

The Next Chapter in Education

Peopledesign helps companies change.

We live in an era of great change. It's a new game for business, education, health, and politics, but most organizations do not have a new playbook. To adapt quickly, organizations need to be grounded in a focused philosophy or purpose. Peopledesign has identified a process to respond to these changes and target new goals and outcomes.

We help you get different faster. We work with leaders on design-led innovation, value propositions, brands, audience experience, and change strategy.

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Founded in 1997
9 full-time employees
Privately held by 3 owners

Consulting
Adobe (Universal Mind)
Amway Corporation
Autocam Medical
Dow
ESI Ergonomic Solutions
Fiat USA (Impatto)
Founders Brewing
Georgia-Pacific
Grand Rapids Community Foundation
Grand Rapids Art Museum
Guilford of Maine
Grand Valley State University
Haworth
Herman Miller
HON
Interface
Inscape
Jaguar Cars (Ogilvy&Mather)
JSJ Corporation
KCAD/Ferris State University
Kelley | Uustal
Lacks Enterprises
Lorin
Macatawa Bank
MPS Multi-Packaging Solutions
Nestlé (Mr&Mrs)
Neurocore
Priority Health
SitOnIt Seating
Spectrum Health
Steelcase
Whirlpool
Wilsonart
Wolverine Worldwide
X-Rite/Pantone

Recognition/Teaching
ADC Global
AIGA
American Marketing Association
American Center for Design
Aquinas College
Communication Arts
GD:USA
Grand Valley State University
Graphis
How
IIT Institute of Design
Inc. 5000
IxDA
Metropolis Magazine
Mexican Design Conference
Northwestern University
PDMA
PRSA
ReBrand
RGD Canada
TEDx
Type Directors Club
University of Michigan
Webby Awards

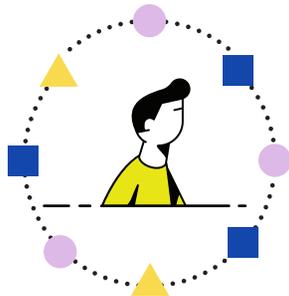
FIND FOCUS

We help you establish, clarify, and communicate your strategic direction. The goal is to increase the understanding of today to enable a vision for tomorrow.



CREATE ALIGNMENT

We connect your strategy to audience experience programs that will drive change. The goal is to develop new systems for alignment, integration, training, and measurement.



INSPIRE ACTION

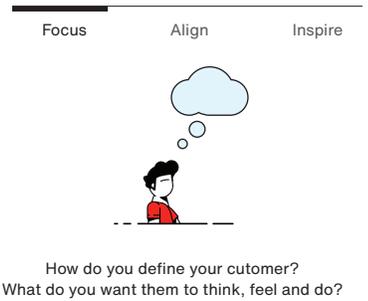
We design and produce new vehicles for communicating and enhancing the audience experience. The goal is to create breakthrough brand experiences.



-  facebook.com/peopledesign
-  twitter.com/peopledesign
-  linkedin.com/company/peopledesign
-  instagram.com/peopledesign.pix

Find Strategic Focus

To make a difference in your market, your company, your career, you must find opportunities to make a significant difference in the lives of the people you serve. That means hacking through a jungle of possibilities to find a clear path forward. We will help you explore the possibilities laying dormant in your market to establish, clarify, and communicate your strategic direction. A tighter strategic focus will increase your understanding of today to enable a vision for tomorrow.

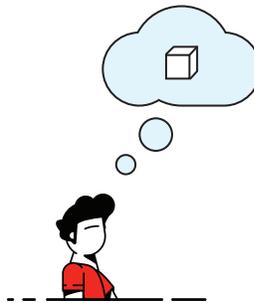


Strategy—Establish/Clarify Strategic Direction



BRAND STRATEGY

Where are you going to play? How are you going to win? Building a brand is about leadership and choices. It means addressing what your customers think of you based on their experiences. First, understand your customer more deeply, and think holistically about creating and delivering value. You begin with a few key decisions, and we help you make them.



PRODUCT STRATEGY

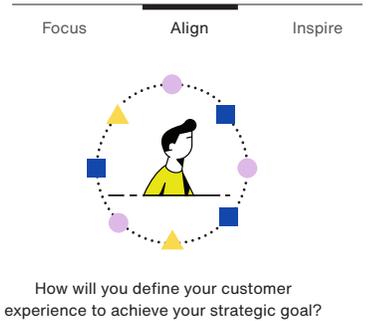
Product and service offerings are brands too. Launching a new product or service often prompts discussions about value propositions and brand value. We can help you clarify value propositions, promote new offerings, and map future positions.

“Get closer than ever to your customers. So close that you tell them what they need well before they realize it themselves.”

Steve Jobs

Align Teams and Tools

We build customer experience programs that define ideal customer interactions, and drive change by yielding a plan for today and a roadmap for tomorrow. With a map in place, we create budgets and metrics, find and train the right players, and select the right toolset to move forward.

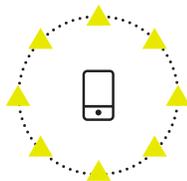


Systems—Connect Strategy to Tactics



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Is your team on the same page? How do they communicate between departments, office locations, and shifts? We help develop communication strategies, space design, and messaging to drive alignment through the organization.



DIGITAL STRATEGY

Creating a digital strategy today can be a source of anxiety for many leaders. Thankfully, we've been a strategic partner to many organizations, helping them create a path, adapt, and surf the waves of change since our inception.

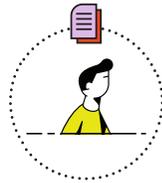
"We see our customers as invited guests to a party, and we are the hosts. It's our job every day to make every important aspect of the customer experience a little bit better."

