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## Category: Art and Creative Director Careers

Subcategory: Art and Creative Director Careers

### **Tip: The Creative Director Personality**

Is there an "ideal personality" that all creative directors have? The chances of all these professionals sharing the same characteristics is slim, but there are some personality traits that just may make the job a bit easier. Here are a few: A strategic mind. Where art directors need to be able to see layout, creative directors need to understand how the entire publication fits in with the voice and style of the organization. This requires the ability to think strategically. A strong creative streak. Any title that actually has the word "creative" in it is pretty self-explanatory. It isn't enough to be a little creative, however. You should have ideas that really set you apart from the crowd. Organizational capacity. This goes hand-in-hand with strategic thinking. Managing the big picture means that you have to be able to see all the moving parts and keep track of them. The ability to accept risk. Not every idea or direction will work out for the creative director. Having the ability to accept a bit of risk is a crucial characteristic that most people in this position share. The ability to lead. Creative directors have to be able to lead a team and keep it on target.

## Category: Careers in Graphic Design

Subcategory: Careers in Graphic Design

### **Tip: Finding Jobs In Graphic Design**

Where can you look for graphic design jobs? There are many places to find employment in this field, but if you are hoping to connect with a position sooner rather than later, it may pay to get a little bit of help. Consider your current contacts. People you know in the field may know of open slots you can interview for. If not, it can at least be a good idea to let them know you are looking in case they hear of something that they can pass your way. Go to a professional. Talent agencies will work hard to find you a position and can be an invaluable resource. In a slow job market, they can also give you a bit of an edge. Look through the "want ads". Although it may seem old-fashioned, plenty of people still run ads for vacant positions. Check on the Internet as well as in the newspaper. Freelancing may be an option if you are willing to put in the extra time needed to get up and running. Searching for a position in the field can be challenging; but there are many different ways to go about finding one. Don't limit yourself to just one approach either. The more venues you explore, the more likely you are to connect with something that works for you.

### **Tip: Graphic Design: Choosing A Specialty**

When setting up your graphic designer career for the long term, it can help to think about specializing in a particular area. In order to do this, you first need to be able to define what that area is and then make sure you get some training in it so that you are marketable. This may not be necessary when you are first starting out, but as you become more established, it can help insure your longevity in the field. These days, the demand for graphic designers who are "Web savvy" is high. Website design is one possibility as there is plenty of coursework you can take to get qualified for this area if you aren't already. There are also designers who consult on page layout and logo placement for Websites and other related collateral on-line. Other areas of specialty can include things such as product or packaging design, logo development, advertising and positions within the newspaper industry. As you go along in your career, you may begin to find one more appealing than the others. Try to keep an eye out for what you would enjoy most, and then look into it in more detail so you can find out about the particular skill set that is needed to work in that arena. Once you have some experience, it can be fairly easy to cross-train into another area in the field if you find something you think you would be happy doing.

### **Tip: Graphic Design: Freelance vs. Full-Time**

Do you want to work in a graphic design agency or would you prefer to freelance? If you aren't sure, ask yourself some questions about your work style. Here are some to consider: *Do you prefer to be told what to do most of the time, or do you like to schedule tasks as you have the time and energy?* Freelance work allows you more flexibility than working for a company does, but you have to be a self-starter to ensure that you complete projects on time. *Do you enjoy working from home or do you prefer interacting with people during the workday?* Freelancers spend much of their time in the home office (unless they're contractors, in which case office hours may apply). If you enjoy the company of others in your field, working on-site as an employee may be more appealing. *Do you want to have weekends off most of the time?* Freelancers may wind up searching for work over the weekend and completing projects during the week. Full-time employees will typically have weekends off. For many freelancers, the flexible schedule makes this worth it.

### **Tip: Graphic Design: What Skills Are Needed?**

Do you have the qualities needed to become a graphic designer? New York graphic designers and designers from sunny California all have one thing in common--they need a particular skill set to perform their work well. Some of this comes from schooling and on the job training, but there are also certain qualities that are a bit more elusive to describe. For example, graphic designers must be able to "synthesize" the input from many people into an idea or campaign that pleases everyone. They must also be able to take people's thoughts and opinions and turn them into a graphic, logo or other visual representation of the concept. Graphic designers need to be able to stay cool under

pressure, as many times a project will have strict time constraints with short deadlines. They also need to have an eye for color, layout and shapes. If that isn't enough--graphic designers must also understand business and marketing so that they are able to utilize their design skills in a way that benefits their client's organization. People best-suited to this field are those with strong visual talents and an ability to perform multiple tasks side by side. Interpersonal skills are another important factor, as designers will interact with many different people during the course of a particular project.

### **Tip: Graphic Designers And The Web**

The Internet has created a need for a different type of graphic designer. This new platform has opened up a whole new way to communicate; resulting in the need for people who are trained for these different types of graphic design jobs. Many companies now have a presence on the Web and are looking for the best ways to convey their messaging to the consumer or customer. Graphic designers with this type of training will be positioned well for these opportunities. Interactive media projects are on the rise as organizations take advantage of all of the computer options that are available to them. Some of these include things such as video games, cell phones and Web pages. Graphic designers will play an increasingly important role in these kinds of applications as time goes on. Web-based marketing, promotional materials and video entertainment are all areas that are going to need more designers, so this type of thing will probably be a good choice for those going into the field to concentrate on when in school. Even those who choose to go a more traditional route will benefit from some Web-based training; it will make them more marketable in their search for employment as an in-house or freelance graphic designer--or to help secure their current position.

