10 QUESTIONS
TO A GRAPHIC DESIGNER

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End of 2018, I asked clients, business partners and other entrepreneurs:
What is it that you always wanted to know from me as a graphic designer?
I answer the most common questions in this whitepaper.

#1 *"How come you are so creative?"*

I think that creativity has a lot to do with curiosity. I've always been quite a curious person and want to know everything, I'm interested in many different things. And what also helps me a lot: I approach things and people without any reservation. I always try to see the big picture and release myself from mental barriers. Where others see limits or are trapped in their own tunnel vision, my thoughts are already far beyond that and I'm lucky to be able to "mentally zoom out".

I'm solution-orientated. There are hardly any problems which I don't find a solution for. I combine things in my head very quickly. Creativity also has a lot to do with me not being easily satisfied with things. There must always be something better, there must always be something to optimise. I question things a lot, too. My thoughts go in many different directions, but I never lose focus on the main aspect.

Curiosity and searching for new ways are my personal keys to creativity.
And travelling, that's also very important, because it broadens the horizon.

#2 *"Where do your ideas come from? Do the best and most creative ideas really come at night?"*

Well, I really do have many good ideas at night when I dream. Luckily, I mostly wake up then to record a voice message on my phone and email it to myself so it doesn't get lost. But I also get good ideas after an intense training session in the gym when taking a shower. Then, my mind is totally free, I'm physically exhausted and *all of a sudden* a great idea comes to my mind.

During the day at work, I make use of classic creativity techniques like brainstorming. Brainstorming works very well for me to gather many good ideas. It's important to let my thoughts run completely free and never see limits, but possibilities.

#3 *"Do you never run out of ideas?"*

Well, of course I have creative blockades too, but not very often, fortunately. In order to dissolve a creative blockade, I leave the project I'm working on for a few hours and start/continue working on another project. Alternatively, I do sports, the more intense the better, that also helps me a lot. It's always good to clear my mind from clutter. I can only do that by having a distance to my projects on a regular basis.

However, when getting back to work, I concentrate and focus very well and don't get distracted easily. I work with a lot of focus but also get my head free here and there because that's really important in my job.

#4 *"How 'funky' can my logo be?"*

As funky as your target group is or wants to be! I personally always like things to be a bit funky - probably because I'm the same sometimes :-) . An unusual logo makes you stand out from the mass. A logo should distinguish your business from the mass. So maybe the question isn't "how funky can my logo be", but rather "how funky *should* my logo be".

#5 *"What are the most important thoughts when creating a perfect branding?"*

I usually ask questions like the following:

l   Who is the target group?
l   What problem does the target group have?
l   What is the product and how does it work?
l   What makes the product stand out? What's the difference between
     your product and your competitors' products (USP)?
l   What price segment are we looking at?
l   What's the company's history? Does the company's history even play a roll?
l   Shall the product attract more people or other people in other regions?
l   What does the target group currently think about the product or company?
l   What shall the target group think about the product or company in future?
l   Where does the company stand today?
l   Where does the company want to stand in ten or 20 years?
l   How do the company's sales channels look like?
l   What is the marketing plan?
l   What values does the company stand for in theory - and in practice?
l   How shall the target group feel when they see the product? What shall be the first gut feeling?

These are questions for a thorough briefing with the client before I start designing.

#6 *"How much does it cost to develop a custom font?"*

I'm no font designer, but I attended a 2-day workshop conducted by the Typejockeys from Vienna, in which I developed my own font - of course only in very basic steps. I cannot say how much it costs to develop a custom font, but I'm sure Typejockeys (or any other font designers you want to work with) can give you a good estimate.

#7 *"Are animated graphics useful?"*

Animated graphics are useful if you want to bring more attention to something or the animation supports the topic. An animation just for the sake of something flashing often looks cheap.

