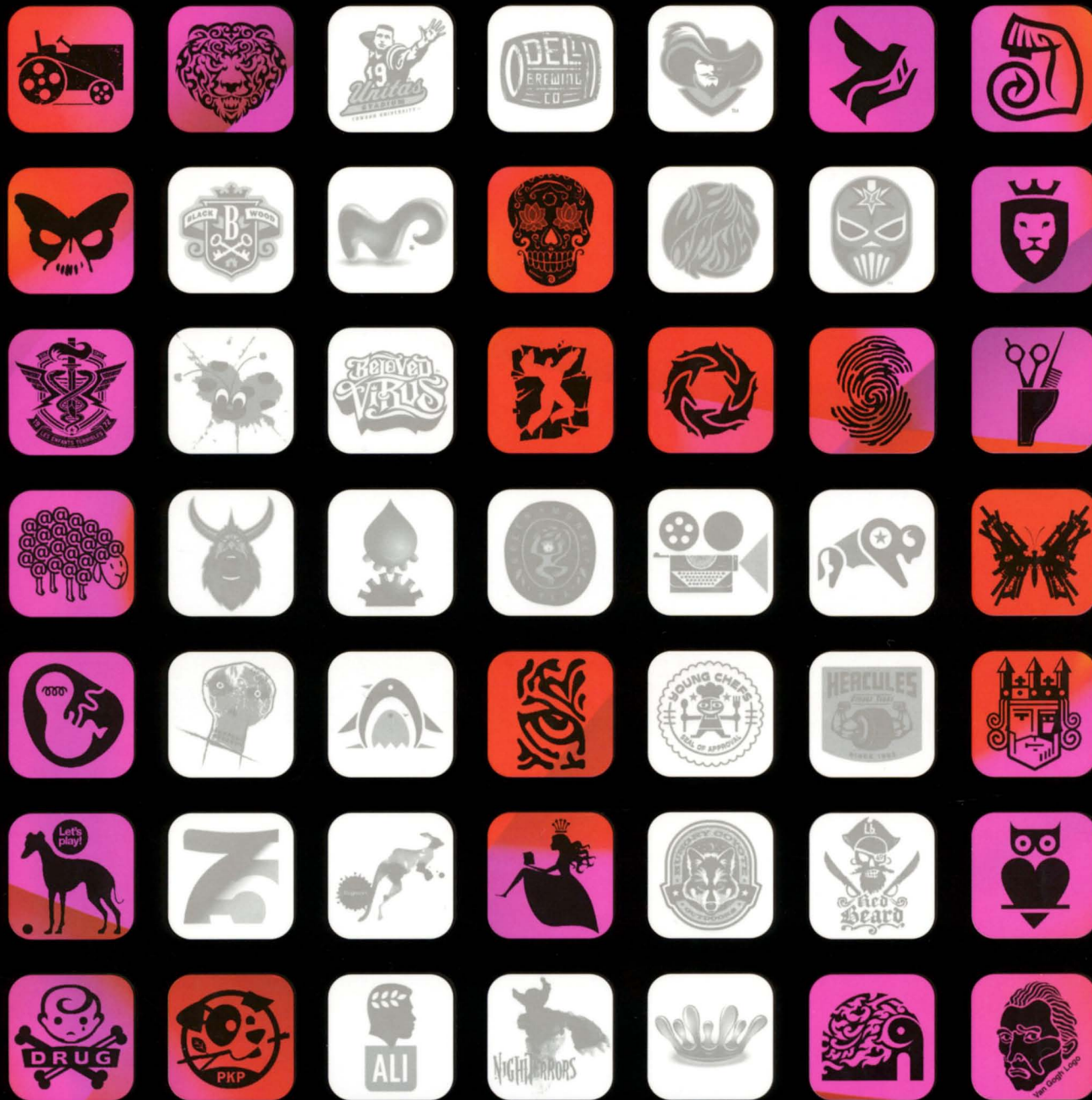




logolounge⁶

2,000 International Identities by Leading Designers



ROCKPORT

catharine fishel



bill gardner

Design Firm **Gee + Chung**

Client **National Semiconductor Corporation**

Project **Brand Identity Design**

National Semiconductor Corporation of Santa Clara, California, is one of the world's leading analog chipmakers. The company's SolarMagic technology is a proprietary brand of power optimizer that maximizes the energy output of solar photovoltaic panel systems in a revolutionary way.

