organization. Organizations that are driven by their brand values allow the values
to shape the product, instead of producing a product and then trying to find ways that the
values will fit into the product.

Meads & Sharma’s Vision – Culture – Story Model (Figure 3) proves that a cu-
mulative story is ultimately told. Meads & Sharma’s Brand System Value Scale Model,
shows that essential stickiness comes from the vision behind the business/organization.
When that vision is rooted in the creation of wealth for the organization and the emergent
business culture of the organization is in alignment with that vision, the story told will be
that of value-add, or McCoy’s superficial veneer. In the eyes of the consumer, there is no
intangible value. This kind of connection does not translate into essential stickiness.

However, if the organization or product exists for the greater good of society,
or as John Moore says to “change the world,” and the emergent business culture of the
organization is in alignment with that vision, then the story told in the user’s experiences
with the message, product or service and the business itself, will be more valuable to
consumers who share those values. The essential purpose of the production of the com-
modity/business becomes to connect those who share those values with the broader social
concept, the spiritual meaning.

Designers alone can’t create essential stickiness. Essential stickiness, or sustain-
able business value comes from the essential purpose for which the organization exists
- the vision – which is created by the CEO and directed by managers at all levels through-
out out the organization. When the business culture of the organization aligns with that
vision, an authentic story is told. According to Meads & Sharma, whether this vision is
rooted in value add or social value determines if the authentic story will create sustain-
able business value or McCoy’s essential stickiness.
And finally, according to Davis & Dunn the single greatest threat to a brand-driven business is senior management’s lack of understanding what the brand stands for. This principle was clearly demonstrated in the analysis of the voice and visual language of the May/June 2000, July/August 2000 and the December 2000 issues of O, the Oprah Magazine.

From the beginning, the joint partners at O, the Oprah Magazine (Hearst Magazine and Harpo Productions) sought to create something that would be more than just a magazine - a personal growth guide for women of the 21st century. The mission of the magazine was (and still is) to help women live their best life – Winfrey paraphrases, to “get women to look at their lives differently and see that through the stories of other people.” [Granatstein 2000] This certainly fulfills part of the criteria needed for sustainable value creation - a vision rooted in social value.

As the joint partners focused on this vision and the reader’s experience, they began to redefine the conventional magazine formula. This fulfilled the second part of the criteria - creating unique experiences and interactions with the product and the message (the story). Yet, were these meaningful connections with the brand? Was the story of any value to the audience? This study answered these questions.

In the first three months of publication, this analysis found the preverbal, subverbal and subconscious messages in the voice and visual language of the magazine to be out of balance with the values of the Oprah brand. The editorial content and design in the Hearst-driven issues focused on Winfrey the person and used her image and the label given to Winfrey by the mass media ‘the Queen of Talk’ as a value proposition. Winfrey was a link, which is nothing more than an artifact.
To those outside the Oprah brand, the magazine probably looked and felt like Oprah. But having the ‘look and feel’ of something doesn’t create meaningful connections. The circumstance of display itself does not effect the value [Danto 1998]. Creating essential stickiness requires embedding brand character (or values), the intangible rewards, into the product, service or organization. What truly matters to those inside the Oprah brand are her values, not the fact that she is a very popular talk-show host. Clearly the Hearst appointed editors at *O, the Oprah Magazine* did not understand what the Oprah stood for, as there is no real value in the story of the Queen of Talk to anyone other than those wanting to capitalize Winfrey’s earlier success. Hence, the experiences and interaction introduced in the Hearst-driven magazine were not the types of meaningful connections that create sustainable value according to Meads and Sharma.

After the first three months of publication, a change in senior management altered the direction of the magazine and its voice and visual language. In the end this resulted in the thoughts and values of the Oprah brand being embedded into the voice and visual language of the magazine and a more holistic story was told. Therefore, more meaningful connections emerged because the story was (is) based in social value.

It is impossible to say if the changes in direction actually increased the value of the magazine. Although, the following can be said:

- Within the first year of publication (April 2001) *O, the Oprah Magazine* raised the newsstand price from $2.95 to $3.50.
- In April 2001, Hearst launched Rosie (another celebrity-branded magazine) with Rosie O’Donnell. By May 2003, this magazine was no longer in publication.
- In March 2001, *O, the Oprah Magazine* had 1.9 million subscribers; by March
2007, the circulation grew to 2,382,917.