### **Tip: Is Graphic Design For You?**

Were you always the kid in school with the best art project? Did you always get picked to create the lemonade stand sign? What about now? Do all your friends turn to you for an opinion on their party invitations or birth announcements? If so, you may have a natural ability for graphic design. Graphic designers are those who strive to get messages across using visual means. They work on projects ranging from promotional material to full-scale ad campaigns and more. Brochures, packaging and logos are all things that graphic designers are called upon to do, depending on their specific role within a particular company. If this all sounds interesting, you may want to look into a career as a graphic designer. There are many graphic design programs, ranging from basic, introductory courses to advanced degrees. To start with, you may want to research the various options in your area and see which seem appealing. If possible, it may also be helpful to sit down and talk to an actual graphic designer. Does someone in your family know a person that is already in the field? If so, they may be willing to sit down with you and talk about their career over a cup of coffee. Talking to an industry professional can be a great, low-pressure way to learn more about what it is like to work in the field.

### **Tip: Magazine Design**

Magazine design is an exciting arena for graphic designers, which helps make it a highly competitive field. Similar to art director work for a catalog, creating magazine covers and layouts requires a particular kind of expertise. Designers who want to go into this type of career must be able to understand things such as the "voice" of the publication, the readership of the magazine, and how to create a headline that has visual impact. Those who work in this capacity must be able to communicate well with all of the other people who work on the magazine. They're part of a team that creates the publication, all the way from concept to the newsstand. Editors, writers, and other designers all collaborate to make the finished product look good and represent the brand. Advertising and copy create the need for smart layout, and each magazine has a different look and feel to it. Graphic designers help preserve that image from one issue to the next, while keeping things fresh and interesting to the reader. It's a challenging job, but it also can be a lot of fun.

### **Tip: What Does Your Client Need?**

Whether you're one of the top Chicago designers or a brand new freelancer, there's one rule that applies to all levels of experience: you need to listen to your client. In order to create the visual design your client is looking (and paying you) for, you'll have to get some specifics. Things such as color, illustration, font, and photography all play crucial roles in the creation of a layout for visual appeal. Spend time with your client discussing their tastes, the impact they would like to make, and who the target audience is. Once you have an understanding of your client's needs, the next step begins: communicating the brand to the customer. Whether this means creating a magazine ad that will appeal to 20-year-olds or working on packaging that stands out in the supermarket, it takes time and skill to get this part right. Matching all of this up together—the things your client wants and the things that will reach the audience—is the foundation for everything a graphic designer does. It all begins with listening to your client.

## **Category: Careers in Marketing**

Subcategory: Careers in Marketing

### **Tip: Tools to Help with Social Marketing**

If you're going to be working in one of the many social marketing jobs out there, employ some of the tools that are available to make your life easier. Signing in and out of different social media accounts can be time-consuming. Managing a bunch of different passwords is also difficult. Here are some ways to manage your time wisely: Take advantage of automatic updates. If you're working on a blog, set it up to automatically

update to Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn, depending on which sites you use. Utilize a "dashboard" program. Managing all of your social media accounts from one screen will help cut down on time spent logging in and out. Also, programs such as Hoot Suite or Tweet Deck will let you update your status across all of your accounts at one time. Schedule tweets. Pre-scheduling tweets can free you up to do other things during the course of the day and keep you from being tied to your computer constantly. Managing your social media time is crucial. Take a look at the tools that are available to make this job easier and you'll find more time to tend to other important tasks.

## Category: Careers in Web Design

Subcategory: Careers in Web Design

### **Tip: Pricing Your Work As A Web Designer**

One of the issues that often arises for a Web designer is how to price their work--and this is especially true for freelancers. At some point in your Web design career you will probably need to bid a project, and it can help to know what you should take into account when setting your price. First of all, it is a good idea to make sure that you have the expertise that is required to complete the project. If a client is looking for a flash-based site but that isn't in your background, you won't want to waste time compiling a bid. On the other hand, if flash is your specialty, you may be able to charge a premium for the work. Get all the information ahead of time and you'll be able to see if the job is something you can do. The time-frame is another big factor in determining the cost of a project, as is the difficulty of the work. Generally speaking, the shorter the time and the harder the work, the more you can charge. You may also want to know if the client will want you to maintain the site. It can mean extra money, but some designers may prefer not to take that type of work on. The more you know on the front end, the easier it will be to quote the client a solid price.

### **Tip: Web Design: Employment Outlook**

Are you a little curious about the current employment outlook for Web design jobs? If you are trying to get a feel for the industry and whether or not it will continue to grow, it can help to look at some projections. The U.S. Department of Labor points out that as companies become more dependent on the Internet for various aspects of their business, the demand for related service professionals will increase. As e-commerce continues to grow and become a larger factor in the shopping arena, there will be a need for people who can create and maintain things such as shopping carts and security. In addition, nearly every company has interest in having a Web presence. It appears that this career field has a very good outlook in terms of continued employment opportunities. The Bureau of Labor Statistics states that earnings in this field are above the national average, and this is expected to continue as technology evolves. In other

words, Web design is a good field to go into, with a bright future ahead. There are a variety of jobs in the field and they pay well. If you are already in the business, you can feel secure about your employment, and if you are thinking about going into the field, you can feel good about your chances for connecting with a job.

