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THE FABRIC DOCK:
REELING IN THE RIGHT BRAND FOR A SEA-INSPIRED SEWING SHOP

by
Katie Elaine Lee

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford
May 2014

Approved by

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ABSTRACT

Creating a brand for a company can require much time, research, and ingenuity. When The Fabric Dock in Wiggins, Mississippi, opened in April 2013, I began work as their graphic designer and gained valuable experience that has taught me everything from learning to gather strong research for color and typefaces to being able to communicate with the people on the production end. Since I was dealing with a new business, I was able to start from nothing to create exactly what I felt would be the perfect fit for this sea-inspired sewing shop. I spent days conversing with the owners on location, trying to grasp the intentions of the store and just what atmosphere the owners envisioned for their customers.

After careful consideration and ample discussion, the owners and I decided to establish The Fabric Dock as an inspiring, beach cottage chic setting to find designer fabric at reasonable prices. I explored the Internet and design magazines to gain as much insight as I could to come up with a successful, versatile logo. I studied Pantone swatches and color reports and claimed Living Coral, Fair Aqua, and Bleached Sand, as the colors, in hopes of producing a refreshed nautical feel. I paired a blocky, stamp-like typeface with a soft, flowing one to create the ultimate contrast needed for the logo. This logo would be constantly seen with the store's icon, a sketched anchor showing a sewing needle with the crossbar connected by a sewn-on button.

Not only did I have to unearth information about the store, but I also had to focus on the audience, the customers. Sewing has seen a recent upsurge in popularity. Younger people and children are now becoming interested in this timeless tradition due to trends like Project Runway and Do-It-Yourself projects. Because sewing now encompasses all ages and interests, versatility was the key to constructing signage, advertisements, t-shirt designs, and the rest of the system. I feel I achieved success with versatility, and I hope these design pieces will continually prove to be profitable for The Fabric Dock.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful parents for blessing me with the greatest love and support and always encouraging me to chase after and excel in my many interests. In addition, I dedicate this thesis to the owners of The Fabric Dock for providing me with this unique thesis topic perfectly fit for my interests and career aspirations. Lastly, I want to thank my entire family for always being there for me and for helping to make the long-awaited dream of The Fabric Dock finally come true.

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Chapter 1

Revisiting Nautical Roots

It seems that now, more than in past years, graphic designers are needed in almost every environment, and as an art major, I feel that my career options are rather diverse. From designing book, newspaper, and magazine layouts, to creating a custom digital logo for a website, to researching and developing environmental graphics for a billboard, to executing every detail of a bride's ideal set of wedding invitations, the demand for the work I plan to pursue seems endless. What has also proven beneficial to me in making design a part of my future career is that I am open to designing different items, rather than focusing on design of a particular style. I feel it is necessary to be skilled in a wide range of design possibilities to solve the project or problem for a company or product.

When I first found out that two people close to me were planning to open a fabric shop, I instantly knew that the door had just opened to the perfect thesis topic. I realized that working with these clients to establish a complete brand identity for them would allow me the chance to push the design skills I had acquired in school. While collaborating with the owners of this fabric store, I took the time to learn everything I could about the shop, as any knowledgeable designer should. As a designer it is crucial to find out any information one can about a company, including its target customers, types of products and services sold, personality, budget, and any detail that might affect the design process,

to set brand guidelines for the store. I now had the opportunity to see my work executed in a wide variation of materials, including eight-foot vinyl adhesives, professionally painted signs, screen-printed t-shirts, adhesive labels, business cards, and other media.

This experience showed me the full potential of a basic logo. In addition I learned to work with the people on the end of the production line, thus having creative control of my design project from start to finish. What has been especially helpful was being able to start from a blank slate and explore in all different directions without being tied down to some already existing idea or design strategy. Planning with this amount of freedom allowed me to best meet the needs and desires of my client while gaining the chance to incorporate exactly what I feel is the most successful fit for the brand of the company. I experimented with color, concept, and layout, and eventually decided upon a brand that I feel most appropriately suits this business.

Both owners of the store are native to coastal Mississippi, growing up just nine miles from the beach of Gulfport. Therefore, they have spent much of their lives influenced by the water and all things coastal. The owners, Nancy and Natalie, of The Fabric Dock in Wiggins, Mississippi, had a vision to make their newly established fabric store stand out from the typical sewing shop. Nancy learned to sew from a very early age, making clothes for her dolls, herself, and even her sister's bridesmaids' dresses. Years later, she is now sewing dresses and bedding sets for her college-aged daughter, as well as throw pillows and other home decor items. Natalie also began sewing early in life and found a niche in quilting, embroidery, and making children's clothes.



1. Owners of The Fabric Dock in Front of the Original Store

Their mutual love for sewing created an even stronger love for fabric, the bond that led them to want to open a fabric store. The combination of their extensive sewing experience with limited access to only mediocre sewing supplies helped them know firsthand what a customer would want when beginning a new project. Their main goals in opening The Fabric Dock were to provide designer fabric at low prices while creating a memorable shopping experience for each of their customers. I have also lived in Mississippi my whole life and have grown up surrounded by family members who love to sew, so I was familiar with the issues of generic fabric store shopping excursions and shared their same goal of attracting customers with fresh, engaging designs for the company.

