The story of our brand

‘A brand is a collection of perceptions in the mind of the consumer. It is not a color or a typeface – it is about how we interact with our customers and each other.’

Nokia has grown from a small Finnish challenger to become one of the world’s most valuable and best known brands. This timeline charts its evolution against an illustrated history of developments in graphic design over the last 140 years.
Mining engineer Fredrik Idestam establishes a wood pulp mill on the banks of the Tammerkoski Rapids. Demand for paper grows, and the factory expands onto land owned by Nokia Manor on the Nokia River. The name ‘Nokia’ is said to derive from ‘Nokinäätä’ – a weasel-like animal native to this part of Finland. Six years later the company is renamed Nokia Ab.
In 1898 Eduard Polón establishes the Finnish Rubber Works, producing boots and shoes, industrial hoses and belts. The high electricity consumption of the forestry industry prompts Gustaf Fogelholm – Nokia Ab’s second president – to move into power generation in 1900. The Finnish Rubber Works is one of Nokia Ab’s first major customers for power.
The increasing demand for electricity in homes and factories drives the establishment of Suomen Punomotehdas Oy in 1912 by Arvid Wickström. The company merges with the newly established Finnish Cable Works in 1917. Early products include copper wire coated with a rubber impregnated textile layer.

During the First World War and the Russian Revolution designers abandon the decadence of Art Nouveau in favour of simpler, more direct styling. The Bauhaus school is founded in Germany with the aim of uniting creativity with science and economics to develop a new sense of functional design.
New production methods and products develop in the paper, rubber and cable industries. In 1933 Nokia’s first car tyre, with a summer tread, is launched. It is used as the basis for a winter tyre that becomes the popular Hakkapeliitta series – still sold as this brand.

The highly influential Bauhaus school is closed down. The Art Deco style embraces everything from architecture to fashion, and design classics such as the London Underground map and the blue Gauloises pack make their appearance. The advertising industry grows rapidly in response to the emerging consumer society.
Finnish Rubber Works and Finnish Cable Works merge with Nokia Ab in 1966 to form Nokia Corporation. A new logo is created by the Finnish Rubberworks designers, inspired by the rubber ball toys produced at the time. Nokia enters the telecommunications market.

The ‘Microgramma’ font is adopted – the typeface forms the basis for the Nokia namestyle in the 1980s.

The Finnish Cable Works logo.

New photographic and printing techniques give designers new freedom with text, images and colour. The Vietnam War, the Cuban revolution and drug culture all find graphic expression in the swinging sixties and the pop art phenomenon influences designers around the world.

Electronics department established in Finnish Cable Works to produce radio transmission equipment. New logo introduced in 1960, based on the cables logo.

Radio telephone advertisement from 1967.
Telenokia Oy – the forerunner of Nokia Networks – is formed in 1981, owned jointly by Nokia and Televa. Nokia accelerates its international expansion, acquiring Mobira, Salora and Luxor. A competition for Finnish designers to produce a Nokia symbol attracts nearly 200 entries, none of which is chosen! Nokia introduces the NMT cellular mobile exchange in 1986.

In 1984 Nokia launches the world’s first portable NMT car telephone: the Mobira Talkman.

Microgramma style logo is adopted.

High speed computers allow imagery and type to be manipulated in completely new ways, and the introduction of the Apple Mac revolutionises graphic design. Neville Brody’s anarchic ‘street style’ becomes a much-imitated model for magazines, advertising and consumer-oriented graphics.

1980 tyre advertisement features Juha Meito, the Finnish cross country ski champion.

The 1986 campaign for the Mobira Talkman voted best Finnish advertisements of the year.
The ‘arrows’ were first used on Nokia’s annual report in 1987. Acquisitions in consumer electronics of Oceanic SA and Standard Elektrik Lorenz make Nokia the third largest manufacturer of TVs in Europe. The company divests its tyre operations.

In 1987 thousands of billboard advertisements appeared overnight across Sweden and Norway, posing a series of questions next to a futuristic symbol. People were left to guess the identity of the advertiser. A week later all was revealed, and the simple answer ‘Nokia’ appeared alongside its new corporate symbol.

Nokia launches the world’s first pocket phone: the Talkman 520.

The Mobira Cityman was launched in 1987.
A multi colored version of the 'arrows' device is used by Nokia Telecommunications.

1992 sees the launch of Nokia's first GSM hand portable mobile, the 1011. The phone's user interface and design form the basis of future models. The world's first genuine GSM call is made in Finland with equipment supplied by Nokia.

