

# Graphic designer-client relationships — case study

Pro Gradu Thesis  
University of Lapland  
Faculty of Art and Design  
Department of Graphic Design  
Autumn 2010  
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Name: Graphic designer-client relationships — case study

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Programme: Graphic Design

Type: Pro Gradu Thesis

Pages: 88

Year: 2010

### **Abstract:**

Graphic design is one of the elements of today's environment. It communicates meanings, identifies things, navigates people, and imparts knowledge in physical visible forms. We can see it everywhere: in the street signs, books, newspapers, packages, labels, clothes, billboards, etc. Since ideas and messages find their visual appearance in printed, published, or other visual forms, this means there are clients that order these design projects and designers that make them a reality. Since there are many examples of great and poor design, this means creative cooperation may be effective and clear or mutual understanding may be missed. In this context, relationships between the graphic designer and a client become the main topic of this research. This work aims to discover the reasons of spoiling of relations and offer practical guidelines that help graphic designers and their clients to improve their business cooperation.

In order to reach the main goal, this study describes the idea of the graphic designer and a client. Graphic designer is a mediator of ideas between producer and consumer and creator of experiences that can change behavior of individuals. In this context, designer's social responsibilities, inner culture, education, career opportunities, and professional growth stay in the focus of this research. Since design is a result of designer's activity, designer is responsible for success or failure of the project. However, client acts as equal in rights participant of the design process. This research presents a client from the position on corporate ladder and level of familiarization with design.

The existing literature on the current topic describes disrespect, lack of responsibility, unethical behavior, stereotypes, and lack of clarity as the main reasons of spoiling of relationships between the graphic designer and a client. Two practical cases prove theoretical findings and outline possible solutions to improve these relations. Results provided by the cases become a basis for further research and conclusions.

This study concludes with general guidelines that help graphic designers and their clients to speak clear language and provide effective design. Practical solutions suggest respect, ethical behavior, honesty, flexibility, overcoming stereotypes, individual approach to a client, and thinking several steps forward as core elements of profitable and fruitful cooperation. Also, they suggest concept of socially responsible design, payment strategies, and techniques to keep clients coming back and adapt to existing business conditions.

Keywords: graphic designer, client, relations, ethical behavior.

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# 1. Introduction

Today, we live in a visually oriented society and graphic design affects almost every aspect of modern life. For example, mass production, industry, commerce, culture, politics, education, and others. (Starck 2007) Magazines' covers, packages, labels, light-boxes, posters, leaflets, brochures or web-pages carry visual message to the person. Being a powerful communicational instrument, graphic design gives a possibility to control individual choice and behavior. In a commercial context, design can influence profit. Companies may consider design to be a part of their marketing strategy, and since success strongly depends on visual communication, design projects should be undertaken by really qualified professionals. For that reason, the field requires designers who understand the need to affect society and culture in ways that are constructive and positive.

However, graphic design is applied not only in commerce. In culture, politics, education, and in other social areas, it has a potential for improving the quality of life, peoples beliefs, and personal attitude to processes in their local environment. Design strives to provide a better use of culture itself, helping people to better realize their needs, perspectives, and social power as groups and individuals. In this context, design acts as communication between social goals, methods of impact, technologies, and consumers. Therefore, social fields expect that the designer clearly interprets ideas into visual forms and presents them to consumers effectively.

In a rapidly changing environment, clients become more demanding of effective design. The sophistication among people, who are responsible for cooperation with designers, rises because they work more and more in one team with designers (Guest 2008). Their joint projects may include web-design, package design, logo design, multimedia design, exhibition design, typography services and others. It would seem, the more they cooperate the better they understand each other and the better the result. However, the client may finally receive an unexpected result. Or design does not work, even if it corresponds to the aesthetical, functional, and constructional requirements. There are many reasons of 'bad' design as well as factors that adversely affect the relationship between the graphic designer and client.

In this context, an issue of the relationship between the client (who orders the design project) and the designer (who makes the project a reality) becomes a relevant topic for this research. The aim of this thesis is to discover the reasons of 'discord' in graphic designer-client relations and find appropriate solutions to improve them. Therefore, the following work extends the existing knowledge regarding the relationship between the graphic designer and

client. It draws on the stages of communications between the designer and customer, the causes of disorder in these interplay, and the reasons of misunderstandings. By analyzing the cases, this research discovers the ways to gain mutual understanding in a joint work between the graphic designer and customer. This work concludes by suggesting practical advice and perspectives to run a successful design product.

## **1.1 Research question and structure**

The main question of this research is how the relationship between the graphic designer and client can be improved. In order to answer this question, my study intends to describe the responsibility of the graphic designer and client, discover problems in joint conduct within the design project, and reveal reasons of dissension. Comprehension of these topics and analysis of cases provide practical solutions that help to improve relations between the graphic designer and client.

The study is divided into several chapters. Chapter 2 presents the research materials and methods that inform this study. The portrait of a graphic designer features in the focus of my research in Chapter 3. It draws on the designer's social responsibility, attitude to work, educational background, working conditions, and career opportunities. This chapter discovers two types of designers: permanently contracted designer that works for one single company and the designer that runs their own business – the free-lancer and studio owner. Chapter 4 introduces the image of the client and becomes no less significant in my study. It explores different types of clients, according their position on corporate ladder. In Chapter 5, graphic designer and client meet in joint design process. This chapter aims to clearly recognize what problems both participants face during their work and what specific reasons prevent either to reach mutual understanding in their collaboration.

To illustrate and test the conclusions from Chapter 5, this research conducts two case studies. The first one represents an interview with a design studio owner and his client; the second one is an interview with an in-house designer and his client. The analysis of theoretical findings and practical cases helps to support a better understanding of the problem and acts as a foundation for conclusion of my thesis. To complete the body of this research, Chapter 7 offers practical solutions that help to improve graphic designer/client relations. Based on the conclusions made in previous chapters, it presents a framework that can help to avoid misunderstandings and find mutual understanding in relations between the customer and designer.

## 1.2 Motivation

The motivation for this research is based on several facets. I have more than 7 years of working experience as a hired graphic designer in the advertising departments of trade companies and as a free-lancer. In my experience, I have faced with many situations of success and failure of design projects. Based on this experience, I try to create my personal strategies that help to deliver better design solution and work effectively with the client. However, problems in relations between both designer and customer require deeper comprehension. For that reason, it has become the topic for my research.

Parallel to that, numerous designers can tell dreadful stories about a barrier in their communication with clients “who have treated them like second-rate suppliers or worse” (Giffen 2004, 22). Designers complain that clients reject their design and ask to do something which would look awful. These designers consider that clients are given a huge responsibility of approving solutions of a discipline they are not that familiar with (Browne 2003). Usually, designers work closely with someone from the company’s marketing department or the owner in most ‘one-man-show’ companies. These clients might imagine only faintly what design they need, how much design work they require, and what final project they expect to achieve (Browne 2003). This means clients may not know what is communication function, aesthetical role, and ethical impact of design. Actually, clients need not have a clear understanding. However, the client is a full member of the creative process and controls the accomplishment of work (Browne 2003). Moreover, client is a person that pays a bill. Usually, this argument acts as determinative factor in most conflicts. Obviously, without demand there is no supply; without clients, who have the design need, there is no graphic design and therefore designers (Shaughnessy 2005, 104). Yet, this does not add clarity in relations. Therefore, all of the above explains my interest to lucidity in a graphic designer’s relationship with a client. The intention of my research is to reduce contradictions in designer/client relations and improve the quality of graphic design products.

Ultimately, the goals of both client and graphic designer overlap in order to produce piece of work that is effective in reaching the client’s aims. I agree with the statement that tells that both “designer and client are locked into a marriage that, like a real marriage, has to be an equal partnership if it is to last and produce any worthwhile offspring” (Shaughnessy 2005, 104). They need to establish a relationship based on mutual respect and understanding that the clients are the expert in their industry, and designer are the experts in theirs. From my perspective as a graphic designer, I want to work out appropriate techniques that will help to

effectively meet project goals and provide the best product outcome. With this research, I want to contribute my own findings to this study, as well as to stimulate designer/client collaboration for fruitful cooperative results.

One more reason that induces me to this research is that my Bachelor's degree programme at Saint-Petersburg State University (Saint-Petersburg, Russia) and Master's degree programme at University of Lapland (Rovaniemi, Finland), do not include courses that teach how to establish relationships with the customer. Gorb (1987, 107) says that "designers have always had an uneasy working relationship with the management world, and nothing in their education and training makes it easy for them to do so". This quotation shows that students are not really 'taught' how work with client. They go deep into the study of visual communications, typography, theory of color, laws of composition, etc. They participate in workshops aimed at solution for concrete tasks and practical skills' improvement. However, communications with the client is not directly related to design. It belongs to other disciplines: sociology, psychology, ethics, management, and marketing that do not have straight concern to graphic design. For that reason, these issues receded into the background.

Nevertheless, there is a noticeable need for graphic designers to be well educated and be ready for efficient communications and performance of tasks. In this case, theoretical knowledge and practical skills given at school can not be underestimated. However, most designers get real education at the work place by 'cut and try' method. Their clients act as their teachers. Every new client is unique and challenges designer to establish new particular relations again (Shaughnessy 2009, 19). We all study again by our personal experience, and under no circumstances I consider my work to be a 'guide of law' for designers. However, this paper suggests a framework for further discussion and research into client/graphic designer relationships.

To fulfill my motivation with more argument, I want to present the quotation: "I love clients, even bad ones" (Shaughnessy 2005, 104). Agreeing with Adrian Shaughnessy's statement, I prefer to work with 'hard' clients because it stimulates me as graphic designer for further development in my profession.



## 2. Research materials and Methodology

In order to reach the goals of this work, I use several ways of analysis. First one is literature review. Books offer insights into the term of designer from commercial, social, political, cultural, and creative viewpoint. They present different opinions and argumentations on the designer's role in society, in design process, and in creation of environments. Books offer more structured knowledge on the topic. Articles from magazines and electronic journals present more emotional and fresh discussions, concepts, and reasoning. Mentioned sources have helped me to reveal reasons of misunderstandings in relations between a graphic designer and client. Special significance of my research is taken on the ethical side of designer/client relations, because ethics is a core element of success in any relations.

Though there are many opinions and discussions on designer/client relations, there are not many literature sources that help to describe the client. In this case, I comprehended the idea of the client from her position on a corporate ladder and level of familiarization with design.

Theoretical data provide a firm basis for the second stage of my research. To prove theoretical argumentations by real life evidences, I continued empirical research with two practical cases. Since the theoretical part of my research describes two types of designer, – own employed designer and in-house designer – two case studies are relatively chosen as strategy. The first case presents relations between a graphic designer that runs their own studio 'Numedia', and from his client 'Satamaoperaattorit'. The second case illustrates relations between an in-house designer and departmental manager, that both work on behalf of one company 'Kemppi Oy'. The method of interview is chosen to collect different opinions and compare different design practices. Therefore, the two cases show the graphic designer-client relationship from two sides and provide main conclusions for the study.

Studying at a Finnish university and working as a graphic designer at a Finnish company, I do my research in the context of this country. Case studies present Finnish designers and clients, Thus, Finnish environment is an integral attribute of this research.

### **3. Who is the graphic designer?**

In order to understand better the relations between the graphic designer and client, first, one needs to understand counterparts. This chapter aims to describe the graphic designer from the angle of her responsibilities, attitude to work, instruments for creative implementation, educational background, and professional skills. To offer a wider opinion, this chapter includes discourse about possibilities of job placement, working conditions, and career opportunities of the graphic designer. Also, emphasis is made on ethical side of designer's behavior. Keeping a look-out according above mentioned characteristics, this chapter constructs the portrait of nowadays graphic designer for the further research of this study.

#### **3.1 Graphic designer – values behind profession**

Nowadays, design is a significant part of society because it is applied to almost every side of our environment. It concerns art and architecture, philosophy and ethics, literature and language, science and politics and performance (Helfand, online). Moreover, design intersects with commerce and marketing. Under conditions of hard competition, besides practical and functional value, product has distinctive representational value (Bierut 1999, 106). In this case, design acts as symbolical and emotional communication between producer and consumer. Additionally, design has psychological importance because it empowers people to express themselves (their taste, experience, knowledge, status, etc.) through the things they consume (Salmon 2001, 1–8). Thus, design has a very exclusive merit, to influence the consumer's choice.

However, graphic design is significant not only for economy and business. It is a strong 'cultural force' and instrument of social impact in non-commercial areas. For example, in politics it affects people's actions and shapes social beliefs, in signage systems it navigates people, in education it aims to improve teaching and learning presentation (Bennett 2006, 10–28). Therefore, design provides visual communication that may change social behavior of audience.

Since the graphic design establishes visual communication, designer acts as a creator of meaningful interaction and contributor of ideas that correspond and anticipate the requirements of society (Ilhan 2009). In connection with advertising and marketing, this requires strong feeling about the customer requirements to improve sales. In non-commerce, graphic design serves to express ideas and convey message in order to make people change

their opinion or behavior. This means strong feeling of present social behavior and prediction of its future changes (Ilhan 2009). Thus, graphic designer is an exact person, who makes a reality of public expectations by personal creative expression. It implies a variety of specific creative and practical considerations and adherence not to personal preferences, but rather to social demands. Coupling of creative activity and its adaptation to social needs identifies graphic design as a profession.

Speaking visual language, graphic designer establishes interaction and influences individual choice and cultural experience. By transforming and attributing present values to new subjects, designer induces new beliefs to audience (Bennett 2006, 28–30). Designer persuades the audience to act and sends social impulse through communication by displaying values (Bennett 2006, 36–55). In this context, clear and active dialogue with audience and understanding of social experience has as much significance as aesthetics. Ability to establish proper visual communication becomes essential for designer. The role of graphic designer can be defined as ‘graphic communicator’, ‘media consultant’, and ‘communications designer’.

