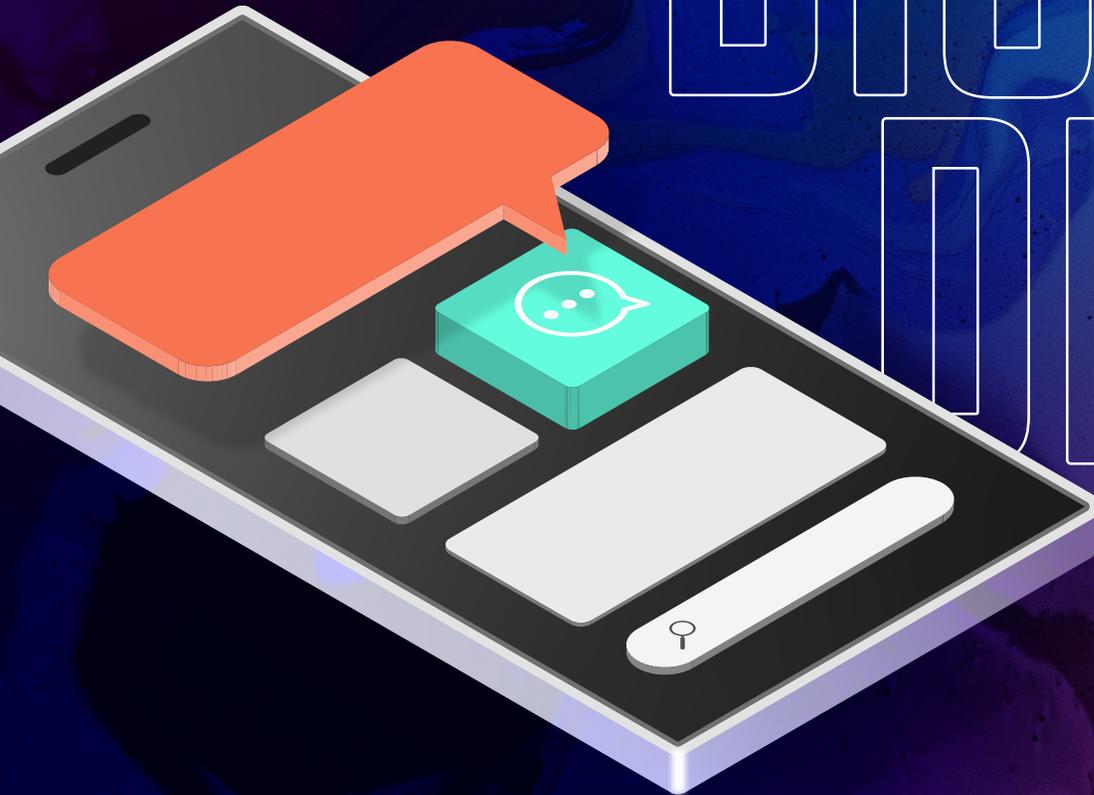


THE GUIDE TO

DIGITAL DESIGN



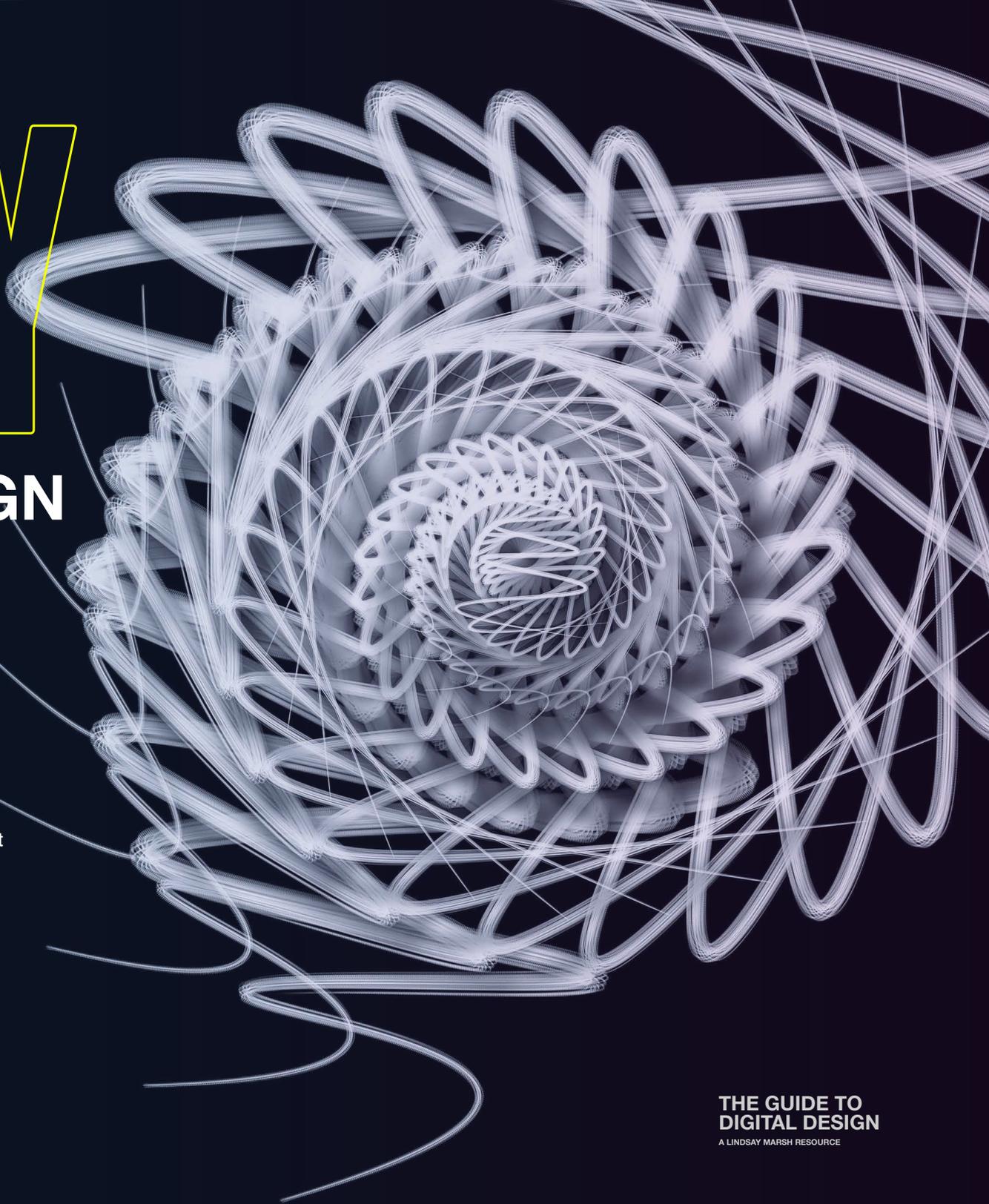
WHY

DIGITAL DESIGN SHOULD BE DIFFERENT.

There are print projects that you can touch and feel and see, that uses inks, metals, paper or cloth materials and then there is digital design.

Anything displayed using pixels on a screen can be considered a digital design piece. We may not be able to touch digital design projects now, but more and more they are feeling more real and a part of our physical world.

As digital devices slowly replace things that were once only analog, more designers need to not only know how to create digital pieces, but to understand how best to connect with their audiences in real authentic ways.



BECOMING MORE HUMAN



HUMANS ASSIGN VALUE TO
"THINGS". CAN SOMETHING
THAT EXISTS ONLY WITH
ZEROS AND ONES
BE CONSIDERED A "THING"?



Digital Design should be an extension of the human experience on screen.

Developments in software have given us the ability to allow digital media to become more genuine and allows us to express ourselves with more precision.

Many years ago creating a website was simply picking among a limited array of design options. You had five or six font choices, limited boxed layouts and only static photos to display. Now, you can add movement as you scroll, with some design elements peaking out of the corner and some that come toward you in surprise. You have an almost unlimited selection of font choices and gradients, colors and more video integration.

Humans assign value to "things". Can something that exists only with zeros and ones be considered a "thing"? I think we have discovered through digital art sales (especially crypto art) that we absolutely see digital items as things of value.

How then can we create digital projects worth sharing, remembering and are considered valuable? We can try to be unique and different, but even those projects can fall short if they do not provide an authentic connection point with the viewer.

Throughout this guide we are going to try to answer a few of these questions. We will study solid examples of design for digital and also get really practical about sizes, best practices and different types of digital design projects with a focus on social media design.



DIGITAL DESIGN PROJECT TYPES



SOCIAL MEDIA

COMPETITIVE

Highly competitive, design for social media needs to be at least one of two things to be seen:

Bold or Emotionally Compelling

Examples:

Facebook LinkedIn
Instagram SnapChat
TikTok Twitter



MOBILE EXPERIENCES

SMALL SPACES

Viewed on their screens, design for mobile needs to focus mostly on practical design aspects, like readability and ease of use.

Examples:

Mobile Ads
Apps
Mobile Websites



DESKTOP EXPERIENCES

EXPERIMENTATION

With larger spaces, desktop experiences tend to be multi-sensory and involve music, motion and video. With readability less of an issue more expressive typography can be used.

Examples:

Desktop Websites
Desktop Apps
Digital Menus and Displays



VIDEO EXPERIENCES

HANDS OFF

Allows for a hands-off viewing experience that can explain complex concepts and details without the user needing to interact.

Examples:

YouTube and Vimeo
Digital Streaming Apps (Netflix)
Video Stories and
Social Media Video Posts



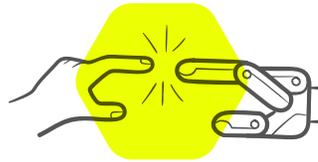
PERIPHERAL DEVICES

TASK DRIVEN

“Hey Alexia, turn the volume up.” These task-oriented devices need to understand and deliver quick results or a frustrated user will result.

Examples:

Digital Remotes
Alexa
Digital Way-finding Maps
Digital Menus



AUGMENTED REALITY

INTERACTIVE

Still emerging, augmented reality or AR is becoming easier and easier to create due to apps like Adobe Aero. A simple layered Photoshop file can become an interactive experience that still feels new and exciting. The only downside is it takes effort on behalf of the user to initiate and it has not been universally adopted yet.

Examples:

Adobe Aero
Phone Apps that use the camera
AR Glasses



3-D DISPLAY EXPERIENCES

IMMERSIVE

Some think of a Star Wars-like hologram display, while others may think of a 3-D digital display at a concert performance. These new and very expensive displays require tons of costly hardware and have known to cause headaches in some, but they put on quite the show.

Examples:

3-D Glasses
magnetic3d or physical displays
projectors

DESIGN FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

What looks “the best” does not always drive engagement or clicks. That was something that was hard to digest while I created social media campaigns for my clients over the last 10 years. Their goal was to sell “X” product or tickets to “X” event and I wanted to make a design look great to convert as many views to sales as possible.

Come to find out, the ads that converted the best were not always the prettiest or looked the “coolest” with trendy colors and styles but they had the following characteristics:

COME TO FIND OUT, THE ADS THAT CONVERTED “THE BEST” WERE NOT ALWAYS THE PRETTIEST OR LOOKED THE “COOLEST” ...

