

AN IDEATION PROCESS FOR BUILDING BRAND IDENTITY:
THE GRAPHIC ATLAS IDEATION NEXUS APPLIED TO THE
CRAB CAY, EXUMA, RESORT AND REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

THESIS

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by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my loving wife, Shannon, and our two wonderful daughters Jess and Elli, for inspiring me to work hard every day; my incredible parents and family, who have always supported me; Mark Judson, for his mentorship and friendship; my longtime friend and colleague Tom Berno; and the Communication Design MFA program, for giving me this wonderful opportunity.

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ABSTRACT

**AN IDEATION PROCESS FOR BUILDING BRAND IDENTITY:
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Ideation strategies are essential tools utilized by the communication design discipline (CDD), which depends on ideation strategies for creative problem solving.

The CDD has historically used a variety of ideation strategies in their creative process appropriated from other disciplines.

This thesis explores these ideation strategies, which are historically and currently utilized by the CDD, and the role these strategies play in the creation of ideas. The

preliminary research focuses on three categories; historical and current ideation strategies used by the CDD, understanding brand, and designing brand identity.

These ideation strategies are analyzed and compared to the Graphic Atlas Ideation Nexus (GAIN), a fact-based research ideation strategy specifically designed for building objective brand identities.

In 2006, the GAIN process was applied to building the brand identity for Crab Cay, Exuma, (CCE), a master planned real estate development and luxury spa resort in the Bahamas. This thesis also examines the results of utilizing the GAIN process in building the brand identity and brand narrative as presented in the *Crab Cay, Exuma, brand presentation book*.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The communication design discipline (CDD) depends on ideation strategies for creative problem solving. The majority of these ideation strategies originate from external disciplines including psychology, philosophy, physics, and literature. Communication designers utilize variations of these ideation strategies and develop their own systematic approach to problem solving, often combining several different ideation strategies (Pricken, 2004).

Ideation strategies assist the CDD to generate the majority of their conceptual ideas. In the CDD, conceptual ideas represent critical thinking and are defined as creative problem solving. Ideation strategies produce larger quantities of quality ideas. In written and visual form, ideas are utilized in the design, advertising, and marketing messages that make consumer brands and corporate brands more prominent in the market (Pricken, 2004).

Employing a variety of ideation strategies yields different types of ideas. For example, word listing ideation yields written ideas; whereas, the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) yields visual metaphors to represent ideas. The CDD utilizes both strategies that have proven most effectively, with a proven record of yielding the strongest conceptual ideas within their client-designer practice (Bothe, 2009). With the growth of the corporate based CDD, there is greater demand for creative solutions

that rely on objectivity, as opposed to designers' intuitions, as the means for validation of effective communication. This is especially true in the areas of consumer brands and corporate brands where millions of dollars are invested in the development of effective brand identities (Wheeler, 2006).

It is in the areas of consumer brands and corporate brands where designers and business strategists have forged partnerships that work closely together to ensure a brand's effectiveness. An effective brand is measured by differentiation and its presence in the marketplace (Olin, 2003). This partnership is mutually beneficial, exposing designers to business strategies, as well as exposing business strategists to creative strategies. The most effective business strategies rely on fact-based research to objectively shape critical decision making to ensure long-term growth and increased market share (Rasiel, 1999).

Currently, an ideation strategy developed specifically for building brand identity does not exist. To effectively build brand identities in the twenty-first century, the CDD requires an ideation strategy that emphasizes objectivity to influence critical thinking, foster creative problem solving, and yield visual elements instead of written content.

Graphic Atlas Ideation Nexus

The Graphic Atlas Ideation Nexus (GAIN) was developed in 2006 as a communication design strategic ideation process for building brand identity. It relies on an academic model of research for generating the most relevant visual contexts (e.g., iconography) instrumental in building effective brand identities. GAIN is a straightforward, three-step process using time, lineage, and iconography.

Step one: GAIN uses a time line to quickly and efficiently establish all major contributions from the past to the present that are specific to a brand. Identifying historical and cultural attributes unique to a brand help establish areas of study. Areas of study include applied arts, arts, humanities, liberal arts, mathematics, and science. The GAIN process utilizes twenty-first century information technology to efficiently generate research from academic databases and online journals.

Step two: Establish a brand's lineage. A brand's lineage is drawn from research encompassing general academic areas of study to identify the most relevant context unique to every brand.

Step three: Research is refined within the most relevant context and distilled into representative iconography (e.g., signs, mosaics, tapestries, illustrations, maps, and photographic images).

The construct of GAIN was inspired by the utility of world atlases, which use graphic components to convey scientific, cultural, and geographical information. Where as a world atlas is a collection of maps and charts, GAIN is a collection of iconography. Additionally, the GAIN structure is influenced by genealogy mapping (i.e., family trees), which chronologically organizes and groups information to create a map of lineage.

In the GAIN process, the nexus serves as the nucleus of a brand's identity, which is represented by centralized visual information, such as iconography. Centralized visual information allows the designer to formulate visual connections, rather than written connections to a brand. GAIN utilizes sequence of cognition, which is a key component of semiotics and visual perception (Wheeler, 2006). Sequence of cognition theory states that identification and memorization are cognitive processes in which objects are

recognized in a sequence beginning with an object's shape, then its color or tonal value, and finally, written content (Chandler, 2007). Written content is last in the sequence because it relies on a human's ability to understand and decode language (Wheeler, 2006).

The ideation strategies reviewed in chapter two of this thesis yielded mostly verbal (i.e., written or spoken) content. Additionally, the ideation generated by these strategies is based on the participant's intuition, as opposed to objective means. This is due, in part, because existing ideation strategies lack a research component to help participants make well-informed contributions to the process. The shortcomings of these ideation strategies brought about the development of GAIN, an ideation process specifically created for building brand identity.

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of terms used in this thesis as defined by the CDD:

- 1.) *Brand* is the total value, distinct characteristics, and quality of corporate products, goods, or services determined by the consumer and the marketplace.
- 2.) *Brand Strategy* is a corporation's plan-of-action for the systematic development of a brand in order to meet business objectives and customer aspirations.
- 3.) *Collaboration* is a collective approach to building a brand by a diverse network of individual talents representing business strategists and CDD working together.
- 4.) *Communication Design Discipline* is a profession that designs communications using visual and typographical elements to convey information.

- 5.) *Differentiation* is a how a corporation establishes a unique and preferred market position for its products, goods, or services to increase profitability and avoid commoditization.
- 6.) *Ideation* is the process of developing creative ideas and critical problem solving.
- 7.) *Semiotics* is the study of a culture's signs and symbols, as well as their function in visual perception, cognition, and the communication process.
- 8.) *Validation* is the approval or feedback to a message, concept, or prototype for a brand by a customer or the marketplace.
- 9.) *Visual Perception* is how a person perceives the arrangement of, and relationship between objects, colors, and shapes.

The focus of this thesis is the introduction and explanation of GAIN, its methodology, and its application to building brand identity. Historical and current ideation strategies in building brand identity are reviewed, analyzed, compared, and contrasted to GAIN.

This thesis is organized into sections. There is the preliminary research, which includes an overview of historical and current ideation strategies in building brand identity. The preliminary research is followed by the introduction to GAIN and the application of GAIN in building the brand identity Crab Cay, Exuma. Finally, the conclusion examines the continued use of ideation strategies by the CDD today and future applications of the GAIN process to building brand identity.

CHAPTER II

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

Historical and Current Ideation Strategies in CDD

There are numerous ideation strategies, historically and currently, utilized by the CDD. These ideation strategies also play a role in the creation of ideas and the refinement of visual elements used in building brand identities (Tolleson, 1999). The preliminary research focused on three categories: historical and current ideation strategies used in communication design, understanding brand, and designing brand identity.

Communication designers have historically used a variety of ideation strategies appropriated from other disciplines in their creative process. Often these ideation strategies have been altered from their original purpose, adopted only in part, or entirely misused by the CDD. However, designers have created successful works utilizing these strategies for creative problem solving (Pricken, 2004).

A survey of textbooks, graduate and undergraduate communication design programs, and journal articles specific to the CDD revealed five commonly used ideation strategies. The five ideation strategies are brainstorming, mind mapping, six thinking hats, word listing, and the Zaltman Elicitation Metaphor Technique (ZMET). In Table 1, a comparative study was conducted to assess these ideation strategies.

The ideation strategies selected were analyzed using nine categories. The categories were created to assess, compare, and determine the origins of each strategy,

the objective evaluation of visual, historical, and cultural relevance, their ability to focus communication objectives, a built-in research component, utilization of information technology, and individual or group participation.

Table 1: Comparative Study of Historical and Current Ideation Strategies, 2009

	Brainstorming	Mind Mapping	Six Thinking Hats (de Bono)	Word Listing	ZMET
Origins from within Communication Design	No	No	No	No	No
Objective Evaluation of Visual Relevance	No	No	No	No	No
Objective Evaluation of Historical Relevance	No	No	No	No	No
Objective Evaluation of Cultural Relevance	No	No	No	No	No
Focuses Communication Objectives	No	No	Yes	No	No
Integrated Research Component	No	No	No	No	No
Utilizes Information Technology	No	No	No	No	No
Process Requires Individual Participation	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Process Requires Group Participation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note. None of the ideation strategies received affirmative marks in the majority of the nine categories used in the assessment.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a problem solving technique in which group participants first generate a broad range of ideas, and then analyze the ideas to determine their value (Osborn, 1953).

Origins

Advertising executive and author Alex Faickney Osborn first introduced the process of brainstorming in the 1950s. The main goal of brainstorming is to foster creative problem solving through lateral thinking. Brainstorming is the harvesting of large quantities of collective ideas through group participation.

Constructs

The brainstorming group is comprised of participants from within an organization with an emphasis on diverse backgrounds, experiences, and talents (Osborn, 1953). In most cases, the inclusion of outsiders (e.g., industry experts and academics from within the discipline) has brought fresh ideas that have proven beneficial to brainstorming sessions (Correll, 2004). All participants are considered equals without delineation between management and labor. The size of a group is most effective with 8-12 participants including a facilitator to guide the session, encourage participation, and record the generated ideas. In the traditional brainstorming session, the facilitator creates an energetic and openly collaborative setting that allows the participants to build on the group's ideas (Correll, 2004).

Methodology

A brainstorming session begins with a clearly defined problem, which is presented as a creative challenge to be solved. A clearly defined problem is extremely important because a poorly designed challenge could lead to the generation of unusable ideas. Next, the participants are given a 30-minute time limit and a goal of generating a predetermined number of ideas. For the duration of the time allotted the participants are encouraged to actively share thoughts, words, and ideas, which the facilitator records. It

is crucial to the process, as well as the overall outcome. The ideation process must occur without critical analysis of the participant's ideas during the timed portion of the brainstorming session. Once the allotted time has expired the group selects the best five ideas. These best ideas are then scored—using a 5-point rating scale—based on how well each idea meets the criterion for solving the problem(s). Presumably, the idea with the highest score is the best or most creative solution (Osborn, 1953).

Strengths and Weaknesses

A strength of brainstorming is its expanded use outside of advertising. Corporations, educational institutions, and professional organizations use brainstorming. Although there is little evidence to support that brainstorming leads to measurable increases in creative output or actual problem solving, most experts agree that it is an effective instrument for team building and increasing morale within an organization (de Bono, 1993). A weakness of brainstorming is that it does not utilize information technology to help participants conduct research. Also, brainstorming does not include an integrated research component. Without the research component, participants are unable to make well-informed contributions based on factual information. Therefore, arguments in support of their outcomes are based on intuition instead of objective facts.

Mind Mapping

Mind mapping is one of the oldest ideation methods in existence with origins dating back to third century philosopher, Porphyry of Tyros.