Since graphic designer communicates public values and tastes, she may seem to be put under pressure because personal artistic vision may run counter to social standards (Bennett 2006, 30; Bierut 1999, 106). Indeed, profession demands to realize neatly what will please the audience and what is right for the time. But if designer’s vision narrows by following the commonplace model and justification of routine there is no success. (Giffen 2004, 27; Salmon 2001, 6) Thus, remaining free from prejudices and stereotypes is the main social goal of designer.

Outstanding from prejudices means fresh approach and open-minded vision. It concerns with staunch designer that looks beyond own borders and takes advantages from new challenges (Bennett 2006, 14–26). It is much to tell about professional intuition supported by theoretical research that strengthens solutions. (Bierut 1999, 106–108; Giffen 2004, 27) Guided by intuition maintained by knowledge and personal ‘ability to think out from the box’ designer can influence public opinion and stimulate for changes (Burket 2009, 28). Therefore, designer becomes socially proactive.

Utterance that “graphic designers have always been problem solvers” strengthens the importance of graphic designer’s social role (Giffen, 2004: 26). This means that designers are no longer designers. Using their larger view on behavior and motivation, designers enter into problem-solving process and help to navigate people needs through visual communication (Giffen 2004, 26–27). Exactly, strategic thinking distinguishes designer from decorator or publisher and defines competence in profession.

## 3.2 Responsibilities of the graphic designer

Ability of design to change individual behavior and to influence public opinion determines the significance of graphic design as profession and attracts a lot of gifted and imaginative specialists. However, graphic design means not only approval by audience and possibilities for growth, but also responsibilities and understanding of duties (Bierut 1999, 156–159). Neglect of own responsibilities means illiteracy in profession, which may result in vulgar, unethical, and ignorant design (Brown 2002, online). Also, it becomes a reason of misunderstandings between the graphic designer and client. For that reason, this section is important for my research. Inherently, this issue might be appreciated as utopian. To make it less idealized, the verb ‘should’ is used instead of ‘must’. Eventually, concerning design profession every ‘must’ doesn’t carry the weight and could be easily contested.

As design is a product of the designer’s work, designer’s duty is to bear responsibilities of design. Following the proactive position and being proud of profession, designer should realize the gravity of her role. Nevertheless, designer is not the only person that maintains, evaluates, shapes, and studies the reality. Environment within its context (e.g. economy, culture, policy, society, etc.) is the result of historical cooperation of individuals and institutions (Brown 2002, online). For that reason, designer should effectively grasp the dependence upon others. This means respect to other opinion (client, in particular), openness to changes or flexibility, modest behavior, and honest attitude to work (Bennett 2006, 28). Thus, ethical aspect of responsibilities becomes crucial for designer’s interplay with society. Designer should define the principles of life towards other people, environment, future, and life of following generations.

For example, problem of overproduction directly concerns designer and the graphic designer in particular. In a wasteful age, the problem of bloated consumption and satiety of goods is a part of globe trend. Overproduction leads to problems of utilization of useless goods, to environmental deterioration, and disappearance of natural resources (Busch A. 2007, 22). In this context, designer’s responsibility is to design less thinking more (Hardt 2009, online). Being a ‘problem solver’, using ability of multifaceted thinking, designer should offer solutions to reduce consumption without reducing the standard of living (Bierut 1999, 160). This is a manifestation of social responsibility towards other and important contribution to economy and social needs of future period.

Before making design decisions, designer should honestly answer questions: Do we really need it? Can we live without it? Can we reconstruct or rebuild another product not to

produce a new one? Is this product designed to be multifunctional and long? (Busch A. 2007, 23; Hardt 2009, online) Acuteness of problem consists not only of redesigning present systems of products and services, but also of creating new thoughtful, conscious, sustainable, and simple environment. Social and economic change starts by doing small things in a larger issue (Busch 2008a). Balanced combination of resourcefulness, innovation and responsibility towards society is an effective tool at designer's hand (Szenasy 2009, 16). It builds environment based on immaterial values of honesty, frankness, thrift, and ability to do more by using less.

The above mentioned reflection of overconsumption and overproduction is just one illustration of how design can modify the system of people's attitude. This example presents design applied to production. But there are different aspects that graphic design can influence: quitting smoking, reduction of amount of abortion, giving money for charity, drinking more milk, reading more books, etc. (Bennett 2006, 31). Quality of design is determined by changes it makes in social consciousness (Gerber 2008, 31–33). In this case, ethics becomes critical. Designer's ability to act ethically determines what kind of changes may happen in behavior of target group after communication.

Argumentation about ethical and moral qualities may seem uncertain. It also arise the opposite supposition that actually nobody wants to be unethical (Dudley 2000, 143). However, not everyone understands what does it really mean – being ethical. Saying briefly, concerning human being one should be true to oneself. Concerning graphic design that has existed a long time without the trend of ethical design, one should be true to the craft and to the baseline of profession (Dudley 2000, 143). Ethical attitude is a part of design thinking that has far-reaching consequences for design industry in general. Therefore, the graphic designer should communicate the ideas they are given in as ethical and effective way as possible (Dudley 2000, 146). Focusing on the content of message to society, ethical designer asks personal questions 'Do I believe or do I agree with the content?' and 'Does the message manifest 'unethical' signs?' In this context, the role of the graphic designer becomes a defender of moral principles.

This research emphasizes designers' aspire to honesty, moderateness of views, and objectivity in work. According to their 'problem solving' role they also act as scientists, engineers, teachers, and doctors. Being active participants of industry, production, society, and culture, designers should know what kind of solutions they can offer for public; particularly, nobody knows it better than they do (Gerber 2008, 33; Liechty 2006, online). Moreover, being creators, they should be proud as professionals that they do change the world and do it for the

better (Busch 2008a). This positive and proactive credo develops designer's personal attitude described in the next section.

### **3.3 Attitude and inside culture of the graphic designer**

The previous part of this chapter coherently conducts to a question of expectations and orientations that designer brings to design project. The key goal of this section is to discover designer's attitude and inside culture as an individual and as a part of social. This part of literature review suggests stimulating of emotional reevaluation about designer's functions and will make clear the essence of designer's role.

Designer operates with different objectives and meanings in order to achieve correlation between contents, representation, and functional values (Wasserman 2007, 8). This means not only having ideas, but also creative embodiment of concept in strict time limitations. Design thinking should drive solutions. In context of graphic design, solutions have physical incarnation in digital or material form (Michlewski 2008, 380). First, designer always gets insight of the problem, observes previous experience from the perspective of new task, and searches for appropriate concepts (Michlewski 2008, 380). Then, concepts find their tangible form as notes or sketches. The act of embodiment is a key moment in design process because then all immaterial meanings interflow to gain physical form. The level of professionalism depends on how quick and precise designer can pick up appropriate concepts, select out peculiar ideas, and direct them into creative process (Michlewski 2008, 380).

In context of design attitude, creativity emphasizes designer's aspiration to produce the best solution that unites all functional, aesthetical, and ethical meanings, and meets client's requirements. Inherently, the act of embodiment is a very risky process because designer never has predetermined plan (Michlewski 2008, 380). Designer mostly applies previous experience for the new task by following intuition and by experimenting with visual forms. Even experienced designer may be stuck with the project. This attitude is connected to uncomfortable feeling of accepting a risk to lose control over the project development (Michlewski 2008, 380). However, it may become a stimulus for fruitful work. Thus, readiness for challenge and risk is one of distinctive characteristics of design attitude.

The risk of receiving unexpected result may be one of the reasons of creative crisis. Absence of ready plan may hold in place when designer can not choose the start point for prototyping. On the other hand, accepting of risk may become the main factor for urging forward nonstandard solution (Nussbaum 2004, 89). Designers' state of mind is not always logical; they can think in a completely different way and get a different result instead of a

traditional answer (Michlewski 2008, 381). The design attitude differs from that of others by willingness to use a chance for innovation by saying ‘Why not? Let’s do it!’ In this respect, ambiguity and improvisation also act as constituents of design attitude.

However, designer may be deeply plunged into looking for the best creative result by trying new and new solutions, amending, tweaking, and polishing (Weick 2004, 43). Hence, the feeling of dissatisfaction has become a personal trait of graphic designer. It appears and grows because graphic design never has one answer to a question. On one hand, striving for perfection forces designers to produce better quality work and helps them to feel more confident when showing the visual to the client (Michlewski 2008, 381). But on the other hand, endless amending leads even good design to death. Endless scrutinizing of small things or rethinking the concept leads to discontinuity and kills design. Therefore, designer should trust her competence and feel the moment to leave design while it is still fresh. The ability to find balance between doubts and passions concerning concrete task presents one more aspect of design attitude.

Interacting with the environment, designer uses personal aesthetic sense and judgment adapting it to people’s needs. Designer’s aim is to create ideas and capture them into simple visual form. This aim demands visual thinking that develops through drawing and making visual products. In this perspective, “visual discourse within yourself” also presents design attitude (Michlewski 2008, 382). Therefore, the category of unconscious perception is deeply integrated into designer’s way of thinking (Michlewski 2008, 382).

Also, designer works in close cooperation with people from areas that are not related to design. This means that with every new project, designer accommodates the views of audience and learns to develop the project from end-user perspective (Bierut 1999, 97). Designer’s attitude is formed by exceptional ability to deal with concepts, qualities, processes, ideas and their interrelations (Michlewski 2008, 384) Thus, personal empathy interlaces with aim to inculcate emotional reactions into design project.

Emotional endow into a product becomes one of the main objectives of designers because it includes new unique experiences, processes, entertainment forms, and ways of communicating with end-user. Reaching customer’s hidden needs, designer fills up the product with individual meanings and provides the open dialogue with the end-user (Brown 2009b, 62; Chitturi 2009, 7). From the design attitude perspective, human-centered approach demands a shift from design ‘doing’ to design ‘thinking’ that joins together the emotional and the rational (Michlewski 2008, 384).

Designer makes personal emotional contribution into the product by collecting meanings and their responses that are preformed visually. During creative process, designer strives for new original solution that should be better than previous one (Michlewski 2008, 384). There is a strong aspiration to suggest something aesthetically different and practically considerate. Designer's nature uncovers inner belief to do things better, extend present boundaries, and change existing rules (Michlewski 2008, 385). Designer's culture and attitude signify the readiness for challenges, wish for investigation, and following uncertain inner guidance while keeping the general vision as a subconscious measure for the project's success.

This section uncovers designer's inner culture through the observance of design process. However, to comprehend deeper designer's nature, this chapter should also answer the question 'How does designer operate with these meanings and ideas?' The next part of this chapter suggests a closer view at designer's tools and instruments.

### **3.4 Instruments of the graphic designer**

The usage of tools, instruments, and techniques depends on specific product that designer creates (Tassi 2009, online). Graphic designers create the graphics primarily for published, printed or electronic media. They are also responsible for typesetting, illustration, user interfaces, and web design, or take a teaching position, although these specialties may be assigned to specialists in various graphic design occupations. A core responsibility of the designer's job is to present information in accessible and memorable way. The number of instruments, the ability to use them adequately, the balance between technology and representation depend on designer's experience, professional literacy, and intuition (Tassi 2009, online). This part of my research displays a collection of tools used in design. The tools are divided into parts according to the design activity they are used for, the kind of representation they produce, the recipients they are addressed to, and the contents of the project that they convey.

Looking closer at the design process, there are several communication tools that become keys for success. A fruitful collaboration or co-designing is one of them. Since design product is a result of joint work, client, user, or other figure can make personal contribution to the process. In order to use this off-site experience as an appropriate tool, participants should correspond to the aims of a product. Also, designer should find the means to engage with team members and provide them with ways to communicate and share their own ideas (Bartzke 2009). There are different levels of participation in co-designing, from attraction of the



external figures just in specific moments to situations when the product or service is built up by joint group from A to Z (Tassi 2009, online). In any case, collecting expressed ideas and filtering the best of them remains the main challenge for designer.

Envisioning is one more design tool used to represent the concept of future product. It outlines the imaginative preview of design solution and makes its features more distinct by translating ideas into visual expositions (Tassi 2009, online). Making ideas visible allows people to explain, share, and understand what is in their minds. The main difficulty in envisioning process is communicating inner immaterial components of thinking and representation technique or language (Tassi 2009, online). Every new project is a new visual environment; it requires a different approach to the creation of visual elements. It demands new modes of visual sensitivity and interrelation with other fields of knowledge (Meirelles 2005, 100–103).

Another efficient technique in design process is prototyping that helps to experience some features of design in order to improve it. This is an additional tool to visualize and refine designs. Prototyping is a quick and cheap method for testing and correcting goals and functions of the project before getting to the further expensive development (Brown 2009a, 198–201). It is a less risky approach to test the design before significant investment has been made. It might not include technological infrastructure, clear terms and conditions, but it offers the vision of the concept and often answers the questions: ‘Does it do what users expect and want?’, ‘Does it work like it is expected to work?’, and ‘Does it look like it is expected to look?’ (Tassi 2009, online). Finally, using the technique of prototyping, designer concentrates more on the needs, expectations and capabilities of the user. It guides designer to user-centered design solutions.

Effective prototyping and testing leads design into a working service. The product is developed step by step and communicated attentively in order to be built effectively and to become ready for using. Implementation is a critical tool of design process as it includes work on the details, full-length analysis of each element, and preparation for delivering (Tassi 2009, online). The end product is a final tangible stage of long process. Any way, even after completion when product is ready critics and remarks should not be neglected.

The stages of design process illustrate methods and tools according design activity and project development. From the point of representation each designer has personal kit of techniques and instruments, which identify designer and complete her own style of expression. Designers have at their hand different tools for representation: texts, graphs,

narratives, models, tables. Object's basic attributes – shape, scale, orientation, position, tone, color, and texture – are also the subject of designer's experiments.

