



THE RÉALISE DESIGN
STUDENT WEB AWARDS

a passion for quality

Graphic design for commercial applications—a field within the broader scope of visual communications—is design with the specific practical purpose of meeting the needs of a client. Aesthetic integrity, as it pertains to graphic design, is the successful cohesion of design elements within a piece that, combined, effect a sense of purpose. It is what makes the application of color, typography, balance, and spacing of a promotional piece or Web site successful. Aesthetic integrity is the wholeness, the unity, that ties together all of the various aspects of a particular design.

Due to the nature of graphic design work, the sole tenant of aesthetic integrity lies in the design's ability to serve the purpose for which it was created. Since the goal of the graphic designer is to create work that meets the needs of the client, if a piece is effective in that respect, the design is successful; if it fails, the design fails. Design without purpose is useless in commercial applications. The sole measure of a design's success—and thus, its integrity—is its ability to communicate its intended message. All of the design elements in a piece must be centered on this principle to produce an effective result. But how is this accomplished?

The answer lies not in the technical details of a successful product, but rather in the process through which designers create, form, and shape their successful ideas. Graphic design is a highly creative discipline, relying on the continual generation of new and original ideas to form the foundation for effective communications solutions. A designer must remain continually innovative and inspired and inventive. Process, therefore, is as important as product. Good designers invested in their work must be completely invested in this process.

While there is no secret solution to great design, there is perhaps one critical key to a successful design process: it is a passion for quality. A passion for quality is a continuous, thriving, deeply-rooted commitment to produce only exceptional, flawless work. A passion for quality is what separates the exceptional designers from the mediocre. For the capable and skillful graphic designer, this passion for quality is dualistic. First, design must be well-executed; and second, it must never compromise a client's message.

The first concept is the simpler or the two. Any good design idea will be ineffective if poorly executed. Sloppy craftsmanship in literature does not inspire confidence in the corresponding company. By paying attention to even the smallest detail, on the other hand, a designer will create a piece that reflects positively on the client. But there is much more to a passion for quality than just not producing shoddy work. Careful attention must be made to each detail—to each element of graphic design—so that these elements can work together to form a message.

The second application of a designer's passion for quality lies in his or her dedication to the needs of the client. A client's message, and thus a design's usefulness, cannot be sacrificed at any cost. Just because a piece has purpose does not mean that it has aesthetic integrity. The important distinction is that, for a piece to have aesthetic integrity, a sense of purpose does not just exist inherently but is realized through the combined visual elements of design. With each design choice, the key is to remember that what is trendy is not always the most suitable option. Each element of design—for example, color and typography—can and must be carefully chosen to effectively communicate a message, not just to create a piece that is visually appealing. The designer must always keep in mind the goal of the client and then modify the design elements he or she chooses to implement accordingly. It is this unwavering adherence to a client's needs—this passion for quality—that gives work its aesthetic integrity.

Paying scrupulous attention to every detail will lead to high-quality work. Designing only with a clear sense of purpose will lead to visual elements that work together to communicate the client's message. These two principles, combined, form one underlying concept that an uncompromising passion for quality will generate work with aesthetic integrity—work in which the whole becomes more than the sum of its technical parts—work that comes alive. When a designer's passion is communicated through his or her work, the result is a piece that has being, that has body, that begins to beat and breathe.

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