Graphic Design Essay, Research Paper

Any paper you pick up was put together using graphic design. It is a very widely used art form incorporated into many different projects. The ultimate purpose is to communicate. The field takes a lot of knowledge to be able to produce a finished and printed product (Rogers, interview). Graphic design is an art that uses skill, information, and technology to communicate to the world. Graphic design, even though it may not have been called that, has evolved with technology. It always has been here to get our thoughts across, but they didn?t always use pictures and color. Graphic design started out as typography, letter writing, which quickly gained popularity. Carvings in wood blocks were used as stamps before Johan Guttenberg invented metal casting in AD 1450 (Kagy 27). The first poster made in 1472 used text to advertise a sale on a book in England. Letterpresses were then made. Even though presses were available, most communication was still verbal. The old technology using print presses didn?t start dominating the new art of advertising until the 1940s (Hurlburt 40). Designers then started to influence advertising. The balance began to shift from purely verbal concepts to image presentation. Then the letter types, typewriters, were made. Next came the photocopiers. Finally today we use computer publishing. Even though designers now use computers, they still need pen and markers to create some images. Felt-tip pens and colored markers replaced pencils and paints as a sketching medium. Technical pens have replaced ruling pens in finished artwork. The marker has not changed the idea of the line, but just made it more dominant. It gives the art a different tone in communicating. Throughout the change of technology, communication has also changed from Old English to our present grammar and slang. Though the language has changed, it is still an important transmission of ideas and information. Graphic design changed just as drastically as our language. It allows easier communication to be achieved between two parties. Individuals with dissimilar backgrounds still share communication with common experiences. Visual design permits individuals with different heritages to exchange ideas, information, and feelings (Knobler 30). From the first sign of communication, cave men, to commercials on television, visual images have communicated our ideas to other receivers (Hurlburt 40). Graphic design communicates the client’s ideas to the receiver by persuading, identifying, and informing. We use the written word to inform or identify, but incorporating the art of design into a project creates a more forceful persuasion. Package design, while informing the consumer and identifying what they are looking at, persuades them to buy the product or service. Even book design incorporates information, but the book jackets may try to persuade the consumer (Hurlburt 23). The art of composing information to persuade and create identity in any piece is a complex process. The logo is the most difficult piece of graphic design. The designer has to be able to make a portrayal of the company from scratch. The logo has to be able to fit on a stamp or be as big as a billboard. A company communicates to anyone who runs across their logo, advertisements, menus, or mailer. Even a logo speaks. Logos are important visual representations of a business. The colors show what kind of people they are. If the colors are bright and cheery, you have a down to earth, happy image. When business uses a monotonous, dull, deep red or green, they give out the more sophisticated image. If the company logo consists of only a small forest, then the consumer will know the business is near a forest, using a forest, or has something to do with trees or forests. (Hopefully your designer is more creative to give you something more than trees and your company name.) Just by giving out the name of the business, usually the consumer will figure out what type of business it is. This is just in a logo. Keep the communications consistent, otherwise the audience gets confused (Parsons 3). If the business decides to make an advertisement, there is an enormous communication log between the company and consumer. The advertisement tells what the business sells or what service they give, how the consumer can benefit from the business, why the consumer should use the business, and much, much more (Rogers, interview). Art is a big part of this communication process. Art is used in giving a word and image presentation. Just the different concepts of a word and image speak to the audience. There are different techniques used to portray the artistic styles of design. One technique is to use ?the concept? of the product. If it is something big the business is dealing with, then the designer should play with the idea of BIG. ?The other side? is a technique used to say how good something is by incorporating the bad things. Using ?continuity? imprints the message of the business by keeping the communications consistent. The company?s slogan is a type of continuity. ?Recognition? runs with continuity, because continuity makes recognition. The consumer sees the imaging again and again. Using a ?symbol? helps the audience relate to the ideas of the business. When using a ?demonstration,? the message is clear, because the audience has proof the product work or the service is good. The ?declarative? technique is a strong one. It makes a bold statement catching your audience. ?Inferential? is usually only used on larger companies, because it only uses a trademark to identify the company. They do not put the company name on the finished product. The quality is already known. The company only wants to keep its image on the minds of the audience. You have to be a well-known company to use the ?understatement? technique. It deliberately takes out the company trademark or name, and exclusively uses the company identity. An ?endorsement? uses personal praise from the endorser, usually a stereotype or famous person, to relate the product to the audience. A ?narrative? technique uses a sequential illustration, a panel and balloon format, photojournalism, or a single story-telling picture to get the idea across. ?Association? is a real key catcher, because the reader associates a product with an appealing ambiance. ?Inversion? puts a twist on the product serving a different purpose. When a designer attaches an ?emotional appeal? to the design, all strategies of persuasion are involved. ?Compassion catches the reader such as the emotional appeal. They feel obligated by their own feelings toward an advertisement. In today?s market ?sex appeal? is what many companies want. It is a key force in human relationships. ?Fantasy? uses emotional responses related to and guided by preconscious and even unconscious levels of the mind. For example the designer might put people on flying carpets while drinking the company?s brand liquor. ?Fear? is very persuasive and carries a lot of abuse to the consumer. ?Dimensional design? gives the illusion of three dimensional, so what the consumer sees is what they get. Packaging attracts the designer and consumer (Hurlburt 42). The designer will often incorporate different forms as well as graphics on the packaging to attract a consumer. All those examples have different methods of getting the business?s ideas out. They all communicate differently. There is a lot of skill in getting a quality product across to an audience. A designer has to have years of experiences behind him to understand and complete the process of any project. It all starts with information. The designer has to know the needs of the client. When is the project needed? A week, a month, a year? If you know the