To approach the topic of design tools and instruments, this section also presents recipients. A recipient is a person that has a legitimate interest in a project or entity. One of distinctive feature of design at the 'professional' level is that decisions are made by those, who hold potentially significant consequences for individuals (Tassi 2009, online). For that reason, consultation and analysis made by these members may construct a system of different views on one problem (Tassi 2009, online). In reality, the results of consultative outcome may be often naïve, superficial, and descriptive (Doherty 2009, 115). Nevertheless, it helps to bring order to the further design process and can be used as an instrument for ethical conduct. Members of a joint work are often become recipients of the product. They can be divided into the following categories: stakeholders, professionals, service staff, and users.

An approximate list of stakeholders may include one or several participants: employees, communities, shareholders, investors, government, suppliers, labor unions, government regulatory agencies, industry trade group, professional associates, competitors, public communities, local communities (Tassi 2009, online). Stakeholder analysis can be used as a tool to compose a true picture of the focus groups with their social interactions which might be affected by design intervention (Doherty 2009, 115–116). Also, analysis can be used as a consulting tool that provides designers with the necessary responses from target groups and confirms an apparent relevancy of constructed schemes (Doherty 2009, 116). The knowledge of expert figures is required for successful development of the service idea and can be used as another tool at designer's hand. Professionals of broad spectrum (marketing, branding, analytics, technology, social sciences, etc.) can be involved in the process from the very beginning or at particular moment. Service staff includes people that are responsible for the final delivery of service or product. It consists of operators that directly interact with users and those, who produce information and needed technical support. The user is the most important recipient that experiences provided product. Therefore, the feedback from user is one more communication tool for designer.

Deeper comprehension of presented problem itself can evolve additional communication tools that serve to designer. Immersing in contents helps to understand the context which product or service belongs to. Exploring and defining the context means acquiring of project supporting points and specific environment where it takes place (Tassi 2009, online). This method helps to set the project limitations and to extend its opportunities.

Going deeper in interaction process between user and concrete product, service, or activity, and studying of its specific character gives a platform for theoretical considerations. It develops empirical research that finally creates new knowledge. Such basis becomes critical in graphic design because visual communication has become more and more powerful instrument of economical, cultural, and social impact (Bennett 2006, 158). Communication research brings together real facts and designer's intuition. Moreover, it helps to test concepts on the stage of their development and to guess consumer's response beforehand. (Bennett 2006, 159–160) Hence, theoretical research is an appropriate tool to structure the content of design problem, to systemize creative thinking, and to produce solution that corresponds to client's needs and consumer's expectations.

Based on description of instruments and tools this section delineates the portrait of graphic designer more precisely. Representation tools, analytical methods, and communication techniques that support design process are integral elements of design practice. These experiences as well as creative skills can be obtained while learning. The next part of this chapter aims to illuminate the field of education of graphic designer.

### **3.5 Education of the graphic designer**

Being a communicator, link, interpreter, and inspirer, the graphic designer stands at the turn of meanings and ideas, uniting them in design product. This unique role demands technical knowledge and skills. Moreover, a designer needs to see every possible option and solution to presented task (Weeks 2004, 76). Natural talent of multifaceted vision is a big advantage. However, to become a professional it needs to be trained. This part of my research touches upon the questions of becoming a designer. What is it that makes someone a designer? Is academic degree a guarantee for 'good' designer when there are many self-taught designers? Does 'academisation' deviate design from natural development? (Weeks 2004, 76) In context of relations with the client, this section also discovers the problem of gap between education and real design practice. I suggest this part of my research as one more stroke that fulfils the portrait of graphic designer.

To answer the question 'What makes someone a designer?', this section first reveals skills demanded to start design education. The list of entrant criteria can vary in order of importance: creativity, drawing skills, intelligence, aspiration for education, and literacy (Dudley 2000, 8). Additional features might be placed into the list.

Creativity is one the most significant criteria. However, it is an ephemeral notion that can not be measured. It has no limits and it does not exist in itself. Creativity is like a talent that does not carry weight without use. To get original solutions, it needs to be sharpened. (Dudley 2000, 8–9) The only way to train creativity is to apply it to concrete task and to go deeper into the subject area. Bringing to light natural talent by applying it to multitask is the main goals of educational institutions. Another role of educators is to show every slice of the design world (Vavetsi 2010, online). It is necessary to study design to have multifaceted vision to a problem and to adjust this vision to design solutions. As any other field, design process demands hard work involving rational thinking, intuition, re-combination of basic elements into new prototypes (Salmon 2001, 14). Finally, creativity is only the starting point for further investigation even if it acts as the most significant stimuli in educational process.

Creativity is suggested to be the main determination for potential designer. It has been analyzed that high creativity is tied together with high intelligence and low intelligence rare entails high creativity. Still, intelligence does not guarantee creativity. (Dudley 2000, 11) Nevertheless, such essential constituents of intelligence as dexterity, keenness of wit, and ability to learn quickly are key elements for potential designer. Indeed, analytical, practical, and creative categories of intelligence are important for original response to real-life situations that usually arise at work.

Drawing skills belong to that features that are evoked from natural inclination or that can be trained. In any case, comprehension the environment through drawing is the basis of visual literacy and the initial way for communicating visual ideas (Dudley 2000, 13). Sketches and preliminary drafts effectively represent the concepts. Also, they provide a variety of means to experience the environment and to express personal attitude to it (Dudley 2000, 14). It is a language that designer applies to the message to speak to audience. However, drawing is just one of instruments that potential designer should have in the set of strategies.

Besides visual language, communication with words is one of the most serious issues in design as well as in other disciplines (Dudley 2000, 15). Language is the essential principle of thinking. In design practice, it is necessary to communicate to colleagues, to clients, and to technical specialists. Natural language is the step of working process when abstract concepts have no physical embodiment. In this context, literacy is helps to define the problem, express ideas to others clearly, and come closer to problem-solving (Dudley 2000, 15). Thus, possession of public speaking and coherent writing using linguistic standards (spelling, grammar, and punctuation) is the crucial element of designer's literacy.

All above mentioned features help to recognize potential designer. However, additional characteristics may become significant in admission: computer skills, maturity, and responsibility (Weeks 2004, 76). These skills can be trained during education. Yet, among these characteristics one stays in priority – aspiration for education and keeping eyes opened (Dudley 2000, 11). Aspiration for knowledge is born long before knocking the door of educational institution. It grows from natural interest to the field, willingness to get into the subject, desire to apply and to develop arising inclination towards designing (Weeks 2004, 76). This passion makes someone a designer. However, passion is not enough. To reach a success one needs to have technical knowledge that becomes a tool for creative implementation and experience that keeps balance between technical skills and passion (Weeks 2004, 76). Therefore, combination of theoretical and practical knowledge helps to achieve this balance.

One can argue that academic education in design is not very significant because the field is strewn with those who are self-taught and self-education is the main part of development. However, while making practical suggestions for current task, one is not able to understand design effectively until this task is placed within a general theory of design (Dudley 2000, 40). Acquiring an education means accommodating with arranged design-specific theoretical and practical skills and becoming cultured in taken decisions. Additionally, academic education cultivates creative potential, ethical conscience, communication skills, and critical thinking. (Caan 2005) Another important institution's responsibility is to challenge, inspire, and support students throughout their learning processes. Therefore, becoming a specialist requires the possession of variety of skills and awareness of meaning of design profession.

Because design is an applied art and craft, does 'academisation' of design deviate it from natural development? Reasoning from its definition, educational institution has much from academism. Universities are obliged to evaluate, put the grade, and define the key skills that a student should possess on graduating. Every course goes through testing and critics; than it is standardized, named, or labeled. (Dudley 2000, 17) Strict regulation entails the conflict between conservative system of education and revelation of innovative thoughts that requires various methods of teaching. (Busch J. 2007, 12) Therefore, standardization, regulation, and subjection influence upon organic development of design profession. Nevertheless, there is no perfect environment to correspond with each requirement and potential designer should adapt to teaching atmosphere as she should adapt to future working conditions.

Adaptation to real life after graduation can become a difficult process because of gap between education and real design practice (Vavetsi 2010, online). In general, educational

path of design students is quite typical. During their studies, students are given no limits to be creative with each assignment. Presented tasks aim to unlock their creative thinking. They develop their own style of expression and they prepare themselves for career with boundless opportunities for experiments. However, after graduation they may find themselves at trivial putting together long text columns, bullets, charts, and stock photos that do not require creativity and personal aesthetics (Vavetsi 2010, online). Students' dreams and expectations are not always fulfilled in the real world. In this context, the fault of educational institutions is that they do not give a true picture of design practice (Caan 2005). Although, real design work does not give much freedom for personal talent, it gives a sense of the purpose and the satisfaction of being useful to society. Unfortunately, real life demands skills that usually are not taught at school.

Academic system of teaching does not provide the 'right' combination of skills for incoming designers (Busch 2008c, 158). Indeed, it gives necessary knowledge in aesthetics, visual communication, drawing, design theory, photography, typography, identity systems, etc. However, there is a lack of understanding how design is implicated within a world market and how design needs vary for different socio-economic groups (Caan 2005). From the collaboration view, students are not always integrated into effective communication (Helmer 1993). In the context of my research, this disadvantage becomes critical. Lack of appropriate skills spoils relations of the graphic designer and client.

In fact, many graduates enter profession when they start their career (Milshtein 2007, 40). By this moment, they have already had a kit of strategies, techniques, and skills; they are determined to apply their knowledge and talent to presented task. Nevertheless, continuing education is an essential element of professional growth (Weeks 2006, 80). This means keeping abreast what is going on in the profession and thinking beyond the borders of solutions for routine problems. In addition to practical skills, this approach broadens designer's ability of thinking forward (Bennett 2006, 51–53). It cultivates a model of ethical behavior that comes useful in real design practice after graduation.

The process of becoming a designer does not end with graduation and having a certificate; also, being a designer does not mean to have a degree. Diploma is not a guarantee that designer does not have failures and makes 'good' design. Designers enter the industry armed with their degrees, possession of latest technology, and ambitions (Weeks 2004, 76). But they still study with every new task trying to do next project better. In addition, new materials, new processes, new software or technologies have to be learned. Consequently,

designer grows together with profession (Dierson 2006, 24). Career opportunities of the graphic designer are described in the next part.

### **3.6 Career opportunities of the graphic designer**

The following section adds the list of elements that successful designers share and potential employers expect from graduates. In order to complete the image of graphic designer, this part describes two types of graphic designer: designer employed by a company and self-employed designer.

In profession, life becomes ‘real’; learning is examined, tested and applied to practice. In the world where everyone contests for a place under the sun, speed of reaction, shrewd mind, communication skills, and ability of foreseeing are highly appreciated and influence the success of business. However, some elements that contribute to success in design are hard to measure, and one of them is commitment. Commitment is based on love and adherence to profession. Obviously, the progress is more feasible when designer really loves what he/she makes (Caan 2005). Moreover, joy of design-making gives many important psychological rewards that can be measured by such non-material things as personal growth and self-discovery. Commitment also means willingness to work toward a future goal by constant training and willingness to stay in profession. This also means that a considerable period of time may pass before designer is accomplished enough and career makes the pay off. (Salmon 2001, 12) Therefore, success takes a combination of time and hard work.

Hard work is one of the most important contributions to successful output. The idea should be obvious for people from other professions, but it is very often neglected because of stereotypes concerning creative persons (Salmon 2001, 13). Designers are usually thought of as being spontaneous and undisciplined figures that creatively ‘play’ with ideas and concepts. There is an unfortunate stereotype that designers spend their days “in a magically rarefied play space, dreaming up ways to connect with other humans using imagination, wit, esthetic nuance...” (Dolan 2008) Designer’s staying in studio, giving birth to visual ideas, doing sketches, combining together colors, pictures, and texts is not considered to be a hard work. And the dark side of design reality as sending off a heartily worked-out series of questions on a pending project, explaining and proving to clients for the tenth time the concept of product, summarizing opinions of team participants, conference calls, etc. is not taken into account (Dolan 2008). But still, designers work hard for their success. Career requires readiness to work long and hard to achieve professional objectives.

Hard work also means finishing specified assignments within strict deadlines, busy schedule, and having multiple projects at one time (Bierut 1999, 107). In this case, self discipline becomes crucial personal feature for designer whether she runs own business or work at a design company. For many designers, working at a company is easier because it involves organizational structure and culture that is quite similar to an educational institution and has been probably experienced already. Hence, it is understandable that working in familiar and predictable environment feels comfortable for some people because it is relatively safe and secure (Salmon 2001, 14). However, being incorporated with complex structure, designer must obey business factors that control the work. Therefore, designer's work habits should correspond to requirements of the job.

For freelance designers and those, who run own studio, the situation is different but it does not remain easier. At first glance, it may be seen as attractive situation. One may see the picture of individuals that do not have supervisor standing over their shoulders. There is no boss shaping daily activities and giving creative assignments. Certainly, for some people being on their own is the best thing. (Salmon 2001, 15) In fact, designer needs to acts as supervisor relying on personal set of assignments, controlling the quality of work, being responsible for getting own clients, and assuming responsibility of taken decisions. Being own supervisor, designer must demand as much from him- or herself as other supervisors might have demanded. For that reason, designer must be self disciplined and self-reliant.

The list of professional requirements can be continued by willingness for experimenting and developing an idea, ability to learn during working process, readiness to try new materials and techniques, etc. All mentioned distinctive features illustrate designer from the perspective of professional skills that are necessary for career. Career opportunities are illustrated in the next subsection.

### **3.6.1 The two types of design practice**

Designer has several career opportunities. One of them is being hired by design studio or company that needs design services. To correspond to requirements of design studio or company, a designer should obtain a wide range of technical, personal, and communication skills. Working at a design company automatically stimulates designer's creative thinking because she is surrounded with the same ambitious, talented, and skillful colleagues (Salmon 2001, 56). If designer is hired by non-design studio, her competitiveness is additionally



determined by understanding concrete field of technology or science. The main distinctive feature of hired designer is that she is just one member of a big system that demands ability to work as effective communicator and performer in official context (Salmon 2001, 56).

