UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

Edmond, Oklahoma

College of Graduate Studies & Research

Public Awareness of Graphic Design

A THESIS APPROVED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN DESIGN

By

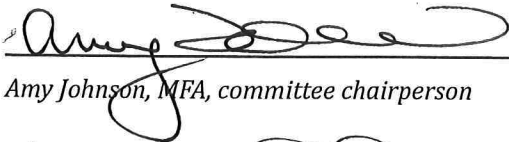Samantha Bohn

Edmond, Oklahoma

2011
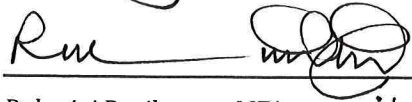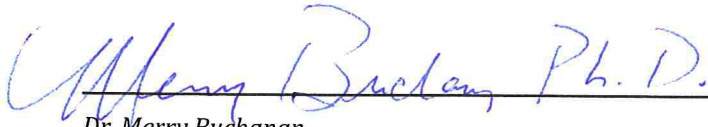
SIGNATURES

Student signature

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Accreditation: "To recognize (an educational institution) as maintaining standards that qualify the graduates for admission to higher or more specialized institutions or for professional practice" (Merriam & Webster, 2011).

AIGA: "Founded in 1914 as the American Institute of Graphic Arts, AIGA remains the oldest and largest professional membership organization for design and is now known simply as 'AIGA, the professional association for design' (AIGA, 2011).

Certification: "Formal procedure by which an accredited or authorized person or agency assesses and verifies (and attests in writing by issuing a certificate) the attributes, characteristics, quality, qualification, or status of individuals or organizations, goods or services, procedures or processes, or events or situations, in accordance with established requirements or standards" (BusinessDictionary.com, 2011).

Credibility: "the quality or power of inspiring belief" (Merriam & Webster, 2010).

*Graphic design: "*Graphic designers work with drawn, painted, photographed, or computer-generated images (pictures), but they also design the letterforms that make up various typefaces found in movie credits and TV ads; in books, magazines, and menus; and even on computer screens. Designers create, choose, and organize these elements-typography, images, and the so-called "white space" around them-to communicate a message. Graphic design is a part of your daily life. From humble things like gum wrappers to huge things like billboards to the T-shirt you're wearing, graphic design informs, persuades, organizes, stimulates,

locates, identifies, attracts attention and provides pleasure. Graphic design is a

creative process that combines art and technology to communicate ideas. The

designer works with a variety of communication tools in order to convey a

message from a client to a particular audience. The main tools are image and

typography" (The American Institute of Graphic Arts, 1993).

Graphic designers: "Sometimes referred to as 'communication designers,' (graphic

designers) are visual ambassadors of ideas: their role is to translate, communicate

— and occasionally even agitate — by rendering thinking as form, process and

experience" (Drenttel & Helfand, 2009).

Mac: Short for Macintosh computer.

Professional:

1: "A professional designer shall acquaint himself or herself with a client's

business and design standards and shall act in the client's best interest within the

limits of professional responsibility" (AIGA, 2010).

2: "A professional designer shall work only for a fee, a royalty, salary or other

agreed-upon form of compensation" (AIGA, 2010).

3: "Worthy of or appropriate to a professional person; competent, skillful, or

assured" (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Prosumerism: "simultaneous production and consumption" (Siegel, 2006).

ABSTRACT

For more than 30 years, the graphic design industry has been searching for a solution to communicate to the public, to the business world, and to leaders exactly *why* graphic design is important and *what* graphic designers actually do. As of yet, little has been developed or implemented. This research was in response to the lack of resolved action on the subject. The ultimate purpose of this research is to arm the graphic design industry with an enhanced perspective on the state and level of public awareness of graphic design. This research asks the question, "How can the graphic design industry best communicate the role of a graphic designer?" The eventual solution to the research question, based on a review of literature, was to conduct a survey to form a statistical groundwork of the current level of public awareness. An eventual campaign will help the graphic design industry better communicate to the public about graphic design. With increased understanding among the public, graphic designers would be able to better perform their duties and, in turn, would enhance society through more effective design solutions.

INTRODUCTION

The graphic design industry has struggled to communicate the role of professional graphic designers. Before advancements in technology in the 1980s, graphic design was predominantly left to artists and a skilled group of craftsmen and craftswomen called commercial artists. The industry largely went unnoticed by the public until advancements in computer hardware and software in the 1980s allowed the average consumer access to technology that was previously only attainable by professional designers. This led to a great stream of amateur graphic designers and diminished respect for professional graphic designers as a result of easy access to design software (Shapiro, 1993; Gold, 1995; Swanson, 1995; Giffen, 2004). The public perception was that what previously was accomplished by skilled practitioners could now be done by simply clicking a few buttons (Gold, 1995). The one, perhaps positive, advantage to the rise in amateur designers was that the public, previously unaware of the graphic design as a profession, now was ostensibly aware.

Since the 1980s, graphic designers have discussed how to achieve a better understanding of their profession among the public. Solutions such as a certification system have been discussed the most often. However, another solution—a public awareness campaign—was briefly discussed and applauded, but never devised. This research began as an attempt to develop such a campaign. However, before any group or individual can begin to tackle the issue of a lack of public awareness, the industry needs to have enough foundational knowledge about the current state of

public awareness to understand how to communicate to the public about graphic design. This research serves that purpose.

Results of the survey will enlighten the graphic design industry about the current level of public awareness of graphic design. That knowledge could lead to a solution to communicate to the public about the benefits of professional, effective design. In turn, employers and clients would hire more competent, effective designers who, in turn, would enhance the quality of the industry's output and the overall clarity and efficacy of communication. Long-term benefits of a future solution include reducing the number of ineffective designers and their output; clients and employers may better select more qualified designers for their projects; and people previously uninterested in the need for and benefits of successful design may be more inclined to engage a professional instead of attempting to design themselves.

This research asks the question, "How can the graphic design industry best communicate the role of the graphic designer?" The research solution, as it turned out, was that before any communication can begin, the design industry must better understand what exactly needs communicating.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The most oft-discussed solution to a lack of public awareness is a certification plan that would purportedly weed out ill-prepared practitioners and award a mark of professionalism to those who have the right amount of education, knowledge, and experience (Shapiro, 1993). The discussion heated up in the early

1990s, mostly notably spearheaded by professional graphic designer and writer

Ellen Shapiro.

Certification

The crux of the problem in the 1990s—and still existent today—is that the

supply of graphic designers exceeds demand (Gold, 1995; Shapiro, 1993). Numerous

educational programs of varying quality and standards graduate thousands of

students every year. By some estimates, as many as 40,000 students could be

entering the market every year (Heller, 2005). It then becomes difficult for

employers and the public to decipher what exactly a professional designer is and

does. In addition, this overabundance of graphic designers and an uneducated

public have lead to reduced income for professional designers (Shapiro). With

employers and clients' misunderstanding the worth of graphic design, the

professionals' role in the design process has been underappreciated. Designers now

experience clients with little trust for designers and who attempt to control the

process (Shapiro, 1993). The surplus of designers has ultimately led to the

deterioration of the public image of professional graphic design. Certification

entered the discussion as a solution to these problems.

The rewards of a certification plan seemed lucrative to some in the industry:

increased awareness by employers and clients of a professional graphic designers;

gatekeeping of amateurs; and the establishment of standards (Swanson, 1995;

Shapiro, 1994; Gold, 1995). But the rationale and vague planning of a certification

plan left much to be desired. And, ultimately, the debate seemed to be centered more

around the issue of education—that too many students are entering the field

inadequately prepared or are inappropriate for the industry altogether. If that is the

case, a program already exists for accrediting educational programs: The National

Association of Schools of Art and Design accredits schools that meet the criteria and

requirements for admission to the association, which, according to the association's

website, can be used as a tool for students and parents to determine whether a school

is high quality. While there may be no in-place certification plan in the United States,

NASAD does provide an accreditation route for educational programs.

Shapiro's certification plan in particular was structured in such a way that taste

and aesthetic standards were not part of the equation. Instead, education, experience,

and basic knowledge comprised the test. However, if taste and level of aesthetic skill

were not part of the certification process, then, according to Swanson (1995), how

exactly would certification generate a set of standards for the profession? Practitioners

and critics have raised these, and other questions, over the past two decades.

Designer, educator, and writer Gunnar Swanson (1995) cited a fundamental

flaw in certification: If the difference between an amateur and a professional is

"esthetic refinement," then a test that does not analyze a designer's taste will

ultimately not solve the problem (p. 108). In addition, Swanson (1995) noted that a

certification system might not dissuade some amateurs from entering the field. "Do

we think the desktop publishers are going to say, 'Oh, sorry. I didn't realize this was

holy ground. I'll pack up and leave' " (p. 108). Shapiro's plan also held logistical

shortages. Swanson (1995) highlighted holes such as a lack in an overarching

organization that could oversee such a program. Even the premier professional

organization for graphic design in the United States, AIGA, the Professional

Association for Design, (previously referred to as the American Institute of Graphic

Arts) would likely be overwhelmed by the logistics in running such a program

(Swanson, 1995). Another significant issue that Swanson (1995) noted in a

certification plan was the risk that design schools would teach students to the test.

Certainly, certification rates would become a factor in the measurement of a school's

quality. And the risk is palpable that faculty could succumb to the pressure to produce

students capable of passing such a certification test (Swanson, 1995). In addition, in

comparison with interior designer certification, there is little chance that a graphic

designer's actions could result in an issue of life or death. Swanson (1995) ended his

argument by calling the pro-certification camp to action. He asked for an outline and

sample of the test so that practitioners can determine if the test will be beneficial to

the industry. Designer Ed Gold repeated Gunnar Swanson's call to arms for those in

the pro-certification camp to produce a sample test (Gold, 1995).

In the Canadian province of Ontario, however, the certification movement has

taken on a more active role through the establishment of the Registered Graphic

Designers of Ontario. The organization certifies graphic designers in Ontario who have

met the organization's rigorous standards and satisfy the requirements for education

and experience (Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario, 2011). In all, however, it

took an Act of the Ontario Legislature to establish such an organization that certifies

graphic designers. The RGD of Ontario is the only graphic design organization of this type in North America (Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario, 2011).

Certification, no doubt, has been debated possibly more so than any other component of the industry, but so, too, has the discussion of who and what is to blame for the public's misconceptions about graphic designers.

Public education

When the certification was at its hottest in the early 1990s, a panel of graphic design experts and leaders from other, similar fields with certification programs were convened. Some of the graphic design members were pro-certification while others were not. The discussion went back and forth between certification and education—and the holes within the theory of certification—but what arose from the panel was that the issue at its heart was pubic education and the education of the individual ("Are graphic designers certifiable?" 1995).

Designer Joseph Essex had the following to say about alternatives to certification: "If we had educated clients who could perceive the difference between what was good and what was bad, we wouldn't have this problem. We're talking about an educated audience and an educated, prepared consumer" (p. 40). Schwartz of the Industrial Design Society of America agrees with Essex:

Designers don't get no respect. It doesn't matter what the discipline is. In spite of certification and licensing, legal licensing, architects have the same damn discussion all the time. This is not an issue of certification, it's an issue of public education. It's an issue of the culture and the country (p. 38).

Another expert from a related field, Gray, of the Public Relations Society, also echoed

the argument for public awareness:

> What I wouldn't recommend you do is go out and spend a lot of money. I
>
> think you need to do something that raises standards and heightens public
>
> awareness of standards. Have a subcommittee at the top of your organization
>
> looking at your image as a profession, and from that could flow suggested
>
> types of article placement and perhaps some modest advertising (p. 38).

Graphic design historian and educator, the late Phillip Meggs, was a proponent of

certification but still noted the need for a focus on education: "First I think we need

to address the issue of accrediting education and deciding if young designers

entering the field would benefit from some sort of certification" (p. 36). Even

Shapiro, a staunch supporter of certification, seemed to be at odds with some of her

own theories when she casually mentioned running a campaign using AIGA member

dues: "If each of the AlGA's 8,000 members paid $200 each in additional dues, we'd

have $1.7 million, enough to hire Fallon McElligott to do a nice little campaign that

runs in magazines clients do read" (p. 32).

In all, the panel seemed to have devised a new alternative to certification:

public education. The panel in 1995 could not agree that certification was the

correct route to enhance the professional graphic design industry. AIGA also has

decided not to pursue that route (AIGA, 2001; "Are Graphic Designers Certifiable?"

1995). In a 2001 member survey by AIGA, the organization had this to say about its

stance on certification (AIGA, 2001):

It would simply be too difficult to find a meaningful way to certify designers.

Many also feel that certification is an inappropriate way to define the kind of

judgment that good designers offer (AIGA, 2001).

AIGA has instead opted to pursue alternative routes such as focusing on

accreditation and promoting the value of AIGA membership as a distinguishing

mark of professionalism (AIGA, 2001).

Industry Problems

Technology and amateurs

Technology has largely become the culprit of the amateur tide and resulting

public misconceptions. However, pundits such as Ed Gold are quick to point out that

technology is as much to blame as designers themselves. Gold (1995) bases this

assertion on the fact that no tangible certification plan has ever been devised by an

organization. He equates that inaction to "sticking their heads in the sand."

According to Gold, designers should be moved to action when faced with a growing

population of amateurs (Gold, 1995):

If we don't send a signal to our own peers and clients that we, as a profession,

as design organizations and as individuals, care deeply about the value of

design, both in the marketplace and as artifacts that either enhance or

beautify our world or pollute it, who will? (p. 298)

This laissez-faire attitude resulted in no viable action from the graphic design

industry, according to Gold (1995).

Shapiro (1994) also mentions technology as at least one fault in the increasing number of misconceptions about graphic design. Shapiro (1994) suggested "not entirely in jest" at a conference in 1994 to lobby software companies to place warning labels on professional design software that reads: WARNING: The examples pictured herein were created by a professional graphic designer. If you are not a professional graphic designer, even if you follow the directions implicitly, you may not be able to achieve the same results" (p. 47). She goes on to say that members of the audience at the conference agreed, seemingly becoming more aware of the growing need for a solution to the growing layers of misconceptions and amateur graphic designers.

Education

The first dilemma the graphic design industry must contend with is the void in design education not only in K-12 schools but also in liberal arts universities (Gold, 1995; Poyner, 2011). Gold points out that most often, art programs are the first programs to be cut from both K-12 settings and universities. This move, ultimately, sends the message that literacy in the arts is inferior. Gold, like others, chides the U.S. educational system at all levels for failing to provide visual literacy. Some of the solutions have been to require a graphic design history course as part of a liberal arts education (Golec, 2004). Another solution is to create marriages between design schools and business colleges (Gold, 1995). This marriage would begin to equip emerging business leaders with basic knowledge and subsequent respect for design innovation.

Ignorance

Another major issue at hand for the graphic design industry is that often times, people hiring a designer are uneducated as to what a graphic designer does (Gold, 1995). The ignorance is significant enough that the hiring official most likely will not accurately be able to decipher between a good designer and an ineffective one. The abundance and access to professional design programs of varying quality, the lack of design education across the U.S. education system, ignorant hiring officials, and designers' laissez-faire stance have led to significant misconceptions among the public about what a graphic designers is and does (Shapiro, 1994; Gold, 1995). Shapiro (1994) also mentions that this same ignorance extends into the public sphere, where "even my mother doesn't understand (what I do)" is a typical turn-of-phrase among graphic designers. However, the problem lies in the most fundamental element in the exchange of goods and services: supply and demand. Too many designers and not enough educated clients have lead to diminished respect for and trust in professional graphic designers (Shapiro, 1994; Gold, 1995).

Oversupply of designers

Gold (1995) suggests raising the expectations of business leaders and the public. This would require some form of education, which leads to his second recommendation: a public relations campaign. According to Gold (1995), this would require a significant commitment:

If we really want to help clients understand what they should expect and

demand from a graphic designer, a full-blown advertising and public

relations effort would have to be mounted. This takes a lot of money (p. 297).

In order to undertake such a task, he suggests using dues from a certification

program. However, Shapiro has suggested using money raised from AIGA member

fees ("Are graphic designers certifiable?" 1995). In regard to education of the public,

Gold also takes issues with AIGA and other professional design organizations, which,

according to him, should be paying more attention to enhancing the industry since,

ultimately, that was the intention of their creation in the first place. While Gold (1995)

and others support public education as a solution to the overriding public

misconceptions, others, such as Michael Bierut, have different concerns and solutions.

Designer, critic, and educator Michael Bierut sees no "silver bullet" to earning

the public's trust and respect (2006). The perhaps best method, according to Bierut,

is to earn clients' respect:

As a class, we designers long to wrap ourselves in the bulletproof cloak of our

profession, thinking that if "a place at the table" is reserved for something

called "design," maybe we can slide into that empty seat. But the game

doesn't bring the player; the player brings the game. Every great designer

I've ever met has gotten respect the old fashioned way, by earning it (Beirut,

2006, para. 12).

