



QUALITY EDUCATIONAL DESIGN OF SAN DIEGO

A hypothetical Corporation

*Initial Analysis of  
Problems and Opportunities*

# Design Principles for Small Business Owners

*Prepared by Kristina Killian  
for  
Gabriel Ozgood,  
President and Chief Creative Officer*

*March 9, 2006*

# Initial Analysis

## *Design Principles for Small Business Owners*

Small business owners face a constant battle to create effective and appealing marketing products. Because advertising directly relates to consumer purchasing, small business owners must apply design principles that will sell their products and services.

### ***Analysis of Problems and Opportunities***

#### **Description of the Educational Context**

The overall educational context for this instructional product is based on three sub-contexts: socio-cultural, informational, and technical.

The intrinsic motivation of small business owners is to increase financial gain and success. Because advertising is directly related to the number of customers, their goal is to produce marketing products that appeal to the customer. "The American Marketing Association's definition of marketing is: *the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives.*" (SBA). Consequently, if the small business owner's objective is to make money and be successful, marketing tools are the key to meeting that objective.

These learners need certain informational resources to understand graphical principles used in exceptional marketing products. Each graphic design web site, book, video, and class presents a unique perspective on how to create effective advertisements. These resources would complement the instructional product proposed in this analysis.

In addition, certain types of technical tools are necessary to use graphic design principles appropriately. Having learners compare well designed versus poorly designed advertisements displays effective design use in today's marketplace. Also, utilizing graphic design principles within a computer program enhances the learner's ability to create valuable promotional products. Finally, designing marketing products and receiving professional feedback shows the small business owner aspects they must change and those they are already using appropriately.

#### **Learners**

Small business owners are a prime audience for QED because of their limited monetary resources and lack of educational background in design principles. They usually range in age from 25 to 65. Most small business owners fall into the middle-upper economic class, but invest a large portion of their money into their companies. Typically, they have some computer knowledge, but rarely any training in graphic design. Most small business owners have previously concentrated their education on business management or the area in which their business focuses.

### **Evidence that Instruction is Appropriate as a Potential Strategy**

Considering the consumer responses, small business owners currently lack effective and appealing marketing tools. The fact that owning a small business might not have been their initial career choice, and thus they may have no background in design or marketing at all, proves that instruction is essential to their educational needs.

### **Justification for Using an Instructional Product**

As stated above, instructor-led training would be beneficial to teach design principles; however, most small business owners do not have the time or money to take design courses. They simply need basic design knowledge specifically related to marketing products. Also, small business owners need the ability to refer back to this information when producing advertisements in the future. Because it does not require training off-site or long hours, an instructional product may be a more effective means of educating small business owners. This product would not require rearranging their schedules for an instructor-led course and each individual learner could proceed at his/her own pace based on their previous knowledge.

## ***Sources and Methods of Data Collection***

### **Sources of Data**

Our sources of data consisted of four perspectives:

- Small Business Owner (See **Appendix A**)
- Professional Graphic Design Instructors (See **Appendix B**)
- Consumers of Small Business Products (See **Appendix C**)
- Graphic Design Books and Web Sites (See **Appendix D**)
- SBA Web Site

### **Methods of Data Collection**

We interviewed small business owners via email. Their businesses focused on a wide range of products and services. Our interviews concentrated on current marketing products used; computer applications, time, money, and personnel used in production; and learner interest in basic design principles training.

We delivered an online survey via email to university graphic design instructors. The survey focused on instructional strategies, hands-on exercises, and technology used in these classes; types of graphic design principles taught to novice learners; difficulties these learners face; and various tools utilized to assess students' knowledge before and after instruction.

Questionnaires were sent to consumers ranging in age, socio-cultural background, and economic class. The questionnaire centered on types of information and features in advertising products that appeal to consumers and how these aspects have impacted their decision to shop with a company.

We conducted research using well-known graphic design books and web sites to define “basic design principles”. Also, the SBA web site was used to gather information on small business marketing strategies.

