

Summary

Principles of design, the grid, and layout come together to form brand identity. This writing sample, formatted using MLA Style, analyzes the 2012 Summer Olympics brand case study in a visual essay made with InDesign. The 2012 Summer Olympics is an iconic example of branding. The 2012 Olympics logo and corresponding signage/infrastructure used throughout the event was, and continues to be, highly disputed. The modern-looking logo pushes past boundaries while adhering to successful design. It was created to exemplify a burst of energy that reflects the Games' overarching message, to break out of your comfort zone to achieve success.

The 2012 Summer Olympics' logo and complementing designs used throughout the 2012 Games will forever be debated, but, regardless of people's opinions, the logo follows "good" design practices. My knowledge of good design practices is exemplified throughout the document. The language is straightforward and informative.

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2012 Olympics Logo Case Study, Visual Essay

Each Olympic Games has a unique logo that is designed to reflect the city the Games are being held in, as well as reach out to people all over the world. Arguably the most controversial Olympics logo ever made is the logo of the 2012 Olympics held in London. The notorious graphic design sparked major debate. Some designers loathed the logo, yet some designers praised its ingeniousness. Unfortunately, the design was not received by the public well. The majority of the public did not merely dislike the logo; they hated it.

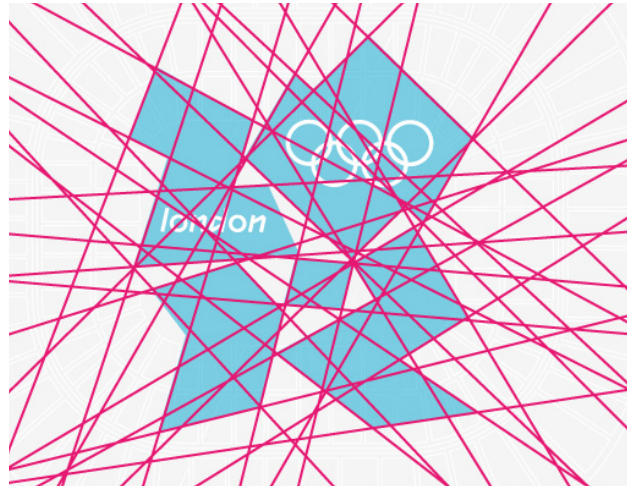
The look of the 2012 Olympics was overseen by McCann Worldgroup; McCann collaborated with London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG). Wolff Olins was employed to create the logo. The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) was responsible for developing and building the new venues and infrastructure for the Games, designating the new uses of the venues and infrastructure after the Games, and providing transport infrastructure and services during the Games (London Assembly Environment Committee). The logo was designed to get the younger, more modern demographic excited about the games. It challenged people to step outside their comfort zones and push their boundaries, exactly what the Olympics embodies. Design Boom states, "It is unconventionally bold, deliberately spirited and unexpectedly dissonant, echoing London's qualities of a modern, edgy city. Containing neither sporting images nor pictures of London landmarks, the emblem shows that the games are more than London, more than sport ("London Olympics 2012: the Look of the Games"). When the logo was revealed to the public, many people voiced their hatred for its unconventional design, but LOCOG ultimately used the logo anyway, claiming they believed the design would achieve its purpose of engaging young people. With a font created to match the logo's angular geometry, the 2012 Olympics design choices drew mass attention from all demographics.

LOCOG built the Games' complete brand around the infamous logo and its corresponding font. The logo forms "shard" patterns that were applied across the entire design of the 2012 Olympic Games at the macro and micro level.



"2012 Summer Olympics"

The “shard” pattern models a burst of energy, emphasizing the 2012 Games’ messaging. Every physical touch-point that people came into contact with during the Games, in London and other areas of the United Kingdom, conformed to the “shard” pattern. The 2012 Olympics succeeded in telling a design story. The logo, font, and infrastructure were consistent. The organized chaos of the design allowed it to be adaptable across various mediums while remaining recognizable to the theme. The success of a design is, however, more complicated than visual perception.



“London Olympics 2012: the Look of the Games”

The success of a design ultimately depends on design ethics. Ethical design aligns with morality. It evaluates its audience: What do they want? What do they need? Ethical design respects human rights and promotes the conservation of nature. Unfortunately, the Olympics has not always committed to ethical practices. Internet users now blast ill practices onto the world stage. It is impossible for organizations to hide their infractions from the public. Therefore, the overall design of the 2012 Olympics was conscientious from the start.

The Olympics attracts a colossal global audience, and as the saying goes, “With great power comes great responsibility.” There are very few instances when the majority of the world is tuned into a television program. The Games can be used to alter mentalities at the international level for the better. Müller, et al. developed and applied a model with nine indicators to examine the sustainability of the 16 editions of the Summer and Winter Olympic Games between 1992 and 2020. They claim, “The large expenditure and exceptional political leverage of the Olympic Games present a chance to pioneer necessary sustainability transformations well beyond the trillion-dollar event industry” (340-48). The stakeholders of the Olympic Games “paint them as paragons of sustainability,” but the research conducted shows that the Games held between 1992 and 2020 have a medium sustainability level. Even the Games with the highest sustainability records, Salt Lake City 2002 and Albertville 1992, did not reach high sustainability status (340-48).