Jeff Bezos



CONTENT STRATEGY

The demands of today's information society and the media and technologies that deliver audience-specific messages requires organizations to have a plan for developing and managing content.



BRAND STANDARDS AND UX PROGRAMS

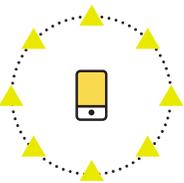
We help organizations design systems and new programs to help enhance strategic initiatives, drive internal change, establish tools that support new processes, and set new standards. Then we document the work and help with knowledge transfer to internal teams, or help with ongoing program management.

Inspire People to Act

Each customer interaction is an opportunity. When you and all of your resources are ready, it's time to engage the markets you have chosen, whose needs and habits you now know. We can design the user experience, the touchpoints, the interfaces and artifacts that help you to engage and re-engage at the key stages of a customer's lifecycle.

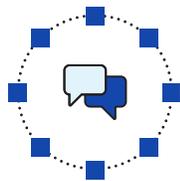


Artifacts—Create New Precedents



DIGITAL PRODUCTS

We help you create digital experiences that balance user needs, business goals, and technology opportunities.

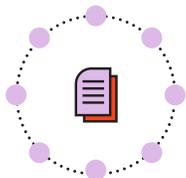


COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES

Communication is not decoration or spin, it's about a sender and a receiver, and the value in the exchange. Good communication humanizes experiences —making them accessible and understandable. Great communication offers a clear message, a story, a narrative.

*“Ideas won’t keep.
Something must be
done about them.”*

Alfred North Whitehead



CONTENT AND ASSET DEVELOPMENT

Brand leadership creates experiences people remember. Competition for customer attention is often driven by the quality of the content and creative assets that help your message stand out.

Grand Valley State University

An integrated campaign for university and development



Grand Valley State University

A paradigm shift in higher education is shaping how schools need to communicate their value, with an ever higher level of competition for both students and donor dollars. Grand Valley State University (GVSU), asked Peopledesign to achieve something they had never done before—create an integrated campaign for both recruiting and development.

FOCUS

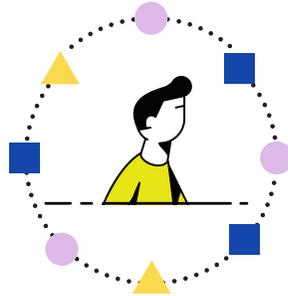
Peopledesign helped GVSU bridge a departmental gap that exists in many institutions, first by better understanding the objectives of each group, then overlaying our strategic process and primary research.



Brand Message

ALIGN

We developed a focused identity program that began to address the broader needs of the GVSU brand itself. The resulting campaign has been widely adopted by Admissions and Development and is expanding to other parts of the school including students and faculty.



Campaign Design
Message Framework
Campaign Standards

INSPIRE

In addition to brand strategy and alignment, GVSU was in need of a creative kick-start to assist implementation of the campaign for donors and recruitment. Peopledesign delivered content, assets, and templates to multiple GVSU teams for future communications.



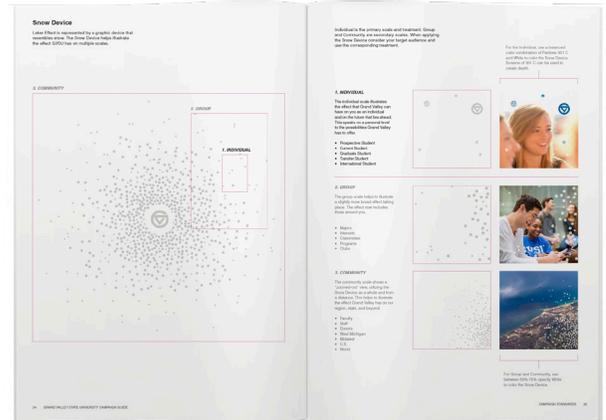
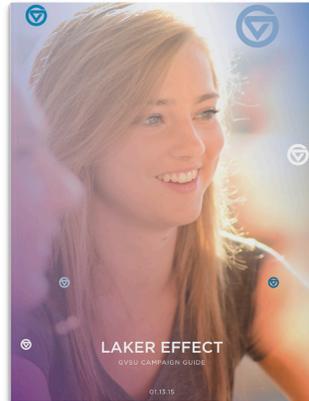
Image Campaign
Promotional Videos
Advertisements
Art Direction
Photography

“The Laker Effect program is overwhelmingly popular with all constituencies and we owe that success to your leadership and expertise.”

Nancy French
Senior Director of Communications, GVSU

GVSU Campaign Standards

Peopledesign worked with the GVSU Institutional Marketing and University Development teams to develop the Laker Effect Campaign Standard, which included an explanation of brand positioning, graphic identity and message frameworks, advertising templates, and a new image library.



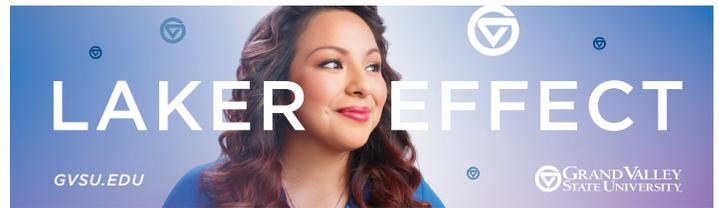
GVSU Donor Viewbook

Peopledesign worked with the GVSU University Development team to create a campaign piece with the goal of informing current and future donors of future investments while increasing donor spending and participation. With lengthy and detailed content, we designed a book that was easy to navigate quickly yet positioned for a deeper dive.



