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The National College of Art and Design
Department of Visual Communication

‘Designing the Designer’

A progressive approach to developing Designer Professionalism.

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Introduction

“There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world; and that is an idea whose time has come.”

Anonymous, *Nation* 15 Apr. 1943.

Introduction

It can be seen that fourth year students are on the verge of entering into a competitive marketplace, where they will to be asked to deal with clients and to sell their work successfully. Throughout college they amass wealth of experience in producing successful design work, but have not gained experience in dealing with clients or indeed selling their work. This text allows an opportunity to study and analyse techniques which a number of successful designers use to work more effectively in the market place.

The task set here-in is to develop a model or a set of rules that a graphic designer can use to help him or her work more effectively in the marketplace. The guidelines will make suggestions on how the graphic designer should approach and deal with clients, both before and during the design process. Suggestions will be made on how the designer, before the design process, should view him/herself and his/her client. During the design process, suggestions will be made on selling design, briefing, presentation, and the implementation of the work.

This model will be developed and compiled from a variety of successful designers who use various methods when working within the market place. The key literature that these methods have been compiled from are numerous articles from magazines, a number of books written on related subjects and several interviews that were conducted throughout 1995. In reality, a fixed set of rules does not exist for dealing with clients and the design process, every designer has his or her own method of working. Therefore, the suggestions that will be offered can be seen as one method out of a number that may be applied successfully.

Given the vast number of influencing factors involved in discussing design and basic business acumen, some broader points will be used to illustrate rather than indepthly discuss familiar subject matter.

However, before guidelines can be set up, it is important that we understand where the graphic designer and the client have come from. Therefore, one must begin by looking at their education and what this has led them to believe. Once this is understood, suggestions can be made for both designer and client to work more effectively within the marketplace and with one another. When the role of the graphic designer and the client is understood then the design process can be looked at. This will be approached step by step, from selling through to the implementation of the design.

Suggestions will be made on what the designer should and should not sell and how he or she should go about doing this. Once the client is interested in working with the designer the price of the work must be discussed. With this the problems of pricing and the hidden cost of doing free work are also considered. In order for the designer to successfully work for a client the briefing must be correct. Suggestions are made on how this should be handled by the designer and the common mistakes are pointed out. Even the best design work may not be accepted if the presentation is not handled correctly. Attitudes to this are discussed and a method of presentation is suggested. Finally, the implementation of the design work is dealt with and the importance of continuity is discussed.

The information aims at serving as a guide for the graphic designer, reviewing the potential of good business practice, realised against a backdrop of misunderstood roles, differing educational backgrounds and the need to continually learn and communicate.

Part I

Section 1

Schooling

“We class schools, you see, into four grades: Leading school, First-rate School, Good School, and School. Frankly,” said Mr Levy, “School is pretty bad.”

Evelyn Waugh, *Decline and Fall* (1928).

Schooling

In order to develop a model or a set of rules which a graphic designer can use to work more successfully in the marketplace, it is important that the background of the graphic designer and the client be understood. One must begin by looking at their education, analyse what skills their education has taught them and whether these skills help them to work effectively together. Before solutions to problems can be suggested it is important to understand what the problems are and where they first arise.

Almost all of today's practising designers have come from one design course or another, which form the bridge between secondary school and professional life. These courses strongly influence the designers in their approach to their work. On leaving secondary school, students are coming from systems that teach them very little about design. In the art classes within these schools they may be taught how to make things, but not to explore the process by which things are made. They enter third level education with little understanding about design. This, however, is not very surprising, as design is a new field in comparison to other areas of study, for example; Law, Medicine, Business. Many people have trouble accepting design as a profession. One must be conscious of the fact that designers comprise only a tiny percentage of professional workers.

Furthermore, most people enter the design field because of its artistic value and not for its business potential. Indeed, students in secondary schools may have opted for art classes as they deemed themselves incapable academically of being successful in a business or language class. It is experienced in secondary school Art classes, that out of a class of twenty-five or more, there were never more than two people interested in Art as a career. For many students not seriously contemplating any further artistic development, secondary level Art represents little more than an escape from normal academia.

Students may not only be entering third level without an understanding of what the graphic design field can involve, but also a lack of knowledge of design as a process. Bill Bolger, Head of Visual Communications in NCAD, said that many students come to him without an understanding of design as a process (McCarthy, 1995). This, however, is not to say that a huge proportion of Art class in secondary schools should be graphic design orientated, but, Art should follow the procedure of the other class curricula. For example: Business, English, and Math's touch on a broad view of associated subject matter as well as core areas of learning. In Art class the students are taught to make things, not to explore the process by which things are made. This, Bolger says, leads to portfolios that are unimaginative and that look similar: "They have style but no content" (McCarthy, 1995).

In third level education the graphic designer is taught how to come up with a successful design solution to a problem, but this is the only part of the design process that he or she learns in college. On leaving third level education, students are coming from systems that did not give them much contact with clients. The graphic designer is not taught any techniques for dealing with clients or how to sell, price, present, or implement his or her work. These skills are needed very much in the marketplace in order for the designer to be successful in business. Such people as Michael Peters (a British graphic designer) have undoubtedly pointed out that 'design is a business'. Peters' achievement was to combine design excellence with outstanding business acumen. In 1983 he was one of the first design companies to go public. Within every business there are clients. Yet the designer is not taught how to develop and maintain a long term client relationship. Designers 'design to communicate,' but for greater levels of success they should 'communicate better to design better.'

Clients come from a diversity of backgrounds. One of the few things that they have in common with designers is that in their secondary schooling they too were taught little about design. This can only give clients the wrong impression of art or its related topics, including design. The client, just as the designer, enters third level education with no design knowledge; they leave secondary school without any understanding of the design process.

Within third level, clients study marketing and business courses. These courses are set out to teach them skills to successfully run a company. Yet, there is little or nothing taught about design. They are not taught that design can play an important part in a business. They are taught management skills but these skills do not cover design management.

Clients and designers went to the same secondary schools where there was little or no teaching on design. Therefore, it is up to their respective third level courses to teach them about design and the role that each must play in the design process. But third level education has failed to do so. The graphic designer has been taught only that which immediately affects him: how to design. He/she has not been taught the rest of the design process: selling, pricing, briefing, presentation, or implementation. And, most importantly, he/she has not had any experience in dealing with the client. The client has also gained no experience in dealing with designers.

In order for a set of rules or a model to be set up for the graphic designer to work effectively in the marketplace, it is important to understand the background of the designer and the client. This chapter has pointed out that third level education has failed in teaching all the skills necessary for the client and the designer to work effectively within the marketplace. This will lead to problems in their mutual communication and

their performance in the marketplace. Once there is an understanding that their education is lacking, it is easier to analyse any further problems that occur.

Part I

Section 2

Educational problems that effect the designers' professional work.

"It isn't that they can't see the solution. It is that they can't see the problem."

G.K.Chesterton, *Scandal of Father Brown* (1935)

Educational problems that effect the designers' professional work

In the previous chapter a number of problems have been pointed out in the education system for the designer. For example; A lot of designers enter the field because of its artistic value, within third level the designer is not taught communication skills for dealing with clients, and the designer is not taught all the areas of the design procedure. The following text will demonstrate how these effect the designers' professional work.