Current solar power solutions consist of solar panels connected to inverters, which change direct current into alternating current for household or commercial use. The SolarMagic power optimizer is a small converter box between the panels and inverter in the system that can recoup up to 57 percent of the power that is lost to less-than-ideal situations, such as shade and irregular panel performance. This recapturing of power significantly improves an owner's return on investment and makes installation possible in many other less-than-ideal sites.

Having already designed National Semiconductor's industry-leading PowerWise brand of energy-efficient chips, Earl Gee and Fani Chung of Gee + Chung Design (San Francisco) were asked to also develop the client's SolarMagic brand of solar converter/power optimizer technology.

The primary audience for the SolarMagic brand included solar installers and solar panel manufacturers, aged eighteen to fifty-five and predominately male. Key geographic sales areas included North America (California, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, and New Jersey), Europe (Germany, Italy, and Spain), Japan, and China. The secondary audiences included financial analysts, industry reporters, semiconductor engineers, and government agencies.

The primary marketing objectives of the SolarMagic brand were to position National as an innovative, creative technology leader in delivering system solutions, and as the leader in energy-efficiency design. As the first mover in the solar panel power optimizer market, the new brand had no immediate competition, although competitors were anticipated in the next three to five years.

The single most important advantage the brand has over other systems is that the SolarMagic converter enhances the performance of each panel, allowing it to achieve maximum efficiency under adverse conditions, while existing solutions do not. The client wanted the new SolarMagic identity to represent the qualities of "innovative," "cutting-edge technology," and "easy to use." The brand should not convey "commodity item," "expensive," or "complicated."

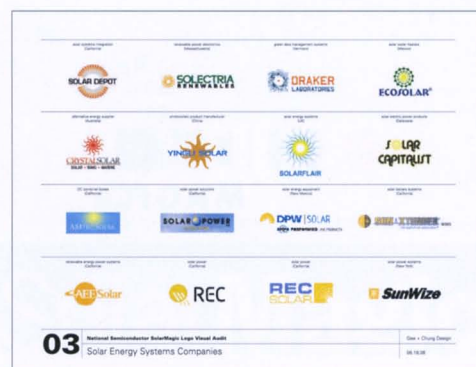


National Semiconductor, one of the world's leading analog chipmakers, develops a brand of innovative solar conversion technology which transforms solar energy into electric current by multiplying the power of the sun. The progression of emanating silicon wafers in perspective symbolizes the transformative nature of the company's power optimizer technology, using alternating yellow and blue colors to represent the conversion and optimization of solar input to electrical output.

"The SolarMagic brand was successful in conveying the innovative and transformative nature of National's power optimizer technology and in establishing an entirely new product category within the industry," says Gee.

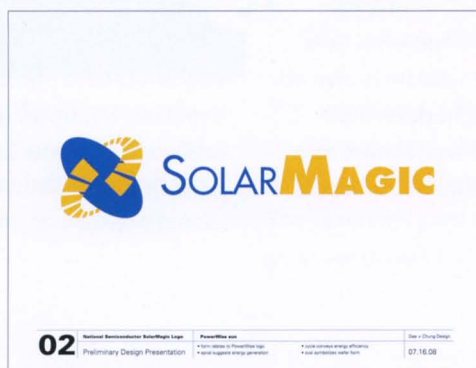
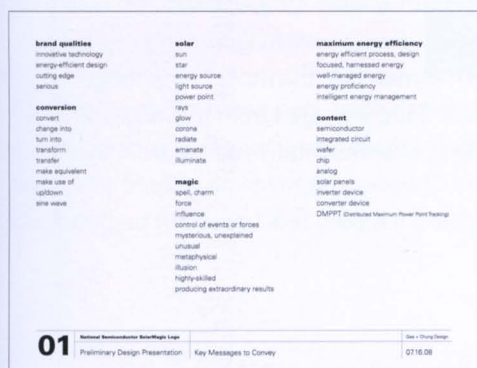
In this article, we are sharing Gee + Chung Design's actual presentation to National Semiconductor, to share the project's story as well as the presentation's look and feel.

