

LIFE'S A PITCH

THEN YOU GET ASKED TO DO [ANOTHER] ONE

Title: Life's a Pitch –The you get asked to do [another] one

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Duration: Monday 3rd – 14th September 2007

Aims of the workshop

- to work under realistic pressures
- to consider your decision making process regarding business
- to consider your role beyond just being a visually literate person
- to work on realistic projects with a realistic timelines and present your work accordingly

Introduction

Graphic design is extremely competitive. The industry is overwhelmed with talent (although not all good) – very often competing for the same projects for the same companies, brands, record labels and various other sectors. Commissioning editors, marketing managers, product managers, communication managers –the people who commission us now have an endless choice of designers to call upon and frequently do, in vast numbers. Standing out from the crowd has never been more difficult.

Good design is not always obvious to a client, and neither is its *tangibility* – unlike a new car, building or product they cannot necessarily see, touch, smell, feel the value that you will bring to their brand, campaign, product, etc. How are you going to sell your idea, yourself, your vision? Everyone does it differently. It is a delicate balance of demonstrating your understanding of a brief, of being able to tackle a clients problem, find a range of solutions whilst allowing them to feel part of the process. You also have to show your understanding and research of their market, consumer, product and lastly show some ideas that no-one else has with conviction, passion and enthusiasm – and all this (typically) for free.

Pitches are rarely (if ever) paid and as a designer you have to decide whether to take on these pitches in order to be in with a chance of winning new business? If so how long do you spend on the proposal? Do you need to get quotes from printers? How are you going to present it? How much is the project worth and what do you think you can get for it? How long is it going to take you if you get the project? Do you want the project? Do you like the client? That person sitting next to you is now your competitor.

You can choose not to pitch, but those that do are a rarity (and mostly out of work).

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The project

Like the world around us the role of the designer is constantly evolving. We are involved in more than just layout and design, clients now employ us to consult on a vast array of areas such as strategy, marketing, campaigns, brand development. Designers can work across almost every conceivable media platform there is from banners to billboards and from paper to screen. Being a designer also means being constantly aware of the world, social trends even (and perhaps even more importantly) anthropology.

For the next two weeks we are going to test this with a dose of real-life work experience. You are going to be running your own design company. You will choose a name that will represent who you are when presenting your work to the 'client' – this can be anything you like, but do not spend any time thinking too hard. You are going to be working on a pitch/brief that is either a live project of mine, or a pitch I have been invited to partake in.

You can choose to work alone, or in pairs. You will be briefed, from there you will be expected to assemble your ideas, and formulate a plan of how to tackle the project. If you are working as a pair consider what your combined and individual strengths are and decide who is going to do what, and by when.

This is not just a design project where you hand-in some print-outs to your tutors. We are going to be your potential clients, and you'll be quizzed as such. You have ten working days (not including weekends), use that time efficiently – you will be marked on this and the following:

1. your design work and understanding of the brief – what medium/format will the proposed work take? Consider this for the client/product
2. presentation – think about how and what you use to present your work (is it just a pdf/powerpoint, or a video/iChat-webcam, perhaps it has to take place outside?)
3. your consideration beyond the design work – are there any launch/promotion/marketing ideas for the project/product? Is there a moral/ethical viewpoint you want the client to consider?
4. your financial proposal – what is it going to cost the client? (hint: don't guess)

Remember

- One thing I've learnt is to trust my instinct –no idea is too ridiculous to suggest as long as it is relevant.
- The pitch will be awarded to the best proposal, remember this is not *always* the best design –its about the whole package.
- As with real life you never just have one project to work on.
- I am here for any help and advice.