1

THEY WERE SIMPLE

You have less than one second to catch the attention of a viewer scrolling through a social feed. Most ads that converted well had one simple focal point or idea. Leave the details to the post description and put what is most important in the headline and ad visuals.



2

THEY WERE RELATABLE

Hate your job? Just had a baby? Have you ever seen a ad that mentioned an experience you are currently going through? Ads can target very specific demographics using data and use that to their advantage to evoke a response.



3

THEY GAVE YOU A TIME LIMIT

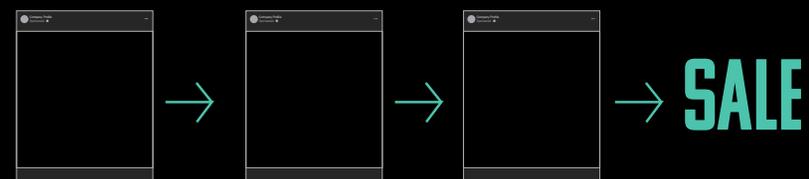
One tactic advertisers use to spur sales is to place a time limit on the ad. In some cases that might be a specific offer disappearing forever in “X” time-frame (or in this case to the right) a countdown to an event. FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) is something marketers use often.



4

THEY WORK AS A PART OF A BIGGER WHOLE

Sometimes ads work well in a series by using re-targeting. They present different ad sets depending on if you interacted with a prior ad or not. This allows them to change their response to try to close a sale. This allows for more story-driven creatives.



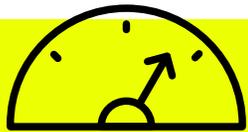
DESIGN GUIDE

ON MOST SOCIAL PLATFORMS YOU HAVE TWO MAIN CONTENT TYPES: PAID AND ORGANIC CONTENT.

PAID CONTENT

Most paid content has strict guidelines. For example, **Facebook has found that ads that have less than 20% of the visual ad space dedicated to text perform better.** This means that ads need to be approved by Facebook and Instagram, before they are allowed to run.

As a designer you need to know these changing rules and updates so you can continue to have a smooth ad roll out and reduce delays for you or your clients.



Do I have to learn how to use ad platforms?

If you are a graphic designer doing digital ad work for a client you most likely will not have to run the campaign yourself, **but it is good to know the results of how the different ad visuals are performing.** You can ask for this data from the client or from the clients ad manager if they outsourced this to an agency. This will allow you to work with the client to continue to tweak the best performing visuals and ad copy.



*You could team up with an ad manager and provide the visuals to them or you can learn how ad platforms like Facebook Ads Manager works so you can provide **both services** to your client, if interested.*



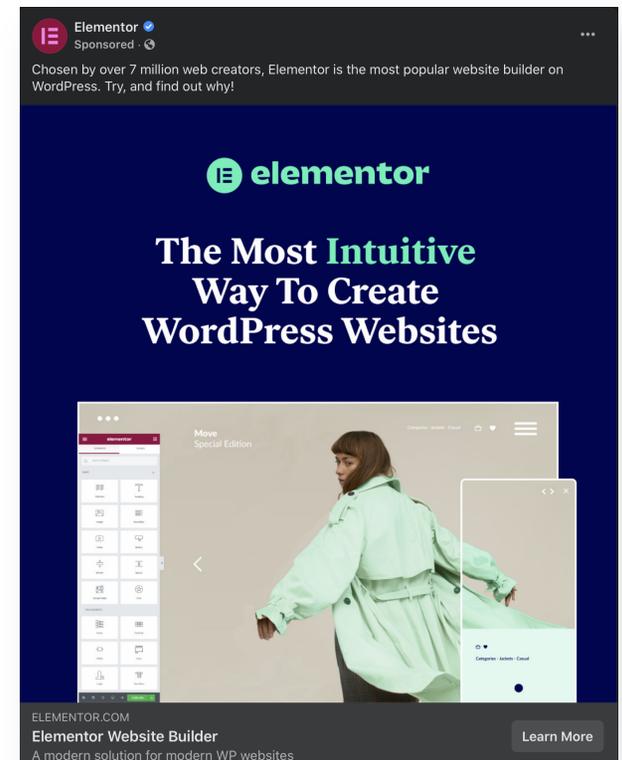
Paid content almost always needs a call to action or a sales pitch. This is because you need to generate sales to be able to pay for more ads and hopefully turn a profit for you or your client toward the end.

Ads are shown to your desired audience and, depending on the keywords chosen, it costs a specific amount for one thousand impressions. **This is called CPM or Cost per Thousand Impressions.** This is just how many people are shown the ad.

To measure the success of a campaign you can look more closely at **CTR or Click-through Rate.** The more click-through you get, the more effective your ad was at gaining the users interest.

This allows you to test multiple campaigns and visuals to see which ones convert best or had the highest CTR. **This will help you know what direction to go visually for your campaign.**

Rarely will you nail the creative the first month of an ad campaign. It can take many months to figure out what is connecting best with your target audience and also who the best target audience is.



Notice the similar color used for the logo and the girl's jacket? The jacket color was most likely a different color but was changed to maximize the impact of the headline and the highlighted word "intuitive", an important keyword to differentiate this product.

THE ANATOMY OF A STRONG PAID AD

PHOTOS THAT DRAW US IN

Humans connect with people and tend to follow the gaze of one's eyes. **Notice the direct stare in the main photo.** He is also leaning into the headline on the right, tempting you to extend your eyes that way. There is also a supportive photo up top which allows us to understand that he is a storyteller and speaker, as that is not obvious in the main photo.

GOOD USE OF BRAND ELEMENTS

Notice the subtlety of the logo here on the top? The company name is always attached to an ad, so there is not always the need for a large logo on the visual, too. In this case, they feature a **logo mark up top and the full logo type down below** allowing the brand to be seen throughout the entire visual without being obtrusive.

MasterClass
Sponsored · 🌐

This Mother's Day, buy one membership and get one free with our limited-time 2-for-1 offer. Additional terms apply.

BUY ONE.
GET ONE FOR
MOM, FREE.

David Sedaris
Teaches Storytelling
and Humor

MasterClass

MASTERCLASS.COM
2-for-1 Mother's Day Offer
Stream the world's best on MasterClass

Learn More

TWO DIFFERENT WAYS

As a designer you should know the final ad copy before creating a visual for a paid ad or post. **Notice how the headline used in the visual is different than the one used here in the ad title?** It allows viewers to digest it with two different phrasings.

AD COPY AND VISUALS SUPPORT EACH OTHER

A great well written ad copy can explain in more detail the offer or product. This allows the visual to support the ad copy, reducing the need to load up your visual with **too much text**.

ONE SIMPLE HEADLINE

This ad features a high contrast black text on white background. It highlights the word **FREE** to break up the **small simple headline**.

A much smaller text box below explains the finer details but does not complete with the main headline.

CONSISTENT COLORS

The softer red used here for the word **FREE** and for the company logo is close to the red of the chair in the main photo. **This allows the photo and ad to feel like they are connected.**

anyword Sponsored

No one wants a product page that doesn't convert, so use Anyword to instantly generate multiple text variations that will drive more sales. Start now for free.

AI-Powered Copywriting For Marketers

anyword

ANYWORD.COM

AI for Creating Compelling Copy | 7 Days Free, Starts at \$19/m

Increase conversion rates and drive more sales with AI-powered copywrit...

Learn More

ILLUSTRATION AS VISUAL AID



They say a photo is worth a thousand words. In this case an illustration takes center stage and helps to explain the problem the product is trying to solve for you.

You can see a woman guiding the man out the door (in this case your website).

This is a great example of how visuals **help to support your product's unique selling point.**

Also notice the highlighted word "why" in the headline. Notice how the man's shirt is also the same color? Color ties those two ideas together. Also notice the center alignment throughout the visuals as it allows a viewer's eyes to move down the ad in an orderly fashion.

↑ THE DRAW TOWARD THE FOCAL POINT

This ad features a blue background with this white background bubble in the center. **There is a huge temptation to read the content in the white bubble first.** The drop shadow pushes this white bubble further into the forefront.

Notice how the headline gets straight to the point? They spent a lot of time taking a complex product offering and simplifying the headline to its most basic form. Any longer and the headline would be less tempting and overwhelming to read.

Notice the small brand elements used? The complementary orange color allows those small background elements to fill the ad without making it look busy.

hotjar Sponsored

See what your users see, feel what your users feel, and make experiences they love.

Understand why your users are leaving your site

Try Hotjar free

HOTJAR.COM

Give it a go (it's free)!

Hotjar was our first choice for heat mapping because of what we had hea...

Learn More

Emotive Sponsored

Struggling to convert your traffic? Find out how hundreds of leading brands tripled conversion rates with conversational texting.

THE NEW WAY

Conversational Texting

10%+ Conversion Rate

THE OLD WAY

One-way Blasts

1-2% Conversion Rate

EMOTIVE.IO

Turn SMS into the #1 sales channel for your store

By submitting this form, you agree to receive recurring automated marke...

Learn More

↑ WHEN BUSY IS OK

This is a great example of product demonstration in a paid ad. It may seem a bit busy but it demonstrates the product in action and shows you how it is superior, all in one simple, static image.

This is normally hard to do, but the side-by-side layout helps.

There is also a natural attraction to the chat bubbles, as we naturally want to know what people are chatting about, so there are some psychological factors at play.

Daily Harvest Sponsored

Our new Harvest Bowls flew off the shelves in just one week. The seasonally-inspired Bowls are back — stock your freezer while they last.

DAILY HARVEST

SO GOOD THEY

STOCK UP NOW

SOLD OUT IN A WEEK.

DAILY-HARVEST.COM
Get \$25 Off Your First Box

Shop Now

5.4K 975 Comments 387 Shares

Elementor Sponsored

Create beautiful, pixel-perfect websites with Elementor's advanced features and capabilities.

elementor

All-In-One Website Builder

Reach Infinite Design Capabilities

Elementor Sponsored

Turn your vision into a live WordPress website with Elementor's advanced design capabilities, NO CODING NEEDED

elementor

All-In-One Website Builder

Reach Infinite Design Capabilities



CREATING EXCLUSIVITY

This ad uses scarcity to achieve a FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) effect for the viewer. This ad makes viewers feel like the product is exclusive and hard to find, thus adding a sense of urgency to explore and purchase the product.

Apparel ads do this all the time with sold out pants, shirts or sweaters. They may use a headline like this:

"Last month, we sold out in 24 hours and we are back in stock!"

We ask ourselves, "if a product or service is that hot what on earth could be so great about it?" We now have a good excuse to click on the shop now button and explore the landing page.



SOMETHING OLD SOMETHING NEW

Remember the Elementor ad from just a few pages ago? Because I interacted with the ad I was re-targeted with a different variation of the ad. I was also shown different color variations of the same exact ad layout.

As I scrolled through my feed and noticed the same ad over and over, I started to ignore it because I recognized the color or photo. By serving me the same ad, but with a color change my brain now sees it as a new ad and I stop for just a moment. You may also see the same ad but with a woman instead of a man.

There is also user testing going on here with serving multiple ads with a different color. They are searching to find out if there is one color that receives more clicks than another and also pairing that with demographic data. They may find more women click on pink while more men click on blue, or the data could say otherwise.