When I first stepped foot into the original brick location of The Fabric Dock in

downtown Wiggins to meet with the owners, I was immersed in a warm, sunlit open space filled with pops of cheerful color and bold prints, including stripes, paisleys and bursting florals, along with polka dots, gingham, chevron, seersucker, burlap, and hundreds of other patterns. There was an entire wall of hundreds of fabric bolts lined up in rows of shelves, each bolt unique and captivating. The shelves were sorted by collection, designer, and pattern, and it seemed it would take days to cover all of those countless rows of fabric. Designer brands including Michael Miller, Amy Butler, Moda, and Robert Kaufman, were just a few of the well-known fabric lines that filled the store.



2. Dots Fabric Collection Display

In the back sat five or six large trashcans painted in soft beach-inspired colors that were full of long rolls of Premier Prints upholstery and home decor fabric. Towards the front of the store I was greeted by multiple warm and inviting cottage-inspired displays that intermixed distressed, antique-washed pieces of furniture with colored metal pails and beautiful white cake plates and large bowls loaded with pre-cut fabric and notions.

Throughout the store was an overwhelming splash of soft, beach cottage-inspired color

and decor, so I felt the best way to describe the unique style of The Fabric Dock is "beach cottage chic."



3. Beach Cottage Chic Store Display



4. Cottage-Inspired Window Display

That is exactly the style I tried to capture in each piece of my design work for the store. When I first searched the Internet for "beach cottage chic," hundreds of results rolled in, and most were somewhat reminiscent of The Fabric Dock. This was encouraging, as the theme they chose seemed to be one of the foremost style trends in interior spaces in 2014. This factor should play a key role in attracting the attention of customers at their initial steps into the store. However, the important thing to realize is that, trend or not, nautical chic has been done and seen in interiors for decades and should never really go out of style.

Last fall I had the unique privilege of attending the 2014 International Quilt Festival Show in Houston, Texas, where I was able to acquire valuable knowledge and inspiration from every aspect of fabric. Despite the misleading name, the show was made up of over two thousand booths comprised of everything from brand new designer fabric collections that are just now available this spring to fabric stores across the country, to

sewing machines, notions, and anything else one could imagine that involves sewing. The displays throughout the complex that were designed and created there at the show were intensely elaborate, each with a unique theme for that season's latest collection of fabric or notions. The rows and rows of richly displayed booths of fabric collections seemed endless.

This show helped me to see the latest trends of patterns, styles, and even colors for this upcoming season. I was unfortunately unable to make it to every single booth, even after walking up and down the organized rows for two long days. Not only did I have the opportunity to see the amazing new collections of designer fabric and the incredible displays that these designers put together, but I also got the special opportunity to meet several renowned designers. One, in particular, was a well-known designer named Amy Butler, a personal favorite of mine as well as that of The Fabric Dock owners. I was able to talk to her about my thesis work and what I was planning to design for The Fabric Dock as well as my career aspirations for the future. She was quite personable and gave me helpful advice for my thesis as well as working with fabric design, a design category I would like to explore after graduation. I also attended a class there on how to display fabric that will best make it sell. While I am simply designing graphic design items for The Fabric Dock, it is important for me to be knowledgeable about displaying my work in stores as well, so I can better design them purposely to fit with the location I am designing for. I have been able to successfully take the information I gained from the 2014 International Quilt Show and channel it towards making my designs best fit for The Fabric Dock.

Chapter 2

Rediscovering a Traditional Pastime

What helps in drawing customers to The Fabric Dock is the fact that sewing has recently seen an upsurge in popularity in the last decade (Chaker 1). Prior to this resurgence, many seemed to immediately think only of their grandmothers or *Little House on the Prairie* at the mere mention of sewing, simply because they were of the few who could relate to this seemingly outdated craft. There were just a few young people, along with the middle-aged, who had even a clue about sewing on a button or maybe hemming a pair of pants, much less creating their own outfit or spending days constructing an entire quilt.

However, today sewing is not just for the grandmothers of the world. Jennifer Culpepper, a 33-year-old from Washington, D.C., who recently began sewing, confirms this sentiment by saying that she has realized "how creative it is, rather than it being one of those things that old ladies do" (Chaker 1). More and more, younger women and children have formed a new appreciation and desire for sewing that they may not have had before. This new-found regard for sewing is due to a number of things, including the popular and steadily growing trend of *Do-It-Yourself* projects, the birth of Pinterest, and shows like *Project Runway* that inspire designers to design and create their own unique clothing masterpieces (Chaker 1).

The struggling economy is even playing a role in this craze as the higher unemployment rate encourages people to save money by making the products that they could more easily purchase from a store or designer for a much higher price (Chaker 1). Judy Ni, a 28-year-old seamstress from Parsippany, New Jersey, said she was tired of seeing fashion that was dull and expensive (Chaker 1). "Everyone's starting to look like clones of each other. Why pay \$1,000 for something that everyone else has" (Chaker 1)? Most importantly, the pride and accomplishment that is born out of the plan for an interesting project, the purchase of the needed materials, the resolution of details and obstacles in the completion of the process, and finally being able to wear or use what took so much time and effort is what keeps sewers coming back for more. Owner of Haberman Fabrics of Royal Oak, Michigan, Toby Haberman, attests to this as she states, "Years ago if you made something you didn't want anyone to know, now I hear people say, 'Yes, I made that'!" (Chaker 1)

The Fabric Dock owners feel that it is crucial to reach out to young people and help provide the sewing support that they long for and need. While this store caters to people of all ages and backgrounds, they want to make a special point to engage this generation. However, the attention, interests, and concerns of this age group can be largely different than those of the older age groups. Therefore, to gain this generation as customers, the owners must understand how these young people operate and live their lives. What will be most beneficial for the sewing economy, the small local sewing businesses, and of course, the newly inspired seamstress and crafter is the start of the owners' engagement in their design interests as well as encouragement to get their friends involved.

