

Design for Industry: Task 1B

[Professional Practice: GRAP1045]

Daud Imran Shamsul Amri: 3138033

Name:	MUJI
Type:	Corporate In-House Practice
Size:	Large Global Multi-National – approx. 172 direct sales outlets and 146 co-operative stores in Japan. Stores in UK, Ireland, France, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong and the USA.
History	Began in 1980 with a small offering of 40 products for the home, they were sold in supermarkets around Japan. MUJI was a response to products that were “cheap but of poor quality” (Ryohin Keikaku Co., 2012b). This response was driven by Seiji Tsutsumi, president of Seiyu Supermarket, who enlisted the help of Ikko Tanaka, Kazuko Koike, Masaru Amano and Takashi Sugimoto. After poor results in other supermarkets the MUJI brand established their first retail outlet in Aoyama in 1983 with great success. In 1989 MUJI’s parent company, Ryohin Keikaku Co. Ltd., was founded after a separation from the Seiyu supermarket system. The 1990s saw MUJI expand their product offering from household food and sundries to home electrical appliances, apparel and eventually Automotive with the MUJI car. They also established their overseas presence with their first international branch in London, UK. MUJI has branched out into many other foreign cities now.
Specialities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home electronics, Apparel, Stationery, Bicycles, Furniture, Kitchenware, Luggage, overall clean simple and functional products for daily life. Offering is now at over 7,000 different products. • Necessities such as clothes, household articles and food.
Design Principles and Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Lower priced for a reason”, • Simplicity, • High Quality.
Design Methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of materials • Streamlining processes • Simplification of packaging
Culture	According to Shoji Ito, Design and Art Director for MUJI, MUJI designers have something in common, “They’re very good at finding something that exists and distilling its essence”. (TV, 2009)
Business Structure/Organisation	MUJI is a manufacturer/retailer for the planning, development, production, distribution and sale of their Product. Ryohin Keikaku currently has businesses of MUJI in Japan, MUJI Overseas Marketing, The Café&Meal MUJI, MUJI Campsite Operation, MUJI.net Co., Ltd. (Housing Business) and IDEE Co., Ltd. (Ryohin Keikaku Co., 2012c)
Field of Influence	Functionality and Minimalism
Competitors	Supermarkets within Japan, Daiso. Internationally companies like IKEA.
Clients	MUJI
Employees	Shoji Ito is Design and Art Director of MUJI in Europe after the

	passing of Ikko Tanaka. Employees count at 4,908
Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MUJI is Mention in the 2003 Novel Pattern Recognition by William Gibson.• Brands A to Z: MUJI (Peng Yangju, 2007)
Press	New York Times blog article about “Found Muji” a new concept store by MUJI (Hodge, 2012)
Awards Received	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2005 – Five gold product design awards from International Forum Design in Germany. (Ryohin Keikaku Co., 2012a)

Name:	Jasper Morrison Ltd
Type:	Design Consultancy
Size:	Regional Scale Multinational – London & Paris
History	Established in 1986 by Jasper Morrison
Specialities	Stainless Steel Kitchenware, Tableware, Electronics, Sanitary ware, Home/Commercial/Corporate Furniture & Storage Solutions, Lighting, Accessories, Decorative Products. Consultancy Design services in Architecture and Urban Structures and Transport. Product Exhibitions. (Ltd., 2012)
Design Principles and Values	"Design makes things seem special, and who wants normal if they can have special? And that's the problem. What has grown naturally and unselfconsciously over the years cannot easily be replaced. The normality of a street of shops which has developed over time, offering various products and trades, is a delicate organism. Not that old things shouldn't be replaced or that new things are bad, just that things which are designed to attract attention are usually unsatisfactory. There are better ways to design than putting a big effort into making something look special. Special is generally less useful than normal, and less rewarding in the long term." (Therapy, 2012)
Design Methodologies	<p><i>"To produce everyday objects for everyone's use, make things lighter not heavier, softer not harder, inclusive rather than exclusive, generate energy, light and space." "Design, a tool to improve the atmosphere" "The best atmosphere and the most beauty can be found in everyday situations."</i></p> <p>Democratic Design with Mass production to create quality products, but affordable. To judge the quality Jasper Morrison lives with his creations to fully understand design and its workings, also to judge its influence on the atmosphere.</p> <p>("Whitewall - Jasper Morrison: The minimalist," 2010)</p>
Culture	"We have ten workstations in London alone, and they are never all occupied. But if we were all together in the one room, productivity would most likely suffer as a result, I myself would certainly be less productive." (AG, 2011)
Business Structure/Organisation	2 Head Design Offices – London: Tableware & Kitchenware, Electricals, Sanitary ware and Accessories. Paris: Furniture Products where they will test and discuss