And, as for the proponents of public education, Bierut has something to say about

that too. It's very simple, according to Bierut: You don't attempt to educate them

(Beirut, 2011). Clients shouldn't be bothered with the minutiae of graphic design, such as color and font choices. If a designer finds him- or herself grappling with a client who fights every design decision, that designer should refuse to work with that client again (Bierut, 2011). And, as for the client who demands quantifiable data on why a particular design decision is correct, then, too, should that designer move on to different clients (Bierut, 2011). Design often is not a provable venture; you need clients who trust the process and the designer's decisions (Bierut, 2011). According to Bierut, the future of design relies on designers who have the guts to tell a client they're wrong but also those who choose to work only with clients who trust and value what design innovation brings to the table. Building relationships with *good* clients is key, according to Bierut (2011).

Anti-design designers

If public education is a solution, then it faces at least one uphill battle against what Steven Heller calls the "cult of the ugly" (Heller, 1994). More specifically, Heller is taking issue with the Cranbrook Academy of Art and the message their students send to the public. According to the 2D Design Department's philosophy, the department "continues to produce designers with an active disdain for 'the rules' and for established practices, with a resistance to 'categorization' " (Cranbrook Academy of Art, 2011). This "disdain" and their ensuing output send a confusing message to the public, who then interpret the disjointed, rule-breaking anti-design design as a model, often interpreting it incorrectly and without the necessary intelligence and refinement (Heller, 1994). In addition to Cranbrook's

students and others like them sending out oppositional design that ultimately
confuses the public, there are other avenues of misconception reaching the public,
such as spec work.

Spec work

Peter Giffen, in his now infamous article "The Credibility Gap," (2004)
addresses the issue of competitions in which designers are asked to create an
identity or other final product for free and compete for compensation only if their
design is selected as the winner. This speculative arrangement sends a message to
the public and business world that designers and design firms can and should work
for free or complete a project only to have to compete with other firms for payment
(Giffen, 2004). In addition, spec work devalues the work of designers. Spec works
begs the question, would you ask a doctor to work for free? Or a contractor? Or, how
about an architect? Yet, somehow, the public and some business leaders rationalize
that designers are worth less than other professionals (Giffen, 2004). According to
Giffen (2004), people may be rationalizing paying below market value or not at all
for design work based on the notion that they can perform design work as well as a
designer (2004). AIGA considers spec work to be unlawful according to its
professional code of conduct, which members must agree to in order to gain status
as a professional member (AIGA, 2010). In addition, the ease of access to
professional design programs has engendered a public that believes design is as
simple as pressing "Command-D" (Giffen, 2004).

"Command-D" phenomenon

Giffen (2004) and Dimitri Siegel (2006) both speak of the "Command-D"

phenomenon. The misconception that graphic design is easy to do has further

reduced respect for the design process, resulting in a lack of patience among clients

with the time required to produce successful and innovative results (Giffen, 2004). If

a client becomes too impatient or lacks any respect for professional design, he or

she may be entirely content asking a secretary to perform design work (Giffen,

2004). Siegel (2006) also sees this devastating trend among the public but ascribes

it largely to the concept of prosumerism, or a do-it-yourself society. In other words,

according to Siegel, the public now more so than ever has tools available to them—

and the attitude that comes with it—to conduct what formerly was a professional's

task, such as fixing your own toilet, taking your own photos, and so on (Siegel,

2006). This new confidence to perform just about any task has in its own right

diminished the role of the graphic designer (Giffen, 2004).

Giffen (2004) ultimately suggests certification as the solution to the public's

lack of respect and value for professional graphic design. However, Giffen (2004)

also recommends that designers take a tougher stance and become proactive by

educating clients on the amount of time, research, and strategy that go into the

design process. Giffen notes success by other designers when they have sat clients

down and explained the involvement of the design process (2004). In addition,

Giffen (2004) notes some companies' attempts to alter public perception by using

alternative terms for graphic design. This sentiment is echoed by Errol Saldanha of

the Communication Designers Association (CDA).

Titles

Saldanha (2003) founded CDA in response to what he considered was an

inaccurate and incomplete term: graphic design. "Beyond graphic" became his battle

call (Saldanha, 2003). According to Saldanha, the public is already bleakly unaware

of what a graphic designer really does, and the term "graphic" does little to

counteract that ignorance (BeyondGraphic.org, 2003). The term currently suggests

that all graphic designers do is deal with graphics. It leaves out the important traits

of a graphic designer, such as the ability to not only design but also to think and

write, to conduct market research, strategize, and so on (BeyondGraphic.org, 2003).

Eventually, Saldanha settled on "communication design" and founded

Communication Designers Association to form a community of like-minded "quality"

communication designers (Communication Designers Association, 2011). The

organization is in its infancy, but Saldanha is not the first to note the need for more

accurate terminology.

AIGA, the premier organization for graphic design in the United States, in

2005 changed its name to AIGA, the Professional Association for Design. Previously,

it stood for the American Institute of Graphic Arts. The name change arose from a

need expressed by designers "to help them speak to external audiences about their

roles as designers and the value of great design" (AIGA, 2011, para. 2). However, this

name change provides a vague idea of graphic design and lumps the industry into all

other design genres, which are vast. Another design organization, ICOGRADA, or the

International Council on Graphic Design Associations, now aligns itself with the

term "communication design," although it has not altered its formal name as AIGA

did. In addition to the desire to alter terminology, Maria Popova (2010) suggests

altering the method by which designers recognize good work.

Awards

Design blogger and writer Maria Popova (2010) takes issue with another

aspect of the graphic design industry: awards. Popova (2010) suggests the entire

system of bestowing awards on purportedly the industry's best and brightest is

fundamentally flawed:

Awards are awful. Awards breed ego, create false meritocracies and

ultimately stymie innovation at every step of the award-granting process—

from entry to evaluation to owning the win (Popova, 2010, para. 2).

Popova asserts that innovation cannot be recognized using the current awards

system, which primarily is judged from the perspective of an experienced

practitioner. According to Popova, "when it comes to design innovation, awards are

essentially the old way judging the new way—and that's no way to innovate"

(Popova, 2010, para. 5). In addition, Popova suggests that awards create complacent

designers who simply look to their awards for reason to bid the highest for a project,

when, perhaps, a less experienced designer may have a more innovative and fresh

concept (Popova, 2010). In order for the awards system to be successful, designers

must ask themselves how their work is impacting the world around them (Popova,

2010). Then, according to Popova the problem becomes an issue of "how do you

measure good design?" AIGA is seemingly echoing Popova's sentiments in the birth

of two new design contests that aim to demonstrate the value of design for the

benefit of enhancing the profession.

AIGA has introduced as of 2011 a new design competition titled *Making the*

Case, in which designers are asked to provide case studies of the value of their

design work. This move is in response to a call from AIGA members "to provide tools

that demonstrate the value of design in a format they can share with clients" (AIGA,

2011). Another competition, *Design Effectiveness*, which AIGA said had been

improved for the year 2011, aims to honor "design work that's both aesthetically

pleasing and effective at solving challenges" (AIGA, 2011). In addition to these

attempts at reorganizing the awards system, AIGA also in 2011 announced it would

be refocusing its objectives after feedback from members. Most notably, AIGA will

spend less time, effort, and money on individual benefits and, instead, will focus on

creating value for graphic design now and in the future (Grefé, "What do members

think...", 2011). In addition to AIGA's increased efforts in communicating graphic

design to the public, a number of other institutions have recognized the profession.

Strides

The graphic design industry has enjoyed recent—and not so recent—strides

in making the public more aware of what it does. In the early 1990s, the A.M. Best

Company added the graphic design profession to its guide for insurance

underwriters. The guide, which describes a profession's workplace, workflow, and

roles, serves as a tool to help insurance companies assess risk and damage in the

workplace. The profession's inclusion was a great step toward increased public

awareness, according to Fo Wilson (1993). AIGA has also stepped up its attention to

responding to current events as they become issues of public misconception about

graphic design. In addition, in the late 2000s, the government has made an effort to

recognize the profession's status.

U.S. National Design Policy Initiative

Dori Tunstall, Ph.D., has undertaken the task of communicating the value of

design to the government—specifically, that design is the key to regaining the

United States' economic foothold (U.S. National Design Policy Initiative, 2009).

Headed by Tunstall, the U.S. National Design Policy Initiative has published a list of

10 recommendations to promote the value of the design industry (a category that

includes all genres, including graphic design) in order to improve the United States'

standing, inspire innovation, and enhance the communication of government policy.

Among the proposals, is the recommendation of creating an Assistant Secretary of

Design, a position that would oversee and promote the design industry and would

"establish the basis for the effective administration of policies for design promotion,

innovation, and design standards" (U.S. National Design Policy Initiative, 2009). The

organization also is making attempts to secure an investigation into design's

contribution to the overall economy (USNDPI, 2009). In addition, a number of the

other recommendations provide clear reasoning for the government to consider a

more active role in communicating and supporting the design industries in order to

gain a global economic advantage. Tunstall's inclination to establish a national

design policy institute is cemented by the fact that other countries, such as the

United Kingdom's Design Council, have such government agencies. However, the

U.S. government has yet to act directly on Tunstall's recommendations.

U.S. Department of Labor

Even though the U.S. government has not enacted Tunstall's

recommendations, it has, however, made other strides to recognize the industry. In

2008, the U.S. Department of Labor added a separate listing for graphic designers

within its Occupational Handbook. Previously, it had been given a paragraph's

worth of description under the "designers" category, an unfit categorization of an

industry that spans multiple fields of design. This listing now allows for

international workers to accurately list themselves on work visas. The recognition,

more significantly, helps to cement the profession's status as a necessary and

important aspect of the U.S. economy. AIGA itself is also taking additional steps to

promote the graphic design profession.

AIGA efforts

AIGA has increased its level of attention in addressing issues of

misconception and the devaluing of the graphic design profession. One example of

AIGA increasing its attention to issues of misconception occurred in October 2011.

AIGA Executive Director Richard Grefé sent a letter to President Barack Obama in

October of 2011 illustrating the inappropriateness of Obama's spec contest titled Art

Works poster contest in which Obama asked his supporters to come up with poster

designs (Grefé, 2011). In the letter, Grefé points out to the Obama campaign that the

contest diminishes the graphic design industry and asks Obama to immediately

cancel the contest. Grefé also urges Obama to "consider the role of design in creating

social and economic capital as well as innovation and growth, treating it as an

economic driver instead of a creative indulgence, and involve the design community

in integrating design into an economic strategy for strengthening U.S.

competitiveness" (Grefé, 2011, para. 3). In all, AIGA has stepped up to help the

industry communicate its value. However, in many instances, the organization

ultimately "preaches to the choir," in that its attempts to effect change largely do not

reach the public's ears. In the instance of the letter to Obama, AIGA could have taken

additional steps to ensure that the inappropriateness of Obama campaign's poster

contest was communicated to the public, and not just the offender. Designer leaders

in the United Kingdom have also undertaken enhanced roles to promote the value of

graphic design.

United Kingdom efforts

The United Kingdom has undergone recent efforts to effect change in the U.K.

economy. There, design leaders have taken on the quality of education and adopted

the tagline "high level skills for higher value" (Design Skills Advisory Panel, 2007,

p.1). Much like Tunstall in the U.S., the U.K. Design Council noted the need to

promote the value of design to improve the country's competitive edge. The U.K.

team also noted the need for increased attention to the quality and standards of

design education and, in addition, cited the "over-supply" of designers (DSAP, 2007,

p. 6). In order to persuade the U.K. government, businesses, and public of the value

and role of design, the council recommended a number of steps. These include

partnerships with design educational programs and visiting professionals;

accreditation; teacher education; the establishment of design standards; a

"framework" that recognizes good design; and lastly, professional continuing

education (DSAP, 2007, p. 7).

The efforts by the U.K. and U.S. design councils attempt to promote the value

of design, but it has always been difficult to quantify exactly what benefits are

derived from good design. The number of variables in any design equation such as

immeasurable results from further brand recognition but no immediate profit

present difficulties in providing an estimate to the client in terms of return on

investment. However, design and business are inherently linked. For some

companies, clients, and industries, it is difficult to swallow the price tag of design

without evidence of design increasing profit. For those that *do* value design,

however, design is a high priority in business and is evidenced to bring in additional

revenue. In addition, innovation—a core driver of economy and business—is

irrevocably linked to a value in design. In other words, companies that value design

are therefore more innovative and thus more successful (DSAP, 2007; Mutlu & Er,

2003; Ainamo, 2009; Rodriguez, 2010). To these companies, design thinking is the

process by which innovation occurs—and through which profit is achieved.

Design thinking as an innovation tool

One aspect of graphic design is using design thinking to help companies solve problems and innovate. Companies that value design thinking and design are more innovative (Rodriguez, 2010; Walters, 2010; Shapiro, 2005). The role of a professional graphic designer includes design thinking. This is one aspect of a graphic designer's role that is blossoming and has the potential to bridge some of the misconceptions and gaps that practitioners cite.

Many researchers and practitioners cite a strong relationship between design and innovation (Mutlu & Er, 2003; Ainamo, 2009; Brown, 2009; DSAP, 2007; Rodriguez, 2010). Companies like Target, 3M, Procter & Gamble, and Apple are among the most oft-mentioned companies that value design and thus produce products of an enviable, competitive nature (Rodriguez, 2010; Walters, 2010; Shapiro, 2005). "It is no accident," according to Ravi Sawhney and Deepa Prahalad, "that many of the world's top brands are also design leaders" (Sawhney & Prahalad, 2010). Companies that utilize design thinking as a primary means of development set the bar. For Diego Rodriguez, partner at IDEO design and innovation firm, design is not just about pretty aesthetics, but is instead about the whole offering of "design thinking":

> We would all be better off treating design as a verb, a process, a way of approaching challenges which designers and nondesigners alike can learn to use to create positive change in the world. Throughout history design as a verb, also known these days as design Thinking (sic), has created things of enormous value to humanity. The Bill of Rights, the Aravind Eye Care System,

Medecins Sans Frontières, and the Marshall Plan will never show up in a

Design Within Reach catalog. And yet each of these amazing achievements of

humanity was designed (Rodriguez, 2010).

The Design Skills Advisory Panel out of the United Kingdom has discovered fiscal

connections between design and innovation:

Businesses where design is seen as integral are twice as likely as businesses

overall to develop new products and services, and to open new markets. Also,

design is integral to 39 per cent of rapidly growing businesses but only seven

per cent of static ones. Through better and integral use of design, companies

are reporting that they are able to differentiate their products and compete on

added value rather than on price alone (Design Skills Advisory Panel, 2007).

However, part of the difficulty in design thinking is convincing a company to invest

in and utilize design as a way of business (Ainamo, 2009; Rand, 1993).

The late Paul Rand, a prolific and admired graphic designer, became

frustrated with the corporate world and its poor attitude toward investing in in-

house design teams. Near the end of his life in 1993, Rand wrote an opinion column

in the New York Times in which he bemoans the degradation of in-house design

departments at certain corporations such as Westinghouse, CBS, and Container

Corporation of America. Rand wonders why such previously solid and innovative

design teams were put to sleep. He cites two possible reasons: uneducated CEOs and

complacent designers. According to Rand, CEOs who are not knowledgeable of the

value of design are as much to blame as the designers "who are only too willing to

accommodate them" (Rand, 1993, para. 10). However, researcher Antti Ainamo

(2009) has one other explanation for the disconnect between designers and

business leaders.

Ainamo's research into the psychological makeup of "strategic managers"

and designers offers some explanation for why it is difficult for many companies to

understand the link between design thinking and innovation (Ainamo, 2009, p. 259).

Ainamo suggests that business leaders model the typical attitude among the

public—that of a late or somewhat-late adopter of new technology. In other words,

strategic leaders are not likely to be among those who are first in line to buy a new

product—and accordingly are not likely to stand behind a new technology,

especially one that carries much risk. On the other hand, designers tend to be early

adopters and innovators. This presents difficulties for the two camps to find

agreement. And, without the support of business leaders, designers will have

difficulty convincing their decision-makers of the value of design and to adopt an

innovation. Companies like IDEO are beginning to capitalize on the corporate

world's hesitation to adopt design as a priority.

IDEO is a design and innovation firm that partners with companies to develop

new technologies and products. The company describes itself as the following:

> We identify new ways to serve and support people by uncovering latent
>
> needs, behaviors, and desires. We envision new companies and brands and
>
> design the products, services, spaces, and interactive experiences that bring
>
> them to life. We help organizations build creative culture and the internal

systems required to sustain innovation and launch new ventures ("About

IDEO," 2011).

