

DO'S & DON'TS OF GRAPHIC DESIGN

WITH NATHAN JACKSON

THE DO'S



01 BE ON BRAND

Working with a new client? Make sure you have all the branding elements required, based on their style guide. That means, colours, fonts, graphical elements such as logos and banners. Never alter the logo or use different colours to suit yourself.

02 USE HIGH QUALITY BRAND ELEMENTS FOR PRINTING

Make sure that all elements that you are using that will be printed are of high quality. Photographs should be 300dpi, graphics should be vector files such as AI & EPS file formats and all colours used should be CMYK (that is the format the printer will use).

03 PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR CLIENT

Make sure you are both on the same page before starting a new project, so as you don't waste any time. Not sure about something? Set up a video meeting with the client so you can work through any issues. Use Miro or a similar project tool to work through the brief to get a better understanding.

THE DO'S

04 WRITE COPY THAT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND

Putting together copy for a poster that you want designed? Think about who the target audience is first as you may have to reword and simplify what you have written. Less is more when providing copy that is used for marketing purposes. You want the audience to easily read the message, whether it's on a billboard, poster or on social media, you don't want to cram in heaps of copy as it will be too hard to read.

05 KEEP UP TO DATE WITH DESIGN TRENDS

These change from year to year. So don't fall behind. Stay current with the most popular trends in design. These can be anything from Pattern, Repetition, Typography, 3D, Illustration, Symbols, Nature, Geometric Shapes, Duotone, and the list goes on.

06 PAY ATTENTION TO COLOUR

Are you a designer who is sending items to the printer but then notices the colours look a lot different from how they did on your monitor? You need to use a monitor that has a high gamut of colour. Monitors are advertised as having 100% sRGB, Adobe RGB or DCI-P3. These are all for different scenarios and will show more or less accurate colours depending on the output that is intended. The sRGB standard is mainly for the web, Adobe RGB is for Photography and Print graphics and DCI-P3 is for digital video. Having a monitor that displays all 3 is rare but aim to get a monitor that displays over 100% sRGB as a minimum.

THE DONT'S

01 USE HIGH QUALITY BRAND ELEMENTS ONLINE ❌

Don't make the mistake of using these formats online. Make sure when uploading a photograph to a website or social platform that you resize the image to 72dpi and reduce the pixel size. JPEG's are used for Photographs, where as PNG is used for graphics. CMYK colours can be converted to RGB or HEX values.

02 USE SIMILAR COLOURS FOR FOREGROUND & BACKGROUND ❌

Understand Web Accessibility. These standards are used across the Web, Print and Video as well. When designing a document in Adobe InDesign you can add Accessibility Tags to every Paragraph Style and Photograph so as it's easier for someone using a screen reader to understand the document as a PDF. Use the WebAIM Colour Contrast checker. This provides a PASS or FAIL status based on the colours you are using for Foreground and Background. Vision impaired individuals can't always see the difference between colours that are too similar to each other.

03 COPY OTHER DESIGNERS ❌

Be inspired but don't completely copy something another designer has created. One of my all-time favourite periods of art and design is Art Deco. If you go anywhere today, you will notice little characteristics of Art Deco pop up in all different areas as architects and designers want to implement a little bit of that feeling into our own creations. The more confident you become as a designer the less you will rely on looking at designs others have made for inspiration.

THE DONT'S

04 FORGET ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

I touched on this earlier, but don't forget who you are designing for. Display the design as 100% on your monitor then step as far back as possible. Can you read what it says? Does it make sense and is the client logo easy to see and read. Before you send the item to be printed, share it with a colleague or friend and ask for some feedback. Sometimes looking at the screen all day, we can overlook misspelled copy and the last thing you want is for it to be printed incorrectly.

GET IN CONTACT



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