Origins

Porphyry used a similar technique to modern mind mapping to understand the concept categories of Aristotle (Martindale, 2008). In the 1960s, Dr. Allan Collins and M.

Ross Quillian were inspired by Porphyry's techniques and developed modern mind mapping as an ideation strategy. Collins is considered the father of the modern mind mapping (Martindale, 2008). However, British born author and psychologist Tony Buzan claims to be the inventor of modern mind map. While attending the University of British Columbia as an undergraduate in the 1960s, Buzan initially developed his mapping method as an alternative form of note taking. He claimed in his book, *The Mind Map Book: How to Use Radiant Thinking to Maximize Your Brain's Untapped Potential*, that mind mapping was more effective than traditional methods of note taking (Buzan, 1993).

Constructs

Mind mapping is an ideation method that utilizes a diagram to connect words, ideas, and visual elements originating from a centralized key word, concept, or problem. Alternately described as a radiant word list, the composition of a mind map is based on the construct of radiant thinking with all elements arranged in a radial manner like branches on a tree viewed from above. A finished mind map is organic in appearance and is free-formed, resembling objects in nature (Buzan, 1993).

Methodology

The central theme, or stated problem, serves as the nucleus from which 10 associated words or sub-themes branch out. From these original 10 branches extend an endless association of words expressing every sight, smell, taste, or sensation recalled by the participant (Buzan, 1993). The assemblages of words radiate from the centralized theme to generate new ideas, expand creativity, and help in problem solving. An individual or a group working together can conduct this ideation strategy.

Strengths and Weaknesses

A strength of mind mapping is its popularity and its expanded use in advertising, educational institutions, and professional organizations. This nonlinear ideation strategy is an effective instrument for organizing and retaining information (Martindale, 2008). However, there is no conclusive evidence to support that mind mapping leads to measurable increases in creative output or actual problem solving (de Bono, 1993). A weakness of mind mapping is that it does not utilize information technology to help participants conduct research. Also, mind mapping does not include an integrated research component. Without the research component, participants are unable to connect relevant words, ideas, and visual elements based on factual information. Therefore, arguments in support of their outcomes are based on intuition instead of objective facts.

Six Thinking Hats (de Bono, 1993)

The six thinking hats method is an ideation tool that introduces six colored hats, which are metaphors representing various types of thinking processes used for problem solving.

Origins

Developed by Dr. Edward de Bono in 1985, this method was designed to develop lateral thinking, to elicit more efficient problem solving, and to help groups work together more effectively. Traditional problem solving uses vertical thinking, finding the best approach to solving a problem in a clearly defined direction. In lateral thinking, the purpose is to move in any direction generating different approaches, and consequently, different solutions.

Constructs

De Bono (1985) explained, “Each of the six thinking hats has a color, the color provides the name for the hat and the color of each hat has a related function” (p. 13). De Bono identified these specific functions as follows:

- 1.) *White hat* is neutral, objective (i.e., facts and figures).
- 2.) *Red hat* is emotional suggesting anger (e.g., seeing red), rage, and emotions.
- 3.) *Black hat* is serious, cautious and careful.
- 4.) *Yellow hat* is optimistic, positive, and offers hope.
- 5.) *Green hat* is abundant creativity, fertility, and new ideas.
- 6.) *Blue hat* is cool, organized and concerned with control.

Methodology

Having identified the six thinking hats and their distinct functions, the group develops ideas wearing one hat at a time. The group agrees to focus using only terms and perspectives represented by that particular hat. Together the group first agrees on how they will think, what to think about, how to evaluate their thinking, and finally the best way to implement their thoughts. The session always begins with and ends with the team wearing only the blue hat (de Bono, 1985). The six thinking hats method is productive because it focuses the discussion on the right approach, at the right time, and only as needed. With all participants focused on a particular approach at one time, there is more efficient collaboration. For example, if one person is reacting emotionally (i.e., red hat), while another person is trying to be objective (i.e., white hat) while still another person is being critical (i.e., black hat) there is no group collaboration. Another use for this method is in a sequence of actions: firstly, to explore the problem; secondly, to develop a set of

solutions; and finally, to select the best solution through a process of validation (de Bono).

Strengths and Weaknesses

De Bono's six thinking hats method has emerged as a popular and widely used ideation tool for top business strategists and management. A strength of six thinking hats is its use of lateral thinking. Participants generate different approaches to developing ideas and different solutions to solving problems in an organized and systematic way (de Bono, 1985). Also, the six thinking hats method also allows the individual participants to have equal input, free of criticism or judgment. Like other ideation tools, the six thinking hats method is an effective instrument for team building, creating group cohesion, and increasing morale within an organization (de Bono, 1993). A weakness of the six thinking hats method is that it does not utilize information technology to help participants conduct research. Also, the six thinking hats method does not include an integrated research component. Without the research component, participants are unable to discover relevant contexts based on factual information. Therefore, arguments in support of their outcomes are based on intuition instead of objective facts.

Word Listing

A literature review uncovered little information on the origins of word listing as an ideation strategy. This strategy is most often associated with literature, especially in creative writing.

Origins

During the 1950s, university English professors began using word listing as a teaching technique to improve the ideas, the stories, and the characters developed by student writers. Eventually, this ideation method was appropriated and applied to other creative disciplines, including communication design.

Constructs

Word listing is the easiest of all the ideation strategies to use, primarily due to its few components and its simple construction. Word lists are traditionally comprised of multiple categories related to the problem to be solved. With the categories identified, the participant then fills each category with a long list of associated words.

Methodology

Word listing is accomplished by writing down key words that are most associated to a specific problem or need, new ideas are revealed, helping to solve the problem. The word list is reviewed and analyzed to determine connections between the most relevant key words, from which new ideas, or solutions, are created for the stated problem (Tolleson, 2000). An individual or a group working together can conduct this ideation strategy.

Strengths and Weaknesses

A strength of word listing is its popularity and expanded use by writers, as well as its use in advertising and CDD. Also, wordlists consistently yield effective creative solutions for creative professionals, academics, and students. Like other ideation strategies, word listing is also an effective instrument for team building, creating group cohesion, and increasing morale within an organization (de Bono, 1993). A weakness of

word listing is that it only yields written elements to express participant's ideas. Another weakness is that word listing does not utilize information technology to help participants conduct research. Also, word listing does not include an integrated research component. Without the research component, participants are unable to identify key words or categories based on factual information. Therefore, arguments in support of their outcomes are based on intuition instead of objective facts.

ZMET

The ZMET is used to access both conscious and unconscious thoughts by exploring peoples' non-literal or metaphoric expressions represented through photographic imagery. The ZMET was based on Zaltman's premise that a human's thoughts are visual in nature rather than verbal or literal (Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008).

Origins

ZMET is a patented market research tool developed by Dr. Gerald Zaltman at the Harvard Business School in 1995.

Constructs

The ZMET ideation strategy is a four-step process, requiring research study participants and researchers working together. Step 1: ZMET study participants collect images over a predetermined period of time. Step 2: Researchers conduct a two-hour one-on-one interview with individual study participants. Step 3: Researchers assist research study participants to create a collage constructed from imagery collected by the study participants. Step 4: Researchers conduct observations and analysis from both the participant's interview and collage.

Methodology

Research study participants collect photographic images that represent their thoughts and feelings about the topic of interest (e.g., a consumer product, organization, or professional service). The imagery in the collage contains important non-verbal data for uncovering deeply held, often unconscious, thoughts and feelings (Eakin, 2002).

Researchers interview ZMET study participants. Through a proprietary process imagery is analyzed to uncover the relevant fundamental structures that influence people's thoughts on a topic. During the ZMET interview, storytelling and other unbiased investigational techniques are used to elicit metaphoric responses to frame the participant's thinking, emotions, attitudes, and concerns. At the end of the interview process, the participants take part in the creation of a collage built from their imagery. This collage provides the researcher with a detailed and meaningful depiction of how the participant viewed the topic, whether that topic is a consumer product, brand, or general experience (Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008).

Strengths and Weaknesses

A strength of the ZMET technique has been its successful use by academic researchers at the Harvard Business School. ZMET is used to study consumer reactions to a variety of products, related to both marketing and the social sciences. This technique continues to yield positive results for consumer brands, as well as governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations (Eakins, 2002). Though a proprietary process, an individual or a group working together can conduct variations on this ideation strategy. The CDD, business strategist, and educators have recently adapted ZMET techniques for effective problem solving. The proprietary status of ZMET is also a potential weakness.

Also, ZMET does not include an integrated research component. Without the research component, participants are unable to understand the significance of visual elements and associations based on factual information. Therefore, arguments in support of their outcomes are based on intuition instead of objective facts.

All of these ideation strategies have proven both valuable and reliable in contributing to a communication designer's success in problem solving. These strategies remain effective ideation tools, continue to be used within the CDD, and are currently taught in most communication design programs. A weakness of most of these strategies is that they rely heavily on an individual's own intuition to solve problems. Problem solving based primarily on intuition results in outcomes that are subjective (i.e., emotionally based) rather than objective (i.e., fact based). Furthermore, intuition always favors participants with the most experience and from experience comes a better perspective and greater insight into the problem to be solved.

Understanding Brand and Brand Identity

There are many books, articles, and journals dedicated to the subject of brand. Most of the discussions and theories on brand are derived from the perspective of business, marketing, and advertising, which are primarily focused on brand strategy.

Brand

Brand can be viewed from three different perspectives: the consumer, business strategists, and the CDD. In consumer terms, brand is defined as an experience. A person's perception of a product, service, or company determines the success or failure of a brand. Business strategists see brand as a product, service, or company that has operations, employees, assets and obligations, which have to be managed and controlled.

From the CDD perspective brand is a product, service, or company that has an identity. A brand's identity has to be created, promoted, and maintained (Landa, 2006).

The world's economy is based on a compendium of mass production, mass customization, and mass consumption (Neumeier, 2005). In today's marketplace, there are thousands of brand choices for the individual consumers. The average consumer will be exposed to over 3,000 marketing messages per day, up from 1,500 in 1965 (Neumeier, 2006). All companies have the same goals: to stand out in the market place and get their brand noticed. Before a company can achieve this, they must know who they are, what they do best, and if they are relevant in the market. Not until a company knows the answers to these questions can they build brand presence. Strong brands have strong brand identities, and companies strive to capture the brand presence of industry leaders such as Nike, Apple, Mercedes-Benz, and Coca-Cola (Neumeier, 2006).

Successful brand identities are developed and maintained through the collaboration between business strategists and creative agencies (Aaker, 2004). Building an effective and sustainable brand identity and its integrated brand identity system with a multi-component architecture, is a collaborative endeavor. There are a multitude of firms capable of fulfilling a company's brand needs. There is not, however, one solution to building brand identity and its architecture (Wheeler, 2006). Brands are developed and managed with an ever-expanding roster of consultants representing design firms, business strategists, researchers, and advertising agencies.

Collaboration between these unstructured networks is not new nor is it unique to the CDD. Consultant and brand strategist Marty Neumeier suggests that Hollywood offers valuable insight into a variety of network models that work for brand building. By

observing the collaborative networks employed in film making (i.e., producers, directors, cinematographers, set designers) brand designers can assemble first-class teams of specialized talents to work together. There are three preferred models for managing brand collaboration: outsource the brand to an all-in-one branding firm, outsource the brand to a branding firm that utilizes a network of subcontractors, and internal development and management of brand overseen by a chief branding officer (Neumeier, 2006).

Brand Identity

A brand identity is a company's trademark and it is the most important visual component of a company's brand. Trademarks are mistakenly referred to as logos (Neumeier, 2005). The term logo is shorthand for logotype (i.e., word-mark), a customized trademark comprised solely of letterforms. In Figure 1, the K9 Academy brand identity is an example of a logotype.