- In March 2007, *O, The Oprah Magazine* was ranked No. 1 on *Adweek’s* magazine Hot List.

The purpose of this study was not to prove that more meaningful connections create sustainable value, although it appears they do. The purpose was to understand the difference between superficial veneer and embedded brand character and to discover how to translate brand values into action.

This study found that simply creating unique and different experiences or connections with the reader does not mean that the brand character will be embedded into those affordances. As Danto showed, the circumstance of display itself does not affect the value. Just as simply, having a vision rooted in social value will not create sustainable value. Rather, it is a culmination of all these - the vision rooted in social value, the business culture that builds around these values, and the emerging designed affordances (the vision – culture – story) that tells a more valuable story to those who live the brand.

More importantly this study discovered that it is possible to embed intangible values and abstract thoughts into something tangible (the message, the product, the service, or the business itself), and demonstrated how industry can apply Danto’s process of transvaluation to help create more holistic experiences for the consumer through the brand.

Simply designing, building and managing assets or communication channels is no longer enough to create lasting connections with today’s consumer. The process of branding has evolved to include the integration of embedded brand character into the sum total of the user’s experiences and interactions with the message, the product or service and the business itself. This type of product/service or organization has two functions,
they are (or produce) objects of use and vessels with the material embodiment of the organization’s intangible rewards - the brand character.

Danto tells us that when objects embody thought and content, their function changes and it is the change in function that actually increases the value. By embedding the values of the Oprah brand into the voice and visual language of the magazine, the editors at *O, the Oprah Magazine* were able to change the function of the magazine, which in turn, changed the value in the eyes of those who live the brand; leading to premium pricing, sustainable business value and customers as advocates.

Finally, this study discovered similarities or parallels in Dantos concept of transvaluation from the fine art world and Meads and Sharmas study on the socio-cultural role of the brand in business value creation. These parallels give the designer a vocabulary that will help him or her tell the story about how to embed brand character to more audiences.

Maybe it is not the concept of brand that is worn out and no longer mysterious [Roberts 2005]; but rather the dialog the designer has been forced to use to sell the concept of brand to those in industry. Living brands, brands defined in the thoughts and actions of those who share like values, are very mysterious. They are as mysterious as the *Brillo Box* by Warhol. They are as mysterious as life itself.
Appendixes

Appendix 1 - Background Information

HARPO Entertainment Group

*O, the Oprah Magazine* is the first magazine for ‘publishing novice’ HARPO Entertainment Group. Other business ventures include: a TV and film production company, (which includes Oprah, a syndicated television program, with an estimated TV audience of 22 million a week, in September of 1999, Oprah attracted 33 million viewers daily in 135 countries), a partnership in Oxygen Media, the Internet and cable company and her website, (oprah.com, drew seven million hits each month and 2,000 email notes daily). [O’Leary 2001]

Hearst Magazine

Hearst launched its first magazine, *Motor*, in 1903, has published the largest-selling young women’s magazine in the world, *Cosmopolitan*, since 1905 and in 1911 acquired *Good Housekeeping*. In 2000, Hearst Magazine was the publisher of 16 magazines which included – *CosmoGIRL, Country Living, Cosmopolitan, Esquire, Good Housekeeping, Harpers Bazaar, House Beautiful, Marie Claire, Popular Mechanics, Redbook, Quick & Simple, Seventeen, SmartMoney, Town & Country, Teen* and their joint venture *O, the Oprah Magazine*. 
O, the Oprah Magazine

Produced as a joint venture between Hearst Magazine and Oprah Winfrey, O, the Oprah Magazine is geared towards self-improvement and empowering women. Hearst and other publishing companies had approached Winfrey for years about the concept of a magazine. The publishers wanted to transfer the synergy of this very successful talk-show host into a magazine, and with good reason, Winfrey’s syndicated program, in September of 1999, attracted 33 million viewers daily in 135 countries and her website, oprah.com, drew seven million hits each month and 2,000 email notes daily.