## **Findings**

### **Description of Problem and Opportunities**

Consumers agree that many existing advertisements do not look professional. Of the 22 consumer respondents, over half (13 respondents) said they have not purchased a product because of an advertisement. Many explained that busy or confusing layouts turned them off from the product and, consequently, they chose a different company. One consumer stated that she “recently looked for glass oil candles...and chose the website that honestly looked the most professional...being that [she] knew nothing else about the companies. [She] chose that over price.” Also, more than half of respondents chose professionalism as a key component involved in their decision to purchase from a company. These results prove that design of marketing products affects potential consumers.

Every small business owner interviewed (5 out of 5) stated that they would be interested in receiving training on basic design principles to help them produce more professional marketing tools. They have the desire to learn, but lack necessary instructional products. These entrepreneurs believe that learning graphical principles will save them time and money. One small business owner stated that, “if my signs are more professional, customers will take my business more seriously and maybe spend more money on my products/services.”

The SBA lists the following benefits of advertising:

- Reminds customers about the benefits of product or service
- Establishes and maintains distinct identity
- Enhances reputation
- Encourages existing customers to buy more
- Attracts new customers and replaces lost ones
- Slowly builds sales to boost bottom line
- Promotes business to customers and others

Advertising can enhance or devastate a company. The small business owner understands this direct link between marketing and financial success and wants to design the tools necessary to increase sales and separate their companies from others like them.

### **Learner Knowledge and Skills**

None of the small business owners interviewed have more than an average knowledge of design principles. Most use very few design principles and do not use any graphic design computer programs, except MS Word, when creating their products.

## ***Conclusions and Recommendations***

### **Summary of Findings**

Consumers frequently base their purchasing decisions on advertisements. If customers are unsatisfied by an ad or brochure, they will not spend money with that company. Also, because marketing directly affects revenue, small business owners believe that learning design principles could enhance their advertising and significantly benefit their companies.

### **General Recommendations**

Based on this information, computer-based training (CBT) with a supplemental job aid is an appropriate instructional product. With CBT, the learner can walk through tutorials and apply design principles by creating a useable marketing product. Also, the small business owner will be evaluated throughout the CBT and receive immediate feedback. If the learner encounters a problem, a computer animated coach will be available to answer questions. The CBT will allow a self-paced training with the opportunity of returning to the instructional product at a later time. Finally, the job aid will give them quick access to the information on design principles that they previously learned.

## ***Goals***

### **User Goals**

We defined learner goals for the instructional product based on the small business owner interviews and what they would like to accomplish using this instructional product.

1. Learner goal: I want to be able to create more appealing and professional looking ads and signs
2. Learner goal: I want to be able to make our mailers appeal to a broader audience
3. Learner goal: I want to design my ads, signs, and brochures so that the number of customers increases as well as my profits.
4. Learner goal: I want to feel confident about the ads, signs, and brochures that I am sending out to the public.

### **Instructional Goals**

We defined the instructional goals based on the interviews, surveys, and research we conducted regarding design principles and how they can be used by small business owners.

1. Instructional goal: The small business owner will be able to identify good uses of basic design principles in various ads and brochures.
2. Instructional goal: The small business owner will be able to use the basic design principles to create effective marketing products.

## References (APA Style)

- Williams, R. (1994). *The non-designer's design book*. Berkeley: Peachpit Press.
- Parker, R. C. (2000). *Eleven common web page design frustrations and how to cure them*. Retrieved March 4, 2006, from [http://www.newentrepreneur.com/Resources/Articles/12\\_Com\\_Mis/12\\_com\\_mis.html](http://www.newentrepreneur.com/Resources/Articles/12_Com_Mis/12_com_mis.html)
- Lynch, P. & Horton, S. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). (2005, July 12). *Web style guide*. Retrieved March 4, 2006, from <http://www.webstyleguide.com/>
- Scholosberg, J. (2001). Roger Black on the area of web design. Retrieved March 4, 2006, from [http://www.medialifemagazine.com/news2001/feb01/feb05/1\\_mon/news3monday.html](http://www.medialifemagazine.com/news2001/feb01/feb05/1_mon/news3monday.html)
- United States Small Business Administration. *Understanding marketing*. Retrieved on March 4, 2006, from <http://www.sba.gov/managing/marketing/market.html>
- United States Small Business Administration. *Ads and PR*. Retrieved on March 4, 2006, from [http://www.sba.gov/starting\\_business/marketing/adspr.html](http://www.sba.gov/starting_business/marketing/adspr.html)