In the book "Change by Design," CEO and President of IDEO Tim Brown (2009)

asserts that design thinking is akin to a mind map, in which connections are made

not by a linear, A to C process, but by a continuously evolving and sometimes

seemingly disorganized process. Brown cites the example of IDEO's partnership

with bike company Shimano. Shimano came to IDEO after noting sluggish growth in

its high-end bike racing equipment in the United States. Armed with an expertise in

design thinking, IDEO set out to reinvent Shimano's approach in this market sector.

IDEO began by organizing a team of scientists and designers to investigate what

exactly was preventing Shimano from inspiring U.S. high-end bike consumers. The

team discovered that U.S. consumers were "bewildered" by the amount of

accessories, high prices, complex bikes, and the intimidating retail environment

(Brown, 2009, p. 14). Therefore, the team decided it was best to simplify the biking

experience, settling on the idea of "coasting," which, according to the team, is

"simple, straightforward, healthy, and fun" (Brown, 2009, p. 14). The innovation the

team had devised was very successful. Three major manufacturers got onboard

initially with seven additional ones later. According to Brown, "an exercise in design

had become an exercise in design thinking" (p. 15). In addition to providing a unique

perspective on innovation, design also plays a vital role in the competitive process

(Mutlu & Er, 2003).

One of design's main goals is in the differentiation of a product or service from its competition. This is achieved though a combination of features, including, "quality, robustness, precision, ease of use, product appeal, and price" (Porter, 1980, as cited in Mutlu & Er, 2003). Graphic design, industrial design, and interior design all intersect in the process of differentiating a product from its competitors. In addition, design goes beyond communicating a product or service to consumers. According to Ravi Sawhney and Deepa Prahalad, (2010) design allows companies to establish a relationship with consumers, and with that connection, can then define the consumers' needs more efficiently. Prahalad and Sawhney (2010) note that designers understand consumers through their innate ability to understand consumer behavior and interaction with products and services. This combination of design thinking and the design application that follows ultimately combine to produce consumer-driven products and services.

One of the most innovative companies that place a high value in design is no better evident than at retail chain Target. The implementation and evolution of the Target brand will be explored in order to solidify the role of design in business.

Target: A design leader

Retailer giant Target has become synonymous with the term chic cheap (Hoekstra, 2007; Shapiro, 2005; Rowley, 2003). Its attention to detail, design, and innovation has catapulted the Minneapolis-based company into the No. 2 position after Walmart in discount retail sector in the United States. But the tale of how Target reached that No. 2 spot is quite different from how Walmart became No. 1.

The answer lies in design and design innovation. Even Walmart is aware of Target's

advantage, as evidenced in a leaked internal memo in 2007:

> Target has been incredibly successful at resetting the bar of what people
>
> expect from a discount store. Their fundamental premise is democratizing
>
> great design…. They feel like the 'new and improved' while Wal-Mart often
>
> feels like the 'old and outdated' (as cited in Hoekstra, 2007, para. 2).

From Target's beginnings as a design leader through the introduction of designer

kitchen wear to its in-house design studio, inHouse, Target has set the bar and

established itself as a prime example of how and why design should be valued.

Target cemented itself as a chic but cheap retailer where the common man

and woman could buy both toilet paper and a designer sweater in one stop (Shapiro,

2005). The first move Target made that established this mark was through its

partnership with designer Michael Graves, who designed a set of household

products for the retailer, which was a smash hit. Most prominent among these

products was a teakettle that Graves had originally designed in 1985 at a $150 price

tag. Target's Graves teakettle offered the same aesthetic at a reasonable price.

Thereafter, Target was continuously linked with design. Examples include its Design

for All campaign, where designer products are sold in store at economical prices. In

addition, it adopted a revolutionary prescription bottle design by Deborah Adler,

who, for her Master of Fine arts thesis, designed a flat-faced prescription bottle that

allowed for maximum readability by placing the directions on the flat face of the

bottle. The design also included colored rings for individuals family members so

they would not accidentally take another person's medicine (Shapiro, 2005). Target

absorbed Adler's bottle design, renamed ClearRX, for use in its pharmacies. Target's

value in design is evident not only in its designer-product offerings, but also in its

use of designers both in-house and out of house.

Target employs a strong team of designers through its inHouse creative team

and through its use of multiple design agencies, predominantly from the

Minneapolis/Twin Cities area. Eric Erickson, one of two creative directors for Target

who is now retired, believes design is the force behind Target's success:

> Design is part of Target's DNA. It isn't only our team's priority. All 300,000
>
> employees—and this includes headquarters, distribution centers, stores and
>
> international offices—share that attitude. You really can't do design well if
>
> it's not universally valued. The fact that it is valued here gives us great
>
> opportunities to do great work (Shapiro, 2005, p. 50).

In addition, Target utilizes the services of Culture & Commerce, a New York City-

based firm that scouts out emerging talent and new products that Target can bring

in store (Jana, 2008).

In all, Target has set the precedent among big-box retailers. Its success in the

face of international conglomerate Walmart is noteworthy. In fiscal year 2009—the

latest figures available—Walmart netted $401 billion in revenue. Target came in

second with $65 billion and Kmart came in third with $44 billion. Target was able

overcome the saturated market of discount department stores because of its value

in design. It gave consumers a chic but cheap option.

Target's value of design is one of the core components of its success. But in order to further develop an understanding of how to best communicate the value of graphic design to the public, other industries that have dealt with comparable issues of public misconception should be discussed.

Lessons from other industries

It is not unprecedented for an industry to struggle with public misconception. The graphic design field can learn valuable lessons from other industries that have struggled with issues of public misconceptions and credibility. An understanding of successful persuasion practices and other industries' forays into improving their credibility will be valuable in determining a solution for the design industry that is most successful in realigning public perception. The industries surveyed include medicine, journalism, tobacco, corporations, the Catholic Church, and public education. In addition, theories of persuasive communication are consulted in order to provide a basis of understanding for how humans assess credibility.

Persuasive communication

Persuasive communication experts have devised a route to credibility. It is commonly understood that an aptitude for caring, evidence of competence, and trustworthiness comprise credibility (Whalen, 1996; Kouzes & Posner, 1993). Campaigns that have failed to improve an industry's image have faltered because they omitted or didn't fulfill one of those components.

Today's persuasion experts have expanded on the theories of the first expert

in persuasion, Aristotle. The Ancient Greek philosopher and scientist devised the

first scientific and psychological route to persuasion consisting of three parts: ethos

(emotional state of the speaker); pathos (emotional state of the audience); and logos

(the content of the message). Aristotle's theory sprung from his predecessor, Plato,

and his disregard for persuasion and belief only in the power of truth. Plato's

attitude derived from his disdain for the Sophists' lack of regard for truth in their

rhetoric. Aristotle was the first to consider both truth and persuasion as equal parts

in a persuasive argument (Perloff, 2004). Through this evolution of theory came an

accurate assessment of a successful route to credibility: truth and persuasion.

Aristotle's theory has evolved into today's current theory on credibility, which

includes truth, competence, and caring.

Another useful lesson and early form of persuasion exists in the Bible. D. Joel

Whalen (1996) suggests that credibility can be transmitted through another party in

what he refers to as the "John-the-Baptist Technique." In that technique, an

"advance man" can introduce a person or campaign and take much of the work out

of establishing credibility with an audience. Whalen takes this concept from a story

in the New Testament, when Jesus purportedly spent 40 days and nights mulling

over and preparing for his ministry and his "advance man," John the Baptist, readied

the world for Jesus' entrance by proclaiming Jesus' powers and wisdom. Because of

John, Jesus did not need to instill his credibility; John had done all the work for him.

One of the most successful approaches to persuasion includes introducing fear into the audience's mind. Whalen (1996) asserts that this must be done carefully because people can distinguish between mock fear and a real threat of loss. In addition, Whalen also stresses using truths, observations, and testimony from groups or others with high credibility that side with you. Another similar method is source credibility, in which the audience gains respect and trust from an individual source, such as a speaker. In order to be most successful, researchers Elliot Aronson and Burton Golden (1962) suggest that the source of the message (spokesperson, sponsoring organization, and corporation) must appear as if it has no direct benefit from any change in public opinion. In other words, there is a higher chance of persuading the public if the message source is not attempting to reap rewards such as profit from any public change in opinion. In addition, the success of persuasion also must battle with the threat of cognitive dissonance.

The well-established theory of cognitive dissonance has merit in any endeavor by the graphic design industry to alter the public's attitude toward hiring professional designers. Cognitive dissonance is an uncomfortable mental state in which a person holds two incompatible attitudes. For example, a business owner that does not utilize effective, professional design may hold the attitude "I cannot afford to hire a professional designer." Yet meanwhile, that same business owner may be thinking, "I need to have the best possible logo so I look credible and professional and my business can reach its potential." These conflicting attitudes create cognitive dissonance, which was theorized by Leon Festinger in 1957.

Despite the consequences, the business owner may risk future gain by using an ineffective logo. Today's dissonance theorists are quick to discuss the fact that human beings are not rational.

Left to their own devices, human beings cannot always accurately judge which alternative is the best, most rational one (Perloff, 2004). A successful persuasion campaign must instill an attitude of caring to establish credibility and trust (Kouzes & Posner, 1993; Whalen, 1996). In addition, based on the self-affirmation theory, people are programmed to pursue a positive self-image; or in other words, they are preprogrammed to seek to maintain a positive, upstanding image (Von Koningsbruggen & Das, 2006). If shown the consequences of ineffective design, they may be motivated to respond in a positive manner by hiring a professional. In addition to advice from persuasive communication experts, real instances of industries grappling with credibility can provide graphic design with a firm ground to stand on when approaching the issue head-on.

Medical field

The medical profession in particular has significant relevance to graphic design credibility. Many of the intricate issues that medical professionals face correlate to problems in the graphic design field. Most significantly is the issue of public mistrust. However, the issues of quality control and the creation of standards also are highly relatable. In addition, other medical professionals such as chiropractors and anesthesiologists have also attempted to control their credibility.

As people continue to become more educated and better informed and have

increased access to medical information, they, too, begin to become more skeptical

and less trusting of a doctor's intrinsic role as a paternalist caregiver (Mechanic,

1998; Gauld & Williams, 2009). This increased education among the public can have

a detrimental effect on the success rate between patient and doctor. Decreased trust

in a doctor's ability to effect a cure diminishes the likelihood that the placebo effect

will be successful (Mechanic, 1998). In other words, treatment or care is as

important as the patient's trust in the doctor and belief that the treatment will work.

David Mechanic, PhD, (1998) has encouraged doctors to increase the success rate

among their patients by becoming more empathetic and engaging in a partnership

with the patient. Mechanic (1998) suggested that hospitals adopt an elaborate

marketing campaign that communicates to the public its high-quality care and

competitive technology and services so the public would therefore conclude that the

institution is credible and trustworthy. In addition, the health care industry is

tackling the very root of the issue: myriad misinformation on the Internet.

Doctors continuously report that they see patients who rely on non-

authoritative websites for their health information instead of trusting information

or advice from a medical professional (Lundberg, 2000; Mechanic, 1998; Gauld &

Williams, 2009). The medical field has responded to the abundance of unreliable

sites by putting more stock in the ones they *can* control and educating their patients

on how to assess a website's credibility (Lundberg, 2000). Patients are encouraged

to use information only from websites that have logos from credible medical

organizations such as the American Medical Association. The Journal of the

American Medical Association, another authoritative source, compiled a checklist

for patients seeking credible web information (Lundberg, 2000). In addition, Health

on the Net Foundation offers certification to health websites that meet their

standards. Participating websites include MayoClinic.com and WebMD.com.

However, the issue with providing tools such as a checklist or a certification

program is that that knowledge rarely leaves the circles they derived from. The

success of such tools relies on whether the institution behind them makes the

information known to the public.

The medical field also struggles greatly with quality, much like graphic

design. For medical professionals, the process of attaining quality is much like the

process designers generally follow to achieve the best end product. Avedis

Donabedian in 1980 established what is now considered the standard measurement

of quality for the medical field. It begins by assessing structure, such as the building

and equipment. Next is process, or how well the organization, equipment, and the

like operate. Lastly is outcome, or whether the process fixed or cured the ailment

(Kilbourne, Keyser, & Pincus, 2010; Lundburg, 2000). This method is similar to the

process that graphic designers generally follow: research and planning; concept;

and execution.

A graphic designers' research and planning stage might begin by assessing

parameters/limitations and structure of a website, for example. This is akin to how

the medical field assesses its facilities: What are the limitations in the current

facility? Next in a graphic designers' process is to process what was gleaned from

the research and planning stage. Here a graphic designer might sketch or engage in

mind mapping, where connections are explored. This is similar to the process stage

of the medical field's quality process, where questions like, "How well are the

facility's current equipment operating?" might be asked. This question is on par with

questions designers ask as they explore concepts. The last step in the medical field's

process is outcome, where questions like; "Did we help the patient?" would be

asked. This is also similar to a graphic designer's process, where in the final stage of

development, the designer would be assessing every element and ensuring the

outcome will be beneficial to the client.

Accountability may be found through a standardized process, much like the

medical field's. If doctors don't follow the rigorous standards of quality, their

credibility would be inherently lowered, and potentially could lose their medical

license. And, although design can lend itself more to subjectivity than can the

medical field, it, too, can benefit from standardization of quality.

In many ways, the subjectivity in the graphic design field mimics the

limitations in evidence in the mental health field, where many conditions do not

have the level of safety testing necessary for consumption of medicine by

adolescents, for example (Kilbourne, Keyser, & Pincus, 2010). However, in order to

strengthen the quality of mental health, researchers Kilbourne, Keyser, and Pincus

(2010) suggested policies for implementing a stricter process of quality that

advocated for stronger attention to training and accountability. Both training and

accountability are particularly relevant in addressing the graphic design credibility

gap. It is important for the graphic design industry to address standardization of a

professional process.

Anesthesiologists have followed a similar idea for establishing quality, which

greatly increased their credibility with the public. In response largely to a growing

number of malpractice suits, anesthesiologists began to tighten their standards and

requirements and, in turn, reduced accessibility to career opportunities (Lundberg,

2000). In addition to tightening industry standards, anesthesiologists began to

explain their processes to patients. In doing so, the number of malpractice suits

decreased (Lundberg, 2000). It is apparent through the experiences of the

anesthesiology industry that increased attention to educational requirements and

communication with clients is one method for increasing the professional visibility

of an industry.

Another group of medical professionals, chiropractors, have suffered low

credibility, but this time at the hands of their fellow medical professionals at the

American Medical Association (AMA). Beginning in the 1960s, the AMA began to

note the rise in the chiropractic profession and became concerned that medical

doctors would lose clout. Thus, the organization began an effort to stamp out

chiropractors using a "contain and eliminate" campaign (Pedigo, 1998). AMA told its

members it was unethical to professionally associate with a DC (Doctor of

Chiropractic) or even to refer a patient to a DC. DCs were compared to rabid dogs,

attempting to scare would-be patients from utilizing a DC's service (Pedigo, 1998).

The AMA at the time was so esteemed that no one questioned its accuracy. In 1976,

a group of defendants sued the AMA and won. That was the chiropractic field's first

real attempt to quash efforts to harm the industry's credibility. Since then, the field

has taken additional steps to build credibility. Most notably, research has illustrated

benefits to chiropractic care and solidified the field's medicinal status, increasing

mainstream acceptance (Henderson, 1991). Therefore, it seems that established

professions who rely on public trust have extensive research engines to build and

maintain public trust.

Journalists

One of the greatest lessons graphic design can derive from another industry

is through journalists and the oft-mentioned pursuit of educating the public on the

reporting process in order to improve to the public's trust in the reporter (Aiekens,

2008; Shapiro, 2008; American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1985). This mirrors

anesthesiologists' success in increased communication with patients. In addition to

educating the public, journalists' solutions to credibility, such as attention to

accountability, have resonance with issues in the graphic design industry.

The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), one of the professional

bodies within journalism, got involved in the credibility debate in 1985. The

organization reported a number of steps that the field should take, which were

derived from a focused survey of newspaper readers and television news viewers.

Among the report's recommendations was to show the public that journalists report

on issues—controversial or otherwise—for the benefit of their community, not to

devalue people or to sensationalize events. This correlates directly to one of the

three components of credibility—demonstrating that you care. Here, again, graphic

design should take note of the consensus that showing goodwill to the public is

paramount to building and maintaining credibility.