Winfrey credits Ellen Kunes, O, the Oprah Magazine’s first editor-in-chief, for the “bingo” moment that finally convinced her to go into print media. Kunes said “What we need to offer is a personal-growth guide for women for the 21st century.” [Granatstein 2000] Ellen Levine, the Editor-in-Chief of Good Housekeeping approached Winfrey in the Fall of 1998, and Winfrey signed on with Hearst in June 1999. [O’Leary 2001]

In July 2000, after O, the Oprah Magazine’s third issue, there is a shift in power at the magazine, with the resignation of Ellen Kunes as editor-in-chief. Kunes reportedly left amid staff turnover due to frustration and pressure of trying to please both sides of the Hearst-Harpo partnership. Kunes, a Hearst appointee, was replaced by Amy Gross a fashion magazine veteran. Gross was a good fit for O, the Oprah Magazine. Gross reportedly shares Winfrey’s exacting standards and has explored her own personal-growth paths, having attended a couple of three-month, silence-only Buddhist retreats. When she began to interview for the O, the Oprah Magazine job, she was about to enroll at New York University for a Master’s Degree in Psychology.

In her first meeting with Winfrey, before she landed the job, Gross says they both
agreed on what was wrong with the magazine. “The writing was uneven,” she recalls. “We wanted it more consistent. I wanted the images to be larger. Oprah likes pictures that bleed off the page and are in-your-face. She doesn’t like pictures that are cold, Nordic, edgy.” [O’Leary 2001]

Although this study looks at how the magazine has gone through the process of transvaluation, where it transformed from what McCoy calls ‘superficial veneer’ (or an artifact) to a product with the essence of the Oprah brand embedded in the voice and visual language, for the most part the entire scope of the magazine did not change. The study will refer to the superficial veneer phase of the magazine as the Hearst-driven phase, and the segment of time when the essence of the Oprah brand became embedded in the pages of the magazine as the Harpo-driven phase. When it comes to the topic of voice and visual languages, the difference between an artifact and messages, products or services with embedded brand values are usually very minor.

The following data refers to the parts of the magazine that did not change:

**Type of magazine:** Women’s service magazine – it should be noted that in my research I found the HARPO Entertainment Group and Hearst Magazine refer to this magazine as a service magazine.

**Target Audience:** women 18 – 49 [Granatstein 2000] or women 25 – 54 [D’Orio 1999] (Today, these women would be 32 – 61, which I believe more accurately describes the ages of *O, the Oprah Magazine’s* audience, nine years ago and now.) The audiences for the magazine and the television show are not the same. The magazine resonates with a larger audience - career women who aren’t home watching her show. “‘O is geared toward a reader who’s more affluent than a daytime television viewer,’ says Cathleen
Black.” [O’Leary 2001] In 2001, a readership study showed that nearly 50 percent of 
*O, the Oprah Magazine* readers have professional/managerial jobs. Eleven percent of the 
respondents never watched her television show, while forty-three percent watched less 
than half the time it is on the air. [O’Leary 2001]

**Competition:** In her article, “Spiritual Awakening”, Lisa Granatstein says, “O will look 
to catch on in an expanding women’s lifestyle field that includes *Martha Stewart Living*, 
*Time Inc.’s Real Simple* and *American Express Publishing’s B. Smith Style.*” [Granatstein 
2000] Other possible competitors may be, *In Style, Self; Glamour, Vogue, Good House-
keeping, Harper’s Bazaar and Victoria.* As deduced from the following statement com-
menting on the success of the magazine in the last half of 2000 – “It outsold established 
Hearst rivals *In Style, Self; Glamour and Vogue* on the newsstand, as well as corporate 
siblings such as *Good Housekeeping, Harper’s Bazaar and Victoria.*” [O’Leary 2001]

**Central Concept:** Live Your Best Life – If you can cut through the satire, Simon Du-
menco comes close to defining the mission of *O, the Oprah Magazine*, in his article titled 
‘O’ Gosh. (observations on Oprah Winfrey’s magazine) published in *Folio: the Maga-
zine for Magazine Management* in Feb of 2003; Dumenco calls *O, the Oprah Magazine* a “….gospel of self-improvement.” He goes on to call Winfrey a cultural icon; and her 
mission, that of “a cultural icon encouraging women to lead something other than lives of 
quiet desperation.”

