

125 Jahre Dreipunkt

125 Years of Experience

Trade Marks **Three Dots for Dreipunkt**

At the end of the 1950s, Dreipunkt began signing their message with the three red dots, which were soon to become the central point of the trademark. It was the former company owner Hermann Schwarz himself who defined the idea behind these three dots, an idea which is still valid today. The three red dots, lined up side-by-side, signify

- **Sophistication of form**
- **Quality and reliable pricing**
- **Fair partnership**

To the present day, these principles – always updated in keeping with current trends – represent the main pillars of the company's entrepreneurial success.

The design of the products is no trifling matter, and this is equally true for the brand and the trademark. The brand reflects the essence of the corporate identity, which in turn is expressed in the company's everyday actions. The brand constitutes a defining factor which affects product design, pricing and customer service as well as the positioning of the company in relation to its competitors and how it sets itself apart from them. The brand gives a product an unmistakable identity. The brand indicates what customers are in for with a certain product – and, on the other hand, what they can expect from it. It is the condensed definition of a product's performance and its standard of quality – it creates a lasting track in the mind and acts as a social indicator for the consumers.

A Leading Role **Brands as Recognisable Signals**

Brand and customer interact in search of a common basis that will connect them. Companies put forth a message and make a certain promise – and the customers can intuitively tell whether this message and this promise will suit them and their individual lifestyle or not. The customer will also have a feeling – albeit not always before making the purchase – whether the company is sincere in its message. Especially in times when supply is abundant and many products are interchangeable, brands offer orientation and security. They provide recognisability within the unmanageable whirl of consumption, where products vie for the attention of the buyers in shrill chorus. Product ranges change, as does the prevailing taste, and every era has its own interpretation of seating comfort and home furnishing. The only constant factor that retailers and end

customers can look to is the brand, whose contents remain stable even if the surface is in constant change – which is, of course, necessary if the product is to retain a current appeal.

The contents of a brand are literally "branded" by the symbol that has been assigned to them. Similar to a stigma, be it positive or negative, the graphic symbol represents all that has been engraved in the minds (and the souls) of the target group through long years of corporate actions. It takes years until a positive brand image is firmly established – while in the wink of an eye it can be fundamentally shaken, completely shattered or reversed to have the opposite effect. The standing of a brand can change dramatically when, in large corporations led by exchangeable boards, entrepreneurial attitude, conviction and enthusiasm are replaced by a hollow marketing-bubble and when this structure then serves as the sole stabiliser of a vacuous brand identity. In this respect, the history of the Dreipunkt Company speaks a clear language.

To create a powerful brand simply by defining a message, combining it with a logo and propagating it as obtrusively as possible with the help of an opulent advertising budget – this fantasy of omnipotence held by many marketing experts is therefore not feasible. It is much more important to actively *live* the qualities which are to be embodied by the brand and to give them a face by developing a distinct and recognisable corporate design.

Re-Design The Evolvement of the Dreipunkt Logo

Already at an early stage, when marketing was still in its infancy, Hermann Schwarz recognised the importance of such a visualisation. The transformation of "Hermann Schwarz Upholstered Furniture and Mattress Factory, Donzdorf" to "Dreipunkt" as a synonym for high-quality, design-oriented upholstered furniture can be clearly seen in the first product catalogues of the 1950s. While the back cover of the publication features the intricately interwoven initials "HSD" in a circular arrangement, a new logo appears on the title page and is repeated throughout the entire catalogue: a likewise circular logo, divided into two sections by a stylised seat. The upper section is white and already shows the characteristic three dots, the lower, black section features the word "Donzdorf". Thus Schwarz clearly signals that it is not just any sofa or armchair which leaves his factory, but pieces of upholstered furniture whose qualities he himself has defined. From this moment onwards, the Dreipunkt brand gradually begins to detach itself from its "father" and take on an independent identity. What is offered is no longer "sofas made by Hermann Schwarz" but Dreipunkt products with their characteristic features.

The second phase in the development of the Dreipunkt logo can be observed during the years 1964/65. While the "Dreipunkt Donzdorf" logo still appears in its full version on the title page, the following pages including the back cover feature a reduced design consisting only of the three red dots lined up in a row which are still used today.

This also illustrates a fundamental "law" in the development of a corporate design: the balancing of change and constancy, which is characteristic of a successful brand. Basic features are retained but nevertheless modified to give the message a contempo-

rary shape. At the beginning of the 1970s, the three dots were complemented by the word "Polstermöbel" – meaning upholstered furniture – written underneath. They were also integrated into the title of an image brochure as a more independent element in the form of three punched-out dots on the cover page.

