10 BEST PRACTICES
FOR GOOD DESIGN

HCG
CORPORATE
DESIGNS

In this whitepaper I'll share my ten personal best practices that in general contribute to a good design.

1: REDUCTION

Get rid of everything which is not necessary. As soon as you reach a point where nothing can be left out any more, you have a clear layout and can work on some details here and there. So in general: Less is more.

2: SPECIALITIES IN LOGO DESIGN

When designing a logo, make sure you also test it in black and white as well as in small and big size - on a screen and, if somehow possible, also in a printed version.

3: USE A GRID

Every good layout is based on a good grid. All elements can be aligned towards a grid. It also helps to design your grid in a flexible way. When I layout magazines, for instance, I mostly use a twelve column grid, so I can layout copy and images as two, three or even four column layouts.

4: TARGET GROUP

It's very important to design for your target group. Colours, round or straight or regular or irregular shapes, fonts, the order of design elements, photo moods, the proportion of text and image etc. ... all these elements have an impact on your layout. And in the end, the layout has to make sense and speak to the people you want to win for your design.

5: CONTRASTS

Contrasts generate excitement and mix up the layout. Whether you want your layout to rather be subtle and silent or outstanding and loud, you can work with more or less extreme contrasts. I think, it's best to focus on one contrast so it really works best. (To give you an example: Combine a handwriting with a sans-serif font, whereas all fonts have just one colour and the background has only one colour too.)

6: REPEATING ELEMENTS

Repeating elements allow for a better orientation and contribute to an overall positive reading experience. Repeating elements can be headline bars, big letters at a very specific position in the layout, repeating picture orders at specific positions or other design elements such as symbols or the start of a text column at the exact same position when starting a new chapter in your editorial design.

7: SCREEN VS. PRINT

When you design something on a screen, that is supposed to be used in a printed format, it's always good to do a test print. Things often seem different when they're printed out. Especially font sizes and colour contrasts can be evaluated better on print rather than on a screen.

8: SLEEP OVER IT

One of the most important tips in my opinion: Once your design is finished (or you think it's finished) > sleep over it and look at it the next day with a fresh mind. All good designers need to have a distance to their work here and there to deliver great quality in the end. After a good night's rest, you'll see things more clearly than working on it for hours and get stuck in the design.

9: DON'T MIX TOO MANY FONTS

As mentioned earlier, working with contrasts is a good thing. However, be careful when mixing fonts. Never combine too many fonts in one layout. It's better to use less fonts in various styles (like italic or bold) rather than wildly mixing too many completely different fonts. Mostly, using two or three fonts is enough. And always think about what fonts and styles you are going to use for which purpose *before* you start designing. I personally like to work with the typography matrix from Berlin-based typography expert Wolfgang Beinert, as it really helps me in my everyday work.

10: CALL TO ACTION

The last tip relates to advertisements in particular: *Before* you start designing, ask yourself: What's the core message of this advertisement? What's the concrete call to action, what do I want to achieve? Do I want people to click on a specific button? Do I want people to buy a ticket for a certain event? Do I want people to call a certain telephone number to ask for an appointment? Whatever it is, every advertisement should have *one* clear call to action which has to visually stand out in your layout.

HCG
CORPORATE
DESIGNS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hello, my name is Helene Clara Gamper. I'm a graphic designer that believes in a common thread – as illustrated in my logo. I help businesses build a visual identity, translate data into graphic landscapes and help publishers make their magazines look great.

I grew up in a publisher family. About ten years ago I started working in the creative field what in 2010 made me start my own business called HCG corproate designs.

Since then, I've designed for companies of many sizes from the German speaking area but also from other countries such as the USA or the United Kingdom. I created corporate design concepts for business start-ups, established editorial designs for publishers, designed and implemented rich media magazines for tablets and smart phones and visualized complex data for some great infographics.

When creating designs, I always try to get to the very essence of the character and the philosophy behind my clients' businesses and their products. This essence I include in a holistic design approach, that follows me through the entire creative process. Collaborating with my clients and exploring what makes their businesses and their products unique and stand out, I believe is an important part of my job as a designer. This is how I can develop unique visual concepts with a common thread running through them, which is something I'm really passionate about. It puts a smile on my face when I see people respond and interact with my design creations – and when my clients tell me about that.

Some of my clients say they appreciate my flexibility and transparency. I believe that being open and straight with my clients is a matter of fairness and respect and contributes to a positive and successful collaboration.

When I'm not designing you can find me doing sports, exploring nature or travelling. I get a lot of inspiration from seeing different places, doing new things or trying out new recipes with exotic spices I bought from different corners of the globe. In 2014, I fulfilled one of my biggest dreams: travelling through Peru and Ecuador and visiting the giant tortoises of the Galapagos Islands.

I live in the wonderful city of Innsbruck, Austria, the so-called "Capital of the Alps". The lovely scenery here inspires me every day.

Want to get get in touch?
I'd love to hear from you.

DESIGNS FOR DIGITAL AND PRINT