Figure 1. The K9 Academy brand identity is an example of a logotype.

In Figure 2, the Botanique brand identity is an example of a traditional trademark. Both brand identities are considered trademarks. The sole purpose of a brand identity is to serve as an iconic symbol for a company. The most effective brand identities are simple in their design, instantly recognizable, authentic, memorable, and meaningful across different cultures and customs (Wheeler, 2006).



Figure 2. The Botanique brand identity is an example of a traditional trademark arranged with a supporting typographic element called a signature.

A company's brand identity is not its brand, and a company's brand is not determined by its corporate identity system. A brand identity system (see Figure 3) refers to the broad application of a company's brand identity to a controlled system of publications, advertisements, stationery, signage, vehicles, equipment, and non-print marketing materials (Landa, 2006).



Figure 3. Pesce brand identity system showcasing the seafood restaurant's brand identity applied to a menu, matchbox, stationery, and apparel.

Globally, brand identity in the twenty-first century is a multi-billion dollar industry. Corporations invest millions of dollars annually on building and maintaining brand identities (Wheeler, 2006). Along with ever-increasing capital expenditures are higher expectations for creative solutions based on critical thinking and academic research.

Historically, the ideation strategies used in CDD yield only subjective outcomes that are based on designers' intuition. This is partially due to the lack of a research component in these strategies to help benefit the process and the participants. Without conducting research, participants using these ideation strategies cannot make well-informed contributions to the ideation process. The outcome is ideation that lacks objectivity, and problem solving that is based on personal intuition. In addition, these existing ideation strategies do not take advantage of twenty-first century information

technology. Utilizing information technology enables researchers unlimited access to databases, online journals, corporate literature, and financial reports to efficiently generate reliable research.

CHAPTER 3

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

All five ideation strategies reviewed are effective and continue to be used within the CDD for different reasons. Firstly, these strategies produce ideation using lateral and radiant thinking, which are well suited for visual thinkers (de Bono, 1993). Secondly, most of these strategies have an established record of producing good results (Pricken, 2004). And thirdly, these strategies are effective for team building and increasing morale within an organization (de Bono, 1993).

A common shared weakness of these strategies is that they yield ideation outcomes based primarily on intuition resulting in outcomes that are more subjective rather than objective. Missing from all of these ideation strategies was a clearly defined research component to generate relevant contexts (i.e., facts, data, verifiable sources of information).

From these weaknesses three questions arise:

- 1.) What benefits would come from a fact-based research ideation strategy in building objective brand identities?
- 2.) What benefits would come from utilizing information technology for generating research?

3.) What benefits would come from an ideation strategy that generates visual representations of ideas, as opposed to written or verbal representations of ideas?

Hypothesis

Although the five ideation strategies examined for this thesis have proven both valuable and reliable, developing a fact-based research ideation strategy bridges the current gap between intuition and fact that is crucial for building effective brand identities. GAIN is a fact-based research ideation strategy specifically designed for building objective brand identities. Academic areas of study are the source of fact-based research in this ideation process. GAIN utilizes iconography generated from these academic areas of study to create a lasting visual nexus for building effective brand identity.

In Table 2, ideation strategies used by the CDD were compared to GAIN. All of the ideation strategies selected were analyzed using nine categories. The categories were created to assess, compare, and determine the origins of each strategy; the objective evaluation of visual, historical, and cultural relevance; their ability to focus communication objectives; integrated research component; utilization of information technology; and individual or group participation.

Table 2: Comparative Study of Existing Ideation Strategies VS. GAIN, 2009

	Brainstorming	Mind Mapping	Six Thinking Hats (de Bono)	Word Listing	ZMET	GAIN
Origins from within Communication Design	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Objective Evaluation of Visual Relevance	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Objective Evaluation of Historical Relevance	No	NO	No	No	No	Yes
Objective Evaluation of Cultural Relevance	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Focuses Communication Objectives	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Built-in Research Component	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Utilizes Information Technology	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Process Requires Individual Participation	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Process Requires Group Participation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note. GAIN was the only ideation strategy to receive affirmative marks in the majority of the nine categories used in the assessment.

GAIN

There were three main goals for creating GAIN. Firstly, the goal was to create an ideation strategy unique to communication design that underscored the importance of research in building brand identity. Secondly, the goal was to develop an ideation strategy that yielded visual elements—instead of written or verbal responses—as representations of the ideation process. Thirdly, the goal was to initiate clients to creative solutions that fostered critical review based on objectivity as opposed to subjective points-of-view.

Origins

The origins of GAIN are rooted in scholarly and creative research into ideation, critical thinking, creative problem solving, and visual perception, from building identities and identity systems for corporate and consumer brands, and teaching communication design undergraduates brand identity. Texas State University-San Marcos associate professor Jeffrey G. Davis and associate professor Thomas C. Berno developed the GAIN process in 2006 in collaboration with Mark Judson, Judson Design Associates, Houston, Texas.

Constructs

The GAIN process was constructed of three components: time, lineage, and iconography (see Figure 4). Each of these three components played an essential role in identifying only the most relevant visual elements essential to building effective brand identities.

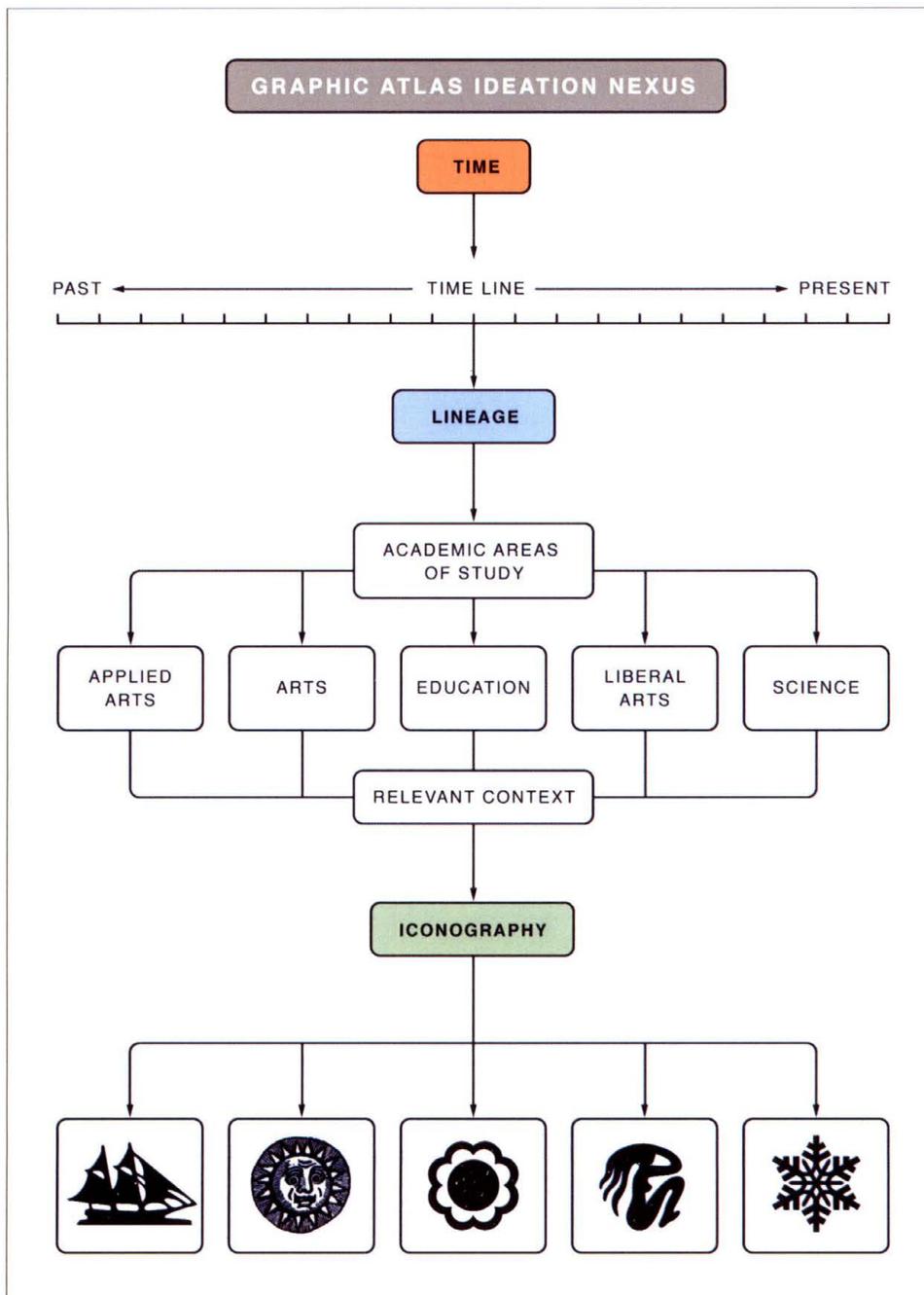


Figure 4. Diagram highlighting the three components of GAIN: time, lineage, and iconography (Berno, Davis, & Judson, 2006).

Time Component.

The time component is a historical time line that includes all people, places, and events related to a brand. The time line reveals all major contributions from the past, through the present, including current events. Time lines identify the distinctive history that is unique to every brand. GAIN participants access on-line databases to locate existing time lines or utilize share-ware (i.e., free online software) to efficiently generate time lines.

Lineage Component.

The lineage component links relevant contexts gathered from the various academic areas of study. The premise of the GAIN method is that all ideation must originate from verifiable facts discovered through academically based research. Unlike other ideation methods, the GAIN method outlines specific areas of research based on established academic areas of study. Sound research practices uncover the most relevant context related to the project (Berno, Davis, & Judson, 2009).

Iconography Component.

Iconography is the third component in the GAIN process. The GAIN process utilizes iconography as a nonverbal representation of a brand's most relevant context. Iconography creates instant long-term impressions that are easily recognized by the human mind (Chandler, 2007). This allows the designer to synthesize the most relevant context as visual forms, which is an important step in the initial development of a brand identity.

Methodology

In the GAIN process, participants can work in a group or individually. Prior to initiating the GAIN process, participants are given a project brief related to the brand.

Step One: Participants in the GAIN process generate a historical time line for the project. For the duration of the one hour allotted, participants access online databases to efficiently generate time lines. The purpose of the time line is to reveal the specific areas of study that are most relevant to the brand.

Step Two: Participants are allotted four to six hours to establish a brand's lineage. A brand's lineage is established by connecting specific research collected from literature reviews, academic databases, e-journals, and online portals. Researching and fact-finding is collected from specific areas of study to identify the most relevant context unique to every brand. Academic areas of study may include applied arts, arts, humanities, liberal arts, mathematics, and science. The areas of study are different for every brand and are determined by factors such as industry sector (e.g., energy, manufacturing), product category (e.g., food, cosmetics), geographic location, and specialization (e.g., consumer brand, corporate brand).

Step Three: In this final step in the GAIN process, participants are allotted four to six hours to collect iconography from various resources including books, online image databases, and royalty-free image web sites. The artistic style of the iconography plays an important role guiding the overall aesthetics of a brand identity. Uncovering signs, mosaics, tapestries, illustrations, maps, and photographic images from various historical periods and diverse cultural origins are influential in determining the aesthetics of a brand.