KNOW THY TARGET MARKET



THE PROFESSIONAL TOUCH

All of the ads you see on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and others use account data to find an audience that has desired likes and interests.

Knowing who your audience will be when creating your visual is key to finding out what colors, layout and offer to use.

In the upper right example for the brand management company Frontify, it uses a simple safe professional layout. Most people who are looking to purchase a brand management tool will be those in mid-to-higher level positions at larger companies.

The design uses lots of clear whitespace, a professional woman as the subject matter and a standard left alignment with a small call to action button. **This ad tries not to be bold or different, because the target market might resonate with a more clean looking ad.**

PROVIDING VALUE

In the Wix ad on the lower right, it drums up excitement for a free resource on web design trends. Wix sells a website building platform and mostly likely their target will be those looking for create or develop a website this year.

What better way to connect to your audience than by giving them something they can use or find valuable? This guide can easily be turned into a paid ad and marketed on social media. **A lot of successful ad campaigns involve giving away free advice, e-books or access to videos in exchange for an e-mail.**

The ad design focuses solely on the web design trend giveaway. The design gives it a tangible, textured look with the guide wrapped in plastic. This makes it feel real and authentic.

Frontify
Sponsored · 🌐

One nifty benefit of brand ownership is brand consistency. Learn four ways financial brands can improve brand consistency to safeguard their images and establish trust with customers.

Frontify

From Brand Ownership to Brand Success

Get Free Guide

TRY.FRONTIFY.COM
Brand Thinking for Financial Services
Get Insights

Download

Wix
Sponsored · 🌐

Check out the major trends that will shape this coming year.

Shaping Design | By Editor X

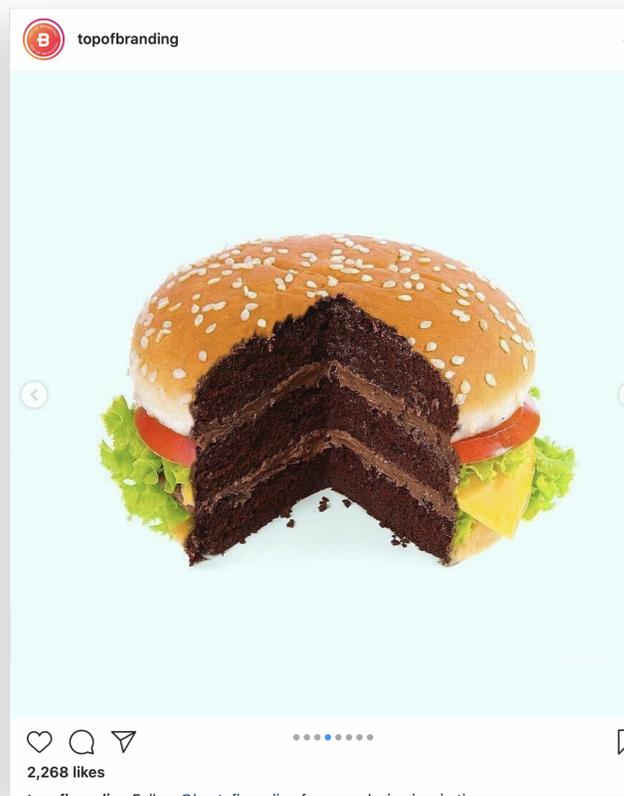
WEB DESIGN IN 2021

A new year marks the possibility for change and progress. Are you ready? We are.

The report

FORM ON FACEBOOK
The major web design trends of 2021
What creatives need to know right now.

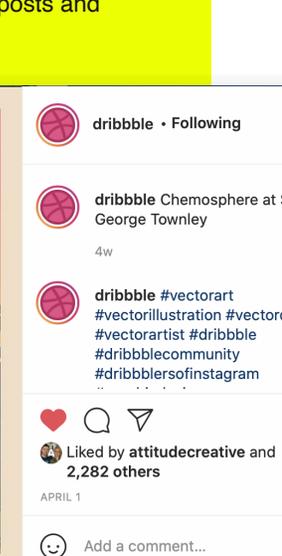
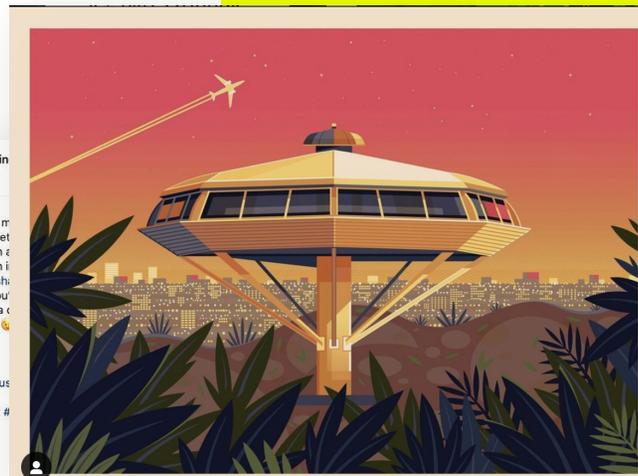
Learn More



ORGANIC CONTENT

Organic content can break a lot more rules. It is not bound by as many restrictions in terms of content and visual. It can be more expressive of your style and of the company you represent.

The goal with organic content is **not to sell something hard** but to give users a peak into your world. Being able to sell organically happens in time, throughout many posts and interactions with users.



THINK OF THE LONG GAME

ENGAGEMENT WINS



Create posts that ask questions or encourages comments, responses and shares.

ORGANIC CONTENT ALLOWS THE AUDIENCE TO TAKE THE LEAD.

Instagram and other social media algorithms are incorporating more and more user engagement data in your ranking score. This means likes and hearts do not cut it. You have to have people interact and engage with your content. This means most posts need to involve them somehow. Sometimes this can be asking a question. A lot of times it will be your response to comments.

Study the most successful Instagram accounts. All of them reply to almost every comment on every post with some sort of comment.

Studying each of your posts can give you insight on which content people are engaging with the most. Look at shares, saves and comments as the way to best rank the success of your posts. **Likes and hearts are mostly to be ignored.** Is there a post that has way more comments than anything you have done in the past? Why?



lindsaymarshdesign



THE PRODUCT SHOWOFF



Organic posts are a great way to present your product in a tantalizing way without a direct sales pitch. Other great ideas are the "behind the scenes" shots of you or your client making or creating the product or service.



BE THE EXPERT



In this post by Chris Do, he provides a purely educational post and gives away his color palette numbers for some of his most popular posts. In this way you present yourself as an industry expert, which opens doors for other opportunities. It also increases post shares and thus your organic post ranking.

Twenty21

HOW TO STEAL MY DESIGN:

Use this color combination—

R 191 G 50 B 43	R 198 G 77 B 99	R 234 G 186 B 185	R 58 G 92 B 51
-----------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	----------------------

R 203
G 206
B 152

Brought to you by [thefutur.com](#)
©2021 The Futur, LLC

Chris Do
@theChrisDo

thechrisdo • Following

Warning. This post is going to be a little spicy. Skip it if you don't like spicy. I have been described before as a charismatic razor blade. I might earn it today.

Baskin-Robbins has 31 flavors and people lose their minds because they don't know what to pick. So many flavors. If the person in line picked vanilla and every other person after picked vanilla, they'd run out of vanilla. But more importantly, flavors like mint chocolate chip, rocky road, and cookie dough would go largely unappreciated.

As my design and carousels evolve, I can't help but notice how other "influencers" are making similar

Liked by andre_gagiano and 40,266 others

JANUARY 27

Add a comment...



LIKES AND HEARTS DO NOT CUT IT.



CREATE A STYLE & OWN IT

SOCIAL ACCOUNTS HAVE BRANDING TOO

Develop a style guide for your client or yourself that can keep posts consistent and on point. Ask yourself the following questions when creating one:

How often should I (they) post? (Develop a content calendar or strategy.)

What type of posts do I post?

(educational, product shot, behind the scenes post, teaser etc.)

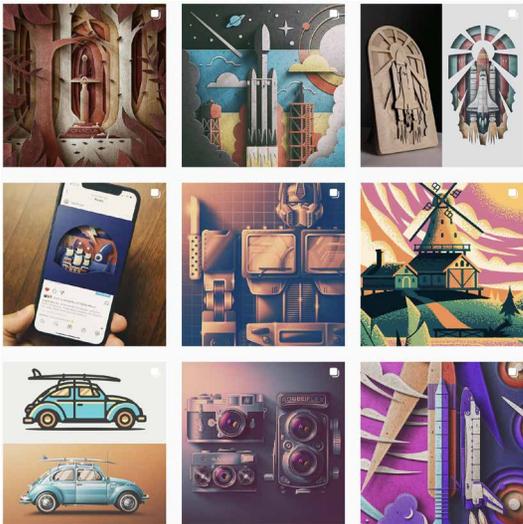
What style of photos do I use? How are they typically cropped?

What colors do I use and how often?

What size is my typical headline? Smaller text?

How do I incorporate a current brand asset manual to social media?

Create several templates that incorporate the brands style so you can quickly create a wide-range of posts. These templates include different post types and layouts, so you can save time and energy.



← @FUGSTRATOR

I follow a really talented designer, Michael Fugoso @fugstrator. He has such a unique, specific style. He features incredibly layered illustrations and uses an incredible array of texture on top of those layered illustrations to give everything a tactile look. He does not post too much outside of his style and stays dedicated to his illustration/vector art audience.