While a 1993 *Ad Age* editorial was one of the first to use the term “Generation Y,” author Campbell Sanderson explains that this age group ranges from 11-31 years old (Main 1). It is important to know that this Generation Y is a group of over 70 million people that more than triples the population of the previous Generation X (Sanderson 3). Therefore, the decisions and activities that these people pursue can notably impact the overall trends that consumers will see. Because they have grown up using technology in their everyday activities, they require quite a different way of being reached in comparison to their predecessors (Sanderson 3). Researchers feel that this group is more responsible and self-sufficient than groups who came before them, so this may help reveal why they are keen on this idea of creating and sewing items for themselves, rather than simply buying similar already made products (Sanderson 4). In his article, “Marketing to Generation Y: understanding and appealing to the millennial generation,” Sanderson claims that in order to most efficiently reach the interests of Generation Y, businesses must focus on the top four aspects they consider before choosing a product or service: *cheap cost, high quality, fast service, and an experience* (Sanderson 7).

Sanderson claims that the companies that are most successful today have made it this far because they make it a point not to talk down to this independent generation and, instead, simply let their top quality products and returning, enthusiastic customers do the rest (Sanderson 7). The Fabric Dock is already applying this successful strategy to their business. Even though young new sewers can introduce themselves to this hobby with little or no knowledge of the process and preparation required, the owners strive to

inspire all of their customers and do their best to incorporate exciting new classes and projects that these beginners can use to get off to a promising start. Top quality and designer brands in fabric and products are priority for The Fabric Dock. Their selection is distinct from the other surrounding fabric stores, and the prices are low for the designer brands and extra quality that customers receive. People from all over the South, as well as other countries, are already noticing these aspects of this store, and these passionate returning customers are making strong relationships with the owners and helping new shoppers realize what they have been missing.

All types of media need to be utilized by any business today, in order to reach this particular age group (Sanderson 8). This young generation uses social media to gain information from their friends and the community (Sanderson 8). Sanderson affirms that the Internet is the single most effective way to reach Generation Y because the members of this group enjoy the freedom of doing their own research on a particular product or service to find out if it is something they are interested in (Sanderson 8). The Fabric Dock has already begun to take advantage of this beneficial media with their Facebook page, which the owners use to inform customers of upcoming project classes and to post pictures of project samples. Often, after a class has finished a particular project, a picture is posted of the group that attended the class with their finished products.

This resource is what allows this younger age group to see exactly what The Fabric Dock is about and helps them to determine whether they would be interested in getting involved with this business. Facebook is also a source that the owners use to invite people

to sign up for the class after seeing the post of a description and project sample. This makes it possible for people around town to see which of their friends or people they know might also be taking the class, typically increasing their desire to participate, knowing they will not be alone. Additionally, The Fabric Dock operates an Instagram account that they can use to advertise upcoming sales and new fabric shipments. They have also recently started experimenting with Instagram videos, a way to more easily showcase an extensive store display or a wide spread of fabric bolts at one time.

Next comes understanding that Generation Y is considered an "experience" culture (Sanderson 9). While other generations may have allowed companies to consume certain products, the members of Generation Y want to, instead, observe the world firsthand and make their own educated decisions (Sanderson 9). The owners know that merely telling these young people that sewing can produce engaging outcomes will not fully entice them. The members of Generation Y want to live life with their friends. When they see their friends being tagged in pictures of sewing classes with their finished products on Facebook, they will be much more willing to try it themselves. Once they make it into the store, they will be able to look around and directly take in the creative atmosphere.

A fascinating fact about the people of this generation is that they are attracted to buying all they can that relates to their passions from a single location, instead of just one or two items (Sanderson 11). In response, businesses are trying to expand as far as they can in order to become the provider of all that a person needs for a particular lifestyle (Sanderson 11). The Fabric Dock has worked diligently and rapidly to adapt to this

strategy. When The Fabric Dock first opened in April 2013, they were primarily only selling fabric, with few notions or other related products. A year later in April 2014, the store is now equipped with over three times the fabric including pre-cut fabric, like jelly rolls, fat quarters, fat eighths, and charm packs, that is used in quilting, a complete range of sewing and embroidery machines, a wide variety of various sewing notions such as embroidery and sewing thread, needles, buttons, ribbons, cutting and measuring tools, and an entire collection of personalized products that come in all shapes, sizes, colors, patterns, and types, along with a number of other valuable sewing-related items.

In addition to the products, the owners also provide profitable services. These consist of long-arm quilting, embroidery, appliqués, and monogramming, sewing classes, open project work nights, and meaningful advice and assistance. When members of Generation Y come in having decided that they are ready to immerse themselves into the world of sewing, it is convenient for them to find everything they need to get started all in one location, The Fabric Dock. This birth of customer loyalty is beneficial for both the owners of The Fabric Dock and the new customer.

