NAME
Design Specialities

AUTHOR/OWNER
Design Business Association

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INTRODUCTION

Designers use a range of terms to describe their specialities, this tool provides a simple and basic guide to the different design disciplines. Please be aware that some designers are trained in multiple disciplines and definitions might vary between countries.

NOTES

Graphic Design

Graphic design deals mainly with two-dimensional design or what is sometimes referred to as design for print. This will typically include stationery, brochures, catalogues and internal communication materials as well as technical information and forms. Designers in graphic design may specialise in Information Design or Internal Communications.

Brand or Identity Design

Designers who specialise in this area tend to deal with the way a company communicates who it is and what it does and, more importantly, try to define a differentiated proposition for the business. They will typically develop an identity system that will include a logo, typeface, colour palette and any photography or imagery required. As part of the project they will also produce stationery options, a brochure cover or may be a webpage that demonstrates how the identity should be applied. Ideally they will produce a guide to all the identity elements for use when commissioning design in the future.

Product or Industrial Design

Product designers will deal with anything that is three dimensional and typically manufactured. This may include components of larger designs, complete products, consumer goods and even 3D structural packaging. These designers can also specialise in sub categories, for example medical devices, consumer goods or sports equipment. They may have engineering support in house and will be able to deliver a set of CAD drawings ready for tooling and production.

Web or Digital Design

Website design deals with the way a business is expressed on line as well as handling any extranet or intranet applications required. Increasingly digital designers will also be able to develop phone applications and other access media applications. This sector will also help develop everything from powerful presentations to CD ROMs and digital media for customer use.

Packaging Design

Packaging designers work in three dimensions but use the print process to express the final design. Packaging design includes labelling and protective covers as well as the actual box, carton or pack the product arrives in. Some packaging designers also deal with point-of-sale materials such as the retail unit that may display the packaged goods in store.

Exhibition Design

Exhibition design covers that range of design outputs required to promote a product or service in a designated space. This could either be a stand at a trade show or a small booth at a local networking event. In some cases it may also include the development and construction of the final design.

Retail Design

Retail design covers shop interiors and fittings as well as the way products are sold within the retails space. Some agencies will also have project managers who will be able to manage the fit-out of the shop or retail space as per the design solutions developed.

Interior Design

Interior design in some agencies may well include retail but usually covers everything from office space and workspace to large public spaces and design for domestic spaces. Typically interiors designers will get involved with the entire fit out process.

Service Design

This is a relatively new specialism for agencies; traditionally it was included as part of a brand agency offer when establishing the way a brand operated. It deals with the development and delivery of a service offer both on line and off line. It will cover all aspects of the service from the customer experience to the internal resources required to support the service on a day-to-day basis.

Innovation Consultancy

Innovation consultants help organisations to identify and develop new product or service propositions. Typically they will work with the business at a more strategic level using creative tools and processes to help the business uncover and identify then exploit unrecognised opportunities within specific markets. Innovations consultants will also work internally to help identify and build appropriate internal skills and capabilities. Creativity and innovation is part of what all the agencies can offer but only as part of the core specialism.

These agencies are typically used when no specialism has been identified or required but will work with the client to develop a brief for the most suitable agency to help implement the opportunity identified.

USEFUL LINKS

www.dbadirectory.org.uk/dba/uploads/pages/1section-1-getting-started.pdf