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Small Business Owner Interview Questions and Answers

1. **What kinds of tools do you use for marketing?**
  - a. Brochure – 2 response
  - b. Commercial
  - c. Newspaper ad
  - d. Magazine ad – 2 response
  - e. Website – 2 response
  - f. Other
    - DVD brochure
    - Phone book ad
    - Sponsoring events like holes at golf tournaments
    - Sponsoring weekly trade publications
    - Road signs
    - Word-of-mouth – 3 responses
    - Networking
    - Personal references
  
2. **What marketing tool do you rely on most? Why?**
  - Referrals from other professionals in community and existing clients – because it works, provides company with as much new business as they can absorb
  - Sponsorship of aspects of events – because it gives people a sense of involvement and we are able to target a very specific niche market, it is cost effective because you can usually set your own spending limit without having to pay a set fee
  - Road signs and word-of-mouth – because they seem to work and occupancy rates are well above 90%
  - Direct mail – because of its cost and effectiveness
  
3. **What types of computer programs do you use to make these marketing items?**
  - a. MS Word – 3 response
  - b. MS Publisher
  - c. MS PowerPoint – 1 response
  - d. Adobe Photoshop – 1 response
  - e. Adobe Page Maker
  - f. Adobe InDesign
  - g. Quark Express
  - h. Other – Please specify
    - We are part of a franchise organization and they develop the marketing pieces.
  
4. **How would you rate your knowledge of graphic design principles?**
  - a. Superior
  - b. Good
  - c. Average – 3 response
  - d. Below average
  - e. No skill – 1 response

5. **List any specific design principles you use to produce marketing products.**
  - Emulating other presentations we find tasteful and useful for desired image
  - Consistency in presentations: appearance of firm name, choice of color blends, etc.
  - Large print
  - Few words
  - Strong color for letters
  - Message gets to the point quickly in identifying products and contact info
  - Business cards
  
6. **How much money do you typically spend on producing marketing products? (Please state specific marketing tool & amount of money spent for each.)**
  - Very little amount
  - Trade Magazines -- \$3200
  - Generic event sponsoring -- \$2000
  - Road signs -- \$350
  
7. **How much time do you typically spend on producing marketing products? (Please state specific marketing tool & amount of time spent for each.)**
  - Not a significant amount
  - 2 hours a quarter
  - 2 hours a year
  
8. **Do you hire any outside sources to help design marketing products for your company?**
  - Yes – personal contacts who are not truly “professionals” in this area
  - No – 2 responses
  - Yes – Signs Now
  - Yes – hired an intern to help design postcards and mailers
  
9. **Would you be interested in being trained to use basic design principles when producing marketing tools?**
  - Yes – because we could use these principles to produce the brochure and save time in the future when producing the brochures because we would have experience
  - Yes – because they could be used to create more appealing ads for the magazines and the signs for sponsoring an event and it could save us money to produce the signs ourselves
  - Yes – because I could use these tools to make my signs look more professional; if my signs are more professional, customers will take my business more seriously and maybe spend more money on my products/services.
  - Yes – because it could help us make our mailers appeal to a broader audience
  - Yes – because I’m interested in making a professional website that clients can go to and get information

## **Appendix B: Professional Graphic Design Instructor Survey Questions and Answers**

1. **What instructional strategies do you utilize when teaching students graphic design principles?**
  - a. Varies: Show-do-cue; tutorials; menu item search; many others...
  - b. examples and anti-examples, lecture on concepts, creating projects that allow students to apply concepts
  - c. lecture (minimal), hands on workshops, real life design examples (magazine ads, posters, etc...)
  - d. Can this truly be answered in one sentence? If someone does, let me know...it's a miracle.
  
2. **Does your graphic design instruction include hands-on exercises using computer graphic software? (Please explain why or why not.)**
  - a. Yes = 75%
    - i. Yes, only way to really learn.
    - ii. application of these principles are the most important part, hands on learning does this best
    - iii. It's the primary tool of our trade.
  - b. No = 25%
    - i. I try to avoid the use of the computer when talking about graphic design principles because it complicates things. Design principles are the foundation and can be better explained through discussion.
  
