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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DESIGN AND ROUGH LAYOUT

What you're trying to get down the line is a product.

You've got the idea for a promo piece expressed in the dummy and you're trying to take it from Design (the artful format that will interest and involve the viewer and stimulate him to act) into a precise Rough Layout (the precisely measured parts of the piece laid out with mechanical accuracy).

And right here between these two - Design and Rough Layout - your product could hang up and bog or get hopelessly bungled if the difference between these two actions and their relationship to each other is not fully understood.

DESIGN

The Purpose Of Design

To do a rough layout or any layout at all, you must begin with Design and the guiding line there is HCOB 29 July 1973 ART, MORE ABOUT.

What you're trying to do with the design of a layout throughout is:

- A) ATTRACT
- B) INTEREST
- C) DELIVER THE MESSAGE.

If you use the Communication Formula you get an extension of this.

Some people abandon Art for the message; others abandon any message for what they believe to be Art. But if you double it - apply ATTRACT-INTEREST-MESSAGE and the Comm Formula to the layout as a whole, and then redouble it - apply ATTRACT-INTEREST-MESSAGE and the Comm Formula to the message itself, you get a double punch of impingement.

You want a design that, in itself, communicates -- a design that talks. It requires the use of art forms.

Art Forms - Design Basics

The art forms we're talking about here are shapes or objects.

A keyhole, for example, is an art form. Different shapes, different sizes of keyholes, convey different things. Circles, squares, triangles, etc. - these are all art forms.

There is a simple drill one can do, using art forms, to grasp the basic idea of design. Take ovals, squares, rectangles, circles. Throw down certain shapes on an open page of a brochure on each page and you get a specific design. Is it pleasing? Not pleasing? Dramatic? Not dramatic? What is the effect?

Do this again and again, using the various shapes or combinations of them. You can play around with this until you get the full feel of design basics.

Beyond this, one can experiment (but not on the final product!) with different formats, different sizes, horizontals, verticals, different sizes of photos and backgrounds in color or not, textures and two dimensions giving the impression of textures, as well as background designs.

The possibilities are many and one should feel at home with a wide range of them and how they align and integrate, or not, with the rules of standard composition.

Composition And The "Eye Trail"

When we talk about composition we are talking about how you dispose of the objects in a picture or design, not how you draw one object. Composition is how you arrange or group the objects or shapes.

There are certain stable composition lines and there are dynamic lines. There are various types of mood lines. These must be used. They are part of standard composition, and they have everything to do with Design.

In composition you are working not only with the mood of the piece but with the EYE TRAIL. The EYE TRAIL is vital in the layout of a design.

The eye must go somewhere - i.e. start at the top and follow down. Where it starts and where it goes is called the Eye Trail. And right here you get into the basic formula of ATTRACT-INTEREST-MESSAGE. The Eye Trail should lead one - pull one - involuntarily through ATTRACT-INTEREST-MESSAGE.

You can have a design which, by itself, is so irritating that it forbids reading it - it defeats the message. If you don't believe it look at some pictures in Cubism. Cubism is a dead art, by the way. But why did it die? Well, it specialized in irritating pictures, jagged, angry pictures, confused pictures. If the layout is ragged the eye does not follow down easily.

The actual design will deliver an emotional impact. In other words, your design can be such as to prevent the piece from being read or deliver the wrong emotional impact for that piece, and therefore all the money and the work and all the ideas and all the think that went into it is totally defeated.

Take squares. You put squares in the wrong place and have the eye trail going in the wrong direction and you have an irritated person who will not go further.

Mono sized shapes or objects or monotone lines - the piece will have no impact and no real eye trail. It's all monotone. It goes nowhere. Or a so-called center spread where the eye is distracted by two other disrelated photos and the attention is dispersed - wrong eye trail.

Thus design, the way you put something together, is very, very able to deliver an emotional impact by itself. Brilliant design will deliver exactly the emotional impact you intend. Brilliant use of the eye trail will carry one to and then through ATTRACT-INTEREST-MESSAGE.

The conclusion, therefore, is that format and layout - the design of the piece - is the key to saleability.

So you use the emotional patterns of design and design itself as a means of communicating, to project the desired emotional response.

You're working for the final appearance of the final product when it arrives in somebody's hands.

You're working for a technical quality which all by itself will deliver an impact.

That's DESIGN.

ROUGH LAYOUT

Once the design has been established rough layout can be done.

