

drawingconclusions

## Influence

*Designing Influence. Drawing Attention.*

*When I draw, the paper surface influences my pencil. This why a sharpener is a good thing to have on hand. I use a sharpener far more often than an eraser.*



I have been thinking about the ways in which design has influenced our culture, our commerce and our politics. Design pervades everything. What do we touch, use, wear, consume or read on a daily basis that has not been designed or been brought to us through the vehicle of design?

Most of us go through life unaware of the presence of design all around. It's easy to miss things when we're so used to them. Yet those things have great impact on us. Just take a walk through your grocery store and notice that everything in it, down to those silly little static labels on the apples and oranges, was designed. Grab a carton of orange juice and consider its form and the graphics on the carton. Notice how the lunch meats are so similarly packaged, and the laundry detergents share a common color scheme.

**Design creates community.** Sub-cultures and consumer groups are identified and influenced by design. If you ride a Harley you surely have at least one item of Harley gear or apparel somewhere. Do you own a Hard Rock Cafe T-shirt? Do your kids wear Abercrombie or Hollister? We show loyalty to our favorite team by wearing its logo and colors. We frequent Starbucks or Peet's, buy Dell or Apple, wear Wrangler or Levi's. We are what we drink, use, eat and wear, and we rely on

design in order to fit in or stand out. My daughter the Marine relies on the digi camouflage pattern of her BDUs to help protect her life.

Design exists on many different levels. On one level, it is all about aesthetics and style. On another, it is function and purpose. On another it provides an experience. On another level it makes life more convenient. On another it helps save the environment and elects presidents. It always seems to hold sway over people's lives and lifestyles. Where would BMW or Barak Obama be without a strong conviction about design's ability to influence?

**Influence is the capacity to affect** the character or behavior of someone or something; the ability to shape policy or ensure favor. The word comes from Middle English origin and carries the implied sense of a continuous action or flow.

To maintain and grow your business, you influence your customer base to come your direction. You do this with deliberate intent through effective design over a period of time. Try communicating without the means of a web site, a logo, a business card, an order form, a brochure, product sheet or print ad. Design persuades your audience to build a relationship and identify with you. You're creating your own culture.

As implied, influence happens most effectively when it is consistent over time. Our culture still values faithfulness. Socially we prefer to hang out with people who are consistent in appearance and character, and who are faithful. We feel secure with them and come to know what to expect. When consistency is demonstrated again and again, we build trust and make commitments to that person. We start seeking them out. The same is true in business.

You cannot expect a one-hit wonder to build and sustain your business. You cannot show up, introduce yourself and walk away without further engagement and expect to be remembered favorably, if at all. You need to stick around in order to affect the outcome. Your presence should be constant and true, even through a slowed economy. Be a river, not a spill.

**Keep your influence flowing.** Doing so will keep you in the game and your customers connected so that when things turn around those relationships will still be there. If you disappear by pulling back on your marketing and design, you will lose out to those in your niche who demonstrated faithfulness through the tough times.

These are just some thoughts about design to influence your thinking... —Alvalyn Lundgren

## creative

### Create Magazine

The point of any publication is to get the reader to read what's inside. With so much else in a magazine to attract the reader's attention, the design of an article is as vital as its content. For this four-page layout I developed the background to showcase the text and highlight the photos. I made it visually rich through color choices and layering, and added a sense of motion to the pages by incorporating repeated motifs and angles. I researched and included some of the photographic work of Eadweard Muybridge, the 19th Century photographer known for proving with his photo sequences that all four of a horse's hooves are airborne at the same time during a gallop. Muybridge's stop-motion principles were incorporated into the making of the slow-motion sequences in the film, *The Matrix*, and its sequels.



## designs of the times

### 2009 Color of the Year

Yes, Virginia! There is a Color of the Year and it's **Pan-tone's** Mimosa Yellow, a warm, friendly and optimistic color offered as a chromatic antidote to economic uncertainty. We need reassurance in these days, and this color has been served up to help encourage confidence and optimism.

### Word Play

**Scrabble**, the classic word game, has undergone a makeover in order to increase appeal among a younger audience. The makeover not only includes brighter colors and new shapes, but will allow a wider variety of words. I wonder, will it allow text message acronyms as well?

### Design Policy

In 2008 two significant events occurred under the radar of world and national news. The events served to highlight the value of design not only to business, but to life in general and may be the catalyst for major changes in design practices. One event was the **U.S. National Design Policy Summit** in Washington DC last November, which met to establish strategy and tactics for a national design policy and the re-formation of the American Design Council. The other event was the **International Conference on Design Policy** in Turin, Italy, which met to discuss how design can be used to stimulate economic and cultural growth throughout the world. Take note and keep watch. Our U. S. economy, once driven by agriculture, then industry, then business and recently technology, is now driven by design and ideas. I recommend reading both *Fast Company* and *Business Week* (print or online editions) to track developments in design.

## eyelevel

*If you don't have any understanding of the world and the culture you live in, you're not going to express anything to anybody else.*

—Paula Scher

## sketches

### I Didn't Get the Job

Everyone considering working with a designer needs to realize that, just as they are evaluating the designer, the designer is in turn evaluating them. Interviews and "go-sees" go both ways. It is as important for a prospective client to be someone the designer wants to work with as it is for the designer to be someone the client wants to work with.

I had an initial meeting with a prospective client which raised a bunch of red flags around whether she would be worth working with. Here are a few of them:

- > She was more than 45 minutes late to our meeting (which she had requested) with no courtesy phone call or text message.
- > She was not professionally dressed, yet she was representing an organization of professionals.
- > She spoke disparagingly of designers she had previously worked with.
- > She focused on her personal taste rather than on what her organization needed and was closed to exploring different approaches or ideas.

Read the entire article at [alvalyncreative.wordpress.com](http://alvalyncreative.wordpress.com).

## takenote

### My Very Own Stimulus Plan

For a limited time I have reduced my creative and administrative fees by 10%. I have decided to do this in order to assist my clients maintain their financial health and meet their marketing goals. This fee reduction is in effect until July 31, 2009 when I will determine whether return to my regular fee structure. This does not apply to expenses.

### Hire Me

Postage increases on May 11th. There is still time to develop and send your next direct mail campaign at the current postage rates. Contact me to arrange a meeting to plan your next project. Don't neglect to make every possible connection with your customer base.

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