Many individualistic and free-spirited persons may consider these complex social environments to be not comfortable. However, such experience may become useful. First, working as hired designer helps to collect professional portfolio that may become a strong foundation for future independent career. Second, few years of working at a company is one more step in education that places a designer at more professional level. In this case, the company can provide valuable training. (Salmon 2001, 57–58) Whatever the specific job may be, a designer immerse into design process and sharpen her skills at every step. Starting from getting a task, designer goes through picking up the ideas and preliminary representation to final implementation. As any design project begins and ends with the client, experience of relations with the client is also useful. This experience might be not so stressful in a company because other members of team help to support the process.

At first sight, working in a design studio and working in a design department of large company may seem quite similar from organization point of view. They all do design and provide products and services for other companies. However, there are differences that influence to designer's in choosing a career.

The activity of a design company is mostly focused on the message that its client communicates to her own customers. Design companies usually have different clients with different goals that can be conveyed by variety of design products. Also, sufficient number of clients and adequate results enhance the reputation of the designer and may help to gain prestige and recognition (Salmon 2001, 59). In contrast, work of design departments of large corporations is concentrated at inner needs: documentation, brochures, corporate reports, newsletters, and advertising modules (Salmon 2001, 60). Usually, new design products are made on the basis of existing corporate style with several modifications. This means, the responsibilities of designer do not extend over working with established design. However, large corporations offer good payment and benefits. For example, health insurance, vocation time, strict timetable without overtime, best materials and equipment, etc. (Salmon 2001, 60). In addition, big company with wide known name is a good reference in resume for future career.

Another way of graphic design career is being self-employed – becoming a freelancer or running a design studio. Freelance means independent selling services or products to a number of clients. Some designers prefer this kind of working because they do not want to spend their

time in office. Working from home is highly desirable: no studio rent to pay, no travel from home to office and back, when the task is finished designer is free to move on or to have a week for rest (Foote 1996, 60). This type of designers has strong personal vision that can not be adapted to structure of design group. These individuals with solitary approach to design set up freelance practice because it is a working necessity. Nevertheless, being independent, designer needs to be self-reliant and accurate. Being self-employed requires even much more self-discipline, self-confidence, and self-criticism than being hired by a design company. This means that freelancer must have additional abilities. For example, getting own clients, doing own public relations work, setting own schedule, keeping records, ordering equipment and materials, taking care of bills and accounts (Salmon 2001, 83). All these things should be done besides design work. For this reason, good administration skills should be acquired and become habitual every day.

A freelance practice takes much of personal effort, but it has one main advantage – it can become a good start for setting up own studio. Having been satisfied with design product once, clients can order the set of design products or engage designer in longer cooperation (Dolan, 2008). In this case, ‘good’ clients that pay adequately and on time bring financial benefits and self-employment is considerable (Shaughnessy 2005, 49).

The graphic design studio is considered to be a unique factory consisting with group of visionary individuals that are engaged into creation of design (Shaughnessy 2005, 59). It may seem a fertile place to work – it gives independence, individual or collective authorship, and feeling of equality that is rarely experienced elsewhere (Crawford 2005, 17). In fact, most design studios can be defined as places of stress and long hours of hard work, where moments of euphoria from creative achievement are rare (Foote 1996, 289). Nevertheless, in spite of all difficulties and risks, many designers run their own studios because they want to take control of their financial destinies.

Setting up a studio is a process that should be well-organized and counted. This process includes audits, analysis, development of strategies, and definition of office responsibilities. It also consists of tracing finance, following deadlines, control of assignments’ implementation, and transmission of information. (Crawford 2005, 17–23) All these things have to be done as well as bringing in clients, negotiating the contracts, getting clients pay, advertising and promoting design studio, buying materials and equipment, protecting insurance, and, sure, doing design. When all the elements of one system are under control they function smoothly and bring profit.

## 4. Who is the client?

It is hard for designer to realize how difficult is to be a client. Whether it is an individual businessman or a company's executive, she has non-normalized timetable and crazy tempo of life combining roles of service provider for end user, representative of a company and the main contact person for designer. Moreover, client has a high responsibility for success of the project, but probably indirect control over the implementation process (Young 2004). Being a company representative or individual businessman, client is a person that has a responsibility for selecting the outside consultants. She puts her own professional credibility, reputation, and future on the line when choose the designer (Rayle 2006). Just one bad experience may ruin a career and business. Also, client is a person, who will live with design after project has been completed and designer has left away. For that reason, designer should correspond to the needs of a client. Trying to understand requirements of a client is a challenge, but not knowing the client is even worse.

This chapter aims to describe a client. Actually, each client as well as each design project is unique. At the moment a designer thinks that she knows how to deal with clients, one appears that does not fit any 'rules of the game'. What designer can learn is how to deal with one particular client (Shaughnessy 2009, 20). It is very difficult to discover and generalize distinctive features of a client. For that reason, this chapter provides only an outline for the portrait of client and describes it from the angle of business hierarchy, activity where design is matter of importance, and level of familiarization with graphic design. Therefore, this chapter helps to understand client's pressures and realities. This is a significant step towards establishing profitable and long-term relations with them.

Besides various factors like company governance model, amount of board members, company's turnover, phase of company development, and others, the client's position in hierarchy categorizes client more accurately. Understanding of where client stands on the corporate ladder may help a designer to discover what is the level of client's personal involvement, responsibility, and interest in design process. This knowledge, in turn, helps to establish cooperative relations. This section outlines portraits of business owner, creative director, department manager, and staff level professional.

## 4.1 Business owner

Business owner or entrepreneur is a person that starts a business activity solely, with partner, or with group of accomplices. Definition of typical business owner is vast and very much depends on specific character of business structure and activity where business runs. Also, every business starts with an acceptance of risk to lose financial investments and to burst; and even if business runs successfully it constantly requires additional contributions for development (Suttle 2010, online). At starting point or at times, it might also require loans. Therefore, business owner is wholly responsible for debts or losses that risky enterprise entails. In general, the responsibilities of an entrepreneur include the wide variety of tasks: hiring qualified employees, organization of company policy and corporate culture, control of expenses and profits, tracing of taxes, creation of business plan, and coordinating of advertising and promotion (Suttle 2010, online). Also, for successful business, entrepreneur should have skills and talent to attract customers. It demands excellent knowledge about industry, products or services, communication channels with consumer, demands of consumer, forces and weaknesses of competitors. Moreover, this complex mechanism should function within law limits.

For successful development of business, the owner should create a strategy based on several principles. First one is looking at everything from audience point of view (Coate 2003, 272). It is significant to understand people that product, service, or action is going to reach. It reveals the implicit factors that motivate them to take action. After identifying target audience, business owner has to provide straightforward message that results in action (Coate 2003, 272). The clearer message is the more vividly audience reacts. It is also important to make action simply to accomplish. Business owner should emphasize that aspects of action that audience perceives as beneficial. Having information on what audience likes, dislikes, and cares about helps to speak clear language to a target group. Human-centered approach means that business owner perfectly knows specific segments of audience. This principle is also helpful in work with designer.

Second, business owner must perfectly know what she offers to audience. She can not rely on instincts and assumptions; instead, deep research should prove or disprove the assumptions (Coate 2003, 270). In practice, this marketing research becomes a basis for communication strategy that motivates the audience to try the product or adopt the behavior. It includes media to deliver the message, content of message, its manner and allure. In this context, designer is one of specialists that may help to create visual communication strategy.

To organize people that are included in business team, the owner should have good management skills. It is important to be ensure that people do work that is necessary, to make valuable employees free from work that can be done by others, and to make assignments clear for implementation. It requires understanding of how present inner living system works and how it can work more effectively. To be productive, system should become smart and predictable (Coate 2003, 269). It should be optimized globally, because local improvements might have no result on the bottom line.

Effective using of time is another critical factor that determines success or failure of business. In situation of strong competition and high speed of product development, everyone wants to be the first and predictability seems to be illusive. Business owners are nervous about deadlines, because short delays of deadlines can bury years of efforts. Moreover, missing of deadlines or wrong calculation of how long particular stage of process may take leads to crash. Being not first, but second often means failure in competition (Coate 2003, 271). Therefore, to reduce the risk, business owner should plan project precisely and efficiently.

Taken risk and high level of responsibility do not guarantee payback. Salary of owner may vary greatly, depending on size of business, its stage of development, and economical trend in certain segment of industry. (Suttle 2010, online) When starting a business, owner might not have profit at all, or she can pay herself less in order to invest more in business. Bit if conditions are favorable and business runs successfully owner might have serious incomes.

In many respects, success of venture depends on personality of business owner. It is based on complex of different characteristics (Stephenson 2009, online):

- Devotion to business;
- Planning and thinking several steps forward;
- Wise use of money;
- Thinking first about customer;
- Ability to inspire, coordinate, and join people together;
- Ability to create competitive advantages for personnel and for consumers;
- Aspiration to learn;
- Being accessible for colleagues and clients;
- Consistency in work.

Being a leader of a business, owner should know about the affair more that any other person in the team. Global vision and strategic thinking of business development differs her from others. Moreover, an entrepreneur is a person that takes all risks and responsibilities of

success or failure. By developing of business, she changes people's experiences and creates new social behavior.

Designer is one of specialists that can help business owner to reach strategic goals by improving of visual communications between people, processes, and product. Business owners might not know specific subtlety of design; they speak the language of company policy and strategic goals. In reality, they do not need design and do not care about color combination, balance of composition, and typography. Client states a problem that generally sounds like 'I need this to work better'. All the other things are less important. Client might not even feel that design may have so big effect for sales because it is difficult to track (Cooper 2003, online). But it is more important when head manager speaks to designer at level of strategy and thinking several steps forward (Cooper 2003, online). In this case, direct communications and mutual understanding between owner and graphic design are very important. It helps to produce clear policy of company, improve system of product development, and make a work flow smooth and rational. This section shows that business owner has similar goals and uses similar principles that designer does, but entrepreneur looks at business from the opposite point of view.

## **4.2 Creative director**

Top manager is the next element in business hierarchy. In the context of cooperation with designer, creative director acts as a mediator between designer and company at the top management level. She works at the stage of planning and translation of policy into in form that can be easily translated in visual language (Vucsko 2008, online). The mission of creative director position is to provide effective coordination and integrity between company's brand strategy and key marketing role (Vucsko 2008, online). Also, creative executive develops strategic response to consumer's needs and expectations in form of intelligible communication. Hence, it requires experience in creative planning, development of brand messages and understanding the significance of design as a strong communication instrument. For example, in advertising, this means ensuring that new advertising fits in company's image and company's image corresponds to requirements of target audience. In other industries, creative director is responsible for vision of the product or activity. The number of responsibilities of creative executive depends on the size of organization and level at which she is hired. Creative services manager of organization with significant marketing efforts

directs production of both internal and external brand communications using different channels: advertising in mass media, promotion, campaigns, direct mails and e-mails, and other auxiliary instruments (Vucsko 2008, online).

The role of creative director demands high qualification and approximately 10 years of experience in directing of products or services (through printed, electronic, and interactive media) and staff (art directors, designers, photographers, artists, representatives of mass media) (Vucsko 2008, online). The more multifaceted experience creative director has, the more global picture she can see and the more rational decisions she can take. Multiple experience allows creative director to operate with the whole set of communication instruments in order to address a proper creative message to outside vendors (Pattis 2004, 70). Indeed, this position demands strong personal characteristics: natural leadership, firmness of purpose, and managerial skills. Stress resistance is also important. For example, creative director gets most of acclaim in case of success; however, when project goes wrong, or board-of-president does not like an idea she gets all the blames and negative responses (Vucsko 2008, online). Thus, creative executive is a person that has business mind, that is able to do multitask very well, that has excellent presentation and communication skills.

Creative director might be called lead designer, chief creative officers, director of creative services, manager of creative services, etc. In some cases, brand manager or product manager may take a role of creative director. Titles may vary depending on company's specific character. Nevertheless, having such expert on top management level provides advocacy and well coordinated communication between product, company, outside vendors, and finally consumers (Vucsko 2008, online).

From the perspective of relations with designer, creative director might be comfortable to work with because this person understands communication objectives, brand strategies, production techniques, and efficiencies (Pattis 2004, 70). However, not every organization has this kind of expert and designer may work with top managers of different branches. Therefore, cooperation with several members may negatively influence on results of design project and relations inside working team.

### **4.3 Department manager**

Going down by hierarchical ladder, this part approaches to department manager, whose responsibilities include organization, definition, control of projects and routine work on the

level of department or section of a bigger business branch. Primary, department manager articulates the needs of the department members to the administration. Consequently, she acts as a reliable link between central administration and department staff to implement and carry out organization's policy. Also, she correlates intents of each department member with overall purpose by connecting department objectives with the broader mission.

General responsibilities are divided into more particular operations and concrete assignments: making plans for short and long term projects, choosing team participants, preparing budgets and schedules for big and small projects, controlling of implementation, writing of supporting documentation, conducting of work review, and writing of work reports (Thomsett 2002, 2). Thus, all these actions have aim to organize smooth work of department and to predict coming changes.

Also, department manager account for routine work and new complex tasks (Thomsett 2002, 2). In each job, there are habitual and repetitive operations that have become natural and that do not disturb usual working atmosphere. They are easier to manage with because after going through them a couple of times, one knows what to expect. Hence, routine tasks are mostly predictable and can be made almost automatically. However, in business, everything changes very fast and organization's development is impossible without new projects. Special tasks appear at every level of company. Consequently, department manager may face the problem of leading new project that is hard to plan, define, and organize (Thomsett, 2002: 2).

Design project might be one of these stressful situations when department manager is put in very strict conditions. In contrast to routine tasks, it entails problems that are never met before. Besides limited resources, small budget, and short deadlines, design project may not have detailed description of specific goals. Project might be described from the perspective of end result and global meaning for organization (Thomsett 2002, 3). Commonly, rare person in non-design area can give practical guidelines to define the exact objectives of the project. From one hand, department manager should control and direct the team to achieve the result. From the other hand, she is pressed by limitations and high level of responsibility (Thomsett 2002, 2). Moreover, department manager has another paradoxical distinctive feature – being a leader, she rare has indisputable authority. Any moment, leadership can be restricted. Therefore, such nervous mood may negatively influence on the character of relations with designer and may become one of the reasons of misunderstanding.

