

B.O.B

By: Steve Price of Plan-B Studio (www.plan-bstudio.com)
Duration: Monday 1st – 12st September 2008

Aims of the workshop

- to work under realistic pressures on a live project(s)
- to understand and develop your skill-set and role as a designer
- to develop your presentation skills and understanding of your own capabilities
- to consider your decision making process regarding business decisions
- to work on realistic projects with a realistic timelines and present your work accordingly

Introducing B.O.B

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 paid for and as an independent designer/small company 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 it; a day, two days, a month? 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? Are their moral obstacles? The person sitting next to you, maybe a friend, is now your competitor or partner.

Remember: You can choose not to pitch, but not pitching means you definitely won't get the new work.

The B.O.B workshop (part 1)

The world around is evolving at a rapid pace. Technology and applications are as vast as the social networks that have exploded online. Designers are now 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 you are going to be tested with a of real-life workload. You are going to be running your own design company. Choose a name that represents 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 with a project on Monday morning around 11am. After that 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:

The B.O.B workshop (part 2) – Presentation is everything

Whether you become freelance/self-employed, or employed; presenting to your creative director, a client or just your colleagues is about presenting yourself, your ideas and your work. It is an integral part of a designer's job.

It is fundamentally about communication. Speak too quietly, or without any sign of interest or passion and the client might pick up on it. Be too loud, obnoxious or arrogant and this can equally work against you.

Too long, too short, too boring, too informative, too creative... There are many different ways to do it. There are no right ways, but there are certainly wrong ways. There are lots of theories: imagine the audience being naked (almost impossible). However, there is one interesting theory that says '*there is nothing that cannot be presented in six slides*'.

Over the course of the next ten days you are going to give three presentations. They will all follow a similar format; you will present from a laptop/projector a series of slides/jpegs. Each slide will be shown for 20seconds and **20 seconds only**. In that time you will say what you need to say and move on. This is based on the Japanese created 'Pecha Kucha' (meaning chitter-chatter). It is a quick, simple, (sometimes) amusing way to present your work, yourself, your cat, who cares!

Presentation 1: Me, Myself and I - Tuesday 2nd September (@ KHiB)

You will present 6 slides/jpegs that tell me/us who you are. You can show and tell as much as you like but there are no animations. No video. Just one slides/jpegs x 6. You will have 20seconds per slide. **That is two minutes.**

Presentation 2: Vesterålen - Monday 8th September (@ KHiB)

You will present 6 print-outs that show your research, findings, interesting facts concerning the Vesterålen project. Again, you can show and tell as much as you like but there are no animations. No video. Just six print-outs on the wall. You will have 20seconds per print-out. **That is two minutes.**

Presentation 3: Pecha Kucha Style - Friday 12th September (@ TBC)

You will present 20 slides/jpegs of anything you like. There are no animations. No video. Just twenty slides/jpegs. You will have 20seconds per slide. **That is 6mins 40secs.**

Considerations for B.O.B

This is not a project where you just hand-in some print-outs to your tutors. It requires absolute commitment. You will be marked on your research, your development work as well as the final executions and ideas. As well as how, where and in what form you choose to present will also be under heavy scrutiny.

You will present your final project at the end of the workshop to the client who will be visiting on Friday 12th September. You have ten working days (not including weekends), use that time efficiently – you will be marked on and need to consider the following criteria

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 – how you present your work and yourself. Think about how and what you use to present your work (is it a pdf/powerpoint, or a video/skype webcam, perhaps it has to take place outside? Or just work on the wall – encourage discussion and communication)
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

- Trust your instinct – no idea is too ridiculous to suggest as long as it is relevant
- Do not panic, breathe deeply and manage your time wisely
- I am here for any help and advice in person for two weeks, or via email 24/7: steve@plan-bstudio.com or cell phone: +447971 207 276