David Goodman brings thirty-two years of consulting and teaching to his role as Design Consultant. Founder and President of the marketing and design firm 'Porter, Goodman & Cheatham'; he now consults other designers on how to better position themselves and their work. He has analysed designers, their knowledge and their needs. Goodman feels that most designers have a need for their work to be appreciated and accepted, not rejected (Goodman, Jan./Feb. 1992). Designers desire recognition by their peers by winning awards and having their work in exhibitions and publications. Most designers have a need to produce designs that are aesthetically pleasing if possible. This relates back to the large number of people entering the design field because of its artistic value and not for its business potential.

Michael Hardt, president of BEDA (the Bureau of European Designers Association), also agrees with Goodman. Hardt believes: "Many designers underestimate the economical benefits of design and are too much in love with other aspects of their work" (Hughes, Dec. 1995). If a graphic designer is in love with the artistic value of his/her work, he/she will encounter trouble when dealing with the client. The client does not want to hear about the artistic value of the work. They are business professionals who have paid the designer to perform a particular task. What the designer must realise is that

he/she is being paid by the client to perform a task, and it is the success of this task that must be discussed not the artistic value of the work.

As designers do not have any formal training in communicative skills, most designers can not communicate clearly and persuasively with the client. We have learned from such people as Goodman that developing and maintaining longer-lasting client relationships is a skill you do not learn in school, and yet it is fundamental for success in the design business. Most designers are unprepared when the basic skills of negotiation that are necessary in working out compromises are called upon.

This, coupled with the designers need to produce aesthetically pleasing work, leads the designer into a defensive and adversarial relationship with their clients. If he receives criticism on his work he will all too often not know how to deal with the criticism and as a result will become defensive towards the client. Designers are not versed in the professional methods employed to avoid communications conflict (Goodman, Jan./Feb. 1992).

Not only is there a lack of good communication, there is also a lack of understanding on the designer's part. Hardt has stated that many designers underestimate the economical benefits of design (Hardt, 1995). Similarly, Goodman feels that most designers can often provide a better marketing value per pound than other forms of marketing. However, few communicate this effectively to their clients (Goodman, Jan./Feb. 1992). This problem originates in the graphic designer's schooling, where he/she is not taught all the areas in the design process. The graphic designer would glean a better understanding of his economical potential if he/she was taught the other areas of the design process. If the implementation of the design work and its importance was illustrated to the graphic designer, it would solve many problems. The designer would then be able to communicate something more to the client.

Colin Forbes, an established American graphic designer, believes that designers both over and underestimate the contribution they can make to a clients company. Forbes feels that the designers' overestimation comes from a lack of acceptance of the business risk (Brown, 1990). Again, this comes from a lack of education in the design process. During a meeting he had with the Chairman of Ford Motor Company, Forbes brought up this issue. Forbes said that chief executives at some point have to take the risk of backing a designer's intuition. The Chairman smiled and said, "If you are betting a billion dollars, you would like a second opinion" (Brown, 1990). This overestimation could be avoided if the graphic designer had a better understanding of the role that the client plays in the design process. The client is under pressure within his/her company and this must be understood by the designer. If the designer knows more about the clients pressures, he/she will have more acceptance of the business risks that are involved in any project.

Another educational flaw, that continues into the marketplace, is a lack of understanding of the importance of design. Graphic designers underestimate the value of their education and way of thinking (Brown, 1990). Within college, the graphic designer is not taught the importance that design can play within a business. Peter Gorb, from the London Business School, is a great believer in the value of designers to management. However, this value that the designer can have to management is not clear to most people, including designers. In order for the designer to be successful he must understand the importance of his role and the variety of areas that it can cover.

Gorb points out the variety of areas the designer is involved in. Gorb maintains, designers are concerned with artefacts which, "constitute the products that the manufacturing industry makes and sells, or, that the distribution industry buy in order to sell, or, that service industries use to achieve and to provide their services. They also constitute the physical environment in which all business operate...and the information

systems which managers use to convey their purpose to a wide variety of audiences” (Brown, 1990). It is necessary for the designer to understand his role and all of the aspects that it can involve.

Goodman points out that this underestimation of the designers’ role can lead to problems, as many designers today should be involved in a clients’ marketing strategy (Goodman, Jan./Feb. 1992). Designers should assist management in overall planning. Goodman feels that the average designer that has been in the business for ten to fifteen years often knows more about marketing than the recently graduated marketing student that he may be taking direction from (Goodman, Jan./Feb. 1992). The designers hands-on, day to day experience of solving marketing problems is an education that cannot be duplicated. For the designer to be successful, he must understand the importance that his role can play.

What also has to be understood is the nature of the business the graphic designer is in. Gorb pointed out a variety of areas that design touches on, so it must be understood by the designer what area he is dealing with and how he/she should relate to other disciplines.

Communication skills should not be omitted or compromised in the designers education. The college system insufficiently portrays in teaching graphic designer, the importance their role can play. Such neglect does not allow the designer to work to his/her full potential. In order to be successful, the designer must more fully recognise their role to find solutions. Only with due consideration to role (designer and client), communication and estimable value, can a more successful and wholer approach be nurtured.

Part I

Section 3

Educational problems which effect the clients' professional work.

'Le client n'a jamais tort.'

(The customer is never wrong.) Cesar Ritz, *Piccadilly to Pall Mall* (1908).

Educational problems that effect the clients professional work

In the first chapter a number of problems were pointed out in the education system of the client. For example; the client is not taught anything about design or design management, the client is not taught any skills in dealing with the designer. This chapter will demonstrate how these effect the professional work of the client.

Alan Pleass is the Head of Design at RTE and Past President of the Society of Designers in Ireland (SDI). He was elected Chairman of BEDA (the Bureau of European Designers Association) in 1991. In February 1995, a 'Design Education for Schools Symposium' was held and Pleass stated: "Time and again one comes across appalling ignorance about design at high levels both in the private and public sectors. Most of this is caused by educational deprivation" (McCarthy, 1995). This can only lead to problems. How many of today's gurus of the business and political worlds, who have risen to the top, have had any form of training in design? Yet, regularly, they are required to pass judgement on issues of design. The graphic designer presents his/her work to the client, work which the designer has used all the skills learned to produce. Then the client ,who has no design knowledge, is asked to make a decision on this work. This leads to many problems if the graphic designer and the client do not understand one another.

This brings one back to the clients' schooling. Goodman talks about the clients' education and asks us to remember that most clients know a lot about their business. The client knows much more than the designer will ever want to know, or need to know about their business. Clients are good business people, clients are probably more experienced in the fine art of negotiation in money matters than a designer. Most clients can assess people well. The client will judge a designer on how they look, dress, talk and especially how they present their work. Goodman feels that clients often want to work with a

designer to develop the best solution to a marketing problem. Yet we must remember that clients underestimate the bottom line value a designer can provide to a marketing plan or strategy (Forbes, 1992).

In addition to this underestimation they also tend to overestimate their own skills. Hardt states that most managers "tend to underestimate the qualifications of a specialist and consider their own capabilities to be much too high, believing to be able to produce their own design by using a Macintosh" (Hardt, 1995). Pleass points out that the greatest impact on all our lives has been, and will continue to be, the computer (McCarthy, 1995). If it is used correctly, it is a wonderfully versatile tool. At best it will carry out many time consuming tasks in order to free the human mind for creativity. But, it is not a designer.

