A STUDY ON BUDWEISER'S BRAND RENEWAL FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DESIGN ASSETS

Xiaotong YU[1]
[1] Central Academy of Fine Arts

ABSTRACT

With the advent of the new consumption era, classic brands are widely confronting the issue of brand aging. The opportunity and challenge for classic brands is seeking new paths and possibilities for brand asset reconstruction without compromising the continuity of their existing brand equity. From the perspective of design assets, this paper analyzes Budweiser's strategies for inheriting, updating, expanding, and applying design assets during its brand renewal in the new consumption era. It proposes the SOI（Screen, Optimize, Innovate） model for brand design asset management, aiming to provide references for relevant practices.

Keywords: new consumption era, classic brands, brand renewal, design assets, design management

1   INTRODUCTION

In the dawn of the new consumption era, classic brands are widely confronted with the predicament of brand aging, driven by shifts in consumer demands and upgrades in consumption patterns. [1] To sustain competitiveness and foster sustainable growth amidst this evolving landscape, it is imperative for classic brands to rejuvenate themselves and rekindle consumers' passion and trust through strategic brand renewal. Given the distinctive nature of classic brands, which have cultivated specific brand associations, knowledge, and loyalty within the consumers' psyche over an extended period, the renewal process necessitates a dual focus. [2] On one hand, brands must devise strategies to project a novel image, thereby dispelling perceptions of being outdated or antiquated. On the other hand, they must also prioritize the preservation and enhancement of positive brand connotations, knowledge, memories, and emotions among their existing customer base, thereby safeguarding their hard-earned brand loyalty. Aaker posits that "brand awareness," "brand associations," and "brand loyalty" are the sources of brand equity. [3]In Keller's "customer-based" brand theory and strategic propositions, "brand knowledge" (held by customers) is recognized as the foundation of brand equity. He suggests that "brand knowledge" emerges from customers' "brand recognition" and "brand associations," providing fundamental insights for tackling practical challenges such as "brand activation" and "brand reinforcement."[4] The relationship between brand image and brand equity is mediated by perceived quality[5] , and specific dimensions of brand image hold substantial value for brand associations.[6] Presently, studies on brand renewal from a design perspective predominantly concentrate on the influence of updating design elements within brand identity on consumers' perception of the brand. [7] Nonetheless, there is a notable dearth of research examining the interplay between design elements and brand assets, as well as the methodologies for organizing, managing, and applying these design elements within a brand framework. This oversight is particularly significant given the potential of such strategies to enhance design efficiency, ensure brand image consistency, and bolster brand competitiveness.

Therefore, this study innovatively introduces the analytical perspective of "design assets." It not only focuses on how classic brands update and expand design elements during brand renewal in the new consumption era but also examines how these brands select design elements to construct their brand identity systems, how they adjust these elements for better organization, management, and application within the brand, and the specific methodologies employed to enhance design efficiency, ensure brand image consistency, and strengthen brand competitiveness.

This study primarily adopts a case study approach, analyzing Budweiser's brand renewal in the new consumption era from the perspective of design assets. The reason for this choice is that the updated Budweiser brand image not only combines modernity with classic appeal in its visual presentation but also establishes a design element management system that continually reinforces the brand's spirit and

quality through communication. [8] By examining the formation of Budweiser's design assets and the innovative strategies employed in their inheritance, updating, expansion, and application during this renewal process, this study aims to explore the role of design assets in brand renewal and analyze how effective utilization of design assets can enhance a brand's market competitiveness.