3. **List the graphic design principles that are most important to teach novice learners.**
  - a. Any basic list, like Robin Williams or others'
  - b. CARP is generally the best along with screen or page layout
  - c. Line, space, scale, texture, rhythm, balance, unity, emphasis, value, color.
  - d. Design tools, craftsmanship and design process.
  
4. **What technology do you use to deliver the graphic design instruction? (Check all that apply.)**
  - a. **Digital Video** (25% or 1 response)
  - b. **VHS Video**
  - c. **Audio cassette**
  - d. **Podcasting**
  - e. **Books** (100% or 4 responses)
  - f. **Websites** (100% or 4 responses)
  - g. **PowerPoint** (50% or 2 responses)
  - h. **CD-Rom** (25% or 1 response)
  - i. **Computer-based training (CBT)** (25% or 1 response)
  - j. **Learning Management Systems (Blackboard, WebCT, etc.)** (25% or 1 response)
  - k. **Open Source Software (Moodle, etc.)** (50% or 2 responses)
  - l. **Paper-based training manuals** (100% or 4 responses)
  - m. **Instructor-lead (face-to-face)**
  - n. **Weblogs**
  - o. **Wikis**
  - p. **Other (please specify)** (50% or 2 responses)
    - i. Listservs
    - ii. Articles
  
5. **What are typical problems learners encounter during graphic design instruction?**
  - a. Lack of experience, lack of practice

- b. they think they know it, but don't apply it correctly
  - c. Frustration with technology
  - d. craftsmanship. overuse of ornamentation without enhancing communication
6. **What strategies do you use to assess the students' graphic design skill level prior to instruction?**
- a. Assume nothing!
  - b. I typically don't I only look at what software they have used
  - c. I look at their current work, past projects they have designed.
  - d. Do they make it to class on time, how clean are their initial sketches
7. **What strategies do you use to assess students' graphic design skill level after instruction?**
- a. Project rubric
  - b. Rubrics on the application of the concepts
  - c. Constant critique about their work, both instructor and students.
  - d. Quality of the craftsmanship, communication and design. Did they achieve the design goals?
8. **What is the typical amount of time necessary to teach basic graphic design skills to a novice learner?**
- a. A semester is none too much
  - b. Not enough, at least a semester probably longer, but it comes down to practice. Students must apply these principles numerous times using a variety of software until they develop their own style
  - c. Hard to say, variable. I teach a Design fundamentals class and feel like I'm still learning after 10 years of design schooling.
  - d. 5 years
9. **How many students typically enroll/attend your graphic design course?**
- a. It isn't a graphic design course, but generally there are 20-25
  - b. I teach 2, with about 15 students in each
  - c. 20
  - d. 29

## Appendix C: Consumer Questionnaire Questions and Answers

1. What information do you expect to see in a small business' ad, brochure, or website? (Please be specific as to whether you're talking about an ad, brochure, or website.)
  - a. **Company Products/Services Offered (What Company Does, Objectives, Goals) = 22 Responses**
  - b. **Product Pricing = 3 Responses**
  - c. **Locations, Contact Information, & Web Address = 29 Responses**
  - d. **Company Name & Mission Statement = 8 Responses**
  - e. **Company History = 5 Responses**
  - f. **Customer Service Information = 2 Responses**
  - g. **Employee Information (Key Employees, size of company) = 2 Responses**
  - h. **Employment Opportunities = 2 Responses**
  - i. **E-Commerce details (how to pay online, etc.) = 3 Responses**
  - j. **Testimonials/Evidence of Business Credibility = 6 Responses**
  - k. **Food Product's Nutrition Info. & Side Affect Warnings = 5 Responses**
  - l. Other Random Responses = 8 Responses**