GVSU Campaign—Outdoor

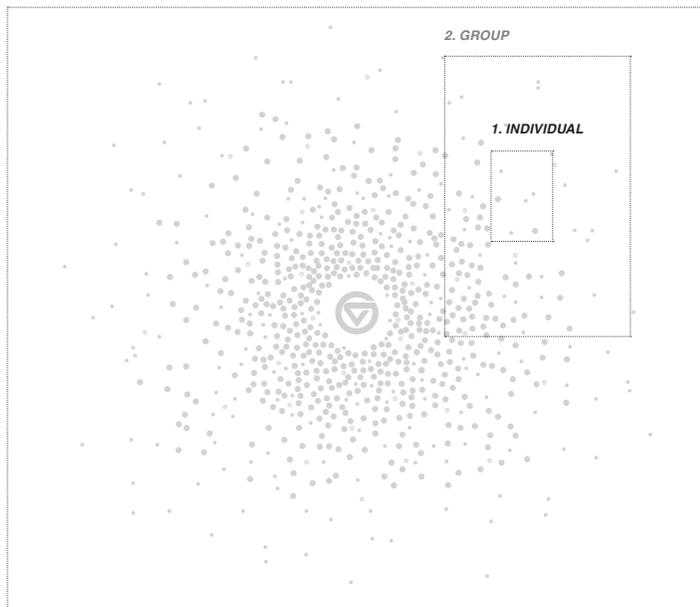
The Laker Effect campaign for GVSU included an outdoor component with billboards and busboards across Michigan and the Midwest. Peopledesign created a system of headlines to reach their audience on three different levels—personal, group, and community.



GVSU Campaign—Advertisements

Peopledesign created both web and print ads for the Laker Effect Campaign at GVSU. Laker Effect is represented by a graphic device that resembles snow. The Snow Device helps illustrate the effect GVSU has on multiple scales.

3. COMMUNITY



1. INDIVIDUAL

The individual scale illustrates the effect that Grand Valley can have on you as an individual and on the future that lies ahead. This speaks on a personal level to the possibilities Grand Valley has to offer.

- Prospective Student
- Current Student
- Graduate Student
- Transfer Student
- International Student

2. GROUP

The group scale helps to illustrate a slightly more broad effect taking place. The effect now includes those around you.

- Majors
- Interests
- Classmates
- Programs
- Clubs

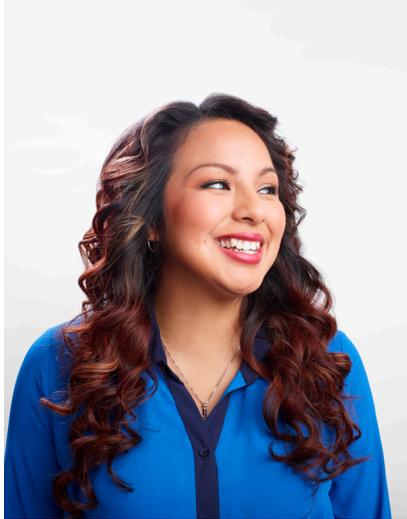
3. COMMUNITY

The community scale shows a "zoomed-out" view, utilizing the Snow Device as a whole and from a distance. This helps to illustrate the effect Grand Valley has on our region, state, and beyond.