2   FORMATION AND INHERITANCE OF BUDWEISER'S BRAND ASSETS

2.1 Formation of Budweiser's Brand Assets

In this paper, the concept of "design assets" is defined as the key components among the design elements employed throughout a brand's historical evolution that are capable of stimulating consumers' associations and cognitions with the brand and its core values.   Consequently, not all "design elements" can be regarded as "design assets."   Design assets are the crystallization of long-term interactions between brands and consumers, gradually accumulated and precipitated over time.   Specifically, although some design elements adopted during the inception of a brand may inherently carry symbolic meanings when constructing "brand behaviors," it is only when these "brand behaviors" facilitated by such "design elements" become ingrained as "brand knowledge" in consumers' minds and form close associations with them that these "design elements" are endowed with the status of "design assets." They not only bear the significance of the symbols themselves but also embody the profound connotations of the brand.
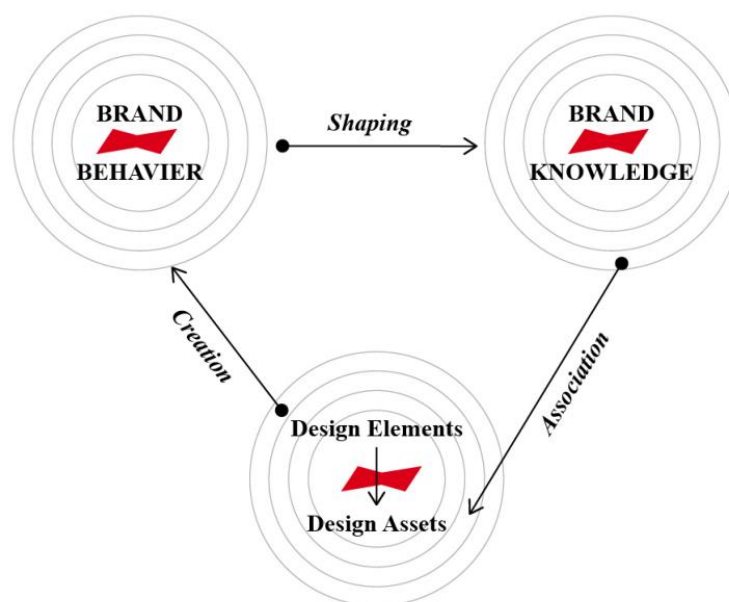

Figure 1. The Formation Process of "Design Assets"

2.2 Inherited Brand Assets of Budweiser

In the evolution of a brand, numerous "design assets" are accumulated, and selecting different design assets to shape "brand behavior" will directly lead to the construction of differentiated brand knowledge systems. By strategically adjusting and optimizing "design assets," brands can indirectly shape and guide consumers' "brand knowledge." Conversely, consumers' brand knowledge can also inject new vitality and meaning into "design assets," achieving deeper interaction and resonance between the brand and consumers.

Table 1 summarizes the main "design assets" chosen by Budweiser for inheritance in the new consumption era, as well as their usage in brand history and symbolic meanings. Using these "design assets" to create "brand behavior" will reinforce in customers' minds: (1) the American culture and spirit symbolized by Budweiser; (2) Budweiser's craftsmanship and championship quality; (3) the role Budweiser has played in customers' lives for over a hundred years - an amplifier of emotions during exciting moments.

Table 1. Major Design Assets Inherited by Budweiser in the New Consumption Era, Their

No.	Budweiser's Design Assets	Design Assets In Budweiser's history	Semantic Representation of Design Assets Symbols
1	logo	In 1957, a similar graphic was first associated with the brand as its logo. Since then, except for brief periods in 1963-1967 and 1996-1998 when different logos were used, the brand has consistently adopted the "bowtie" frame combined with the brand name as its logo.	• The bowtie graphic symbolizes gentility and refinement. • Budweiser Brand Logo
2	color	Since the brand's establishment in 1876, red has been its primary color. However, during its development, it has also utilized color schemes such as red and green, red, black, and white, red and blue, as well as red, blue, yellow, and white.	• The primary color red symbolizes passion, enthusiasm, excitement, and a bold spirit. • The color combination of red, white, and blue, which mirrors the colors of the American flag, symbolizes American culture.
• 3	Heritage Illustration	The initial logo design created when the brand was founded in 1876 serves as a symbol of the brand itself, as well as its history and quality.	• The historical Budweiser. • A symbol of authority.
4	photography	From the early hand-drawn posters to subsequent photographic advertisements, Budweiser's imagery has consistently revolved around the product and the stories of customers engaging with the product.	• Moments of inspiration. • Feelings of enthusiasm, boldness, and excitement.

The selective inheritance of these design assets is primarily attributed to the fact that, in the new era of consumption, customers place greater emphasis on factors such as "emotional factors," "emotional value," and "cultural identification" when forming purchase decisions. [9]These design assets are precisely capable of evoking relevant brand associations and brand knowledge among customers.