### Specific Responses ...

- What their company does, product/services
- Where I can purchase their product or services (on websites something like a store locator function)
- A phone number I can call if I have questions about their products or services
- If it is a company I am currently dealing with I would like a place where I can pay them easily online!
- Company's mission statement, objectives, goals, products and services, testimonials about their products, and how to contact them
- History
- Employment opportunities
- Summary of what they do
- Locations
- Products/services, pricing
- For the most part, I don't pay much attention to ads; I'll pay more for quality. As for websites, I like to know the location of the business, history of the company, products/services, key management. I like websites that are simple and easy to navigate through. I like a phone number to call (800 #) and a web address.
- Name
- Address
- Contact info
- Summary of what they do/products they have
- History regarding the company
- **Company financials**
- Description of the product and/or services they offer
- Website if in an ad or brochure to access additional information
- Contact information that is easily accessible
- Name of company
- Mission statement
- Product line (if applicable)
- Contact information (email and Phone)

- How to find customer service
- If it is for ecommerce it should have detailed policies and procedures for orders
- Address (where brick and mortar company is located or based or where products ship from)
- What type of company, services they provide
- Who they serve
- Where they are located
- Information on special promotions
- Company history (website only)
- Contact information
- Price information
- The name of the company
- What they do
- All of their contact info
- Anything they specialize in
- If it's not a well-known company, need to see some credits, like BBB.
- What the company is all about.
- What the product does
- Where to find the product
- How to speak to someone about the product. – customer service
- Brief overview of company mission, products and/or services, structure, locations, etc
- Contact info: phone, mail, email, web
- Details on products or services, brief basics if ad or brochure, same for web but with links to greater detail
- Links or references for more information on various aspects of the company
  - Name, contact info, explanation of services rendered, testimonials
  - Location [country/ city]
  - How long in business
  - Size [no. employees]
  - Description of company
  - A phone number where I can reach an actual person (no automated crap!)
  - I really do expect nutrition information to be available on food packaging. It pisses me off when it isn't (i.e. some beer bottles :-P)
  - Yes. Products and how to contact them
  - History
  - Employment opportunities
  - Summary of what they do
  - Locations
  - I would expect it to clearly identify the company and the product
  - Yes; products/services, pricing, availability, contact info
  - I guess it depends what I'm looking for. If it's food, I'd like to know calories, etc. If it's a product, I'd like to know the quality of the product. I need to know why I should buy it.
  - Yes, contact information, nutrition information, shipping info, ecommerce details, location of company
  - Just really what they specialize in. Again, websites should go into detail.
  - Privacy policy, phone number, address
  - Name of product, contact info, for what the product is used, side affects, etc.
  - The consumer should be able to find contact information and any warnings associated with the product easily.
  - Name, contact info
  - Specific information but brief

2. **What features (colors, layout, professionalism, etc.) of an ad, brochure, or website appeal to you?**
- I like a simple layout that is easy to find what you are looking for. Cluttered websites and ads are the worst and totally not necessary
  - Layout – data cannot be cluttered (Information overload)
  - Professionalism appeals
  - Clear; congruent color schemes and minimal advertising
  - I would say color is number one. Then layout. Readability.
  - Colors, layout, ease of use, flash, videos
  - Quality, simplicity, warm colors.
  - I like bright colors, but not too bright. The company logo should be displayed large and clearly, easy navigational map on the top or to the right. Bullet points are easy to read.
  - Simplicity – sensory overload occurs if there are too many words or pictures or links on one page, Direct, to the point language, Professionalism – no misspelled words or poor punctuation
  - Catalog pages that are easy to browse, have pictures of products being sold, and have detailed product pages if a person clicks on the product from the catalog page.
  - Professionalism and it should not be too busy, especially with other links, etc. that have nothing to do with the company, product or service.
  - Usually I want to see a clean ad without too much clutter.
  - Professional website more business-like than cosmetic. Easy to view, such as good contrast.
  - Bright, catchy colors and phrases
  - Professionalism is important in any media. Color is nice but not necessary, and the layout is much more important for a website than a print ad. Good headers or divisions (spacing, borders, boxes, etc.) help the reader find the appropriate information quickly and accurately.
  - Professionalism, simple layout, pictures, sense of customer service
  - Graphics (pictures, diagrams, or graphs)
  - Layout and size
3. **What features of an ad, brochure, or website are *not* appealing to you?**
- I can't stand it when they seem like they are shouting at you. Big headlines like "Last day of sale!" or "Buy now and save more!" Stuff like that.
  - Animated graphics,
  - Sound – sometimes sound is annoying
  - Excessive ads; unclear font; cheap looking colors
  - Confusing layout, lack of information
  - Violence, off color stuff.
  - Opposite of above
  - Catalog pages without pictures or without more detailed product page links, vague descriptions, non-parallel formats for different pages.
  - If it is too busy I quickly lose interest or get frustrated looking for the information I want. [www.goduke.com](http://www.goduke.com) is a great example of a site that is too busy. If information that I am looking for is not there, I will more than likely go with another company.
  - I don't like to see a lot of flashy stuff, and it doesn't mean much when they say "we're the best" without really explaining why.
  - Busy backgrounds. Too much function / info on one page.
  - Anything ambiguous

