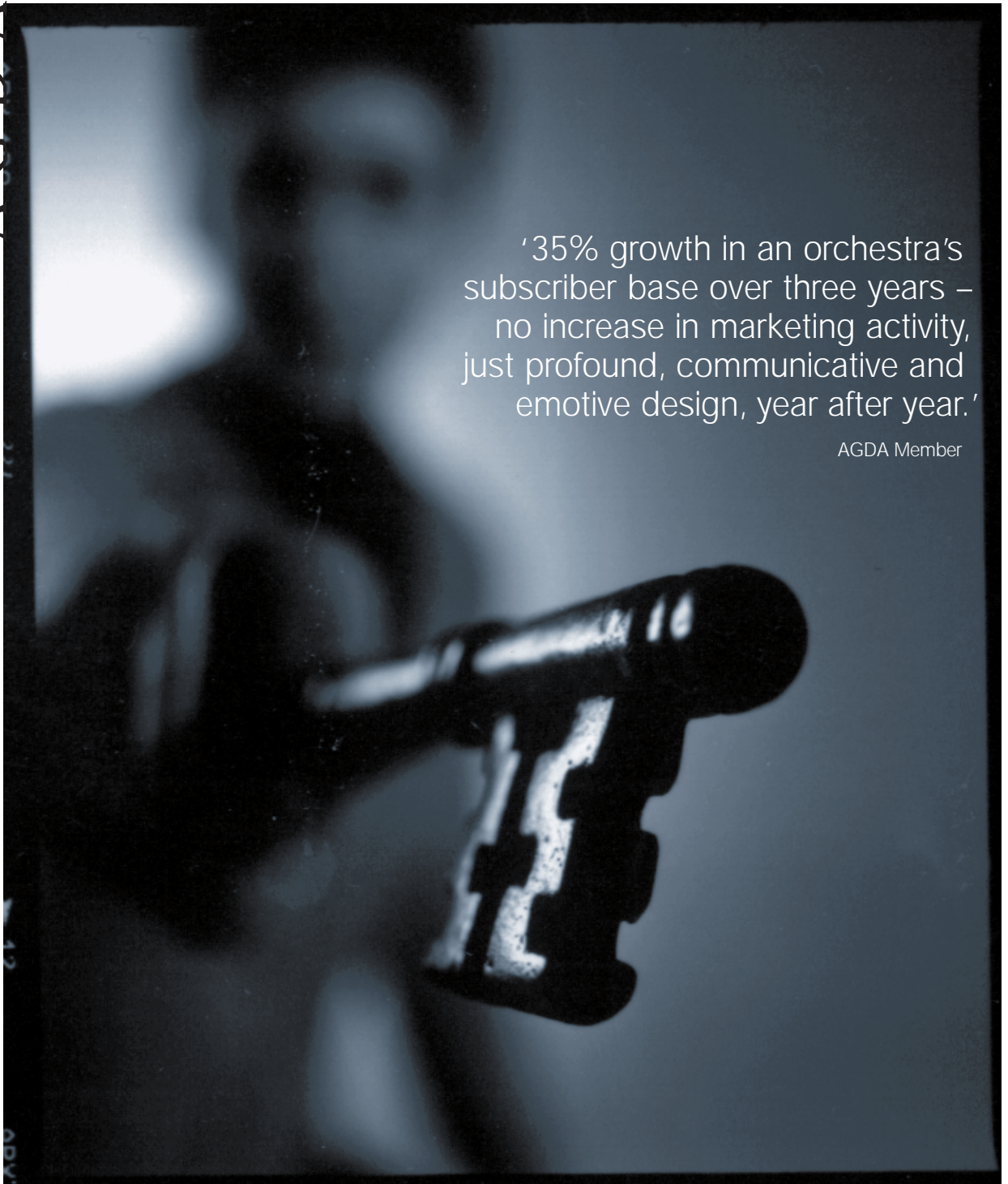


AGDA



'35% growth in an orchestra's subscriber base over three years – no increase in marketing activity, just profound, communicative and emotive design, year after year.'