3   RENEWAL AND EXPANSION OF BUDWEISER'S BRAND ASSETS
In its new brand image, Budweiser updates and expands its original "design assets" while retaining their distinctive features and memorable points, allowing them to shine brightly within a system that makes Budweiser's design larger, bolder, and more characteristic of the brand. [10]
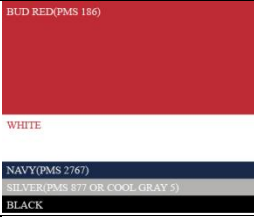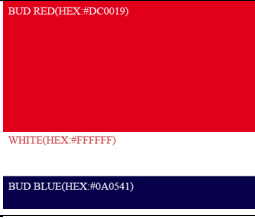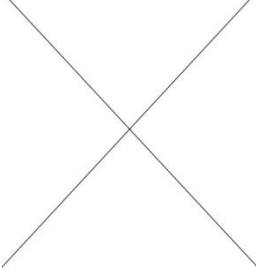
3.1 Renewal of Budweiser's Brand Assets
Through Table 2, we can visually compare the changes in Budweiser's "design assets" in the new consumption era compared to before:

Table 2. Comparison of Budweiser's Major Design Assets Before and After the New Consumption Era

Design Assets	Before	After

	New Consumption Era	New Consumption Era	
	1999	2016	2021
Logo			
Color	BUD RED WHITE NAVY GOLD SILVER BLACK	BUD RED(PMS 186) WHITE NAVY(PMS 2767) SILVER(PMS 877 OR COOL GRAY 5) BLACK	BUD RED(HEX:#DC0019) WHITE(HEX:#FFFFFF) BUD BLUE(HEX:#0A0541)
Typography	✕	AaBbCc BUD BOLD AaBbCc BUD CRAFTED AaBbCc FRANKLIN GOTHIC BOOK	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789!@#$%^&*()[]?+ ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789!@#$%^&*()[]?+
Heritage Illustration			
Photography			

Firstly, compared to the version Budweiser has been using since 1999, the most significant design asset of Budweiser in the new era—the logo formed by the combination of the "bowtie" frame and the stylized brand name in script—has undergone several changes: (1) In the new consumption era, the Budweiser logo has removed the border, shadow, and internal decorative lines around the bowtie graphic, transforming it into a more recognizable minimalist design. Based on the 2016 version, the 2021 "Amp" graphic has undergone subtle adjustments to its symmetry, making it more intuitively repeatable and bendable, thus enhancing its extensibility (as shown in Figure 2); (2) The "crown" element in the original logo has been eliminated; (3) The handwritten Wordmark has also removed its outline and shadow, becoming clearer and easier to read, and its overall width has been narrowed, allowing the Wordmark and symbol to combine more cohesively; (4) The "bowtie" graphic has been granted a new meaning— "the great amplifier," which aims to reinforce Budweiser's longstanding role in customers' lives.
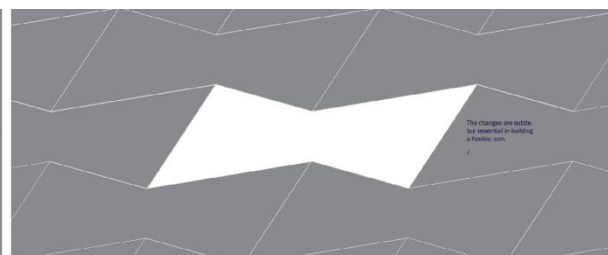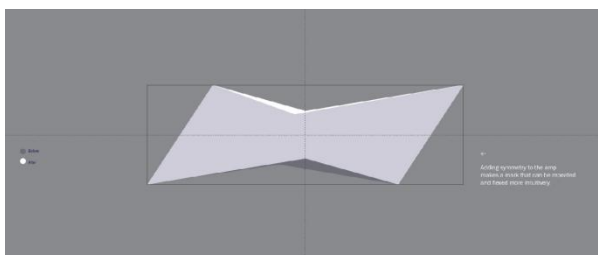
paper Secondly, compared to before, Budweiser's brand colors have: (1) Continuously streamlined the color palette—the latest color combination aligns with the American flag, which is more conducive to reinforcing the American culture embedded in Budweiser's quality; (2) Increased the brightness and saturation of the colors—enhancing the visual impact and making it easier to attract customers' attention in a fiercely competitive market.