### **Tip: Web Designer Skills**

Web designers need a particular group of skills in order to perform their work well. Some of these may come naturally, but many can be learned. For example, an aptitude for selecting complementary colors is a skill that would be of great benefit to a person who designs Websites for a living. A good sense of space and layout are other desirable qualities, as is the knowledge of how to set up a site that is easy to navigate. These skills are taught in the design classroom in a variety of different courses. Web design careers require more than "hard" skills however. People skills are also a big plus, as you will be dealing with clients who have expectations of how their Website will look and work. If you are able to communicate with them easily and understand their wants, needs and concerns, you are probably going to do a lot better than someone who lacks those skills. A good blend of technical ability and communication skills is the perfect combination for a career in Web design.

## **Category: Designer Profiles and Portfolios**

Subcategory: Designer Profiles and Portfolios

### **Tip: Developing A Freelance Portfolio**

If you are trying to figure out how to set up your own freelance designer profile and portfolio, one of the best things you can do is look around. Browse the Websites of other designers and take a close look at how they are set up--as well as what they include. Take some notes that will help you remember features that you really like. You might want to include some information on things you don't like as well. You can also take a look at the Websites for larger firms that do work in your field. These can also be a good source of ideas. At the very least they can help give you an idea of current styles and trends when it comes to showcasing work. This will be an advantage when it comes to setting up your own portfolio. Looking at the work of others in your field can also help you be more aware of what the "competition" is doing so that you can set yourself apart. Pay special attention to the style of companies that you may want to work with and see what you may have that suits their look and tone. This research can make you stand out from others when it comes to pitching your services as a freelance designer, as it shows you can produce work that matches their vision.

### **Tip: Online Portfolios**

It doesn't matter if you're looking for a position at a Chicago graphic design company or hoping to start your own freelance business, you always need to have a good portfolio. In this digital age, many people are turning to the web to showcase their work, and this can be a great alternative to a traditional portfolio. Many sites on the web offer this type of service, so a simple search can provide a good starting point. In addition, certain talent agencies may offer a bit of their own web space to help you highlight some of your best work for potential clients. Take a look around and see what's available before you settle on a website, but give it some serious consideration as an addition to your regular portfolio. Savvy designers will understand the need to have both a physical portfolio and an online presence. It just makes sense, since you can't be sure what the client may prefer. If you have all the bases covered, you'll be able to show your best work to someone no matter where they're located.

### **Tip: Select Your Best Work**

It doesn't matter if you are putting together a Web designer portfolio or one for graphic design, there is one key rule to keep in mind--select only your best work for inclusion. When it comes to showing your abilities, keep in mind that quality is always better than quantity. This goes for on-line work in addition to print samples. So the next step raises a question--how do you choose your best work? Try and think about several things when selecting things to include. For example, if you have worked for a particularly well-known company, you may want to include them in your portfolio. Also, try to look at the work from a technical point of view. Is it outstanding? If not, you may want to leave it out. Even just a few well-chosen pieces can show your ability. Another thing that can be helpful is to get a second set of eyes on the work you are considering for the portfolio. Choose someone who has technical expertise as well as an understanding of the field, and have them take a look at your work. The feedback they give may help you finalize what you include. Once you have made your final selections, you are then ready to assemble the portfolio and shop it around.

### **Tip: The Portfolio Review**

Portfolio reviews can be stressful. Sitting in a room with a potential employer and discussing your work can make anyone nervous--even someone with an amazing graphic designer portfolio. There are some things that you can do to make the experience less nerve-wracking: Practice. Sit down with your book and talk to a range of different people about your work. The more you practice, the better you'll get. Make sure the work that you are showing is the absolute best you have. It will boost your confidence. Work on handling the portfolio while you are speaking and explaining your designs. Coordinating all of that can be a challenge and you won't want to try it out for the first time during an interview. Make sure to check your portfolio out a week or so prior to the interview. If there is something amiss, you'll have time to fix it before you go. Finding out last-minute would be a difficult situation to remedy. If you run through these things and get yourself ready to go, the portfolio review should be a snap.

### **Tip: Tips For A Professional Website**

Whether you were raised on New York graphic design concepts or have always gone off in your own direction, showcasing your portfolio is something that requires some serious attention. If you are planning on doing yours on the Web, there are some things you should think about ahead of time. If you already have extensive Web experience, you will already know most of these tips, but if you specialize in print, or aren't very Web savvy, you'll want to take the following into consideration: Make sure your name and contact information are easily visible and are written in a clear font. Don't make the site overly complicated. You'll want it to be simple to navigate and attractive to the eye. While it's fine to use some of your own style, try not to be too bold with your design. A short bio is nice to include, but keep it relevant. When selecting your images, make sure you have them at a size that won't load too slowly. At the same time, make sure that the quality is good enough to showcase your abilities. It may take a little bit of experimenting to get the mix just right. A resume page is a great addition. Don't put too much on the site. Choose your best work and try to narrow it down to somewhere around 10 to 14 pieces. You can always change them out periodically if you just can't decide. These simple tips will help you create a Website that is clean, informative and attractive. You can also talk with your Web designer and see if they have any additional suggestions.