- Faculty
- Staff
- Donors
- West Michigan
- Midwest
- U.S.
- World

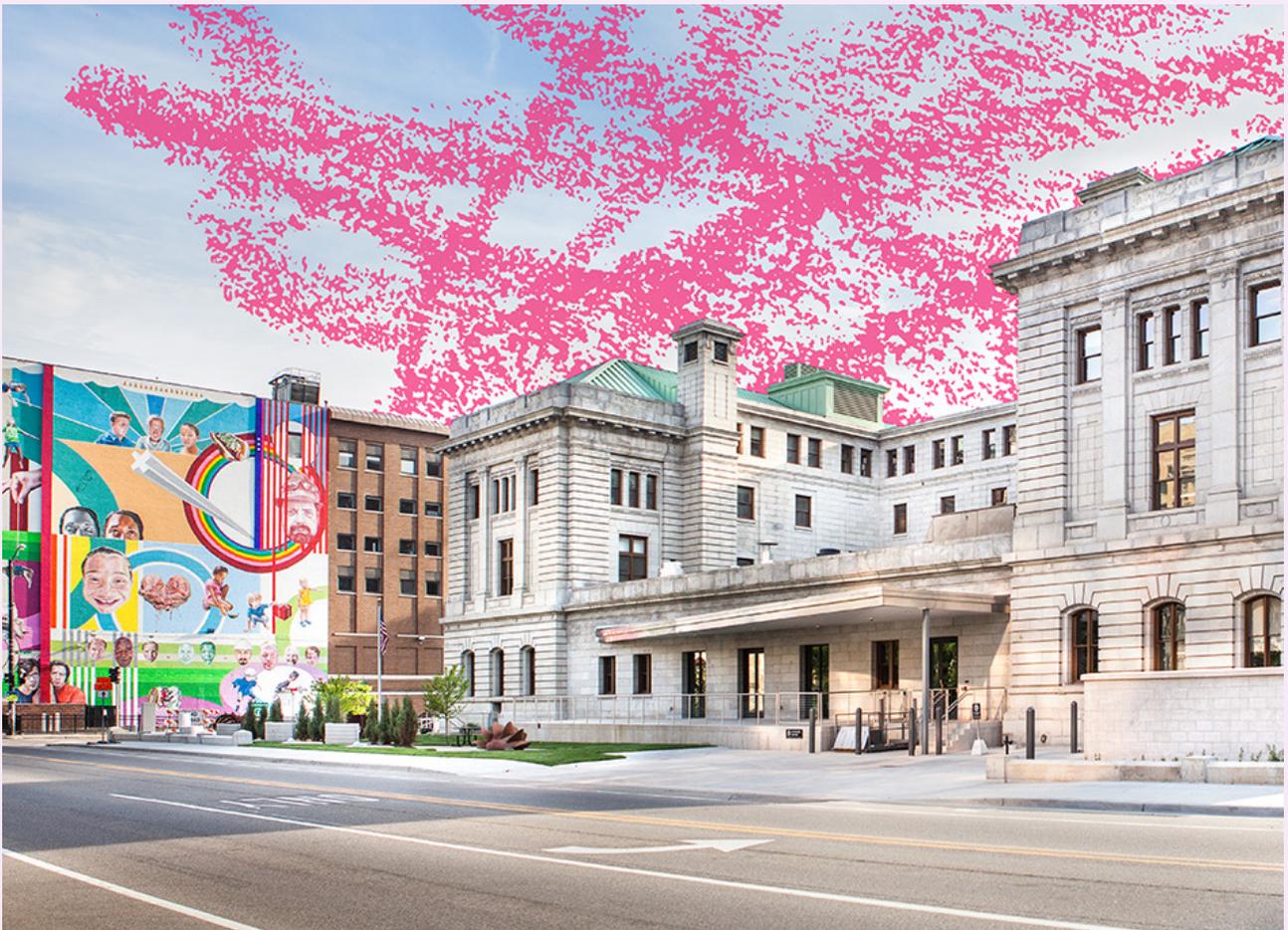
GVSU Photography

Peopledesign shot new photography and combined it with a curated selection of GVSU's current digital library to create one cohesive campaign photo library.



Kendall College of Art and Design

Creating a harder-working brand standard



Kendall College of Art and Design

When Kendall College of Art and Design (KCAD), a part of Ferris State University, needed to generate stronger awareness and resonate with diverse audiences, KCAD enlisted Peopledesign. They also needed better brand standards to define the use of their new logo to create a unified brand vision for the school.

FOCUS

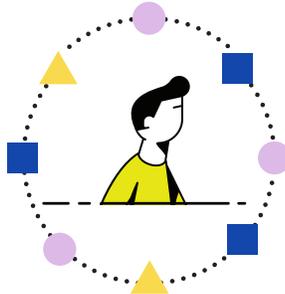
Peopledesign helped evolve the brand message to appeal to high school art students, their parents, as well as art enthusiasts of all ages through continued education and art gallery programs.



Customer Focus

ALIGN

For KCAD to maintain a relevant and cohesive brand experience, Peopledesign developed a set of standards to help communicate across multiple audiences and channels.



Brand Standards

INSPIRE

Peopledesign helped establish a pattern of use for the new message and graphic identity by producing a few sample pieces and templates that are in wide use by the internal communication team.



Application Examples

“Bee-yoo-tiful. Love. Love. Love. This is fantastic! It clearly suits our new brand standards but won’t look completely foreign to current fans. Home run.”

Elena Tislerics
Director of Graphic Design, KCAD

KCAD Brand Rules

KCAD had created a new logo for the school, but no logic for its meaning or how it might be used. Peopledesign created a more unified identity system reflecting the brand vision of the school. By dissecting the mark into its parts, we built more meaning and variability to provide a more comprehensive program.

EXTENDING THE LOGO INTO TWO PLAYFUL ELEMENTS

The logo is made from many parts, each with its own meaning.



CROPPED K

From exploring mediums, points of view, and careers—students have the opportunity to create their own Kendall.

- Element of surprise
- Revealing something
- Endless possibilities
- Hidden

SPARK

An innately human mark that symbolizes the creative energy that lies inside all of us, waiting to be released. It's the instant in which energy becomes kinetic, the beginning of something brand new, a declaration of endless possibility. It celebrates the universal vitality of the creative process while also evoking a graffiti-like image of a bold, individualistic statement that challenges convention and inspires innovation.

- Challenges convention.
- Graffiti-like
- Less precious
- Idea
- Spark
- Star
- Asterisk
- Creative
- Energy

CONSIDER NEEDS OF DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

BREAKTHROUGH

STABLE



GENERAL USE/ARC
Audience: Student



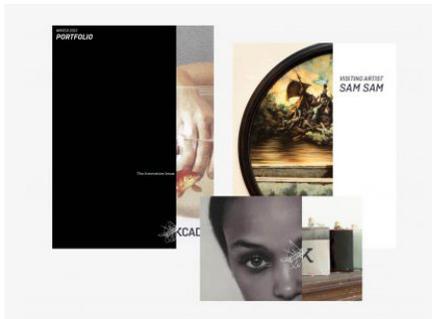
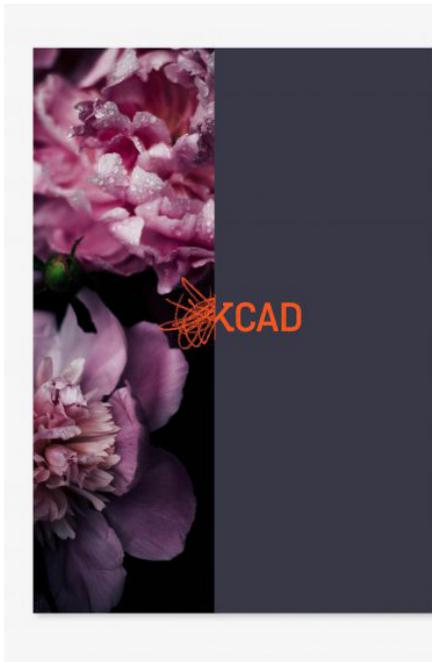
GALLERIES
Audience: Students, Community



YOUTH AND ADULT
Audience: Parents, Community

KCAD Brand Application

Peopledesign helped express the character of the KCAD brand expression through initial creative pieces and sketches to inspire and demonstrate the graphic identity usage.



