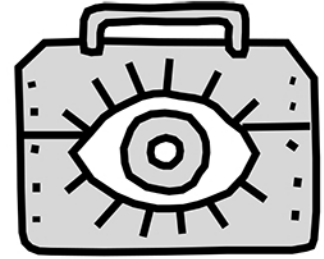


SKILL SHEET:

The Creative Process



The creative process is similar for all areas of communications — it usually involves gathering information, brainstorming, planning, getting feedback, production and evaluation. Here are some things to consider at each stage of your graphic design project.

STAGE 1:

Gathering Information

Before you start developing your design, you'll need to find out:

- Who is the audience and what do you want them to do?
- What is the message?
- What formats (such as advertisements, fliers, brochures and presentation graphics) are available and which format will best suit your purpose?
- What setting will your design piece be seen in? What will be competing with it for attention?
- What production or reproduction processes are available to you and which one will best suit your purpose?
- What is the life span of your design piece? Will it be read once and recycled, or saved and used by more than one person?



- What is your timeline and budget?

STAGE 2:

Brainstorming Ideas

Your brain can work on a creative problem even when you're not concentrating on it! Be prepared — great creative insights can occur at times when you're doing something totally unrelated to your project.

Brainstorming is a technique for generating lots of ideas in a short time (see "Brainstorming" on pg. 5). Remember that all ideas are good ideas at this stage!

- Look in magazines, books or other sources to see how others solved similar problems.
- Make lots of small, quick "thumbnail sketches" to try out many visual ideas.
- Write lots of short, action-oriented headlines or slogans.
- Look for images (photographs, clip-art) that might go with your message.
- Think about the feeling or mood you wish to convey, then look for type styles and colors that could help express it.

STAGE 3:

Fine-Tuning Ideas, Getting Feedback & Planning Production

Make a more complete version of your best idea or ideas. This could be an actual size or scale model of a drawing that looks as much as possible like the final piece. You can use it to:

- Present to others for feedback.

- Serve as a "road map" for producing your final artwork.
- Get cost and time estimates for offset printing or other methods of reproduction.

STAGE 4:

Producing the Final Piece

Once your design is approved and you've checked to make sure it will be able to be produced within your budget, you can move on to production. Production methods will be different depending on whether your final design will be:

- Handmade.
- Printed by a photocopier, offset printing press or silkscreen printer.
- Viewed on a television, video or computer screen.
- Painted on a wall, signboard, vehicle or other object.
- Produced as a display or exhibit.

If your final product is going to be handled by others (such as a printer) talk with the people who will be working with your artwork. Be sure you know how they would like it to be prepared. Include clear, written instructions and always give them a phone number where they can reach you with questions!

STAGE 5:

Evaluating Results

Did your intended audience get your message and respond the way you hoped they would? (See the "How Did I Do?" skill sheet on pg. 72 for help in evaluating your work.)