Sanderson asserts that there are several key messaging remarks that chiefly appeal to Generation Y (Sanderson 11). First, "great value," "cheap," and "inexpensive" are three phrases that this generation, along with people of all ages, seems instantly drawn to (Sanderson 11). Conveniently, the slogan for The Fabric Dock is "Great Prices on Fabulous Fabric." Therefore, the owners understand how important good prices are to customers and have done their best to stand out among surrounding competitors.

"Best" is the next keyword, and The Fabric Dock is diligent in maintaining the best possible selection of fabric and sewing supplies possible (Sanderson 11). While local customers have the option of going to Wal-Mart or other competing businesses like Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores or Hancock Fabrics, these places do not carry products with the same quality that The Fabric Dock works hard to preserve. Next, calling a product or service "innovative" is much more alluring than calling a product "cool" or "trendy" (Sanderson 11). The owners have already discovered this idea and have been efficient in relating to these young customers the benefits of sewing as teaching them new skills that they can apply to other areas of their lives. "Helpful" is the next phrase and goes hand-in-hand with "innovative" (Sanderson 12). What Generation Y can gain from sewing is saving money from making products they would otherwise buy, attaining skills that they can apply in many directions like mending old clothing and making new products, repurposing old pieces that can be remade into new, usable items, and developing patience and hard work from time spent sewing.

Sanderson's last piece of advice to business owners in reaching Generation Y is "Be Authentic" (Sanderson 12). The Fabric Dock owners exemplify this tip in every way. They started this business solely because they loved fabric and wanted to share their passion of sewing with others. Therefore, they are focused on bringing the best to their customers to help them succeed in sewing. They strive to be truthful and honest to their customers and seem to be more intent on providing helpful information than simply selling sewing supplies. Shoppers I have spoken to say they are personable and

accessible, allowing customers to build relationships with them, encouraging customer loyalty and many returns. With the strong combination of all of these fundamental aspects being addressed, The Fabric Dock will find Generation Y a leading force in its customer base.

Chapter 3

Refining the Creative Process

Inspired by their own coastal backgrounds, the owners of the store selected the name “The Fabric Dock.” In order to make the store easily found when searched for, they made sure the word “fabric” was included in the name. The word “dock” helps to imply the desired nautical feel, as well as indicate the possibility of reasonable prices. The image of a dock encourages thoughts of casual simplicity because it is made out of plain wooden boards, not some more expensive building material. Therefore, fabric being sold at a place called "The Fabric Dock" should first indicate to customers that they will find fabric at very reasonable prices, rather than fabric that has been highly marked up at some highly luxurious interior decorating store. The "dock" is there chiefly to set this scene.

Another reason they chose a name that incorporates the nautical aspect was to make the idea of fabric shopping fresh. While it may be easy to find a plethora of sewers in older generations, it has been a real challenge to find many in younger age groups during the last several decades. However, in the last few years, sewing has started to make a comeback. To complement this growing trend, The Fabric Dock set one of its main goals as trying to involve younger customers in all things related to sewing and enhance the enthusiasm of the older generations.

Along with the name come well-known nautical and sewing symbols that can be used on various signage. Creative slogans used to introduce sales and various events also work well with this name. For example, The Fabric Dock started placing its featured bolts of fabric of the day that will be in a special sale in an old wooden chair at the front of the store. A catchy way to bring attention to these daily sales would be calling it “The Catch of the Day.” Therefore, this name opens doors for creative opportunities that can be designed and seen throughout the store. One of the customers' favorite aspects of the store is the system used to reward repeat shoppers who are constantly buying new fabric. In response to their icon being a sewing-inspired anchor, The Fabric Dock owners were able to title this motivating program "Anchor Awards." In addition, having the name of the store reading obviously as nautical allows much room and opportunity for store displays throughout the store, as the nautical theme is a classic one.

To present the nautical theme, I initially considered adopting traditional red and navy blue, typical of sailing flags and other boating equipment. However, as I understand the client is trying to cast a new light on sewing and fabric shopping, I decided to try a fresher, renewed version of this color scheme. Coral and aqua immediately came to my mind as the perfect solution. While these colors had recently become a common trend in my own closet as well as my bedroom, I knew that I was not alone in loving this refreshing new color trend. From my personal research perusing posts on Pinterest and photographs from interior design magazines online as well as simply looking around at the clothes and decorations that surrounded me at local stores and advertisements, I began to understand that this trend was alive and growing. However, merely claiming coral and

aqua as the official store colors was not as easy as it sounds. I had to conduct further research and much of my own color mixing to establish the exact hues I was imagining in my head.

As a graphic designer, I have learned that the careful selection and consistent use of particular colors is crucial to the design process. In December 2012 the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College sent me to Boston, Massachusetts, to meet with and gain knowledge and advice from businesspeople in my field of study. I sought out and visited Mystic View Design Inc. in Chelsea, Massachusetts, where I was able to sit in on an actual decision regarding an upcoming design for a client. Being there gave me a realistic perspective of how it would be to work with other designers at a design firm. While I had already learned a great deal about graphic design from my courses, it was the staff at Mystic View Inc. that showed me how different paper types, ink colors, and the Pantone system is applied to graphic design projects.