klarens

Message



1,291 posts

113k followers

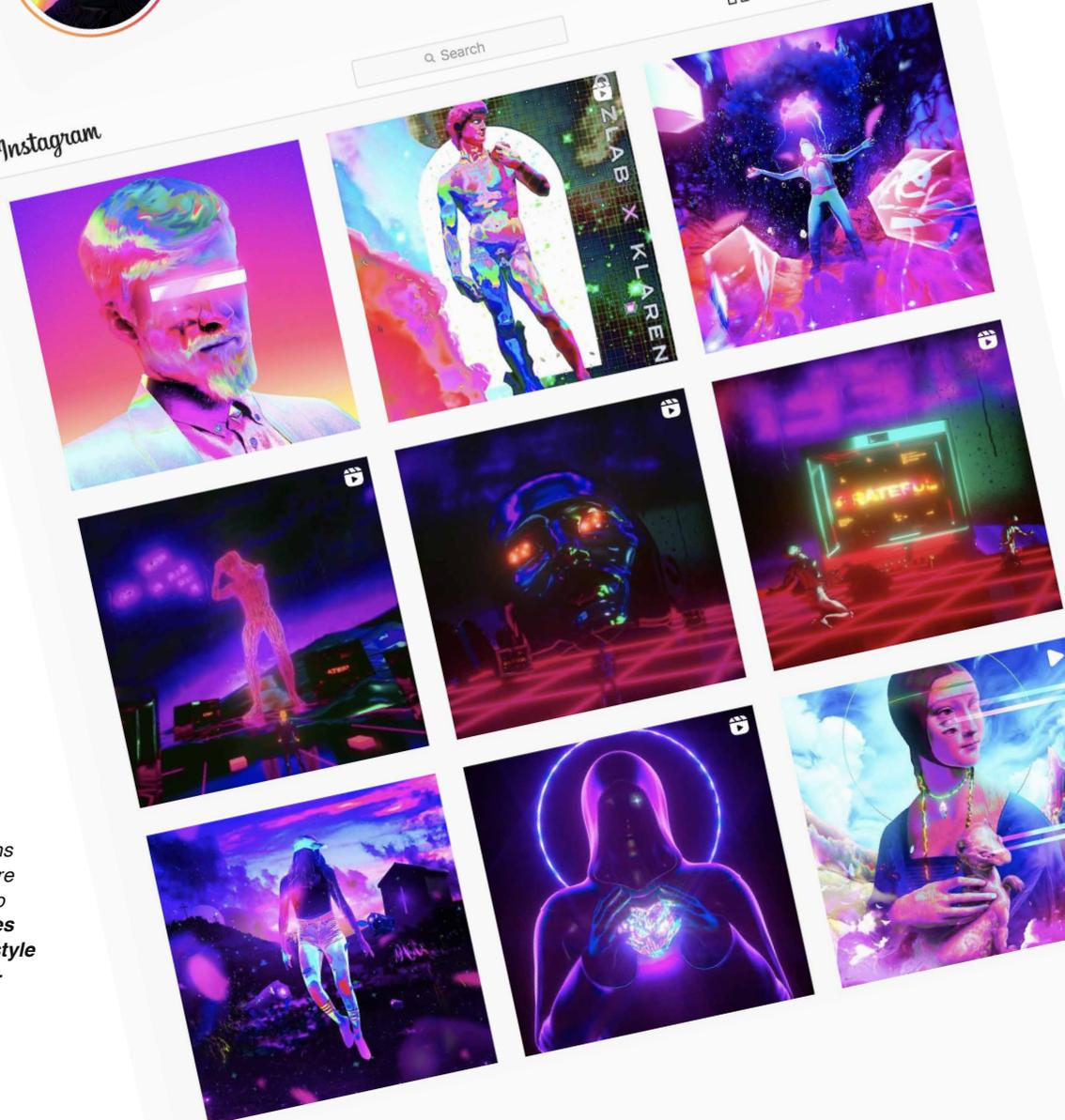
2,279 following

Klarens Malluta
Artist



Q Search

Instagram



STYLE USAGE

TYPOGRAPHY

55pt
Azo Sans

HEADLINE
SUBHEADING

32pt
Azo Sans

12pt
Helvetica

Smaller body copy will be this size right here.
Smaller body copy will be this size right here.
Smaller body copy will be this size right here.

COLORS

COOL



Vivid Green
Hex #662D91



Vivid Purple
Hex #662D91

WARM



Vivid Yellow
Hex #662D91



Vivid Orange
Hex #662D91

NEUTRALS



Light Gray
Hex #662D91



Gray
Hex #662D91

CALL TO ACTION

HEADLINE
GOES
RIGHT
HERE

FREE
ADMISSION

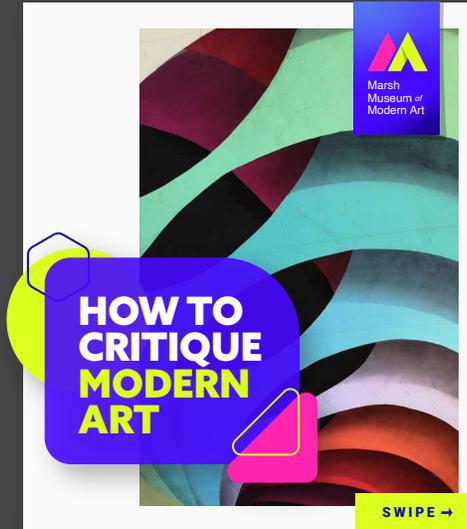
FREE
ADMISSION

ART THAT SPEAKS INTO YOUR WORLD
EVENT
SIGN-UP

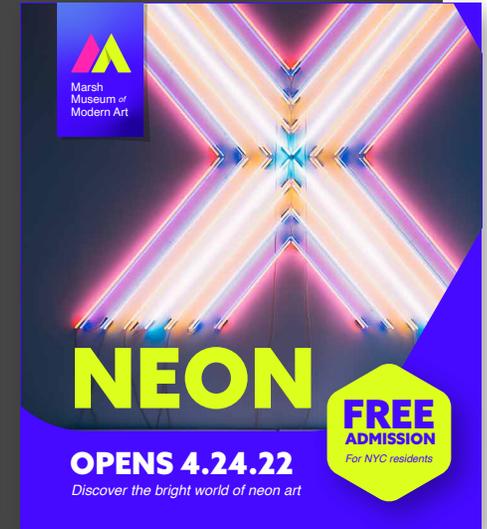
ARTIST SPOTLIGHT
ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

POST TYPES (TEMPLATES)

Sometimes style usage guides can be multiple pages long, outlining in more detail type and size choices, photo usage rules, color rules and lots of usage examples. You can create templates like the ones below and have a library full of layout choices so you can whip up a post in mere minutes (which is sometimes needed in the fast past world of social media).



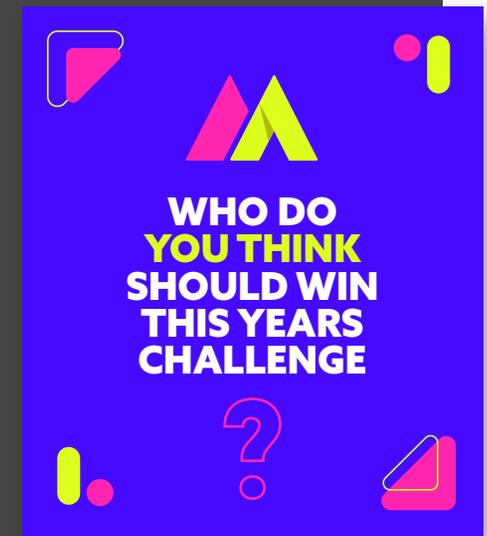
EDUCATIONAL



EVENT PROMO



ART PRESENTATION



ENGAGEMENT POST

SIZING GUIDE

FACEBOOK

4

Facebook offers an overwhelming amount of paid ad size options. The good news is, once you get comfortable designing in these four main ad/post sizes you will be able to create ads and posts for pretty much any situation.

THE SIZE WITH THE BIGGEST IMPACT

4:5

1:1

1.91:1

Portrait
1080 x 1350

Square
1080 x 1080

Standard
1200 x 628

The square 4:5 ratio ad gets **way more screen real estate** than the older standard size. If given a choice the square and portrait size format is preferred over the standard size.

This format is the tallest of the three sizes. Facebook stories and Instagram stories use the same sizes and can easily be used on both platforms without creating a new size or file.

1080 x 1350 pixels is a 4:5 ratio and is a newer Facebook post size. It has the **best total screen coverage of any size.**

1080 x 1080 pixels gives you much more screen real estate than the standard older size post. **This is the most flexible post size** as this 1:1 ratio can be used on carousel ads, posts and more.

1200 x 628 pixels used to be the only acceptable paid ad size for Facebook. In 2021 Facebook has opened this up to the much larger 1:1 aspect ratio of 1080x1080.

For the right-hand column ads this size format is still required. Those ads are the smaller thumbnail sized ads along the right side of a desktop feed.

This size is also used for the ads you see in Facebook messenger and for the Facebook Audience network. It is also the required size if you decide to **use a link** in your ad or launch an offer ad.

Facebook Story Post
1080 x 1920 pixels

Facebook Portrait | 4:5 Ratio
1080 x 1350 pixels

Square | 1:1 Ratio
1080 x 1080 pixels

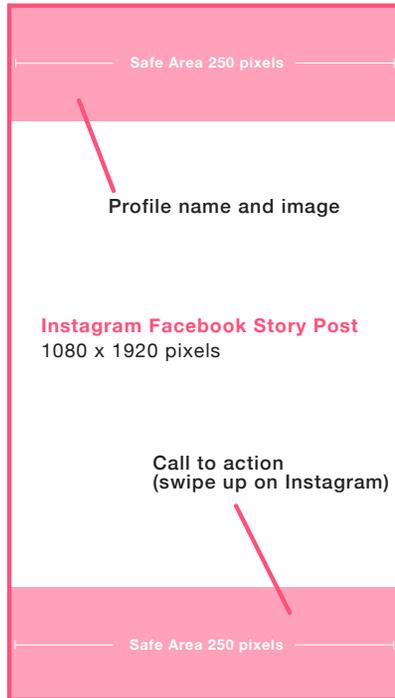
Standard | 1.91:1 Ratio (AKA Landscape)
1200 x 628 pixels

*For best results, use a
JPG or PNG file when exporting*

FACEBOOK DESKTOP

STORY POSTS AND ADS

Stories can also be organic or paid ads. The paid ads show for 5 seconds if it is a still image, so you have to make it super simple and high impact to drive a click through. 15 seconds if it is a video ad.



Stories need to be clear of text in the top 250 and bottom 250 pixel margin. Photos and backgrounds can see extend beyond this area.

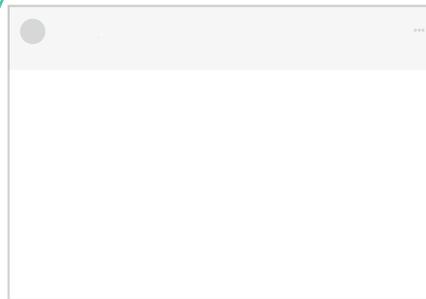
FEED AD AND POST PLACEMENTS

Paid and Organic posts catch users as they scroll through their news feed. Paid ads have an extra title and subheader at the bottom as well as a call to action clickable button.

Both organic and paid feed ads need to be created to stand out in the news feed. This can be through the use of bold color, movement or imagery.



News Feed



Sponsored



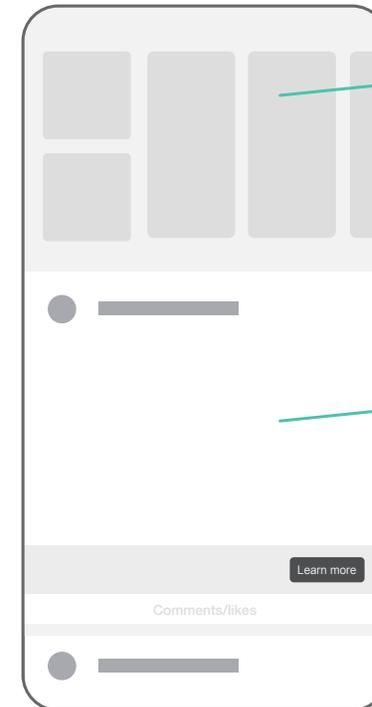
Contacts



RIGHT COLUMN ADS

This ad is only shown on the desktop versions of Facebook. They are less in demand but are also much cheaper than Facebook feed ads because of this.

MOBILE APP



Stories are a bigger deal on mobile taking up a large portion of the app upon opening.

Feed posts are not framed like on the desktop version and extend out to the edge of the screen. The taller your post the more it will take up the vertical screen space.

CAROUSEL POSTS

Carousel posts for Facebook show two square 1:1 ratio photos at a time, each with their own title and call to action button.