KCAD Usage Guidelines

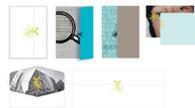
Peopledesign worked with the KCAD team to create a flexible but rules-based approach to better unify communications.

ACCENTUATE THE THE EXTREME VERTICAL

The full logo is great in many situations

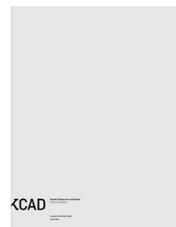


Accentuate the vertical K graphically



DECOUPLE THE K AND THE SPARK

Use the Spark as a decorative element

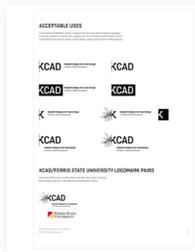
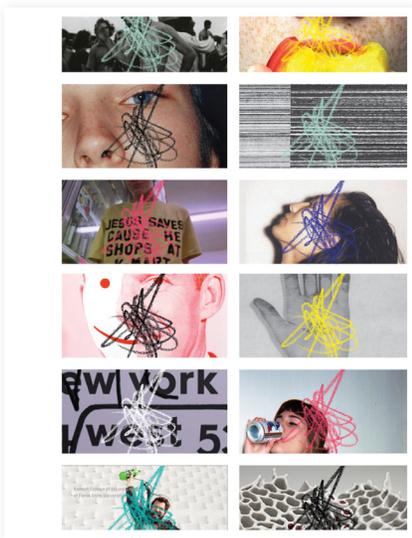
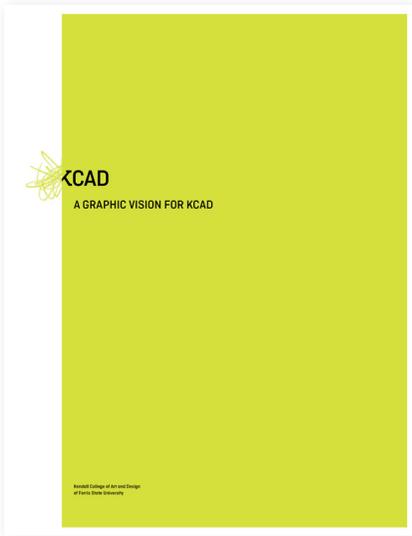