Exploring the color options for this store brought me back to this beneficial trip, encouraging me to examine the Pantone system and see what I might discover. According to Pantone, the internationally acclaimed authority on color and producer of color systems, the Color of the Year for 2010 was Pantone Turquoise 15-5519 (Pantone 1). Although the aqua I chose for the store was Pantone Fair Aqua 12-5409, these two colors were in the same color family and had comparable effects. Pantone said of Turquoise that it conjured up thoughts of "soothing, tropical waters and a languorous, effective escape from the everyday troubles of the world" (Pantone 1). This description seems to fit the

purpose of the store exactly. The activity of sewing and being surrounded by yards and yards of rich color and pattern is exactly the escape that most shoppers who frequent The Fabric Dock are longing for.



5. Pantone Color of the Year for 2010: Turquoise 15-5519

Most people respond to Turquoise positively, making it necessary to incorporate into all aspects of this fabric store (Pantone 1). Because it is "universally flattering," appeals to both genders, and is easily translatable to both interiors and fashion, The Fabric Dock and I had no problem integrating our variation of Turquoise into the t-shirts being designed for the store, as well as the overall store display and decor, including the painted columns on the front porch of the new store location as well as the window frames of the original location (Pantone 1).

What I found to be primarily valuable about Turquoise is that it coordinates nicely with almost any color on the spectrum (Pantone 1). Specifically, it "adds a splash of excitement to neutrals and browns, complements reds and pinks, creates a classic maritime look with deep blues, livens up all other greens, and is especially trend-setting with yellow-greens" (Pantone 1). This articulation sums up my reasoning for making it one of the primary colors of the scheme for The Fabric Dock. Consequently, the owners and I have thoroughly enforced the use of this color by using it in everything from the

identity system which is made up of the combination of coral, aqua, and the sandy neutral, the painted metal trashcans used to hold the upholstery fabric, all a combination of tones of yellow-green, coral, and aqua, and other items which embody these strategic hues. What is also interesting about tones similar to Turquoise is that it can look "elegant and dressy" or "casual and fun," complementary to the duty The Fabric Dock has to provide designer fabric at reasonable prices in a casually chic setting (Pantone 1).

When looking ahead to the next year, I was surprised to learn that the Color of the Year for 2011 was Pantone Honeysuckle 18-2120 (Pantone 1). While the Pantone hue I selected through the Pantone Matching System closest to the coral I chose for the store is Living Coral 16-1546, Honeysuckle 18-2120 is slightly cooler than Living Coral 16-1546. Pantone considers this reddish pink Honeysuckle hue "encouraging and uplifting," perfectly appropriate for The Fabric Dock as the owners strive to be exactly that for each of their customers (Pantone 1). This is also necessary that the signage and decor of the store be inspiring, helping to create that "experience" for all customers who visit The Fabric Dock.



6. Pantone Color of the Year for 2011: Honeysuckle 18-2120

This hue has also been claimed to deliver a "wave of nostalgia," reminding customers of

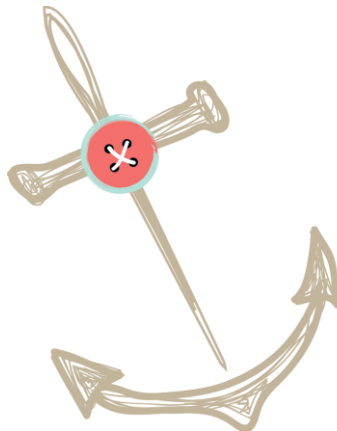
the carefree days with their grandmothers, possibly spent together sewing (Pantone 1). Pantone also states that colors like Honeysuckle are guaranteed to give off a "healthy glow" when worn by people of both genders (Pantone 1). This was particularly helpful to know when helping the owners decide what t-shirt colors to order. Pantone also encourages people to add splashes of Honeysuckle to their home decor, and The Fabric Dock has accomplished this by incorporating similar hues to Honeysuckle all throughout the store (Pantone 1).

It is not difficult to understand why coral and aqua seem meant for each other and, particularly, meant for The Fabric Dock. In addition I can see why people from all over the world would appreciate these two colors and be drawn to blending them into their everyday lives. Moreover, when coral and aqua are combined with a sandy tan, particularly Pantone Bleached Sand 13-1008, a warm neutral that generates images of the beach, the ideal color scheme for this beach cottage chic fabric store is born (Pantone 1).

The symbol for the overall brand was something that the client and I thought every other design piece should center around. The owners have always been drawn to the appearance and concept of an anchor, and I immediately felt it would be the perfect identity for The Fabric Dock. One helpful aspect of choosing the anchor is that it is a traditional symbol that is easily accessible and recognizable, making customers relate to the store at first sight. However, the anchor I designed to identify The Fabric Dock is not just any anchor. In order to most successfully blend the image of sewing and the sea together, I decided to construct an anchor with the shank made to resemble a sewing

needle. I also added a button to look sewn over the cross bar to incorporate another sewing element as well as a bit of color.