The ASNE report also notes the need for accountability in the form of

ombudsmen—or reader representatives—and news councils, which act as a sort of

judicial power. News councils are controversial and rare. They and ombudsmen

provide a framework for public complaints and action on ethics and quality in the

journalism industry. In addition, credible newspapers follow rigorous standards for

error reporting. Even minor errors, such as misspellings, are promptly reported in

the next day or following day's newspaper.

The most significant recommendation to journalists for improving their

credibility is educating the public on the process. Many members of the public look

with disdain at investigative reporters, either having been involved in a report

themselves or simply feeling sorry for those who are (Schapiro, 2008). A PBS

documentary series called Exposé attempted to alter this perception by chronicling

significant investigations and the process reporters followed. Viewers saw the

involved, highly detailed process of research and the high standards of truth and

accuracy involved in the reporting. "Taking people inside the work of investigative

reporters increases the story's credibility and illuminates the immense effort that

journalists put into such coverage" (Schapiro, 2008, p. 43).

Lastly, the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) has decided that one of

the solutions to the credibility gap in the journalism industry is to arm the public

with the tools to help them discern a trustworthy news source from a non-

trustworthy source (Aeikens, 2009). SPJ began this solution by inviting the public to

participate in forums with SPJ board members "to increase the dialogue between

the public and the press" (Aeikens, 2009, p. 3). Journalists struggle with the fact that

the public can get news from numerous sources. Before the age of the Internet, the

public relied on two, maybe three sources. Now, they can get news from

unreliable—and sometimes reliable—venues such as social-networking, blogs,

satirical news shows, and so on. The journalist's role has been eclipsed in providing

breaking news. Journalists are now struggling with communicating the value of their

work, in an age where the public can get news from numerous and growing

sources—and sometimes, sources that are faster and more efficient modes of

communication.

Tobacco industry

The tobacco industry perhaps faces the most momentous task in rebuilding

credibility. Faced with the fact that their product kills, tobacco executives have

responded to a lack of credibility by spinning the truth, downplaying the truth,

admitting their product is harmful, then blaming the public for not understanding

the industry's intentions (McDaniel & Malone, 2009). The outcome of these

approaches has been a disgruntled public less enamored with tobacco than ever

before. What tobacco executives have failed to remember in any solution to a lack of

credibility are the three core principles of credibility: caring, competence, and trustworthiness.

While the industry attempted to resolve competence and trustworthiness through numerous advertising campaigns and the formation of the industry-supported research arms, the industry has failed to appear caring to the public (McDaniel & Malone, 2009; Thrasher & Jackson, 2006). By failing to alter its hazardous product in the face of alarming multitudes of research, the industry cannot gain credibility because this refusal contradicts an attitude of caring. With the tobacco products created as they currently are, it is impossible for the industry to achieve credibility. They would need to reformat their product to be devoid of habit-forming and cancerous chemicals.

Although the tobacco industry has attempted several times to address truthfulness in its advertising efforts, the industry has never arrived at complete truth. Therefore, the public has become quite keen at distinguishing truth from lies. Attempts at truthfulness by the industry have included agreeing that their product is harmful and that is a "risk factor" in cancer (McDaniel & Malone, 2009). But it has never completely come to terms publicly with the danger of using tobacco. Persuasion experts also note that people are able to distinguish lies from truth (Lundstrom, 2000).

In response to the lack of transparency from the tobacco engine, several anti-smoking campaigns have been organized in an attempt to discredit the tobacco industry. These counter-industry campaigns have largely focused on educating

teens about the dangers of smoking due to the fact that smoking tends to be initiated

during adolescence (Ling, Neilands, & Glantz, 2007). The campaigns, such as the

national Truth initiative, have been effective in reducing the number of teen

smokers and increasing the anti-tobacco attitude among teens and young adults

(Thrasher & Jackson, 2006; Ling et al, 2007). The anti-smoking campaigns have

targeted sectors of the public for maximum success.

Corporations

The corporate world has undergone a rapid change in public attitude due to

the number of highly publicized demises of corporations such as Enron. Starting in

2008, government bailouts of what seem to be irresponsible corporations have

further degraded the credibility of corporations. The public is demanding answers

and accountability—from CEOs, auditors, and general employees (Kadlec &

Thottam, 2002). That resentment toward increased spending has sprung forward a

grassroots political party called the Tea Party.

Much like journalists' pursuit of transparency to increase credibility, so, too, it

has been suggested that corporations engage in more transparent behavior, in both

internal communication tools and external communication (Schumann, 2004; Kadlec

& Thottam, 2002). In addition, success in improving credibility for corporations must

include an aspect of accountability and a reduction in perks for executives (Kadlec &

Thottam, 2002). In other words, the public must see executives treated as normal

employees who abide by the same laws and rules as regular employees. In addition,

executives must be seen taking accountability for their roles in the complete or near

dissolution of their companies. Again, like the lesson in accountability gleaned from journalists, accountability is key to building public rapport.

A second plan of action that corporations have suggested is pursuing more training for employees, specifically in financial laws and regulations for auditors and CPAs (Brewster, 2003). Mike Brewster recognized the shortcomings of education in regard to producing high-caliber students who are well-versed in financial laws and ethics. Brewster (2003) recommends that the efficacy of educational programs for accounting be improved so that students entering the field will be better equipped to handle complex auditing assignments.

Catholic Church

The Catholic Church's reputation has been severely damaged by reports of sexual abuse by priests. Dioceses across the United States and in other countries have dealt with numerous lawsuits and restitution to abuse victims. The Holy See, or commonly referred to as the Vatican, is the governing body of the Catholic Church and has responded in multiple forms, at times admitting some fault and at others attempting to subvert abuse claims and protect accused priests ("Timeline," 2007). The church even commissioned an internal investigation, the *John Jay Report*, into abuse claims. However, while the Holy See, dioceses, and bishops themselves have either apologized or paid restitution, it may be too little, too late.

It has been well-documented by both journalists and in lawsuits against the church that the church leaders were well aware of priests' abuses long before the issue reached its peak in the 1980s (Barnett, 2003). In these documents, the Holy See

urged bishops to conceal and protect priests and encouraged them to seek medical help for the transgressions. These documents, according to victims, are evidence of negligence by the church. Because the church allowed the issue to continue under secrecy for years, it becomes extremely difficult for the public to trust the church again. It can be garnered from the church's experience that an industry should not wait to respond to a problem until has become too much to bear.

Public education

Educators struggle from a lack of credibility due to misconceptions among the public—specifically that those "who can't do, teach." Researchers have discovered that students view teachers much like they do public speakers, searching for the same cues of credibility (Myers & Bryant, 2004). Public education, itself, has low credibility due to its direct link to the government and its own set of credibility issues—namely that the government is not to be trusted (Carr, 2006). In all, the public has developed a lower appreciation for the fine art of teaching, sometimes turning to homeschooling or opting for a private education (Carr, 2006). In turn, this low appreciation has forced the profession to accept low pay, further degrading their work. The misconceptions that it takes little skill or intelligence to teach and that a private education is better than a public one are hurdles the education industry must overcome in order to gain increased credibility. Solutions to these issues include merit-based pay systems and public relations campaigns.

Merit-based pay, in particular, has resonance with the graphic design community as it presents many of the same obstacles as a national certification plan

for designers. Paying teachers based on their success in the classroom is a divisive

issue, one that has some rooting for more accountability for the least successful

teachers and others underscoring the difficulty of accurately measuring the

effectiveness of an educator (Clabaugh, 2009). Clabaugh, a professor of education at

La Salle University in Philadelphia, takes issue with attempts to introduce a merit-

based pay system. He fears that such a system would elevate teachers who have

"brown-nosed" their way into principals' hearts and that teachers would teach "by

the test" in order to produce the highest scores from standardized tests (Clabaugh,

2009, p. 18). Most importantly, he fears any merit-based pay system would be

unfair, measuring only student test data and not the immeasurable qualities of a

good teacher (good role model, builds student self-esteem and confidence, instills

leadership skills, and so on). Clabaugh's testimony is much like arguments against

certification for graphic designers. It becomes, like merit-based pay, impossible to

accurately and fairly measure a designer's ability to effectively design.

The public has a mistrust of public education, propelled by myths that a

private education is somehow better (Carr, 2006). This myth runs the gamut in

public education, from elementary to higher education. But statistics speak volumes

as to the fact that, overall, private education is simply no better than a public

education (Carr, 2006). Carr (2006) encourages public school districts to utilize

public relations campaigns to educate its district that a public education is just as

effective as a private one. Carr recommends increased visibility and participation in

the community from school district officials, such as letters to the editor, having a

dynamic spokesperson, and forming good relationships with media so that positive, image-enhancing stories can be related to the public. In addition, Carr notes that an advertising campaign will not work because the public would view it as lazy or disinterested. But getting involved in the community and increasing a district's visibility would illustrate to the public that the district cares about students. Graphic design can learn from Carr's suggestions by becoming more involved in the community, highlighting the good they have done for companies and even non-profits, and in general making their presence known. The notions of increased visibility of effective designers and good design have the potential of persuading people to view graphic design as a more respectable profession.

In all, the graphic design industry can learn volumes through a close inspection of other industries' attempts to realign their standards with public perception. However, from here it becomes important to investigate where the current level of public awareness stands. This study will now proceed to discover the current level of public awareness via a survey.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

To begin the methodology, the goal of the research was scrutinized,
beginning with an analysis of the original research question: "How can the graphic
design industry best communicate the role of a professional graphic designer?"
Through an analysis of existing research in the area of public awareness and
education of graphic design it became necessary to consider whether it was
appropriate at all to begin educating the public about graphic design. No statistical
evidence on the current state of public awareness came to light during the literature
review process. Therefore, before the graphic design industry can engage in the
process of building public awareness, this research needed to set the stage for the
industry to do so. The resulting solution to the research question ultimately became
a survey that tested the existing level of public awareness of graphic design.

Instrument

The survey includes 20 questions using both multiple choice and Likert scale
formats as well as one qualifying question, which included the consent form. It was
built and administered through SurveyMonkey.com. Access to the survey was
available at http://www.samanthajeandesign.com/survey.html.

Instrument objectives

The primary goal of the resulting survey (see Appendix A) was to determine
whether some of the misconceptions or beliefs that graphic designers believe the
general public holds in respect to graphic design as a profession are definable and

tangible. Therefore, most of the questions on the final 21-question survey were derived

from the literature review—and specifically, from graphic design practitioners'

commentary on the subject of public awareness. The goals are as follows:

1) To assess the public's awareness of basic roles of graphic designers.

2) To reveal how people assess whether they, themselves, are graphic

    designers.

3) To determine the percentage of people who have ever worked with a

    graphic designer.

4) To analyze the public's perceptions of, expectations, and experiences with

    graphic designers.

Secondary goals of the survey dealt more with the design and scope of the survey,

which include:

1) To maintain a respectful tone toward respondents so that they feel

    comfortable divulging their ignorance on the subject.

2) To design a survey that requires as little time as possible to complete in

    order to reduce the number of people who would not be interested in

    completing it.

Instrument design

Questions were either multiple choice or Likert scale; four questions had an

"other" field. The survey utilized some SurveyMonkey.com features including

"question logic" and forced ranking. Question logic allows for routing respondents to

questions based on how they respond. This feature was used on the question "Are

you a graphic designer?" If the respondent chose "Yes," they were routed to an

additional question, which asked the respondents to indicate how they qualify

themselves as designers. Those respondents were then routed around three

questions that were not relevant. Those include the questions "Have you ever hired

a graphic designer for a personal project or hired one at your workplace?"; "Have

you ever worked with a graphic designer at your place of employment?"; and

"Please rate your experiences with graphic design or graphic designers."

One question featured "forced ranking," where respondents were asked to

place 10 professions on a scale from 1 to 10. With this question format, respondents

were allowed to use one rating per profession. However, that feature was turned off

a couple of hours after the survey went live due to a few e-mails from people who

had difficulty understanding the question's forced ranking feature. It should be

noted, however, the majority of respondents completed the question correctly

previous to the change.

Procedure

A mass e-mail sent to University of Central Oklahoma faculty, staff, and

current students served as the primary means of soliciting participation. The sample

for the survey is considered one of convenience, rather than one of a representative

sample. However, based on the results of some basic demographic information

including age and educational attainment, the data reflects a fairly representative

sample of the population. In addition, a limited amount of exposure on Facebook

also garnered some responses. The mass e-mail asked people to participate in an

unprecedented attempt to better understand public awareness of graphic design.

Informed consent was attained through the first question on the survey, which

instructed prospective respondents that their participation was voluntary and that

they could withdraw from the survey at any time. The survey was live August 30,

2011 through Oct. 13, 2011.

Participants

A total of 660 people took the survey with 568 fully completing it. Those who

didn't fully complete the survey were not included in the final results. The 568

respondents who completed the survey comprised the final results. In addition,

questions that included an "other" field could be skipped due to limitations within

SurveyMonkey.com features. This restriction led to some questions being skipped

but still being included in the completed surveys.

Results

The survey was composed of 20 questions and was approved by the University of Central Oklahoma Institutional Review Board (Appendix A). It included an additional qualifying question for a total of 21 questions.

Participants were asked as the first question whether they agreed or disagreed with the consent form, which featured information about the survey and other details including length of time required to complete the survey (figure 1). One respondent checked "disagree" and was not included in the final results. The second and third questions asked respondents for some basic demographic information (figures 2 and 3).

The age group of 22 to 34 received the highest percentage of the respondents (figure 2). The remainder of the respondents seemed to be evenly distributed based on age. Asking respondents their age was an important step in determining correlations. There were, however, no significant correlations present after an analysis of the data.

The next question asked respondents to indicate the highest level of education they have received (figure 3). The level of high school diploma received the most responses. The responses seemed to coincide with national averages for educational attainment. The latest figures from the United States Census Bureau indicate that 29.9% of Americans ages 25 and older have a bachelor's degree (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Asking respondents about their educational attainment was also important in determining any correlations. There were none present in the data, however. In addition, because the primary means of gathering data was to solicit the University of Central Oklahoma community for responses, the results of the question "What is the highest level of education you have received?" received a higher than average percent-

1.

You are invited to take part in a survey about public awareness of graphic design. The research is being conducted by Samantha Bohn, an MFA candidate in the Design Department at the University of Central Oklahoma. We ask that you read this form before agreeing to complete the survey.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from participating at any time, you will not be penalized. You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

The procedure involves filling out an online survey that will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes. Your responses will be confidential and we do not collect identifying information such as your name, email address, or IP address. The results of the survey will help the graphic design industry best move forward with communicating the value of graphic design to the public. This survey is testing public awareness. Therefore, it is not necessary that you know about graphic design in order to participate.

All data collected from the survey will be stored in a password-protected electronic format. To help protect your confidentiality, the surveys will not contain information that will personally identify you. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Samantha Bohn at 701-799-7540 or sbohn@uco.edu. You may also contact Dr. Jill A. Devenport, chair of the UCO Institutional Review Board, at 405-974-5479. This research has been reviewed according to the University of Central Oklahoma IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Thank you.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Agree		**99.8%**	**568**
Disagree		0.2%	1

FIGURE 1: Summary of results for Question 1, consent form.

2. What is your age?

		Response Percent	Response Count
21 and under		25.4%	144
22 to 34		**37.1%**	**211**
35 to 44		12.5%	71
45 to 54		13.9%	79
55 to 64		9.5%	54
65 and over		1.6%	9
		answered question	**568**

FIGURE 2: Summary of results for Question 2.

3. What is the highest level of education you have received?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than high school		0.4%	2
GED		1.1%	6
High school diploma		**33.8%**	**192**
Associate's degree or technical certification		18.0%	102
Bachelor's degree		22.7%	129
Master's degree		12.5%	71
PhD		11.6%	66
		answered question	**568**

FIGURE 3: Summary of results for Question 3.

4. How familiar are you with graphic design?		
	Response Percent	**Response Count**
Unfamiliar	22.2%	126
Somewhat familiar	**49.5%**	**281**
Familiar	18.5%	105
Very familiar	9.9%	56
	answered question	**568**

FIGURE 4: Summary of results for Question 4.

age of respondents indicating they have received a master's degree or PhD.

The fourth question sets the stage for understanding the respondents' level of awareness toward graphic design and graphic designers. It asks, "How familiar are you with graphic design?" (figure 4). Respondents could choose from four ratings, which were on a Likert scale of lowest to highest. The second lowest rating of familiarity (somewhat familiar) received the highest number of responses. The rating level of unfamiliar came in second; familiar came in third; and very familiar came in fourth. These results mimic design practitioners' observations, which is that very few people have a high familiarity with graphic design and that the general member of the public knows little to anything about graphic design.