The world of commerce has seen the output of a computer in semi-skilled hands. All too often a computer is used for design by a non-trained member of staff. This has given some businessmen the impression that they do not need a designer to work for them. They believe that a computer, used by a non-trained person to produce design work, is cheaper and therefore more useful than a computer in the hands of a designer. In the short term this policy may reduce spending but it cannot hope to reap the financial returns offered by professional design. This view was reinforced when clients, in an advertisement for Macintosh in 1987, were told to forget the telephone number of their designers. Pleass offers another viewpoint however; "One only has to look at the range of TV images entering our homes to see evidence of the latest piece of computer generated gimmickry looking remarkably like the next" (McCarthy, 1995). He maintains that in the hands of a trained professional so much more freshness and originality can be achieved.

Michael Hardt asks clients to become aware of the crucial importance of professionally designed communication and products. He asks them to forget the visual

pollution that they have been proudly producing on their own computer equipment.

Hardt says to the client: "It might look nice to you, but like a little child which uses the toilet for the first time is proud about the result, you have to learn that it is nothing to be really proud about. Flush it down" (Hardt, 1995).

Martin Crothy has extensive experience in marketing and in design consultancy. Crothy is also a Past President of SDI. He approaches the question of design education from the perspective of one who works with industry and is therefore familiar with how design works, or does not work, in the commercial environment. Crothy feels that, even though there are efforts being made by SDI, there is still a shortage of managers who recognise the central importance of design. Occasionally SDI runs conferences that set out to explain and teach businesses the importance that design can play in a company. For example, in 1992 SDI joined forces with The Marketing Institute of Ireland and presented a one day conference on the management of the design process and its implementation as a management tool. Even though the results that are achieved at such seminars are very good, this is still a very small percentage of the market place. Managers not only fail to recognise the central importance of design but also fail to recognise the issues relating to proper management of design with the product development process and the need for adequate funding of design. Sean Colan, who works as a Chief Executive in the market place, says there is a lack of awareness among business managers of the power of design as a "strategic business weapon" (McCarthy, 1995).

Crothy reasons that the majority of managers in Irish industry come from a production or finance background. To these, design is all too frequently an unknown quantity and one which implies change. Change creates uncertainty, is unwelcome and is even regarded with fear. Thus design is alien to the culture of a significant proportion of Irish management and of the work force. But openness to change in general is vital for

success in any business. The most successful businesses thrive upon change. However, this not recognised by many business people and therefore design is not looked upon well. This must change, not because design is a nice “arty” thing to do but because it has benefits which are a hard commercial reality.

One can learn from such people as Michael Peters that in the past, design inhabited a specific and rather separate territory, at some considerable distance from the economic heart of the client companies. The designer and the client lead very different lives. They knew little of each others’ respective professional disciplines and believed that their interface occurred only in certain specific areas. They believed that they only crossed paths where visually based decisions needed to be made in order to get the product onto the shelves. This leads to the designer being left out of a large section of the design process. Without the designer being present in all sections of the design process it is very difficult to produce successful work. In order to achieve more professionalism in the market place this must change.

Due to the clients’ lack of design knowledge, there is a lot of ignorance at high levels, yet these same people are asked to make design decisions. This ignorance also leads business people to overestimate their own skills, believing that they can use their own computer to produce design work and therefore do not need a graphic designer. In the past clients and graphic designers have only crossed paths late in the design process. These misconceptions must be recognised and dealt with, allowing for greater interaction and integration of the pool of skills available to produce a more potent end product.

Part I

Section 4

Solutions begin: the graphic designer.

“What we’re saying today is that you’re either part of the solution or you’re part of the problem.”

Eldridge Cleaver, *Post Prison Writings and Speeches* (1969).

Solution begin: the graphic designer.

In the previous chapters, a variety of points indicated problems for the graphic designer that originate in the education system and how these have effected the designers' professional work. To begin to develop a model or a set of rules under which a graphic designer could work more effectively in the market place, one must look at the designers' role before he or she enters into the design process. Suggestions will be made on how the designer can take steps to do so. These suggestions come from points that have been made by successful practising designers on dealing with different aspects of the designers' role. Suggestions are made on what the designers' attitude to design should be, on understanding the client, and on self marketing.

The graphic designer and client must no longer lead different lives. They must learn more about each other's disciplines and no longer only meet when the product needs to be visualised for the shelves. In order to do this there must be more communication. Designers must be aware of their responsibility, they have to do much more than just design, to explain and teach, not only make design. Experts in design and experts in marketing have to develop a mutual language in order to understand each other.

A mutual language needs to be set up that can dispel the old views, where design is an unknown and misunderstood discipline. A European Commission Official said rather desperately that he classified designers with private detectives in that "in both cases one could judge them by results, but their methodology and body of knowledge drawn on remained a mystery" (McCarthy, 1995). In order to get rid of this mystery Michael Peters states that designers must evolve. They must offer a new type of consultancy. They also need to explain the function and contribution of design, in its widest sense, to a client community which have firmly embraced the old view. Peters

discovered very early in his career that in order to raise design to its proper role in business, and to allow its full impact and influence, it is necessary to do two things.

- Firstly, the designer has to integrate design into their client's business, from the foundations upward.
- Secondly, the designer must demonstrate the effect of design in terms of pure business success (Peters, Jan/Feb. 1990).

In order to achieve both of these objectives it is necessary to question and redefine the role and self-image of the designer. Peters tells how he had to "abolish the notion of design practice with a fence around it" (Peters, Jan./Feb. 1990). At the same time they had to wean their clients away from the notion of eleventh hour design, reluctant design, uncommitted design or remedial design - required to paper over all manners of other ills which the client wished to ignore. Peters did so by having a very clear understanding of the designers' role and the role that his client should play. He did not believe in the notion of eleventh hour design and insisted on the designer being involved with the client at a much earlier stage in the design process. This was not only more effective for the designer but was also effective in giving the client a better understanding of design and in doing so a better relationship was set up between the designer and the client. When this was done Peters found that his new-style design practice was able to communicate more effectively with the client. In order to achieve good design it is essential to have excellent designer-client communication. The new style design practice could speak in terms that clients could appreciate.

Appreciation, and especially understanding, is what David Goodman believes to be the key to establishing solid clients. Goodman notes that successful relationships between designers and clients begin with mutual understanding of each others responsibilities (Goodman, Jul./Aug. 1992). Goodman suggests that designers invest the

time necessary to really know their clients, their products, their market place, and their competition. The more the designer knows about these, the better his or her work will be and the more valuable the designer will be to the client. More time invested in the client may seem to suggest more cost for the designer but this may not be the case. If the designer becomes more interested in the client and his company it means that the designer will understand the clients' problem from the clients' point of view. As a result the client will perceive and utilise the designer more than just a source for artwork.

Not only should the designer understand the role of his/her client but the designer also needs to understand his/her own role. It has been stated that designers both over and underestimate their role. Alan Forbes believes that designers need to define their business more clearly (Forbes, 1992). He says that designers are not clear about what business they are in. Designers must understand their role.

Once the graphic designer understands his/her role, the means to market it more effectively become more obvious. Marketing is crucial for the success of all business, including design business. Designers who really understand marketing and are able to apply this knowledge to their own practice, have a definite advantage. Goodman believes marketing gives great control over growth and the pursuit of success. However, he feels that many designers who are involved in the daily marketing of their client's products and services find it difficult to market themselves (Goodman, Jan./Feb. 1992). There is a widely held belief that if you are good, you do not have to sell. Goodman tells that the reality is that the biggest and best designers have been actively and successfully marketing themselves for decades. For example the Michael Peters Group did this so successfully that they were able to go public.