AGDA Member

UNLOCKING THE GRAPHIC DESIGN PROCESS

DESIGN management

We

live in a consumer environment constantly surrounded by graphic design in one form or another – corporate identity systems applied to stationery and signage, architectural graphics, packaging, corporate literature, product brochures, posters, internet home pages – in fact, anything that visually represents an organisation to its markets or stakeholders.

Most businesses use graphic design as an integral part of their marketing strategy to enhance the competitive positioning of their product, service or company.

The graphic design process is a problem solving process, one that requires substantial creativity, innovation and technical expertise. An understanding of the client's product or service and goals, their competitors and the target audience is translated into a visual solution created from the manipulation, combination and utilisation of shape, colour, imagery, typography and space.

Successful graphic design powerfully aligns consumer perception with the marketing message, elicits the desired consumer response and confers

competitive advantage.

= VISUAL COMMUNICATION]



THIS PUBLICATION

This publication has been produced by the Australian Graphic Design Association (AGDA) to support client understanding of our profession. What buyers of design services will gain from this explanation of the graphic design process is the knowledge to manage their own projects better. Just as the client

What buyers of design services will gain from this explanation of the graphic design process is the knowledge to manage their own projects better.

GRAPHIC DESIGN & QUALITY CONTROL

A good graphic design process is structured around ensuring that the client gets the highest quality solution and service appropriate to their business, marketing or communication problem. Quite often there is a temptation to 'crunch' the time allowed for graphic design. Clients who face this temptation should remember that reproduction processes, such as printing and electronic publishing, are 'garbage-in, garbage-out' processes.

If clients want to ensure that their investment not only in design, but also in reproduction, is maximised, the focus should be on making sure that the input, the design and artwork, is right. If clients face irresolvable time constraints, AGDA recommends that the client discuss with the designer how these constraints may be dealt with in a manner that does not irretrievably compromise the commercial value of the entire project.

and designer benefit enormously from a solid understanding of the client's business and marketing activities, so too can the same team benefit from an understanding of the designer's activities.

The graphic design process map provides an overview of the steps involved in a typical project. The text provides a short explanation of each step, including the responsibilities of client and designer.

This publication is not intended to be the definitive guide to graphic design project planning. No single document could possibly encompass all the permutations and unique details that each graphic design project generates during its development and implementation. AGDA recommends that the client and designer take the time to establish an actual project plan for each project, using this information as a guide.

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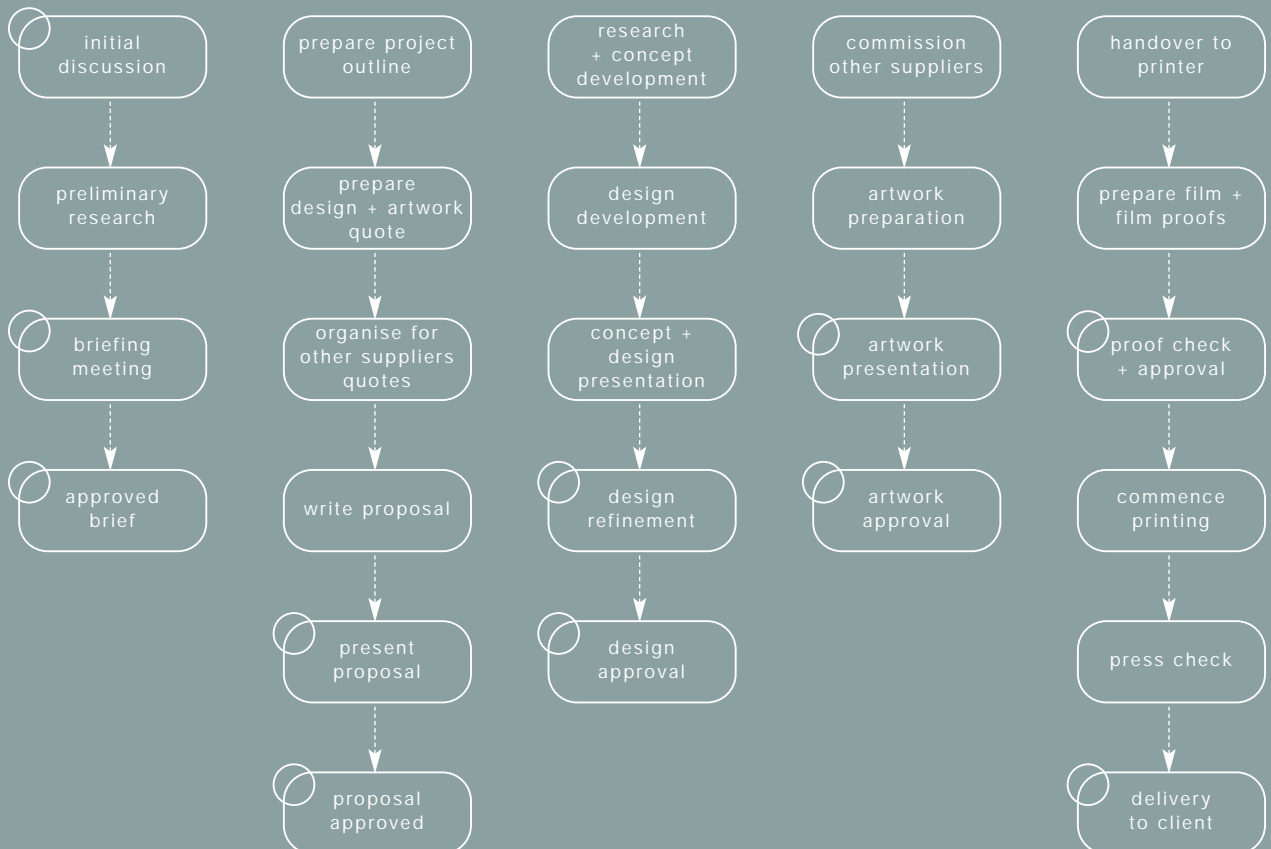
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1 2 3 4 5