	ideas, the genomics with various furniture companies for their input before finalising the designs. (AG, 2011)
Field of Influence	Minimalist & Scandinavian style (early 60s) and different lifestyles from travelling experiences.
Competitors	Other companies that share the same design aesthetic, specifically in minimalism and Scandinavian Design.
Clients	Global diverse clients in various fields.
Employees	London Office: John Tree, Lloyd Cowdry, Sosuke Nakabo, Jasleen Kaur Paris Office: Jun Yasumoto, Laurence Mauderli
Publications	Coffee Table Books Published from 1990-2007, Essays on Jasper Morrisons Personal Thoughts and findings.
Press	Magazine Articles and various Interviews. http://www.jaspermorrison.com/html/03024445.html http://www.designboom.com/eng/interview/morrison.html
Awards Received	IF Transportation Design Prize, Ecology award for designing the Hannover Tram. Urban Project worth 500million Deutschemarks.

2. Use comparative analysis to identify the differences between the businesses

Size:	The scale of the two different companies is vastly different. Jasper Morrison is tiny compared to MUJI and its reach through global outlets.
History	Both established in the 80s with a smaller offering than what they have today. MUJI has expanded at a much larger rate than Jasper Morrison Ltd. However the range of projects seems to be larger with Jasper Morrison Ltd as he is a design consultancy.
Specialities	There is overlap in their product offerings and in fact Jasper Morrison has designed products for MUJI.
Design Principles and Values	Close but with slight different focus. MUJI is simplicity with high quality, while Jasper Morrison is focused on simplicity but normality.
Design Methodologies	Both companies are on the same track here. Good quality, affordable and simple.
Culture	MUJI talks about the designers having the same mindset and principles and Jasper Morrison is talking more about too many people working together at once.
Business Structure/Organisation	MUJI is a very large Multi-National with multiple companies under its parent company. If you go by sheer retail outlets MUJI is vastly larger. They have a Design, Manufacturing, Distribution model whereas Jasper Morrison will Design and Deliver a product for Manufacturing.
Field of Influence	Similar in that they both are after Functionality and Minimalism in the products they design.
Competitors	On some level they share the same competitors as they both retail their own designed products and are in the area of minimalist, functional home wares and electronics. They are direct competitors at the same time as being different – James Morrison is mainly a consultancy so their clients are big companies like MUJI and Alessi.
Clients	MUJI is more focused on their own products whereas Jasper Morrison requires a diverse range of clients in order to stay in business.
Employees	MUJI has just under 5,000 more staff than Jasper Morrison
Publications	Mainly web based sources. I believe Jasper Morrison is prolific in publishing his exhibitions, ideas and works. MUJI distribute their catalogues but I'm not sure if that can count.
Press	They are featured in on-line magazines and blogs.
Awards Received	Both have received awards from German iF design.

3. Provide a personal reflection on each business.

It is interesting for me to compare two companies which interact within the same area of home wares and furniture but both taking a different approach. While MUJI do it all, Jasper Morrison will get you as far as manufacturing and management but not retailing to the scale that MUJI does. The growth of MUJI over the past 30 years is astonishing! Going from 40 items to over 7,000 and no outlets to a global chain in that time, it is testament to the thoroughness of their design philosophy and approach to products in general. From my personal experience, MUJI creates a sense of reliability and dependability when it comes to meeting items and things for day-to-day existence. Jasper Morrison has some interesting work and it is great to see such a small team is designing for very large and famous manufacturers and retailers. I feel with size comes a greater level of flexibility, but there would be a big reliance on autonomy of designers and strong communication pathways. In conclusion this task has given me far more insight into companies that I may interact with as a customer but never understand or appreciate the nature of their process.

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