- With print ads, space is limited and the ad represents a specific snapshot in time, so there is little to be bothered by. Conversely, a website is dynamic and should evolve to help the consumer. Links should work, information should be up to date, and options should be specific and helpful to the site/product. For example: It makes no sense to have a “search” feature on a website that searches the rest of the internet only. If a consumer chooses to search within a site, there ought to be an option that allows them to search only the site itself.
- Cluttered layout, lots of small text, pictures that are not relevant to company or product or service offered, hard to find or no contact info
- Small print or many paragraphs of printed information
- Too detailed, too busy

**4. Have you ever purchased a product or service because of an ad, brochure, or website you saw? What was “special” about that ad or brochure?**

- I've definitely gone out and purchased fast food after watching a commercial with a really yummy looking burger in it
- Yes – the way the ad was presented.
- Not really –
- WHERE and HOW the brochure is distributed would be a major factor
- Yes; mostly small unimportant items. Funny or flashy ads will sway me to buy something; I try to look past advertisements when making a large purchase.
- The ad was colorful, the product was eye appealing, and the product has good quality. As I recall, the ad was simple, but got the point across.
- I don't think I have ever purchased something solely on the ad.
- As genetic counselors, we typically preferentially select what laboratories we send samples to based on their websites. If it is easy to access the paperwork we need, and there's a clear description of the service provided, that's a big plus. Also, we like to see contact information that takes us directly to a person, not a recording or at least explains how to get to a person.
- I've purchased books recommended by the Amazon Customer Recommendations links.
- I'm sure we all have, or advertisers would be out of business! I now skip ads on TV via my DVR and I go looking for something on a website specifically, so I'm motivated to by when I start searching. I recently looked for glass oil candles on several websites as a gift and chose the website that honestly looked the most professional to me, being that I knew nothing else about the companies. I choose that over price.
- Some products I don't know exist until I see them advertised. When choosing services from the phone book, I'm likely to call an ad that specializes in my problem.
- Good price, or simply something I was looking for at the time.
- No one ad or site comes to mind, but if an ad or site is confusing or unnecessarily complicated it can have the reverse affect and prompt me to not want to deal with the institution that created the ad/site. In general if there is something that resonates with me as a consumer it tends to carry a lot of weight. If, for example, a product has many options and the provider offers flexibility in the number of individual items or the specific items in a set the willingness to allow me, the consumer, to mix and match will suggest trust on the service provider's end. This in turn will make me more likely to feel similarly. Any way a provider illustrate their desires to make their position consumer-friendly will gain them favor with me as a customer.
- Yes -- I could find the product details that I wanted to know easily and understandably and I could easily compare features of different models/lines of similar products, including price and picture
- Usually it's a picture of some sort that makes it “special”

- Yes, don't recall

**5. Have you ever chosen *not* to purchase a product or service because of the company's ad, brochure, or website? What was it about the ad, brochure, or website that turned you off?**