Strengths and Weaknesses

A strength of the GAIN process is its effectiveness due to its utilization of information technology and its reliance on academic research to identify a brand's most relevant visual context. Accordingly, GAIN reveals a brand's most relevant context, an essential step in differentiation, which is a key element in building an effective brand identity (Aaker, 2004). Most strategies only generate words or metaphoric imagery to represent ideas. These written or verbal representations must then be decoded and converted into visual imagery by the brand identity designer. In the GAIN process, iconography is the inspiration, as well as the defining visual elements essential for building an effective brand identity. These visual elements become the nexus of a brand. The nexus defines a brand's attributes, shapes its narrative (i.e., communicated message), and it is the core of a brand's identity. A weakness of this process is that GAIN is more time consuming than other ideation strategies. In addition, participants must have access to computer technology in order to conduct research. Finally, the GAIN process has only been applied on a limited basis. Currently, only five brand identities have been built utilizing GAIN, one of which was the brand identity for Crab Cay, Exuma.

Chapter 4

METHODS

The Application of GAIN to Building the Crab Cay, Exuma, Brand Identity

In 2006, the GAIN process was applied to building the brand identity for Crab Cay, Exuma, (CCE), a master planned real estate development and luxury spa resort in the Bahamas.

The CCE Development and Brand Identity Teams

Murphy Development International, Inc., Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Cushman Wakefield, Houston, Texas, commissioned Judson Design Associates, Houston, Texas, (2006) to build the brand identity for the Crab Cay, Exuma, project (CCP).

Judson Design Associates assembled the Crab Cay brand team (CCBT) from industry specialist that included the project team leader and coordinator, Mark Judson; the copywriter, brand strategist, and Texas State University-San Marcos, associate professor Thomas C. Berno, Austin, Texas; public relations, Dancie Perugini Ware, Houston, Texas; photographer, Terry Vine; Andy Deerwater, Dearwater Design, Houston, Texas; environmental graphics firm DSGD, Austin, Texas; and brand identity designer, brand strategist, and Texas State University-San Marcos, associate professor Jeffrey G. Davis, Wimberley, Texas (see Figure 5).

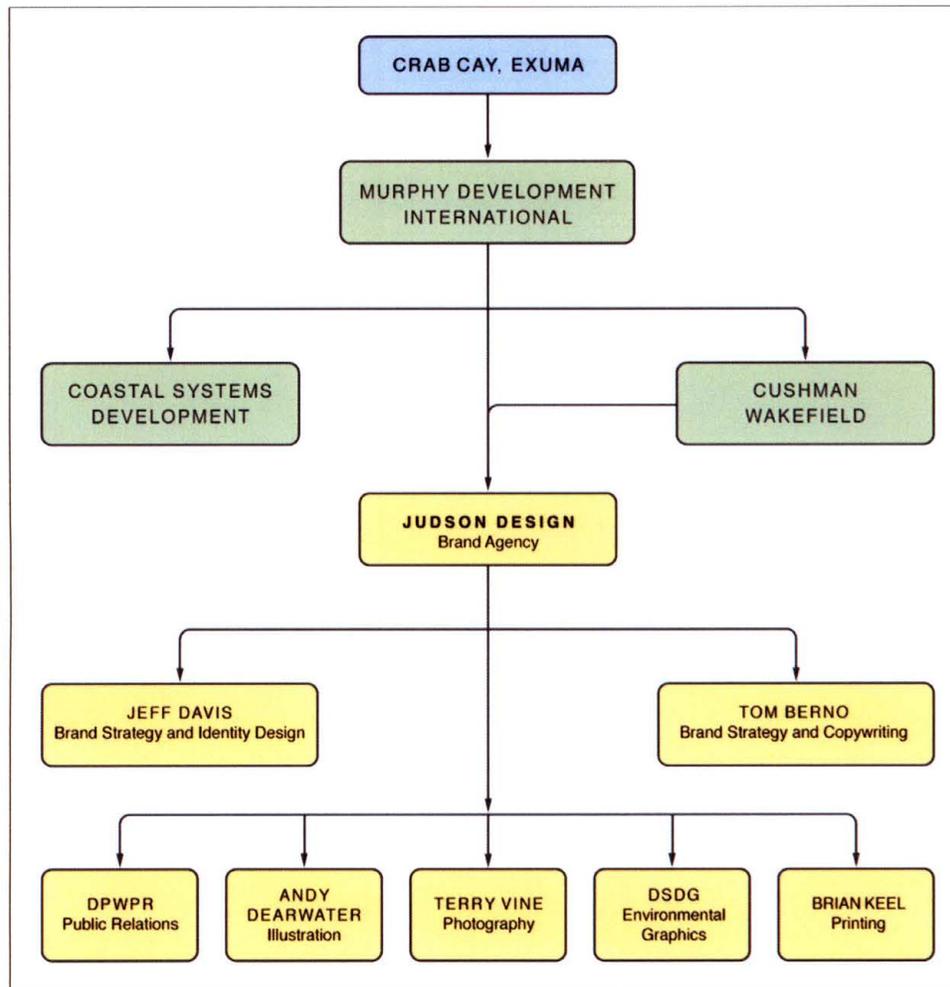


Figure 5. The collaborative brand team for the CCP.

The CCP Real Estate Development and Resort

The CCP was a master planned real estate development and luxury resort encompassing a 185-acre private island located off Great Exuma Island, Bahamas (see Figure 6). The development was inspired by and exemplified the splendor of Mediterranean coastal destinations Portofino and Sardinia. The CCP was planned as a multi-phase development, which included The Harbour Village, Spa and Resort, Harbour Yacht Club, Crab Cay Inn, Walker Estates, and The Uplands (Berno, Davis, & Judson, 2006).



Figure 6. Development site plan for the CCP, Exuma, the Bahamas (Berno, Davis, & Judson, 2006).

The most distinguishable feature of the development was the Harbour Village. A large segment of the luxury market was attracted to the prospect of the luxurious accommodations and the anchorage facilities for mega-yachts up to 300 feet at CCP, due to a shortage of permanent boat slips in the Bahamas and throughout the Caribbean. The strategic geography of Crab Cay in relation to Elizabeth Harbour—the most protected deep-water anchorage in the Bahamas—has historically provided shelter and safety for mariners. For centuries, Great Exuma has protected Crab Cay and Elizabeth Harbour from strong currents to the west, while a network of barrier islands mitigates storm surges from the east (Cushman Wakefield, 2006).

Of further value to the development was the joint venture partnership that authorized Sedona Spa brands, Sedona, Arizona, to manage and operate the Crab Cay

Spa and Resort and surrounding facilities. The Sedona Spa brand is recognized around the world as a leader in the destination travel spa industry.

The CCP Market Analysis and Background

The developer, Murphy International, Inc., the construction engineer, Coastal Development Systems, Inc., and the broker, Cushman Wakefield, conducted an extensive market analysis and background dossier as part of the development's business plan. This analysis revealed several key strengths and opportunities that made the CCP stand out in the crowded luxury resort and real estate market.

The combination of attractive real estate—harbourside villas, private estate homesites, and fractional-ownership condominiums—combined with Exumas' status as a luxury travel destination and the strategic partnership with Sedona Resorts, helped Crab Cay, Exuma, (CCE) stand out in the market. The CCP was also positioned to capitalize on emerging trends in the Bahamas for luxury vacation properties, trends in the overall elite luxury real estate market, and a worldwide shortage of mooring facilities for large yachts (Cushman, 2007).

The Bahamas profile has increased as a prestigious resort destination and real estate market for the world's elite. This was validated by the recent development on Exuma of a Four Seasons Resort and Residences project, and a planned Ritz-Carlton resort project on Rose Island, off Nassau. The Bahamas have been the beneficiary of sustained growth in both tourism and foreign investment as well as economical and political stability. Its financial systems are friendly to international investors and expatriate residents (Cushman Wakefield, 2006).

The CCP was the last luxury real estate project to be approved for construction prior to a moratorium enacted on similar projects throughout Exuma. For the foreseeable future, there will be little or no new comparable real estate to compete with the CCP. Except for the existing Four Seasons and the CCP, there are no recognized luxury resorts and residences in the Exumas (Cushman Wakefield, 2006).

Another feature of the CCP that distinguished it in the luxury destination resort and real estate market is that it is a private island. This highly marketable quality means a level of privacy and exclusivity currently not available in the marketplace.

The market analysis also determined that the mega-yacht harbour facilities at CCE created a strategic advantage for the development. Currently, there are only four luxury resorts in the entire Caribbean area, all under development, that offer mega-yacht harbour facilities: Watson Island, Miami; Cap Cana, Dominican Republic; Port Louis, St. George's, Grenada; and Isla Moin, Costa Rica (Pearson, 2007). Excluding Watson Island, all of the other developments require between three and seven days of travel by sea from the southern United States, which again made CCE the more desirable destination.

The development team's market analysis and project background dossier was an important introduction to the CCP. Insight gained from these presentation materials was instrumental in directing the brand team's initial research.

GAIN Application to the CCP: A Step-By-Step Method

Step 1. Time line of the Bahamas and Exuma

The CCBT used market-data and preliminary background information on the CCP to construct a historical time line (see Figure 7).

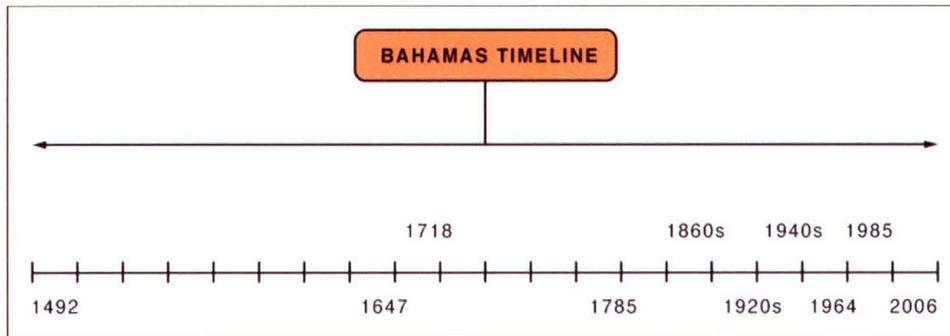


Figure 7. Established CCE time line of the Bahamas from 1492 to 2006 (Berno, Davis, & Judson, 2006).

Historical research established the time line for CCE from the late fifteenth century through the end of the twentieth century. The time line began with Columbus' landfall on San Salvador Island—now Watling's Island, Bahamas—in 1492 (Craton, 1962).

Eleutheran settlers, English Puritans who left Bermuda in 1647 searching for religious freedom, were next to arrive in the Bahamas. The Eleutherans developed the region's first agricultural economy, which still prospers today (Craton, 1962).

The geographic location of the Bahamas made it an ideal base of operations for English, American, and French pirates who preyed on merchant ships sailing the Caribbean. Until the early 1800s, the Bahamas played host to many well-known pirates, including Blackbeard, Henry Morgan, and Anne Bonney (Craton, 1962).

Britain recognized the Bahamas as a Crown colony in 1718 with Nassau the center of commerce and the seat of provincial government. Sanctioned by the English crown, privateering—a form of piracy practiced during Britain's war with Spain and during the American Revolution—brought periods of prosperity to the islands (Craton, 1962).

Uprooted Southern loyalists fleeing retribution following Britain's defeat in the American Revolutionary War brought their slaves to the islands and grew cotton under the Crown's protection until the mid 1800s (Craton, 1962).

During the American Civil War, Bahamian captains grew rich running the Union Navy blockade of the islands. Bahamian ships transported confederate cotton from Charleston, North Carolina, to mills in England in exchange for much needed military equipment to supply the Confederate forces (Craton, 1962).

In the 1920s, the Bahamas became a base for smuggling Caribbean rum into America's eastern ports. Soon after prohibition was repealed the islands fell into economic hard times. Prosperity returned with America's entrance into World War II, when the Bahamas served as an air and seaway station in the Atlantic.