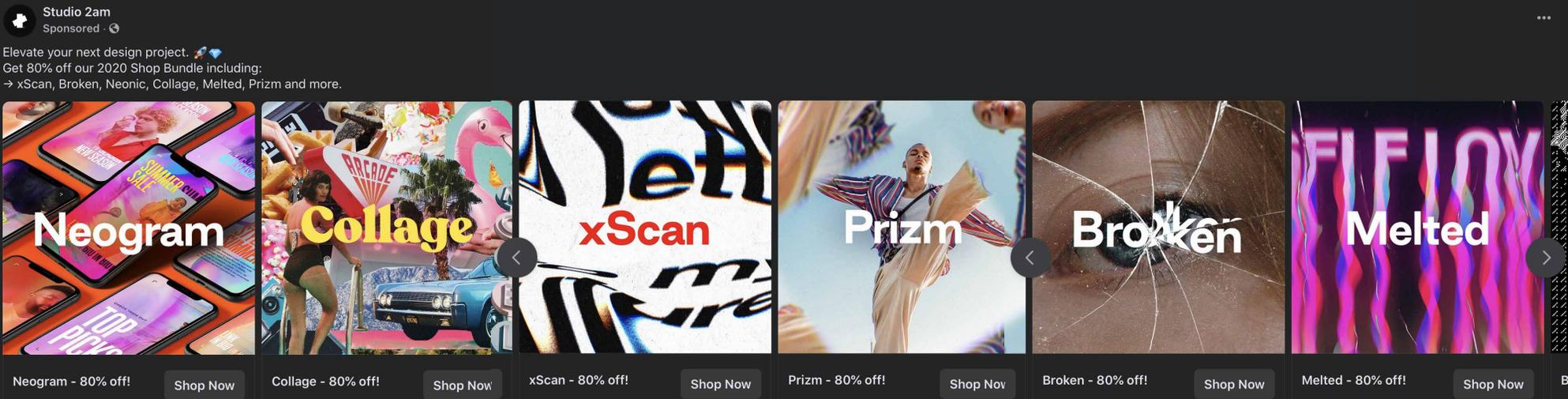
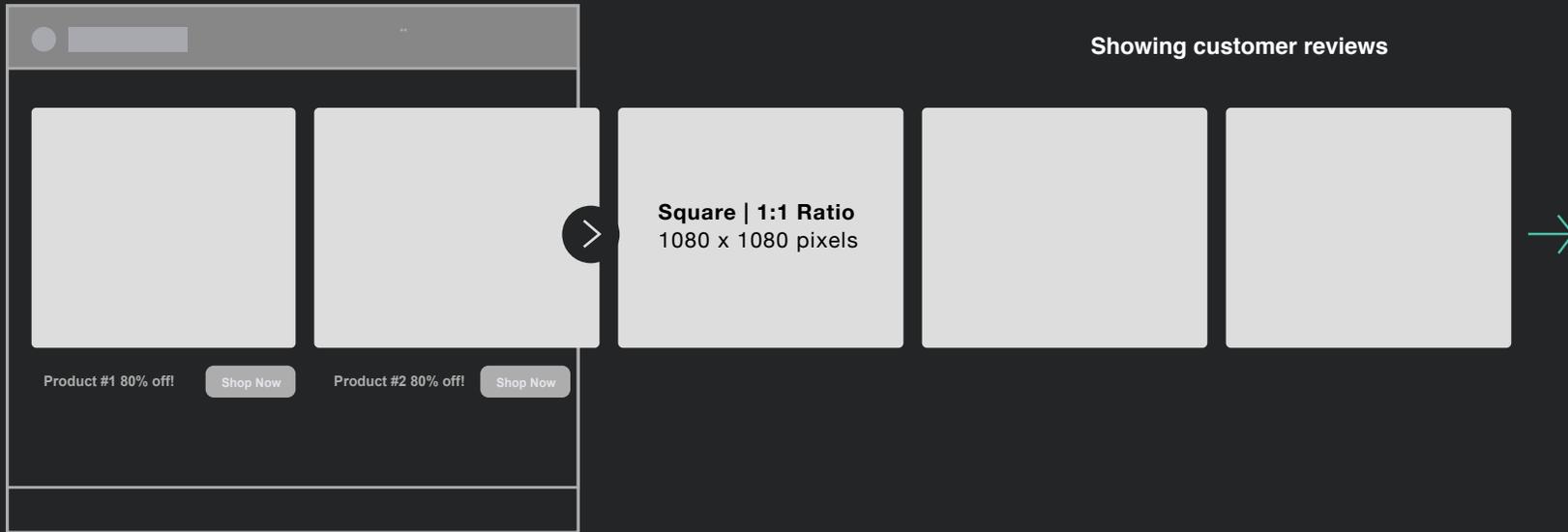
GREAT FOR

Telling a story or narrative that requires multiple photos (Brand Stories)

Before and Afters

Previewing multiple products, courses or services in one ad

Showing customer reviews



FACEBOOK GROUPS & EVENTS

Nothing beats an active Facebook group for growing a following and making organic sales. My private student only Facebook group has grown to over 30,000 members and has been a great place to let students know about new courses and products.

BEST PRACTICES

A small group logo is fine but try not to put a gigantic logo in the center. Groups are used for interaction and community and less for "selling" a product. **Use something that will connect with group members.** Perhaps show the product or service in action or being used by a real person for example.

Notice how the Facebook group cover photo and the Facebook event cover photo are different sizes.

Facebook Event Cover Photo
1920 x 1005 pixels

Facebook Group Cover Image
1640 x 856 pixels



GROUP PROFILE IMAGES

Each Facebook group gets a small square 1:1 ratio profile image. It grabs it from the center point of your cover photo so make sure the middle has something identifiable for your group. The layout looks great here but it does not allow for a easily identifiable profile group photo.

CONNECT WITH STYLE

Find ways to connect with your group demographic. If the group is fun and casual then keep your cover photo that way.

KEEP IT FRESH

You can use the group cover photo to keep group members up to date on the latest announcements

NO CLUTTER

Cluttered cover photos can make it tough to know which group you are on. Simple and right to the point can work for big busier groups.



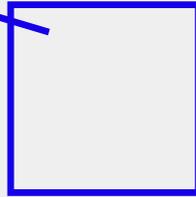
BUSINESS PAGE

LOGO SIMPLIFICATION

This is why I always encourage you to develop logos that can extend down in size and still maintain a brand awareness. This is the time to use your abbreviated logos or just a logo mark and not the full logo name (unless it is short). Full company names can be really tough to read when scaled down.

COMPANY PROFILE

With paid ads and organic posts users will see your name next to a small circular profile image although you upload it as a square 1:1 ratio image.



Profile Image
170 x 170 pixels



OK



BETTER

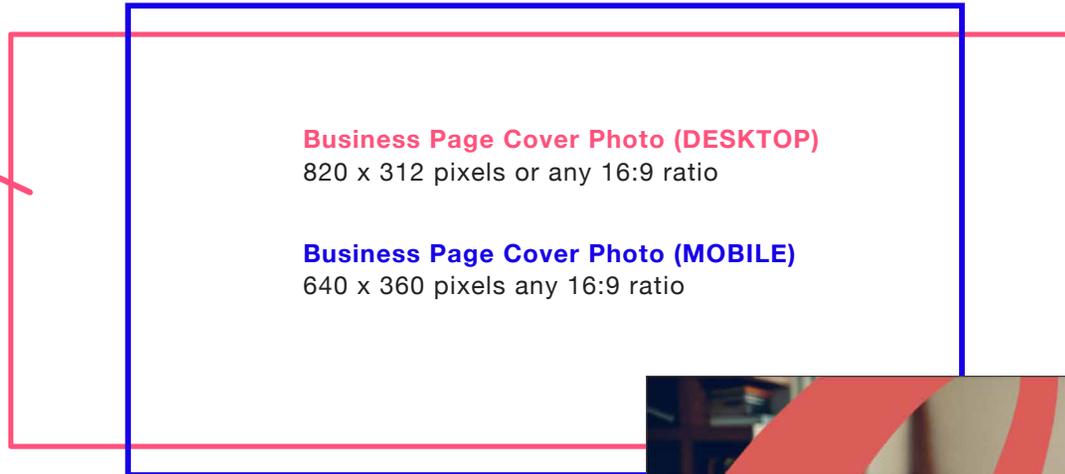


BEST



KEEP IT CLEAN

The left and right sides that extend beyond the edge here are cropped in mobile view. Keep vital text away from the extreme ends of your cover photo.



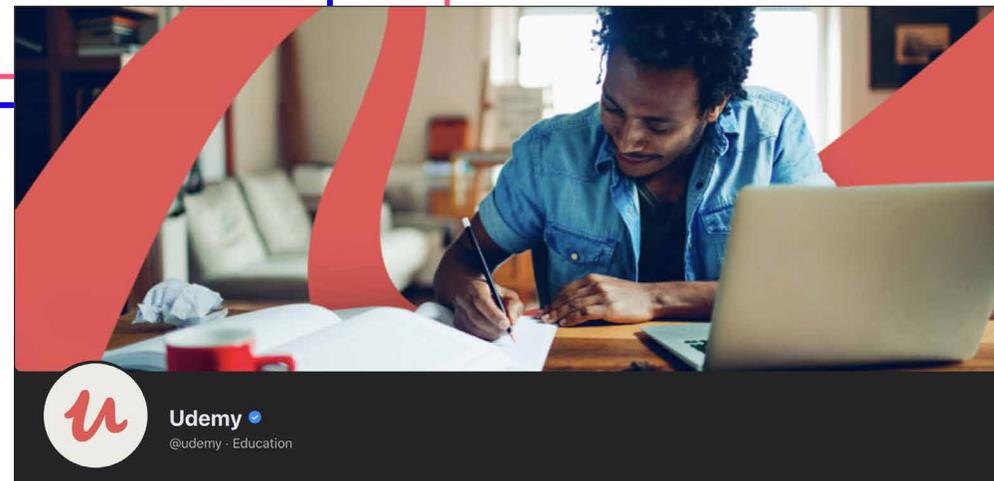
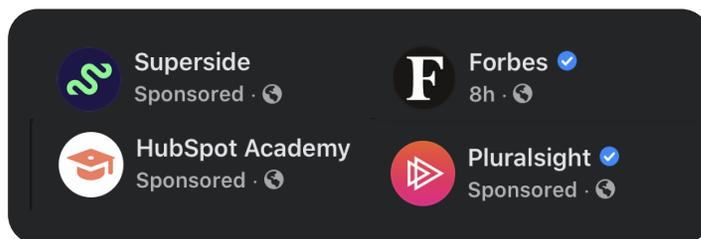
PROFILE AND IMAGE UNIFIED

In this Facebook business page for Udemy.com, you can see how the brand elements of the red U are echoed in the profile image uniting the two stylistically.

Desktop view below

TIP

in some ways the tiny little profile image can be more visible and important than the larger cover photo. This small icon is featured on everything the page does.