(OVERVIEW)



(DETAIL)



LEGEND:

○ stage involves client input

Note: AGDA recommends that designers adapt this generic process map to fit their actual working style and type of projects before using it to enhance client understanding of design project management issues.

IS A PROCESS]



1

BRIEFING

INITIAL DISCUSSION BETWEEN CLIENT & DESIGN FIRM

- Client and design firm discuss project objectives timing and budget in broad outline.

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

- Client prepares and reviews background material.
- Client begins to prepare briefing information (see Briefing Checklist, back page).
- Design firm reviews their own background material and/or previous projects, in preparation for briefing meeting: this research helps the design firm to focus on the key issues in the context of the work (competitors, other products/services within the line, etc.).

BRIEFING MEETING

- Client and design firm meet to discuss brief in detail and clarify any technical issues (budget, timetable, corporate identity guidelines, etc.).

CLIENT APPROVAL OF BRIEF

- Client seeks internal approval of brief, including budget and timetable.

2

PROPOSAL

WRITTEN PROPOSAL

- Design firm prepares a written proposal detailing:
 - what is required (in communication/design/production objectives).
 - design and production fees, treatment of author's corrections and material expenses.
 - timetable from approval of proposal to delivery to client.
 - terms and conditions of engagement, including copyright assignment.

This stage may also include procuring subcontractor quotes, e.g. photography, illustration, copywriting, etc.

CLIENT APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

- Client checks proposal and compares it to brief to confirm the design firm's understanding of the project's purpose and strategic directions, as well as technical considerations.
- If the design firm's understanding of the project cannot be confirmed, client reviews written proposal with the firm and a new proposal is prepared.
- Client accepts proposal and prepares order for design firm.

6
Telstra had some challenging news for a key industrial users' segment – this was addressed through a well-designed direct mail piece that achieved a 94% recall rate and even had customers ringing for extra copies!

3

DESIGN

CONCEPT AND DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

- Designer reviews brief, background material and identity standards to ensure that the project context is understood and corporate requirements are met.
- Designer develops creative concepts, with designs being produced from the concepts.
- Preliminary designs are reviewed and critiqued to select the most appropriate designs for further development or presentation.

CONCEPT AND DESIGN PRESENTATION

- Designer prepares visuals and design rationale for client presentation.
- Client and designer evaluate the presentation against the brief and written proposal. If the initial briefing is adequately prepared, it is rare for a presentation to be totally off the mark. Personal taste should not be used as the primary criteria for a design's acceptance or rejection.
- Criticisms should be specified as tangibly as possible, using the Briefing Checklist. These criticisms are important for the next stage of development.