After World War II, the tourist industry capitalized on the Bahamas' natural beauty, and tourism emerged as a dominant economic factor (Craton, 1962). Tourism was also boosted when the United States government banned travel to Cuba after Fidel Castro rose to power in the late 1950s. Great Britain granted the islands self-government in 1964 and changed their status from colony to Commonwealth in 1969. In 1973, the Commonwealth of The Bahamas became independent within the Commonwealth of Nations, but retained Queen Elizabeth II as constitutional head of state (Cushman Wakefield, 2006).

The Exuma National Land and Sea Park was established in 1985 by the Bahamas National Trust, which designated the beaches, marine life, reefs, and anchorages around the Exumas as a marine sanctuary and reserve (The Nature Conservancy, n.d.).

Step 2. Lineage

The time line was influential in establishing the general areas of study to conduct research, which established the CCP brand's lineage (see Figure 13). Guided by the GAIN, the design team explored all historical events, cultural influences, and scientific findings related to not only CCE, but also, the Exumas and the Bahamas.

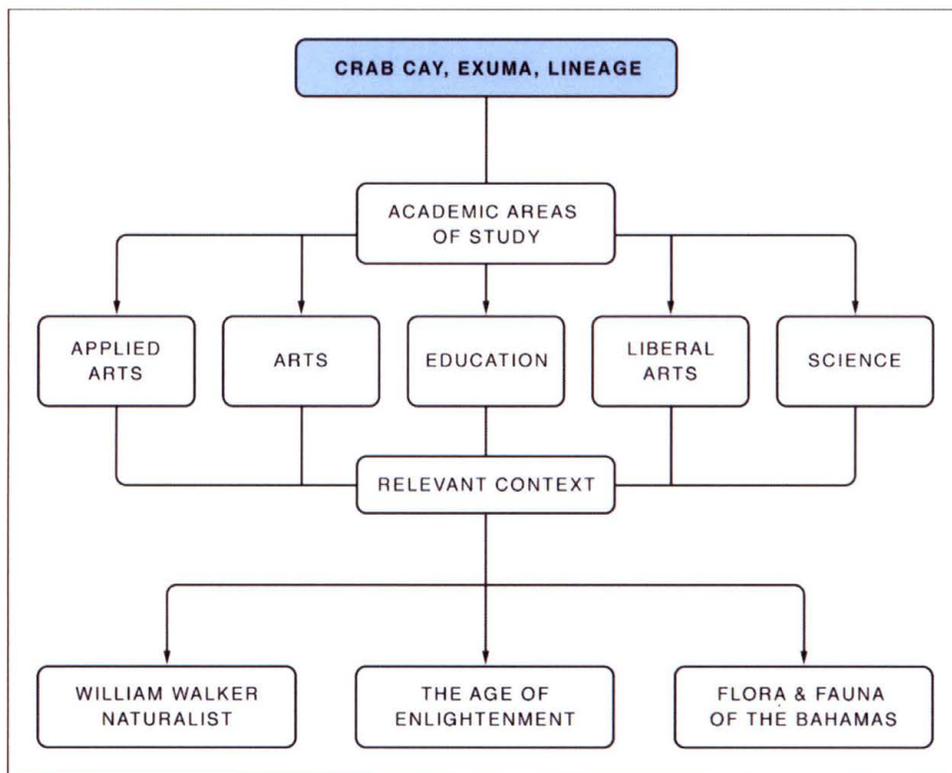


Figure 8. Lineage diagram of CCE.

William Walker.

William Walker (c. 1740–1810) was given the deed to Crab Cay circa 1785. Walker's connection to CCE was established through a trail of history including government records, news clippings, letters; and most compellingly the architectural remains of his home and plantation. Records indicate that Walker was born in the

mid-1700s to a family affluent enough to provide him with what was considered a decent education at the time. Prior to moving to the Bahamas in 1785, Walker had surrendered a 3,000-acre land grant in the Mississippi territory to conquering Spanish forces and left a successful post as Commissary General on the island of St. Vincent (Cushman Wakefield, 2006).

He built a modest home and started a cotton plantation on CCE. Walker was also an amateur naturalist who possessed a scientific curiosity. His knowledge of botany led him to successfully introduce and cultivate a variety of non-native plant species. He acquired mango trees, watermelon and breadnut, grapefruit trees, garlic shrub, Spanish chestnut, gum Arabic plant, and aromatic herbs like cinnamon and sage that were successfully propagated on the island. The ruins of the Walker homestead and the limestone walls from his botanical gardens survived and were incorporated as signature landmarks in the CCP (Cushman Wakefield, 2006).

Age of Enlightenment.

An important historical link connected CCE to one of the most prominent naturalists of the Age of Enlightenment (1650–1800). William Walker corresponded and collected specimens for noted British statesmen and naturalist, Sir Joseph Banks (1743–1820). Banks accompanied Captain Cook on *HMS Endeavour's* South Seas voyages (1769–1771). Banks was also a primary backer of the infamous *Bounty* voyage (1787–1789) to transplant the breadfruit plant from Tahiti to the Bahamas (Gascoigne, 1998). Eventually, Walker was the recipient of breadfruit plants delivered to the Bahamas by William Bligh on his successful second expedition to Tahiti (Cushman Wakefield, 2006).

During the Age of Enlightenment, there began a new commitment to the sciences, especially the natural sciences such as biology and botany (Gascoigne, 1998). The industrious research and documentation of new species by pioneering naturalists such as Linneaus, Lamarck, and noted Englishman Mark Catesby set the groundwork for establishing the natural sciences as a legitimate field of study (McBurney, 1997). Increasingly in the eighteenth century, voyages of discovery and commerce included educated men eager to document exotic finds in faraway lands. Their physical observations were collected in catalogues of engraved and aquatinted illustrations. These renderings evoke a sense of wonder and classical beauty. The period illustrations from the Age of Enlightenment became the basis of the graphic style for the CCP identity and marketing materials.

Flora and Fauna.

The CCBT researched a variety of flora and fauna related to CCE and the Greater Exumas. Their specimens included both native and non-native species of plants and animals. The tropical waters surrounding Crab Cay are part of the Exuma National Land and Sea Park that ensured abundant specimens of marine life, which included a diverse population of tropical fish, crustaceans, and mollusks that the CCBT discovered in research. The Bahamas also host a variety of both native and migratory songbirds, seabirds, and butterflies (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

Step 3: Iconography

This unique flora and fauna proved to be valuable visual elements, which the CCBT incorporated into the CCP brand identity.

The GAIN process guided the CCBT in collecting iconography from two distinct areas: European heraldry (see Figure 9) from the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries and flora and fauna common to the Bahamas (see Figure 10). This iconography was influential to the initial brand development and ultimately became the foundation of the CCP brand and sub-brand identities (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

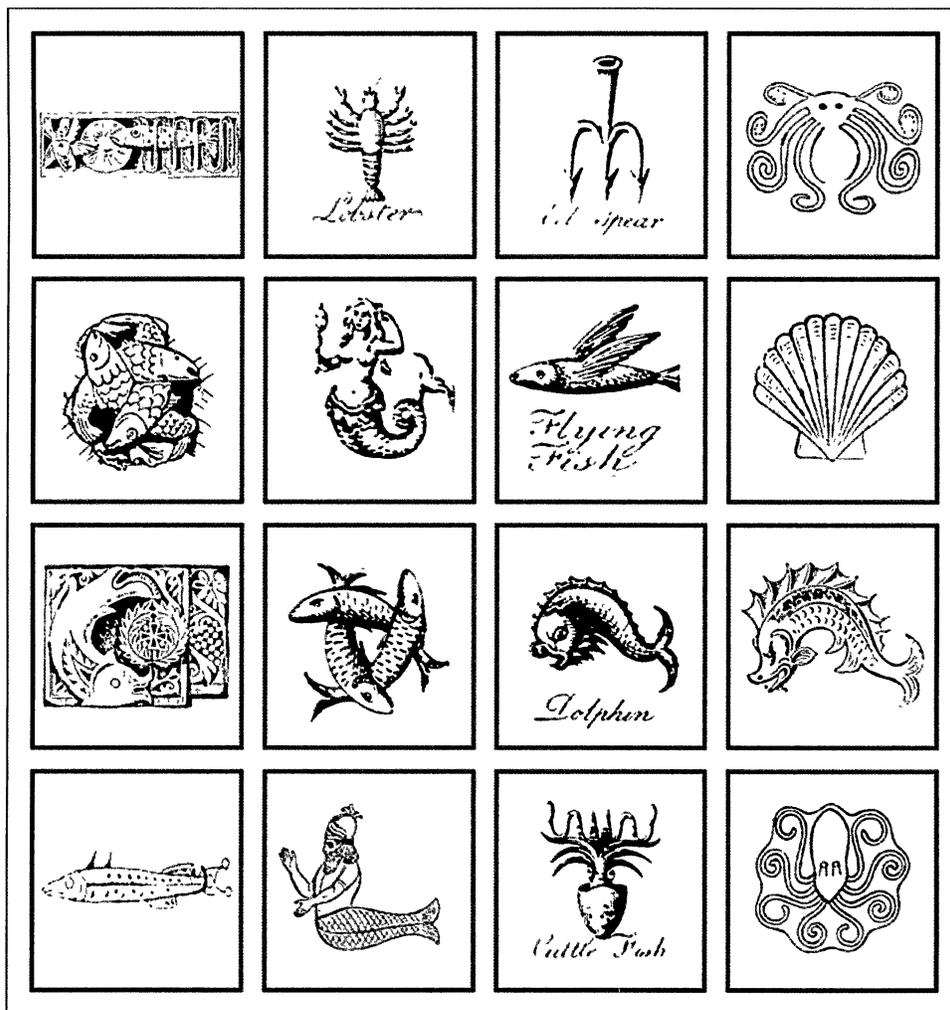


Figure 9. Examples of marine-themed iconography: European heraldry (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

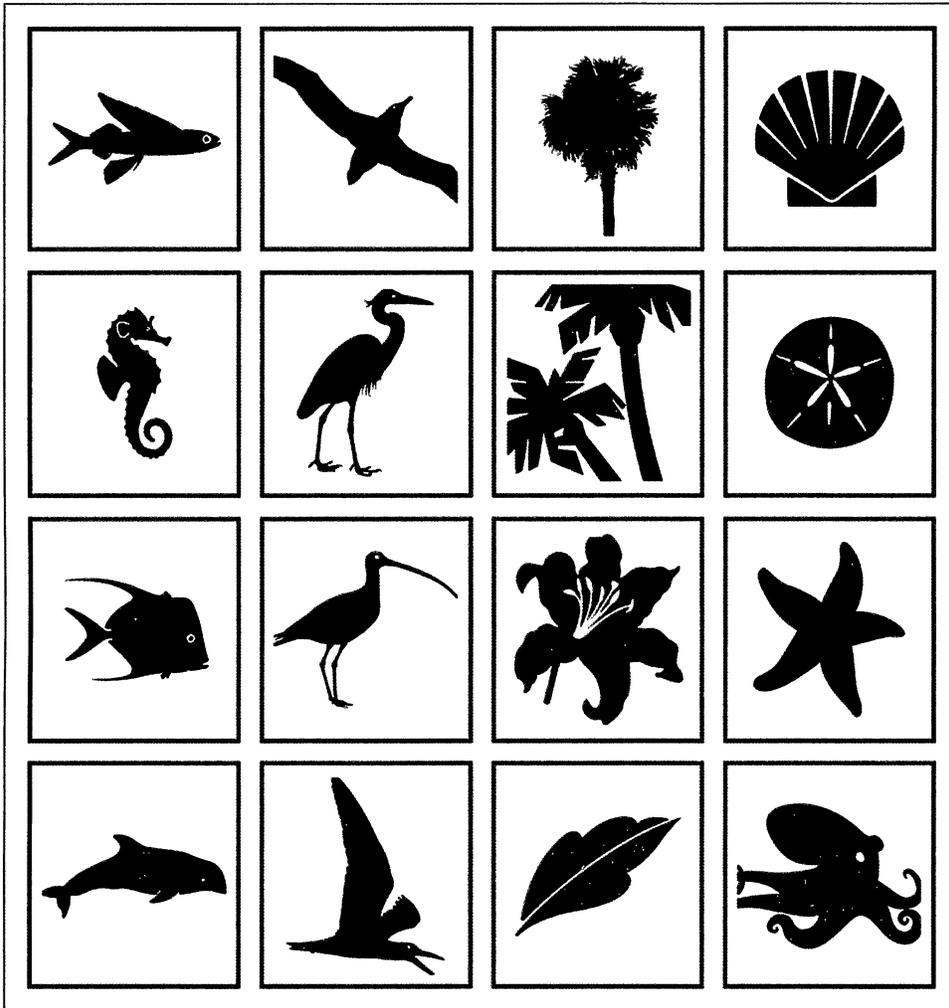


Figure 10. Examples of flora and fauna: Native and introduced to the Bahamas (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

The flying fish, palm, and shorebird iconography, as well as the etched style of the renderings, gave the team visual references that became the nexus of the conceptual directions, which were incorporated into the brand and sub-brand identities. The iconography was also a source for inspiration of architectural details and interior finishes that were incorporated into the development's buildings and facilities (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The CCP Brand Presentation Book

The following are the results of utilizing the GAIN process in building the brand identity, theme, and narrative as presented in the *CCP brand presentation book*.