Furthermore, the typographic used by the brand have become more streamlined and exclusive compared to before, better highlighting the brand's unique characteristics. Although the Budweiser brand visual guidelines manual for the period 1999-2015 could not be obtained, by comparing the norms set by Budweiser officials for "brand fonts" in the brand manuals of 2016 and 2021, it can be understood that in 2021, the number of fonts used by the brand was reduced from three to one. The new font features are derived from the new logo, combining a sense of tradition with high recognizability, and are designed with different font weights. This helps to better emphasize "Budweiser quality" in the New Consumption Era.

Moreover, compared to previously, Budweiser's Heritage Illustration has:(1) Continuously streamlined its compositional elements—in the 2021 version, the wheat stalk element has been removed because, in the latest brand strategy, product ingredients are no longer crucial information to convey; (2) Continuously improved the recognizability of each element—in the latest version of the illustration, both the clarity of the text and the subtleties of the illustration details have been better handled, making the content appear cleaner and easier to read.

Lastly, compared to before, Budweiser's Photography: (1) In terms of photography style and expression, it places greater emphasis on the impact of composition and color contrast; (2) In terms of content, while still focusing on the product and stories between customers and the product, the narrative content is more focused. Product photography emphasizes capturing exhilarating moments such as "bottle opening" and "bubbles surging"; stories mainly revolve around three themes: sharing a bottle of beer, pursuing dreams, and celebrating greatness.

Overall, in the new consumption era, Budweiser's updates to its "design assets" are guided by the following three principles: (1) "Simplify to Amplify": By eliminating unnecessary elements and information, it reinforces "Budweiser quality" and enhances its "recognizability" by reducing unnecessary embellishments; (2) "Intensify to Highlight: By enhancing contrast and increasing color brightness, it boosts the brand's "visual appeal"; (3) "Symmetrize to Extend": By improving the symmetry of visual elements, it makes them easier to extend in practical applications.

This is primarily because, in the new consumption era, market competition has intensified,[11] and the information explosion in the digital age has led to information fatigue among people. [12]Given this, firstly, the simplicity of information has become a key factor in effective memory[13]; secondly, increasing touchpoints with consumers and deeply penetrating their daily lives through diverse means has become a necessary strategy to enhance brand recall.[14]

3.2 Expansion of Budweiser's Brand Assets

From Budweiser's 2021 brand manual, we can understand that: apart from updates, Budweiser has also expanded its most crucial design asset—the logo, to enhance its adaptability across different application scenarios. The specific expansions are as follows (see Figure 3):

Firstly, the logo has been expanded into three versions based on different usage contexts and media: Solid Colorway, Symbol & Wordmark, and Keyline Colorway. Among them, Solid Colorway is primarily used in more formal and official contexts; Symbol & Wordmark is mainly used for dynamic and creative applications; Keyline Colorway is primarily utilized for graphic or printing purposes.

Secondly, to cater to different requirements for logo size and proportion across various devices, the Amp logo and Script Wordmark have each been expanded into three size versions, ensuring that the brand's logo can be presented completely and clearly at any size.