date, then you can make other due dates for the tasks of the project, a photographer or ordering supplies. What is the client?s line of business, and where do they plan on going? Up front information to fact finding is used to get the client?s business objective, if they want a logo, menu, a mailer to keep in touch, a brochure, etc.?Who is their key audience, teens, older men, Upper class business people? Also, who are their competitors? The designer has to know the budget of the company. Depending on the budget is how much you can spend on paper, design, photographer, or even ink (Parsons 3). The size of the paper tells a lot about the project design and costs. The more colors you have the more the cost. Graphic designers need to know a lot more than about the company and their needs. When the designer knows his/her limitations of communicating the client?s ideas, he/she has to start putting together the design. Techniques in design are mainly the designer?s personal style, but the ability to render visuals quickly and concisely is one of the designer?s most critical skills (Hurlburt 13). There are a lot of computer programs out there used for designing, but before you start using those, you need to know the elements. The designer must also know how to use all the elements, lines, forms and shapes, masses, colors, and textures (Kagy 15). ?The designer takes what haphazardly happened to the client?s business and channels it in a direction (Parsons 3).? Most designers touch with their personal experiences to search for new ways of communicating. Word play is a popular aspect to design. They use their sounds, meanings, and collective letterforms in typography training, so this is used when designing. This correspondingly relates to humor, which is often used as one of the design techniques. Humor opens a way to whole new communication ideas. Most humors combine verbal puns with visual wit (Hurlburt 18). Often enough designers? solutions remain unknown until the end of the project. The designer takes into consideration proportion, balance, emphasis, and unity when shaping a message (Kagy 15). The graphic designers’ tastes, talents, knowledge, and ideas balanced with the assignment undergo a lot of evaluation. The original design process is what carries the artistic side of the design, but it in addition to the art it uses a great deal of technology. Designers work on many different computer programs and other tools of technology. There are numerous design programs. The average consumer might own some of the programs, but do not produce the same quality projects, because of all the information needed to do so. The most popular ones I have heard of and run across are Adobe Illustrator, QuarkXPress, Pagemaker, and Adobe Photoshop (Haller All). The designer has to be able to format his design so it can be transferred from one program to another. When making a design with words and letters, the computer is not always the only way to design. While making a layout, designers use flat surfaces, straight edges, layout sheets, T-squares, pencils, pens, and adhesives. The finished layout consisting only of text is often called a ?mechanical.? The mechanical is then made into film. Black areas are left where pictures would go. The pictures would be stripped in later. Layouts using pictures and text are not always done this way, but are often enough to be stated. Being able to work a scanner inside and out is a ?must know.? Another useful piece is the digital camera, transfers images strait from the camera to the computer. It is not necessary to be able to use this camera, but it cuts costs and is simpler to use than regular pictures and cameras. Designers have to be skilled in the computer programs, scanners, and small technical things we don?t think of to even start to produce a design for a client. When the design is finished, the designer gives the client a proof. The proof, if done on a laser printer, does not show the correct colors. Most companies will get their proof on laser printers instead of having it produced, because it is cheaper. This causes a different representation of their ideas, because color preference is a way of showing personality. Two different companies with the same objective will see different equivalents for the same project (Knobler 33). Depending on if the design is accepted or denied, it will go back to the drawing board or be reproduced. When it is accepted, the design is sent to the press. If the graphic designer doesn?t do his/her own printing, they have to know all about the different types of paper and printing. The most information is held here. The designer first has to ?make his mark,? his printing marks showing any crops or color bars. There is a great consideration of the type of printing the project will go through. The different types of printing give different outlooks to the finished project, which in turn portrays a slightly different attitude to the message being communicated. This also goes for the paper types. There are billions of different types depending on strength, thickness, size, finish, and so on?The designer has to know how the printing works, what they produce, and maybe even the different costs. A brand new area of design has high benefits with not much cost. You don?t have to worry about paper or ink on the Internet. The Internet is all built from design. Businesses higher graphic designers for web design for the same reason they would any other design. The business wants quality communications to their audience. This aspect of the design brings on more information needed. That becomes skill when it is mastered. Though many people get confused about the Internet, the information is easier to pick up then learning print works. There is a lot of information in knowing how the different printing works, and what type of product they produce. There are many different ways to print on paper. For example, Letterpress- letter plates or blocks gathered together and raised above a non-printing area (a stamp). Flexography- same as letterpress, but the rubber or polymer plates can conform to an uneven surface, paperbags, corrugated boxes, and packing material. Gravure- the reverse of letterpress. The area is recessed into copper cylinder just like engraving. Thermography- it has a greater raised effect than engraving using a powder, the ink, and heat. A very popular way of printing is offset lithography, the image areas attract grease, and the non-image areas attract water (ink). Screen printing- mesh screen mounted with the areas of the screen blocked with a stencil. When ink is put on the screen it is squeegeed through the screen into the open areas. Digital colors printing- the newest technology using a combination of lasers that make plates and offset printing. It is a shortly run, full color job that would be needed quickly. There are many more types of printing, but these should give a good idea of how much information is needed. This is only one aspect of the graphic design process, so there is more to learn in the field and more skill to pick up. Skill, technology, and an immense amount of information gives the designer their ability to communicate. Person to person was too slow for the world communication, so designers started using technology to get messages across oceans. It also got messages across the consumer?s brain. The skills of a graphic designer persuades the readers to purchase a product, go some place to try a product, use a service, vote for a politician, make a contribution, or even join the army. Graphic designers have to professionally display a campaign of persuasion, identity, and information to benefit both the company and consumer. Face it! We live in a communication-based world.

323