Brand Identity, Typographic Component, and Brand Attributes

The iconography generated from the GAIN became the inspiration and underlying visual structure in building the CCP brand identity. The nexus of the brand identity served as a visual link that preserved the legacy of William Walker, the Age of Enlightenment, and highlighted CCE's natural beauty and diverse flora and fauna.

Brand Identity

Inspired by the Age of Enlightenment, the CCBT developed a consistent and tightly controlled set of visual elements, typography, and a color palette to form a cohesive and compelling brand identity system. The brand and sub-brand identities communicated the sense of adventure, authenticity, and tranquility consistent with the positioning and marketing objectives for the CCP brand. Research from the GAIN uncovered numerous examples of illustrated plant and animal species consistent with the aesthetic established during the Age of Enlightenment.

The CCBT selected the most relevant species of plants and animals—including native, introduced, and migratory—common to the Bahamas. The species were selected based on how they matched with the visual theme of the primary brand and sub-brand identities (see Figure 11). Each species of plant and animal selected was identified with representative iconography derived from the GAIN (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

CCBT member Andy Dearwater transformed the selected iconography into watercolor illustrations. The resulting illustrations authentically mastered the intent and aesthetic of the imagery created by naturalists during the Age of Enlightenment.

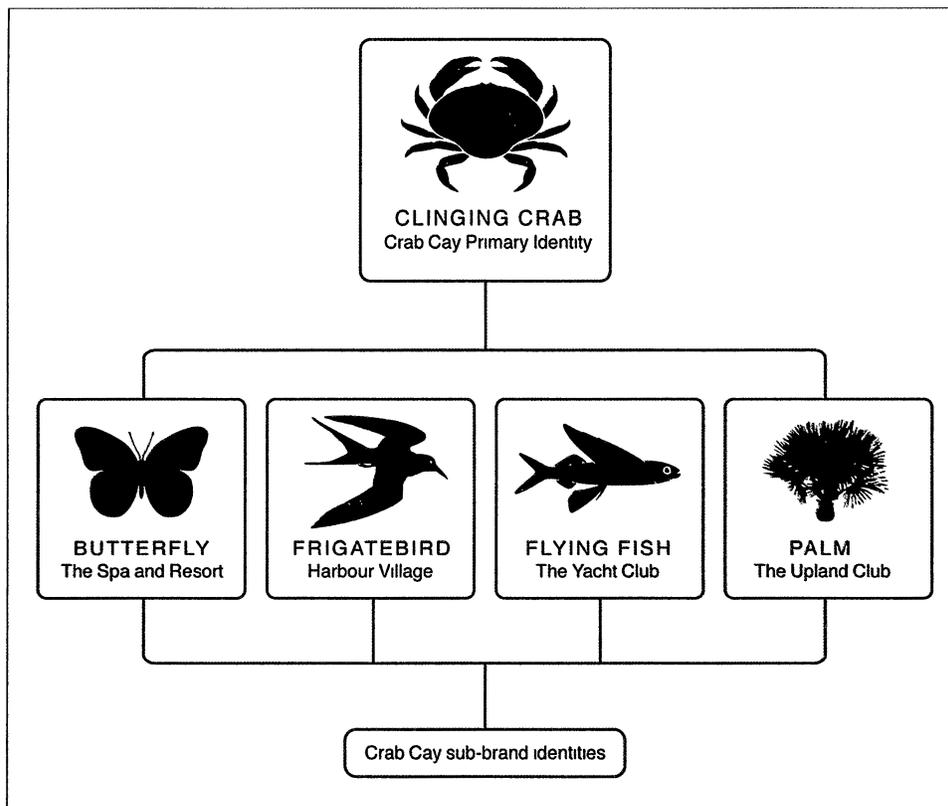


Figure 11. Classification and matching of the CCP brand and sub-brand names with relevant iconography representing specific species of plants and animals chosen from the GAIN (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

The CCP Primary Brand Identity: The Clinging Crab.

The clinging crab was once the most abundant species of crab indigenous to the Exumas. This crab was chosen to visually represent the CCP and evoke the imagery of the turquoise waters and tropical reefs of the Bahamas. This choice was based on cross-referenced representational iconography, photography, and period illustration and its application of the historical, cultural, and scientific narrative that was unique to CCE (Judson Design Associates, 2006). Dearwater's illustrated clinging crab (see Figure 12) became the primary brand identity for the CCP brand.

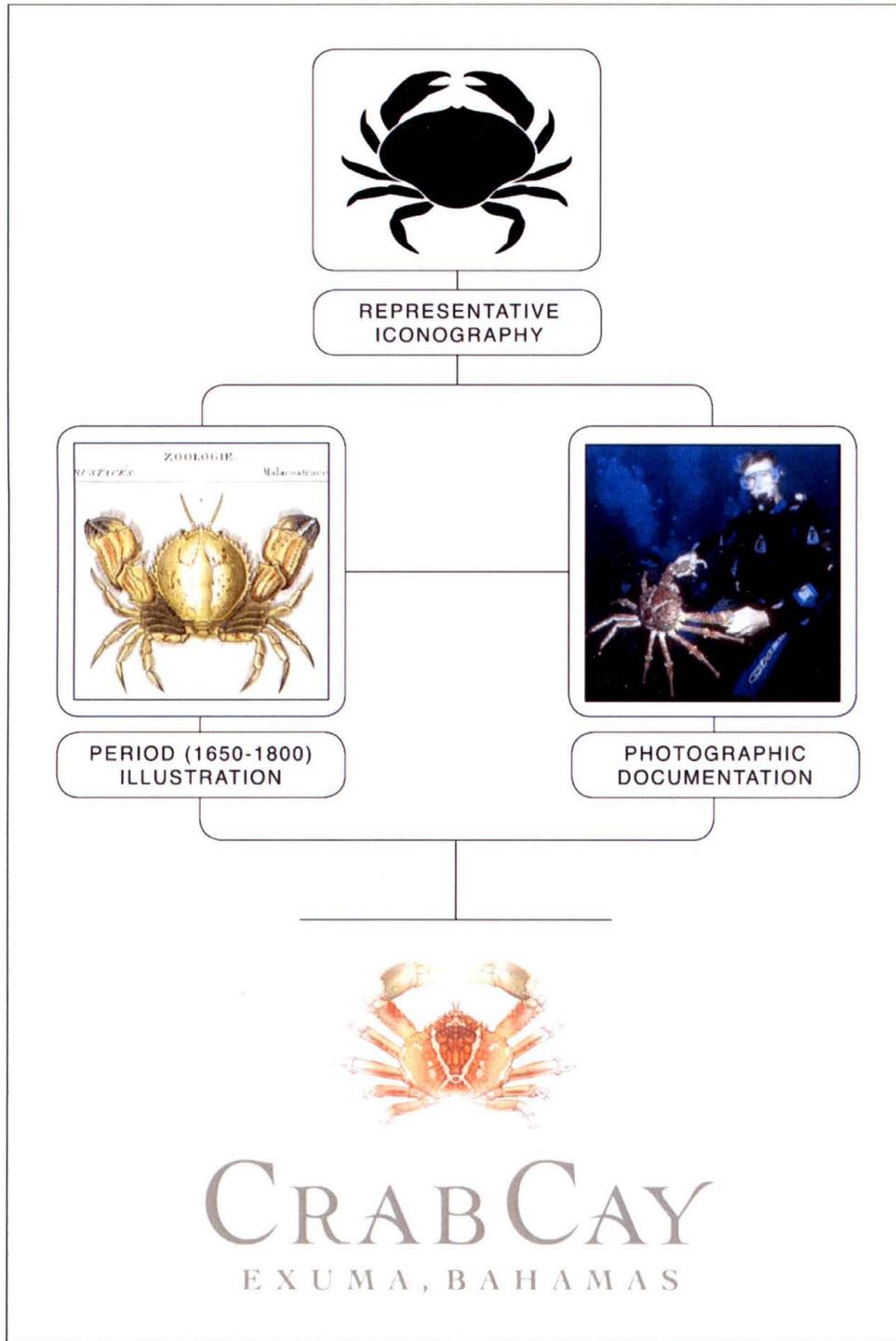


Figure 12. Diagram mapping the CCBT's process that utilized the GAIN to direct their research through to the finished primary identity for CCP (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

Crab Cay Spa & Resort Sub-brand Identity: Sulfur Butterfly.

The saffron-hued sulfur butterfly was chosen to visually represent the Spa & Resort component of the project (see Figure 13). Gentle and beautiful, this colorful species flourishes in the Bahamas' temperate climate. It is native to Exuma and blankets the island's flowers and plants. The sulfur butterfly served as a metaphoric representation of beauty through transformation and is highly reflective of the rejuvenative effects of spa treatments. Its gentle flight and quiet presence also represent the tranquility of the spa experience (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

