The Next Millennium Of Graphic Design Essay, Research Paper

A career in graphic design is perfect for a creative individual who has a sense of design. “A graphic designer is one who creates ideas that are expressed in words and/or pictures, and generally solves problems of visual communication,” says Paul Rand, a professional designer (23). Employment in this profession is projected to increase 29% by the year 2006, which is the highest of any career according to a study done by the American Institute of the Graphic Arts (3). A graphic designer may work in a variety of places including a large firm or corporation, a specific design agency, a magazine or newspaper, or even in his own home as a freelance designer. There are few specific requirements needed to be involved in graphic design. However, there are similar traits and qualities that most designers generally possess, including training, knowledge of specific elements, using criticism positively, and a keen eye for color and balance. The cost of being a graphic designer must also be factored in.

Graphic design is a career that offers a creative outlet but can be quite stressful, which is why designers must be cooperative and work well with others. A dexterous designer knows how to use criticism positively. Oftentimes criticism is what makes a piece of art better. Depending on the project, job duties may include designing and preparing layouts, sketching out ideas, arranging the materials needed, or putting together the final image. Since there may be different requirements for each client, a graphic designer (on average) should have the ability to be spontaneous and creative and work well under pressure and stressful in situations. “DO NOT be a designer if you stress out easily!” says Steve Jones (interview). In many cases a designer has deadlines which may not be negotiated with his clients, and therefore he must work productively. There is also the downside of creating an image that is not accepted by the client; the designer must then discuss what is wrong with it and perhaps start over. “Any job becomes creative when the doer cares about doing it right, or doing it better.” (Borenstein) Certain clients leave the project completely open-ended and up to the designer, while others have a specific idea in mind. It is important for the designer to remember that he is creating a piece of work for someone else?s liking, and it may not be exactly what he would do on his own time. Most clients, however, choose their designers by looking at their portfolios or recognizing other pieces they have created. A client usually hires someone with a style he prefers.

Other qualities that a designer must have include the ability to make original designs, knowledge of composition, and attention to detail. Social skills play a major role in the profession. While creating a design may be done independently, the final piece is usually presented by the designer to someone else. It is not likely that advanced math will be used, but basic skills such as adding and subtracting quickly and accurately are necessary. There is also not a lot of physical activity essential to the artist. “At the end of a project, your brain will feel like it just ran a marathon.” (Anderson)

The amount of time it takes to create a piece of graphic art depends on the individual. If he is given a deadline, for instance, the designer will use his time wisely and efficiently to finish the project. A designer often works from his home, which allows them to choose their own hours. An experienced artist is aware of their personal style of creating and finishing a project. Some work well in an office setting, while others work more efficiently at night when it is quiet. Due to the variations in styles and individuals, a graphic designer generally spends around 25-50 hours a week working on projects.

Preparing to be a professional graphic designer can vary depending on how much experience is desired by the individual. On average, the minimum amount of education is between two and four years of training in either fine art or design. Many choose to attend a general university to start with and often transfer to a specific art or design school. High school students are not expected to take classes specifically in graphic design, but advanced art classes will help them in the future. A basic four-year high school curriculum (English, math, science, and history) is all that is expected to have been taken by a high school student; however, college preparatory classes are beneficial. Since the demand for designers is quickly increasing, finding a job after advanced training is quite simple. Employers will look for those with a strong background, experience, and a large portfolio. A designer may have a natural ability to create an extraordinary piece of design; in this case a lot of training is not necessary. For this reason, students who wish to find work as soon as possible should look into attending an art school after they graduate from high school.

Graphic design requires one to have knowledge and experience in working with images and type. “Typography is the term used to describe the use of words and type to convey a message” (Perfect). One who has an intelligent sense of design is familiar with how to incorporate color with type and image to create an emphasis where needed. It is important to be able to catch on to things quickly. A strong vocabulary will be to the designer?s advantage, because oftentimes words are used as the main focus; any misspellings would not be the client?s fault. When looking at advertisements in magazines, for example, the ones that catch the eye have a good balance of image and type; there is not too much of one or the other.

Computers are quickly becoming the most popular tool for combining image and type. The materials needed in graphic design can be quite expensive, but the final product will be worth it. As any artist knows, the cost of supplies adds up fast. The image(s) can either be taken from a photograph, a sketch, a painting, or any other type of art. There is also the need for access to a computer, scanner, and printer. Computer programs that are specifically designed for the graphic arts can be quite costly, such as Photoshop (about $600). In order to produce a nice piece of work, these materials are necessary. Other computer programs include Quark, Adobe Illustrator, and Corel Draw.

In order to be a leading designer in the future, individuals in the profession must have the ability to come up with original and unique ideas. One who enjoys preparing layouts for school projects or arranging art into a final composition would excel in the graphic design field. Not anyone can be a graphic designer; only those who accept responsibility and have a natural ability in design will enjoy this career. Modern-day designers will be the leaders of the next millennium and will produce the designs that will be seen for years to come. The opportunities as a graphic artist are endless.