

Even the use of the medieval Hebrew lettering, familiar from the usual Bibles and Holy Scrolls, has very little in common with modern Israel, whose true link with the Biblical past lies in the revival of the language itself, and not in the characters evolved under the influence of European black-letter calligraphy.

On the other hand, modern Hebrew lettering which tries to revive letter forms of the Biblical age is ideally suitable, if used in a purely decorative way, to give EL AL offices the desired distinctive note. It is less ornate, the shapes are simpler and more geometric and can therefore fit much better into a contemporary architectural language.

(e) GLOBAL ASPECT

Air travellers have a marked preference for large airlines, as they expect better service from them. EL AL, without belonging to the really large companies, flies to eighteen countries in four continents. This, for the airline of one of the smallest countries of the world, is quite an impressive record. It is desirable to express it, even if it is merely in the shape of a list of destinations.

(f) FRIENDLINESS

EL AL prides itself on treating its passengers as people, and not as serial numbers. It wishes to offer warm, friendly, and personalized service. An EL AL office, therefore, must look friendly and inviting.

(g) GENERAL MOOD

The emotional impact of an EL AL office should be that of something young, gay, friendly, simple, comfortable, efficient, enterprising, progressive, avant-garde.

The instruction then goes into details of materials to use, company identification, and practical considerations - all seen as part of the whole. It is worth remembering that EL AL is one of the few airlines making a profit.

This expression of a corporate personality emphasizes that even within one industry there are always particular answers. The case shows, too, how the particular may be affected by the general.

The airlines provide interesting examples, too, of two widespread influences on corporate identity. First is the way particular organizations can be given the virtues of the country they come from. This can be a two-edged sword, to be treated with care. Second is the way the important and differentiating characteristics of organizations may be far from the product itself, or just aspects of the whole blown up to large proportions.

Canadian National Railways had been revitalizing themselves for ten years and yet a survey conducted by CN in 1959 showed that people still had a poor impression of the railway industry. It was regarded as old fashioned, slow to experiment, and unconcerned with improving its services. CN suffered from this even though they had spent many millions of dollars changing from steam to diesel, embraced centralized traffic control, and integrated data processing as well as anyone. But most of these changes were behind the scenes. When they employed designers, a central part of the brief was to 'give CN a distinctive, easily recognizable identity, making it stand out....' One way to deal with the attitude to railways as a whole was to make sure CN was distinguished from the image as a whole. This point emerges in a number of cases quoted in this book.

The design programme, followed through with high quality, helped accomplish results. A study, made in 1966 by an independent firm, showed that (since the 1959 findings) CN had substantially improved its corporate image. It had enhanced its reputation in terms of being progressive, efficiently run, trying to serve the public well,