However, even stressful situations have their advantages – new skills are obtained within every oncoming project. In this context, manager learns to apply existing knowledge to inexperienced situation, plan phases of the task, develop its specific goals, and assume



possible problems that can arise (Thomsett 2002, 2). Knowing how to manage with the routine working cycles can also help in operating with new projects (Thomsett 2002, 2). Thus, it is a part of manager's skills to function within changing environment.

A department manager rarely acts alone. A team of specialists helps her to deal with assignments successfully. Within one company, members of one team are bounded together for a long term. Hence, support, trust, and personal interaction with colleagues are important. Therefore, success or failure of joint work depends on relations that manager can establish in her department (Thomsett 2002, 152).

It sounds simple, but in reality, trustful relations are hard to achieve. Well-ordered mental-rhythm of work can hardly drive somebody in distraction. However, urgent or high-ranking projects may easily drive in tension (Thomsett 2002, 152). In addition, out-of-order situation entails communication challenges from outside (Thomsett 2002, 153):

- As department manager does not always have absolute authority of assignment, she does not always make a final decision. It may threaten to divergence of opinions between manager and committee that has given assignment.
- Managers of other departments have their own priorities and specific objectives concerning task that is carried out. It may entail problems in schedule or in additional unforeseen details.
- In many situations, project needs additional contribution from outside resources that are not part of department or even company.

Therefore, being a leader and a follower, the department manager should have a talent to communicate in a lucid way and foresee upcoming changes. Also, for vitality of company and high quality of work, department manager should have team composed of the best persons placed in specific position. Though staff professionals are those who are directly subordinate to manager and have low level of supervision, they make up one mechanism that provides successful implementation of tasks (Banjamin, online).

#### **4.4 Staff level professional**

Generally, according employment contract, executors of staff level may take permanent position in the team or may temporary act for absentee. Depending on company needs, they can work for part-time as well as for full-time. The field of work may also require high school diploma or undergraduate degree. For example, office secretary or customer service job might

only require undergraduate certificate, whereas technical specialist or financial analyst needs to have high school degree. To force up job performance, company might also organize additional specific trainings and courses for staff level specialists. The level of knowledge and working experience may vary according subject matter of the job. For instance, some jobs require mastery and long working experience; other ones look for basic skills and do not need working experience. Accordingly, salary of entry level specialist is not the same as salary of professional with several years of working experience. Nevertheless, the main benefit of staff level job is opportunity for professional growth fulfilled by practical skills, additional knowledge, and working experience.

Development and growth is important not only for employee. Company is also interested in keeping the best of the best because its survival depends on them. A new person is a kind of material that can be used to reach own objectives in exchange for getting working experience and obtaining new knowledge (Hersey, online). Opportunity to learn is the main motivation for entry level staff. For staff professionals working in company for long term, development and support provided by employer is additional opportunity for horizontal and vertical growth (Hersey, online). In this context, challenging and worthwhile tasks can enrich their job and life. Common tasks or trainings join team together and inspire for creativity and innovation. Moreover, support gives rise to employee's devotion to company, respect, and openness. Thus, loyalty, correspondence to job, enthusiasm, and honesty are certain characteristics of staff level executors.

Among requirements that employee presents to company, environment is the most important aspect when staff makes a choice of place to work. Indeed, benefits and relevant payment are significant aspects, but working atmosphere is the main one. Comfortable working environment may consist of different factors: working goals, career opportunities, personal space, schedule, style of clothes, manners of relations, corporate culture, and many others (Banjamin, online; Hersey, online). If working conditions do not satisfy employee, dissatisfaction starts to grow and specialist tries to find another company to work for. It leads to the problem of employee rotation (Hersey, online). They come in a company, learn basic skills, get working experience, and being not satisfied with something, they live to another employer. It makes keeping professional stay in company one of the most difficult problems. Many employers afraid to invest in people because they know that person will leave with all provided knowledge and skills (Hersey, online). Therefore, personnel turnover is the highest at the level of staff professionals.

Staff level professional may also become a client of designer. However, there is no guarantee that a freshman clearly interprets global objectives of a company to designer. Junior might not have proper knowledge about company's direction of development because they are not admitted to this information. Also, she might have no idea about how much design may cost and how much time is needed for implementation. However, there are many responsible professionals at the staff level that have enough competence to manage design projects. Moreover, they are stimulated by the sense of respect and enthusiasm from a new task. In this case, the main problem is that within company hierarchy, they do not have much decisive power. Also, they are pressed and controlled by higher administration and can not be charged with 'serious' design project. And when project is not very important and does not have much value it does not have much supervision. In addition, junior people become one more element in communication chain where information might be lost or transformed (Browne 2003). Therefore, this state of things may negatively influence on design and relations with designer.

## **4.5 Educated client**

An educated client is a breath of fresh air for designer, because such client treats designer as a professional and trusts her (Starck 2007). An educated client builds relations with designer integrating analysis with intuition and keeping in mind that the process is as important as final outcome. Hence, educated client more or less can put herself on the place of designer and balance all the parameters of a project: schedule, budget, functionality, technology, and other specific knowledge (Starck 2007). Thus, this means that designer 'sows' thoughts into an already prepared soil.

The main specific character of educated client is competence, willingness to learn from cooperation with designer, and active participation in design project. Being familiar with design process is a big advantage because in this case client helps designer to produce right solution (Guest 2008b). Indeed, this does not mean knowing specific character of design process, understanding of design terminology, and standing behind designer's shoulder. Nevertheless, understanding of design importance and its necessity for business development is crucial (Guest 2008a). Client should answer the following question 'Why do I need design to solve certain problem?' or 'How design can help in existing situation?' Therefore, clear vision of design problem makes a considerable contribution to cooperation with designer.

Ability to find and choose qualified designer among others is another advantage of a client. In field full of people offering design services, choosing of graphic designer might become a daunting task. Therefore, good selection is necessary to get what is really needed and to avoid claiming about unexpected result (Busch 2008b). Still, searching for designer that asks the requirements of the project may take time. However, wrong choice will take much more time and money to find another designer and to correct mistakes. To the contrary, collaboration of educated client and qualified graphic designer leads to comfortable relations during working process and provides better results.

As design business has very collaborative nature, educated client acts not as dictator, but as collaborator between design and different specific knowledge (Young 2004). Her role is to combine and coordinate separate disciplines in order to identify all possible ways that the final product should convey. This role demands integrated approach that does not respond to autocratic way of thinking (Puleo 2008). Also, effective integration helps to prioritize project objectives and formulate precise request for design. Moreover, it helps to become aware of how much time and efforts should be applied to assignment and what members should participate in the process. (Puleo 2008) In addition, being a collaborator, client gains a sense of ownership and higher implication. Thus, client's equitable participation and constructive dialogue with designer leads to more efficient results.

However, integration does not mean just participation. In design process, client is a decision maker. As client orders design project, she takes supervisory function that determines basic compulsory responsibilities. Concerning design process, client should acknowledge the following (Grefé 2009a, 30):

- Coordination of any decision-making with designer and parties other than the designer.
- Provision of content in a form suitable for reproduction or delivery without further preparation or meddling in.
- Final proofreading and approval.

Also, client's role may require several additional responsibilities (Grefé, 2009a, 45–46):

- Communication of administrative or operational decisions if they affect the design of product or service, and coordination of required public approvals and meetings.

- Providing with accurate and complete information and materials requested by designer. For example, color and material samples, corporate guidelines, rules, and regulation information.
- Providing with approved naming, nomenclature, secure and correct information from third parties.
- Arranging for the documentation, permissions, licensing and implementation of all structural or mechanical elements needed to support design process.
- Final proofreading and written approval of all project documents including, for example, schedules, plans, sketches, and design drawings before their release for production.
- Contract negotiation, sourcing, establishment of final pricing and contract terms directly with designer and third parties.

Designer is lucky enough if her client is ready to share responsibility and take active participation in design process. In this case, designer remains only to attentively listen and translate remarks in visual language. Educated client is a windfall because she allots design with multidisciplinary vision and helps designer to understand much broader meanings than before (Scharff 2005). Therefore, such client can make a serious contribution to design project and her effort can not be overestimated.

It might seem that today, clients are more educated because design services are widely offered and everyone can order design project. Indeed, clients become more sophisticated and overstate their expectations (FitzGerald 2007, online). However, lack of true integration, flexibility and latitude in all levels of business hierarchy leads to resistance with designers that “dedicate their time and livelihoods to mastering visual rhetoric” (FitzGerald 2007, online). Hence, this leads to resistance with designer and necessity to adapt to circumstances. Thus, compromise may confuse a client and stain the reputation of the design profession.

Unfortunately, educated client is very hard to find and uneducated clients are met more often. In reality, anyone might become a client as well as anyone might become a consumer of design. Generally, uneducated client is a client that has no idea about communication, information, and aesthetical impact of design. However, even client that orders design not for the first time might have different opinion on some issue, different sense of aesthetics, different concept on the project, and different manners or working style. Nevertheless, client might be of any suit and she is not obliged to be a specialist in design and visual culture. However, client has achieved a success in some other field otherwise she would not have

addressed to designer. Moreover, design is a job of a designer. Consequently, designer is a certain person that must keep client from wrong decision and brake stereotype that designer does whatever client wants. Designer that blindly makes what is told by her client is not professional. Whether educated client or not, consumers do not evaluate client, but they do evaluate design. Thus, to reach the goal of presented task, designer should learn as much as possible from the client.

## **5. Reasons of disorder in relations between the graphic designer and a client**

This chapter intends to discover the reasons of faulty relations between the graphic designer and a client. Though it is possible to describe graphic designer and outline the portrait of a client, each of them is unique. There are no two similar designers as well as there are no two identical clients. For that reason, building of productive relations is difficult for both of them. Designers complain that they are treated as second-rate people, deadlines are unreal, many of their ideas are buried, and a critic from their clients is unconstructive. Also, clients complain that designers do not understand what clients want, design costs are very high, design process is too long, and results are unexpected. Thus, it entails tension from both sides.

### **5.1 No respect**

Acting as a communicator, mediator, and producer of visual ideas is not the hardest thing in design profession – being ungratefully treated as a supplier is harder. Often, ability to be the cheapest becomes the main determinative factor of client's choice. (Browne 2003) It might seem that such attitude is related to economical recession of last several years. Consequently, clients are nervous about budgets, designers feel threatened and scared to lose a job. In this situation, the question about how cheap designer can do the project becomes common (Browne 2003). Thus, it leads to resistance with a client and deterioration in their cooperation.

Since relations between graphic designer and the client are business relations, one may think that money is a determinative factor in success. However, in relations, question is not about budgets and costs. There is always someone that will offer lower price, or higher price, or even will design for free. After all, work costs as much as one is ready to pay for it, and low compensation not always mean disrespect. Also, price is not a guarantee of qualified work. Successful designer is motivated by sturdy passion for profession, not by money (Busch 2003). In this case, not price, but design capability is chosen as the most significant value (Busch 2009). Hence, it is much to tell about respect, ethics, level of personal responsibility, and inner culture of design process participants. No respect – this is a starting point of most failures in relations. It is evinced by distrust, treating designer as amateur, meddling in design

process, mentoring, and dictatorship (Browne 2003). Moreover, it slows down project embodiment as well as designer's professional growth, creativity, inspiration, and other subjective qualities.

Another reason of treating designers with less respect is connected with technology and specific computer software. Undoubtedly, technology has revolutionized creative process giving designer unlimited amount of instruments. Many processes have become automated, computer-aided, and computer-controlled (Giffen 2004, 24). Technology has given opportunity to work faster and more rationally. However, it has raised the demands of clients that want designers to do their job in short terms and for less charge (Bennett 2006, 200–202). Also, easy access to computer programs allows almost everyone to pretend a designer only because she has tools for designing. Today, everyone can create something aesthetically pleasant and pretty. Therefore, it reduces the value of design.

Trustful relations start from self-respect. Designer can not demand respect from others if she forgets about self-dignity. Disrespect to own self is a direct way to non profitable work, spending much more time doing design project, and deterioration of quality (Snell 2010, online). There are several things that designers do that are disrespectful to themselves:

- Understating of price. Designer may put a lower price for her work in order to compete with others. It is harmful to designer because even with low price work requires time and effort (Snell, 2010, online). For earning worth living by doing projects for low price, designer has to do a rush job. This means the quality of design comes down.
- Not charging for additional changes. Almost every project has changes and amendments during implementation. It becomes unbearable when price is agreed without additional compensation and client wants to change for example whole design concept (Snell, 2010, online). If additional fees are not agreed, this means designer does not respect herself.
- Neglect of contracts and norms. If designer does not pay attention to getting a signed contract and establishing agreements of payment, it may conduct many problems (Snell 2010, online). When project does not develop according plan and there is no legal protection in the form of contract, designer feels disrespect to herself because contract has not been negotiated before designing.
- Lack of client's involvement in design process. Skipping pre-design stage entails more mistakes, changes, and corrections. Lack of client's involvement leads to low quality of work, worse results, and more wasted time. If designer does not



- Snatching of any project that runs across. Being disorderly in project selection leads to losing of those ones that designer is worth. By accepting every project that comes at hand, designer may not notice really interesting project that will answer her skills and experience and will be really enjoying (Snell 2010, online).
- Poor time management. Many designers prefer to have flexible timetable, some of them even like to work at night. Flexible timetable seems to be attractive, however it does not put clear distinction what time is for work and what time is personal (Snell 2010, online). It might mean working during late evenings and weekends. If designer does not set clear schedule for each day or week, it negatively affects the work.

A designer's self-disrespect also means designer's disrespect to a client. This behavior originates from neglect of professional principals and standards. Indeed, it is hard to behave in totally respectful way. Neither designer, nor client keeps all ethical rules. Thus, it becomes a reason of disorder in relations between the graphic designer and a client.