The 'Connecting People' strapline encapsulates the character of the brand. It was chosen in 1993 apparently during a Board meeting in the sauna.

Nokia abandons consumer electronics and computers to concentrate on telecomms networks and mobile phones. The company exits the rubber and cable businesses, having already divested forestry and power generation. A brand strategy is launched – with the aim of positioning Nokia as a recognised brand focused on specific markets. The world's first genuine brand-focused on telecomms networks is launched.

The decade that quoted other twentieth-century styles without a real one of its own. Digital technology expands the creative potential of design by making possible an unprecedented manipulation of color, form, space and imagery. In just a few years, designers create the same number of typefaces as they had in the previous 500 years.

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Connecting People
All products are now branded under ‘Nokia’ name. The 25 year brand development cycle is established in 1993 – based on delivering consistency and continuity. Nokia’s branding is focused on ‘individualism, desire for the new, human scale technology, high quality and the ability to be mobile with the product.’ The 2100 mobile phone series is launched in 1994, becoming an overnight success with some 20m sold worldwide. Nokia is the first European manufacturer to start selling mobile phones in Japan.

Nokia collaborated with rock band The Leningrad Cowboys on several projects and concerts in the 1990s.

The 1994 annual report marks a departure from traditional design.

‘Gran Valse’ ringtone launched in 1994. Based on a 100 year-old Spanish waltz by Francisco Tarrega, the upbeat, distinctive and familiar ‘Nokia tune’ provides instant brand recognition around the world.

Nokia website launches in 1995.

Newspaper advertisement for the Nokia 2110.
In 1997 the arrows are dropped in favour of a simplified logo.

Green adopted as an accent color – inspired by the Finnish landscape.

The parent and child’s hands communicate Nokia’s core brand values in their most basic form.

PMS 293 Green adopted as an accent color – inspired by the Finnish landscape.

1990s

The brand ‘steering wheel’ is introduced, bringing new discipline to brand management, guiding product creation and marketing principles. The ‘Hands’ device is introduced as the key visual identifier of the Nokia brand. Nokia becomes world No1 in mobile phone sales by volume.

Nokia House in Espoo was built between 1995 and 1997. It was the outcome of a design process lasting 14 years, aimed at creating a working environment that would encourage creative thinking.

Advertisements for the 8810 and 8210 from the late 1990s.
“The most trusted brand across 18 countries, across Europe, across all industries.”
(Reader’s Digest 2003)

“The eighth most valuable brand in the world.”
(Interbrand/BusinessWeek 2004)

Corporate publications produced for a range of stakeholders around the world.

By 2003 Nokia’s new typeface is in use across the company, expressing the qualities of the brand.

Advertising and marketing material mirrors the diversity of Nokia’s products and markets.


Nokia Sans
Nokia Serif

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Advertising and marketing material mirrors the diversity of Nokia’s products and markets.
The new brand steering wheel is launched outlining our core principles and what the brand stands for. The Nokia typeface is launched, strengthening brand equity and helping audiences recognise and identify the brand. Nokia announces its first phone with built-in camera in 2002.

‘We help people feel close by connecting them through inspired mobile technology.’ The 2003 brand steering wheel shows how all elements work together to create a holistic brand experience.
The Nokia brandmark is a powerful signature. It is supported by the other expressions of the brand: logo, core colors, secondary colors, tone of voice, typography, imagery, ‘hands’, the audio brand and ‘Nokia forms.’

Nokia’s brandmark is a combination of the logotype and the slogan, which always appear together in a fixed relationship.

Strict guidelines govern how, when and where the brandmark can be used.
Through consistent and co-ordinated use of these elements we can communicate the whole range of feelings and motivations we want people to associate with the Nokia brand.

Imagery – creating real and believable images.

A common vision; a common voice.

Typography – the visualisation of our voice.

Nokia visual forms – supporting the visual expression of Nokia.

Core colors – bringing additional dimensions to the brand.

Secondary colors – bringing further expression to the brand.
With such a proud heritage, we can have only one vision – to make Nokia the world’s most valued, loved and respected iconic brand.

This vision is bold, but it is achievable, so long as we deliver consistent messages, verbally and visually. This is why the new guidelines are so important. They help us understand what the Nokia brand stands for, and what makes it different. They provide detailed instructions about how to promote our products, our services and ourselves consistently.

We have a leading market share, a growing customer base and a relentless drive to make technology serve consumer and customer needs. These give us unequalled opportunities to continue shaping the face of human communications.