Use the K by itself



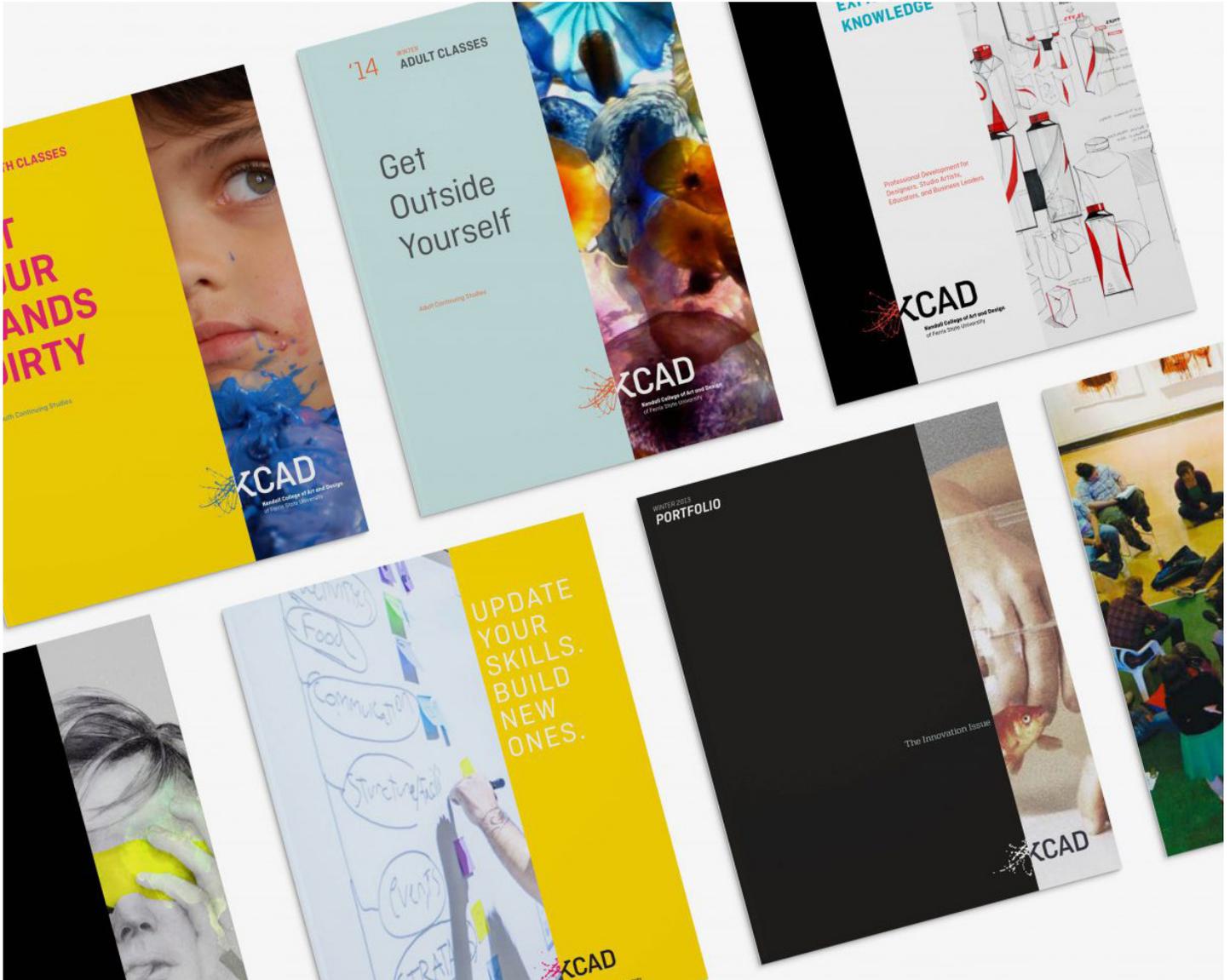
KCAD Application Templates

Peopledesign delivered templates for the KCAD Marketing Department as a starting point for new programs and communications.



KCAD Brochure System

The KCAD communications team continues to leverage the new system for its wide variety of program materials that reflect the uniqueness of each offering with a unified brand voice.



Education Brand Innovation

In the midst of significant change, education is on a precipice. New learning criteria and channels are changing the landscape. Colleges and Universities need to modernize their approaches to recruiting, fundraising, and building learning communities to remain relevant and vital.

When leaders like Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, and Mark Zuckerberg driving the new economy are famous for dropping out of college, schools need a new narrative. From Khan Academy, Coursera, and LinkedIn Learning and to edX, MITx, and HBX, distance learning is giving greater access to students. Top universities with big brand names and endowments are extending their reach. Regional schools may have a steeper hill to climb staying relevant within their communities, showing how they add value, and telling their story.

Peopledesign is a brand innovation firm which helps institutions stay relevant and agile. We've worked with colleges and universities to stay relevant in their communities, show how they add value and tell their story.

The Changing Education Landscape

Rethinking outreach to prospective students, parents, and donors.

The landscape for higher education is changing. Student demographics, influencer networks, new media, an overall market perception of the value of a degree is causing many schools to rethink their focus.

A shrinking and changing high school graduation population is forcing colleges and universities to compete on a national level. Too many schools are generally saying the same thing and competing on the same merits. To increase their appeal, schools are trying to attract students in a variety of ways—from offering scholarships to new college sports like bowling or fishing. Meanwhile, schools tend to underutilize or completely ignore alumni in the admissions process, and also rarely differentiate between materials targeted towards parents as opposed to students. All this is under the umbrella influence of technology and what it means for education generally.

Here are a few key trends we have found through our experience and research.

Changing demographics

- The high school graduation population is shrinking, forcing colleges to compete and market more heavily on a national level, and more ferociously with local competition.
- Traditional demographics of graduating high school students are also changing, becoming more ethnically diverse. How could a college's outreach change to speak to different cultures?

Influencer networks

- Prospective students are somewhat conscious about choosing a school that will give them the best chance of getting a job out of college and see alumni networks as a key role in achieving this goal. The alumni population, however, is rarely engaged in the admissions process.
- Parents are feeling the financial pinch of their child's education, questioning the value of each college, but also feeling the emotional charge of giving their child the best chance to succeed no matter the cost.
- High school guidance counselors are swamped with administrative duties and have little time to focus on college prep for their student population; what tools can schools equip these influencers with to better tell their story?

New media

- Students and parents are looking for different content from schools, and looking in different mediums (view book vs. website vs. social media).
- When it comes to "attraction" websites may be lower on the list in terms of interaction and potential students are looking more for pictures of students they could identify with rather than academic programs.
- Kahn Academy and MOOCs are challenging traditional pedagogy. How can schools utilize technology in a positive way?

The Changing Education Landscape, con't.

The value of a degree

- The high school graduation population is shrinking, forcing colleges to compete and market more heavily on a national level, and more ferociously with local competition.
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-

These trends are disrupting the traditional go-to-market strategies for colleges and universities and creating a dynamic new landscape. Schools that are clever will rethink their marketing tools and adopt new strategies based on a greater focus of their brand and target audiences to reach these students and parents on a national and international level.

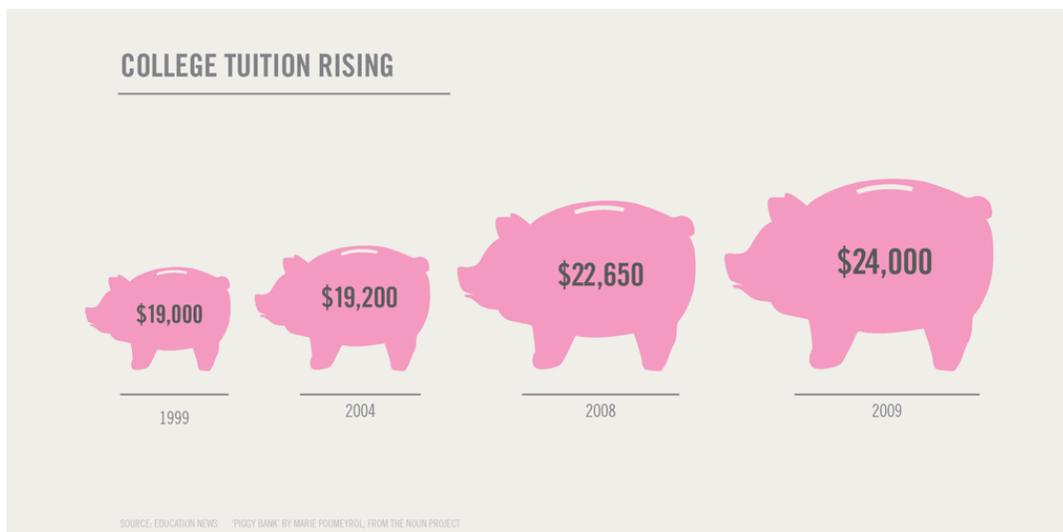
While this may seem like “doom and gloom,” it actually represents immense opportunity for schools willing to create sharper focus around their brand and express that brand in ways that are new and meaningful to parents and students.

