

Interactive Graphic Design Project Two

Paper Engineering/Mailer/Self-Promotion

Direct-mail advertising is a significant outlet for graphic design. Recent advances in production technology have allowed for increasingly complex presentations of products and services that still conform to strict bulk-mailing standards. The aim with these packages is to capture and hold the audience's attention in an environment where they are very likely to throw the item away without opening it. Innovations in printing, binding and paper engineering are being utilized to transform these products and the consumer's relationship to the content that is being communicated.

People in the creative fields have grown especially weary of digital portfolios that all look the same, lack personality and are easily lost in email file folders. Your mailer will serve as a promotional tool for yourself. Consider this as a branding project and the brand is you! According to Seth Godin, "A brand is the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer's decision to choose one product or service over another. If the consumer (whether it's a business, a buyer, a voter or a donor) doesn't pay a premium, make a selection or spread the word, then no brand value exists for that consumer." You're a new brand. How can you announce yourself in a novel and memorable way?

Process

1. Create a mailer that promotes your personal brand
 - Who are you as a designer?
 - What can you say about yourself that's not already contained in your resumé or portfolio?
 - What unique skills, interests, experiences can you communicate to prospective employers or clients?
 - Clients and employers tend to complain that promotional pieces all look and read the same. What can you say, present, explore that's new?
 - Most importantly, how will you be memorable?
2. Design a direct-mail piece that conforms to USPS guidelines
 - Consider folds, die cuts, finishes, inclusions that can enhance the value of the piece
 - Special effects will encourage interest but should also be relevant to the content
 - Consult usps.com for specific guidelines for mailability of the pieces
 - You have a lot of flexibility in design of the piece and can incorporate multiple page sizes, orientation, and elements, take care to maintain unity across the disparate elements
3. Explore paper engineering.
 - Experiment with various devices to animate content or encourage interaction
 - Consider various types of pop-up forms and paper folds but keep in mind that fairly simple explorations can have a dramatic effect on the viewer's interaction with the content
 - The best solutions will use paper engineering to amplify the content and not serve simply as an effect or decoration
 - Examples of pop-ups and paper engineering can be found online. Some links have been added to the class homepage.
4. Design a poster that will be contained in the mailer:
 - Produce an object that further promotes your brand.
 - This poster should be something that the recipient values enough to hang up
 - There should be a clear conceptual and formal relationship between the poster and the mailer. Work to develop and maintain a unified design between the mailer and the poster

Final Presentation

I. Use both comprehensives and critique as a basis to work up completed project.

- Final presentation will be of a single direct-mail piece.
- Piece must contain multiple folds and interactive/kinetic elements
- Mailer must contain a poster that is exactly 15.5x19.5"
- Package must conform to USPS standards and be "machinable"
- Piece must be designed to mail without an envelope

Schedule

Feb 27	Syllabus. Introduction of Project One. Homework: Research your subject. 50 thumbnails of mailer/poster structure and layout. Research direct-mail examples, pop-up forms, page folding. Construct models. Create Style/Concept boards
Mar 4	Present Mailer Research/Concepts. Individual Critiques. Work Day. Homework: Black and white mailer designs.
Mar 6	Due Today: Black and white models of your mailer and poster for group critique. You may use dummy copy and images at this stage but packages must be completely constructed.
Mar 11	Work Day. Homework: Color Mailer/Poster Comprehensive.
Mar 13	Due Today: Full-scale color comprehensive of mailer and poster for group critique. Project must contain ALL information and be completely constructed.
Mar 18	Work Day.
Mar 20	Work Day. Homework: Complete final Mailer version.
Apr 1	Due Today: Mailer Due. Submit Workbooks for Grading.

- How is the brand perceived against competitors in the market for products and services you're looking to provide?
- What is the positioning statement of your brand? Answer the what, how, to whom, where, why and when questions.
- What is the heritage of your product type, and the origin(s) of its ingredients and fabrication process?
- Who is your audience? Are they digitally savvy? Where will your products/services have contact with them?
How do you want that contact experience to make them feel, take action and think about your brand?
- What values & beliefs should the brand have about the business and its mission in the world?
If the brand was a person, what would its personality be? How would it look, act and talk?
- What benefits do you want customers to associate with your brand? What is the vision of the brand that you want to create?
- Other brand image concerns: market awareness, emotional associations, value to the consumer;
brand perception vs. consumer behavior; changes desired in the brand-consumer relationship over time.