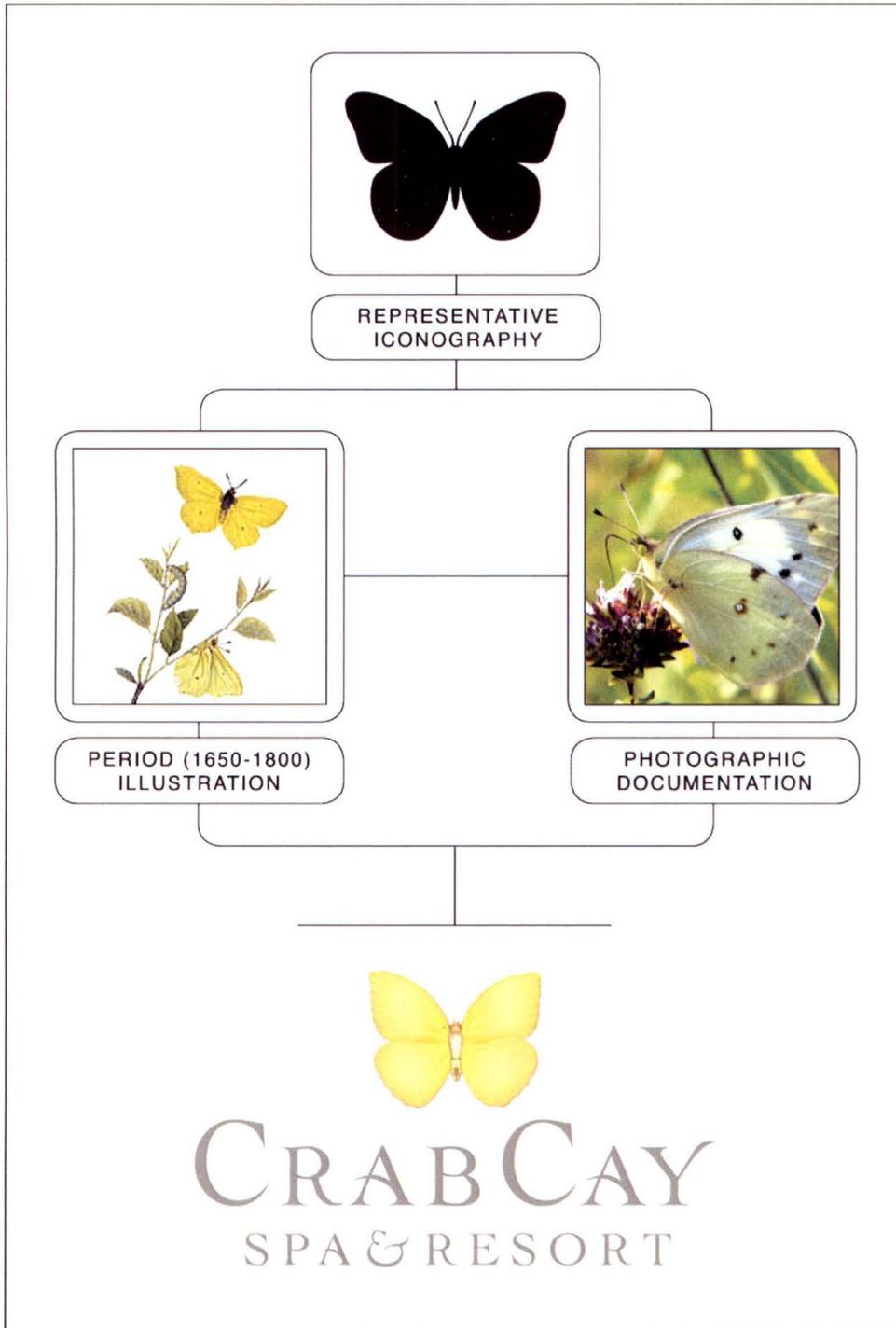


Figure 13. Diagram mapping the CCBT's process that utilized the GAIN to direct their research through to the finished sub-brand identity for Crab Cay Spa & Resort (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

Crab Cay Harbour Village Sub-brand Identity: Frigate Bird.

The frigate bird was chosen to visually represent the Crab Cay Harbour Village (see Figure 14). These graceful seabirds are indigenous, and were recognized by the mariners of earlier times as harbingers of land. As the symbol of the Harbour Village, the frigate bird has evoked symbolism of successful voyages and safe returns, as well as a gathering point and the CCP's central landmark (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

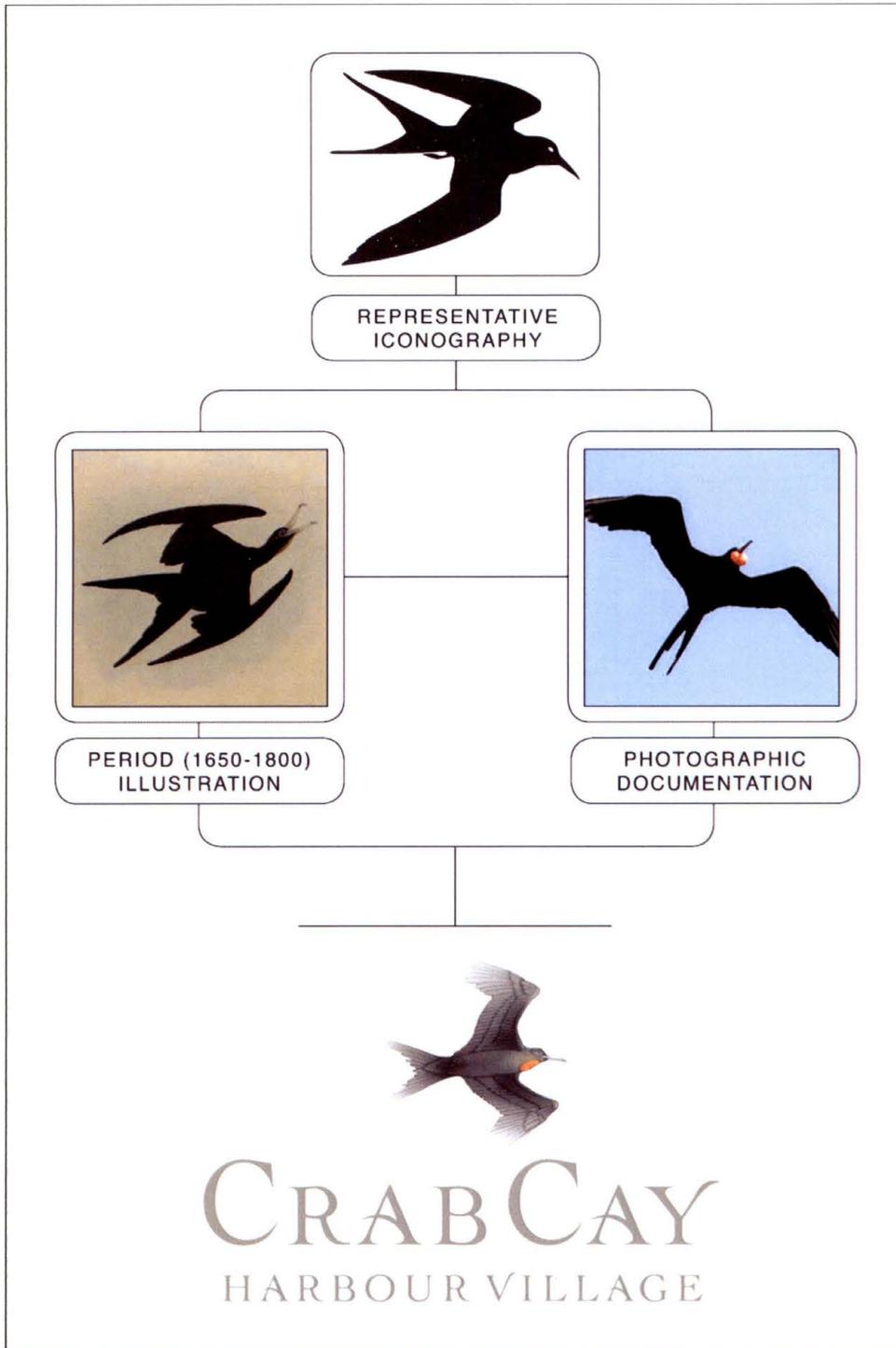


Figure 14. Diagram mapping the CCBT's process that utilized the GAIN to direct their research through to the finished sub-brand identity for Crab Cay Harbour Village (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

Crab Cay Harbour Village Sub-brand Identity: Flying Fish.

The flying fish was a strongly representative symbol for the Crab Cay Harbour Club (see Figure 15). First seen by Europeans during voyages in the Age of Discovery, they are natives of the world's warm water oceans. Sailors came to associate them with clement conditions and smooth sailing. A natural wonder that can swim up to 30 knots as they break and skim the surface, they also represent the performance of the modern high-power yacht for a whole new generation of adventure seekers (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

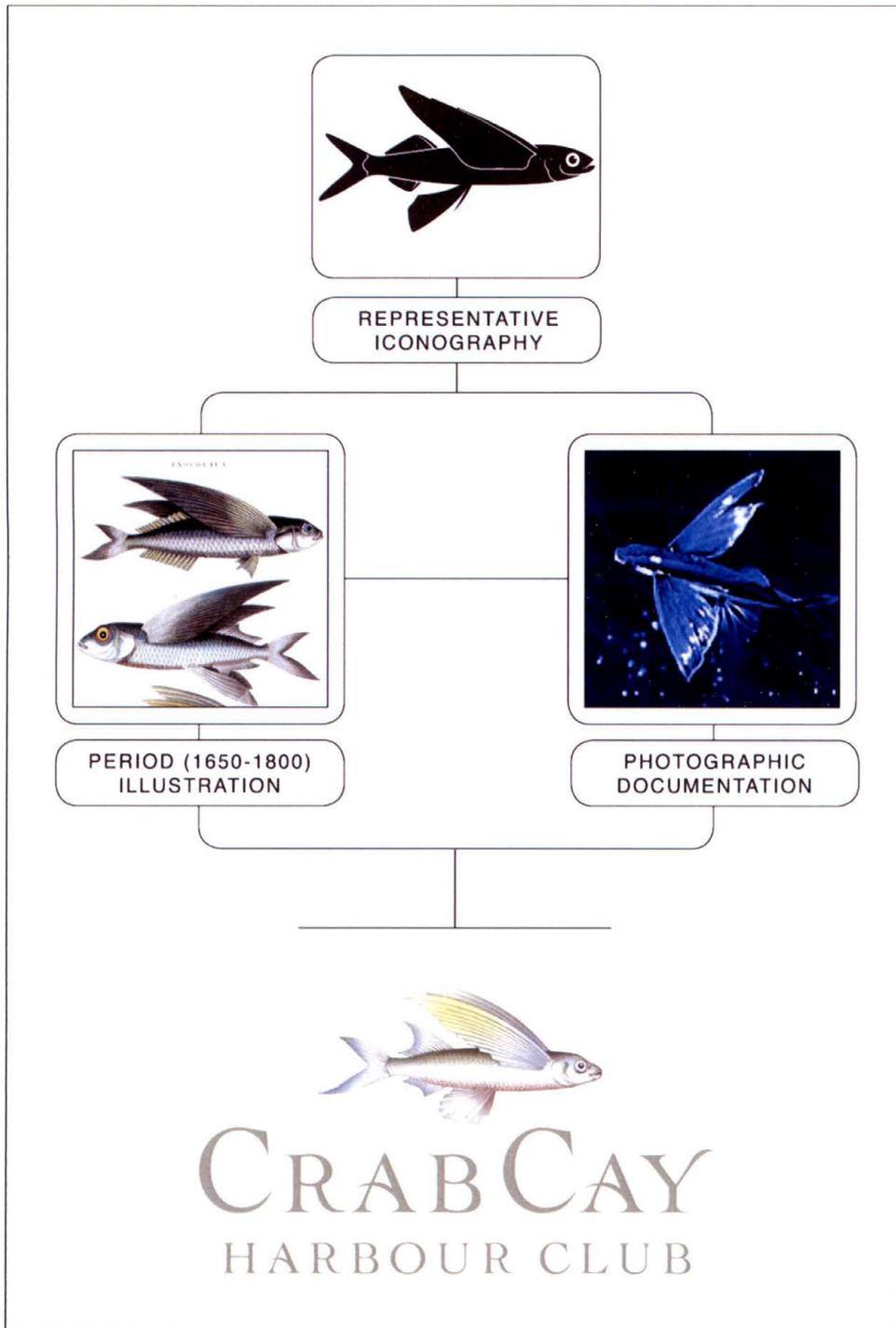


Figure 15. Diagram mapping the CCBT's process that utilized the GAIN to direct their research through to the finished sub-brand identity for Crab Cay Harbour Club (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

Crab Cay Uplands Club Sub-brand Identity: Silver Thatch and Bismarck Palms.