However, the biggest problem for graphic designers to overcome is the ability to strategically position themselves. It is important that the graphic designer understands his

role, the role of his client and how they should work together. Effective positioning requires an objective evaluation of the designers' strengths, a knowledge of where he/she fits in the competitive market place and a clear understanding of how he/she is perceived by prospective clients - all of which is impossible if the designer does not understand his/her role. The designer needs an over-riding vision of who he/she is and what he does.

Alan Siegel, who is Chairman and CEO of Siegel and Gale, Inc., a New-York based graphic design firm, says that corporations (both design and non-design) do not need a fabricated image overlaid on the company (Siegel, 1993). They need an encompassing vision. They need a vision that is true to who they are and what they do, that is integrated into all of their communications. To cut through the noise of the market place, a company must speak with a clear, coherent and distinctive voice. An easily recognised corporate voice is the product of a company with single-minded direction - and with a corporate culture that supports innovative communications at every level. Michael Hardt believes marketing is the alignment of an enterprise to one aim (Hardt, 1995). A company that has effectively done this is CBS. Frank Stanton, Past President of CBS, said in an interview: "We believe that we should not only be progressive but look progressive. We aim at excellence in all the arts, including the art of self-expression" (Siegel, 1993).

One of the best ways for designers to market themselves in the design world is by having their work and name seen. Goodman makes a number of suggestions on how the designer should go about doing this (Goodman, Jul./Aug. 1992). The primary route for designers to get their work seen is in the multitude of competitions that are open to them. The exposure at these shows influences design publications, which in turn influence the design world. In Goodman's experience, as soon as a body of work is published and the designer's name becomes known, he will be asked to sit on juries and to speak to clubs and organisations. The designer may even be asked to write articles

about himself and his firm's work. This will not automatically assure a designer new clients but it surely sets the stage for such things.

Another approach is by contacting publishers. Goodman has experienced that designers have a better chance of being published by contacting the publisher directly rather than waiting to be discovered. In his early years as a designer, Goodman, longed for a major publication who had roaming reporters and photographers to come one day and discover him. But publications are always looking for timely subjects, and most organisations are always looking for speakers. And remember the designer is not limited to addressing other designers. He can also take aim at other potential clients by speaking to business groups in other industries.

Within our own industry, Goodman recommends that all ambitious designers join and become active in local and national organisations concerned with design and related subjects. This will not necessarily result in immediate profits, but it will provide long-term advantages, including establishing connections. An alternative way of forming connections is by teaching. Teaching is another indirect marketing activity that provides visibility. Presenting yourself as a designer in front of any number of people whether they be students, fellow designers, or otherwise, leads to self promotion on a personal level. Goodman believes that there are, as shown, many promotional activities that can keep the designer's work and name in front of clients and prospective clients: "If they don't know your name, they won't call" (Goodman, Jul./Aug. 1992).

In this chapter a number of important steps have been shown that the designer should take before entering the graphic design process, in order to work more effectively in the market place.

- The designer must find a mutual language that he/she can use to communicate effectively and clearly to the client.

- The designer will use this language to explain design in terms of pure business success and to abolish the notion of eleventh hour design.
- The designer must understand his/her role and the role that the client must play.
- The designer must also market him/herself effectively through any number of ways: competitions, publications, design organisations, or teaching. These are methods that are easily accessible, sources of self advertising and springboards to developing a wide range of personal interaction and communication skills.

Part I

Section 5

Solutions begin: the client.

‘Every problem contains the seeds of its own solution.’

Stanley Arnold (1925-)

Solutions begin: the client.

There are a number of problems for the client, which originate in the education system, that continue into the market place. In order for the client and the graphic designer to work more effectively together it is important that professional misconceptions are understood and steps taken to solve them. However, in reality not many clients are aware of these problems. Therefore, in developing a set of rules under which the graphic designer can work more effectively in the market place, it is important that the designer understands these problems, as it is his/her responsibility to make the client aware, to explain, and to teach. This chapter reviews how clients should act towards design and the design process, what attitude they should have towards design, and how they should work with the graphic designer.

Michael Hardt states: "If you consider how many designers are trying to create good design day to day, the success rate is awfully low" (Hardt, 1995). But are there that many bad designers? No. The fact that there are so few good designers in the world is not primarily the fault of the designers. Hardt believes: "Success with design is in the first place not in the hands of the designer but in the hands of the client" (Hardt, 1995).

Then good clients get good design. A client is good, Hardt believes, if he/she understands that good design is not a question of taste, a superficial aesthetic game, but an important operational and operative tool of the marketing which can only develop its full efficiency if fully integrated into the corporate aims; "good corporate design is always the result of a co-operation between the client and the designer which is born out of understanding" (Hardt, 1995). It is a case of where both parts have to play their role properly. It is possible to compare it to a good team, with both parts having to operate at the same speed and on the same level. It is important that clients understand this. Sir

Gorden Russell said, "we don't expect everyone to become expert designers, that is neither possible nor desirable. We can not all become accountants, but we can learn enough to read a balance sheet" (McCarthy, 1995). Similarly, all managers, or indeed all workers, cannot be designers. But they can and should understand the principles of the design process. They should be able to understand what design is. To understand what design can contribute to their business. To know how they can use design to the best effect, to help them achieve their business objectives. They should understand that design is a valuable resource and feel confident to use designers as freely and readily as they use accountants, lawyers or marketing consultants. The management should be familiar and comfortable with design and regard it as a normal day-to-day input in their business.

Before this can possibly happen, clients must stop producing low grade inefficient design on their own computers. They must stop overestimating their own skills and accept the qualifications of a specialist. Clients must let design be integrated into their business from the foundations upward. They must get rid of the notion of eleventh hour design which compromises quality and impact. It is also necessary for corporations to have an over-riding vision, similar to that which the designer must have. Clients must be true to who they are and what they do. They must not ask design to become a mask or to work as a facelift. A clear and distinctive voice must come from a company. They must have single-minded direction. In the nineties clients must learn to communicate their true character and substance. Companies build credibility with customers by repeatedly reinforcing this with information about the quality of their product management, financial strength, innovativeness, alliances etc. This cannot be achieved if there is not a clear direction within a company. Design that is produced for a company with no direction, will be designed out of trendiness, rather than a truly communicative and goal orientated stance.

In this chapter a number of important points have been made that the client should understand if he/she wants to work more effectively with the designer. However, it has been stated that most client's do not see these problems. Therefore, it is up to the designer to understand, to explain, and to teach these problems to the client.

- The client should understand the principles of the design process.
- The client should use a designer as freely and as readily as an accountant or a lawyer.
- Clients must not overestimate their own skills; they must accept the qualifications of a specialist and let design be integrated into his business from the foundations upward.
- The client must not expect design to become a mask or to work as a brittle facelift.
- They must have an over-riding vision of who they are. Through free and frank communication this can be achieved.
- Once these problems are understood by the designer, he/she can then use the design process to explain and to teach them to the client, and with this approach the designer can further educate him/herself and appreciate the viewpoint of the client.

Part II

Section 1

The Design Process.

“Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art.”

Andy Warhol, In *Observer*, 1 Mar. 19

The Design Process.