Lastly, the characteristics of the logo have been expanded and developed into a unique and exclusive Budweiser font. This font is practical, highly readable, and comes in two weights, basically covering the primary textual needs of all brand touchpoints. This allows the "logo" characteristics to engage with customers in a broader sense through another form, further amplifying and reinforcing "Budweiser quality".
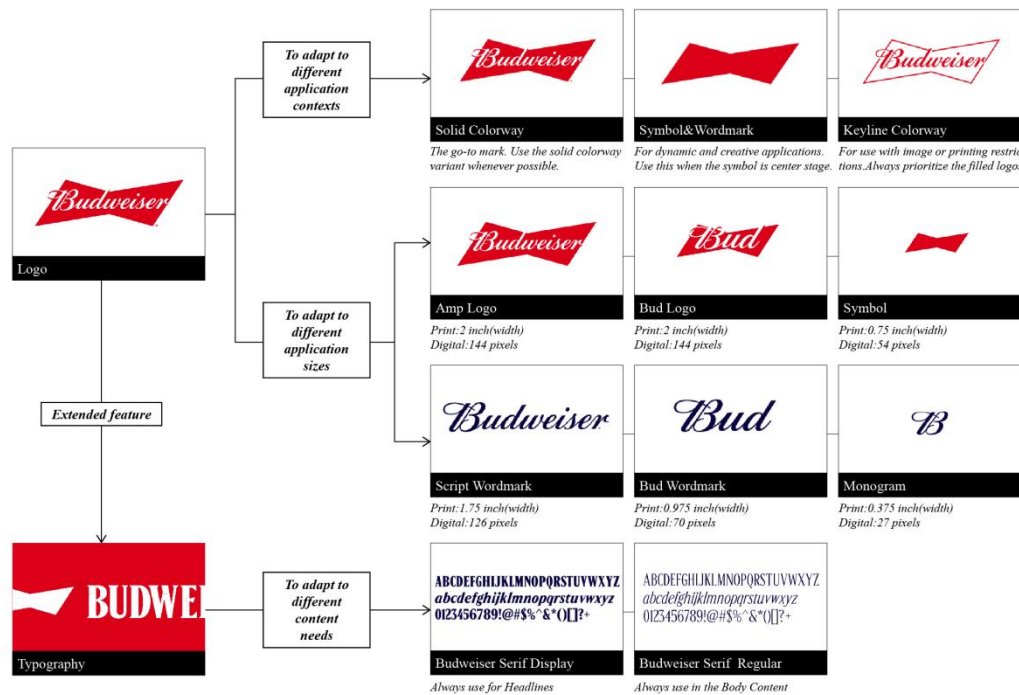
Figure 3. Budweiser's Expansion of Design Asset - Logo in the 2021 Brand Image

This is mainly because different terminals have distinct usage parameters and constraints for design assets.[15] Therefore, it is necessary to provide different versions ahead of time to ensure that the characteristics of design assets can be consistently maintained under various restrictive conditions.

4 INNOVATIVE APPLICATION OF BUDWEISER'S UPDATED BRAND ASSETS

In the latest brand image, Budweiser has also innovated in the application methods and approaches of its updated design assets. This not only allows Budweiser's "design assets" to infiltrate more extensively into various aspects of customers' lives in richer and more diverse forms through practical applications but also achieves a very good balance between its "classic nature" and "sense of fashion".This contributes to enhancing design efficiency, reducing design costs, and ensuring brand image consistency while enriching brand identity in subsequent design processes.

4.1 Innovation of Budweiser on the Application of Its Updated Logo

Before the New Consumption Era, although logos were widely used across various brand touch points, the application methods were relatively rigid and inflexible. In traditional application methods, the form of the logo, as well as its position and proportion within the image, were usually strictly prescribed and could not be altered. However, in the New Consumption Era, the application methods of logos have become open and diverse. They can be used independently in the center of an image, expanded into a series of dynamic graphics with a sense of motion, or even materialized into a tangible product... This allows the logo, which symbolizes the brand's spirit, to infiltrate every corner of customers' lives in a more tension-filled, attractive, and ingenious manner (as shown in Figure 4).
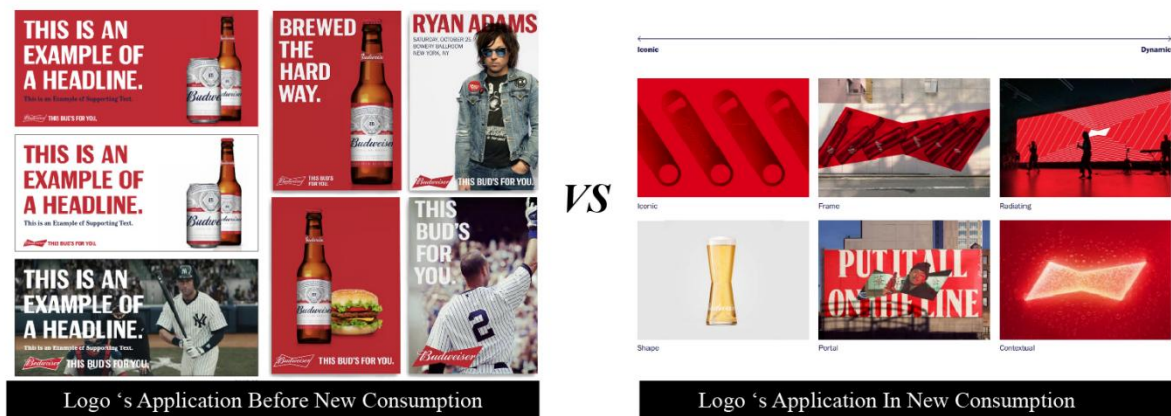
Figure 4. Comparison of Logo Usage Methods Before and After the New Consumption Era