To complement the light and playful color scheme and mood of the store, I chose to make the anchor look as if it had been sketched with a pencil rather than created with solid vector shapes. This custom anchor has become a part of the logo and can be found on the store signs, business cards, price tags, and almost every other piece of the identity system. The universality of the anchor image includes its shape that can fill up negative space efficiently without looking empty. Because the anchor and the nautical style is also a top trend in clothing in 2014, I knew that including this signature icon on a t-shirt for the store would be an easy medium of advertisement for The Fabric Dock. The relevance of the button is that it clarifies that this is a fabric and sewing shop, in case the needle image does not come through clear enough for the viewer.



7. Anchor Symbol

In coming up with the most important piece of The Fabric Dock brand, the logo, I devoted ample time to think, research, and sketch ideas as part of the journey to discover the ultimate logo for a fabric store of its kind. I began by arranging the words in the title of the store in as many different layouts as I could, as well as trying out the letters with various casing options. I spent days searching the internet, as well as seeking inspiration from a few design magazines, for new fonts that would stand out with somewhat of a homemade feel but still professional and that would be attractive to customers of all ages while still looking appropriate in this small, historic town not far from the coast. After putting together hundreds of combinations of typefaces and layouts, I finally settled on what the client and I felt was the perfect balance. I chose to spell out "fabric" and "dock" from the same typeface, Road Movie, which is an uppercase, blocky, print-styled typeface. This helped to immediately echo the creative, handmade feel of the store while showing up well from any distance.

To contrast such thick block letters, I found a delicate script typeface called Doris Day to incorporate the softness of the brand and model the flowing movement of a piece of thread or ribbon. I decided to stack "fabric" on top of "dock" and place "the" sideways to the left of "fabric" and "dock." This helped to create a rather compact logo that can more easily be placed anywhere on a document, rather than a long spaced-out logo that may only work in a long, rectangular space. Also, the sideways "the" provides contrast to the rest of the logo, making it far from being stagnant or typical.



8. Logo

To the right of the text, I have consistently placed the hand-drawn anchor I made. This anchor still has visible brush strokes, complements the letterpress-style typeface used in "fabric" and "dock," and further emphasizes the handmade aspect. What makes this logo most successful is versatility in any design application. For example, while I left the logo in the original placement I described for the original store building sign, the sign for the new location required a bit of rethinking due to the shape change from a rectangle to a square. I was able to take my once straight, compact logo and make it into a round logo without losing its basic aesthetic. A versatile logo is necessary and can make all the difference in creating a company brand. When creating many different pieces for one company, being able to move all the pieces around while still keeping the logo recognizable is the key to making a successfully integrated collection.



9. Original Store Sign



10. New Store Sign

Advertising has been one of the foremost design necessities, especially during this first year of business for The Fabric Dock. Over this past year, I have created a number of various advertising materials in order to spread awareness of the store and attract visitors and shoppers to The Fabric Dock. Advertisement of the new store began with a rack card displayed in racks around town, including at the local rest stop. This flier was made to inform travelers of The Fabric Dock and its location. Quite a bit of different information was needed on this particular flier, so I decided to use a stacking layout, placing lines of information on top of one another, separated by horizontal lines. This makes every line organized and easy to read. Each flier is a simple one-sided third of a sheet of paper, in order to be cost effective and fit into racks that incorporate similar fliers about local attractions. In addition I have created other advertising essentials, such as small advertisements to be placed in local newspapers and digital advertisements for social media tools including Facebook, e-newsletters, Instagram, and Twitter.

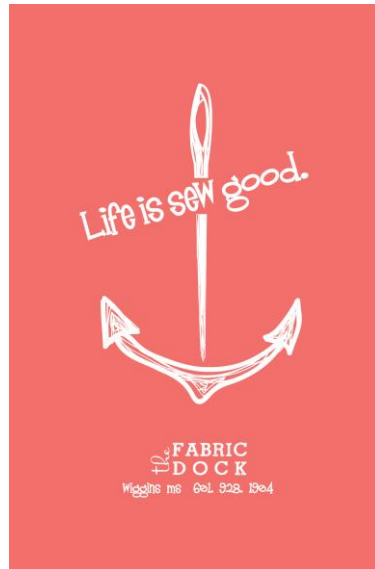


11. Rack Card

Although a subtle product of advertising, the t-shirt I designed for The Fabric Dock has proven to be as effective a tool as the media advertisements for letting customers around town know about the store. Because it is a wearable piece of advertisement and has the potential to be seen by people from around the world, I kept several issues in mind while designing. First, to make the t-shirt most economical, the owners and I felt that we could have a successful shirt with information only on the front and only in white ink. Just these two features helped to keep the cost down. Next, I had to consider the audience, who would be wearing this t-shirt. This audience might extend from young boys and girls, teenagers, and young mothers to middle-aged women and elderly shoppers.

Therefore, I had to make the design as versatile as possible while still coming up with something creative and attractive that all customers would be excited to buy and wear. I felt the best way to accomplish this task was simplicity. I thought about the most successful t-shirts that I had seen people wearing around, and I realized that these shirts were not popular because they displayed some elaborate design on the back or a great deal of decoration. I immediately thought of the "Life is Good" company that makes an entire collection of outdoor-style t-shirts that are complete with scenes that illustrate the phrase "Life is Good."