The design firm was very fortunate to work with an extremely astute, talented, and dedicated team at National, including Todd D. Whitaker, vice president, Worldwide Marketing Operations; Jocelyn King, director, Worldwide Marketing Operations; and HoMan Lee, design manager, Brand Management & Advertising/Corporate Marketing. The National team was instrumental in making the case for the SolarMagic brand's attributes to senior management and throughout the company to enable a highly successful launch.



Gee + Chung Design began its process with a thorough visual audit. They examined existing identities, conceptual directions, and visual trends within the client's circle of business to identify opportunities that would differentiate the SolarMagic brand. The categories reviewed included everything from solar panel companies to solar energy conferences, as well as SolarMagic brands (companies with the same name but not in the client's industry).

The designers found that while the majority of solar energy companies utilize sun imagery to communicate solar energy, solar panels, or solar energy systems, very few companies went further in conveying additional qualitative attributes. This presented an important strategic opportunity for the client to conceptually represent the process of solar conversion and the qualities of a cutting-edge, breakthrough technology that is easy to use.



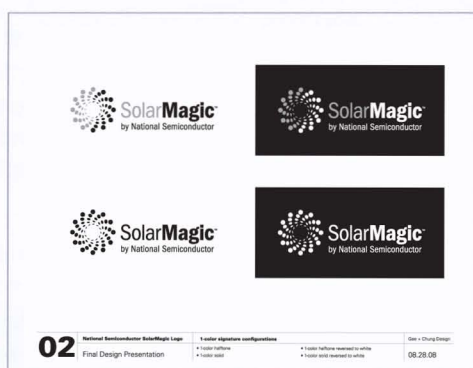
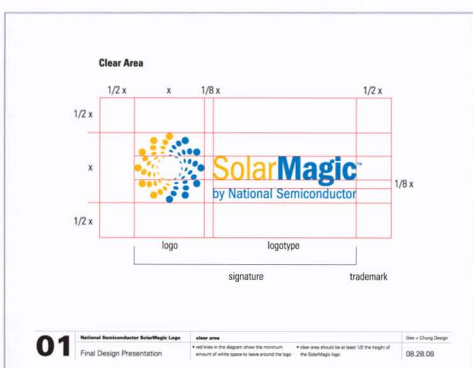
Preliminary Design The designers developed a list of key messages based on National's answers to the creative brief (top left). They explored several options in their first round of designs, trying to explore as many brand attributes as possible in the most compelling manner, constantly checking design solutions against the

key messages list to determine effectiveness. Each concept in the presentation was assigned a number and descriptive name, with its attributes listed underneath for easy reference. Five representative slides from the presentation are shown here.