A variety of suggestions have been made on what the graphic designer should do before entering the design process, in order to work more successfully in the market place. The graphic designer must find a mutual language to communicate effectively and clearly to the client. He/she will use this to explain design in terms of pure business success.

Before this is possible the designer must have a clear understanding of his/her role and the role that the client must play. The designer must market him/herself effectively. The designer needs to understand that if the client is not aware of the problems that effect his/her professional work, then it is up to the designer to explain and to teach, and in return learn and understand.

These suggestions were made for both the client and the designer before entering the design process. However, it is very important that throughout the design process these points be remembered. For example: the designer should work closely to the client during the design process, which means that not only should there be a clear understanding of each others roles but this should be communicated clearly. The design process is broken into six different stages:

- Selling
- Pricing
- Briefing
- Designing
- Presentation
- Implementation

In each stage suggestions will be made by practising designers on what the designers attitude should be towards design, the client and the relationship that the designer and the client should build.

Part II

Chapter 2

Selling Design

‘If there’s no money in poetry, neither is there poetry in money.’

Robert Graves, *Speech at the London School of Economics*, 6 Dec. 1963

Selling Design

Effectively selling design is of utmost importance if a graphic designer wishes to be successful. In this chapter, however, it will be made clear how many designers are selling the wrong product. They are not selling what they are good at. The problem is reinforced when most graphic designers find it difficult to communicate effectively with their clients. There is a need for communication between the designer and the client to take place on a human level and to continue through out the design process.

In 1974, an architecture company (TAC) in Massachusetts ran for a hospital project against a building company (CRS) and lost. Harvard's Business School turned the history of this loss into an extremely provocative case. It has become well known to those who are versed in the literature about the management of professional service firms. However, it certainly merits close attention for designers who wish to grow in a quality way.

Dunk presented this case to twelve architects and engineers (Dunk, Jul./Aug. 1990). Together they guessed that the building company outguessed, out presented, and outthought the architectural company at every turn. The architectural representatives felt they had been outsold - and they were right.

However, Dunk discovered that it was what each company sold that made the difference. The architectural company was emphasising hospital experience, medical financing knowledge, and engineering capability in some of its selling conversations. However, it was a lightweight in these areas, particularly in comparison with the building company. The problem for the architects was to understand their real strengths and to sell them persuasively.

What the architectural company had going for it, above all, was design. It had a design tradition that put them in a select class. Design is what they had to sell - not engineering, not cost control, not hospital experience. Yet these were the areas that were put forward as opposed to where their real competitive strength lay.

Dunk saw that the building company had a health division combining a host of skills and systematic knowledge that could be applied to hospitals. The architects offered one partner who focused on this area. In this instance they were selling uphill here, except for their architectural design competence, which should have been the selling point.

If the architectural company had wanted to sell engineering, systems or cost containment, Dunk pointed out how they would have to restructure themselves and bring in new strengths. They would have to move away from their 'motivated anarchy' that was used to animate the partners. They would have had to move towards the tightly controlled, less creative world of business-dominated organisations where cost comes first and design comes forth or fifth. This would take them inevitably further afield from where their true strengths lay. Designers must develop and sell what is within their area of expertise and resources.

The task of designers, Dunk concludes, is to sell design. Designers should not try to sell other services which they cannot supply. In the case of the architectural firm, they should not have sold engineering capability or hospital experience. They could not supply this effectively in comparison to the building company. However, if a graphic designer can supply other services with the design process, then he/she can use these to sell the design. But without embarrassment, the designer must sell what he is good at.

In a world demanding fast returns, low costs, and fast solutions, design is a very hard sell to make. However, it is Dunk's belief that it can be sold but the designer interested in

quality must find convincing ways to sell design. The designer needs to show how much of a difference design makes and to know how to sell that very difference. So it is clear that the designer should sell design. Michael Hardt sells design. However, he feels that he supplies more than just design - the service that he is providing is a marketing tool that gives better effectiveness, organisation, less cost, and more profit. Design has a lot to do with culture and art but also considering client input such as money and sales figures. Hardt sells design with the aid of a built up knowledge of marketing and money, knowledge learned by communicating fully with his clients. It is logical and understandable for even the money minded and culture-neglecting managers. Hardt believes the return of investment of design is often much higher than the best interest rate or stock exchange share. There is a certain risk but it can be reduced by running the design project properly.

Again, Hardt talks of how the quality of a designer's service has a much bigger effect on the success of an enterprise than estimated by the client. The graphic designer must understand this and communicate the importance of design to the client. The designer must not only make design but also explain and teach.

The designer must communicate and connect with his or her client as an individual. This may sound strange but too much business is done on a formal cold basis. David Goodman pointed out that while the designer is building a serious business relationship, remember that he or she is still working with and relating to a person who is looking for respect, approval, and acceptance on some level. Goodman tells how even his most difficult clients can be looking for their human needs to be met (Goodman, Jan./Feb.).

Michael Hardt talks to his clients as individuals. Upon entering his client's office for the first time, on that ever so crucial introductory meeting, he takes things slowly. He will not rush into business but try to get to know the client first. It is very important that

there is a solid foundation built up between the designer and the client; this foundation begins with the first meeting. It is the first step in the essential communication between the client and designer that must take place in the correct tone. However, Hardt says that he does take a professional attitude towards the business. He will present a business-like attitude and will follow through with it. He will speak their language. But this comes after the initial communication.

As mentioned earlier, the designer must educate their clients and continue to explain and teach as they go through the design process. This does not necessary mean that the designer will be spending much more time with the client or that the client must pay more for this. One has learned from such people as William Dunk that the designer must make very clear exactly what the client will obtain in the design process, going well beyond the physical element the client will see. Dunk tells how the designer will get paid more if he or she is specific about the range of things that will get done (Dunk, Nov./Dec. 1990). The professional can charge substantial prices if the client understands that he will obtain satisfaction because the designer has been explicit about what will be accomplished. This, Dunk believes, changes the way that design must be sold, a change that not only raises margins but also elevates the quality of the resulting design product. He finds that conventional sales practices diminish the quality of the design because the scope and goals are poorly defined at the beginning.

Without the ability to effectively sell design, the graphic designer will not be successful. Therefore, in developing a set of rules under which the graphic designer can work more effectively in the market place, it is important that these suggestions be understood:

- The designer must sell what he is good at.
- If the designers' services provide additional benefits then these can be used to sell

design.

- In dealing with his/her client's, the designer needs to communicate effectively, yet on a human level.
- This will be the basis upon which further communications will be built throughout the design process.

Part II

Section 3

Price. How to charge enough.

‘Money doesn’t talk, it swears.’

Bob Dylan, *It’s Alright, Ma* (1965 song).

Price. How to charge enough.

If the graphic designer wishes to be successful in the marketplace, it is important that he or she be able to price a project effectively. In this chapter poor pricing will be discussed and how this can effect the quality of the designers' work and how it may even lead to the designers' demise. The hidden cost of doing free work is also discussed and how this can be more harmful to the graphic designer in the long run. The services that are the most profitable to the designer are also discussed.