The original plantation owners introduced the silver thatch and Bismarck palms to the Bahamas (see Figure 16). Prized for their broad fronds and ample shade, they have flourished on the island for centuries. These palms were chosen to visually represent the Crab Cay Upland Club sub-brand as a symbol of civilized development from the Age of Enlightenment planters and a legacy of its successful transplantation. This symbol has connected a new generation of settlers through aesthetic beauty and historical relevance to Crab Cay (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

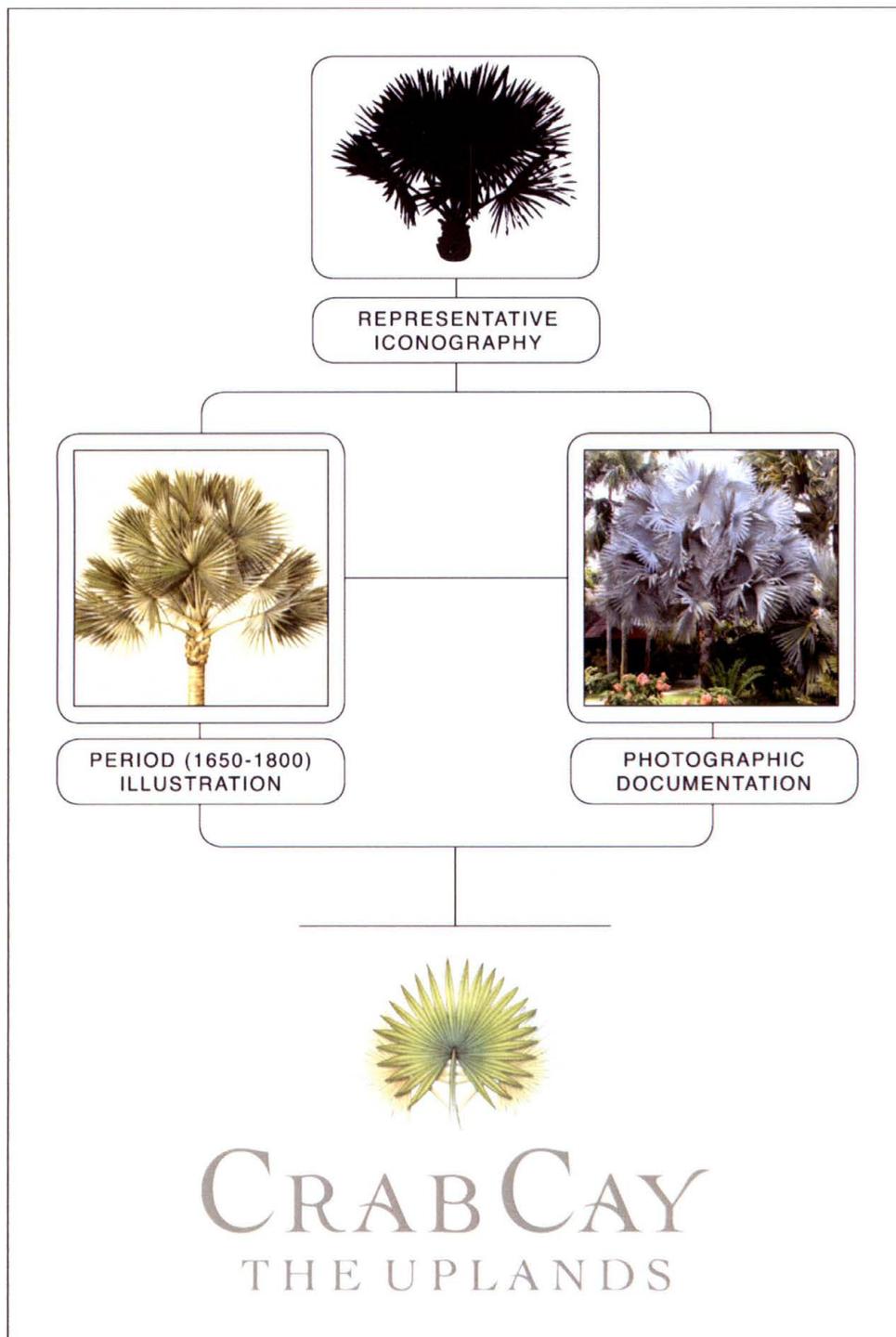


Figure 16. Diagram mapping the CCBT's process that utilized the GAIN to direct their research through to the finished sub-brand identity for Crab Cay Uplands Club (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

Typographic Component

The GAIN process guided the design team in constructing the typographic component for the CCP brand and sub-brand identities, also inspired by the Age of Enlightenment. The resulting typographic arrangement (see Figure 17) maintained the historical and artistic integrity determined by the Dearwater illustrations.



Figure 17. The typographic component—logotype—was used in conjunction Dearwater illustrations and as a stand-alone element to represent the CCP brand identity (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

The CCBT accomplished this by studying the calligraphic letterforms found in the journals of naturalists as well as specimens of typographic engravings from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They selected the type family Cochin, named after the renowned French engraver Nicolas Cochin. The CCBT made significant alterations to individual letterforms to construct a unique logotype that was an authentic and historical match to the illustrated components of the brand identity. The alterations included the addition of calligraphic inspired embellishments to the C, R, A, and Y letterforms that were commonplace in cartography, literature, and personal correspondence from the eighteenth century. The letterforms outlined in red highlight the unaltered Cochin typeface compared to the black letterforms that indicate the calligraphic inspired alterations (see Figure 18).



Figure 18. Comparison of the original Cochin type (i.e., red outline) and the altered letterforms (i.e., black solid) (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

The overall aesthetic of the CCP brand identity and sub-brand identities was inspired by and constructed from the outcomes of the GAIN. This was achieved both visually and verbally as a result of the team's ability to not only conduct meaningful research, but also the CCBT's ability to correctly analyze the research. The CCBT's research was successfully integrated into the brand's positioning, messaging, and identity.

Brand Attributes

Based on the Age of Enlightenment and directly related to the outcomes from the GAIN process, the CCBT constructed CCP's brand attributes (see Figure 19). The unique character, geography, and history of CCE created a significant opportunity for the project to capture the imagination of its target market.

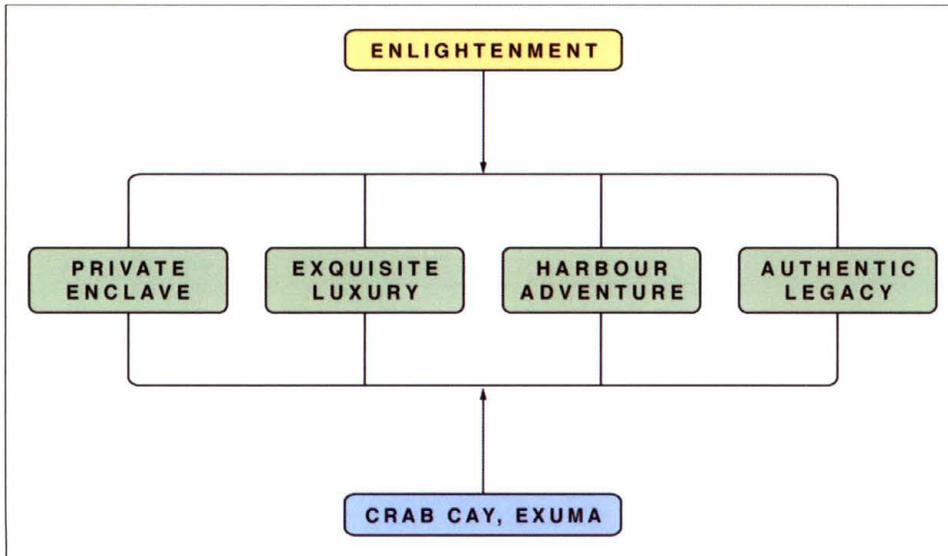


Figure 19. The brand attributes were extracted from the enlightenment theme and incorporated into the CCP brand touch points (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

The positioning of the CCP was built on the effective communication of the following brand attributes: a private enclave of tranquility in the Bahamas, a lifestyle of exquisite luxury, the finest Bahamian harbour for adventure, and an authentic legacy for families.

The CCBT's audit of comparable luxury resort and real estate market developments revealed brand identities that failed to capture authentic qualities that all effective brand identities must have. The application of the GAIN process to the CCP brand identity helped the CCBT visually capture the unique cultural, historical, and scientific story of the island. The resulting brand identity differentiated the CCP in the crowded Caribbean luxury resort and real estate market. CCP's brand identity preserved the legacy of naturalist William Walker, his direct link to Joseph Banks and the Age of Enlightenment, as well as the island's natural beauty and diverse flora and fauna (Judson Design Associates, 2006).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis, *An Ideation Process for Building Brand Identity: The Graphic Atlas Ideation Nexus Applied to the Crab Cay, Exuma, Resort and Real Estate Development*, explores historical and current ideation strategies used in communication design, the understanding of brand, and brand identity.

In addition, this thesis introduces the Graphic Atlas Ideation Nexus, developed in 2006 as a communication design strategic ideation process for building brand identity. Furthermore, this thesis examines the application of the GAIN process to building the CCP brand identity by Berno, Davis, and Judson.

Use of Ideation Strategies by the CDD Today

The historical and current ideation strategies reviewed still play a role in the creation of ideas and the refinement of visual elements used in building brand identities. Designers continue to create successful works utilizing these strategies for creative problem solving (Pricken, 2004). However, due to a lack of a research component these ideation techniques only yield verbal clues that are based on the personal intuition of the participant(s).

The shortcomings of existing ideation strategies led to the development of GAIN as an improved ideation strategy specific to building brand identity. In the GAIN process,

iconography is the inspiration, as well as the defining visual elements essential for building an effective brand identity. These visual elements become the nexus of a brand.

Future Research

Increased application of the GAIN to building brand identities by industry professionals and university educators will be beneficial to improving the process. Through the application of GAIN to building brand identities future research ideas have evolved. These ideas developed through research conducted for this thesis and peer feedback from within, and outside of, the CDD. The following questions from peer feedback arose:

- 1.) Could the outcome of the CCP brand identity be achieved without the GAIN process?
- 2.) Could the CCP lineage be applied to a similar luxury resort developments in the Bahamas or the Caribbean?
- 3.) Would cognition and visual perception call for the use of more recognizable plants and marine animals (e.g., dolphin instead of flying fish) in the CCP brand identities?
- 4.) In brand development and strategy, there is usually a naming phase, did the CCBT have the option of renaming the project, prior to attempting to build a brand identity around a difficult name like Crab Cay?
- 5.) Could the GAIN process be used in conjunction with existing ideation strategies?
- 6.) Could the GAIN process be effectively utilized as a teaching technique?
- 7.) Could the GAIN process benefit from an online portal?

The majority of feedback supports an online portal for the GAIN method. This Web site could have the following navigation: instruction, tutorials, links (e.g., online databases, historical time lines, ideation strategies, royalty-free imagery), a discussion

forum, and a user-generated portfolio to display brand identities built using the GAIN method. The GAIN Web site could also have a survey component to collect and analyze user-generated input and outcomes related brand identities built using the GAIN process.

This online extension supports one of the original goals of the GAIN process: to utilize twenty-first century information technology as a primary research component in building brand identities. With technological advancements and their application to ideation strategies new opportunities will emerge for brand identity designers.

These technological advancements allow designers to assemble a broad range of relevant information, used in conjunction with the GAIN process, to focus the information within a defined method. The result is a dynamic new approach for ideation in building brand identity that withstands the scrutiny of corporate and consumer analysis.

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VITA

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His communication design has been featured in the discipline's leading publications including *Communication Arts*, *Design USA*, *Graphis*, *HOW*, *Logo Lounge*, *Print*, and *Step*. Additionally, his communication design has received awards and been honored in national and international design competitions including Good 50X70, *Graphis Logo 5*, *Graphis Poster*, *Logo Lounge*, New York Art Directors Club, and Type Directors Club.

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