Let me give you an example: I use Mailtastic for my email signature. I show a gif-animated banner in my email signature inviting people to subscribe to my newsletter. There's a text line saying "subscribe to my newsletter now" with a cursor flashing next to it - in a subtle and not disturbing

way. I want people to click on that to subscribe to my newsletter. There are studies confirming that people more likely click on something animated compared to a static web banner.

Another example is the logo I designed for <u>cubile monitoring health</u> in summer 2018. Cubile is a medical product that measures minimal movement of patients in their beds and it sends an alert message to an app the doctor is using when there is slightly abnormal measured data. Movement plays a crucial role here. This is why a part of the logo is <u>gif-animated</u> to include movement into the logo.
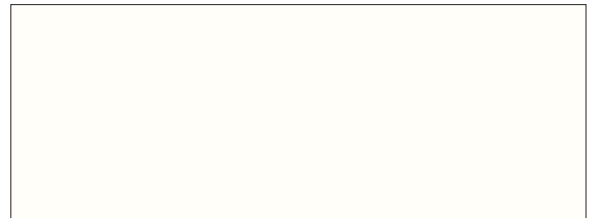
The animation should support the topic, then it can be useful.
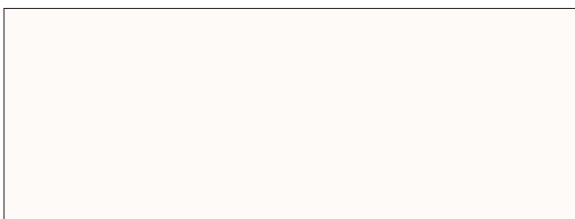
#8 *"What's the 'correct' white?"*

There are different shades of white. Minimal additions of colour to pure white create different moods. Depending on what mood you want to transport, you can create your very own "correct" white.
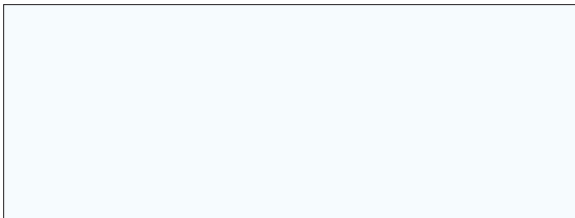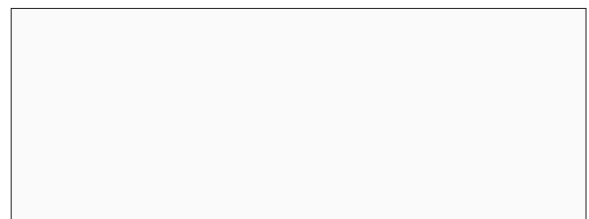
white with 3% cyan

white with 3% yellow

white with 2% yellow and 2% magenta

white with 2% black

#9 *"Is there a calculator between RAL/NCS/RGB etc.?"*

RAL and NCS are different colour systems, just like Pantone. Calculating or switching between different colour systems is something I do not recommend. I recommend to stay within the same colour system, either RAL or NCS or Pantone or simply CMYK or RGB.

When I work with Pantone colours and create a website, I need the equivalent RGB or HEX codes. For this purpose, I work with the so called Pantone Bridge colour fans. Besides the CMYK equivalent on print, they also show the exact colour codes for web applications to make sure I get the visually correct codes. This guarantees that the colour on a brochure looks the same as the colour on the website. To find out more about this interesting topic, you can read a specific article on my website by clicking <u>here</u>.

As far as I know, there are also specific online tools for RAL and NCS to get the correct RGB codes that 100% match with RAL and NCS. Always use the tools of one and the same colour company.

#10 *"What is an infographic?"*

An infographic is a set of data or numbers visualised as an image with only little text. An infographic explains a topic in a much more compelling way than plain text does and is read 30 times more likely than plain text. You can find out more about infographics and how your business can benefit from them in this article.

Do you have any questions? Send them to office@hcg-corporate-designs.com and I'll be happy to answer them.

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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.

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