The London Games aimed to be sustainable and to use the Olympics and Paralympics to promote their commitment to sustainability to the world. Commission for a Sustainable London 2012 monitored the delivery of a sustainable Olympics and Paralympics. The Commission evaluated performance in relation to detailed sustainability objectives (LAEC). London 2012 pledged to study the carbon footprint of the Games and to use the influence of the Games to encourage viewers to be mindful of their individual carbon footprints. The London Games also aimed to host a “zero waste Games.” The Games committed to eliminating waste. Zero waste was projected to be sent to a landfill, and 70% of waste

was projected to be reused, recycled, or decomposted (LAEC). Although there were doubts surrounding the ability to enforce sustainability practices and achieve projected goals, the 2012 Olympics successfully delivered on their promises. One of the most notable achievements was, “the creation of the Olympic Park on once-contaminated industrial land, which became the largest new urban parkland in Europe for 150 years” (“London’s 2012 Sustainability Legacy Lives On”). International Olympic Committee (IOC) claims Games organizers saved the equivalent of 400,000 tons of carbon dioxide. 100% of Games operations waste was diverted from landfill, with 62% of that waste being reused, recycled or composted. Furthermore, 99% of the waste from installing and decommissioning the venues was reused or recycled (“London’s 2012 Sustainability Legacy Lives On”).

Despite the 2012 Games’ commitment to sustainability, the most remembered part of the Games is still the innovative logo. Even today, people continue to argue over whether or not the logo is good or bad design, but the fact that the logo is so well remembered proves that the design paid off in longevity if nothing else. To understand why this particular logo is etched into public memory forever, we need only compare it to the boring Olympic logos that preceded it. The Olympics have produced years worth of logos that are “forgettable, watered-down, designed-by-committee logos” (Daye). Many of the older logos show specific landmarks or other images related to the hosting city, but the recent logos have been growing more conceptual based on the “scaling-up of the logo’s role” in modern society (Klein 28). The previous logos were fine. They were easily digested by the public, but nothing about them contributed to prolonged relevance or really brought audience members together.

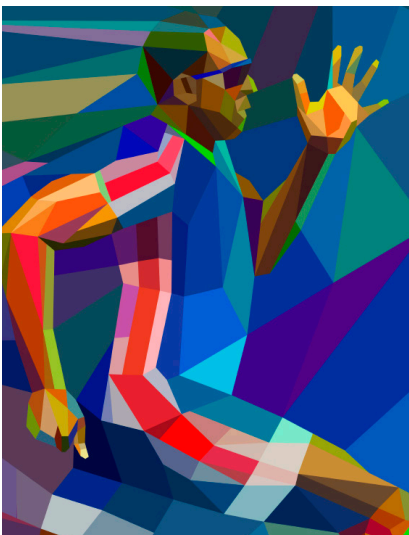
Even though the earlier logos are not as remarkable as the modern ones, IOC acknowledges that inspiration for modern branding is often drawn from the rich history of Olympic graphic design. When discussing the continual transformation of the Olympics brand, Brand Management Director of IOC states, “Extensive research of the Olympic archives was conducted in order to find design pearls from past Games editions. The team drew on every decade, especially the golden



“History of Olympic Logos”

age of graphic design through the 60s and 70s when the Olympic Games identities helped shape a new design aesthetic and approach that transcended cultures and languages” (Sallois).

Branding is intended to evoke feeling, and the 2012 Olympics logo certainly does that, but because the majority of the emotion initially evoked by the logo was negative, one can argue that the design was not good. On the other hand, the use of the “shard” pattern was made to coincide with the theme of the Games. The negative feelings associated with the logo are uncomfortable, but the entire theme of the 2012 Games was about breaking out of your comfort zone, so one can also argue that the design is good. The logo is unconventional, but it provides consumers an opportunity to engage in intellectual conversation with each other. However, the new logo could have been presented to the public in a more efficient way. At first look, the logo, font, and other corresponding designs come off as an old organization trying too hard to be cool. Successful designers consider consumers’ opinions, but the 2012 Games made the decision to stick to the meticulous logo. Minute changes could have been applied to the design to appease the public, but LOCOG insisted on their confidence in the brand. The biggest issue with the brand was the font that was used, simply because it is difficult to read. If the font would have been slightly altered, people might have hated the entire design



“Colorful Geometric Illustrations”



“Colorful Geometric Illustrations”

less. It was a complicated decision to make. If the Olympics had backed down and scratched the design of the 2012 Games, they would have undermined the message to push boundaries.

In conclusion, the 2012 Olympic Games held in London will always be an iconic example of branding, not only because its logo is so memorable, but because the design was cohesively extended across advertisements, infrastructure, merchandise, etc. Furthermore, London’s commitment to ethical practices also makes the 2012 Games hard to forget. London is still reaping significant benefits from the Games years later. The Olympics have come a long way ethically, but the brand is continually transforming for the better.

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