Therefore, I decided to take that basic thought and apply it to a nautical, sewing-inspired design by placing the custom anchor for the store rather large and in the center of the front of the t-shirt. Instead of the crossbar, I placed the words "Life is sew good" in the shape of the crossbar but at a slight upward diagonal. Some anchors are built with a diagonal crossbar, and I felt that applying the text diagonally in this situation would provide some movement and contrast with the horizontal logo that I placed right underneath the anchor. This design made for a tasteful t-shirt that can be worn by people of all ages and is easy to match with other clothing items, as it has only white ink. The owners chose t-shirt colors that matched the colors of the store, such as kiwi green, coral, and aqua. These colors made the design stand out and make the shirts appealing.



12. T-Shirt Design

Signage incorporates the majority of items created for this store. It draws attention to the business and helps to make a brand for the store. First, it was imperative that I create the layouts for the large sign to be placed on the front of the building. Therefore, I designed the sign using the signature colors of coral, aqua, and tan, and centered everything around the logo. In making the actual store sign come to life, the clients and I were able to use several different techniques. For the original store, they decided to have it hand-painted by a professional sign painter because the historic downtown location of the original store set the tone for a simple painted wooden sign. In designing the layout of the sign, I had to consider the shape of the building storefront and figure out what would best enhance the store, as well as show up from the road. Because the store has a stepped brick top on the building facade, I created the sign as a rectangle with a large, extended curve on the very top. This complemented the architecture much better than a round or rectangular sign would have. Less than a year after moving into their initial location, The Fabric Dock

owners felt that the business had already outgrown the building and would benefit from a prime location on Highway 49, the major highway running to and from the coast. While moving into a new location was overwhelming but exciting for the new owners, the quick move created a challenge for displaying the store's information in a totally new setting.

While they were able to reuse the sign over the door, they also required another sign to be placed on wooden dock pilings right outside of the store. The sign from the previous business there was eight feet square, so redesigning our rectangular logo into a square space required some careful consideration. I created a circular design that still tied in perfectly with the old sign that is now on the front of the building, keeping with the same colors, threaded border, and signature anchor symbol. However, I changed the lettering to black, rather than coral and aqua, to achieve maximum readability from the road.

This time the owners and I decided to explore new options for getting the square sign made. I suggested placing a printed vinyl adhesive on the sign board in two large pieces. This proved to be much quicker and more economical, and it ensured better accuracy. Seeing my designs executed from start to finish has helped me know how to deal with the production side of graphic design, as well as working with a client's advertisement budget.



13. Old Location Store Front



14. New Location Store Front

Signage is not limited to the large signs that can be visible from the highway but can incorporate the smallest labels that can be found around the store. For example, I have created a fairly small tag that comes in two different sizes and can be used in a variety of places, such as hanging from the ends of the upholstery fabric rolls that are displayed in painted metal trash cans in the store. These tags are in the shape of classic sales tags and add a special touch to the tall rolls of upholstery fabric while displaying important information like the names and prices of the various fabrics. This tag highlights the logo and incorporates the anchor as well as the striped border that is carried throughout the collection.



15. Fabric Roll Hangtag

Additionally, The Fabric Dock has started selling pre-cut fabric pieces that are cut by the owners out of fabric from the store, saving much cutting time for quilters or those who create appliques or pocket tees to have the small bits of various fabric that they need. For each fat quarter, which is a half of a half of a yard but is cut in a more useable large rectangle rather than a long narrow piece, I created a 1" wide strip of paper called a bellyband that wraps around the middle of the piece of fabric. The owners are able to fold these fat quarters in squares, and the bellyband lets people know that they were pre-cut at The Fabric Dock without covering up the pattern on the fabric. Similarly, the t-shirts needed some type of label to display sizes and sleeve options. I made a bellyband that is a bit wider that wraps around the shirts after they are rolled up and stood up in a bucket or other display container.



16. Fat Quarter Bellyband



17. T-Shirt Bellyband

The third use of a bellyband might just be the most creative. The Fabric Dock owners intend to create inviting store displays that are constantly changing and setups that are innovative and attention grabbing, in order to keep customers returning for the newest products and displays. When they started selling pre-cut fat quarters, they came up with a way to roll up the fat quarters and stick them in paper cupcake cups to resemble actual cupcakes. They present them on tiers of a three-tiered dessert tray, displaying them as if they were real cupcakes. These fat quarter cupcakes are small souvenir-like items that the owners felt would be an inexpensive but memorable item for travelers to purchase to remember their trip to The Fabric Dock. To further this idea, I came up with a bellyband that can either be placed right over the cupcake cup or even replace it, keeping the owners from having to purchase the cups as well as printing the bellybands. One

requirement of this bellyband was the anchor, the sole icon that travelers could use to identify the shop. The other bellybands also boast an anchor to keep consistent.



18. Fat Quarter Cupcake Belly-band

Additional signage includes the use of adhesive labels. While people can purchase gift certificates when they are unsure of what to select for someone, The Fabric Dock now sells so many more products besides fabric than they did when they first opened, including sewing machines, sewing toolboxes, ready-made purses, an entire collection of personalized bags of all types, and notions. Therefore, it is now much easier to buy actual products for others, rather than having to resort to a gift certificate. This expansion leads to the need for gift bags, and, most importantly, gift bag labels. Rather than design an entire design for a gift bag, I felt it more necessary to create a small square label that could quickly be stuck right on a plain white or natural paper bag with handles.