Charging a good price for the designers' work is never an easy task. As ever, corporate and institutional clients are squeezing their suppliers to obtain keen competitive rates in today's bustling marketplace. Dunk has said that you can charge substantial prices if the client understands that he or she will gain satisfaction when the designer has been clear about what the client will receive. He reinforces this by saying that "the designer who is specific about the range of things that will be done and who thinks about the clients problems at the proposal stage will get paid more than the next fellow" (Dunk, Nov./Dec. 1990). Dunk maintains that the most successful designers provide three elements in the design process - the visible design, project management, and a combination of thoughtful analysis and intuition. Thoughtful analysis and intuition are areas where the graphic designer uses all of his or her design skills in dealing with any given project, but as one will see in the next chapter this rarely occurs. Designers, due to the briefing, all too often do not work to their full ability. Dunk finds that those who offer design plus solid project management can realise fees three to five times those just offering design. Combining design, project management, and analysis often achieves rates twelve times higher than solely offering design. This establishes, for the designer, a value pyramid. Here the designer takes aim at the small number of clients wanting a full design process. At the

top is thought, and a very small niche of clients who also want a thoughtful, well conceived product. At the centre is project management, a sizeable number of clients wanting design and project management. At the bottom is visible design, a large base of clients wanting low-cost commodity design. Dunk believes that the trick for those who want higher prices is to get into project management and thinking. And then the hard part is to make very clear, with ample detail during both proposal and implementation stages, what the client will experience as a result.

At best most design work is put together for the home market of the designer. However Dunk believes, the designer will get paid a premium if he or she can reach overseas. Dunk views well conceived design as an international language at its best (Dunk, Nov./Dec. 1990).

In considering Dunk's line of thought on this matter, his discussion with Hartmut Esslinger (a 'common-sense' design businessman, who has produced successful design work for Apple, Next, and others) provides thoughtful insight. The conversation began with how a number of designers were selling their services for next to nothing. For some this led to financial ruin. For others it led to hideous work. Esslinger always believed: 'you have to charge well to do well' (Dunk, Nov./Dec. 1990). In charging too little, the designer will be put in a position where he or she will have trouble supporting him/herself financially and will be in danger of producing poor quality work. Therefore, in dealing with clients, designer's must make very clear what service they will be providing and they must charge a professional price for this service.

How then does the designer charge a good price for what he or she is producing? How does he or she charge a good price without compromising on quality for competition? This can be achieved by not putting him/herself forward as a marketer, an industry expert, or cost-control technician, but as a designer who can have a profound, quality-

building impact on the clients by whom he or she is engaged. Michael Hardt's view is that the client should not try to save money on the designer's fees. "A good designer saves his fees himself, by reducing production cost and increasing the clients sales" (Hardt, 1995). As a designer Hardt will never accept too small a fee that will keep him from solving the problem properly.

The hidden cost of free design

The Graphic Design Business Association (GDBA) has been established to represent, support and develop the Irish graphic design business. This association encourages and promotes the highest professional standards in the Irish graphic design business in every aspect with the advancement of companies engaged in graphic design. It is the intention of this association to provide the Irish and international marketplace with information regarding the quality resources of graphic design in Ireland. All of their member companies practice a high standard of creative design combined with professional business practice. Before a company can join, they will be assessed for quality and creative standards.

'A member company must not take part in competitive design work which is unpaid.' -

Article 9.1 GDBA, Code of Conduct.

This was agreed by GDBA as they believed that working without payment is impractical.

This is understandable when you consider that the generation of a serious design proposal requires considerable time and effort. It is a widely held belief that unpaid design proposals cannot be fully researched to take account of the clients' business

objectives. This, therefore, would not reach the standards of professionalism required of members of any Graphic Design Business Association.

The GDBA feel that free creative work for a competitive pitch will be superficial, due to the fact the pitch can hardly be granted on a genuine perception of the client's needs. The idea of a speculative pitch may appear attractive as a short cut to solving a problem, but the final result may be more damaging than beneficial. It may be more damaging because design companies, like other commercial organisations, are in business to make a profit. If, through pressure from the marketplace, they have to work on unpaid pitches, they will be forced to reclaim the cost by unfairly increasing fees. Therefore a written proposal rather than design is the initial communication.

It is clear that the designer must not take part in competitive design work. The following is an example of where this system of free work failed. In a real case a number of Dublin based designers were asked to give a number of free proposals to a business company who were trying to decide who they wanted as their designer. All of the designers entered their work, bar one. Due to unforeseen problems this designer could not get his proposal done on time. But he went along to the presentation anyway. When asked to produce what he had done he handed the client a blank sheet of paper. The client, taken aback, asked the designer the meaning of this. The designer coolly replied that he did not know enough about the client or his company in order to begin a successful design. He suggested that they begin a conversation and as they go along the designer will fill in the sheet. The client thought about this and they began the conversation. He got the job.

Now this may have began as a mistake for the designer, as he did not initially have the time to do the proposal, but he soon saw the truth in what he said to the client. The client obviously saw the logic in it also. This again shows the importance of connecting with the client.

However, there are exceptions to this policy on free work. Michael Hardt was dealing with a client, working on a brochure for the company. However, Hardt saw that the company had a real need for a new corporate image and design program. So in his free time, without asking the client, he redesigned the company's image. Then he invited the client to dinner and presented the work to him, telling him just to look and that he did not have to pay anything if he did not like it. Looking at the new proposal and the old design, the improvement was obvious. The client bought it.

The difference is that the designer in this case had the choice and the free work was done because he wished to do it. He also had working knowledge of the clients' business and their needs. But this will not work if the designer is expected by the client to do free work, especially if that work is in competition with other designers.

Of course this problem of free work begins long before the designer gets to the design company. At college, students are asked repeatedly to do free work for competitions, where the lucky winner will receive £150 or the like, which is nothing for the diversity and quality of work that the client will obtain. This is an unfair system that leads clients into thinking that designers can be manipulated easily and sets designers off on the wrong foot with clients.

Without the ability to effectively price design, the graphic designer will not be successful. Therefore, in developing a set of rules under which the graphic designer can work more effectively in the market place, it is important that these suggestions be understood:

- The designer must charge well to do well.
- If the designer does not charge a professional price it can lead to bad quality work or to the designers' demise.
- The most successful designer's provide three things: visible design, project

management, thoughtful analysis/intuition.

- The hidden cost of doing free design work must be remembered.

Part II

Section 4

The Briefing

‘Problems are only opportunities in work clothes.’

Henry J. Kaiser (1882-1967)

The briefing

The briefing stage of the design process is the most important, as it sets the stage for what is to follow. This chapter provides a case example of how in many situations the client oversteps his/her qualifications and the graphic designer does not stop him/her from doing so. The client gives the graphic designer the task and not the problem.

“The designer who thinks about the clients’ problem at the proposal stage will get paid more.” - William Dunk (Dunk, Nov./Dec. 1990).

This leads us into the briefing stage of the design process. The dangers of doing free work have been pointed out but even if the client agrees to pay the designer to work for him or her, there may be problems.

There are any number of factors that could change any given situation. In order to illustrate the point briefly, a broad overview will be taken. A businessman had found a designer that was interested in working with him. They had a short conversation and the client asked the designer to design a series of posters. The businessman wanted to give these to his clients so that they could make his presence felt more. The businessman told the designer what size he would like them to be and that he could use full colour. The designer, only too happy to please, agreed to this. Soon he returned with an excellent series of posters that are full colour and were the size suggested. Both parties were happy. However, the client did not understand why, after a number of weeks, the posters were not receiving the attention that he expected them to get.