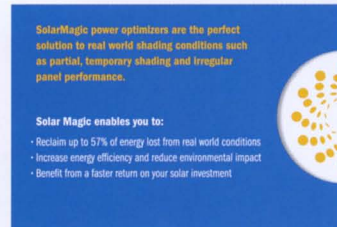
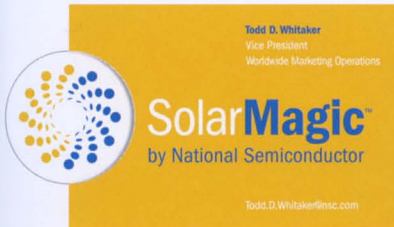
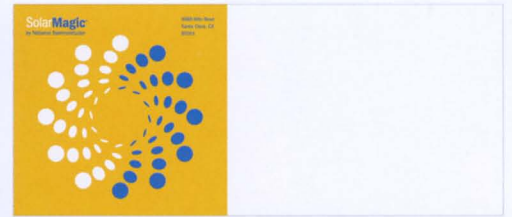
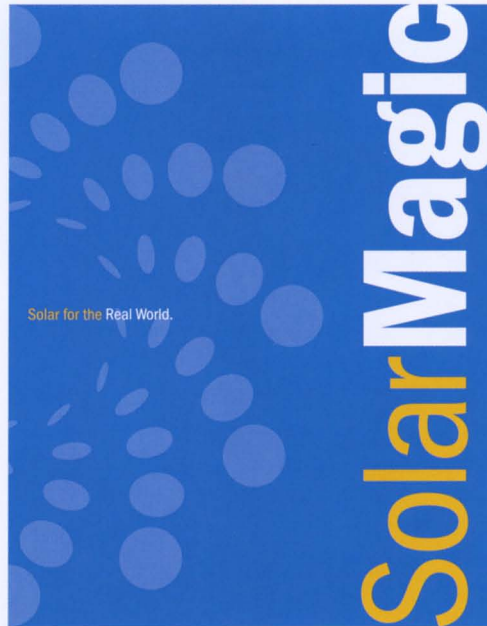
Design Refinement While refining the most promising directions selected by the client, the designers explored several new and equally promising directions that they felt should be reviewed. From extensive experience meeting extremely tight deadlines during the dot-com period, Gee + Chung Design sometimes had to proceed with the Design Refinement phase before they would

have liked. This time around, they were determined to present the client with the most effective ideas possible within this project's very short time frame. As it turned out, the most compelling direction, Multiplying Power Sun, emerged from this additional exploration. Below are sample representative slides from that presentation.



Final Design The creation of the final signature involved the resolution of several important issues, including creating the most effective scale progression within the logo, providing the optimal

letterspacing and relationship of the logo to logotype, designating the appropriate clear area around the logo, and defining the most legible usage of the logo on color backgrounds.

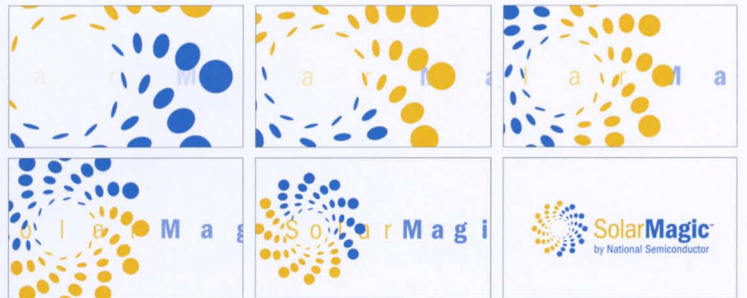


Applications The designers applied the SolarMagic logo to stationery, trucks, and an animated intro. With each component, the designers tried to discover new ways to conceptually extend the ideas behind the brand and create a graphically compelling piece.

The letterhead splits the logo in half, as a screened-back pattern on the front and alternating color on the back. The envelope uses the logo on a yellow background with a bold, eye-catching flap. The business card employs a unique die-cut to highlight the logo and create additional panels for marketing information.



The graphics use color in a flexible manner to define the truck's different surfaces, featuring a bright white side panel with a giant cropped logo, a yellow roll-up door, blue cab, yellow wheels, and custom mud flaps.



The launch intro for dealers and distributors features the logo dynamically spiraling into the frame and locking into position. The letterforms come together as a metaphor for the creation of a new technology. The logo constantly pulsates to represent the continuous conversion of solar energy to electric current.

DCM

Logo Designs

Gee + Chung Design, San Francisco, California

Gee + Chung Design has enjoyed a successful ten-year relationship with client DCM, a leading Silicon Valley venture capital company with significant investments in China, having designed everything from ads and corporate literature to its website and internal messaging. During that time, Earl Gee and Fani Chung have also had the opportunity to design a Lunar New Year logo for each of the four past years.

