

HALIFAX



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OPINION

Painting our buses like juice packs is undignified

How and why Halifax deserves another branding revamp



TRISTAN CLEVELAND
STARMETRO HALIFAX

A weird thing happened back in 2014.

Halifax spent \$300,000 on consultations for a new brand. The most visible aspect of that brand is our buses, the part we see every single day. And yet, while the public was asked abstract questions about what Halifax means to us, we were never asked if we like the buses.

Even regional council was never asked. When they voted on the branding strategy, the document showed a more attractive blue and purple mockup for the buses. The final design decisions were made after the vote by city staff and consultants.

Yellow and blue is a garish



The yellow-and-blue design on Halifax buses looks like a copy-cat of what other cities have done. It is also certainly not dignified. JEFF HARPER/STARMETRO

combo and the diagonal lines are gimmicky. While everyone may not agree that the design is ugly, it certainly is not dignified. Consider that those colours would look natural on a carnival ride, but they wouldn't on a BMW, a MacBook, or City Hall.

The undignified colours contribute to the sense that

taking transit is undignified. And that matters, because stigma is a major barrier to people taking transit. Since no one would paint their car like that, the colours promote the idea that these vehicles are for people who can't do better. While problems with transit frequency may be a greater source of stigma,

painting buses like juice packs doesn't help.

London, England's solid red buses are an example of what dignity looks like, and in fact, they are a tourist attraction. Mature, proud designs are restrained and simple in this way. Our buses deserve the same.

Four years later, nothing

about the brand feels like it has anything to do with Halifax. While the flashy diagonal blue lines on our website and documents supposedly pay homage to our unique identity, it all looks suspiciously like Mississauga, Ont.'s and Melbourne's designs.

Despite a long consultation, the brand is, in truth, only the product of temporary design trends that will go out of style in about 15 minutes.

Hopefully, sooner rather than later, we will replace this brand. Here are three things we should do when that happens.

First, the consultation process should not focus on abstract questions about the meaning of Halifax. Brands are inherently visual. The public should be given visual options, so we can give direct feedback on what we like — and what we don't.

More: thestar.com/halifax

Nova Scotia universities stand to lose hundreds of students, millions of dollars from Saudi Arabia



BRENNAN DOHERTY
STARMETRO CALGARY

Universities in Halifax say they're "assessing the situation" in the wake of reports that Saudi Arabian students

will be pulled from Canadian schools following a diplomatic spat between the two countries.

The dispute started with a tweet from Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland last week criticizing Saudi Arabia's human rights

record.

Since then, Saudi Arabia has expelled the Canadian ambassador, suspended flights to and from Canada on its state airline, and apparently ordered its students out of Canadian universities.

According to a report from

Saudi-owned media outlet Al Arabiya, "training, scholarships and fellowships" for Saudi students in Canada have been halted.

The announcement has universities in Nova Scotia — where Saudi Arabia is the second-largest source of

international students — wondering what will happen come September.

The economic impact of Saudi Arabian students withdrawing from N.S. universities is currently unknown. More details and ongoing updates at thestar.com/halifax

THE GREAT ONE

10-0

Canada cruises past Switzerland in round-robin action at the Hlinka Gretzky Cup.

THE SOCCER

Arsenal

The British team's majority owner, American Stan Kroenke, has bought the remaining stake, making him sole owner.

IN MEMORIAM

Stan Mikita

The Blackhawks legend has died. He was 78.



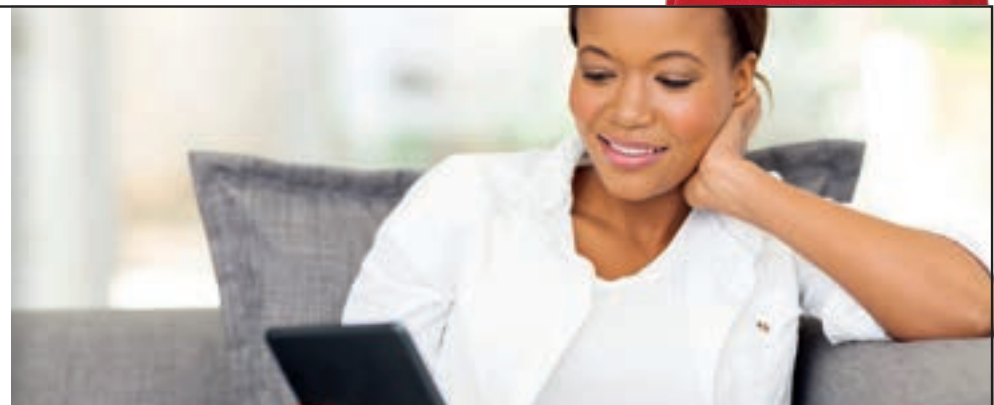
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