Rough Layout precisely measures the pages, precisely measures the spaces within the pages, precisely measures the copy and selects the type that will be used for the copy in the various spaces. It crops, precisely, the photos or other artwork that will be used in the piece.

Cropping

In cropping we see distinctly the relationship between Design and Rough Layout.

There are two types and two stages of cropping:

- 1) Artistic (Design)
- 2) Mechanical (Rough Layout).

- 1) In the Design stage you indicate (describe) the artistic on the Design in the space for the photo. Any crude black and white sketch will do.
- 2) Mechanical - Rough Layout - makes it fit and marks in the exact dimensions and the crop on the board the negative or transparency is in.

Cropping has to do only with format. The actual size of the photograph has nothing to do with the established rules of cropping. It has to do with taste.

Rough Layout follows the Design and scales the Design to fit in the prescribed space. It does this precisely and accurately without altering the Design and according to the balances and relationship described by the Design.

When we get into Rough Layout we are into the Graphic Arts. (One could get into a confusion here between the terms Graphic Arts, graphics and graphic, so it had better be made clear. Roughly, most encyclopedias describe Graphic Arts as engraving, etching, etc., involving representation or expression by means of lines on flat surfaces. Graphics is described as the art or science of drawing especially by mathematical principles, as in mechanical drawing, or calculating by means of graphs or diagrams. But you look in the dictionary and you find graphic means "vivid". So Graphic Arts and graphics do not mean the same thing as graphic.)

Graphic arts deals with the mechanical reproduction of a picture or design. It is done by means of graphing. You don't use arithmetic in graphic arts. It's more a form of plotting.

They call the rough layout the mechanical, and they call it the mechanical for a good reason - it's MECHANICAL. What's mechanical? That means "by machine".

So in Rough Layout you're into the area where it's all machine. We're not talking here about a system of pistons and gears and levers and crank shafts, but we are talking about a mechanical action.

If you've ever been on the bridge of a ship plotting a course or if you've ever taken arithmetic that gave you vectors whereby you draw one line and then you draw another line and then you measure the length of the second line and that gives you a mathematical solution - you'll see that this is a mathematics of sorts. And that is what is used in graphic arts. But it doesn't have much arithmetic involved in it. It's a system of graphing. You draw a line this way and that intercepts or stops a line over here and then that makes a line over here do something. It's plotting, graphing, a machine-like action.

The only way numbers enter into it is that negatives have sizes, paper has a size, prints have a size - and those things have to be accounted for. Your job in Rough Layout is to make the back wall join with the roof.

From the Rough Layout you will be able to get the type selection and size and you'll be able to get the cropping.

So you do the Design in Rough Layout so that it is totally practical. Rough Layout is totally a practical, a mechanical action. "This type will fit here and it fits the design as close as we can get...." etc.

Design and Rough Layout Liaison

There may be instances where the design as presented cannot be followed exactly by Rough Layout. This can be due to limited equipment or materials or an error in the design or other reasons. When there are legitimate reasons it can't be followed Rough Layout liaises with Design to get it worked out so that the design can be executed. Otherwise, they are two separate and distinct functions.

The watchword in Rough Layout is precision. It is done with fine mechanical accuracy so that the preparation of the materials for the shooting boards, the type-setting of the copy, the processing of the separation negatives, etc., can begin. It's all got to be made to fit precisely so that it is do-able when it goes to the final shooting board stage.

If it's not mechanically accurate, the shooting boards won't be do-able. If it gets to final shooting board stage without it being do-able, or to the printer as a faulty shooting board, you won't get a product or you'll get an overt product.

When it gets to the printer and the shooting of the plates, if you are to have two plates, one to follow the other, they've got to be in total absolute register. There can't be a millimeter of difference. Now we're into precision. But it's precision of what? It's the precision of following what was laid down by Rough Layout. So the Rough Layout had better be correct.

If it got up to final shooting board stage without the thing being able to be do-able, then somebody can't lay out the plate, he can't lay out the printing, the halftone dots won't match, the this won't match, the that won't match, the color separation negatives won't fit in that piece.

The essence of it in the final analysis is, is it do-able?

You've taken the Design and you've executed it in layout as it's going to be - each part scaled precisely to the right size and mechanically accurate so it all fits together perfectly. It's ready to go onto a shooting board for business so it can then be put under a camera. It's do-able.

That's ROUGH LAYOUT.