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How To Rescue Your Graphic Design Project When All Else Fails

By Dali Bahat

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by: **Dali Bahat**

Whether you're giving a critical sales presentation to a client, producing visuals for a meeting, event, trade show or seminar, or unveiling the new company logo before an audience of shareholders, top-notch graphics will help ensure that you, your products, and your message receive the attention they deserve.

Yet when you decide to do the graphics in-house to reduce turnaround time or cut expenses, those logos, photos, charts, graphs, pictures, timelines, illustrations, etc. can be a source of frustration, embarrassment, stress and perhaps lost business. Following ten simple tips to surefire do-it-yourself graphic design, however, will help maximize your visual punch, minimize your mistakes, and give you the professional-look your graphics deserve. Not to mention, cut down on the headaches.

-Take a deep breath

Especially if you have a key presentation looming that needs charts, graphs, and visuals and all you have are loose papers and a migraine, first take a deep breath. Put on a fresh pot of coffee. Clear your workspace. Handle those last minute telephone calls. In short, you are going to need to focus your attention on your design project, so prepare yourself. You're about to solve your graphic design problem in classic, do-it-yourself fashion.

- Outline your project

Make a simple list of the presentation graphics you think you'll need. Don't get into details at this point. For example, you might list: opening— photo of young couple with product and company logo; midpoint— new market piechart and bar graph of financial growth; close— photo of new satisfied customer using product. You just want to create a rough outline that can help steer you through the project.

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– Define what you're trying to say

To keep your audience visually interested you must keep things simple and avoid clutter that will confuse your focus.

Communicate one concept at a time with your graphics. Your message can contain various parts, but your communication as a whole must concentrate on the key concept you want to get across. To shoot for more is to court disaster. At all costs, avoid making everything important, as that's the surest way to create visual anarchy. When you attempt to give great importance to more than one message (or visual item), you introduce confusion and succeed only in dispersing the viewer's attention instead of directing it where you want it.

– Keep it simple

Visually, simple is better than complex, especially when images will only be seen a short time. Avoid the complex since it obscures your message rather than clarifies it.

Use pictures, illustrations, graphs, etc. to punch up an important point, and to make complex ideas simple. However, avoid literally mimicking what's said in the text. The graphics must enhance and play on variations of the text to make it more interesting – but never stray from the spirit of the message. At their best, graphics add humor, emotion, reality, believability, and playfulness to help bring about understanding and agreement in viewers.

Keep text simple and readable, without overdoing emphasis. Use changes of size, style, color, and position, including bullets, symbols and other devices to highlight and organize your text in moderation. To avoid distracting the reader, limit the number of fonts to two or three in no more than three or four readable sizes. Keep the background simple, and use contrast to ensure legibility. Contrast is the noticeable difference between things, and can be as simple as bolding or underlining text in some cases. But don't fill every bit of "empty" space, as well-chosen space can serve to "frame" graphic elements you may want to emphasize.

– Lay out your type, graphics, and photos

Look at how the elements blend together. Lay out the type, graphics, photos, etc. in rough format similar to how they will be presented. If you know how, use computer formatting on programs such as MS Word or Excel to experiment with layout. Or you may want to lay out the physical materials on a desk or conference table. Similarly, you may want to tape or pin them to a wall or cubicle to see how vertical display affects their visual impact.

Now, here's where a little strategic thinking can set your graphic design work apart from the norm:

Visually group graphics to show similarity and build interest. Try to visually group objects using similarities of theme, color, direction, position, alignment, etc. Show what goes with what, so your viewers will draw the proper conclusions. For example, a picture of worn-out old shoes could depict a potential client's current database management system (DBS), and brand new track cleats could depict

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your DBS product. Of course, things that belong together must have characteristics in common, and must be similar enough to be perceived as a group or set.

Also, make visual order part of your message. For example, decide WHEN the viewer should notice your logo: Before reading the copy? After reading the headline? Should the viewer note your company name before or after the product you're selling? These strategic distinctions can boost or detract both from your credibility and ability to persuade.

– Add emphasis with a little color and contrast

The graphics of your piece must be easily seen and attract more attention than anything around it. If not, your audience's attention will go elsewhere: to a competitor's ad, booth, flyer, banner, etc. To improve the odds of getting your audience's attention, use color and contrast in moderation to create interest. Remember to use emphasis sparingly, like spice in cooking, because a little goes a long ways but too much simply overpowers.

That said, attention does gravitate toward the area of greatest contrast. (That's why print is usually black-on-white, which makes the letters stand out for easier viewing, instead of say, black-on-brown).

For example, in a visual ad or billboard, a single sentence on an otherwise empty page demands attention. You can't help but read it. Other examples of good, eye-catching contrast: a white spotlight in a dark theater; a 3-D object jutting out of a flat wall; a moving object among motionless ones (or a stationary object among moving ones); and a bright, colorful poster over a dull, monochrome background. Similarly, at a trade show you'd want your signage to run horizontally if you're competitors' signs run vertically. In each case, your audience is visually attracted toward what stands out or offers contrast.

Here are a few types of useful contrast to consider using in your graphics: large/small, light/dark, flat/3-D, high/low, short/long, strong/weak, smooth/course, one/many, full/empty, warm/cool (colors), before/after, complex/simple, straight/winding, round/angular, continuous/interrupted, horizontal/vertical/diagonal, etc.