### **Tip: Why You Need A Portfolio**

Whether you're a Chicago graphic designer or one in a smaller town, one thing is certain; you'll need to have a portfolio. Portfolios are sort of an "extended resume" for design professionals that highlight examples of their best work for potential employers or clients to see. This way the people reviewing your portfolio can see what your style is like and you have a chance to show off your strengths as a designer. Everyone in the field should try to develop a good portfolio of work, as it is an expectation that you will have one available for people to see. Graphic designers may have an on-line portfolio if they specialize in Web design, or a hard-copy book with a variety of samples. The way you set your portfolio up will depend on the work you are looking for and what your specialties are. Taking the time to set up a good portfolio is a worthwhile investment. Once you have one, review it periodically and update it with newer work. That way you will stay current with the trends and come across as a savvy, knowledgeable designer instead of one who is dated and old-fashioned.

## **Category: Freelance Career Agencies**

Subcategory: Freelance Career Agencies

### **Tip: Big Cities, Big Competition?**

If you want to be a Los Angeles graphic designer or are trying to get a job in the field in Chicago, New York, or other major cities, aligning yourself with a career agency is a smart move. The competition in these big cities is extremely stiff, and talent agencies are a tool that can be used to help you connect with work quickly. They can also assist you in finding a position that pays well and has the potential to turn into a full-time job. The bottom line is, if you're going to throw your hat in the ring in a place that has lots of competition, it's a great perk to have someone else helping you look for work. Even if you're not a freelancer, a talent agency can be a good way to get started on your career in a large city. Unless you have a job lined up, the search for work can be overwhelming. Traditional methods, such as job boards or looking through the paper may not bring immediate results or connect you with work that pays well. Even if you choose to look on your own, it doesn't hurt to have professionals who are familiar with the big city searching for you at the same time.

### **Tip: Career Agencies: Finding a Good Match**

If you're one of the many designers and artists that freelance for a living, you may want to consider enlisting the help of a career agency. If you decide to try one out, be sure to select a place that specializes in the creative fields. Chances are good that they will have already established relationships with companies that have the type of work you're trying to find. If you go with an agency that's geared more toward other career fields, they might not be able to locate work for you as easily. How can you tell if the agency is a good match? The first step is to visit their website and see what it can tell you. If you like what you see, make an appointment to speak with someone there and prepare a list of questions so that you get the answers you need. A good talent agency will be able to tell you specifics about what it is that they do and the kinds of jobs they can connect you with. Don't be afraid to shop around until you find a place that feels like it is a good fit.

### **Tip: Finding Freelance Work**

One of the most difficult things about making a living as a freelancer is actually finding the work. Once you have clients, keeping them happy is part of the job, but that task is often far easier than locating them in the first place. There are many ways to go about this process, but the savvy contractor will enlist the help of a talent agency to help them connect with work in the field. When large corporations are looking to hire a production artist or other creative, they often turn to these companies to give them a hand. Talent agencies (or career agencies) are in the business of making a good match between a business client and freelance workers. They do much of the groundwork, such as finding those companies that are looking to hire contractors and setting up the actual interview. Many times, these positions can be more lucrative than those you might find in the paper or on job boards. Even though they take a cut of the payment, they also help negotiate the fee, and they work hard to get a good rate for their contractors.

### **Tip: Interviewing an Agency**

If you're thinking about using a talent agency to help you get one of the coveted Los Angeles design jobs or to find freelance work near where you live, it's smart to think about interviewing them. After all, not all career agencies are created equal, and you'll want to make sure you're aligning yourself with one that will work hard to get you a job. Instead of being nervous for that first meeting, remember that you're trying to determine whether they're a good fit for you. In order to find out if it's a match, try asking some questions when you sit down with the agent. Some smart things to check into include: What type of clients they typically handle. Some examples of the companies they've placed talent with. How large their agency is and how many people they represent. How long they've been in business. What you can expect from them in terms of service.

## Category: Global Web Design

Subcategory: Global Web Design

### **Tip: Expanding Your Horizons**

If you are with a graphic design agency that works with global markets, you may want to try and expand your horizons a bit if you don't know a lot about the cultures you'll be dealing with on a regular basis. For example, if you are doing work for a company that has a strong presence in Japan, you may want to read a little about how the Japanese do business or about their culture in general. How can this help? Take the example above. The Japanese are a very group-oriented society, and once you learn a bit about that, you can fit it into consideration when drafting an ad campaign or setting up a Website. This is true for many different cultures as well. Each part of the world has a unique philosophy and viewpoint, and as the global market expands, understanding the ideas and ideals present in different areas of the world makes you more marketable as a designer. If you can show that you have a basic understanding of the global marketplace, you'll be positioned well to work in the field.

### **Tip: Looking At The Data**

If you're trying to create a Website with global appeal, you'll want to find out what that means in terms of the particular customer base you are trying to reach. The best way to do this is by reviewing data that can tell you more about the approach you should take. If you don't have any market research, you may want to hire a freelance marketing professional or someone who can pull together some information for you to review. If market research says that your heaviest customer base is going to be in Europe, you'll want to be sure that your measurements are listed in centimeters and meters as well as inches and feet. You'll also want to try and get an idea of how much demand there may be for your product in the global market so that you can estimate your production needs.

Are you going to use English as the language for the Website? Again, check out your markets before you commit to this. It may make sense for you to consider another language, or at the very least, give the customer options to choose from.

### **Tip: Shopping On The Web**

Once upon a time we ordered things from catalogues or leisurely browsed through the department store to check out the sales. Although these things still exist, the on-line market has become a player in the field as well. Not only can you shop on the Web, but you can buy things from all over the world--just with the click of a mouse. The evolution of worldwide shopping on the Web has created a new niche for Web designers as well. Shopping carts are the norm in terms of purchasing on-line goods, and their installation has become part of the portfolio of services that is often expected of Web designers. Setting up a shopping cart nowadays means taking global Web design principles into account. Since one never knows what country the customer is coming from, there must be provisions to address their particular currency and postage needs. Smart businesses will take these factors into account and look for Web designers that are able to do this type of work.

