

# THE <sup>Almighty</sup> CREATIVE PROCESS

## What is a "Creative Process"

Creativity is a mental and social process involving the discovery of new ideas or concepts, or new associations of the creative mind between existing ideas or concepts. Creativity is fueled by the process of either conscious or unconscious insight.

In graphic design, the creative process involves collecting, documenting, sharing and boiling this insight into a thoughtful design that meets or exceeds the client's expectations, conveys the intended message to the intended audience and fulfills our creative exploration. Creative process and skills are what set the difference between good design and great design.

Does a creative process benefit only in the graphic arts? Consider that everything you create (term papers, a public speech, your bedroom decor, etc) greatly benefits from utilizing some method of creative process.

## What do you think creative process is:

## Do you have a set process?

## What is your process?

### 1. Research: big snore or not?

Your top 10 reasons to do your research before taking on any project or job:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## How to go about doing research:

**Where can you go to find valid and fresh information on your subject?** Depends on the subject, doesn't it? One thing is for certain, the end-all answer is not the Google and Wikipedia!

### Two pieces of advice:

1. If it's for a paper you are writing or a speech and you are required to site your sources, go straight to a Librarian. Libraries have access to publications and online resources that you do not. No kidding. They can also help you to better understand what can be used as a source and what is inappropriate (no, Wikipedia is not a valid source.)
2. If your project is of a creative nature, look everywhere! Just don't rely on what's in your head and your friend's head. Take in every source you can. Consider inspirations that would interest the audience you are trying to reach. Consider what is obvious and then what isn't obvious. Then filter and edit.

## How to suspend what you learn in your research

(now that you know what is known/assumed, can you take it another direction successfully?)

## Analysis of Research — Asking the right Questions.

- were your assumptions correct?
- what may alter the general assumptions on the topic or outcomes of the project.
- what needs to be done/conveyed in your work.
- what is the best way of achieving your goal/message
- can the work be broken down into steps or phases? can work be delegated wisely?
- what materials are needed and what new materials might work to make it more interesting?
- would incorporating interactively help in delivery? Can it be done? How?
- what is the time line and budget?

## Finding and Collecting Inspiration:

- in common things
- in uncommon things
- for immediate use
- for later use
- tools in the collection of inspiration: note cards, sketchbooks, cameras, note pads, sticky notes...can't draw? Trace, take pictures, make descriptive notes.

## Documenting inspiration

### — Process Folders, Books And Boards

Documenting what you've found is important for many reasons but, there are two really important ones. One, you don't want to forget it before you have the chance to put the idea into action. Secondly, if you need to share it, you have a reference point to help others see your thought pattern. (Say if you need to show proof of work to an instructor/employer, or a client wishes to know how you came to your brilliant idea!)

Depending on the project you might choose one method over another. Many professionals keep notebooks on job specifications and inspirations. Engineers, Writers, Artists... In graphic design, you're often required to show your process (employers and clients eat this up!) For the most part, one of four methods are used. In a really busy design environment where time doesn't allow for much creative exploration, job folders will have research and inspirations shoved into it along with job specifications, client notes, print proofs, tear sheets, etc. Unfortunately, this isn't the best way to get the most of your important work and is the very least required. Preferred are use of an easily accessed and well organized Process Folder, Book or Board.

Any of these three include: all job specifications, research, inspirations and so on are organized and combined into a resource that can be understood by anyone referencing it... but especially you. Keeping this on hand while you work on a job or when you have to go back to work on a job you haven't seen in a while, helps you get and keep in the flow of the project. Designers are often working on many jobs at once. Having organized references of each job helps a great deal.

**Which ever method you choose, remember that each step of the process, from job specifications, research, inspiration, collection of examples, roughs, comps, mock-ups, print proofs and finished pieces ought to be included within. Beyond that there are no rules. Make it your own. Mix it up.**

#### Basic ideas of the three main techniques:

**The Process Folder:** The process folder is just that — a folder. It can be a file folder or just a tabloid size paper folded in half.

1. Start by writing and pasting information about the project, client, deadlines and specifications on the 'front'.
2. Doodle some. Conduct a "brainstorm" including word relations, actual definitions and some stream-of-consciousness writing to free your mind.
3. Collect research on the subject — even if you think you know it all. Use any method to record it. Paste or scribble this down on the folder.
4. Collect your inspirations in the folder. If it's big or not yours, paste a picture, sketch or notes about it in your folder.
5. Start your thumbnail sketches of the project (this would be an bulleted outline if it's a writing project).

6. Explore. Collect colors and textures in the folder.

7. As you work through the project, include your rough sketches and composites, notes, critique comments, printed proofs and examples in the folder.

**The Process Board:** In Interior Design, Designers use a "color board" to put all the elements together visually. This same method can be really helpful in the case of a large multi-faceted graphics project with many departments working on the project.

As a graphic designer working alone, this can be adapted in scale and be edited for inclusion on separate mount board or even the back of the presentation board —allowing you to reference your process and progression in design during a presentation.

**The Process Book:** The process book takes more time and thought, but can turn out to be a piece of art in of itself. The process book may be a sketch or composition book with several projects outlined within, or some process books are small books created specifically for that project.

Look online for examples of other's process books, folders, and boards. Share your ideas and incorporate new ideas into your next project.

### Sharing inspiration — how to talk about your inspiration and how it inspired you.

It's important to share the process you went through when presenting a design solution. When you talk through your job specifications, research, inspirations and so on, the client, interviewer or instructor will know that you have put thought into your design solution. This process is part of the work you are paid to do as a designer. Knowing you have done this work and came to a successful solution is proof that you earned your money as a graphic designer.

Some student designers will make bullet notes to help remind them to mention certain things about the design process and end design solution. This is a great idea to get you used to presenting effectively. Having one of the previously mentioned process collections handy and organized also helps you to talk through it while feeling nervous. Once you've gotten into the habit of communicating in this way, you'll be able to remember these things without visual aids and prompts.

**Quick Assignment:** You are the chosen graphic designer for a new tractor company called MONKEYBUCKETS.

**Your assignment is to research, collect and create a process, folder, book or board for the development of BRANDING (a logo) for the company.**