For a series of visuals, use contrasting sequences to build interest as well. Contrasting sequences such as before/after, young/old, or gradations of color can guide and build the viewer's interest by suggesting degrees of importance, recognizable patterns, or consequences. When establishing what the viewer should notice first, second, third, etc., control the order in which he perceives the various items, using a scale of contrasts from most different to most similar. The greater the contrast, the more importance a visual item is given.

– Get a fresh perspective

After focusing on your graphics project, it helps to get a fresh perspective. Ideally, you should ask someone with art or design experience a few questions. How do these graphics strike you? Do they support the message? What would you change? The less they know about your presentation, company, or product the more helpful their opinion, as it will more closely approximate your audience's

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reaction. But really, anyone's opinion helps to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in your designs, so don't be afraid to ask. And don't be afraid to accept criticism. If no one is available, take a break from your project if at all possible, so you can approach your graphic project with fresher, less biased eyes.

– Put on the finishing touches

Then adjust your graphics project according to the objective feedback you received. Here's where you may brighten or lighten colors, change font sizes, or rearrange graphics for better overall layout.

Also, round out your pictures and graphics with carefully chosen words. From caption to headline and story, words are a critical part of the message you're visually communicating, so they must be chosen and arranged carefully for the whole to work. Include only what's important, so as not to dilute your carefully crafted message.

Along these lines, speak your viewers' language in a way that addresses their problems and answers their needs. For example, if your picture shows a healthy Mr. Jones tussling with grandkids after successful bypass surgery, mention how your new medical product reduced recovery time to three weeks from the normal three months.

– Take one last look

No matter how careful you are there's always last minute mistakes to catch: misspelled words,

misaligned margins, or graphics that still need to be rearranged to lessen distracting "white" or trapped space. Use spell and grammar checkers, then print out sample copies to test overall visual effect until you're satisfied with the results.

0 – Print out and mount your final presentation

Since all your previous work counts for naught if the final graphic product isn't displayed and mounted properly, it's critical to prevent the wrinkling, bubbling, warping, and peeling that can sink an otherwise impeccable graphic presentation. To this end, I have long used and recommended Pres-On products. Well known amongst professional graphic artists and photographers, Pres-On has a broad line of do-it-yourself, self-stick mounting board products for just about every application. I've mounted everything from extremely large oversize prints like architectural renderings and giant logos, to small decorative items, and consistently Pres-On mounting products makes it very easy to do and gives me professional results.

Their newest mounting product Score & Snap, is made of a thin, surprisingly strong, plastic material that's coated with self-stick mounting adhesive. It was designed to mount logos, photos, charts, signs and other graphics quickly and easily, with the capability to correct mistakes, but with subsequent permanent positioning. Once a graphic is mounted, the protective plastic can be easily scored with an X-Acto knife, then snapped off into the desired shape. Because of the consistency of the plastic material, its versatility in positioning graphics, and its clean edges, it makes it easy to produce a spectacular looking finished product that won't come undone at the worst possible moment.

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With a firm grip on your graphics project, you can now look forward to the presentation deadline without knots in your stomach. Who knows, with the knockout graphics you cranked out, on a shoestring budget to boot, you could be in line for a promotion. As a parting tip, ask for a raise, as you've just added polished graphic presentation to your list of job skills. Just keep your Graphic Design Rescue Tips handy because the next project might not be so easy.

Call Dali Bahat at (818) 765-6635 or email at

for more information about Master

Design. For more information on Pres-On "Score & Snap", and other Pres-On Self-Stick adhesive mounting products contact Pres-On Corp. at 21 Factory Road, Addison, Illinois 60101; Phone (800) 323-1745; Fax (888) 543-9406;

Dali Bahat is an Internationally recognized graphic designer, and President of Master Design.

Graphic Design -A Tool for Business Success

By Carla San Gaspar

The application of graphic design does not imply as an extravagant means of advertising but rather it is only a way of making your materials a responsive one. It is indeed a simplest way of creating a good identity in the market. With the countless benefits given, graphic design is a service that you can depend on.

Principally, with the present situation in the market graphic design had brought in to create an impressive impact that had resulted in gaining more clients and earning more profitable sales. And because of the tight and stiff competition in the market businesses had paved to create an identity that will stand out among their competitors.

Basically a business wanting to be highly recognized in the market finds ways and intelligently plans on how they are going to work on with their projects. And with the aid of graphic design Ventura California plus the graphic designer's team they are able to create a corporate logo, content management and manage to develop a good web site for their business.

In managing to create a good image and an identity that will mark in your customer's mind you have to come up with an extraordinary material. With this means for sure you will be bale to gain confidence from your customers.

In order to make a successful graphic design you must learn the tips and the processes.

- Make an intelligent plan. In this part you must have decided for the designs, colors and content you want to apply. Having a well planned and organized idea will bring a smooth workflow upon the process.

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- Choose for the right company that will provide you graphic design needs. A reliable graphic design company will be a good help for a reason that they are available with the materials and graphic design staffs who has the ability to perform and accurately handle your graphic designing project.
- Learn marketing - in this part you are not only after the good designs that your site has but rather you are about to focus how good your designs are and what are the results you had gained from you designs. So in order for you to gain a positive result aside form graphic design application you must also learn about marketing strategies.

Primarily the coming up of numerous graphic design companies tend to provide lots of benefits and graphic design services that might struck you. But mind you not all of them are reliable companies that you can trust. So if you want to have a proper care, security and to attain success for your projects you can rely to the graphic design Ventura California. Having them around can provide you with your needs and for sure you will be able to attain you desired success for your business.

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