LESS IS MORE

Graphic Design Basics

Agenda

- Overview

- Type

- Type Rules (or, Type rules!)

- Layout & Grid

- Images & Resolution

- File Formats

- Color Spaces

- Logo & Identity

- How to Work with Printers & Designers

What is graphic design?

Simply, it's **VISUAL COMMUNICATION**. It's used to influence a target audience in some way.

It's also **PROBLEM SOLVING**, and involves creating solutions that are functional, elegant, appropriate, and economical.

And it's all about **RELATIONSHIPS**. Primarily the relationship between form and content.

First, hone your message.

Who is your audience?

What do you want them to do?

What do you say? *(This is content.)*

How do you say it? *(This is form.)*

TYPE

"Words have meaning, type has spirit." Paula Scher

Serif vs. San Serif

A TAILS

A NO TAILS

Serif fonts have "tails" extending from the edges of letters. They are generally easier to read in printed works, as the tails guide horizontal flow of one's eye.

San Serif fonts have no tails, and are generally used more for headlines and onscreen.

Good Fonts

Serif	San Serif
Garamond	Bell Gothic
Bodoni	Franklin Gothic
Clarendon	Helvetica
Minion	Myriad
Times	Gill Sans

Bad Fonts

Papyrus

Brush Script

Comic Sans

TYPE RULES

Rules are meant to be broken, but do so with intention.

Rule No.1

Don't stretch or compress type.

Typefaces are painstakingly designed. Adjust font size, increase kearning (letter spacing), but don't change it's proportions. Avoid word art! (Unless you are trying to be ironic.)

Rule No.2

Don't underline text.

This was used for emphasis when no other options were available, e.g., on a typewriter. Exception: hyperlinks.

Rule No.3

Don't use more than two typefaces.

Aim for complementary contrast, e.g., serif and san serif combos, or decorative and book font combos. Fonts that compete, e.g., two serifs and two san serifs, or two decorative fonts, confuse the message.

Rule No.4

Be intentional with emphasis.

If everything is bold, nothing is bold.

Rule No.5

Use only one space between sentences.

Your English teacher may have advised you otherwise, but again, this indicator is a descendant of the typewriter.

Rule No.6

Use true quotation marks and apostrophes.

True quotation marks and apostrophes are also known as "curly" or "smart" marks. Prime marks are used to indicate inches and feet.

"Type's fun"

"Type's fun"

Rule No.7

Select an appropriate font size.

Keep your audience in mind. Be accessible.

Rule No.8

For body copy, keep line length at 10 to 15 words per line.

The larger the font, the wider the column.

Rule No.9

Avoid widows and orphans.

Widows are words left on lines by themselves, orphans are words stranded on a new page. Avoid both—they disrupt both alignment and flow of reader's eye. Adjust copy if need be.

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aturese. **ORPHAN**

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Rule No.10

Establish heirarchy.

Arrange elements to stress importance and connectedness. Generally have at least 4 points difference in font size, though this will depend on typeface.

LAYOUT & GRID

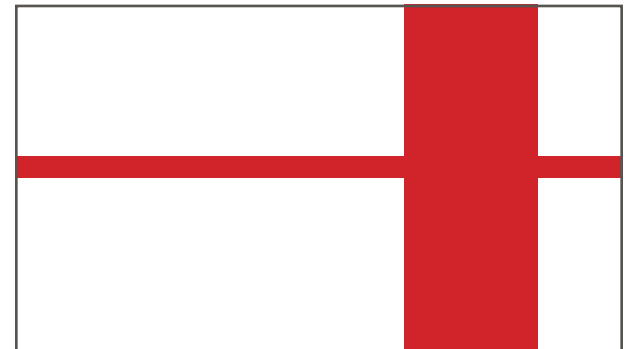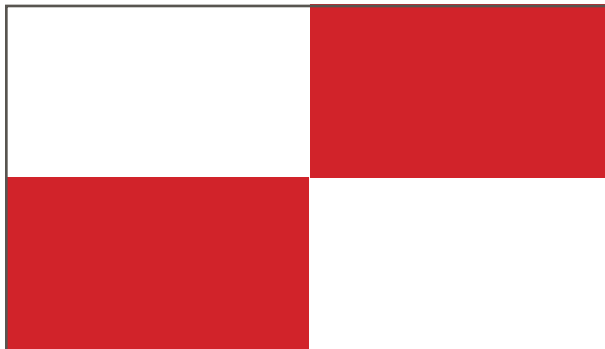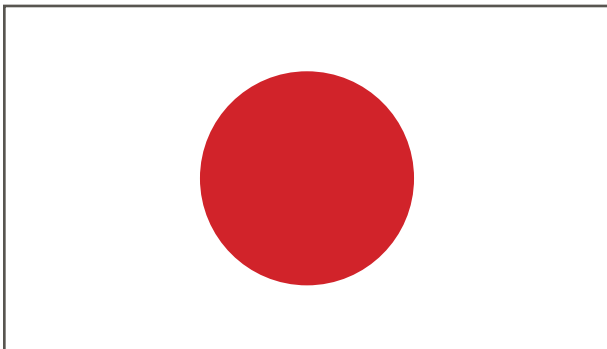*Good layout is about balancing consistency and variety.*