- I'm sure I have, but I really can't think of an example
- Over advertising of the ad –
- Punctuation and spelling and grammar....god, nothing turns me off more than that
- Yes - if the website looks cheap I am unlikely to trust their product
- Yes; a confusing and annoying website usually reflects upon the product/company
- No, not really. I usually know what I want based on brand name and quality. I'll pay extra for brand name and quality.
- Some websites are difficult to navigate and therefore I wouldn't spend too much time trying to purchase one little thing if it takes me hours to figure out how to do it.
- Shy away from companies whose advertising is sloppy or poorly done. Also, if I can't figure out how to navigate the page to get to what I need, I usually drop it pretty quickly.
- I'm not interested in purchasing from a company that doesn't provide any "personal" information about the company – where it is based, etc. If you don't know where the product or service is coming from it is too hard to track down if something goes wrong.
- If I think the underlying or subliminal message is offensive (sexist, racist, too stereotypical, promotes the dumbing down of our population), I will 'boycott' the product. I admit, sometimes when an ad is trying to be humorous it might actually offend me and cause me to lose interest in their product/service. When searching for web sites I immediately close any website that is 'sponsored' by other ads or has too much business, flashing, popups, etc. These give the company of air of not being professional. If a website is too difficult, has broken links, is missing information, hard to navigate, hard to read, etc. I get turned off. I have literally chosen hotels, airlines, etc. sometimes based on how much I liked their website compared to the other companies. When shopping on the web, this is as important in my comparison shopping as price.
- If the company doesn't have a website, that generally turns me off. Also ads that look like they cost a fortune make me think their services are going to be expensive.
- Poorly organized info. Difficult buying process. No credentials.
- Yes -- I could not find details on the product and there was no picture
- Poor wording of the product

**6. How much time would you typically spend reading an ad, brochure, or website?**

- I don't want to spend a lot of time reading them. If I can't find the info I'm looking for quickly I get annoyed.
- 2 minutes – I need to see words that would catch my attention
- 5 minutes
- Few minutes on an ad, as long as it takes for a website
- No, not really. I usually know what I want based on brand name and quality. I'll pay extra for brand name and quality.
- 5 or 10 min
- Minimal – maybe 30 seconds to a minute

- As much time as it takes to find out information that I need. It depends on what I'm looking for.
- Ad= a few seconds; Brochure=would only read if I was already interested in the product/service, but would read it in entirety; Website= usually I go looking for some specific information, so I will scan for that information, read it if I find it, and then look at other items that might have peaked my interest. If the site looks "common" or unprofessional when I open it, I immediately close it.
- 1-2 sec for ads, 2-3 min for websites. I really don't see ads and websites being even remotely related, so these questions are difficult.
- As long as I'm interested in it... couple minutes maybe.
- About 15—30 seconds
- I am not interested in personal opinions or agendas being injected into advertising. To compare to one's competitor and make the assertion that a product is superior is fine (although, it is exponentially more persuasive when combined with facts or rational reasoning that explains reason for the product's ability to perform better than the competitor does). Along the same line, it is counterproductive to use a form of advertisement to complain about a situation without providing a better solution than the status quo has already provided.
- About 15 to 20 seconds before deciding whether or not to keep reading/looking and if it's of interest to me and I'm considering purchasing something it's describing, I might spend a half hour to an hour going over it
- 2-3 minutes
- Two min

**7. What one aspect of the ad, brochure, or website affected your decision to shop with the company?**

- Color – 2 responses**
- Graphics – 1 response**
- Information – 7 responses**
- Logo – 1 response**
- Slogan (catch phrase) – 2 responses**
- Layout – 3 responses**
- Typography (fonts used) – 1 response**
- Professionalism (ad/brochure looks like it was professionally produced) – 6 responses**
- Information easy to find – 10 responses**
- Other**
  - All of the above
  - It would be something that we need or want. THEN the above factors would come into play.
  - Readability

## Appendix D: Notes on Graphic Design Principles from Subject Matter Sources

### Contrast

- if elements are not the same, make them very different (Williams, 1994)
- use stronger, bolder typeface in headlines and subheads (Williams, 1994)
- reader should be able to glance at a document and instantly understand what's going on (Williams, 1994)
- different typefaces add contrast (Williams, 1994)
- use different line thicknesses (Williams, 1994)
- use strong headlines (Williams, 1994)
- determine your focus and use contrast to create focus (Williams, 1994)
- don't be afraid to make some items small (Williams, 1994)
- words need to be clearly separated from background (Parker, 2000)
- set subheads bold and surround with white space above and below (Parker, 2000)
- a dull page of solid text will repel the eye a mass of undifferentiated gray (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- use visual contrast between fonts (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- use contrast between text blocks, headlines, and white space (Lynch & Horton, 2005)