From here, it became important to ask respondents if they, themselves, are graphic designers so that their responses can be filtered. The fifth questions asks, "Are you a graphic designer" and includes only two responses—yes or no (figure 5). Overwhelmingly, the average respondent was not a graphic designer. Only about 7 percent of the total number of respondents said they were a graphic designer. If respondents indicated that they were themselves a graphic designer, they would be routed to a sixth question that the other "No" respondents would skip. This sixth

5. Are you a graphic designer?		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		7.6%	43
No		92.4%	525
		answered question	568

FIGURE 5: Summary of results for Question 5.

question asks the respondents who indicated that they were graphic designers to specify what they believe qualifies them as a graphic designer (see figure 6).

Question 6 seeks to better comprehend the psychology of how and why people qualify themselves as graphic designers (figure 6). Respondents here were allowed to check more than one response and were also able to write a candid response. More than half the respondents (54.6% total) indicated they had some form of education in graphic design. A majority also noted that their level of experience qualifies them. Another majority—albeit smaller than those indicating experience level—indicated their portfolio qualifies them. What's most enlightening about these results is that these respondents—who have previously indicated that they call themselves graphic designers—wouldn't check all three of the categories (experience, some level of education, and portfolio). This question was designed to mirror the general expectations of a respected, competent, and professional graphic designer, which is that a graphic designer should have the right combination of experience, education, and competency (Giffen, 2004; Bierut, 2006; Shapiro, 1995). In addition, one-fifth of respondents checked other and provided a free-form response to explain what qualifies them. The respondents who provided their own responses seemed to desire to reiterate their experience ("It's something I've done for years"; "on-the-job

6. What qualifies you as a graphic designer?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Your level of experience	77.3%	34
You have an Associate's degree in graphic design	20.5%	9
You have a Bachelor's degree in graphic design	27.3%	12
You have a Master's or Master's of Fine Arts in graphic design	6.8%	3
Your portfolio	68.2%	30
Other (please specify)	20.5%	9
	answered question	44
	skipped question	524

FIGURE 6: Summary of results for Question 6.

experience"; "35 years experience"; "used to bee (sic) full-time employed as a design-er"; "Editor of my high school's yearbook, designed for yearbook, also designed many flyers for school activities"; and "Created, edited, designed and layed (sic) out many different publications using Adobe InDesign and Photoshop primarily. Publications include, but are not limited to, catalogs, brochures, manuals, ads and flyers.")

Those who answered Question 6 were routed around Questions 7, 8, and 9 due to irrelevancy. Question 7 asked the question, "Have you ever hired a graphic de-signer for a personal project or hired one at your workplace?" (figure 7). The major-ity of respondents indicated they had never hired a graphic designer personally or at their workplace. The remainder of respondents said they had hired a graphic de-signer before. This question was presented to survey-takers in order to address how
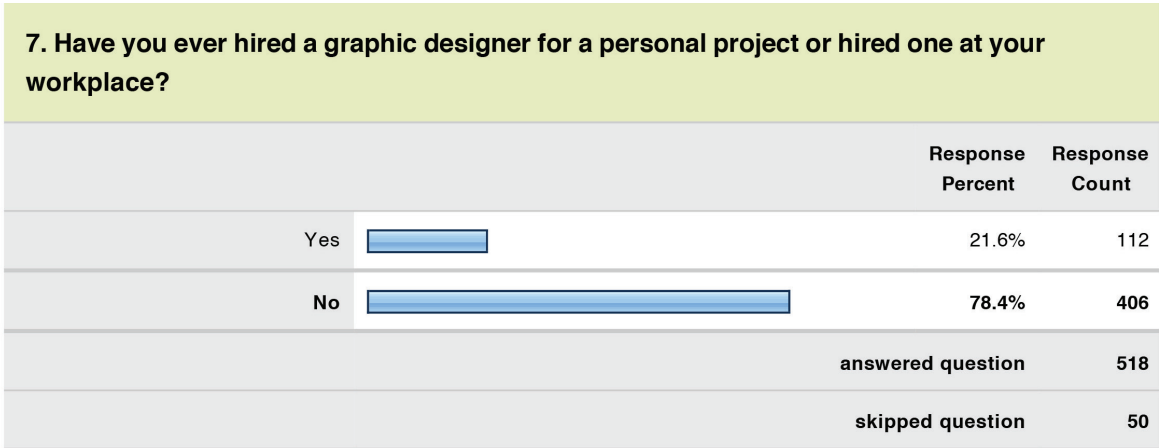
7. Have you ever hired a graphic designer for a personal project or hired one at your workplace?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		21.6%	112
No		**78.4%**	**406**
		answered question	**518**
		skipped question	**50**

FIGURE 7: Summary of results for Question 7.

8. Have you ever worked with a graphic designer at your place of employment?

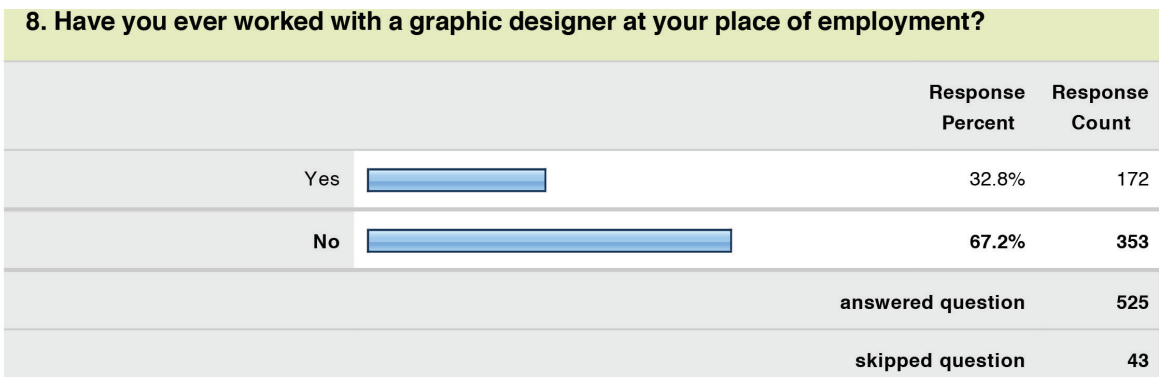|		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		32.8%	172
No		**67.2%**	**353**
		answered question	**525**
		skipped question	**43**

FIGURE 8: Summary of results for Question 8.

much of the population is directly involved in the hiring process of hiring a designer, especially in a corporate setting for an in-house design position. The results show a clear majority of the population not having either been involved in hiring a designer professionally or personally. Question 8 (figure 8) seeks to better understand the amount of interaction the average member of the public has with a graphic designer.

According to the results of Question 8 (figure 8), more people have interacted with designers in their workplace than those who have directly hired one either professionally or personally. About a third of the respondents indicated they have worked with a graphic designer at their place of employment. This is a more than

9. Please rate your experiences with graphic design or graphic designers.			
		Response Percent	**Response Count**
Very poor	▭	5.5%	29
Somewhat poor	▭	6.1%	32
Neutral	▭▭▭▭▭	**45.3%**	**238**
Somewhat good	▭▭▭	25.1%	132
Very good	▭▭	17.9%	94
		answered question	**525**
		skipped question	**43**

FIGURE 9: Summary of results for Question 9.

10% increase from those in Question 7 who indicated they had never hired a graphic designer before. Ultimately, this suggests that the scope of the public's interaction with graphic designers is nominal to moderate.

Question 9 was the last question skipped by those who indicated they were graphic designers (figure 9). The question asked respondents to "Please rate your experiences with graphic design or graphic designers." Respondents could choose from one of five levels on a Likert scale: very poor; somewhat poor; neutral; somewhat good; and very good. The majority of respondents indicated that their experiences were neither good nor bad, thus neutral. The ratings of somewhat good and very good came in at second and third place, respectively. The results of Question 9 illustrate that the typical person likely has had positive or neutral experiences with graphic design or graphic designers. However, it is concerning that the majority of respondents checked neutral. This could mean that respondents' experiences were not positive enough to be memorable or possibly that respondents were not active participants.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Response Count
10. Please rate each of the following words on whether you agree they are accurate descriptions of graphic designers.						
Professional	1.8% (10)	2.3% (13)	19.5% (111)	**52.6% (299)**	24.3% (138)	568
Technical	1.2% (7)	2.5% (14)	15.1% (86)	**49.5% (281)**	32.0% (182)	568
Expensive	1.2% (7)	4.4% (25)	**43.7% (248)**	35.4% (201)	15.3% (87)	568
Strategic	0.9% (5)	5.8% (33)	32.6% (185)	**45.1% (256)**	16.0% (91)	568
Innovative	1.2% (7)	1.1% (6)	13.7% (78)	**43.7% (248)**	40.7% (231)	568
Creative	1.4% (8)	0.7% (4)	6.9% (39)	33.5% (190)	**57.9% (329)**	568
Helpful	1.6% (9)	3.3% (19)	29.8% (169)	**44.4% (252)**	21.3% (121)	568
Necessary	2.3% (13)	5.1% (29)	29.4% (167)	**41.2% (234)**	22.4% (127)	568
Efficient	1.4% (8)	6.9% (39)	**43.5% (247)**	34.3% (195)	14.3% (81)	568
Smart	1.8% (10)	1.4% (8)	29.4% (167)	**44.0% (250)**	24.3% (138)	568
					answered question	**568**

FIGURE 10: Summary of results for Question 10.

At Question 10, all respondents rejoined for the remainder of the survey (figure 10). This question seeks to better understand people's attitudes toward graphic design or graphic designers. It asked respondents, "Please rate each of the following words on whether you agree they are accurate descriptions of graphic designers." The chosen adjectives addressed stereotypes and some of the attitudes already noted by critics and practitioners. On the other hand, some adjectives addressed qualities about graphic designers that graphic designers themselves believe in. Respondents were asked to check a scale rating for each of the adjectives. The scale was Likert and followed the same methodology of lowest to highest as in other questions. The rating of agree was the most popular choice for the majority of the

11. Please rate each of the following words on how accurately they describe your interactions with graphic designers.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Response Count
Professional	1.1% (6)	5.1% (29)	**39.3% (223)**	36.4% (207)	18.5% (105)	568
Technical	1.2% (7)	3.5% (20)	**42.4% (241)**	35.0% (199)	18.0% (102)	568
Expensive	2.1% (12)	6.0% (34)	**59.9% (340)**	21.3% (121)	11.1% (63)	568
Strategic	1.1% (6)	4.2% (24)	**51.1% (290)**	31.5% (179)	12.5% (71)	568
Innovative	1.1% (6)	3.7% (21)	**37.3% (212)**	34.5% (196)	23.6% (134)	568
Creative	0.9% (5)	2.3% (13)	32.0% (182)	30.5% (173)	**34.9% (198)**	568
Helpful	1.9% (11)	3.3% (19)	**41.5% (236)**	35.0% (199)	18.1% (103)	568
Necessary	2.3% (13)	4.8% (27)	**44.7% (254)**	31.7% (180)	17.1% (97)	568
Efficient	1.6% (9)	4.9% (28)	**47.9% (272)**	32.6% (185)	13.2% (75)	568
Smart	1.4% (8)	1.1% (6)	**43.1% (245)**	35.9% (204)	18.7% (106)	568
					answered question	568

FIGURE 11: Summary of results for Question 11.

adjectives (*professional, technical, strategic, innovative, helpful, necessary, and smart*). The rating level of neutral received the highest responses for the adjectives of *expensive and efficient.* Only one adjective received the highest responses for the rating of strongly agree—*creative.* There are a couple of conclusions to be drawn from the results of Question 10. First, when shown a list of adjectives, people tended to agree they were all accurate descriptions of graphic designers. Second, the average person would agree that graphic designers are creative, over all other qualities. In addition, a correlation was present between two of the words—*creative* and *innovative.* A significant Pearson correlation (r=.739) was noted between the words *creative* and *innovative.* This suggests that there is a high probability of those who view graphic

12. How much education do you think the typical graphic designer holds?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than high school		0.4%	2
GED		0.2%	1
High school diploma		3.2%	18
Associate's degree or technical certification		28.3%	161
Bachelor's degree		**62.1%**	**353**
Master's degree		5.8%	33
PhD		0.0%	0
		answered question	**568**

FIGURE 12: Summary of results for Question 12.

designers as creative to also view graphic designers as innovative. More so, it also means that the words are closely linked.

Question 11 is similar to Question 10. It asked respondents to rate how accurately the same adjectives in Question 10 describe their interactions with graphic designers. One of the purposes of Question 11 was to decipher whether people's interactions correlate to their attitudes. It would appear that there are inconsistencies. All but one adjective received the most responses under the neutral category. Only one adjective—*creative*—received the most responses for any other category, which was for the rating of strongly agree. In the case of the adjective *creative*, responses for both interactions and descriptions align. In addition, the adjectives of *expensive* and *efficient* also align, in that both words received the highest responses under the neutral category in both Question 10 and Question 11. For the other adjectives—*professional, technical, strategic, innovative, helpful, necessary,* and *smart*—the ma-

13. How much education do you expect a graphic designer to hold?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than high school		0.0%	0
GED		0.5%	3
High school diploma		3.3%	19
Associate's degree or technical certification		23.8%	135
Bachelor's degree		**63.6%**	**361**
Master's degree		8.5%	48
PhD		0.4%	2
		answered question	**568**

FIGURE 13: Summary of results for Question 13.

jority of respondents checked neutral as describing their interactions with graphic designers. This inconsistency is somewhat confusing. If the majority of respondents held an agreeable attitude toward the word *professional* as a description for graphic designers but stopped short of agreeing the word is also representative of their interactions, the division needs to be further explored. Another deduction that could be derived from Question 11 is that some respondents may have become eager to complete the question and thus checked neutral for all of the words. This may have been due to the repetition of Questions 10 and 11. The survey design anticipated that attitude and built in formatting in the question through emphasis on the word *interactions* in Question 11 and *description* in Question 10.

Question 12 delves further into public awareness and public expectations of graphic designers. It asks the question, "How much education do you think the typical graphic designer holds?" (figure 12). The majority of respondents indicated

14. How familiar do you think the average person is with graphic design?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Unfamiliar		20.6%	117
Somewhat unfamiliar		**46.0%**	**261**
Neutral		15.8%	90
Somewhat familiar		16.4%	93
Very familiar		1.2%	7
		answered question	568

FIGURE 14: Summary of results for Question 14.

they thought the typical graphic designer has received a bachelor's degree. In second place was an associate's degree; a master's degree came in third.

Question 13 seeks to, like Question 11, determine whether people's attitudes correspond to their awareness. Question 13 asks the question "How much education do you **expect** a graphic designer to hold?" (figure 13). It appears from the results that respondents' expectations align with their awareness, which is that the typical graphic designer holds a bachelor's degree. The majority of respondents checked "bachelor's degree," indicating that the majority of the public is aware of industry standards for educational level.

The goal of Question 14 was to determine respondents' attitudes toward public awareness of graphic design. It asks the question, "How familiar do you think the average person is with graphic design?" (figure 14). Here, the rating of somewhat unfamiliar received the highest number of responses; the rating of unfamiliar came in second. Ultimately, the results of Question 14 align with Question 4, which asked people to indicate their level of familiarity. For comparison purposes, in Question 4,

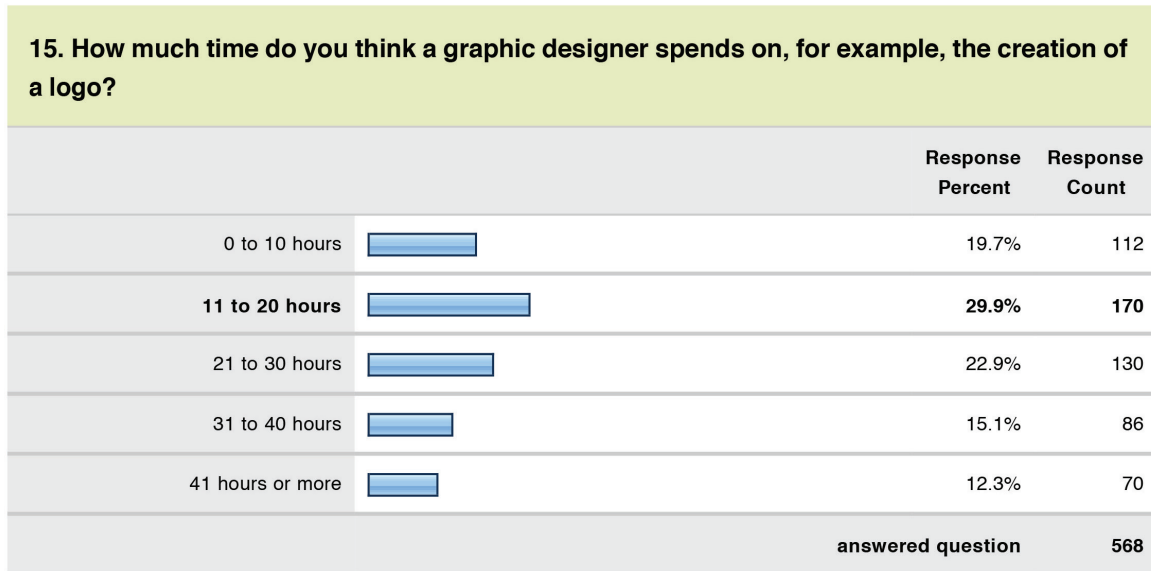| 15. How much time do you think a graphic designer spends on, for example, the creation of a logo?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
0 to 10 hours		19.7%	112
11 to 20 hours		**29.9%**	**170**
21 to 30 hours		22.9%	130
31 to 40 hours		15.1%	86
41 hours or more		12.3%	70
		answered question	**568**

FIGURE 15: Summary of results for Question 15.