## **5.2 Lack of responsibility and unethical behavior**

A designer and a client might have acted in honest, respectful, and flexible way. Nevertheless, in real design practice where just some single designers aspire to change the world for better, these words may sound too perfect (Nini 2004, online). Therefore, this part of my research covers the question of irresponsible and unethical behavior of both graphic designer and the client.

Unfortunately, there are too many evidences of selfish and poor design. It proves that too many designers work for short-term profit and for the commendation of their colleagues rather than in a deliberate endeavor to find appropriate solution for specific design problem (Bierut 1999, 159). Being inspired by fashion and following own aesthetical preferences, they forget about devotion. Many designers design for self-expression without regard to the client's requirements, budget, and project itself problem (Bierut 1999, 160). This means they forget that success of their client is much more important than personal glory. Though many designers are quite familiar with the ideas of 'user-centered' design, user is not included in design process (Nini 2004, online). This is the biggest ethical failure that leads to reduction of

professional standards, fall of self-appraisal, and disrespect. Therefore, the foundations and essential principles of design are undermined.

Also, this section touches upon a question of balance between social responsibility and profit. Design acts as distinctive feature that identifies product and producer. Practically, design profession makes a real contribution in commercial tasks. This means that designers work mostly for economy, where profit is obvious (Liechty 2006, online). Hence, social mood, health, security, education, ethics, etc. stand beyond direct aims of commerce. Designers depend on market and very often they forget about their ability to think and to act according ethical principles (Bierut 1999, 160; Hardt 2009, online). For that reason, designer meets contradiction between her social responsibility and profit earning.

Interest in short-term profit, inspiration by fashion, and neglect of social values are the features of today's marketing development (Bierut 1999, 160). Often marketing people become clients of designers. They chose a designer, pay her demanding to complete the task according their requirements, disappear and later participate on the stage of design evaluation (FitzGerald 2007, online). Consequently, the factor of making decision and paying for final product acts as the main point in conflicts. In this case, designer has to grit the teeth, do what client wants and move on relieving all responsibilities. Inherently, neither designer, nor customer is satisfied with such cooperation. Designer has to neglect the principles of profession and follow client's personal feelings. Customer has a dumb question 'why did I pay for design I could do without designer?' Therefore, As long as autocracy dominates over aspiration to ethics and as long as designers blindly follow tastes of person they are paid, there will be no changes in design profession (Hardt 2009, online).

Nevertheless, many committed designers stay true to mankind standards and they deeply feel things that they see. Many clients make a request for design projects in areas of high social importance: education, elimination of illiteracy, healthcare, security, and others. Many designers respond to the task offering creative and ethical design solutions (Hardt 2009, online). However, in spite of striving for virtue, designer is not suggested to be a member of charity campaign (Liechty 2006, online). Designer's aim is to make product that shows the best correlation with ethic values as well as with financial values.

### **5.3 Stereotypes**

Stereotyped vision that dictates wrong conception about design and designer's role is another side of unethical behavior and disrespect. It puts a barrier in relations between the

graphic designer and a client. Moreover, stereotypes become one more cause for communication gaps. For that reason, this part is included to my research.

Stereotyping is often thought in a deteriorative way because they portray things and people in one-dimensional way. Many people think of stereotypes negatively because of their flaring influence on thinking and behaving (Heller 2006, online). We all are subjected to stereotypes because we try to generalize each case we have experienced: faced ourselves or through friends and relatives, read about in books, seen in movies or television (Mazin 2008, online). Certainly, conclusions based on stereotypical generalization might be accurate. However, characteristics about person or subject based on stereotypes look very much prejudice and keep back exact knowledge and facts.

Whether stereotypes are positive or harmful, they are very hard to overcome and graphic design is not an exception. There, stereotypes act as blinkers that prevent from seeing new solutions (Guest 2008a). Also, they put limits on ability to look at the problem from different sides and imagine the full scope of the services that design can provide. In this context, both designer and a client may become victims of stereotypes. Though clients may underestimate the true value of design, designer should comprehend the reasons of client's stereotypes and help to overcome them (Heller 2006, online). Otherwise, this delusion leads to severance in business relations.

Many problems in graphic designer/client relations are based on wrong idea what designer is. For example, designers are thought to be supersensitive to criticism or they are considered to work somewhere independently in distance to protect themselves from cruel world outside (Vuks 2007, online). Indeed, designers are human beings with their weaknesses and strengths – they may be social or closed, sense of humor or not. However, they are as much susceptible to criticism as any other individual would be. Also, criticism does not spare designer's pride, it makes stronger and capable of great endurance (Vuks 2007, online). Thus, such influence is useful for personality and for project itself.

Another stereotype is that designers are imagined as "...inadequate and maladaptive, so you always take a high risk while introducing them to the customer..." (Vuks 2007, online) Well, inadequate people could be met everywhere and there are 'difficult' designers as well as there are 'hard-to-deal-with' clients. Real professionals and talented specialists are very hard to meet, though it is a designer, product manager, brand manager, analyst manager, or sales manager (Vuks 2007, online). Also, there are many clients that are educated in design and have experience in working with designer as well as there are a lot of qualified designers that can perfectly carry on negotiations with clients. However, stereotyping puts barrier to

communication and causes designer and client to act as if they already know facts about each other. Therefore, it evokes prejudication that hampers the progress of business.

Another negative influence of stereotypes is that they give incorrect idea designer's role. For example, client may cling to the stereotypes that graphic design is an aesthetic enhancement of things. This means clients do not think that designer can help them meet their business goals, attract, and motivate their customers or users (Kothary 2009, online). Instead of allowing designer to create a unique solution and avoid stereotyping, they may come with ready decision based on samples seen before. Indeed, a designer should dissuade her client from creating stereotypes. However, she has no choice if client finally points to some sample and tells 'this is what I want'. Thus, it leads to very typical design solutions, cloning of other designer's mistakes, mediocrity, and plagiarisms that are totally unethical.

Stereotypes stand close to ethics because the significance of the graphic designer has been misinterpreted and marginalized. And designer's ego has nothing to do with it. Here, the main issue is that taking designer as decorator destroys user centered vision that is an integral part of design process (Kothary 2009, online). This means every time when designer is treated in such ungrateful way she has to go along knowing that design will dissatisfy customers. Perhaps, in ideal world, designer could be accepted as a victim of injustice. However, in reality, this position is obviously losing. Thus designer should choose – to become despondent opposing nothing to destructive morality or to get accustomed and work with reality gradually improving it by minimizing negative impact.

Since designer and client are undergone by stereotypes, design produced together is also may become stereotyped. Even good one that satisfies customer's needs may be based on existing stereotypes and give rise to new stereotypes. However, great design is never mediocre – it is unique because provides nonstandard and novel experience. Thus, a designer and a client should aspire for solutions that are born from unprejudiced attitude in joint cooperation.

## **5.4 Lack of clarity**

Neither designer, nor client spends days and nights wondering how to create project that is aesthetically unpleasant, that communicates ineffectively, or that muddles up the end user. Tied together, they want to deal with each other, with design object, and with its consumer correctly and clearly. (Adlin 2006, online) In spite of this, clarity is hard to find and design process is full of disagreements that negatively affect project development. Therefore, this

part intends to discover the reasons of vagueness and missing of clarity in relations between the graphic designer and a client.

In graphic design, clarity becomes a real challenge because it involves non-material and psychologically unpredictable aspects of customer's individual behavior. Both designer and a client face with the problem of consumer's definition, developing of proper message and its visual representation. Early stages are especially hard – design strategies are not completely defined, decisions are changing, and everybody generates numbers of ideas that are hard to unite together (Adlin 2006, online). Also, to produce logical solution, these stages take time, emotional inputs, and circles of reconsiderations. No wonder that clarity can be missed even if everyone is interested in efficiency of collaboration.

One of the reasons of losing clearness is that usually designers and clients are people that speak different languages (Adlin 2006, online). They work in different fields, they have their own cultural background and social values, and they look at the same problem from different angles. What is clear for one is confusing for another. Indeed, it is useful to have translator that helps to understand project goals. Big design companies have project manager or creative executive that is responsible for coordination between designer, client, and third parts. However, not all design teams have this kind of specialist. In this situation, designer becomes mediator, translator, and joining power of people involved in the project (Adlin 2006, online). Though it might take much effort, emotional input and time costs, it does not always have success. Thus, missing of clarity has a negative influence on the product development and mutual relations.

Situations when the graphic designer and a client are perplexed appear because they do not have enough information that is needed to build productive cooperation. Concerning client there are the following cases:

- Client does not always know what she wants. It is normal when client does not know what she wants and asks 'How can you help me with this?' However, when client comes to designer with radically wrong decision it hard to change her mind.
- Client does not always know what possibilities design may give to reach her goals. Not every client thinks about design as a strategy to reach consumer in order to change behavior or persuade to act.
- Client does not always know that design process has many stages: preparing of the design brief, making research, searching for reference, creating of visual

ideas and concepts, making presentation of several solutions, selecting of proper one, and making corrections.

- Client does not always know how many people are involved in design process. Client might not have an idea that designer is not the only person that takes part in design process. There are many other specialists: photographers, consultants, technical specialists, product managers, etc.
- Client does not always know how much design costs. Cheap design differs from professional one. Without knowing phases, people, and technologies involved in professional design it is very hard to have an idea about design costs. The reason of client's question 'Why should I pay so much?' is that she has lack of information.
- Client does not always know how much time design process takes. The reason of client's question 'Why should I wait so long?' is that she has lack of information.
- Client does not always know the specific character of negotiating contracts concerning design. Client might not have an idea about opportunities, phases, time, and costs of professional design. For that reason, negotiation may sound like: 'I will pay you if I like your design'.

Concerning graphic designer, there are also situations when lack of information prevents them from mutual understanding with the client:

- Designer does not always know what client wants. For example, when client comes to designer with ready concept it is hard to find out what is a real client's strategic goal and how design may help to reach it.
- Designer does not always know the specific character of clients industry or field of activity. Clients come from different areas. Each of them has particular distinctive features that need much effort and time to become familiar with them. Designer's knowledge and experience is not enough. Almost every project requires research for getting proper information.
- Designer does not always know how much client is ready to pay for design. Some design projects costs very expensive. But even if client has limited budget there are many possibilities to find solution corresponding to this budget. Without information about client's budget, designer may state price that will scare client. At the worst, client might be lost.

- Designer does not always know decision maker in evaluation of design. There are situations when designer works not directly with a client, but with a person appointed to be responsible for design. Working with intermediary entails losing of information that negatively affect on design quality.

Design is primarily a problem solving practice and process of searching for a solution in a certain problem space. In this perspective, lack of information entails to wrong understanding of the initial state of task and its goal. Without complete data, designer can not set a problem, structure it, and find proper destination in searching for design solution. Problem of lack of information mainly appears in the beginning of design process but also reoccurs periodically as design activity progresses. For that reason, designer needs to gather relevant information and cope with uncertainty during all design process.

In graphic design practice, nobody is insurant from conflicts and misunderstandings because it touches upon individual aesthetical feelings that not always can be proved. In this context, personal ego of both designer and client can be easily hurt and effective cooperation might grow into disrespect and irresponsibility. Also, stereotypes, lack of clarity, and problems in contract negotiations can wreck enthusiasm in relations. However, if reasons of misunderstandings are noticed on time, situation might be changed for the better.

## **6. Practical cases**

Practical cases of this research aim to reveal real problems in relations between the graphic designer and a client. The following cases examine how these relations are established and developed in practice. They represent analysis of interviews taken from designers and their clients and become a basis for further research that offers practical solutions to improve relations between the graphic designer and a client.

Analysis of literature review describes two types of design practice: designer that runs own business and designer hired by a company. In this context, practical cases relatively present two types of relations: between client and design studio owner and between client and in-house designer. Also, case studies present noncommercial and commercial purposes of designer/client cooperation.

All interviews are taken from Finnish designers and clients. Studying on Master's degree programme in graphic design at University of Lapland and working in Finland as a graphic designer, I have assured in significance of design for Finnish culture. It keeps and develops the society through establishment of connections between person, environment, and material world. According to the international researches, competitiveness of the Finnish industry is extremely high today (Molarius 1993, 148). Real actions and qualified products have generated a high reputation and trust to Finnish design. Being an element of industry, design acts aesthetical, functional, and practical role in mass production. Leading position of information technology, innovative approach, high level of science and education stays the major factors of design competitive strength and its economical success (Molarius 1993, 150). In this perspective, it is a great honor for me as a designer to have opportunity to obtain skills on graphic design and apply them in Finland. Interview with Finnish designers and their clients is a great international experience and possibility to learn more in graphic design.

### **6.1 Interview with studio owner and his client (case 1)**

The first case study aims to collect and analyze qualitative data on relations between design studio owner and his client. Design studio name is 'Numedia'; it was founded in 2004 in Lahti, Finland; the main activity is advertising, web-design, and graphic design. Designer 1 is a private person that owns 'Numedia' company. Designer 1 has Bachelor's degree of media assistant and working experience in graphic design and media since 1998. She worked as a free-lance designer, in-house designer, and finally ran his own business. His career plans are



to develop his design studio not as a designer, but more as a manager that coordinates work of creative team.

‘Numedia’s client is ‘Satamaoperaattorit’ company. It is the Finnish Port Operators Association that represents the interests of stevedoring and terminal services and other materials handling and logistics operators in Finnish ports. The mission of ‘Satamaoperaattorit’ is to protect and improve operating conditions in the sector to ensure that its members can conduct their business profitably and can constantly develop their operations. Association belongs to Finnish Port Association and Ministry of Transport and Communications. Association currently has 43 member companies operating in 25 different ports. Company ordered different kinds of design products from ‘Numedia’: web-site, corporate identity projects, and advertising for newspapers. Client 1 has been interviewed as a person responsible for working with ‘Numedia’ and with Designer 1 in particular. According corporate ladder, Client 1 works on position of middle manager.