### Proximity

- group related items together (Williams, 1994)
- make related items one cohesive group (Williams, 1994)
- items unrelated should not be in close proximity (Williams, 1994)
- when items are close in proximity they become one unit (Williams, 1994)
- helps readers know where to begin reading (Williams, 1994)
- information that is subsidiary to the main message can be 7-8 pt. font (Williams, 1994)
- elements that are intellectually connected, have communication relationship, should be visually connected (Williams, 1994)
- if there are too many separate items, designer needs to see which ones should be closer (Williams, 1994)
- organization is not clear if the items that shouldn't be are in proximity to one another (Williams, 1994)
- avoid unnecessary spaces between words or extremely short lines (Parker, 2000)
- too much leading space makes it hard to find start of line (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- too little white space makes lines confusing (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- bring the content to the surface so people can find something immediately (Black, 2001)

### Alignment

- nothing should be placed on the page arbitrarily (Williams, 1994)
- every item should have a visual connection with something else on the page (Williams, 1994)
- invisible lines connect information (Williams, 1994)
- hard vertical edge is better than center aligned (Williams, 1994)
- use one text alignment on the page (Williams, 1994)

- if the text is flush left, set heads and subheads flush left (Williams, 1994)
- don't let illustrations hang over the edge or captions (Williams, 1994)
- centered text is harder to read than flush right or left (Parker, 2000)
- centered text doesn't look as good because the space is divided between the left and right sides (Parker, 2000)
- margins define reading area by separating main text from surrounding environment (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- legibility suffers if justified right text formats used (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- centered and right-justified text blocks are hard to read (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- we read from left to right, so scanning is harder because the eye is searching for the beginning of the line if not left-justified (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- make it the most legible, predictable, and do not adjust word spacing (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- with left-justified text, headlines should be left-justified (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- centered headlines with left-justified text makes page unbalanced (Lynch & Horton, 2005)

### Repetition

- repeat some aspect of the design throughout the entire place (Williams, 1994)
- the repetition can be anything that a reader will visually recognize (Williams, 1994)
- consistency of certain elements (Williams, 1994)
- repetition can be boldness or typeface (Williams, 1994)
- headlines and subheads are good place to start for creating repetition (Williams, 1994)
- shape of bullets, space taken up by columns, starting point, and clip art can be used as repetition (Williams, 1994)
- helps organize information, guide the reader, and unify disparate parts (Williams, 1994)
- consistent colors, layouts, and types enhance image and project credibility and professionalism (Parker, 2000)
- change can cause visitors to wonder if they're visiting a different site (Parker, 2000)
- repetition is not boring, it give a consistent graphic identity that creates and reinforces a distinct sense of 'place' and makes it memorable (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- repetition allows users to adapt and predict information (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- use a graphic and typography theme throughout (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- the reader needs to see the overall pattern of page (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- heterogeneous typography and text headers make it hard to see patterns (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- consistency gains polish to document (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- consistency gives an expectation about the structure of text (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- inconsistency produces confusion (Lynch & Horton, 2005)

### Types

- don't use conflicting types (Williams, 1994)
- have contrasting, not conflicting types (Williams, 1994)
- a more amateurish document may have only one font (Black, 2001)

### Graphics

- graphics are frequently useless logos or complicated image maps (Parker, 2000)

- unnecessary graphics clutter up the page (Parker, 2000)
- you need a careful balance of text and lines with small graphics (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- apply graphic embellishments sparingly (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- overused graphic emphasis leads to garishness and nothing being emphasized (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- graphics can help find the location of information (Lynch & Horton, 2005)

#### Colors

- bright backgrounds are usually tiring to the eyes (Parker, 2000)
- choose subdued backgrounds (Parker, 2000)
- restrict bright colors to few high-impact words, illustrations, or graphics (Parker, 2000)
- use subtle colors (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- nature colors are often the best choice for backgrounds (Lynch & Horton, 2005)
- avoid bold colors except in regions of emphasis (Lynch & Horton, 2005)