Is Prestige Dead in Higher Ed?

Rising education costs and the value of the degree.

In our work with clients in the higher education field, almost all of the college and university officials with whom we meet describe the perception goal they have for their institution the same way. They all want to be seen as “prestigious.”

This is a curious point. Is “prestige” what parents really want from their children’s college education? Where does “prestige” rank on students’ own list of priorities when choosing a school? And what does “prestige” even mean anymore in a world where the level of success achieved by an entrepreneurial Ivy League dropout can eclipse that of any Ivy League graduate (cue Gates and Zuckerberg)?

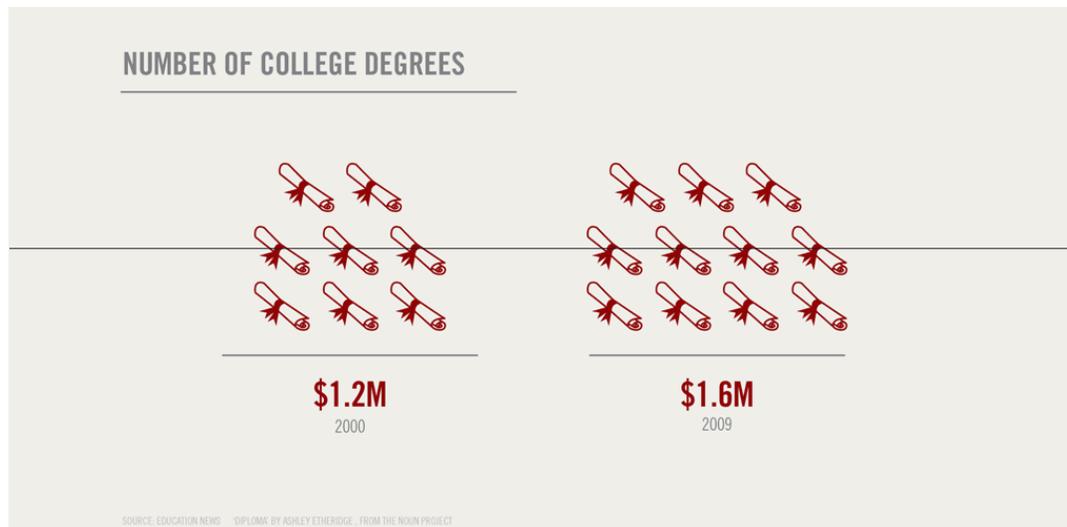


Rising Costs of College Tuition

The cost of a college degree is rising at a dramatic rate, yet the value of that same degree is decreasing as the number of degree holders continues to rise, flooding a job market that’s still not fully recovered from recession.

How can your school compete while justifying the cost of a degree even as the ROI argument is weakening? By competing on the vague idea of “prestige”?

Is Prestige Dead in Higher Ed?, con't.



Number of College Degrees

Students and parents view “prestige” differently. For a parent, “prestige” may represent future employment opportunities for their child, or bragging rights among their peers (that their kid is on what they think is “the right track”). For students, “prestige” may represent some static, staid, and outdated idea of attainment held by their parents or grandparents that they don’t necessarily agree with anymore.

Chances are your school has something better to say than picking up this over-applied and potentially counteracting term. Not saying it could be stunting your yield rates.

Once you have a strong message, the burden shifts to finding the most appropriate ways to deliver your it in order to break through the white noise buzzing around students and parents as together they make their decisions about college. A lot of the organizations we work with struggle on this front, and for good reason. It’s hard!

For colleges and universities—like other organizations—cutting through the market noise starts with knowing your target audience. Not just an outdated persona based on demographics, but a real, clear understanding of their behaviors and motivations to a degree that almost makes you seem psychic. What makes them tick? How are they making decisions? How are the decision-making processes different for parents and students? What will tomorrow’s students be searching for in a higher education experience?

It’s up to you to reshape your school’s message and deliver it in a compelling, authentic way, but we can help. Competing on the outdated ideal of “prestige” is dead.

Alumni are Worth More than Donations

Using alumni in the admissions process.

A recovering economy and rising tuition costs have forced colleges and universities to demonstrate the ROI of a degree more than ever. Alumni have become a holy grail in the academic recruitment world, yet the bulk of the outreach to alumni is for donations.