49.5% of respondents indicated they were somewhat familiar with graphic design. In Question 14, 46% of respondents indicated they thought the average person was somewhat familiar (or in other wording "somewhat unfamiliar") with graphic design. The only division was noted in the rating level of "very familiar," which received 7.7% more in Question 4 than in Question 14. This is indicative that the public itself is aware of its own lack of awareness about graphic design.

Question 15 seeks a more specific understanding of respondents' awareness of graphic design. It asks the question, "How much time do you think a graphic designer spends on, for example, the creation of a logo?" (figure 15). The goal was to determine, indirectly, how respondents value the process of design. While there is no definitive correct answer, industry standards would certainly place a project like the creation of a new identity at at least 20 hours' worth of time. Respondents' answers were varied and distributed across all five options: 0 to 10 hours; 11 to 20 hours; 21 to 30 hours; 31 to 40 hours; and 41 hours or more. The answer 11 to 20 hours received the highest number of responses. However, closely following was the choice

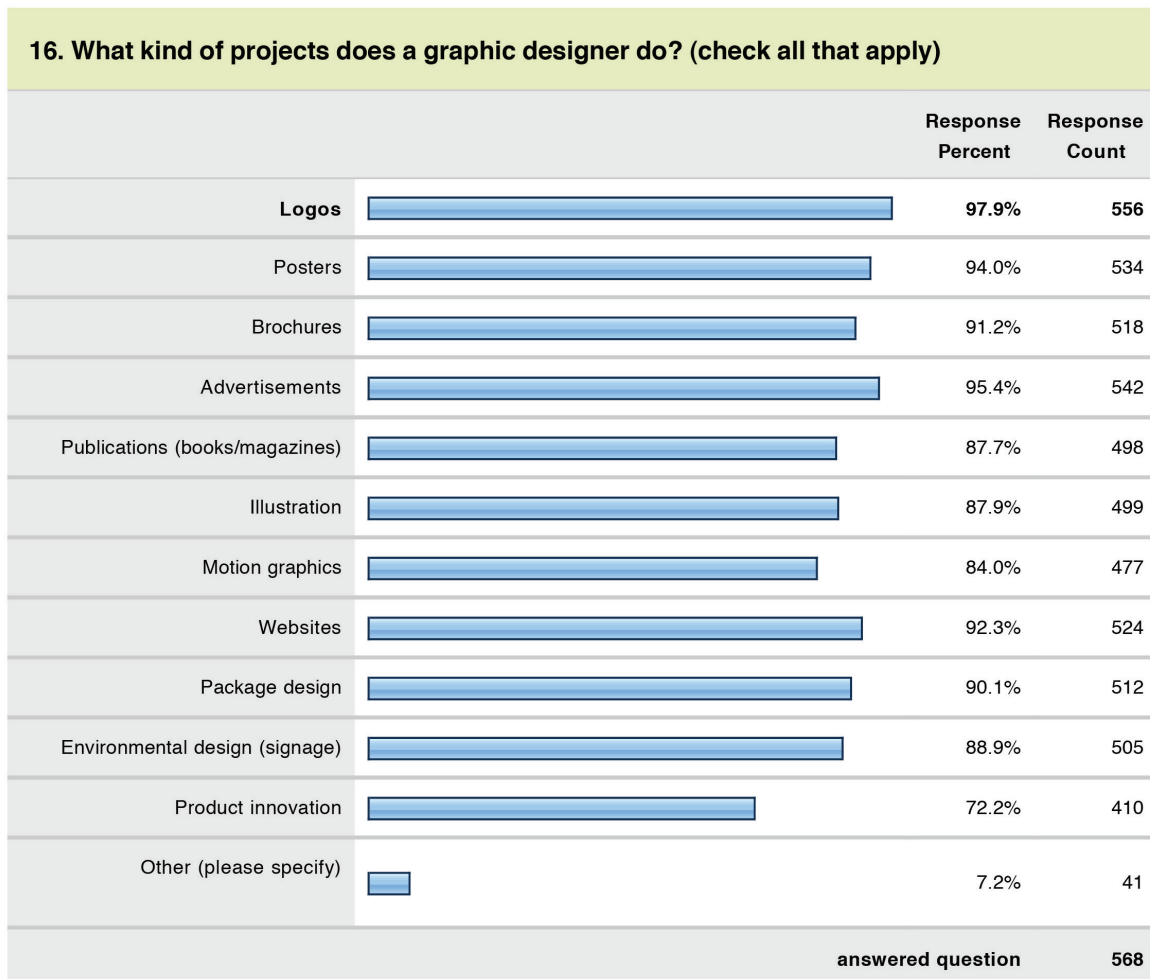| 16. What kind of projects does a graphic designer do? (check all that apply)		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Logos	**97.9%**	**556**
Posters	94.0%	534
Brochures	91.2%	518
Advertisements	95.4%	542
Publications (books/magazines)	87.7%	498
Illustration	87.9%	499
Motion graphics	84.0%	477
Websites	92.3%	524
Package design	90.1%	512
Environmental design (signage)	88.9%	505
Product innovation	72.2%	410
Other (please specify)	7.2%	41
	answered question	**568**

FIGURE 16: Summary of results for Question 16.

of 21 to 30 hours. The third highest number of responses went to the choice of 0 to 10 hours. This is somewhat disappointing, but again, the responses were distributed fairly evenly. Question 16 seeks a deeper understanding of public awareness about what exactly a graphic designer does.

Question 16 asks the question "What kind of projects does a graphic designer do? (check all that apply)" (figure 16). Respondents could check all the options as well as fill in additional thoughts in the other category. The options presented to respondents ranged from print-specific to web-specific. All attempts were made to provide a range of projects that were not too specific that only people in the graphic

design industry would know. The results indicate that when given a list of possible projects a graphic designer may do, an overwhelming majority of respondents agreed they were representative of what a graphic designer does or could do. Only one category received less than 84% of the respondents' votes—product innovation. By all accounts, product innovation is an emerging area of development in the graphic design industry, as evidenced by the growing popularity of product innovation and design firms like IDEO and the School of Visual Arts' *Design As Author* Master of Fine Arts program. In this case, it is unnecessary to review which category received the highest number of responses. Instead, what is most revealing about the results is that 84% or more of respondents checked each category as being something they agree a graphic designer does. One of the faults of the question may have been that respondents naturally felt the categories were obviously correct, as none of the answers were obviously *not* correct.

In addition, 41 respondents left their own responses for what they felt graphic designers do (figure 17). Some discussed categories left out of the original question; others inadvertently revealed shortcomings in their awareness. Many responses addressed apparel design, as well. Two respondents seemed to be confused about the differences between graphic designers and interior designers, indicating that they believed graphic designers deal with "interior" and "furniture, layout of rooms, fabrics... ." Others yet discussed more specific elements of design, such as "typography." Many responses indicated a lower awareness such as "wouldn't know," "everything color," "cartoons and songs and fun stuff that goes along with project (sic)," and "pretty much anything that contains graphics? computer games/etc?" While the results of Question 16 were fairly distributed and evenly agreed upon, the responses left by survey-takers were most revealing.

Responses left as "other" for Question 16 *

Anything we see around us was designed by someone; from the most dramatic movie posters to the instructions on how to train a cat to use a toilet.

Designing websites requires different training from print graphics, but graphic designers can definitely design websites.

anything that needs design

interior

business innovations and brand strategy

Cards and Invites for weddings etc.

pretty much anything that has to do with visual representations

pretty much anything that contains graphics?
computer games/etc?

pictures, special event productions

Menus, Flyers

any kind of design from poster to billboard depend on what kind of graphic designer he or she might be

fine art

wouldn't know

Mailers, online advertising, lots more!

everything with color

Anything involving images, whether it is images of objects or images of words

Furniture, layout of rooms, fabrics, specifications of certain types of furniture/equipment

Consulting

clothing

Letterhead, business cards, book cover design

Catalogs

Shirt Design, Various Promotional Designs

ANYTHING TO DO WITH ADS

social media branding

Postcard design

Mostly logos

sports design, typography, interface design, user experience and interaction, broadcast materials, and more.

Game design

shirts, clothes .

Everything

photo editing/manipulation, research studies

Cartoons and songs and fun stuff that goes along with project

marketing

3d models

all

typography

Entertainment Media

just about anything that needs to look good or sell something.

Branding

Tshirts

all the above

*Responses have not been edited

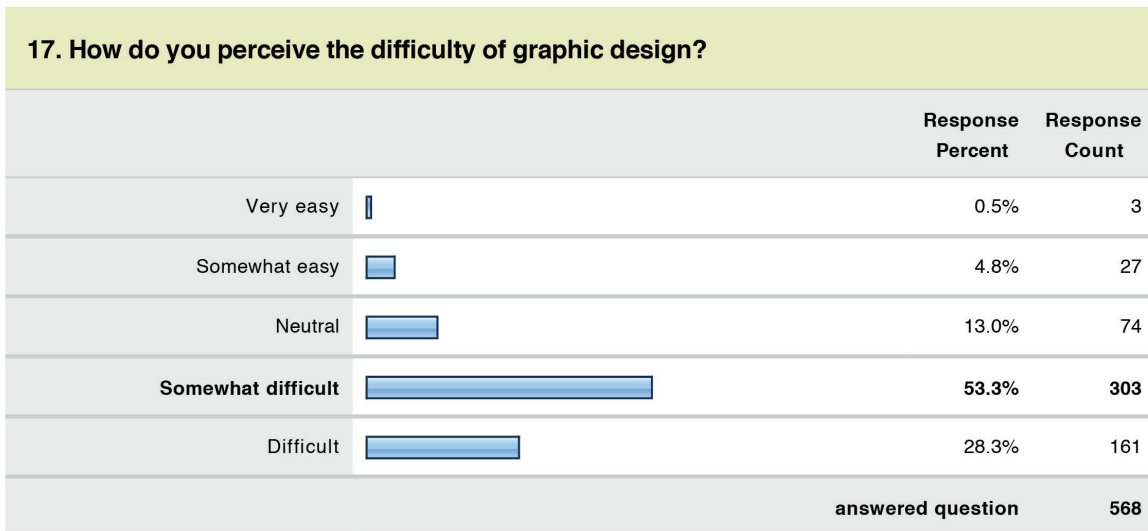FIGURE 17: Summary of results for "other" category for Question 16.

17. How do you perceive the difficulty of graphic design?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Very easy	0.5%	3
Somewhat easy	4.8%	27
Neutral	13.0%	74
Somewhat difficult	**53.3%**	**303**
Difficult	28.3%	161
	answered question	**568**

FIGURE 18: Summary of results for Question 17.

18. How much would you pay to utilize a freelance graphic designer's services?

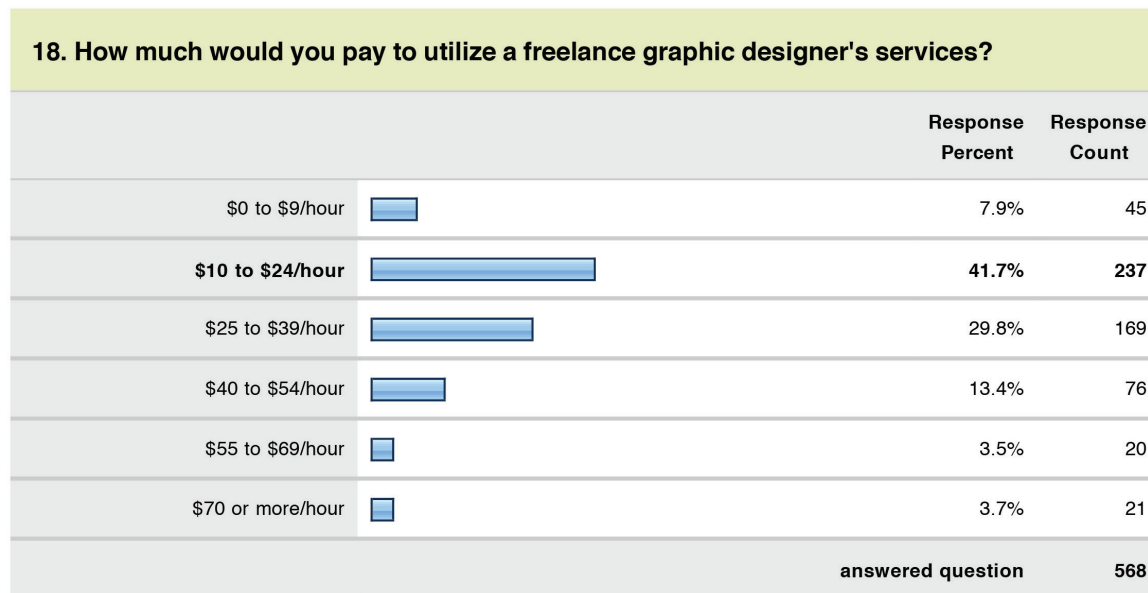|	Response Percent	Response Count
$0 to $9/hour	7.9%	45
$10 to $24/hour	**41.7%**	**237**
$25 to $39/hour	29.8%	169
$40 to $54/hour	13.4%	76
$55 to $69/hour	3.5%	20
$70 or more/hour	3.7%	21
	answered question	**568**

FIGURE 19: Summary of results for Question 18.

Question 17 asks respondents to rate how difficult they perceive graphic design (figure 18). The reasoning for this question is that value placed in a profession can be linked to perceived difficulty. Lawyers and doctors are considered some of the highest-rated professions in terms of respect and admiration (see figure 20). They are also both difficult professions that require a great deal of devotion and edu-

19. Please rate each of the following professions on a scale of 1 to 10 based on your level of trust in each profession's expertise.												
	1 (lowest)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (highest)	Rating Average	Response Count
Doctors	0.4% (2)	1.3% (7)	1.9% (10)	1.3% (7)	4.1% (22)	4.1% (22)	9.5% (51)	22.6% (121)	22.6% (121)	**32.3% (173)**	8.32	536
Teachers	0.6% (3)	0.2% (1)	1.0% (5)	3.0% (16)	7.8% (41)	9.7% (51)	17.3% (91)	**24.8% (130)**	23.8% (125)	11.8% (62)	7.65	525
Graphic designers	0.8% (4)	1.0% (5)	4.2% (22)	8.2% (43)	15.5% (81)	17.2% (90)	**23.1% (121)**	17.2% (90)	9.5% (50)	3.4% (18)	6.48	524
Lawyers	4.8% (25)	8.8% (46)	8.6% (45)	11.5% (60)	13.8% (72)	11.7% (61)	11.9% (62)	**14.0% (73)**	10.3% (54)	4.6% (24)	5.67	522
Salespeople	15.6% (82)	17.0% (89)	**21.0% (110)**	16.2% (85)	14.1% (74)	10.1% (53)	3.2% (17)	1.0% (5)	1.3% (7)	0.6% (3)	3.56	525
Politicians	**36.0% (192)**	21.2% (113)	14.6% (78)	11.6% (62)	9.0% (48)	3.4% (18)	1.5% (8)	1.1% (6)	0.7% (4)	0.9% (5)	2.69	534
CEOs	7.7% (41)	10.1% (54)	13.7% (73)	**15.2% (81)**	13.9% (74)	13.9% (74)	12.6% (67)	7.1% (38)	4.3% (23)	1.5% (8)	4.81	533
Clergy	6.5% (35)	5.4% (29)	8.0% (43)	6.9% (37)	11.1% (60)	8.9% (48)	11.9% (64)	12.8% (69)	12.6% (68)	**16.0% (86)**	6.36	539
Journalists	5.5% (30)	8.1% (44)	11.1% (60)	14.9% (81)	**19.2% (104)**	14.6% (79)	11.8% (64)	7.7% (42)	5.0% (27)	2.0% (11)	5.08	542
Psychologists	2.2% (12)	3.1% (17)	4.2% (23)	5.7% (31)	12.7% (69)	11.8% (64)	15.1% (82)	16.8% (91)	**19.2% (104)**	9.2% (50)	6.83	543
										answered question		565
										skipped question		3

FIGURE 20: Summary of results for Question 19.

cation. Slightly over half of respondents said they thought graphic design was somewhat difficult. The rating of difficult followed in second place; the rating of neutral came in third; and the ratings of somewhat easy and very easy trailed in fourth and fifth, respectively.