SIZING GUIDE



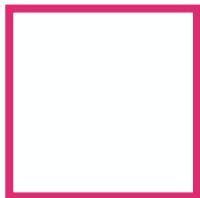
INSTAGRAM

GREAT NEWS! INSTAGRAM + FACEBOOK

Facebook owns Instagram which makes it easy to share ad sizes and formats if you are on both platforms. You need to design for Instagram a bit differently and we will talk about that throughout this section, but at least you do not have to get used to all new post sizes!

The one exception to the rule is Instagram posts cannot go longer than 1080 pixels in width, so the landscape post does have a slight change in width as well (see to the right).

The profile image is also slightly larger but still maintains a 1:1 square ratio and is also cropped to a circle.



Profile Image
320 x 320 pixels



Instagram Story Post

1080 x 1920 pixels

Instagram Portrait | 4:5 Ratio

1080 x 1350 pixels

Instagram Standard | 1:1 Ratio

1080 x 1080 pixels

Instagram Landscape | 1.91:1 Ratio (AKA Landscape)

1080 x 608 pixels

*For best results, use a
JPG or PNG file when exporting*

INSTA STORIES

IF YOU ARE NOT USING STORIES YOU ARE MISSING OUT ON BIG ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

Accounts that posted a series of 10 stories earned twice as many median impressions as accounts that didn't post at.

This is based on research from a joint effort between Buffer and Delmondo,

Instagram stories are featured at the very top of the mobile Instagram app and the order is updated based on new Instagram stories posted. 7-10 stories maintained high engagement rates.

Brands are also using stories to sell more products. Stories allows for narrative driven content and it has been found that **content that was less polished and edited tended to perform better than professionally edited content.** This means that being more natural and producing more quick content was more productive.



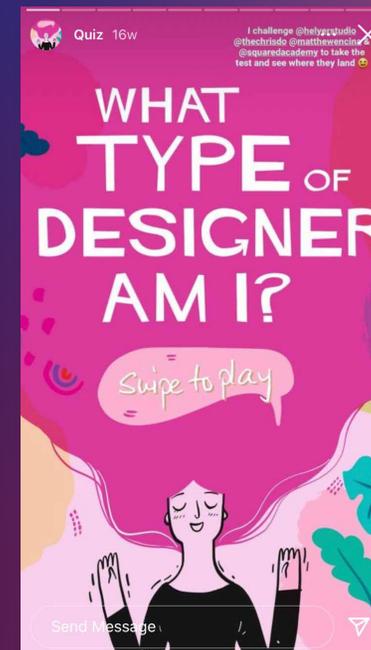
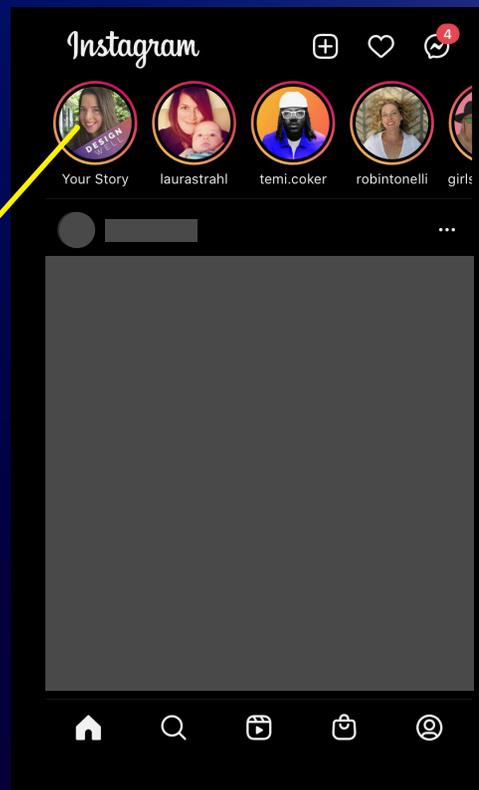
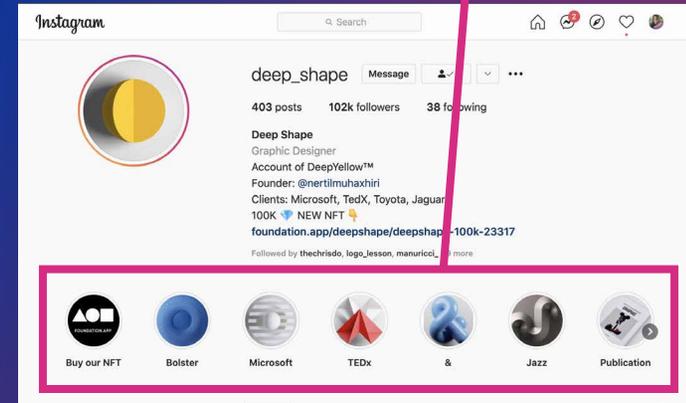
Instagram Story Post
1080 x 1920 pixels



Instagram Story Highlights
1080 x 1920 pixels

Upload your highlight image as a 1080 x 1920 pixel size. Instagram will allow you to crop it down to a smaller circular portion that will end up looking like this.

In the below example, you will see how highlights are added below your profile details. It is surprising **how few accounts take full advantage of adding story highlights** to their profiles.





Beige and Brown Delicate Instagram Story Template from Canva.com

CONSISTENTLY CONSISTENT

When a user browses through stories on Instagram they quickly shift from one account to another once that prior account runs out of stories. **This means a user can quickly assume one of your posts is part of another account if it is not distinct or consistent enough with your brand style or voice.**

Pick one visual element that can be consistent in all stories. This can be the type of typography you use or the typography treatment. It can be a color palette or use of similar textures like in the example above. It could be how you crop photos or the animated gifs or stickers you use.

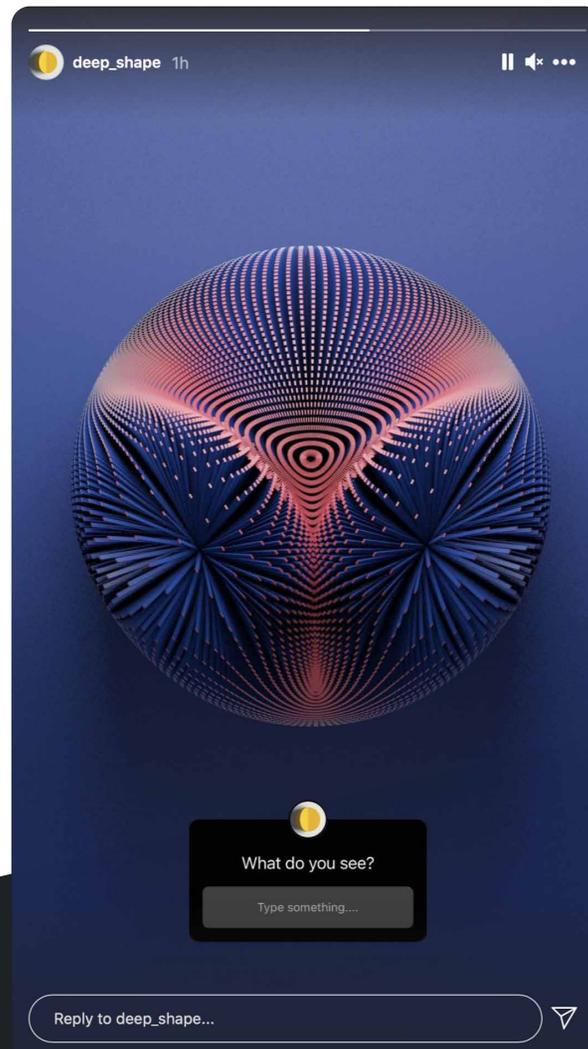
I can tell that the example to the right is associated with the same account with a similar vertical type treatment, dark gray background and occasional use of a circular text design element.



Black and White Spring Sale Instagram Story Template from Canva.com

HONEST OVER FAKE ↓

Instagram stories are great for sharing a recent post. @made.by.james is a brilliant logo designer who likes to be more raw and realistic with his posts.

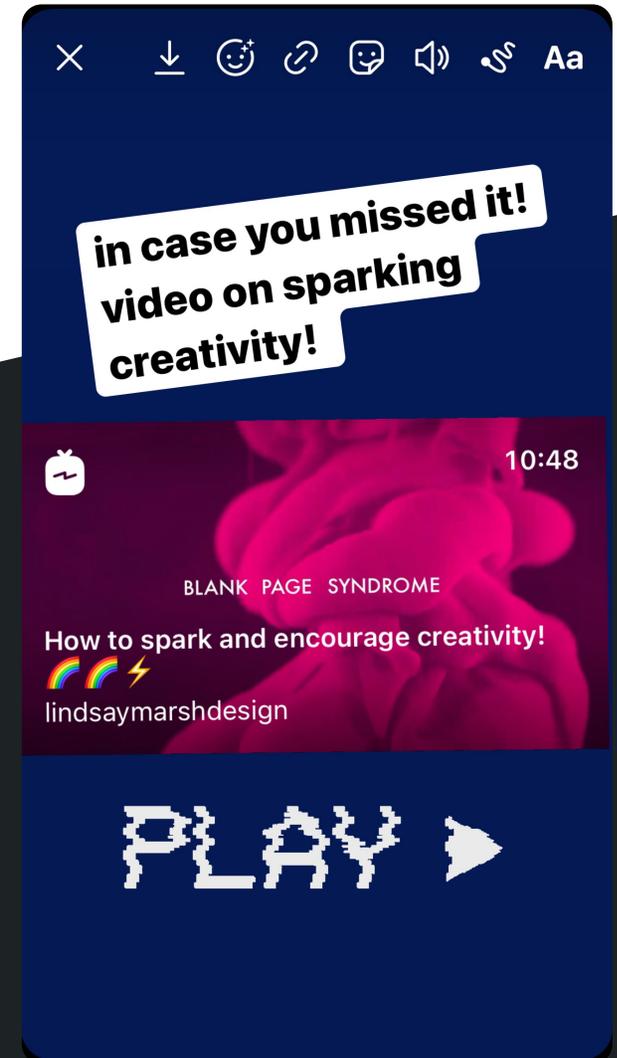


ASK THE USER ↑

This story by a 3-D artist @deep_shape asks the user to type in what they see when looking at this shape. This is more effective than simply posting work as you can invite followers to **participate in your projects, ideas** and receive valuable feedback.

QUICK & MESSY ↓

Stories are about communicating quick impulse like messages to your followers. That could mean messages look less polished and **design takes a backseat to your brand voice**. What you say is more important than how it looks.



INSTAGRAM CAROUSELS

“CAROUSEL POSTS
SCORE THE HIGHEST
ENGAGEMENT
RATE (1.94%)”

Research data from Creatopy (formerly Bannersnack)

Do you still think graphic design is a dying skill?

With graphic design skills you can...

- layout and illustrate your own book
- design a line of t-shirts
- create the entire branding for your startup
- create your album cover art
- design your own boardgame and deck of cards
- lose 20 pounds via Photoshop editing

pick the perfect color palettes for anything

create a viral infographic for your company

design pro level instagram posts

layout your website or design a mobile app UI

rock any presentation design

make yourself look like a million bucks

Share this with anyone who has ever doubted the value of graphic design.

I always feel like I have to "talk up" graphic design as my profession when I tell people what I do. Simply because most have underappreciated the huge value that is created in what we do.

