

GCOM 330



PART 1: THE BRAINSTORMING PROCESS....

Finding unique solutions requires patience and work.

Brainstorming is an expressive, problem-solving activity that promotes idea generation, helps the designer think about and work through complicated design problems, and encourages creative expression. It is based on free association and uses a written record of verbalized ideas to help reveal direction(s) towards a solution(s). Every thought and idea is valuable and worth recording. There are no right or wrong answers, no limitations to the process.

Start by making lists of everything that relates to your subject. Using words is more time-efficient than drawing because you can write a word much quicker than drawing an idea. Keep an open mind to all ideas and let the words flow without censoring or judgement. Make word associations; use a dictionary and/or thesaurus to help facilitate your creative thinking.

Another effective method is verbal diagramming or “mind mapping.” Place a key word in the middle of a piece of paper and branch out in all directions as you write down other ideas that occur and are related to the initial word. You can get this process

going by asking yourself questions: why? when? who? how? what? This lets you picture the structure of your thinking.

If you feel stumped, and the ideas are not coming easily after spending a lot of time working on a problem, *take a break*. Divert to another activity to give your mind time to process all the information you have gathered. You will return with a fresh eye.

Once you feel you have enough material to work from, begin the visualization process by making thumbnail sketches. Thumbnails are small rough sketches of a preliminary design idea (also called a concept). Try to generate as many of these as possible because every communication problem has an infinite number of solutions. Your first ideas will probably be your most obvious ones. Get those out and keep going! Continue until it becomes increasingly difficult to think of any others.

Practice free-writing. Create mind maps. Write down lists of thought and ideas. Build visual inspiration boards.

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THE DESIGN PROCESS....

Finding unique solutions requires patience and work, and even more work.

Problems are best solved by following a series of steps, or phases, that lead to a solution i.e. a process. The design process begins when the designer receives an assignment; it continues until the solution is accepted and implemented. The design process is the supporting guide that lets the designer control the progression of a project from one phase to the next. It encourages the designer to examine the problem and cultivate an effective solution. The phases listed below are usually fundamental to solving a design problem, and may occur rapidly, or over an extended period of time.

one: problem definition

Develop a project brief. Define the problem and its parameters, including audience, tone, project goals and objectives, and any constraints such as schedule, budget and production limitations. HINT: Don't set the parameters too tightly. Always test the boundaries and limitations to avoid being locked in by conventional thinking.

two: research and information gathering

This involves gathering as much information as possible. Learn about the client's needs and current communication materials and strategies. Find out how designers have solved similar problems, survey the environment in which the design will function, check out competitors, consult with vendors.

three: concept development

EACH PROBLEM HAS MANY POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.

This is the biggie. Exploring multiple solutions and then develop the most effective one(s). Phases include: brainstorming...Storm your brain. Whirlwinds. Tornados. thumbnails...Little sketches. Very quick. Connecting what's in your head to what's on paper. You can never do too many variations...Pick a few ideas that are working and explore. Are you still designing the original problem?

refinements...Choose one. You are getting close to the end. re-refinements...Edit. Edit. Edit.

four: implementation

This involves showing a mock-up of the solution to the client, gaining approval, and, keep your fingers crossed, on to production! Your presentation of the final solution should represent the final product as closely as possible i.e. stock, color, size, etc.