### **Tip: What Is Global Web Design?**

So what exactly is global Web design--and why is it important? Basically, global design means that cultural factors are taken into consideration when creating a Website or Web-related material. This can mean anything from language support to color selection, and it is an important component of doing business internationally on the Web. Understanding the likes and dislikes of a particular society can influence how a company is perceived. In addition, being aware of any cultural taboos can help prevent mistakes and misunderstandings. This is extremely important when it comes to setting up a Website or an e-commerce site. Global web design is fast becoming a sub-specialty in the Web development field. People with knowledge in this area are positioning themselves well for jobs in the future as global knowledge becomes more and more important. Companies are also becoming more aware of this idea and are looking for Web design professionals that have a good understanding of the global marketplace.

### **Tip: Working With Color**

If you are employed at a design agency, you will eventually need to learn how to use color for different global populations. Sometimes you may be limited in the amount of input you have in terms of color selection, but if asked, you should be able to speak intelligently about different choices and your reasons behind them in terms of the global marketplace. Throughout the world different colors can mean different things. Colors that in some cultures represent prosperity and luck may mean negative things in others. If you work with a company that does business overseas, you'll want to do a little

investigating as to what colors mean in the countries your client will be doing business with. If you can offer them some input on this, it will increase their confidence in your abilities and ultimately, deliver a more targeted product. These days it isn't enough to have a good knack for color selection. If you'll be specializing in global Web design then you must have a good grasp of this subject and how it can affect your client. With the expansion of on-line marketing and shopping it is becoming an increasingly important facet of the Web design industry.

### **Tip: Working With Fonts**

Fonts may not seem to be much of an issue when it comes to creating an international Web design concept, but the truth is the one you select can be very important. The typeface on a Website can definitely have a major impact on its global appeal. Some cursive fonts can be extremely difficult to read and may not work well on a Website that needs to be clear and simple. In addition, some fonts use all capital letters; which can sometimes be interpreted as rude or as improper etiquette. The shade you select for lettering may play a role as well, as colors can have a cultural meaning. Thinking through your font selection can save you from problems down the line, so don't push this issue to the side before you do a little investigating. Browse other Websites that have global audiences and see what they are doing to see if you can get some ideas. You may be able to find some smart strategies you can use for your own work.

## Category: How Not to Interview

Subcategory: How Not to Interview

### **Tip: Interview Blunder: Appearing Distracted**

Appearing distracted during an interview can be a big mistake. The person who is interviewing you will be looking for signs that you are engaged in the conversation, such as eye contact and quick responses. Attending to them shows the professionalism that is expected in this type of situation, and if they don't think you are listening, you probably won't be considered for the position. So what are some ways you may appear uninterested? The number one thing to watch out for is your cell phone. It is vital that you turn it off prior to an interview, so check this--and double-check it when you get to the building. It doesn't matter if you are hoping to get a creative director job or one as an editorial assistant; a ringing phone will leave you off the hire list pretty darn quick. Your watch is another potential issue. If it chimes on the hour, turn the feature off--or ask someone to do it for you if you aren't sure how. Also, don't check the time at all while you are speaking with the person who is interviewing you; they may find it rude. Fidgeting is another thing to keep an eye out for as it can make you look either bored or nervous.

**Tip: Interview Blunder: Complaining**

When you were a freelance copy editor, your boss repeatedly called you at home to ask you questions late at night. Should you comment on or complain about things like this if asked in an interview? The answer is simple--no. Stick to the positive, otherwise the person that it may reflect badly on is you. While it can be tempting to tell people about the crazy co-worker you had, or the demanding, irrational boss that walked around barefoot in his office, the truth is, in an interview situation people will not see this in a good light. Even minor negativity can make you look like an ungrateful gossip. After all, people haven't met the people you are talking about, so the person who comes across poorly is you. A great strategy to combat this is to re-frame negative things in a different light. For example, rather than just talking about your crazy co-worker's behavior, emphasize your ability to get along with all types of people. Instead of revealing all the flaws that your demanding boss had, talk about how you are able to meet and exceed expectations. This way, you can refrain from looking ungrateful or petty, and make yourself look good as well.

**Tip: Interview Blunder: Talking Too Much**

It doesn't matter if you are interviewing for a position as a writer, production artist or art director; the one thing you don't want to do is talk too much. In an interview it is expected that you will answer questions, elaborate a bit on answers and ask about various details. This is all considered within the bounds of reasonable behavior, but going on and on disturbs the natural flow of information that should be going back and forth during the interview. You may find that the urge to chatter on endlessly hits you at times like this--after all--you are probably a bit nervous. If you find you are a real talker during interviews, you may want to practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and visualization before you go in to help yourself stay calm. If you suddenly realize you have been talking for a long time, just bring your current thought to an end and wait for the other person to speak. It really is that simple! Another great way to curb your desire to talk a lot during interviews is to practice. Try having a friend interview you. Schedule several interviews and practice; even if you may not ultimately wind up taking the position. Once you have some strategies under your belt, it will be a lot easier to feel comfortable when you are talking with someone about a job.