Question 18 was designed as a follow-up to Question 17. It asks, "How much would you pay to utilize a freelance graphic designer's services?" (figure 19). The results indicate that while the majority of respondents said graphic design was somewhat difficult, a majority also wouldn't pay more than $24 an hour to hire a graphic designer. The results of Question 17 and Question 18 don't correlate, however.

With perceived difficulty of a profession, the higher the profession is typically paid on average. Question 19 further illustrates the dichotomy in perceived difficulty and perceived pay. In addition, with the majority of respondents in Question 18 feeling comfortable paying a freelancer $10 to $24 an hour, this also means that they wouldn't be receiving design assistance from experienced or high-calibre designers. According to the AIGA/Aquent Survey of Design Salaries, the median hourly rate for a freelance senior designer who does print, web, and interactive design was $55 in 2011 (AIGA, 2011). The results also indicate that hiring an experienced, high-calibre designer does not enter into their realm of the public's priorities.

Question 19 asks people to "Please rate each of the following professions on a scale of 1 to 10 based on your level of trust in each profession's expertise" (figure 20). The question included a feature of SurveyMonkey.com's called "forced ranking," in which respondents are allowed to use only one ranking level per profession. This lead to some confusion among participants. About an hour after the mass e-mail had been sent to the University of Central Oklahoma community, the researcher received a couple of e-mails from participants who thought the question was formatted incorrectly and could not complete the question because they didn't understand that one numbered ranking could be used only once. However, although nearly everybody at that point (almost 200) had completed the question with no perceived difficulty, it was this researcher's opinion that the forced ranking was presenting enough problems that it would be wise not to frustrate participants. Because of this, the remainder of the participants rated each profession individually rather than as a group from 1 to 10. However, the results support anecdotal, societal attitudes toward professions. Doctors, lawyers, clergy, psychologists, and teachers rated the highest; salespeople, journalists, CEOs, and politicians rated the lowest. Graphic designers,

20. If the graphic design industry needs improvement, how best could it achieve that? (check all that apply)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Do more charitable work		25.0%	139
Lower prices		29.4%	164
Educate public more on industry		**76.8%**	**428**
Better education for designers		35.2%	196
Other (please specify)		9.9%	55
		answered question	557
		skipped question	11

FIGURE 21: Summary of results for Question 20.

however, received the highest majority of responses under the rating of 7 and had an average score of 6.48, indicating that respondents viewed graphic designers as competent and trustworthy. In fact, graphic designers received the fourth-highest average score. Doctors received the highest average score; teachers received the second; and psychologists came in at third. This ultimately suggests that respondents trust graphic designers and their expertise.

Question 20 deals more explicitly with the initial direction of this research, which was that a public educational tool could bridge the gap between graphic designers and public misconceptions about graphic design. Question 20 asks, "If the graphic design industry needs improvement, how best could it achieve that? check all that apply" (figure 21). Respondents were allowed to check more than one answer, or all of them, and could also fill in an open response. The majority of respondents felt that a public awareness tool could be beneficial for improving the

Responses left as "other" for Question 20 *

Moral

more interaction with student in high school and or/ college/techschools

Listen better to the client about what they want.

Find better ways of getting information out there.

stop acting like your jobs really matter, for God's sake you design cereal boxes.

more flexible prices

Lower tuition for graphic designers, the equipment and supplies are already so expensive.

Customer service trainign for graphic designers

More professionalism in conducting business.

True professionals ought to be paid more for what they do. The general public thinks that anyone can be a graphic designer thanks to programs like Illustrator. But real graphic designers are serious professionals with lots of expertise. The public ought to understand this, and the true professionals ought to be compensated accordingly, as with any profession.

Better marketing (ironically)

Limit the availability to use in only worthy products and endeavors.

really couldn't say

Dabble in photography, doodle, practice personal work

Better introduction to design in K-12 education. Celebrate other designers success more and criticize each others work less.

Too often someone who messes with Publisher can deign themselves a 'graphic designer', and too often, those who don't recognize quality design fall for it.

Better education for the overall small business category in smaller cities to allow a real appreciation for professional design.

Designers often seem to be out of touch with what the client actually wants; "better education for designers" refers to lessons in good aesthetic taste

G.D. can be informative or potentially manipulative - might help to ethically distinguish more between the two

Share basics of knowledge rather than keeping it so isolated and protected - comes across as you are in it only for the money - not helping people.

Provide a clear, simple explanation for the public as to what they can actually do.... develop a 'slogan' type of statement

Better pay

undecided

Designers I'm around typically have a frustration about their industry before they're even a part of it. That's not professional to complain about that, and I believe part of the education of the public is them feeling less like the designer is already disgruntled. They're hearing those complaints somewhere and it's being reinforced.

Better Prices, which is different than lower prices. Also no Spec Work. It cheapens it for the rest of us.

Perhaps educate on why prices are the way they are. I think people see a per hour charge, and don't realize that includes an idea. The designer's creative liscensing is on that work, which there makes it valueable.

Design is always about marketing. Learning what is good for an industry is possibly more important than what someone in an industry thinks they need. Be willing to push.

continued education and research into their field just like any other field.

include web design and development as standard part of training programs

Graphic Designers are often artists and therefor not working for the customer, they are tied to what they like not what the customer is asking of the deisgner. It makes it very difficult to accurately represent a product or service or company when the artwork is art and not representation based on extensive research and collective trust. Also based on artistic nature and sometimes personality, the change requests are seen as personal attacks and it makes them hard to work with, generally speaking.

Integrate graphic design throughout education, beginning with letter spacing when learning the alphabet; creating fliers for cub/girl scout meetings; resume/business card design in high school; advanced design where appropriate.

More explination of reasoning behind final product. I hired someone to help me create a logo for a business, and while I was satisfied with the final product, I felt I did not have much influence on the process, and I never really understood why she made the choices she did

Designations that specify a designers specializations in different areas of graphic design, similar to what Realtors have.

*Responses have not been edited

FIGURE 22: Summary of results for "other" for Question 20.

CONTINUED: Responses left as "other" for Question 20 *

Raise awareness about the industry

Inform business world of the damage that 'crowdsourcing' does to the overall quality of design

I didn't know their was a problem.

More instruction on how to work with customers/SME's

responsibility & accountability for what they're producing

advertise more professionally

Graphic Designers could get real jobs and degrees. Thus ending their pointlessness

network, get paid more

Do shows like photographer do

Better designing , unique

Opportunity for the average person to learn more about the basics of graphic design.

Stop talking technical terms to people who are not in the business.

Organization of business with designers focusing on their projects and contact often with client.

In my eperience, the graphic designer was as good as the direction I was able to provide. If I had a clear vision for my project and was able to communicate it well, then they were able to provide a product that well met my expectations.

Compete with overseas freelancers that seem to be more unto date and cheaper.

Give free soda pop and pizza to clients while working on the project!

A major attitude adjustment

no idea

Hire me next time.

Spend more time understanding the differences among industries they plan to design for and get more creative.

Be more selective of who qualifies as a graphic designer.

Communication techniques with customers

*Responses have not been edited

FIGURE 22: Summary of results for "other" for Question 20.

industry. The choice of more charitable work came in last. And, while the majority

of respondents in Question 18 indicated they would only hire a graphic designer for

$10 to $24 an hour, the answer lower prices was checked only by about a third of

respondents as one way to improve the industry. In addition, only slightly over one-

third of respondents indicated that better education of designers was a priority for

improving the industry, despite many design critics discussing the need for better

overall graphic design education (Coyne, 1995; Design Skills Advisory Panel, 2007).

As indicated by the results of Question 20, the majority of respondents would find a

public educational tool valuable for improving the graphic design industry. In addi-

tion, a number of respondents had other suggestions they discussed under the other

category (figure 22).

The responses left under the other category for Question 20 featured a variety of approaches. Some respondents took the opportunity to speak despairingly about graphic designers; others reiterated points in the other answers; others listed their concerns about the industry; and others reiterated better public education and design education.

Of the respondents who took the opportunity to voice their concerns about graphic designers, the one of the most alarming was graphic designers' so-called attitude: "stop acting like your jobs really matter, for God's sake you design cereal boxes"; "Graphic Designers could get real jobs and degrees. Thus ending their pointlessness"; and "A major attitude adjustment." Many respondents also reiterated prices in their open responses:

> "more flexible prices"; "Better pay"; "Better Prices, which is different than lower prices. Also no Spec Work. It cheapens it for the rest of us"; "Perhaps educate on why prices are the way they are. I think people see a per hour charge, and don't realize that includes an idea. The designer's creative liscensing (sic) is on that work, which there (sic) makes it valueable (sic)"; "network, get paid more"; "Compete with overseas freelancers that seem to be more unto (sic) date and cheaper"; and "True professionals ought to be paid more for what they do. The general public thinks that anyone can be a graphic designer thanks to programs like Illustrator. But real graphic designers are serious professionals with lots of expertise. The public ought to understand this, and the true professionals ought to be compensated accordingly, as with any profession."

Some respondents took the time to discuss concerns previously discussed in the literature review, such as spec work, certification, the oversupply of graphic designers, and access to professional design tools:
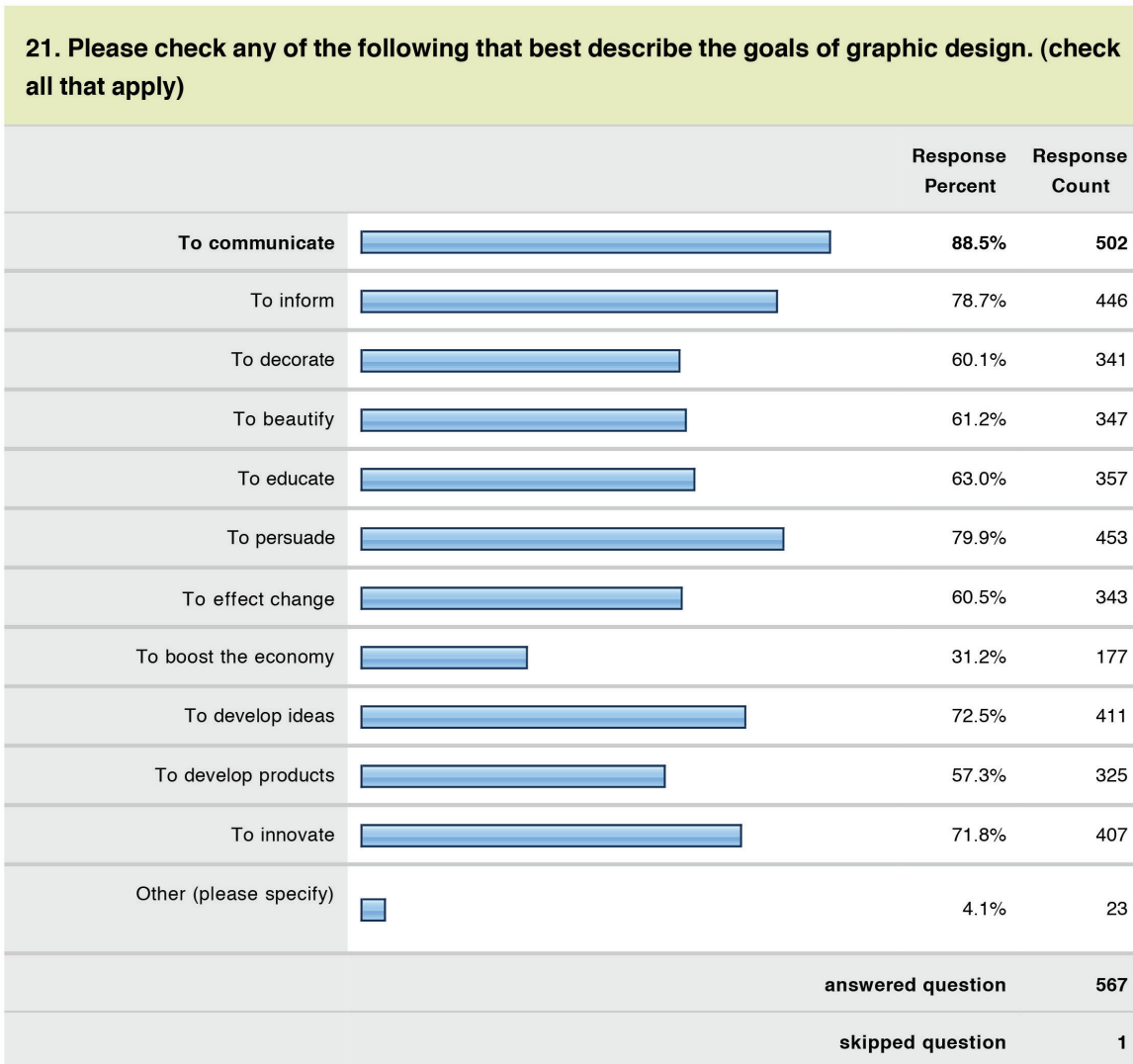
21. Please check any of the following that best describe the goals of graphic design. (check all that apply)

		Response Percent	Response Count
To communicate		88.5%	502
To inform		78.7%	446
To decorate		60.1%	341
To beautify		61.2%	347
To educate		63.0%	357
To persuade		79.9%	453
To effect change		60.5%	343
To boost the economy		31.2%	177
To develop ideas		72.5%	411
To develop products		57.3%	325
To innovate		71.8%	407
Other (please specify)		4.1%	23
	answered question		567
	skipped question		1

FIGURE 23: Summary of results for Question 21.

"Limit the availability to use in only worthy products and endeavors"; "Too often someone who messes with Publisher can deign themselves a 'graphic designer', and too often, those who don't recognize quality design fall for it"; "Designations that specify a designers (sic) specializations in different areas of graphic design, similar to what Realtors have"; "Inform business world of the damage that 'crowdsourcing' does to the overall quality of design"; and "Be more selective of who qualifies as a graphic designer."

In addition, a number of respondents reiterated a need for public education:

"Better marketing (ironically)"; "Better education for the overall small busi-

ness category in smaller cities to allow a real appreciation for professional

design"; "Share basics of knowledge rather than keeping it so isolated and

protected — comes across as you are in it only for the money — not helping

people"; "Provide a clear, simple explanation for the public as to what they

can actually do.... develop a 'slogan' type of statement"; "Design is always

about marketing. Learning what is good for an industry is possibly more

important than what someone in an industry thinks they need. Be willing to

push"; "More explination of reasoning behind final product. I hired someone

to help me create a logo for a business, and while I was satisfied with the final

product, I felt I did not have much influence on the process, and I never really

understood why she made the choices she did"; "Raise awareness about the

industry"; "advertise more professionally"; and "Opportunity for the average

person to learn more about the basics of graphic design"; "Stop talking tech-

nical terms to people who are not in the business."

The final lesson from this feedback is that there are areas for improvement and that

public education, pricing, and design education are priority areas for the industry

to address. In addition, the written responses from survey-takers were very enlight-

ening and provided a clearer picture of how respondents truly felt about graphic

designers and the graphic design industry.

Question 21 asked respondents to "Please check any of the following that

best describe the goals of graphic design." All but two categories received more

than 70% of respondents' agreement. Those categories—*to boost the economy* and

to develop products—are newer forms of development in the design community.

For comparison, the average percent score of the remaining nine other categories

Responses left as "other" for Question 21 *

Although it is not a goal of graphic design to boost the economy, its use does so automatically.
To combine color and shape in a unique manner
increase personal or business sales
have fun
To stand out
To sell
To increase the success of everything the designer is involved in. Designers Midas touch!
project ideas into applicable art
To motivate in general
as with "fashion", change/innovation just for the sake of change may not be constructive
Inspire
I believe it is expected that the outcome will be pretty (decorate / beautify) or the opposite to evoke emotion, etc. I also expect graphic designers to research and bring ideas to the table - but maybe not fully develop them.
To promote
To sell products and services, to promote confidence
To create an identity
To waste other people's time and money
To enthuse and excite!
Marketing, PR
To create needs
To teach
no idea
all the above
inspire

*Responses have not been edited

FIGURE 24: Summary of results for "other" for Question 21.

is 70.6% and *to boost the economy* netted 31.2% and *to develop products* received 57.3% of the vote.