DESIGN REFINEMENT

- Criticisms of the design recommendations are addressed by the designer.
- A second design presentation is held, using the same evaluation process, including the list of criticisms.

DESIGN APPROVAL

- Client accepts design in terms of the visual appearance and construction.

4

ARTWORK

FINISHED ART PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION

- Client provides signed-off text.
- Designer commissions remaining photography/illustration.
- Designer prepares artwork files and final laser proofs for film production (prepress).
- Designer prepares comprehensive prepress and print specifications to ensure that the client's and designer's quality expectations are understood and maintained throughout the reproduction process
- Designer delivers artwork files, final colour and/or laser proofs and related material (transparencies, illustrations, etc.) to client.

FINISHED ART APPROVAL

- Client approves artwork and related material (with a signature on every laser proof). This stage may also include legal department approval of any statutory requirements.
- If client-requested changes (also known as 'author's corrections') are necessary they are corrected at this point.

5

REPRODUCTION

ARTWORK HANDOVER & PRINT BRIEFING

- Designer and/or client hands over artwork files, proofs and related materials to prepress house or printer/print broker, with film specifications, print specifications and an order form specifying quantity, delivery date and shipping instructions. It is also useful to provide samples of work that demonstrate the print quality required.

APPROVAL OF FILM PROOFS

- Designer and/or client checks colour proofs prepared from film to verify the technical accuracy (registration) and colour of the expected printed result. Since this quality control step focuses on technical accuracy, it is generally the designer who reviews the chemical proofs first.

SUPERVISION OF PRINTING

- Once the film proofs are approved, plates are made and printing commences. The authorised print buyer (client/designer/broker) checks the printed results at the commencement of printing – this is known as 'press checking'. The printed colours are compared to the designer's original colour specifications, the transparencies and the chemical proof. Print registration is also checked. Any discrepancies between the desired result and actual printing are corrected before the entire print run is completed.

DELIVERY TO CLIENT

- Printer or designer organises delivery of printed items as per the client's instructions.

The following checklist can be used as a guide in preparing a brief for a graphic design project.

PRODUCT / SERVICE DESCRIPTION

- History/present position/future
- Competitor information

MARKETING BACKGROUND

- Previous marketing activity
- Present marketing activities – research, advertising, direct mail, graphic design, public relations, distributor promotions
- Future marketing activity

COMMUNICATION TASK – ‘THE MESSAGE’

- Context of specific marketing message in relation to business plans
- Information to be included in the designed item
- Medium of transmission
- Target market (see next section of this checklist)
- Function or desired response
- Evaluation procedure

TARGET MARKET

- Segmentation
- Demographics – age, gender, income, employment, geography, lifestyle
- Purchase motivations – needs, wants, corporate image, product/service positioning
- Purchase decisions – decision initiators/influencers/makers, end user

BUDGET

- Similar past projects
- Estimates (based on past projects and other information)
- Future budgetary allocations (what else needs to be done in the current budget period)
- Contingencies

TIMETABLE

- Consultation (research, strategy, brief development)
- Creative (concept and design development)
- Production (artwork, printing and other production)
- Distribution
- Contingencies

All suggested topics are considered relevant, although not all will be necessary depending on the type of project.

‘Advertising pushes the consumer towards the product but design brings the product to the consumer.’

ABOUT AGDA

The Australian Graphic Design Association's mission is to advance excellence in graphic design as a discipline, profession and cultural force. AGDA is a member organisation of ICOGRADA, the International Council of Graphic Design Associations, which holds consultative status with the Council of Europe, UNIDO and UNECSO.

By channelling the experience of successful designers into a single resource, AGDA assists designers in improving their design quality and professional practice, and also enhances clients' ability to make informed decisions when buying design services.

AGDA conducts an extensive range of activities at State and National level, including biennial National Graphic Design Awards, biennial Design Conference and 40-50 state-based seminars annually. AGDA produces a web site and publications, including a Code of Ethics, an Industry Study, a Benchmarking Report, Designer Selection, template contracts and other professional practice topics.

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