## Category: How to Get a Job

Subcategory: How to Get a Job

**Tip: What About Cold Calling?**

If you are job hunting, you may want to consider "cold calling" as a way to begin the search. Although the idea of starting from scratch may at first seem unappealing, there

are some advantages to looking for employment in this way. Cold calling can pay off since you may wind up finding out about an available position before it is actually advertised. This can give you the jump on applying for the job before other people find out about it. Typically the best way to check is to call the human resources department and simply ask if they have any openings at this time. If there is nothing available, you can ask if they will let you send in a resume to keep on file for future reference. Another good thing about approaching the job hunt in this way is that you can select employers that you are excited about working for. For example, if you are a freelance graphic artist, you can allot some time each week to cold calling potential clients--you may pick up another one this way. Or, if you are thinking about looking for another job, you can gradually start putting feelers out by calling around and seeing what may be available. Probably the best part about looking for a job this way is the fact that you can do it in addition to other approaches. Even if you are scanning the classified section every week and have signed on with a talent agency, you can still make some cold calls to see what is out there.

## Category: How to Hire the Perfect Candidate

Subcategory: How to Hire the Perfect Candidate

### **Tip: Choosing The Interview Format**

The format of a job interview can be a key factor to consider when looking at candidates for a particular position. Whether you are looking for a creative art director or a freelance production artist, there are many different ways to conduct an interview. Matching the process to your company style can be a good way to decide on which you prefer. It can also be a smart way to uncover the perfect candidate for the job. Here are some examples of interview styles: Screening interview. This type of interview can be conducted over the phone or in person, and is often used to narrow down the field of potential candidates. It can be a great way to save time if you have many applicants for one position. Lunch interview. This kind of interview is a good one for companies with a more casual atmosphere. In addition to exploring qualifications, it can give you an idea of how the person conducts themselves and how they interact with others in a social setting. Formal interview. This is what most people think of when the word "interview" is mentioned. The one-on-one, sit down at a desk discussion about a particular job. Group interview. Sometimes more than one person will be interviewing a candidate. Group interviews can be a good choice if there are many people who need to have input on the person who is being hired. Regardless of what format you choose, try to make sure that you won't be disturbed or overly distracted by the environment that you select. Consider the different interview types and decide which one will work best for your particular organization; and for the position you are looking to hire. A number of factors will come into play, but knowing ahead of time which one you want to go with will help the process go more smoothly overall.

### **Tip: Consider Exit Interviews**

Does your company utilize exit interviews? While at first it may seem that an exit interview has nothing to do with hiring the perfect candidate for a job at your organization; that actually isn't the case. This type of interview can help you learn about how employees see their role in the company. It can also help point out any strengths and weaknesses; giving you the opportunity to address them and improve the work environment. Even a freelance artist may be able to offer you valuable feedback. If you have a human resources department, you may want to assign this duty to them. You'll need to decide if the interview will be formal or casual, and what type of paperwork will be involved. Some things that are typically included on an exit interview form include: Employee name, identification number, job title and termination date The reason why they are leaving and if they will be eligible for re-hire Comments by the employee and the interviewer Questions such as their areas of satisfaction with the company/position and any areas of frustration or dissatisfaction. You can opt to include other questions as well, based upon what you are hoping to learn about your company. In order to use the exit interview as a tool to improve your work environment, be sure that the appropriate people are contacted based upon the feedback given in the review. Positive feedback as well as improvement opportunities should both be highlighted.

### **Tip: Interviewing: The Information Exchange**

A good interview is more than a question and answer session; it is also an *exchange* of information. You learn about a potential employee or contractor--and they learn about your organization as well. The flow of information should really go both ways to make sure the match is a good one. For example, if you are interviewing freelance creative directors, not only will you want to see if someone is a good fit for your organization, but you'll also want to tell them about what it is like to work for your company. If both parties are satisfied with what they learn; the match is likely to be a great one. The beginning of an interview is the perfect time to give a potential new-hire a brief overview of the work environment, company history and the job position. Spend a few minutes talking about these things to help candidates feel more comfortable, as well as answer any questions they may have going into the interview. The end of the interview is another good time to answer questions and explain anything that you feel may need clarification. This type of information exchange is helpful to have the interviewee learn more about your organization, but it is also a way to help you learn more about them as well. The kind of questions that they ask can help you discover things that you may not have seen in the interview.

### **Tip: Know What You Want From A Candidate**

Hiring someone for your organization is no small task. In some ways, it is almost like dating; in order to get a good match, you first need to know what it is that you are

looking for in a potential candidate. This can be accomplished by having a frank discussion with others in your organization about what type of experience and attitude are desirable for a new hire in your company. Overall, you'll want to choose a qualified applicant, who can do the tasks required of them in the position. It helps to have a list of what those tasks are, so that you can match them up with the candidate's experience and see if they are complimentary. This information can then be used to draw up an appropriate job description that will help clarify the roles and responsibilities involved in the position. You'll also want to find a person who will fit in well with your organization's mission and vision; especially if they will be in a position to lead others and influence company policy. Try to include interview questions that can help explore this fit as well. It doesn't matter if you are looking for an art director or a writer, the overall fit with the company can be important to a smooth working relationship. Before the interview, review the job description and interview questions to keep the important points in mind so that you are prepared to look for them during your time with the interviewee. Knowing what you want from a candidate is a key step in finding the right person for your organization.