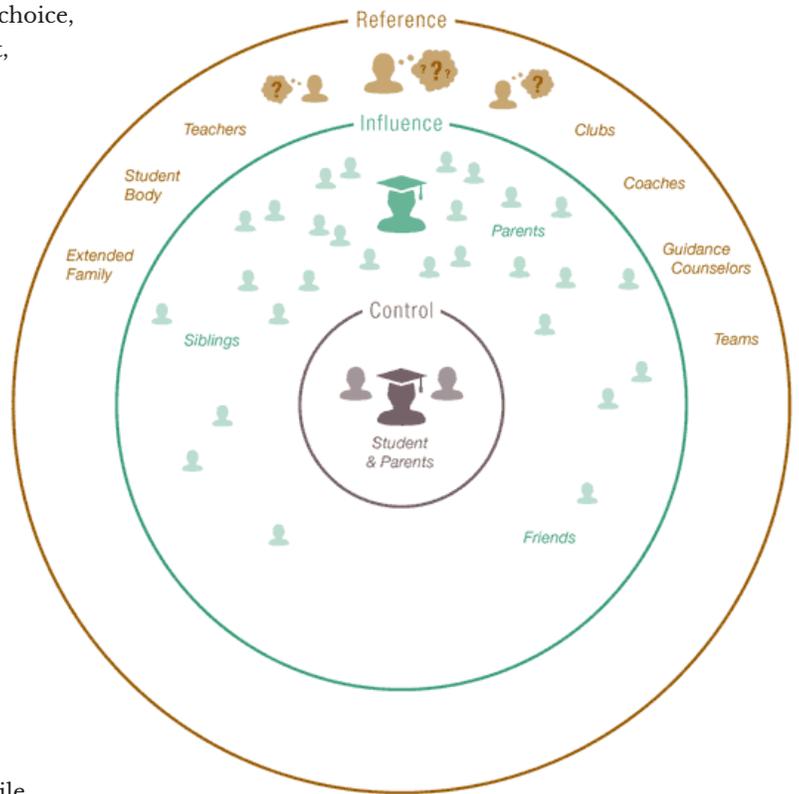
There are a rising number of applications that mention the impact of alumni as the reason for applying to a particular college. If alumni are increasingly influencing student's college choices, and are a key in demonstrating the value of a degree why aren't more schools equipping this population to be evangelists for the school rather than simply asking for donations? A brand evangelist can produce more for your institution than a \$50 donation.

Consider levels of influence and impact in recruiting. Prospective students receive varying levels of impressions ranging from those who directly impact the "control" of a decision, such as parents; those who "influence" their choice, such as friends; and those who serve as a "reference" point, such as a high school counselor.

The reason there is a gap in utilizing alumni in admissions is due to a lack of alignment. In many ways, schools are no different than business organizations in that there are different business units, or departments, that work in silos. This is simply a trait that grows over time. For colleges and universities, admissions, alumni, academics, and athletics are the silos that are typically held together by the marketing team or a single individual. There is simply too much to keep up with on an individual unit level that it makes it hard to see the forest through the trees. As resulting alignment suffers and the alumni population is left underutilized in the admissions process.

Meanwhile, the number of high school graduates is expected to dwindle, but the diversity among those graduates is expected to grow. This means that colleges and universities have to fight harder for local students, while also marketing on a national or global level to reach a larger pool of students. All this to say the way universities are marketing themselves needs to change and alumni should be a key part.

Alumni provide institutions an opportunity to make personal connections with prospective students who may identify better with the individual alumni than the institution itself.

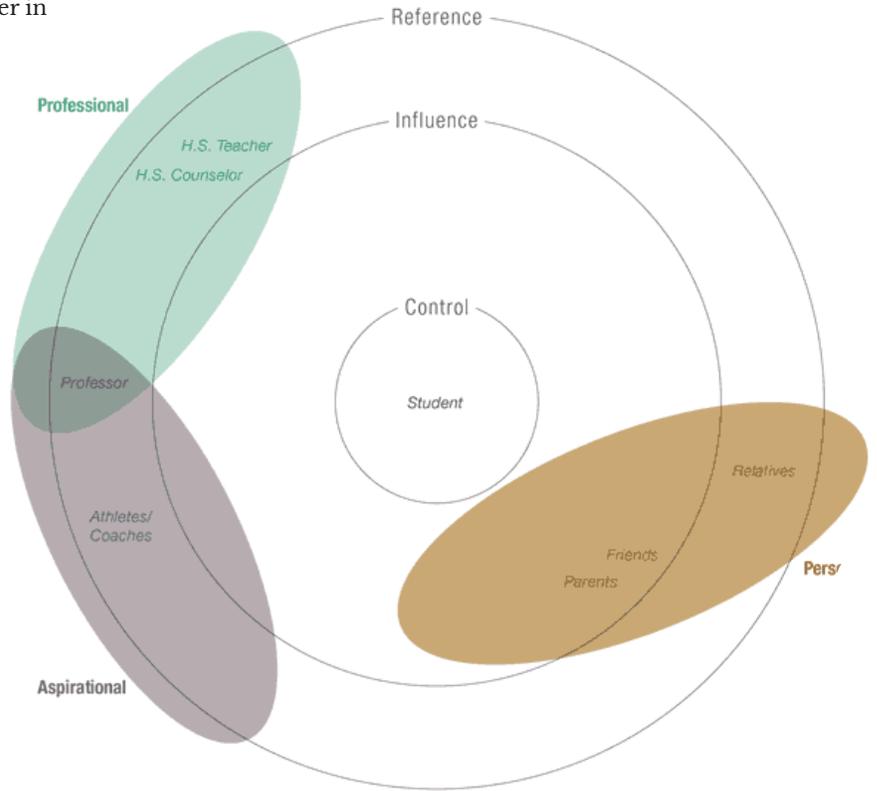


Levels of Influence in Higher Education

Alumni are Worth More than Donations, con't.

Guidance counselors, once an important influencer in the yielding process, have experienced a shift in job roles. A study of 806 middle schools and 2,084 high school counselors revealed that roughly 70 percent of high school counselors state being tasked with clerical duties; another 60 percent include test coordination as the main job responsibility. This leaves very little time to help students and their parents navigate through the intricate process of finding, applying, and choosing a school.

Higher Ed institutions will need to think differently about their brand and route to market as competition heats up for a shrinking and changing group of high school graduates. Clever universities will find ways to create alignment among a shifting set of influencers from guidance counselors to alumni.



How might alumni play a greater role influencing student decisions?