A post by @LindsayMarshDesign GraphicDesignMastery.com

A simple square post kept Instagram a photo sharing app until recently they allowed for longer form content to take over with the use of carousel posts. Carousel posts allows the user to “swipe left” and view up to **10 Instagram “slides”**.

This allows designers to pack a ton of valuable information into one single post. Shares and saves are more valuable than likes when factoring in the ranking algorithm on Instagram. This means that carousels tend to be saved for later because of increase in total information and value given.

There is no wonder you are starting to see carousels dominate your feed.

SEAMLESS CAROUSELS



You can learn to create seamless carousels so that each post flows nicely into another. Photos, arrows and design elements can tempt and lead one to continue to swipe left and to learn more.

**INCLUDING ‘SWIPE LEFT’ IN THE CAPTION
BRINGS THE AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT
RATE FROM 1.83% TO 2%**

Research data from Creatopy (formerly Bannersnack)



CAROUSEL TIPS

GRAB THEM

Use a big bold headline and use contrast to highlight key words. **Motivate them** to swipe further.

REMINDE THEM

A lot of accounts put their **account name at the bottom** of every slide. You could also put the main subject line of your carousel or reference if it is part of a series.

ENCOURAGE THEM

As mentioned in the previous page, engagement rates go up in carousels that use a **swipe indicator** on the visual or in your post captions.

DO NOT OVERWELM THEM

You should be able to read the content on each slide in **10 seconds or less**. This example pushes it to the max. I am able to provide a nice chunk of readable content without giving the viewer fatigue.

CALL TO ACTION

Your last slide should **always encourage an action by the viewer**. You can even dedicate your entire last slide to prompt a follow or comment.



There are millions of fantastic color palettes locked inside photos of people, nature, cultures and the world.

Take your inspiration from photos by sampling various darker and lighter hues in a photograph. Start with the lightest colors and slowly work down into selecting darker color hues. That way you get a rich, diverse color variety.

For **daily** inspiration follow **@LindsayMarshDesign**

YOUTUBE



EFFECTIVE YOUTUBE THUMBNAILS ARE ABOUT TWO THINGS...

GETTING NOTICED GREAT STORYTELLING

YouTube thumbnails can make or break a video. In one image, you need to be able to adequately communicate the video subject matter and contents without being too busy. "Clickbait" is a term for a video thumbnail that has

fallen short of this goal and gives the viewer an inaccurate portrayal of the actual video contents. Rarely does the viewer of "click-bait" become a subscriber.

Telling stories on thumbnails can include putting together multiple images from different sources. You can do this through the use of typography, video stills, headshots or photo manipulations.

The example to the right perfectly acs the goal of thumbnail storytelling. The fake face he is holding up explains the plot of the video and the background image supports it further. I know exactly what this video is about.



YouTube Thumbnail Image
1280 x 720 pixels

RED BORDER = MARGIN

Try to keep vital text and headlines away from the red margin

EXPORT FILE AS A HIGH-QUALITY JPEG
File-> Export -> Export As -> JPEG





How To Stand Up For Yourself Without Being A...
Charisma on Command
6.8M views • 5 years ago



The Digital Artist's Passive Income Guide (10k+ a...
Stylized Station
27K views • 5 days ago



How I Started The Highest Paid Youtube Channel
Biaheza
289K views • 5 months ago



8 income ideas for beginner bloggers (how I make...
Silicon Valley Girl
14K views • 1 day ago

CONTRAST IS KING

✓ THIS
✗ NOT THIS

Video thumbnails have to stand out among so many others. With Facebook, Instagram and other social media channels you are usually viewing just one piece of content at a time when you are scrolling.

The YouTube search results are filled with over **30 thumbnails at any given time**, forcing you to use super high contrast typography (sometimes even using strokes), photos and colors to stand out.

¹Research from: Best SEO Companies
<https://www.bestseocompanies.com/youtube-thumbnails/>

HEADLINE BREAK UP

70%

"Seventy percent of thumbnails among the most popular videos included a title or explanatory text describing what viewers could expect to see upon clicking."

The title you include on the thumbnail can be a shortened abbreviated version of the video title. **Rarely do long full video titles look good on such a small space.** In the example above they use only 4 words in their title, much shorter than the official video title.

VIDEO STILLS OVER ILLUSTRATIONS

Screenshots or video stills used as thumbnails tend to generate more clicks than those who do not feature a direct photo from the video. In the example above they used the blurred out revenue snapshot to give viewers a "sneak peak" into the video content, teasing you along the way.

The below thumbnail features Daniel Schiffer holding his camera featured in the video. Although the image on the right side may not have been pulled directly from the video, it still alludes to the fact that it could have been.



THIS CAMERA WILL CHANGE EVERYTHING...
Daniel Schiffer
370K views • 1 week ago

FACES WIN

72%

"Seventy-two percent of the most popular videos on YouTube in 2020 featured an image of a human, averaging 921,000 more views than those without a human face."

People connect with faces and apparently YouTube thumbnails echo this basic human instinct.

CREATING A PORTFOLIO PRESENTATION

Bēhance



CREATING A TYPOGRAPHIC SYSTEM

headlines are
soft & lowercase

sub-headings are slightly
smaller but medium weight

Smaller headings are medium weight
still but continue to get smaller in size

Bold smaller items, great for labels or menu items

THE
EPIC
BRANDING
CHALLENGE

CREATING A CUSTOMER PERSONA

THE
EPIC
BRANDING
CHALLENGE



THEMED CHANNELS

Just like with Instagram and other social channels make sure to develop a standard look to your series of thumbnails. As you release them, subscribers can instantly identify your video as a new one if you have a particular style or look.

In this case my three thumbnails above are part of a series on branding. They feature the same typeface, color and alignment, with a photo on the right.

THE POWER OF ONE IMAGE



15:42



I Shot a Ford Commercial

Lizzie Peirce

4.4K views · 2 hours ago

You do not always have to use multiple photos to tell a story. If you have the right resources staging a photo shoot could be the best way to gather great photos for your thumbnails, like in the example to the left.

Most popular YouTubers have a **library full of headshots and action shots** to use when building out their thumbnails.

THREE PHOTOS AS ONE

If you do use multiple photos make sure they all look like they are taken together, even if they are sourced from different places. This can easily be done in a photo editing program, matching the lighting, shadows and colors.



3:00



A Photoshop Tutorial, But it's a RAP!

Benny Productions

168K views · 1 week ago

TWITTER



Profile Photo 1:1
400 x 400 pixels

Header Image 3:1
1500 x 500 pixels

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LINKS

Not long ago twitter was a word only place, allowing you to only post 140 characters of text, no images allowed. Fast forward to today and it looks like it might be another Instagram, with photos on almost every tweet.

I think what makes twitter a bit different is it's focus on link posts. Instead of focusing so much on the images of the post, most businesses use twitter to link to other websites, articles, blogs and videos.

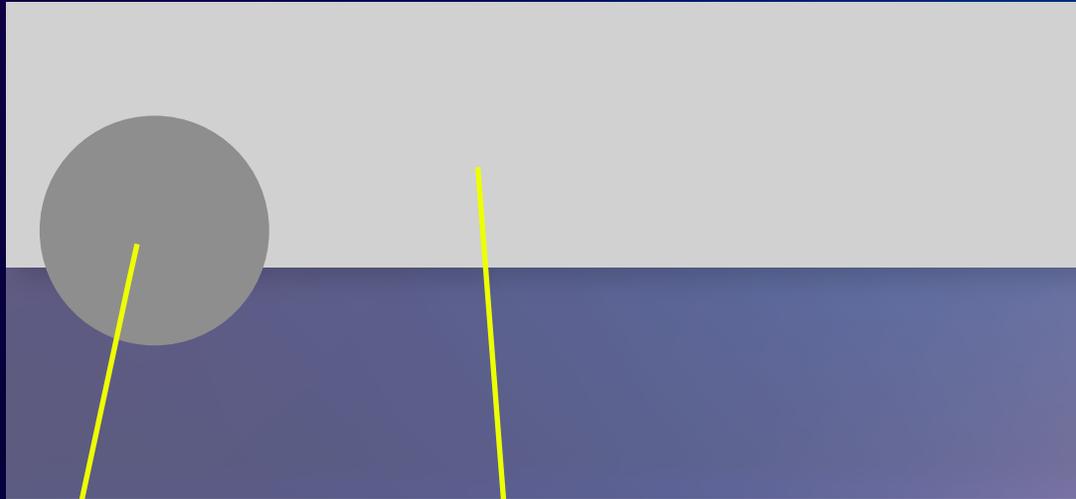
Carousel post:
800 x 800

Carousel post:
800 x 800

Single in-stream post: 1200 x 675 16:9 ratio



LINKED-IN



Logo Image
400 x 400 pixels

Header Image 4:1
1584 x 396 pixels

Linked-In Story 1080 x 1920 pixels

The good news with Linked-In stories is it is the same size as Instagram and Facebook stories. Making it easy to share across platforms.

Sponsored Content Images 1200 x 627 pixels

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Linked-in is overlooked by a lot of young freelancers because they normally associate it with finding full-time jobs. It provides a place to make connections with business owners and gives you a chance to connect with them personally through messages.

It also helps if you fill out your profile completely and make as many connections and client testimonials as possible. Finding the right person to message can require a little bit of research.

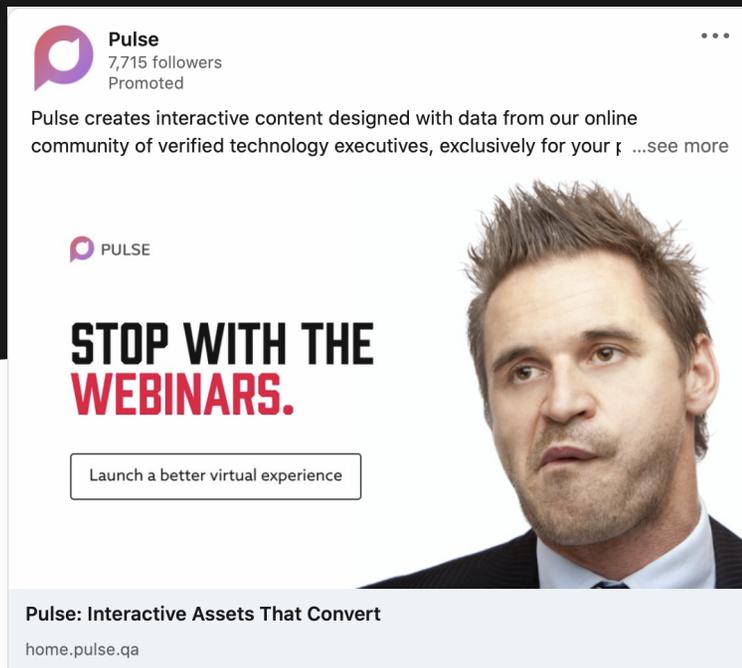
You need to locate those who make decisions on hiring design work. Some titles to look out for are marketing coordinators, creative director, art directors, social media managers and even local small business owners.