Consistency

Things that help establish consistency:

- **GRIDS**

- **LIMITED TYPE PALETTE**

- **STANDARDIZED ELEMENTS** (e.g., imagery that is similar by feel or size, or icons that belong to the same 'system')

Variety

Things that can be employed for variety:

- **COLOR**

- **PLACEMENT**

- **CONTRAST** (e.g., size, shape, direction)

The Grid

The grid is a composition tool used for arranging images and organizing info. It provides underlying structure that helps unify a layout.

Place your biggest elements first, and work around them. Body copy is generally the most flexible element.

Tips

No.1. Every word should be necessary.

No.2. White space is OK. It doesn't necessarily have meaning of its own, but it enhances the meaning of other content by giving it room.

No.3. Use centered layouts intentionally. Flush left or right gives strength to a page and is often a better option.

IMAGES & RESOLUTION

Don't steal images from the internet.

Stock Images

Purchase stock images if appropriate and as necessary. Think about how you might use the image (print or web), and purchase the correct size. You can always scale down, but not up.

Big Stock offers a unique selection and low prices. See also Shutterstock, iStock, Dreamstime, Masterfile, and Veer.

Vector vs. Raster

Vector images are infinitely scalable, like logos. Illustrator is a common software for creating vector images.

Raster images are made up of pixels, like photos. They have resolution and are not infinitely scalable. Photoshop is commonly used for editing and preparing raster images.

Resolution

With print, images must be at least 240 dpi (dots per inch). 72 dpi is sufficient for web use.

Images consist of a set number of pixels, based on resolution. You can *generally* shrink images, but not make them larger without "pixelation."

FILE FORMATS

One Format Does Not Fit All

There is no one ideal format for all graphics. It depends on program used, content, and desired end use (e.g., PDF for screen or print, digital output, offset printing, etc.).

General Use

JPG or **JPEG** is used with photos (print or web).

GIF is used on the web, best for images with a small amount of fixed colors, like a logo (vector). Supports transparency, but not as well as PNG.

PNG is also used on the web. Best format for transparency.

TIFF is used for print.

EPS is also used for print. EPS files can be opened and edited in Illustrator. They are more compatible across applications than native Illustrator files, as they can be placed in most layout, word-processing, and graphic applications. PDF has similar capabilities and will possibly replace EPS in the future.

COLOR SPACES

Definitions

CMYK stands for Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black. Used in print and digital printing, and also referred to as "4-color process."

RGB stands for Red, Green, and Blue. It is the color space of any screen and web format.

SPOT COLOR is a specific ink color. Most well known are Pantone colors, which are often used with corporate identities to ensure consistency.

LOGO & IDENTITY

The Job of a Logo

A logo connects your business to everything it does and stands for. It symbolizes the essense of what you do, and is a key element of your identity. It's often the first impression, and helps distinguish you from others.

Don't confuse your logo and visual identity with your BRAND. Your brand is about personality, and how people interact with you/your business.

Logo Basics

- It should work in black and white

- It should work on both light and dark backgrounds

- Two colors is ideal—assimilates easier in a variety of settings

- Image should be scalable, and recognizable at a small size (1" or so)

- Don't use clip art!

- Shy away from photos and complex patterns

- For smaller budgets, recognizable is likely a better than abstract, as with more limited exposure, recognition needs to be quick.

HOW TO WORK WITH PRINTERS & DESIGNERS

Know Thyself

Know what you want to achieve, or ask your team to help you figure it out. Know your limitations. Don't be afraid to communicate your preferences—colors, fonts, imagery, etc. It's nice to have creative freedom, but it's also good to have parameters. And it saves time in the long run.

Print Considerations

What is your budget?

What quantity do you need?

How many colors will you be printing?

What kind of paper?

Are bleeds involved?

Digital vs. offset?

GET SEVERAL BIDS.

FINAL NOTE

Just because you can, doesn't mean you should.

(I'm specifically talking about gradients and drop shadows here.)

THANK YOU

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