**Content/Function:** In Winfrey’s Let’s Talk column in the premiere issue, May/June 
2000, Winfrey writes that the content of the magazine is about spirit. “This magazine 
is about spirit. Beneath the surface of all physical encounters and experiences is the 
extraordinary and the ordinary, as well as a deeper meaning. That deeper meaning is 
spirit. Spirituality isn’t something we create. It just is. It exists in all things, all the time.
It is the essence of who you are. You are spirit expressing yourself.”

Simon Dumenco, in his 2003 article titled “‘O’ Gosh. (observations on Oprah Winfrey’s magazine)” in Folio: the Magazine for Magazine Management writes, “O doesn’t have the “please-your-man sex content that gunks up other Women’s magazines.” [Dumenco 2003]

O, the Oprah Magazine tells the larger story. The content in the article, “Make the Web Work for You”, by Stephanie Saulmon from the first issue of O, the Oprah Magazine is a great example of what I mean by telling the larger story. The subhead says it all … “Get set to learn how to get the good stuff on-line. No, we don’t mean shopping, but simple strategies for tracking down the information you need, connecting more closely with those you care for and otherwise enriching your life via the Internet.” The article is not about how to shop online, a subject you may expect to find in a women’s magazine, but rather is an article focusing on how to enrich the readers life using the Internet.

In his book, Seeing the Newspaper published in 1994, Kevin G. Barnhurst describes a new stylistic period for the publication industry as “... short snippets of text with amusing graphics and many pictures, in the mode of fast food, sound bites and rock videos.” While O, the Oprah Magazine has its share of short snippets of text with interesting graphics and many pictures, the features tell a bigger story – the multi dimensional, abstract and intangible story from 30,000 feet. Although hard to put into words, William Powers describes the magazine as New Agey: “O is devoid of whining, and so is Oprah, and she and her assorted pop philosophers and lifestyle experts have done something remarkable with New Age thinking. They’ve thrown out the channeling, the crystals, and the chanting, and boiled it down to its practical essence, returned it to its 19th-century roots. The spiritual matters more than the material, says O. Self-reliance is the key to a
good life. Hard work is happiness. The world is what you make of it.

“Sure, the packaging is pure kitsch, a succession of hilarious Hallmark-goes-Zen moments. (My favorite is an ad for Elizabeth Arden’s “Green Tea Scent Spray,” with the slogan “My spirit awakens to a splash of tea.”) But beneath the amusing trappings is a Yankee philosophy that goes back 150 years and further, a thoroughly American outlook that fuses radical individualism with a practical embrace of the real world.

“O is a cultural Trojan horse, and inside it are riding Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, William James, and all the other romantic pragmatists, and they’re grinning. As I read her magazine, I kept thinking of these long-dead people. Then I came upon Oprah’s pullout cards, and there was a head shot of Emerson, with the quotation: “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.” He could have written it for O.”[Powers 2000]

William Powers analysis seems correct. In telling the bigger story, O, the Oprah magazine has borrowed from the philosophies of the American Transcendental Movement that started 150 years ago – the story of the individual’s spirit, self-expression and (nature).

Charles Mayo Ellis, An Essay on Transcendentalism (1842) (http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/amtrans.htm from this web page) “That belief we term Transcendentalism which maintains that man has ideas, that come not through the five senses or the powers of reasoning; but are either the result of direct revelation from God, his immediate inspiration, or his immanent presence in the spiritual world. . . .”