LET'S GET PROFESSIONAL

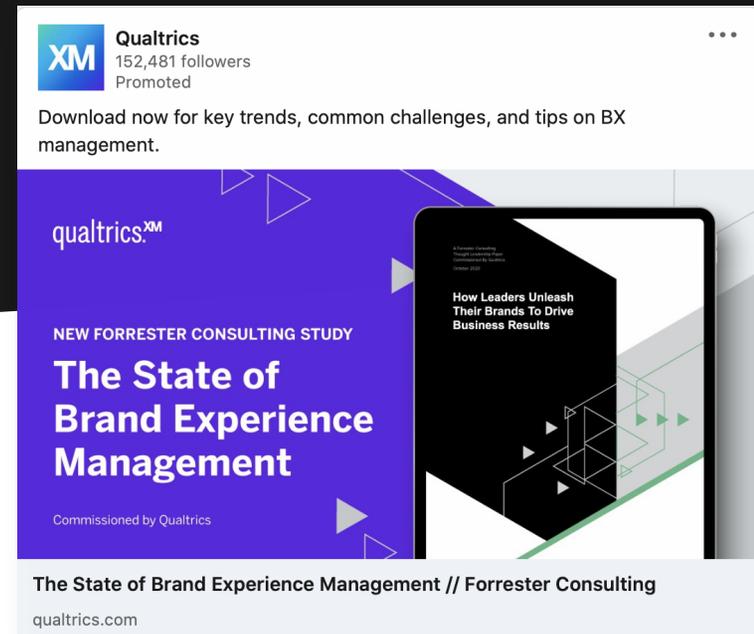
LinkedIn is the “Facebook for Professionals”. It is meant to make connections to others in your industry so you can expand your network, make sales, find jobs or change careers.

44% of LinkedIn users take home more than \$75,000 per year, which is above the national median in the US. This is based on Pew Research on Social Media in 2018.

Whether you are designing graphics for a client or crafting your own LinkedIn profile the following are best practices for creating LinkedIn post content.



A LinkedIn post from Pulse, a company with 7,715 followers. The post features a white background with a purple Pulse logo at the top left. The main text reads: "Pulse creates interactive content designed with data from our online community of verified technology executives, exclusively for your p ...see more". Below this is a large image of a man in a suit looking thoughtful. Overlaid on the image is the text "STOP WITH THE WEBINARS." in bold black and red, and a button that says "Launch a better virtual experience". At the bottom, there is a caption: "Pulse: Interactive Assets That Convert" and the URL "home.pulse.qa".



A LinkedIn post from Qualtrics, a company with 152,481 followers. The post features a purple and white design. The main text reads: "Download now for key trends, common challenges, and tips on BX management." Below this is a large image of a report cover titled "The State of Brand Experience Management" by Forrester Consulting, commissioned by Qualtrics. The cover features a purple background with white text and a graphic of a tablet displaying a report. At the bottom, there is a caption: "The State of Brand Experience Management // Forrester Consulting" and the URL "qualtrics.com".

DESIGN FOR THE PROFESSIONAL TARGET

If you are creating an ad for a client on LinkedIn you are creating it for a professional target market. The headline, copy and the design needs to be crafted with a company decision maker in mind.

Are you targeting a marketing director? Manager? Those in high-level sales?

BE DETAILED AND NERDY

Notice the use of industry specific terms in the first line of copy at the top of this ad? The BX here means brand experience. Because the audience is more narrow and specific on LinkedIn we are able to develop ads that are talking directly to those in specific roles at companies.

There is also repetition with the triangles in the purple portion of the ad and in the downloadable resource that reinforce the brand look. Posts that offer free knowledge do better organically on LinkedIn than on Facebook, where they tend to get lost.

LOOK LIKE AN INDUSTRY PRO

If you plan to do organic posts and decide to message others for potential job opportunities, then your profile better be ready.

Develop your one-line elevator pitch

Take your biggest dreams and accomplishments and merge them into a concise short sentence.

Fill out your services on your profile

Let potential clients know exactly what services you offer.

Take professional headshots

A pro headshot makes a huge difference in making a great first impression. This is worth every investment.

Make as many valuable connections as possible

A high connection number looks impressive. It means you took the time to network with others.



Following

Message

More...

Chris Do · 2nd

Loud Introvert with a big mission: Teach 1B people how to make a living doing what they love

Santa Monica, California, United States · 500+ connections ·

[Contact info](#)



The Futur



Art Center College of Design

Providing services

Career Development Coaching, Executive Coaching, Training, Brand Consulting, and Content Marketing

[See all details](#)

Square Ad



250 x 250 pixels

Inline Rectangle



300 x 250 pixels

DISPLAY ADS

Large Skyscraper or Half Page



300 x 600 pixels

Leaderboard ad



728 x 90 pixels

Banner Ad



468 x 60 pixels

Mobile leaderboard



320 x 50 pixels

SCALING DOWN

In the three leaderboard ads directly above, notice how when you reduce the size you have to sacrifice some design elements for the sake of others? The company identifier or logo is important as well as what the ad is promoting or selling. **Any other details may need to be removed because of the smaller size.**

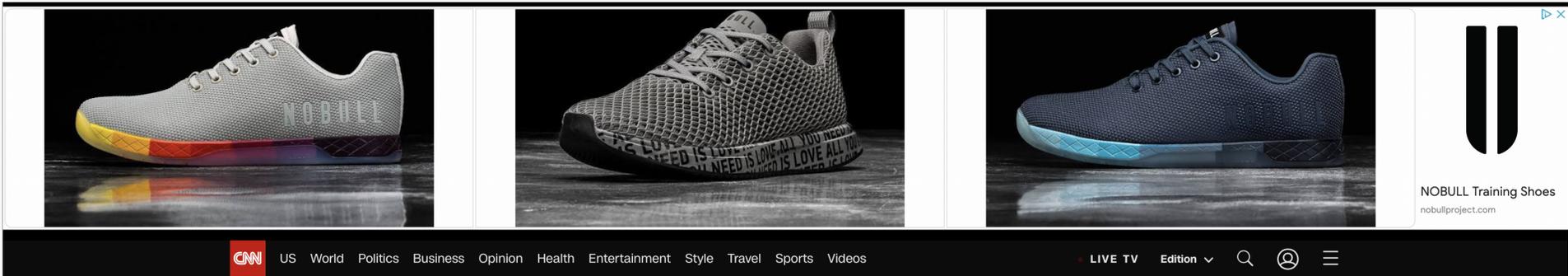
A dying format?

It is true that money spent on display ads is declining compared to spending for special media ads. As a designer you should still be ready to tackle a display ad when needed.

Display ads are those boxy ads you see on news websites and blogs. Most of the time they are static, but some can be GIFs and include motion elements.

Large Skyscraper and square/smaller rectangle ads appear on the right or left column of a desktop website. Leaderboard ads tend to appear more in mobile apps or websites but can also appear at the very top of a website or blog.

Display ads are most effective when used across multiple websites your target market might frequent. This means, like with most ads we have been studying, there needs to be consistency with color, typography and a very clear visible appearance of a brand or logo.

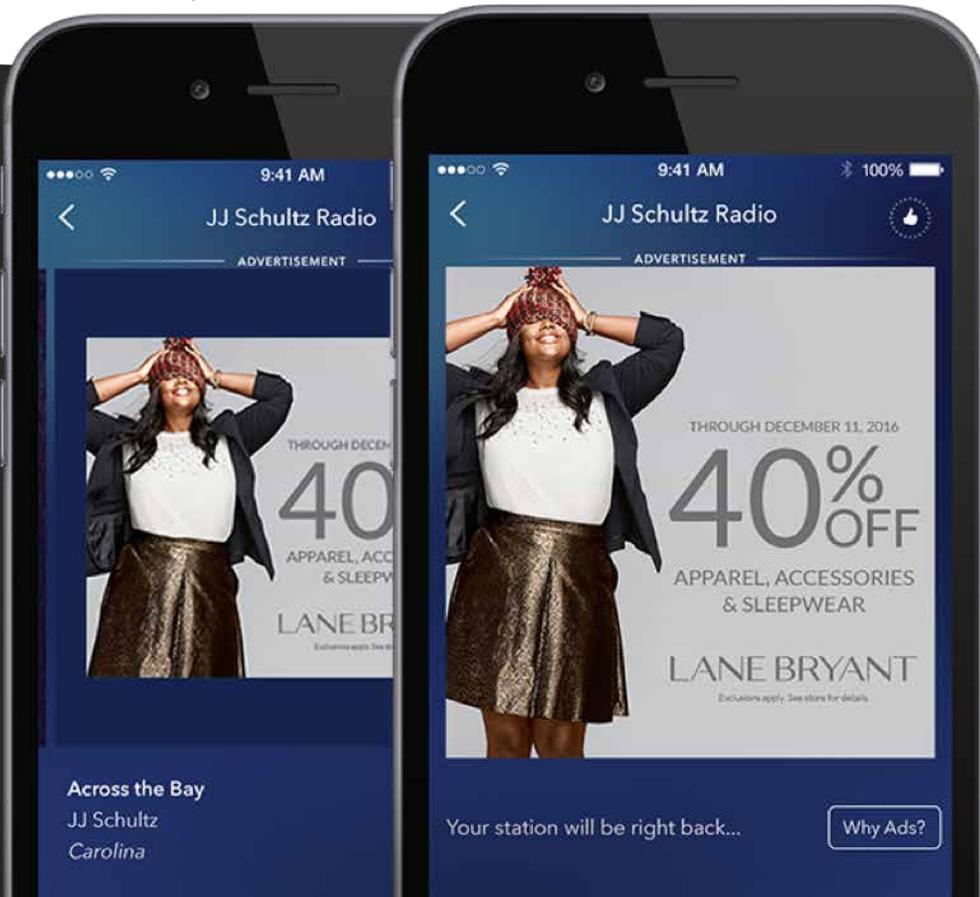


www.CNN.com

DISRUPTIVE POP UP HEADER ADS

There are standard common sizes like you saw on the previous page but depending on which website your display ad will show that size can vary widely. The header display ad above spans the entire website and allows the designer to feature large product heavy photos.

www.pandora.com



STREAMING POP UP ADS

Have you ever been listening to Pandora and an ad pops up? These pop up ads can be various sizes depending on the streaming platform the ad is for.

They can be a bit disruptive. It is best to complement the audio or video that is playing and keep the visuals simple and to the point.

The call to action will be your main local point (shop now, buy now, 20% off, coming soon etc.).



I FEEL OVERWHELMED!!!!



FIND A WAY TO CREATE CONTENT
THAT **CONVERTS, CONNECTS AND
EMPOWERS** VIEWERS TO TAKE
NEXT STEPS.



**IT IS VERY EASY TO READ THIS
DOCUMENT AND FEEL A LITTLE
OVERWHELMED ABOUT CREATING ALL
OF THESE DIFFERENT AD CAMPAIGNS,
ORGANIC POSTS IN DIFFERENT SIZES.**

There is a good chance you will work with a few platforms and master the sizes on those without needing to know how to master design for the entire social media network. In some cases, these sizes can completely change in a matter of months.

The great thing about knowing the basics of graphic design theory and foundations is no matter what size or platform you need to design for, you will find a way to create content that converts, connects and empowers viewers to take next steps.