RANKING PROGRESSION

According to the artist Scrojo,[†] a promotional poster should answer three questions: **WHY? WHEN? WHERE?**

All remaining information is subordinate. Unless restricted from doing so, consider adding information of your own to support or elaborate upon the primary question—why?

This is where research is needed. Both textual and visual solutions need to be explored to build a visual statement, a unified whole—bigger than the sum of its parts.

The existing fan is already sold. The goal of the poster *(commercially)* is to grab a potential fan who comes to the event based solely on the poster.

As virtually no design is accepted by the client without at least a few changes, use the proofing process to your advantage. Go ahead and add supportive text or remove what you may consider extraneous. The client may like your words better than their own.

Establish a hierarchy. Rank groupings into order of importance—what you wish to be read first, then second, and so on. Don't let the given order of importance influence you overly. You may wish to emphasize a different order, based on logic or aesthetics of your own. Copy/paste each line of text into its own text box so it may be moved around and stylized independently. Ranking now saves time later.

Create subsets within the rankings. (i.e. "Organized By," can be significantly less emphasized than, "University Global Affairs Committee.") Although ranked the same, the identifier is not as important as the proper noun, but must remain clustered to make logical sense.

Subdivide text groupings with line breaks into smaller units and remove extraneous punctuation and conjunctions. Simplify text wherever possible. *(you can add these items back in later, if necessary)*

Use only high resolution photos *(300 ppi)*. Bear in mind that pixel information can only scaled so far, but vector information *(text)* can be scaled without degradation of image.

What your client likes and expects plays a big part in what you choose to emphasize. Run with whatever creative license comes your way!

"Nothing is original. Steal from anywhere that resonates with inspiration or fuels your imagination. Devour old films, new films, music, books, paintings, photographs, poems, dreams, random conversations, architecture, bridges, street signs, trees, clouds, bodies of water, light and shadows. Select only things to steal from that speak directly to your soul. If you do this, your work (and theft) will be authentic."

~ Jim Jarmusch

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[†]*http://www.scrojo.com/*   James Howard Miller, *standard lecture series, graphic design*

"Print situates words in space more relentlessly than writing *ever* did.

Quote adapted from Walter Ong, Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word (London and New York: Methuen, 1982).

Writing moves words from the sound world to a world of visual space, but print locks words into position in this space. Control of position is everything in print. Printed texts look machine-made, as they are. In handwriting, control of space tends to be ornamental, ornate, as in calligraphy. Typographic control typically impresses most by its tidiness and invisibility: the lines perfectly regular, all justified on the right side, everything coming out even visually, and without the aid of guidelines or ruled borders that often occur in manuscripts. This is an insistent world of cold, non-human, facts."

COMMON TYPOGRAPHIC DISEASES

Various forms of dysfunction appear among populations exposed to typography for long periods of time. Listed here are a number of frequently observed afflictions.

TYPOPHILIA ~ An excessive attachment to and fascination with the shape of letters, often to the exclusion of other interests and object choices. Typophiliacs usually die *penniless* and *alone*.

TYPOPHOBIA ~ The irrational dislike of letterforms, often marked by a preference for icons, dingbats, and—in fatal cases—bullets and daggers. The fears of the typophobe can often be quieted *(but not cured)* by steady doses of Helvetica and Times Roman.

TYPOCHONDRIA ~ A persistent anxiety that one has selected the wrong typeface. This condition is often paired with **OKD** *(optical kerning disorder)*, the need to constantly adjust and readjust the spaces between letters.

TYPOTHERMIA ~ The promiscuous refusal to make a lifelong commitment to a single typeface—or even to five or six, as some doctors recommend. The typothermiac is constantly tempted to test drive "hot" new fonts, often without a proper license.

Graphic design is primarily a medium of communication.

Graphic designers balance the aesthetic against the communicative, the innovative against the expected. Asked to deliver not only the commercial interpretation of image, but also the accurate edification of word, graphic artists by definition must remain sensitive to external and internal influences, daring to open their eyes and really look. But then they must don their armor and thicken their skin to withstand the criticism and mixed reactions from an audience of varying tastes.

Ellen Lupton, *Thinking with Type*, 2nd revised and expanded edition: *A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students* (Design Briefs) (New York, Princeton Press, 2004, 2010)   James Howard Miller, *standard lecture series, graphic design*