Magazine in publication: May/June 2000 to present
Appendix 2 - the launch of O, the Oprah Magazine: May/June 2000 Hearst-driven phase

O, the Oprah Magazine

Events from the May/June 2000 Hearst-driven Phase

1. Cover
2. Table of Contents
3. The "O" Calendar
4. First Oprah.com Ad
5. "Let's Talk"
6. Second Oprah.com Ad
7. Oprah's Personal Growth Summit Ad
8. The "O" Interview
9. Subscribe to O Insert
10. Feature Article: Books That Made a Difference
11. "What I Know For Sure"
12. On-line
13. CAMILLE COSBY
14. CAMMIE COBBA
15. "O" CALENDAR:
16. Hierarchical positioning (pg 20)
17. 2-page Spread Images Pen & Ink Drawings

MAY/JUNE 2000 The O CALENDAR

17 TOTAL PHOTOS of OPRAH in MAY/JUNE 2000
- (Of these are in advertisements and may or
- may not have been directed by Hearst)!
- Defining the Subject Matter:
  - 10 of Oprah alone
  - 7 in a portrait style/pose (Queen of Talk)
  - 6 of Oprah connected/engaged the others
  - 1 of a Cover of O Magazine

MAY/JUNE 2000 COVER of O, the OPRAH MAGAZINE
- Formatted style/pose (Queen of Talk)
- Impersonal, isolated subject matter with
- an emphasis on the head and hands
- Emphatic values: self-assured, confident,
  powerful and influential

In the May/June 2000 issue the emphatic values are on
Oprah the person: self-assured, confident,
powerful, influential

MAY/JUNE 2000 The Appearance
(type of artwork/typographic style)
- Cold
- Edgy
- Animated
- Cartoon

Ambiguous and vague verbal message
- Not Words, Features, ... And More
- Queen of Talk - Portrait Style Photo, Let's Talk
Appendix 3 - the launch of *O, the Oprah Magazine*: July/August 2000 Transitioning

The embedding brand character can change the function of...

Transition

...From May/June 2000 to December 2000 the following changes were made with regards to the *O Interview*: Added an intro page Larger photos...

Events from the July/August 2000 Transition Phase presented in the order in which they appeared in the magazine:

- Cover
- Table of Contents
- The *O* Calendar
- "Your Opinion"
- "Let's Talk"
- Oprah's Personal Growth Summit Ad
- Feature Article: Healthy 4 2000
- The *O Interview* intro
- The *O Interview*
- Feature Article: Guests That "Real" Ages
- Subscribe to *O* here!
- oprah.com Ad
- "What I Know For Sure"

JULY/AUGUST 2000 The *O* CALENDAR
Hierarchies positioning page 10
2-page spread
Color illustrations in a painterly style

JULY/AUGUST COVER of *O, the OPRAH MAGAZINE*
Full shot of Oprah in an environment and caught in a moment - diagonal lines, use of contrast between organic and inorganic line engages, energizes and excites the viewer

O MAY/JUNE 2000 (2 of these are in advertisements may or...significant) - defining the subject matter
1. Oprah alone
4. in the portrait style
3. photos of Oprah in a feature article
3 of Oprah connected/engaged the others
2 of a Cover of *O* Magazine

OCTOBER 2000 TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Brand Values of the Heart-driven and Harpo-driven Phases of *O, the Oprah Magazine*
  - Heart-driven Magazine (the heart-driven phase)
  - Harpo Productions (the harpo-driven phase)
  - Queen of Media: Truthful - the truth without hype
  - About "Spirit" defined as spirituality or religious
  - Ambiguity and Vagueness: Connector/engaging: able to cross age, race and class line
  - Nordic, Cold and Eddy: Cleared to be cool, insightful, elegant
  - Animated: Authentic/public

WHAT NOW FOR EASTER GIVE: FROM YOU TO YOU,
Appendix 4 - the launch of *O, the Oprah Magazine*: December 2000 Harpo-driven phase

of the product

Harpo-driven Phase

82
Appendix 5 - Key Terminology

**Brand-driven product, service, organization or business** – a product, service, organization or business that has the essence of a brand embedded in them. I liken this to the artist’s signature. Until Duchamp put his signature on the urinal, it was nothing more than a urinal – an object of use – an artifact. Once Duchamp signed the urinal he reappropriated the meaning of the urinal, it became a vessel of spirit and meaning, an expression of Duchamp’s thoughts at the time. For the purposes of this discussion, I define brand-driven in the same way. Embedding core values and attributes into a product is like putting the organizations signature on a piece of artwork, the product, service, organization or business becomes a vessel of spirit and meaning and differentiates that product, service, organization or business from others in the marketplace.

**Brand-driven Communities** – organizations where all actions, behaviors and communications are centered around its core values and attributes.