19. Gift Bag Labels

In the future, The Fabric Dock may want to have a gift bag that is entirely decorated with their nautical sewing theme. However, as a new business that is just now a year old, it seemed much more economical to place this simple, clean label on a plain bag. I have produced a number of label designs for this gift bag, and while they all complement each other, they are each very different. I suggested that The Fabric Dock use several different kinds, rather than just going with one design. This way, each gift bag will look a bit different from another, while still boasting the special touch of The Fabric Dock. Another similar product to the souvenir-like cupcake fat quarters is a miniature tape measure that The Fabric Dock now offers. I decided to apply the same logic to these tape measures by creating a round label for the blank front that incorporates the logo and look of the store, in order to help customers remember their experience at The Fabric Dock every time they pull out that tape measure to take dimensions for a project.



20. Round Label

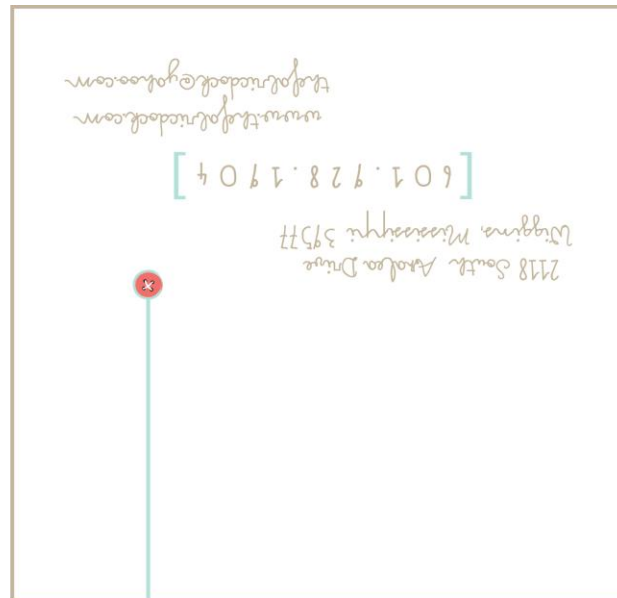
With every business, there is always a need for a personalized identity system. I designed a two-sided vertical business card that became the model for the rack card. I chose the vertical layout for multiple reasons. It seems that the majority of business cards today are very simple, most likely one-sided and presented horizontally. Therefore, turning this business card vertically would make it automatically stand out from the numerous other business cards that customers keep from other companies. Conveniently, the information on the card, such as their services and products which include gifts, fabric, classes, embroidery, custom baby bedding, and long arm quilting, which is done on a large machine that quilts the layers of the quilt together while providing a decorative thread design over the whole quilt, fit better vertically. This stacking method once again keeps every line organized and easily readable.



21. Business Card Front and Back, Respectively

The next item of the system is usually the letterhead and envelope. However, because this store is a small, local fabric store and does not require formal letters being sent to customers or fellow businesses, I felt that an informal notecard would be more appropriate for the owners' conversational needs. I kept the design simple in order to highlight the logo. I incorporated the anchor, but this time allowed it to hang from a rope, making the card a bit different from the other pieces. I lined the bottom with a diagonal aqua and white striped border that can be seen on the business card and the rack card.

This striped border releases a sense of the nautical theme, as stripes are repeatedly seen on nautical-inspired clothing and interior decoration, and the border is a design element that is reminiscent of a piece of printed fabric or ribbon.



22. Notecard

Similar to the business card is the rewards program card for the store called the Anchor Awards card. This card carries that same striped border and includes labeled circles of various dollar amounts that the owners initial once a customer has purchased the specified amount. Because fabric is a product that can be difficult to purchase for someone as a gift without knowing exactly what the recipient wants for their next project, I designed a gift certificate that would make this task of shopping for others easier. This gift certificate is a bit larger than a check to make it unique from usual paper sizes, and it fits nicely in the size of a standard business envelope. However, I will consider making it the size of a check to more easily fit in a wallet. It, too, shares some of the same design elements of the other pieces in order to create unity and automatic recognition throughout the collection.



23. Gift Certificate



24. Anchor Awards Card Front and Back, Respectively

No fabric store would be complete without a method of recording the amount and type of fabric that is being cut, especially when extensive yardage is being cut at one time. I wanted to make sure The Fabric Dock owners kept organized records of yardage being cut to better help them cut fabric and check out customers efficiently at the register. So, I created small sales sheets that are each the size of a fourth of a page. These are simple with the logo at the top, since the owners will be the only ones to see these sheets.



	Name	Yds	Price/Yd	Total
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

Great Prices on Fabulous Fabric!

25. Fabric Sales Book Sheet

Overall, I feel that the owners of The Fabric Dock and I achieved success with the brand of the store, creating an inviting place for travelers from all over to visit. I have learned so much over the past year of serving as their graphic designer, and I hope The Fabric Dock will benefit from this connection as much as I have. I now feel more equipped to take my initial designs on paper and make them into the final product, whether it is a t-shirt, adhesive label, card, or billboard. I will now take all that I have learned and gathered from time and research for this thesis and apply it to my future graphic design endeavors. I greatly appreciate all of the support and time that my committee has applied towards my thesis, and I am grateful to the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College for allowing me the opportunity to take part in such an inspiring program.

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