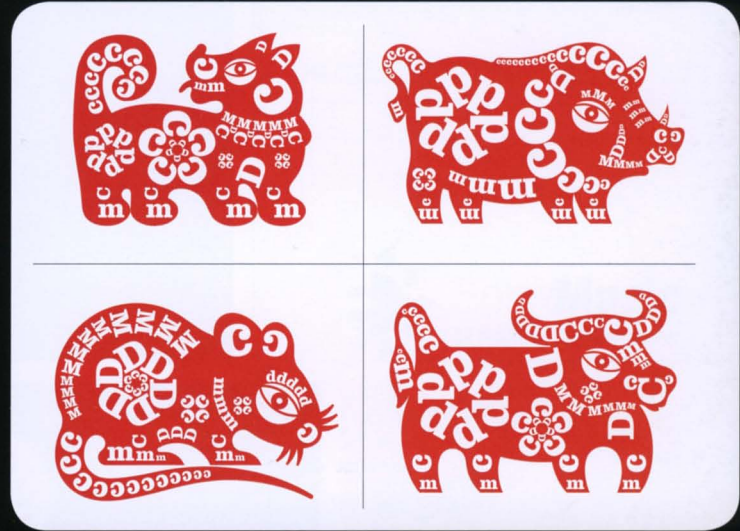
"DCM is the only U.S.-based venture capital firm to host its own Lunar New Year celebration in China to promote networking among its entrepreneurs and limited partners," says Gee. "The events demonstrate the firm's strong commitment to its technology ventures in China, and have been instrumental in establishing DCM as a leading global venture capital firm in China."

The centerpiece of each of the annual identities is a curious creature. The Dog, Boar, Rat, and Ox that the team created are on their surfaces traditional Chinese lunar calendar animals. But on closer inspection, some extraordinary illumination reveals itself. Each logo is designed using the firm's initials in the client's Clarendon Bold corporate font. Each letter, its size and case, were chosen to suggest physical attributes and sometimes pure whimsy.

"We started out by tracing different sized letterforms to create the general form and character of each animal. It was fun figuring out which combination of upper- and lowercase letters would best represent the individual features of each animal," says Gee. The effect is to convey DCM's bold, confident outlook for the firm's investments in China in the new year.

The logos were applied to a wide variety of Lunar New Year promotions, including the party invitations, greeting cards, gift bags, online invitations, and event banners.

"We selected New Page Centura Silk 100# Cover, being the highest-quality stock with the highest amount of recycled content available," says Gee. "Oscar Printing provided incredible attention to detail in producing the party invitations and greeting cards. Fong & Fong Printers and Lithographers printed the gift bags and



DCM, a leading Silicon Valley venture capital firm with significant investments in China, welcomes the Year of the Dog, Boar, Rat, and Ox, using the firm's initials to create proprietary Chinese lunar calendar animals and convey the firm's bold, confident outlook for its investments in China.

sourced the custom red and gold grommets and handles. We used metallic gold foil to evoke a festive, New Year appeal whenever possible, creating items that attendees would want to save as keepsakes of the event, or in the case of the gift bag, reuse."

DCM, recognizing that successful venture investing is built upon strong personal relationships, designed the Lunar New Year celebrations not as formal, "sit-down" Chinese banquets, but as informal receptions that would foster interaction and relationship building between the entrepreneur and investor attendees.

Each year's celebration has been extremely well received, and the events continue to attract a greater number of entrepreneurs and limited partners. The Lunar New Year campaigns have proved to be an effective extension of the DCM brand, and have been successful in establishing DCM as one of the preeminent U.S.-based venture capital firms in China.



The greeting card employs metallic gold foil to create a festive appeal. The gift bag conveys yin and yang through its wraparound motif and alternating color.



The online invitation uses animated letterforms to introduce the Lunar New Year animal.