Figure 5 summarizes four innovative ideas for Budweiser's logo application in the New Consumption Era: Direct use of the Symbol/Limit amplification, reduction use; Use of the Symbol as a template framework for content; Expand the pattern/dynamic deduction method based on the semantics of the Symbol; Materialize the symbol. Using these methods to expand the symbol graphics will be more conducive to bringing the brand's design assets into customers' lives and associating the brand with specific themes/content.
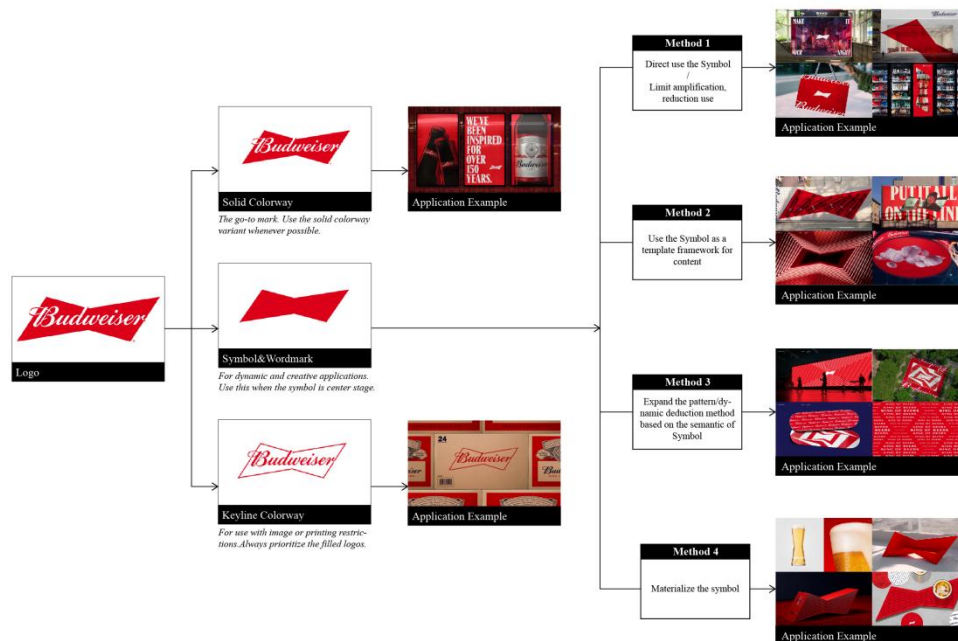

Figure 5. Summary of Innovative Application Methods for Logos in the New Consumption Era

This is primarily because, in the new consumption era, consumer demands are trending towards personalization and diversification. [16]The emergence of various segmented groups has spurred businesses to adopt customized business models. Each type of consumer has their own unique needs, making personalization and customization inevitable. Therefore, brand design assets need to be presented in a more diverse and rich manner to cater to the individual needs of different segmented groups.

4.2 Categorized Application of Budweiser's Updated Brand Assets

As shown in Figure 6, although the "design assets" inherited and updated by Budweiser in the New Consumption Era are overall more concise and modern in visual characteristics, some still have a more historical and classic feel, while others are relatively more modern. Different types of "design assets" have different proportions and application methods in practice: (1) "Design assets" with a classic feel generally do not appear alone but mainly serve as background images or embellishments to enhance the