In this example, the briefing was wrong. It is a common scenario of where both the designer and the client are at fault. Let us look at the businessman. He had a problem and he needed to get his company’s presence felt amongst his clients. This was a marketing problem that the businessman had to deal with. The businessman was

qualified to make the marketing decision, which was to decide that the solution to the marketing problem would be a design project. However, this is as far as his qualification allowed him to go. Yet in this example the businessman went further and made a decision on what the solution to the design problem should be. He came up with the solution himself: to get posters designed. This is his greatest fault. He gave the task to the designer and not the problem. He attempted to solve a major part of the design process himself, yet he had no design education.

The designer was too eager to please the paying client. The designer should have been given the marketing decision by the client. The business needed more exposure and the marketing decision was to use design as a solution. The designer should have taken this problem and used his design skills to solve it. However, in this case the designer did not act to his full ability. He did not use his analysis and intuition skills. He worked at the lower end of the value pyramid, that was mentioned previously, only producing visual work. If the designer had taken the problem and not the task from the client he would be able to use his analysis and intuition skills on the problem. These skills the designer learns from college in dealing with projects which present a problem and request any possible solutions. However, in reality not many designers get the opportunity to use these skills. Too many designers are given tasks and not the problems to solve by their clients. If the designer understands this part of the design process and takes the opportunity to use his analysis and intuition skills he will obtain higher rates for his design service. In addition to this, the businessman is also benefiting, he is assured a better outcome from the project, if he allows the designer to use his full design knowledge. However, in this example the designer was given the solution to the design problem by someone who has no design education yet he, with his design degree, did not question that decision.

This is an all too common event, especially for young designers who have just left college and are dealing with real clients for the first time. A young designer is easily intimidated by a businessman who has been successful for many years. However, it is the role of the designer to professionally use all the skills he has learned to deal with the problem at hand. Even if this means standing up to an established businessman. This must be understood and communicated to the client. However, it must be understood that the designer here is not making a marketing decision, as he is not qualified to do so. But the client is overstepping his qualifications. He made a design decision. The client has marketing knowledge and therefore looks at the marketing problem and comes up with a marketing solution - in this case it is to solve the marketing problem with a design solution. The client should now give this to the designer to solve. In this case example, if the problem (and not the task) was give to the designer, then he may have provided a better solution. It may have taken the form of a calendar, a series of brochures or any number of other things. Indeed, in the end, the correct solution may have been posters but this should be decided by the designer once the facts are established.

One of the issues identified in the 'Design Education for Schools Symposium' was agreement that there is a need for greater emphasis on the appreciation of design rather than on designing. Design should not be seen merely as problem solving but as problem identification (McCarthy, 1995).

Indeed, Michael Peters said that one of his most successful strategies was to put more emphasis on research and business consultancy (Peters, Jan./Feb. 1990). He helped clients diagnose their needs before arriving at a design brief.

Michael Hardt asks: "Can you imagine someone going to the doctor with appendicitis and insisting on getting his tonsils removed? You can't. But in design its normal" (Hughes, Dublin Nov. 1995). He goes on to say that the designer, as in this case, removes the tonsils eager to serve, or, he needs to prove the necessity to remove the

appendix and does so. Hardt feels that it is an apt analogy to compare a sick person with a client or a company; many companies are more or less ill and not a few die from this disease. Good design can be a lifesaving therapy - but it is definitely no panacea. Hardt feels that the responsible designer has a task similar to that of a doctor - to make an analysis and a diagnosis, to develop a therapy and to supervise the healing process (Hardt, 1990).

However, Hardt feels that only in very few and exceptional cases an informative briefing is developed. Wrong briefings can only lead to wrong 'solutions'. If a designer tries to solve a misinformed and misdiagnosed task, the wrong solution is fixed unless it is revealed that the task is wrong.

Hardt asks clients to name the problem and not the task. To give the specialists a fair chance to analyse the problem properly and to define ways to solve the problem. As with most clients there is little true insight into design. Therefore, how can the client believe that they can set up a task for the designer. The client is not qualified to set up a task but is qualified to give the designer a problem to solve. Working out a problem is hard enough.

In order for the graphic designer to be successful he/she must be able to deal with the briefing stage of the design process correctly. It is important that the following be understood:

- The graphic designer must be given the problem and not the task from the client.
- The client must not overstep his/her qualifications in making a design decision.
- It must be understood that the designer in this case is not making a marketing decision but is only getting the correct problem from the client.

Part II

Section 5

Designing

‘You know my methods. Apply them.’

Sir Arthur Conon Doyle, *Sign of Four* (1890) ch. 6

Designing

Throughout the graphic designers college education he or she has been solving design problems. For the designer, coming up with a successful design solution is the easiest part of the design process. It is in the other stages of the design process that designers have most problems. Doing the design work itself is the easy part. If a good foundation has been built up between the designer and the client and they understand one another, then there will not be a problem at this stage.

Hardt points out that the client is included in the design conception and the implementation stages but not in the stage when the visualisation takes place (Hughes, Dublin/Germany 1995). This is where the designer uses all his design skills in coming up with the best solution. But even the best solutions have to be followed by good presentation and implementation.

Part II

Section 6

Presentation

‘Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man’s censure, but reserve thy judgement.’

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* I, 3 (Polonius’s advice to Laertes)

Presentation

Even the best graphic design work may not be accepted due to bad presentation.

Therefore this chapter discusses the importance that presentation can play in the design process. Suggestions are made on what format the design work should be presented in and how designers should deal with clients, stressing the good design is not a question of taste.

Bad presentation encourages rejection. The designer is selling work to the client.

However, at this stage it would be easier if a good foundation between the designer and the client is established. The principles apply that were stated in the initial selling process: designers understanding their role, to not only design but to also teach, to sell design, to continue to communicate clearly with the client.

Due to most clients having no design education, it is the role of the designer to bridge this gap as effectively as possible. Michael Hardt presents his work in folders and portfolios. Because businessmen receive information repeatedly in folders from accountants and lawyers, they are comfortable with this format rather than large sheets and portfolios that are foreign to most clients.

At the beginning of a presentation, Hardt will give a copy of his design folder to each member on the client's team. The folder will contain the original briefing that was agreed on by both the client and the designer. Next an analysis, followed by a written proposal and finally, the proposed visual design work. This enables Hardt to lead the client through the presentation in a formal and logical way. Hardt states the agreed problem, analyses this and makes logical conclusions that he then uses his professional design skills to solve.

However, there still may be obstacles to overcome even using this method. Hardt tells how clients overestimate the quality of their taste or the taste of their wife, secretary, or cleaning woman as criteria for good or bad design (Hughes, Dublin Nov. 1990). The designer must overcome this by explaining that good design is not a question of taste. He/she should do so by using a folder system similar to that of Hardt. The designer should bring the client's attention back to what the briefing was. The question that the client should be asking is whether the design has been successful in solving the briefing. The client should not be letting personal taste interfere with the design solution. A client, Hardt feels, is good if he or she understands that "good design is not a question of taste, a superficial aesthetic game, but an important operational and operative tool of the marketing which can only develop its full efficiency if it is fully integrated in the corporate aims" (Hardt, 1995).

In a presentation that Hardt was giving, the client called in his secretary and asked for her option. There were twelve possible solutions that Hardt was proposing and she did not know which she thought best. But she did know that out of all of them she did not like number three. The client thanked her and she left. Now number three was the one that Hardt had suggested to the client before the secretary entered. The client said they could not use that one. However, Hardt states that he is wrong, that the secretary only proved that number three was the better design. The client did not understand and asked why. Hardt replied that out of the twelve designs number three was the only one that she looked at. He explained that good design is not a question of taste. The client bought number three.

