VISUALIZING SUCCESS: STRATEGIES FOR HOW TO EFFECTIVELY MERGE CREATIVE DESIGN WITH PROGRAM EVALUATION.

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While an Analyst's work involves the collection, interpretation, and visualization of data focusing extensively on details, a Graphic Designer's work can take a more sweeping approach giving that information color and personality.

Informational materials such as brochures and websites can convey the quality of a program or organization through their visual design before the factual content is even considered. The work of professional analysts and professional graphic designers overlaps in many ways. Both take information and deliver it back in more easily understandable formats.

The personality an organization wishes to convey is a core part of its brand and ultimately, its trustworthiness in the space. Marketers and advertisers know that branding is built through the many interactions between user and organization, and one of the initial engagements a user may have with the organization is through its website or printed materials.

CASE STUDY: Veterans Treatment Courts

The project analysis indicated a need for cohesive messaging and more awareness of five Tennessee County Veterans' Treatment Court Programs. A brochure that standardized the branding and design relayed the new messaging with updated visuals and led to more immediate recognition of the programs across the region.

TAKE-AWAY: Working with or sub-contracting a professional graphic designer can be a more efficient and successful way to accomplish initiating or revising printed materials. Brochure templates from word-processing programs can be frustrating and time-consuming to work with and lack sufficient features to create professional-looking results. Graphic designers have access to extended libraries of visuals and can create custom looks through print-industry standard software.

WHAT WE LEARNED
Working Together

1. FRAMING YOUR INFORMATION FOR YOUR AUDIENCE:

- The Evaluator, the Graphic Designer, and the Client should first work together to identify the intended audience of the materials. Set up a meeting to define the audience together. We typically do this by using a document called a *discovery brief*. We discuss who the audience(s) is and what action we want them to take away from the new materials.

- The evaluator remains the expert on information from the field while the designer organizes that information in easily digestible, visual ways.

- Graphic designers are often working across multiple disciplines—each discipline with its own lexicon. Since most fields are sensitive to language formatting, giving the designer some specific language examples up front can help. For instance, an outsider to the field of mental health services may not realize "substance use disorder" is more appropriate and inclusive language than "drug addiction" or that "recovery" is more sensitive than the abbreviated "rehab" in generalized language.

2. BALANCING ROLES WHEN COLLABORATING ACROSS DISCIPLINES:

- It serves both the evaluator and the graphic designer if the evaluator remains the main contact for the client and the graphic designer serves as the contact for the printer or production facility.

- The evaluator's business depends on the client's specific project requirements being met. The evaluator should always be CC'd on any email directly between the client and the designer.

3. WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN PARTNERING WITH A DESIGNER:

- If you need printed materials, ask up front if the designer can supply *print-ready files* in a high-resolution print format, like a .pdf and/or a packaged InDesign file. Most commercial printers will accept a hi-res pdf file and these can be quickly transferred via online methods.

- If you are uncertain whether you will work the print designer again, it is okay to ask if you can be supplied the original InDesign files—so that the print production facility's in-house design team may make future edits for you.

- If you need a website, ask if the designer is comfortable designing a website or "for web". If they are, agree up front on what online tools will be used to create the website. Some designers still code websites. But, an efficient way of working—especially remotely—is to have multiple log-ins for an online website tool such as Squarespace, Wix, or WordPress.

- If you need written content, ask if the designer has copywriting experience. Some graphic designers are not comfortable writing any part of the materials and may be used to receiving fully finished copy (a "copy deck"). Decide up front who will be writing/supplying the written copy: Will it be the Client, the Evaluator, the Graphic Designer, or an outside contracted Copywriter?

- Graphic designers with copywriting experience might charge more hourly, as copywriting typically bills at a higher rate than graphic design.

4. HOW TO BUDGET FOR HIRING CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS:

- Establish project-based fees with guidance from professional organizations. One resource is the *Graphic Artists' Guild's Handbook: Pricing and Ethical Guidelines,* which periodically publishes standard fees for creative projects.

- Be aware that government offices may have established maximum hourly rates for outside contractors.

- Estimate the hours that the job will take to complete and include time for client changes. The standard allowance is two rounds of client-requested changes.

5. HOW TO BUDGET FOR THE PRODUCTION OF MARKETING AND ADVERTISING PRINT MATERIALS:

- Online printing services (like Vistaprint) have standard and ready quotes for printed materials that can be found online. It's often beneficial to start with a quote from one of these sites.

- For printed material, a local printer may be able to provide faster turn-around and delivery. Local printers may also have the staff to make small text updates on site.

- When quoting work on behalf of government offices, you may need to ask for a list of approved vendors. Many government agencies and offices work on contracted rates for items like printed paper goods and promotional products and some offices may not be allowed to pay sales tax.

- Remember to factor in the cost for licensing artwork. Photography and illustration can range anywhere between $10 - $1,000.

CASE STUDY: Residential Recovery Court

The project analysis indicated a need for a website for this residential recovery court. On-site photography was suggested to the client, as it would be more truthful than stock photography. The logo needed to be refreshed to match the modernized approach.

mcrrctn.com

WEBSITE TRAFFIC: March 1, 2019 - May 26, 2020	UNIQUE VISITORS: 696	TOTAL VISITS: 923	PAGE VIEWS: 2,439

TAKE-AWAY: Use a website to deliver up-to-date program information to different audiences. Set-up a webspace as a resource that someone may visit multiple times. In this case, mcrrctn.com provides a look into the institution for referrals and family members, serves as an accessible repository for official public forms, and creates a community facing news page (or blog) for public relations initiatives. We created a professional look that the client could continue to maintain after the project end date with a user-friendly, subscription-based website service. Our top choices for these services are currently Squarespace or Wordpress.

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