Since the end of the 1950s, these three dots, whether on their own, with a reference to the industry or – as in a later stage of the logo development at the end of the 1970s – verbally supported by the word "Dreipunkt", are therefore inseparably connected with Hermann Schwarz's idea of "Sitting in its Most Beautiful Form".

At the end of the 1970s, when this motto coined by Hermann Schwarz had long vanished from the company's outward appearance, the DLW expanded their product range. Now, they did not only produce upholstered furniture for private living environments, but also furniture for the public sector. This led to a diversification of the logo, which was by then arranged in a square. The umbrella brand name "Dreipunkt" was subdivided into "Polstermöbel" and "artCollection".

In the mid-1990s, a linear arrangement of the dots and the word "Dreipunkt" was to convey modernity and lightness and give the logo a sleeker and younger look. This, however, resulted in a lack of graphic clarity and density, and it was certainly no coincidence that at the same time the company's entrepreneurial concept underwent a similar change.

After the takeover in 1998, the logo was revised once again. Thomas Jungjohann arranged the graphics and typeface elements above each other, thus investing the logo with new strength. However, it is not only brand logos which are subject to change, but also the message they embody. Thomas Jungjohann's aim was to rebuild the formerly illustrious brand, not by nostalgically looking back to the past, but by projecting the message of Dreipunkt into the future – a future marked by internationality and rapidly changing market conditions.

After the logo had been defined and positioned according to this goal, it was redesigned once more in 2004 – subtly enough to ensure that the symbol remained recognisable but at the same time noticeably enough to show the new orientation of the brand. The word "Dreipunkt" is now in the centre of the logo, unmistakably German and therefore highly regarded in the international markets. A diagonal arrangement with the three dots in the upper left segment and the word "International" at the lower right establishes the connection between a German brand and an international profile.

TurnStyle

Perspectives on Sitting in its Most Beautiful Form

Since corporate identity is more than just products marked by a distinct sign, the same year saw the establishment of the company magazine TurnStyle. It considers itself to be a veritable turnstile for communicating current developments as well as the making-of of new products, for portraying employees whose personality has a significant impact on the company and for introducing measures aimed at giving support to trading partners. The subtitle of the magazine, which is published two to three times a year, once again takes up the time-honoured motto that was coined by Hermann Schwarz

himself. Following the thorough revision of the company's positioning and product range, this motto has regained its timeless validity. TurnStyle communicates the message of "Sitting in its Most Beautiful Form".

The Dreipunkt Company looks back upon 125 years of corporate history. It is not only the story of a company which started out by manufacturing mattresses and bridles and later took up the production of high-quality upholstered furniture. The story tells of more than just the change of fashions which cause the products to appear in ever new guises. It tells of entrepreneurial attitudes determining failure or success – in the past as well as today. It tells of competence and enthusiasm, which are the prerequisites of economic success. And it tells of vision and an intuition for contemporary trends, which can neither be achieved by reading books on business administration nor by excessive calculation and regimentation aimed at avoiding entrepreneurial risk.

It is one of Dreipunkt's basic philosophies to regard times of crisis as a chance for positive change. Succumbing to the ubiquitous climate of despondency or laying the blame on the "difficult market" or the "unpredictable customer" has never helped in tackling new challenges.

The history of Dreipunkt illustrates the essential importance of a strong entrepreneurial personality as opposed to the anonymity of a replaceable management. Brands and products can only convey as much credibility as has been invested in them. In these times of increasing globalisation not only of markets but also of corporate structures, brands are in acute danger of losing their identity. This inevitably happens when an examination of the product is dominated by the shareholder value, when neither management nor staff can identify with "their" company or when the product range becomes non-committal and no longer shows a distinct profile.

It is essential to examine the message of a product. In this context, it is especially important not only to classify, but also to genuinely understand the target group. Otherwise it is impossible to develop products which truly appeal to their future owners.

Last but not least, the clear commitment to Germany as a production location has always played a major role in Dreipunkt's successful phases. Attempting to imitate manufacturers of cheap products in foreign countries means engaging in a futile race. In the long run, such attempts are doomed to failure. Germany still enjoys a high international reputation as a business location, because it offers core competences such as innovation, sophisticated design and high-quality workmanship. It is necessary to place greater emphasis on these core competences, which have been available in this country for centuries and still exist today – they only have to be brought to bear. Dreipunkt have always recognised the importance of nurturing these competences and using them to the company's advantage.

It is the entrepreneurial values "of old" which have determined whether the company flourished or floundered in the past, and they continue to do so today. A company's economic success is built on a clearly defined and visionary corporate philosophy. A pioneering spirit, ethical principles, a continuity of change as well as a distinct brand strategy are the main pillars on which the company is based. What matters is to uphold these values as guiding principles for the future and to continually give them new meaning.