### **6.1.1 Interview with Designer 1**

To come closer to the topic of designer’s relations with a client, my interview has started with questions that describe Designer 1 as a graphic designer. His coming-to-be a designer began with love to drawing, building models, making music and being creative with computers. At first, design was a nice sounded word, but later it became a visual language that conveys the message that client gives to people. He defines his designer’s role as a link between sender and receiver, though it seller and buyer or some institution and consumer. Designer acts not only as mediator, but also as interpreter that contributes project with personal impact. According Designer’s 1 words, designer does not decorate somebody’s other ideas, but brings his own meanings. In this case, independent designer has more ‘free hands’ in decision making than designer within big company where ‘big guys’ decide the idea. Discussion about designer’s own contribution to the project has additionally revealed inner feelings of Designer 1. He talks about despair and determination that grow to fun and pleasure when idea starts to form.

Designer 1 emphasizes communication skills to be important because they help to understand the area where project is held. He refers design craft much to ‘customer service’ job where communication skills are the main instrument for business. Understanding of business and communication skills come along working experience, not at educational institution. Designer 1 believes that studying of designer never ends and school gives only a

starting point for further development. He advances opinion that academism often ‘kills’ fresh approach to things. Therefore, one can be excellent designer without university degree.

Designer’s 1 mostly has individuals and companies as clients. In this context, he marks that individual clients have much more own ideas and preferences involved in design process. In ‘Numedia’ practice, individuals often have low level of familiarization with design. However, companies are easier to work with because they have more or less definite guidelines for design projects. For example, ‘Satamaoperaattorit’ orders design projects regularly and has concrete vision of design project. Now, when most design templates for ‘Satamaoperaattorit’ are done, the company mostly addresses ‘Numedia’ to renew old materials. This means more routine job in comparison with new customers that comes with challenging tasks. Nevertheless, Designer 1 tells that working with ‘old’ clients has more clarity – it helps to shorten deadlines and to produce clear design message.

Answering the questions about relations with a client, Designer 1 tells that he follows ‘You reap what you sow’ concept. He treats clients as friends trying to offer best solution for their problem. In this concern, Designer 1 thinks that ‘Satamaoperaattorit’, treats him as equal. Among difficulties in relations with ‘Satamaoperaattorit’, Designer 1 marks rounds of changes that may last for weeks and change deadlines. He also tells that sometimes he may understand client’s idea wrongly. It happens because of misread of design brief, while communicating only via e-mail without personal contact, or in case of undertime. Designer 1 admits that he can make mistakes as every person. On his opinion, the main thing is to develop project together with a client. Thus, he concludes that one head is good, but two is always better.

Among other methods to improve relations with client, Designer 1 mentions responsibility, flexibility, planning schedule in advance, keeping in constant touch with client while project implementation, and adapting to existing working conditions. Additionally, Designer 1 tells about method that he uses when the project reaches the deadlock. He offers completely different alternative to previously made solutions. To establish long perspective relations, Designer 1 stays in contact with the customer afterwards to know if client needs new materials or solutions.

### **6.1.2 Interview with Client 1**

The same way as in interview with Designer 1, my first block of questions to Client 1 included questions about role of design. For ‘Satamaoperaattorit’, Client 1 emphasizes design as an important instrument of communication that has strong aesthetical meaning. Since

‘Satamaoperaattorit’ is not a sales organization, design does not have direct marketing function. Therefore, produced materials play instructive, informative, and supportive role.

In ‘Satamaoperaattorit’, Client 1 takes up a post of assistant and she is the only representative of the company that works with designer. In this concern, she addresses ‘Numedia’ for design projects and for updating of old materials. Mostly, tasks concern web-page and layouts for printing. Besides cooperation with designer, her responsibilities include working with publishing houses.

Client 1 defines her role in design process as a creator of a problem that should be solved by designer. Within stating a problem, she also gives suggestions, but keeps designer’s hands free. Final proof and approval are also included to responsibilities of Client 1. Client 1 plans the projects in advance. Therefore, project is normally made not in a hurry, but within deadlines. Client 1 tells that she luckily has time for her dialogue with designer, making suggestions, getting response from designer, and changes in sketches. This approach gives effective result that company is happy with. Besides, Client 1 has inner belief that ‘Numedia’ is on the right way from the very beginning of the project. She is sure that her trust helps her relations with Designer 1.

Client 1 prefers to address ‘Numedia’ from project to project. She tells that working with occasional designers can not bring the same benefit as working with a designer that has already known the client. Client 1 believes in profit of one person, who knows the client’s needs and requirements. This spares difficulties of explaining tasks every time to a new person. On Client’s 1 opinion, designer is a mediator of client’s ideas and a producer of own ideas. This combination helps to produce the best result. Also, Client 1 tells that client is busy with many different things and does not always have design skills. She needs somebody to make ideas come true – appear on screen or paper. Client 1 tells that she respects Designer 1 because he makes her vague ideas turn into something she wants but does not know how to explain. Client 1 emphasizes that in addition to design skills, Designer 1 knows technical restrictions and regulations that should be taken into consideration during implementation. Answering the question about designer’s attitude to a client, Client 1 considers that Designer 1 works from customer service point of view. ‘Satamaoperaattorit’ wants some project and he tries to produce it with help of creativity and other instruments. Designer 1 is ready to give up his personal preferences because he knows that he does project not for himself, but for his client.

Answering my questions about difficulties in working with designer, Client 1 mentions that she has no problems in relations with ‘Numedia’: no confrontations according ideas, no

missing deadlines, and no endless rounds of changes. Client 1 marks that she always gets that what she expects to get and Designer 1 understands the needs of the company quite well. However, sometimes problems appear because Client 1 is not very accurate with design brief. Though Client 1 does not have ‘horror stories’ about relations with designer, she emphasizes more information, more clarity, and more precise brief as good instruments to improve already established relations.

In the end of interview, Client 1 tells about compromise. On her opinion, compromise is not needed because finally client decides what she wants. ‘Satamaoperaattorit’ addresses designer in case when serious obstacles can not be overcome and company wants qualified help. Satisfaction with work is a good argument to continue cooperation with designer. The more company works together with ‘Numedia’, the easier cooperation becomes.

### **6.1.3 Analysis**

The following outline presents my analysis of findings provided by Case 1. Interviews presented in this case leave the impression that both ‘Numedia’ and ‘Satamaoperaattorit’ are satisfied with existing character of relations. They give an example of open, honest, and smooth customer relationship. Such relations are based on precise differentiation of responsibilities, on clear understanding of design role for the business and on distinct definition role of designer and client in design process. Though both designer and a client talk about design from position of customer service activity, they do not disclaim it’s ‘problem solving’ function. This means they demonstrate clear vision of design significance and adequately define their responsibilities in joint cooperation.

However, strong separation of duties in design process does not mean that Designer 1 and Client 1 work apart from each other. This means to be the right man in the right place and do your job. In this context, personal effort of both interviewees can not be underestimated. They intend to reach mutual understanding in order to produce the best design solution. Also, in this team, the goals of the company predominate over personal preferences and feelings. In addition, personal responsibility of both participants of the design process is reinforced by openness and trust based on respect to each other.

Designer 1 tells:

- *If I tell that I treat my clients as friends that will be definition the closest to reality.*
- *I think most of clients treat me as equal... At least I hope so!*

Client 1 uses ‘customer service’ line of reasoning. However, her statement has equal meaning:

*- It seems to me Designer 1 considers us a client and himself as a supplier. We want design project and he tries to produce it.*

Talking about success of the project, both Designer 1 and Client 1 mention careful planning as a guarantee of effective work. As 'Satamaoperaattorit' does not have constant need in design projects, company orders design project not very often. Therefore, Designer 1 and Client 1 have time to make a plan for future work. Efficient scheduling is one of the main advantages for business relations of 'Numedia' and 'Satamaoperaattorit'.

Another advantage works for relationship's goods. Since 'Satamaoperaattorit' has chosen 'Numedia' as a supplier of creative ideas, it continues to use services of this studio. Designer 1 is responsible for all requests form Client 1. It proves that the benefit of working with one designer knowing needs of the client is bigger than benefit of working with occasional designers. Moreover, it allots relationships with comfort and stability.

Although relations between 'Numedia' and 'Satamaoperaattorit' can be characterized as productive and positive, there are several difficulties that appear sometimes during design process. Among them, both Designer 1 and Client 1 mention rounds of changes that evolve changes in schedule. However, they present changes in design project from different positions. Designer 1 accepts it as extra job that he has to do because additional details are not foreseen in advance:

*- This happens all the time, this is the work I hate the most when it goes on for weeks!*

Client 1 reasons from client's position, who wants to be satisfied with end result regardless of intermediate changes:

*- Designer's suggestions perhaps require changes that eventually give the result we are happy with.*

Also, both designer and client notice that sometimes misunderstandings of the task prevent from its fast implementation. Although Designer 1 and Client 1 speak about changes and misunderstandings from opposite sides, they manage to concur with amendments in the project. They both accept it as an integral part of design process. Their mutual trust and inner belief in success also helps them to reach the goals of the project.

Client 1:

*- I have the feeling that our designer does listen to what we say and would like to get.*

Designer 1:

*- If my idea is rejected I stay humble and start looking for another way of presenting it.*

Designer 1 and Client 1 not only define problems in their relations, but they both meditate on their relations' improvement. They focus on fruitful cooperation that provides effective design solution and they come to similar decisions. First, they agree in opinion that mutual respect is the main element in foundation of relations.

Designer 1:

- *For productive work, I need to respect the client and be flexible.*

Client 1:

- *Trust and respect are initial parts of any kind of relations.*

Second, they both see the reason of rounds of changes in lack of information and offer possible ways to avoid or abridge them. Designer 1 and Client 1 emphasize more precise design brief as a main guarantee for the smooth course of design process. Third, Designer 1 and Client 1 talk about importance of long future perspective relations. If client is satisfied with designer's work he likely will address him with new project. Presented views prove proactive position of the graphic designer and the client and their aiming to develop collaboration in future.

#### **6.1.4 Results**

Case 1 approaches relations between the graphic designer and a client that orders design for non-commercial purposes. The case describes their interaction from opposite angles – client states a problem and designer solves it. It gives an example of equal in value relations where roles of every participant of design process are strictly differentiated. This means that both designer and client let each other do their job. Indeed, their duties intersect in order to improve communication between 'Satamaoperaattorit' and its customers. Cooperation between Designer 1 and Client 1 is based on respect, honesty, and mutual desire to reach company's goals. Efficiency of design projects is proved by growing number of companies that annually become members of 'Satamaoperaattorit' association. Since both parts are satisfied with result, these relations can be characterized as successful.

Regardless of the fact that Numedia' and 'Satamaoperaattorit' has mostly positive responses about their relations, some difficulties nevertheless appear. These difficulties are mentioned by Designer 1 as he bears them. Client 1 is completely satisfied with relations because she gets final result and does not know 'back stage' of creative process.

Analysis of interviews reveals the following reasons of misunderstandings between designer and client:

- Not very accurate design brief
- Misread of design brief
- Tight schedule
- Lack of personal contact

Case 1 proves theoretical findings of Chapter 5. Problems in relations between Numedia' and Satamaoperaattorit' do not become critical and insuperable because of honest attitude and high level of responsibility of both participants of design process. Moreover, having analyzed existing difficulties, client and designer offer possible ways that help to improve productivity of their joint work. Among them, they mention:

- More clarity
- More information
- More flexibility
- Accurate scheduling
- Keeping unbroken contact
- Adapting oneself to existing working conditions

## **6.2 Interview with in-house designer and her client (case 2)**

Case 2 aims to analyze relations between hired designer and product manager that both convey strategic goals of one company in order to increase sales and brand magnitude. Here, designer and client both work in one team, but from different angles. They do not have absolute authority in decision making. Depending on project, different people (sales, technical support, quality department, research and innovation department, and others) are included in design process.

The company name is 'Kemppi'. It is a well-known supplier of top-quality and productive welding solutions. In its over 60 years of operation, Kemppi has introduced many new innovations to the market, pioneering the development of both welding technology and productive welding solutions. Kemppi's business operations, today covering the entire world, are still led from the head office in Lahti, Finland. Kemppi has approximately 550 employees, in 13 countries, ensuring the continuous supply and high quality of products, as well as well-functioning customer service.

Designer 2 has been working at Sales and Marketing department in Kemppi during more than 5 years. She has a broad circle of responsibilities: creation of advertising materials for printing and multimedia, development of company's graphic style, creation of modules for exhibitions, nesting of operating manuals layouts, and others. Designer 2 has Master's degree in graphic design. Mostly, Designer 2 get assignments from brand manager and product manager that work on behalf of Kemppi. Designer 2 has been interviewed as in-house designer that fulfills multiple design needs of one big client.

To complete this case, the main client of Designer 2 has been interviewed. Client 2 takes up a post of product manager in Kemppi. His main responsibilities are gathering and prioritizing product and customer requirements. Client 2 works closely with engineering, sales, marketing, welding specialists, and technical support to ensure revenue and customer satisfaction goals are met. As product manager, he defines product vision that supports the company's overall strategy and goals. Interview with Client 2 presents client's opinion on relations between in-house designer and person that works for the sake of a company.

### **6.2.1 Interview with Designer 2**

My interview with Designer 2 also started with questions that help to define her as graphic designer. Designer 2 tells that from childhood she liked drawing very much. For that reason, her parents sent her to drawing school where she studied painting, textile painting, drawing, composition, art history, modeling, and other subjects. She wanted her future profession to be connected to creativity and skills obtained in art school. Designer 2 chose design as a field where she could develop her artistic skills and apply them to real life. She tells that artistic flair mixed with communication skills and successfully applied to concrete problem defines designer as professional. Designer 2 emphasizes designer's role as a link between sender and receiver. Working at 'Kemppi', she acts more in commercial context as a link between producer and consumer. On her opinion, designer works as a translator interpreting words, meanings, emotions, and messages to visual format. Indeed, this job should be done with big personal emotional effort. Designer 2 adds much from her soul, but without distortion of reality and replacing facts.