Boosting the economy is specifically the concept of the U.S. National Design Policy Initiative (2009): "Design serves to advance the goals of the United States' economic competitiveness by saving time and money and simplifying the use, manufacturing, and maintenance of goods and services. It enhances democratic governance by improving the performance and delivery of government services." In addition, product development is also a newer aspect of graphic design, as evidenced by

the establishment of the School of Visual Arts MFA *Design As Author* program and the evolution of product design firm IDEO, which is at the forefront of using design thinking and graphic design as a means for enhancement of products and overall business (Brown & Katz, 2009). Because of the novelty of both product design and economic competitiveness as an offshoot of graphic design, it is not surprising that those categories received much lower percentages of the respondents' agreement than did other categories.

On the other hand, the categories of *to communicate, to inform, to persuade, to develop ideas,* and *to innovate* received the highest percentage of votes. Other categories received lower but fairly equal percentages around 60%: *to decorate, to beautify, to educate,* and *to effect change.* While the goals of graphic design can be varied and otherwise not definitive as an industry, *to communicate* would most likely be the most base definition for the role of graphic design. Street signs, tax documents, and advertisements all share the common goal of communicating. In addition to the provided answers, respondents had the opportunity to provide an open response in the other category (figure 24).

The responses were quite varied, with some weighing in on the idea of selling ("To sell products and services..."; "To sell"; and "To motivate in general"). Others were quite specific ("To combine color and shape in a unique manner"). Overall, the respondents seemed interested in the role of graphic design based on the number of written responses and were aware that graphic design is involved in numerous ways in people's day-to-day lives.

DISCUSSION

This research, which asked the question "How can the graphic design industry best communicate the role of a professional graphic designer?", supports a number of hypotheses. Those hypotheses are as follows: That the average person believes they are unfamiliar with graphic design; that there is disagreement among graphic designers as to what constitutes the term *graphic designer*; that the majority of people would not pay a high-calibre freelance graphic designer the average hourly rate of $55 an hour (AIGA, 2011); that there is disagreement among the public about the time required to design; that the public's perceptions of graphic designers do not mimic their interactions; and that the public expects a graphic designer to hold at least a bachelor's degree. The ultimate solution to the research question was that before any communication to the public can begin, the graphid design industry must first have a clear understanding of what exactly needs to be communicated. Using anecdotal evidence from practitioners is not a complete enough picture to have pursued a public awareness campaign or tool. However, the results gleaned from this research will greatly support the development of any future plans to communicate the role of a professional graphic designer to the public.

Familiarity

The survey affirmed the notion that the public is overall unfamiliar with graphic design. The majority of respondents both indicated that they themselves were unfamiliar and also that they believed the average person was also unfamiliar. This also cements the hypothesis that a public awareness campaign or tool is a worthy solution to pursue.

Graphic designers' feedback

The second area of interest is the dilemma that of the 43 respondents who indicated they called themselves graphic designers, only 23% checked the three core

areas derived from informal formulas for a professional graphic designer: experience, education, and portfolio. This could be due to a lack of awareness among graphic designers themselves—or, in addition, it could be indicative of a separate issue, such as a moderate level of disillusionment among the public as to what constitutes a professional graphic designer.

Interaction

Overall, the majority of respondents indicated their interactions with graphic designers were nominal. The majority of respondents have not either hired a graphic designer personally or professionally nor worked with one in their workplace. This ultimately means the public may have low awareness of graphic design because their interactions with graphic designers are so nominal. As the industry grows and matures and graphic design becomes a more integral part of the equation in business settings, it is possible that awareness will also grow due to increased exposure in work settings. Some additional information gleaned from the survey will also help the graphic design better understand the public's level of interaction with graphic designers.

There was an obvious discord between the level of agreement in perceptions of graphic designers and interactions with graphic designers using the same set of descriptive adjectives in Questions 10 and 11. Only three adjectives received the same majority rating in both Questions 10 and 11. Those adjectives were *creative, expensive, and efficien*t. The other adjectives—*professional, technical, strategic, innovative, helpful, necessary,* and *smart*—all received the rating of neutral in Question 11 yet had received more favorable majority ratings in Question 10 of agree and strongly agree. This suggests a number of things. First, it could suggest a limitation within the questioning. Second, it may suggest that the public has favorable perceptions of graphic designers but that their interactions are less positive or not memorable enough.

Education

That the majority of respondents selected a bachelor's degree as their minimum expectation for a graphic designer tells the community and technical college education community that the public has higher expectations than what their programs in graphic design currently offer. These results indicate that associate's degrees in graphic design need to be evaluated or re-evaluated.

Process

Information gleaned from two questions will help the graphic design industry better understand the public's current level of awareness when it comes to the process of graphic design. The first question addresses one area of a graphic designer's process, which is time. Developed graphic design work takes much time, and because of that, it was important to address whether the public understands that. However, the processes that graphic designers follow are as varied as the design field itself. Perhaps due to that, the answers were fairly distributed across all the options and there was no overwhelming winner. In addition, the graphic design industry does not have a standardized process and that it made it difficult to provide a definitive correct answer. It is notable, however, that nearly a third of respondents were aware of the amount of time effective design takes and selected two of the higher options (31 to 40 hours and 41 hours or more). The second question that attempted to provide information on the public's level of awareness of the design process asked respondents to indicate the level of difficulty they would ascribe to graphic design.

An overwhelming majority of respondents believed graphic design was somewhat difficult or difficult. This is perhaps at least one area of graphic design that does not need addressing in any future public awareness tool or campaign. However, it does provide enlightening information on the dichotomy currently present in the public's level of awareness. Why is the majority of respondents aware of the level of difficulty

yet not aware of the level of pay, time required, or other, more finite duties and goals

of graphic design? One possible explanation includes that they are aware, for instance,

that a freelance graphic designer typically earns more than $24 an hour but the aver-

age respondent may not be willing to pay more than that.

Trust

Overall, the majority of the respondents indicated they trusted graphic design-

ers' expertise and even placed graphic designers higher than clergy. This information,

too, is at odds with the fact that the majority of respondents indicated they would pay

a freelance graphic designer only $10 to $24 an hour, which is far from the average

freelance hourly rate of $55 in 2011 (AIGA, 2011).

Improvement of the industry

A clear majority of respondents selected *educate public more on industry* as one

way to improve the graphic design industry. This ultimately suggests that it is, first,

a viable solution, and second, that the public is aware of a need and *wants* to learn

more. About a third of respondents also each checked *lower prices, better education*

for designers, and *do more charitable work.* This overall should tell the graphic design

industry that improvement is possible and expected.

Limitations of the survey

Overall, the results of the survey indicate that while the majority of respon-

dents (71.7%) rated themselves among the least or second-least familiar with

graphic design, the majority of respondents (72.2%) indicated they were aware of

the various tasks and projects that a graphic designer may do. Questions 16 and 21

asked respondents to select the projects and goals they thought applied to graphic

design. It seems that when presented with the various tasks and goals of graphic

design, the majority of respondents were able to discern that all of the above ap-

plied. In addition, the majority of respondents indicated they were aware of the vari-

ous goals of graphic design. It seems here, too, that when presented with a list, they could see that the list was obviously correct. Future studies should include more obviously incorrect answers. However, when asked specific questions, discrepancies in awareness were clear and areas for future study were also evident.

In addition, Question 6, which asked respondents who indicated they called themselves graphic designers to also identify what qualifies them as such, could have included the answer *I am a member of AIGA*. This would help determine the level of influence that the organization has. As AIGA has an informational website and there is often quite a bit of discussion and areas for involvement via its website, the survey could have benefitted from a closer inspection into the organization's influence within the graphic design community and public at large. It is possible that the organizaton's efforts to promote the value of graphic design do not actually reach the public's attention.

Any future studies could benefit also from one-on-one interviews that also ask respondents to explain why they know or believe what they do. For instance, on Question 18, which asked participants to indicate how much they would pay a freelance graphic designer, it would be worthwhile to ask respondents whether the answer they selected was based on their comfort level of how much they believe a freelance graphic designer deserves.

Areas for future study

That 81.6% of respondents said they thought graphic design was either somewhat difficult or difficult is further reason to explore the dichotomy discovered in comparison with other results, such as pay rate and time spent on a logo. It is pos-sible that the level of difficulty of a profession does not always correlate to a higher pay scale. However, the low pay scale could deal more directly with a lack of aware-

ness or misconceptions. Future studies could delve more deeply into people's feel-ings toward matters of pay and the other similar areas. In addition, another area of attention was noted in Question 15, which asked respondents to indicate how much time a graphic designer would spend on the creation of a logo.

Because the answers for Question 15 were distributed fairly evenly, it is perhaps evident that respondents were unsure of the correct answer. The range that netted the most respondents—11 to 20 hours—is by most accounts on the lower end. In addition, the fairly equal distribution may be evident of the varied processes that graphic designers employ. This is another area for further investigations, as there may not be agreement among the graphic design community on the average amount of time to complete the average identity project. Future studies could also attempt to find a way to provide a more definable process to understand whether the public understands the graphic design process.

A third area to explore in future investigations is the public's expectations for education of graphic designers. The majority of respondents in Question 12 indicat-ed they thought the average graphic designer holds a graphic design degree (62.1%). Another 63.6% in Question 13 said they *expected* a graphic designer to hold a bach-elor's degree. The graphic design community could enhance itself through further attention to educational standards and consistency, as well as further thought into the number of graphic design associate's degree programs.

A number of areas for future study arose out of the questioning of respon-dents who indicated they called themselves graphic designers. A total of 43 partici-pants were included in this line of questioning. Question 6 showed that education, experience, and portfolio were not all selected by all of the 44 participants. In fact, only 23% of the 43 respondents checked education, experience, and portfolio. This is concerning because most formulas for a competent designer combine those three

areas (Shapiro, 1993; National Council for Interior Design Qualification, 2011). Most

interestingly, only 54.6% in Question 6 indicated they have either an Associate's,

Bachelor's, or Master's degree in design. While the lack of an education in design

is not an impediment to becoming a gifted and successful designer, it is concerning

that only slightly over half of respondents indicated they had a formal education.

The results of Questions 12 and 13 should illustrate to current and future graphic

designers that the public expects them to have at least a bachelor's degree. Future

studies should investigate how people qualify the term graphic designer and wheth-

er there is a lack of awareness or lower expectations among certain groups who

refer to themselves as graphic designers.

Another noteworthy area to explore is the significant correlation noted

between the words *creative* and *innovative* in Question 10 (r=.739). This ultimately

suggests that the words are closely related. This is further evidence of a strong cor-

relation between businesses that are creative and businesses that are innovative.

There is ample reason for future studies to investigate this link and to, perhaps,

further recommend that the United States government encourage innovation and

design as a means for economic advantage, which is the goal of the U.S. National De-

sign Policy Initiative (2009).

One last area to explore is the discrepancy in Questions 10 and 11 between

the level of agreement toward descriptive words of graphic designers and how those

same adjectives did not receive the same level of agreement when applied toward

respondent's interactions with graphic designers. One concern is that the public may

hold certain expectations of graphic designers but their interactions with graphic

design or graphic designers are not equal. This also helps explain the majority of

respondents indicating their experiences with graphic design/graphic designers

overall as neutral in Question 9.

Any future studies into public awareness or awareness among graphic designers should consider conducting surveys one-on-one with participants. Because the written responses on questions 16, 20, and 21 provided deep insight into respondents' true feelings and misconceptions, it is suggested that future surveys be conducted one on one and in smaller samples. Those smaller samples could include more targeted groups such as hiring managers, business leaders, graphic design educators, and graphic designers themselves. In addition, it is a conclusion of this researcher that the graphic design industry can and should respond to respondents' lack of familiarity with a targeted public awareness campaign or tool.

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APPENDIX A
Survey of public awareness

Public Awareness of Graphic Design

You are invited to take part in a survey about public awareness of graphic design. The research is being conducted by Samantha Bohn, an MFA candidate in the Design Department at the University of Central Oklahoma. We ask that you read this form before agreeing to complete the survey.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from participating at any time, you will not be penalized. You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

The procedure involves filling out an online survey that will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes. Your responses will be confidential and we do not collect identifying information such as your name, email address, or IP address. The results of the survey will help the graphic design industry best move forward with communicating the value of graphic design to the public. This survey is testing public awareness. Therefore, it is not necessary that you know about graphic design in order to participate.

All data collected from the survey will be stored in a password-protected electronic format. To help protect your confidentiality, the surveys will not contain information that will personally identify you. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Samantha Bohn at 701-799-7540 or sbohn@uco.edu. You may also contact Dr. Jill A. Devenport, chair of the UCO Institutional Review Board, at 405-974-5479. This research has been reviewed according to the University of Central Oklahoma IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Thank you.

- ○ Agree
- ○ Disagree

What is your age?

○ 21 and under

○ 22 to 34

○ 35 to 44

○ 45 to 54

○ 55 to 64

○ 65 and over

What is the highest level of education you have received?

○ Less than high school

○ GED

○ High school diploma

○ Associate's degree or technical certification

○ Bachelor's degree

○ Master's degree

○ PhD

How familiar are you with graphic design?

○ Unfamiliar

○ Somewhat familiar

○ Familiar

○ Very familiar

Are you a graphic designer?

○ Yes

○ No

What qualifies you as a graphic designer?

☐ Your level of experience

☐ You have an Associate's degree in graphic design

☐ You have a Bachelor's degree in graphic design

☐ You have a Master's or Master's of Fine Arts in graphic design

☐ Your portfolio

☐ Other (please specify)

Public Awareness of Graphic Design

Have you ever hired a graphic designer for a personal project or hired one at your workplace?

○ Yes

○ No

Have you ever worked with a graphic designer at your place of employment?

○ Yes

○ No

Public Awareness of Graphic Design

Please rate your experiences with graphic design or graphic designers.

- ○ Very poor
- ○ Somewhat poor
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Somewhat good
- ○ Very good

Public Awareness of Graphic Design

Please rate each of the following words on whether you agree they are accurate descriptions of graphic designers.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Professional	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technical	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Expensive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strategic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Innovative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Creative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Helpful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Necessary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Efficient	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Smart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Public Awareness of Graphic Design

Please rate each of the following words on how accurately they describe your interactions with graphic designers.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Professional	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technical	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Expensive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strategic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Innovative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Creative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Helpful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Necessary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Efficient	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Smart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Public Awareness of Graphic Design

How much education do you think the typical graphic designer holds?

○ Less than high school

○ GED

○ High school diploma

○ Associate's degree or technical certification

○ Bachelor's degree

○ Master's degree

○ PhD

How much education do you expect a graphic designer to hold?

○ Less than high school

○ GED

○ High school diploma

○ Associate's degree or technical certification

○ Bachelor's degree

○ Master's degree

○ PhD

How familiar do you think the average person is with graphic design?

○ Unfamiliar

○ Somewhat unfamiliar

○ Neutral

○ Somewhat familiar

○ Very familiar

How much time do you think a graphic designer spends on, for example, the creation of a logo?

○ 0 to 10 hours

○ 11 to 20 hours

○ 21 to 30 hours

○ 31 to 40 hours

○ 41 hours or more

What kind of projects does a graphic designer do? (check all that apply)

☐ Logos

☐ Posters

☐ Brochures

☐ Advertisements

☐ Publications (books/magazines)

☐ Illustration

☐ Motion graphics

☐ Websites

☐ Package design

☐ Environmental design (signage)

☐ Product innovation

☐ Other (please specify)

Public Awareness of Graphic Design

How do you perceive the difficulty of graphic design?

○ Very easy

○ Somewhat easy

○ Neutral

○ Somewhat difficult

○ Difficult

How much would you pay to utilize a freelance graphic designer's services?

○ $0 to $9/hour

○ $10 to $24/hour

○ $25 to $39/hour

○ $40 to $54/hour

○ $55 to $69/hour

○ $70 or more/hour

Public Awareness of Graphic Design

Please rate each of the following professions on a scale of 1 to 10 based on your level of trust in each profession's expertise.

	1 (lowest)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (highest)
Doctors	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Graphic designers	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lawyers	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Salespeople	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Politicians	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
CEOs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Clergy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Journalists	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Psychologists	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

If the graphic design industry needs improvement, how best could it achieve that? (check all that apply)

☐ Do more charitable work

☐ Lower prices

☐ Educate public more on industry

☐ Better education for designers

☐ Other (please specify)

Please check any of the following that best describe the goals of graphic design. (check all that apply)

- ☐ To communicate
- ☐ To inform
- ☐ To decorate
- ☐ To beautify
- ☐ To educate
- ☐ To persuade
- ☐ To eff ect change
- ☐ To boost the economy
- ☐ To develop ideas
- ☐ To develop products
- ☐ To innovate
- ☐ Other (please specify)