### **Tip: The Power Of Recruiting**

People often think of the hiring process with finality; you have an opening, you look for a candidate, and then you fill the opening. For many reasons, this may not be the best way to get talented people on your team. While traditional methods have their allure, recruiting can sometimes be a better way to go. So what does recruiting mean exactly? Basically, it means that one way or another, you are always on the lookout for sharp, new talent. While you may not be *hiring* these people immediately, you can still collect information to keep on file. Recruiting is a smart concept that is often utilized by top companies who are always actively searching out the best and the brightest to join their ranks. This proactive approach can help you insure that your company stays on the cutting edge when it comes to hiring new employees. For example, if a graphic artist freelance job suddenly comes up; you'll already have a candidate waiting in the wings. While recruiting isn't right for every company; you may want to take just a moment to decide if it might be something for yours to consider. If you don't have the resources to do this in-house, you may want to retain the services of a recruiting company to do it for you. The search for talent can be long, but recruiting can bring you one step closer.

## **Category: Inside the Design Studio**

Subcategory: Inside the Design Studio

### **Tip: Basic Ergonomics**

Ergonomics are an important factor to consider when it comes to setting up your workstation. Web design studios and those for graphic design both rely heavily on

computers for their work. Although sitting in a plush chair may be comfortable for a while, it will eventually result in an aching back and stiff neck. There are many ways to customize your work area to be sure you are not injuring yourself while on the job. Here are some things to consider: Your mouse. Finding the right mouse for graphic design work is key to remaining injury-free. Many designers also like using a tablet for their work. Your chair. Make sure it's adjustable and that you know what the proper height is for your body. You should be able to place your feet flat on the floor and the chair should have back support. Your desk or table. Regardless of whether you have a laptop or a full computer, you'll want to make sure that it is positioned well for you on your desk. Lighting. Screen brightness, room lighting and sunlight are all things you need to think through in your work environment. Taking frequent breaks can be very helpful. Be sure to rest your eyes, stretch and walk around periodically. Preventing injury from repetitive motion should be something that is taken into account by anyone who uses a computer to perform their work on a daily basis.

### **Tip: Considerations For The Design Studio**

You might work for a fancy Los Angeles graphic design studio or you may be a freelance designer that works from home; either way you'll want to consider what your studio area is going to look like. In addition, you will want to make sure it functions well for your needs as a designer. So what are some of the main factors you will need to address? If you work for a larger company, chances are they will have much of the studio set up already, but that doesn't mean you can't customize your own work area. Make sure the ergonomics are healthy and make every effort to create an environment where you will feel creative and comfortable. You'll feel better in the long run if you set things up right from the beginning. If you freelance or work from home, portability may be a major factor in your overall setup. Think through what will make that an easier process, and enable you to stay organized as well. You may want to consider things such as cushioned carry cases and computer security features. If most of your equipment is in your home, you may also want to look into additional insurance so that you are sure you are covered.

### **Tip: Ergonomics: Workstation Setup**

What the setup is like inside a Web design studio or graphic design company can make a big difference when it comes to your body and how it feels. If you haven't yet overhauled your workstation to make sure you are set up well ergonomically; now is the time. Here are some tips on how to make the most of things while being kind to your limbs: Use a headset if you are on the phone a good deal. Make sure that frequently used items are easy to access and use. Use your mouse at the same level as your keyboard. Try to keep your wrists in a neutral position, not bent. Change positions often and rest your eyes frequently. One very important thing to remember is that if you are feeling pain anywhere, you may be developing a repetitive stress injury (RSI) from overuse or improper use. If you find something is bothering you, take a look at the tasks

you're doing and setup you have for that part of your body to see if you can make any healthy changes or adjustments.

### **Tip: Greening Your Studio**

When it comes to your graphic design studio, there are many different ways you can "go green". If you are looking to reduce energy use and waste on the job, here are some great tips to get you started: Recycle. Set up an area for cans, bottles and paper and recycle whatever you can. Use old paper as scrap and bring coffee cups from home that you can wash instead of using disposables. Every little bit helps. Change bulbs. Using florescent bulbs uses less energy than other bulbs. Change them out where you can. Don't forget bathrooms, closets and hallways. Power strips. Putting electronics that don't need to be on all the time on a power strip allows you to turn them all off with the flip of a switch. This will result in energy savings since most electronics use power even when switched off. Outdoor lighting. Consider solar lights for outdoor use if possible. Timers. Use timers for indoor and outdoor lighting to save energy. Programmable thermostat. This item allows you to adjust the temperature based on if there will be anyone in the building. You can use less heat and air conditioning when people aren't there, reducing your overall energy use. Use recycled products, such as paper, paper towels and toilet paper. Just using these simple tips will help you save energy at work, and the best part is that you can use them at home as well. Remember--greening the design studio doesn't have to be an overwhelming task!

### **Tip: Setting Up A Freelance Graphic Design Studio**

Setting up a freelance graphic design studio can be a time-consuming task. Going into business for yourself means taking care of a lot of details--as well as carrying a full workload. You'll need to come up with your own logo and marketing collateral, navigate the books, scout for work and more if you are self-employed. As a freelancer you can work from home, or even rent a small office. Going into business with a writer or another graphic designer are other options that you can consider. You'll need to choose a name for your company, file any necessary paperwork, create a business portfolio, get a Website up and running and attend to many other start-up tasks. You may want to consult a small business lawyer and accountant for advice when you are trying to pull everything together. They can often help you navigate the details so that you are sure that you are covered when it comes to taxes and other details. Self-starters with a knack for multi-tasking may enjoy the freedom that comes with a freelance lifestyle; but it isn't for everyone. Some people prefer the security of a company environment, along with the steady pay and solid benefits. Only you will know if a freelance career is right for you.