**Brand Character** – “Brand character is the spine of a company. It’s evident when a company is accountable to the values that make it stand tall. This means accountability in action, not on paper. Brand character draws a line that moral weakness cannot cross. Companies with character create brands with character. Brands with character lead.”

(from http://tenayagroup.com/blog/the-new-brand-glossary/)

Katherine McCoy says “The process of branding character is “an organic, inside-out process” with the goal of achieving an authentic brand identity.” For the purposes of this thesis, brand character or branded character will be defined as the core values and attributes of the organization.
**Brand Identity (BI)** – “*BI is the tangible part of a brand and is its visual and verbal expression*” (Wheeler 2006, p. 6). Landor defines BI as: “*The outward manifestation of the essence of a corporate brand, product brand, service brand or branded environment.*” (Landor 2006, [online])  BI is not only the brand name and mark, but the entire matrix of communications including product design, packaging and even word of mouth (Wheeler 2006, p. 6). It can be divided further into two sub-segments:

**Visual Identity** - The visual identity are the visual elements of BI. For instance logos, colors, and formats (Landor 2006, [online]). Which for the purposes of this thesis I call the visual language.

**Verbal Identity** - The verbal identity is the spoken part of BI. It is mainly the brand name, but it also includes taglines and slogans (ibid.).” (Commons Identity by Nicolas Schudel, page 12) Which for the purposes of this thesis I call the voice. Alison Davis and Paul B. Brown, in their book Your Attention, Please., define ‘voice’ as the personality of communication. “*Every communication has a voice – from the bureaucratic tone of government reports to the fun, energetic style of Target ads.*”

**Creative Professionals** – Individuals with the skills to express the essence of the brand tangibly - with the skill sets to design, verbally express, build and manage the assets of the brand.

**Experience Supply Chain Design** - Using the design of the product/service/experience as a marketing strategy. The designed experience is so powerful that you don’t need to spend as much on marketing because the designed experience does the marketing for you.

**Formula** - The mix of information, articles, reviews, features, profiles, and other information that will be included in each issue of the magazine.
**Function** - The specific mission in which the magazine hopes to accomplish. Defining the magazine with regards to the target audience, type of magazine, and driving subject matter.

**Spiritual Meaning** - a term that combines Hegel’s definition of art as the Absolute Spirit (where art gives material embodiment to spiritual content) and Danto’s definition of a work of art (to embody thought, to have content and to express meaning). Spiritual meaning is the abstract thought and content that the creator is trying to express at the time he/she produces a work of art. With regards to Brand-driven product, service, organization or business, spiritual meaning is the essence purpose for which the organization exists.

**Stakeholders** – various constituencies that may effect the future of an enterprise. They include Board of directors, Employees, Internal customers, Customers, Prospects, Government regulators, Professional associations, Industry experts, Academic Institutions, Vendors, General public, Competitors, Strategic alliances, Partners, Community organizations, Volunteers, Media, Financial analysts, Investment community, Shareholders, Investors. Because the term stakeholders include those who effect the future of the enterprise, and because those who effect the future of an enterprise may not share the values of that enterprise; stakeholders is not synonymous with those who live the brand.

**Touchpoints** – opportunities to strengthen a brand and to communicate the essence of the brand. Wheeler identifies thirty-three touchpoints: Advertising, Sales Promotion, Civic Marketing, Affinity Marketing, Public Affairs, Public Relations, Direct Mail, Trade Shows, Word of Mouth, Telephone, Networking, Presentations, Speeches, Employees, Products, Services, Publications, Newsletters, Business Forms, Signage, Packaging,
Exhibits, Proposals, E-mails, Voice Mails, Websites, Web Banners, Letterheads, Business Cards, Publicity, Ephemera

**Transvaluation** – a process where the value of an object changes in the eyes of its audience, when the function of the object transforms from an object of use to an object that embodies thought and content, has the ability to enrich the lives of others and emote meaning in an expressive, nonlinear way. This thesis will be specifically addressing the property of the reappropriation of meaning with regards to the process of transvaluation, which is the process where the artist reappropriates the meaning of an artifact by enfranchising it as a vessel to express his/her thoughts and values.