Hardt gave another example of where the client's or his secretary's taste should not be an issue. On giving a presentation to a partnership he received continual negativity from one of the partners. When he asked this partner his reason for this, he did not have one, only that he just did not like the design. Hardt then pointed to the partner's

flamboyant tie and replied that if this was a question of taste then no wonder he does not like it. The partner then remained silent and Hardt clearly pointed out that good design is not a question of taste. He tells designers: "Don't let a client's taste be criteria for the quality of your work"(Hardt, 1995).

Client's pay graphic designers to produce work for them. If the client does not like what he/she is getting, this puts the designer in a difficult position, even if the designer is right. But if the presented design was successful in solving the problem then it is up to the designer to make this clear to the client. A system should be used that the client can understand, bringing the client through the design procedure giving reasons for each step. Then the discussion should be about where the design was successful in solving the problem; the discussion should not be about whether the client likes the work or not. If the discussion is on the success of the design work and not the aesthetics of the work then the presentation will be more successful.

Without correct presentation a graphic designers' work may not be accepted by the client. In developing a set of rules under which the designer can work more successfully in the market place, it is important that the designer should:

- Present his/her work in an understandable way to the client, e.g.: Folders.
- Use this to bring the client through the design process step by step, giving reasons for each design decision.
- Make very clear that the question should not be about whether the client likes the work but the question should be about the success of the design work in solving the problem.

Part II

Section 7

Implementation

‘Trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle.’

Michelangelo (1475-1564)

Implementation

The implementation of the design work is the last stage of the design process. It is very important for the graphic designer and the client to understand this stage, for without proper implementation skills even the best design work will fall short of its ultimate potential. In this chapter established graphic designers comment on the faults that businessmen can have, that effect this stage. These faults can effect the final continuity of the design work. However, it is not just businessmen that are at fault, graphic designers are also to blame. If designers do not understand this stage of the design process it can lead to designs that have no continuity and lead to design chaos.

The designer has made and analysed a diagnosis and has developed a remedy. Now he/she must supervise the healing process. However, in reality clients have trouble managing design. Bad design management can lead to what Paul Rand called 'design chaos' (Siegel, 1993). Alan Siegel supports Rand saying that corporations often have no clear sense of who they are (Siegel, 1993). The design programs that they count on to represent them in the marketplace are created in an atmosphere of trendiness and graphic chaos, when designers (often from a number of different firms) impose their own aesthetic beliefs on communication without any coherence in theme, style, and content.

This is a clear case of where companies do not really know who they are, so they wander from one designer to another asking for new ways to cover up this fault. They repeatedly get new designs; the new designs are not coherent and just add to the mismatched image. This is as much the designers' fault as the clients'. The designer in this case only gave a therapy but did not try to follow through to supervise the healing process. The client must stop looking for new face lifts and get back to first finding out who they are. Then what they should look like will follow.

Paul Rand compared much of what passes for design to 'urban graffiti' saying that it is "a collage of confusion and chaos, swaying between high tech and low art, and wrapped in a cloak of arrogance: squiggles, pixels, doodles, dingbats, ziggirats, boudoir colours... whatever special effects a computer makes possible" (Siegel, 1993). He feels that these 'inspirational decorations' are convenient stand-ins for real ideas and genuine skills.

The first priority of the client is to drop this cloak of arrogance that Rand refers to in order to find out who they are. They should have a clear understanding of their positioning in the marketplace and use a design style that keeps continuity throughout their business. Similarly the first priority of the designer is to drop these 'inspirational decorations.' If the designer is working for a company he/she should understand and explain the importance of a coherent design style. This does not mean that every time a company asks a designer to design a brochure, that he/she has to come up with a whole new corporate identity. If the designer is working on a small project for a company he/she should look at similar work that has been done for the company and try to keep continuity in the design work. If the designer is working on a large project for the company, a new corporate identity for example, he/she should make suggestions on how continuity should be kept throughout the company's design. On such a project it is very important that the designer oversees the implementation.

If this is not done companies will continue to, as Hardt put it, have graphic chaos "due to them working with more than one designer and because they have a lack of design management skills" (Hughes, Dublin/Germany 1995). Hardt believes that design itself is nothing if not used properly, the design process is only a small part of the project, first the 'problem definition' which will be followed by the implementation.

In an earlier chapter William Dunk said that those combining design, project management, and analysis can achieve fees twelve times higher than those just offering

design. Remembering this, the designer at this stage when dealing with the implementation should be looking at project management; just as the doctor has developed a therapy and must go on to supervise the healing process, so too must the designer. The graphic designer should supervise the design work that has been created. This is not only logical but also beneficial for the designer.

When presenting the design proposal, the designer should make suggestions not only short term but also mid and long term. This can also establish a long term client/designer relationship and return custom.

It has been shown that if the graphic designer and the client do not understand the importance of the implementation of the design work it can lead to design chaos.

- The client must not repeatedly look for new designs.
- New designs without continuity will lead to design chaos.
- Clients should understand their position in the marketplace and use a coherent design style to say who they are.

If the graphic designer understands the following it will help him/her to work more successfully in the marketplace:

- When dealing with a client the designer should be aware of the importance of continuity in the design of a business.
- If asked to do a minor project for the business, for example a brochure, the designer should create something that is in keeping with the design style of the rest of the companies design work.
- If working on a major project, for example a corporate image, suggestions should be given on how continuity should be kept throughout the company using the suggested design style.

- The designer should make short, mid, and long term suggestions for the company's design.

Conclusion

‘And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from.’

T.S.Eliot, *Little Gidding* (1942) pt. 5

Conclusion

The task set at the beginning of this thesis was to develop a model or set of rules under which a graphic designer could work more effectively in the marketplace. Utilising a backdrop of general design and business procedures, a variety of design related areas were examined. It is the points and suggestions that are made on these that should be considered. These points help to form guidelines for the graphic designer. To fully understand the position of the graphic designer it was necessary to consider the position and stance of the client. Only with some level of comprehension of each individual's role, can a more positive and communicative scenario emerge. However, before guidelines were set up it was important that one understood where the graphic designer and the client came from. By considering their education and what this has lead them to believe, it enables one to get a clearer understanding of their behaviour in the market place.

In order to form a set of guidelines for a more encompassing overview it was important that suggestions were made both before and during the design process. Before the design process, suggestions were made on how the designer should see him/herself and his/her client. Guidelines were then suggested on how the graphic designer should approach and deal with the client. Once this was clarified the design process was examined. This was broken down into six distinct elements: selling, pricing, briefing, designing, presentation, and the implementation of the design work.

The guidelines were developed and compiled from a variety of successful designers who use different methods when working within the market place. A formal set of fixed rules does not exist for dealing with clients and the design process, every designer having his or her own method of working. Therefore the suggestions that are

made and the guidelines that are developed should be seen as an informational stepping-stone to furthering design professionalism.

Having compiled this text from the vantage point of a fourth year graphic design student, the information offers valuable suggestions towards developing a professional business approach, stressing communication and quality. The suggestions coupled with personal experience and growth will allow for the design graduate to expand upon and customise a set of rules more finely tuned to their individual working needs.

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