refinement of the image; (2) Elements like brand fonts, which carry both a classic and modern sense, can appear alone or be freely mixed with elements that are either more classic or more modern; (3) "Design assets" like symbols with a very modern feel generally serve as the main content of the image but need to be balanced with "classic" or "neutral" design assets. This ensures that the final visual experience presented by the brand is neither outdated nor dull, nor excessively modern, but instead combines modernity with a certain classic and refined feel.
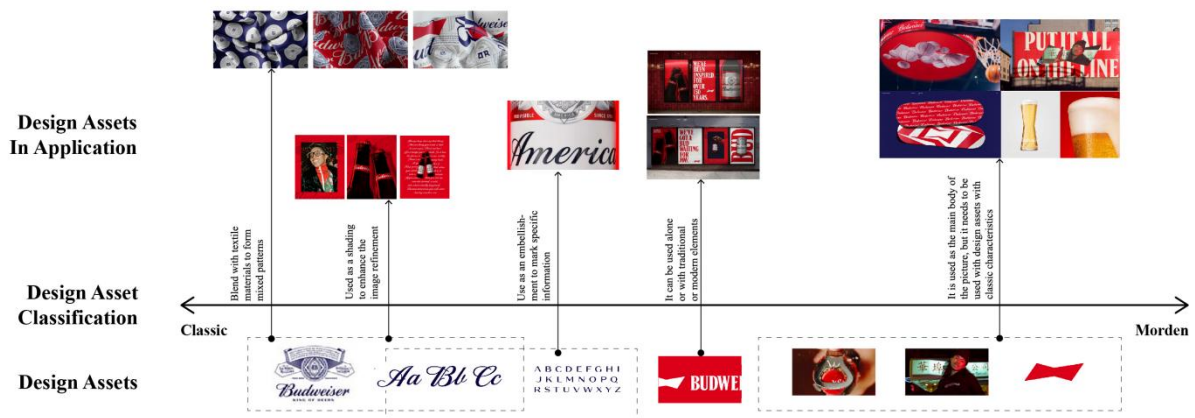

Figure 6. Analysis of Usage Methods and Weighting of Different Design Assets for Budweiser in the New Consumption Era

This is mainly to control the brand's classic nature and modern sense in the process of applying design assets.As a classic brand, Budweiser needs to not only satisfy customers' demand for modern and novel visual experiences in the new consumption era,but also retain its classic nature to some extent in order to strengthen the emotional connection that has been built with consumers over the years. [17]

5   CONCLUSION

Classic brands like Budweiser are currently confronted with the widespread challenge of brand aging in the current developmental landscape. To renew themselves without compromising the continuity of their brand equity, while also exploring new paths and possibilities for brand asset construction, these classic brands can draw upon Budweiser's design management experience and utilize the SOI (Screen, Optimize, Innovate) model for brand design asset management in their brand renewal efforts. The specific methods and processes for doing so are as follows:

(1)S(Screen Design Assets): Firstly, it is necessary to systematically categorize or review the brand's design assets and their inherent semantics and consumer associations, selectively inheriting those design assets that are most frequently used in the brand and most effectively convey the brand's core values, evoking emotional resonance among consumers. Discard those design assets that may obscure, interfere with, or detract from the communication of the brand's core values and the arousal of consumers' emotional connection to the brand.

(2) O(Optimize Design Assets): Secondly, based on current consumer preferences and usage needs, visual adjustments and optimizations are made to the selected design assets that are continued. In the new consumption era, information overload necessitates that design assets be sufficiently refined, prominent, and distinctive to better capture consumers' attention. Additionally, they must be easily replicable and scalable to increase the frequency of information exposure to consumers. Therefore, when updating their brands in this new consumption era, classic brands should adhere to the principles of "simplifying to amplify influence," "enhancing to highlight features," and "symmetrizing to expand applications" in adjusting and optimizing their chosen design assets. Furthermore, considering management efficiency, it is advisable to adaptively extend key design assets, particularly the brand logo, to ensure its adaptability and recognizability across diverse scenarios, thereby enhancing the brand's visual consistency.

(3) I(Innovate the application of design assets): Lastly, based on actual usage needs, a design asset management plan is formulated to enable efficient design development in the future. Given that classic brands have developed extensive business systems and types over time, and considering the factors

mentioned earlier—namely, the information overload in the new consumption era necessitating increased interaction between design assets and consumers, as well as the diversification and personalization of consumer demands requiring design assets to engage with consumers in more varied and diverse forms—it is crucial to approach the application of design assets strategically. This can be achieved by providing a range of creative ideas and templates centered around the brand's core design asset, the logo, for future designs to reference and utilize. By embedding design assets into consumers' daily lives more flexibly and efficiently, we can continue to strengthen the psychological connection between these elements and the brand. At the same time, to protect the classic nature of the brand and avoid giving the impression of being outdated after the update, classic brands need to classify and manage the design assets chosen for continuation. This involves controlling the ratio of classic design assets to modern minimalist design assets in visual presentations to ensure their harmonious coexistence, thereby showcasing the brand's modernity while retaining its classic charm.

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