### **Tip: Studio Decor**

When it comes to studio decor, you'll want to be sure you select something that fits with

your company image. Stodgy furniture or old-fashioned designs won't work well in the graphic arts industry. You don't have to go too far out on a limb, but you'll want to be sure you are decorating with a fresh and contemporary style. Clean lines are always a classic choice, and you can even punctuate space with colors from your company's logo to help reinforce branding. Try to create a waiting area that is pleasant and comfortable, and consider hanging some artwork there as well. Plants are another good choice; just make sure they are low maintenance and that your lighting conditions will work for the type of greenery you pick. In the design field it can be a good idea to set aside some meeting space so that you have an area to sit with clients and talk. Be sure and include a computer with a nice display in the room in case you are going to look at designs or discuss revisions. This way you can keep your own work area more private and set it up however it works best for you.

## Category: Web Technology

Subcategory: Web Technology

### **Tip: Search Engines**

Search engines enable Web users to find information quickly. They are also a tool that can be used for marketing. When it comes to Web design technologies, it can help to know a bit about how these tools are used and what you can do to position your client's site well. This means that at the very least you will need to look into information about search engine optimization and submission. Search engine submission means getting a particular Website listed with search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Alta Vista and others. This is a basic step that should always be done, and it can differ slightly, depending on which one you submit to. Most have directions for submission, but knowing a bit more about how they work can be advantageous. Search engine optimization means positioning a site so that it will rank well on a search. This is becoming a specialty field in itself, but it is also something a Web designer should understand. There are many things that can be done to move a Website up in the rankings, and not all of them are complex. Taking a class in this subject can be a smart move for those in the field, as it will show you are serious about more than just delivering a Website.

### **Tip: The Mobile Web**

These days, technology is rapidly advancing and the Web is becoming more and more mobile. As people begin to search for information from their phones, laptops have become smaller and more portable, and because of all of this the Web designer's job will have a new set of challenges. New and emerging Web technologies are beginning to look more closely at things such as all-in-one devices and built-in wireless technology. In the future, it seems possible that a Web designer might be asked to set

up a phone, load an MP3 player and put up a Web page--all for the same client. The iPhone has begun a trend in mobile technology that looks as though it will not only continue, but flourish as time goes on. The mobility factor also means that things such as remote storage and compressed files may take on a new importance. Although it isn't yet clear which direction things will go, a good designer will be paying attention to the advances and readying themselves to meet them as they come. The mobile Web is something to keep an eye on in that regard.

### **Tip: The Web Camera**

Web cameras have been one of the new and emerging Web technologies to appear on the scene, and they can be very beneficial to designers. Since work on the Web is often done remotely, using a Web camera can help personalize interactions over the computer and add another dimension to a conversation. Videoconferencing is one possibility, as well as one-on-one video calls. Some computers have built-in Web cameras these days, and a webcam can be added to those that don't. The cameras are very easy to use and you can typically turn them off if you prefer to be on a call without video. Web cameras are also being used in some places for security purposes. You'll have to take a look at your business and see if using a Web camera could be right for you, but many people find them a useful addition to the office environment. Overall they are fairly inexpensive as well. Think about what applications you might use a Web camera in and evaluate if it could be a worthwhile investment for your business.

## Category: Web Training

Subcategory: Web Training

### **Tip: Benefits Of Web Based Training**

Whether you are looking to move into the field of content writing or are looking to hone your current skills as a graphic designer, Web based training can be a good thing to investigate. This type of training comes in many forms, such as tutorials, classes and formal coursework. There are certain advantages to this type of training. First of all, it is extremely accessible; you don't have to leave your computer or travel a long distance to do it. Second, it tends to be organized in a "step-by-step" fashion, allowing for ease of use. A third benefit of Web based training is that you can customize it to fit your schedule, rather than the other way around. Although this type of training may not be suitable for all situations, it can be very helpful for busy professionals that just need to learn new skills or upgrade their current knowledge base. It is also becoming more popular, as many companies are beginning to use this type of training for continuing education in the field.

### **Tip: Creating A Web Based Training Program: Step 2**

The second step in creating a Web based training program is to actually create the material as it will be used on-line. This step will be implemented by your Web professional, although you will undoubtedly want to review and approve the final content. It is during this portion of the process that you will need to address issues such as bandwidth demand, ease of access to the material and storage. At the beginning of the Web programming training issues may arise, such as overall speed and loading times. You may need to adjust the materials to fix these problems, and the best time to do it is during this phase. Once the training program is live, it will be more difficult to change. Be sure and communicate with your Web professional and make any tweaks to the overall picture before you begin using it with employees. You may want to run through the finished program yourself to review it, or have a few select employees test it before you sign off on the final product.

### **Tip: Offering Web Based Training**

If you are thinking about offering a Web based training program through your company, there are a few things to consider on the front end. It doesn't matter if you are trying to set up a Web design training program or a simple tutorial, you'll need to know what the requirements will be for your computer system before you get started. One of the potential issues with a Web based training program is bandwidth limitations. You'll need to think about things such as what type of load your system can handle in terms of usage and make sure your server can handle the traffic. In addition, if the training will be heavily picture or video based, it can result in slower load times and poor performance. In addition, someone must be responsible for coordinating the training. This person will need to take the time to provide information to employees as to how to sign on, as well as troubleshoot and answer questions along the way.