Working at 'Kemppi' for 5 years, Designer 2 now acts more as a performer of ideas. In the beginning of her work, she had many projects where she was a producer of ideas. Everything was new and she made serious creative contributions to her job. Now Designer 2 knows all guidelines, corporate graphic style and people's personal preferences. So, very often she follows templates made before. Designer 2 marks that visual thinking differs her from decorator. She tells that designer acts as a transformer of ideas to make them clear and attractive. She gives example of clients that have a wrong vision of project development. Her ability to show right way and offering better solutions than exist distinguishes her from decorator. It includes the following: intuition, thinking beyond limits of existing samples, ability to persuade and inspire. Also, attentive listening and trying to catch even unapparent things (mood, intonation, attitude, etc.) helps in work. In addition, Designer 2 emphasizes designer's ability to explain and present ideas. This technique helps her in design practice.



Designer 2 continues telling about designer's additional skills with very interesting opinion. She tells that designer is not necessary to know everything 'here and now'. Nevertheless, designer should always feel what additional skills might be required for his profession. This means adaptation to situation. For example, some project needs more technical knowledge of concrete field; another one requires more communication skills: public speaking and presentation skills. Hence, every new project is a new challenge and requires different knowledge. And designer should always be ready to learn. Therefore, this determines professional growth.

Talking about significance of design education, Designer 2 notes that school gives only basic knowledge that can be used as a platform for further studying. Educational institution shows directions for development and offers the choice of methods and techniques that designer may have in her kit. Also, school prepares specialist for real life where she can apply possessed knowledge to real situations and obtain additional skills. Among these skills, she mentions team working, presentation skills, and time-management skills. Designer 2 tells that degree in design is not important. It is important to aspire for knowledge, to keep eyes opened, and to be committed to profession. However, she marks that in reality designer with degree is more competitive. For employers, degree might be a guarantee of quality.

My interview with Designer 2 continues with questions about clients. Designer 2 does not see differences between working with private individuals or company. In both cases, she works with people. Within 'Kemppi', people working with her on a project usually familiar with design process. They might not know some details, but they trust her as professional. Designer 2 mentions that people from other departments do their best at their posts and she does her best trying to help them with the problem. On her opinion, this is exactly what joint cooperation means. But if person is included in design project for the first time she needs to explain specific character of work. What seems to be very easy at first glance, in practice, might turn to long process that requires much effort. Designer 2 gives an example of advertising materials that 'Kemppi' produces in 12 languages. This job that requires much attention, rounds of corrections and proof readings. Thus, when somebody thinks this work can be done in one working day Designer 2 needs to explain the details of working process.

Talking about relations with a client, Designer 2 mentions that she constantly feels pressure of deadlines. In addition, she marks that in spite of this pressure, her clients treat her as a professional. And Designer 2 treats her clients as equal too. Also, she reasons that her clients provide useful information needed for the project. Thus, integration and client's involvement in design process lead to productive solution.

Designer 2 turns conversation to the topic of difficulties in relations with her clients. On her opinion, the main thing that destroys design process is missing of deadlines. When somebody is late Designer 2 needs to change her timetable or postpone the project and then to be in a hurry to keep the deadline. Undertime always drag her into stress. Among other difficulties she mentions rounds of changes and corrections that happen all the time. Nevertheless, Designer 2 accept them as a part of reality. Unexpected results happen rarely because clients control the process and see the project from sketch to final version. So, they can not be negatively surprised with the result. If confrontations according concepts appear, Designer 2 offers alternatives. Thus, having several concepts is always better than one.

Describing difficulties of joint work, Designer 2 tells that there are many discussions in the beginning of design process. There can be argumentations and confrontations, but they are needed in the beginning to avoid misunderstandings later. On her words, start is always hard, but when consensus is reached process goes smoothly.

Among reasons of misunderstandings, Designer 2 marks human element: lack of information, bad explanation, or wrong understanding of task. Also, almost every project consists of unexpected things that nobody suspects. There are also force-major situations when technology fails – software is crashed or computer does not work. However, all these difficulties should be taken easy. According Designer’s 2 opinion, nervousness can only aggravate problem.

Reflecting upon improvement of designer/client relations, Designer 2 tells about attentive listening and fast reaction on even small changes. She also mentions openness in communication that prevents from conjectures and misunderstandings and designer’s ability to defend her opinion. As ‘Kemppi’ always has need in graphic design projects, Designer 2 plans these projects in advance in order to establish long perspective relations inside the group. Designer 2 concludes interview with statement that honesty, desire to help, interest in what you do, trust, and respect are also very important. She emphasizes that these are common characteristics not only of relations between graphic designer and the client, but of relations in general.

### **6.2.2 Interview with Client 2**

My interview with Client 2 started with questions about the role of design for ‘Kemppi’. On his opinion, design is a powerful communication tool with strong aesthetic value. In ‘Kemppi’ context, the aim of design projects is to show product advantages, supporting

evidences, and confidence. Design clarifies the message to the consumer and reinforces brand magnitude. Thus, even small details matter because they fulfill the global image of 'Kemppi'.

Client 2 feels that every Kemppi's product should have strong communication. And as image leaves stronger impression, he uses designer's skills to provide powerful visual message to the customer. Client 2 emphasizes graphical side of communication concerning not only printed materials, but also multimedia. Client's role in design process is to establish and to fulfill the need in design and to become sure that work is done as efficiently as possible. Since many people in 'Kemppi' can order design projects, the whole development of graphic style can be destroyed. In this case, his role is to clarify the direction of project development and put together all brand elements. This is needed to follow one general style in design.

Describing his feelings during design process, Client 2 tells that he is always eager to get initial results. He mentions that he is not patient in design process. At the moment he has an idea, he wants to visualize it and to receive a result. Thus, Client 2 does not like weak waiting. He expects that designer will catch his ideas and will offer visual representation of his own ideas according presented task.

Client 2 tells that 'Kemppi' has an endless stream of design projects: web-sites, brochures, logos, leaflets, manuals, catalogues, advertising modules, multimedia presentations, and others. For that reason, in addition to services of in-house designers, 'Kemppi' address to external design studios. In this contest, Client 2 feels a very big difference between working with studio and working with department designer. On his opinion, external designers are more responsive and work in a good commercial speed because they earn a living with this. They try to fit completed task into predetermined costs. This changes the whole dynamic of relationships with the client – they are strong enough to define right design style. They have vision of right and wrong directions in project development. Also, if they believe that this concrete design will not work they can tell it openly. To the contrary, the working manner of in-house designers looks more quite and sometimes they need to be pushed.

As company is constantly challenged by competitors and market changes, 'Kemppi' can not follow the same mood and argumentations in design. Client 2 argues that it is important to think several steps forward. In this context, new designers bring new ideas and fresh view. For that reason, Kemppi works with different studios and designers. Client 2 tells that when he addresses a new studio or designer he brings new opportunity to their business. Therefore, he is treated as a new client and given extra attention and design effort. It is interesting, fresh,

energetic, positive and invigorating. However, Client 2 does not make light of in-house designers' services. He emphasizes that the longer designer works in company the more designer knows about the company's needs. In context of both relationships with studio and in-house designer, Client 2 tells that the client and the designer should challenge each other to keep collaboration fresh and honest.

Among distinctive features of the graphic designer, Client 2 emphasizes not only ability to manipulate with images, but also aspiration to improve the quality of visual communications. Since designers can make a reality of Client's 2 ideas, he treats them with respect. At the same time, Client 2 mentions that he does not respect laziness and weakness. In this context, Client 2 divides designers to weak and strong. Weak designers are not strong enough to redirect clients from wrong way in design project and prevent them from making mistakes. Therefore, they work on ideas they do not believe. Thus, it leads to rubbish design.

During design process, weak designers might feel something like dictatorship. They feel upset, frustrated, and angry with critics. This means concentrating on own feelings rather than on process. In this situation, client will always dominate. However, the worse combination is weak client and weak designer. When none of them wants to take responsibility there is no effective result. To the contrary, if designer is strong and confident enough she will take direction and develop even weak idea by offering several visual concepts. Such designer can also redirect client to the right way. Thus, success of project depends mostly on designer.

Going over the topic of relations between graphic designer and the client, Client 2 supposes that designer might be upset with endless rounds of changes because client never knows when to stop. When project is really exciting and interesting client wants to keep polishing and does not want to give up. Endless improvement makes work too much sterile and might kill its vividness. Client 2 thinks that clients' desire to make design perfect depends on how many projects they have. If organization is small and there are not so many projects, client wants every detail to be shiny and nice. However, big companies as 'Kemppi' have an endless stream of projects. They do not have luxury of spending months over one layout. For that reason, the specific character of big company's relations with designers is different.

Also, contract negotiation is a hard process for Client 2 because as manager he presses costs down. Obviously, it influences the relations with studio or designer. As every little change leads to increasing of the final price, Client 2 has to be very careful with corrections, think about them in advance, and talk about them during contract negotiations. Nevertheless, Client 2 always negotiates the final price regardless of changes and amendments. He tells that he pays for finished job, not for the part of it. External studios do not like it. For that reason, it

is useful to have in-house designer not to spend huge amount of money for weak work. Client 2 speaks favorably of Kemppi's designers because company can do a lot of projects with their help for less.

Besides, difficulties in relations appear when designer does not understand what client means. It happens because sometimes Client 2 does not know what he needs. Here, he mentions bad design brief and not clear communications. However, he 2 tells that with every new project, both designer and a client grow as professional and as individual. Thus, they learn from each other to explain and to express their thoughts.

Going deeper in design process, Client 2 tells that on the stage of initial sketches both designer and a client are excited with the process. Fast sketches help to understand if chosen direction is right or wrong. Everybody is energetic and enthusiastic because process is fresh and new. However, the stage of corrections and polishing of details is terrible for Client 2. Choosing between alternative images, selecting of right words for clear message, evaluating from consumer's point of view, and asking for other's opinion takes much effort. This means many elements should join together to make project work well. Nevertheless, there are many examples of effective design projects based on positive and honest relations with 'Kemppi' designers. Among them Client 2 mentions a set of marketing posters, virtual showroom, product catalogue, etc. All these projects have changed the vision of brand development, style of communication with the customer, and attitude to welding business. Client 2 believes that many projects can be done inside the company with help of department designers.

Answering the question about possible ways to improve relations between the client and the graphic designer, Client 2 emphasizes strong clarification, good design brief, productivity, commitment to job, openness, and being strong enough to defend own opinion. That is what can be opposed to weakness and subservience. Client 2 adds that he likes when designer endows design with something magical that make it work in clear professional way. He is happy to concede professionalism of designer when offered design solution is really the best one.

In the end of interview, Client 2 meditates upon his personal contribution in improvement of relations with designer. He tells that he pushes people because he is relatively pushed by business. He should deliver for business and put designers' attention on the market and product, motivate and inspire them for creativity and strength, show them strong point for project development. On his opinion, improving relationships is about strength, responsibility, and attitude.

### 6.2.3 Analysis

Case 2 is harder to analyze because neither designer nor client give appraisal to each other. Designer 2 has many clients inside 'Kemppi', so she does not express her opinion according working with concrete one and Client 2 in particular. Client 2 has many design projects with external studios and in-house designers. In this case, he talks over his design experience in general. Anyway, Case 2 provides facts that throw light on improvement of relations between the graphic designer and client.

In Case 2, design acts as a communication instrument with a strong commercial purpose – increasing of sales and production. Rules of play on welding market are very hard and Kemppi is always challenged by competitors. In this context, fast reaction to changes, proactive position, and innovative thinking become crucial for business development. Design concentrates these features and directs them to customer.

On the whole, Case 2 creates an impression that designer and client are satisfied with design process and they know their business. They both consider themselves to be professionals that can be proved by successful projects, long working experience, high level of responsibility, and understanding of company goals. They agree in opinion about design role and designer's contribution to product development.

From the first sight, the role of client can be considered as more proactive because he states the problem and challenges the designer. However, designer's emotional impact is more intensive. Designer 2 should be strong enough to tolerate clients' challenge and to change their mind if chosen direction is wrong. Her behavior might provoke confrontations and she should be talented diplomatist to persuade client. In this case, Designer 2 emphasizes designer's communication skills in order to provide clear visual communication. This tells that she is very flexible and responsive person. Such kind of designers is highly appreciated by Client 2.

Case 2 illustrates that both client and designer are opened to get new experiences and try to use knowledge of each other for the benefit of project. Cooperation of two strong personalities that clearly understand their functions and destinations leads to productive design solutions. Although both designer and client reasons from the position of strength, there is no dictatorship in their attitude. In spite of the fact they are both pushed by strict rules of market, they treat each other with trust, respect, and ethics. And obviously, they expect the same attitude from people they work with.

Client 2:

- *Hopefully, I treat designer with respect. Design is so bloody important. I do not respect laziness and weakness, but I like ideas, prompt actions, and honesty.*

- *I feel that I am treated with attention and design effort.*

Designer 2:

- *I try to treat clients as equal. They are people that order design and require result.*

- *Some of my clients want more attention, but they are usually grateful for my effort.*

Although Designer 2 and Client 2 tell about successful relationships, they mention different difficulties that may appear sometimes. They both tell about rounds of changes that entail missing of deadlines. Argumentations according design concepts, terms, and conditions also happen sometimes. However, when everything is discussed and determined process goes on smoothly. Designer 2 and Client 2 agree that it is better to have difficult start than disastrous result.

Among difficulties that can hardly be foreseen, Designer 2 emphasizes lack of information or bad explanation of task. However, she mentions that within 'Kemppi' it happens rarely. Client 2 attaches special importance to contract negotiations that can be hard because client want to reduce the price and designer wants to increase it.

Designer 2 and Client 2 offer possible ways to avoid misunderstandings and to increase quality of cooperation.

Client 2:

- *Strong clarification, productivity, commitment to job, openness, being strong enough to defend your opinion, overcoming of weakness and laziness, clear design brief before the project starts...*

Designer 2:

- *I listen and try to catch everything what client tells, even intonation and mood. When I present my sketches I always explain what I have done and how it maintains the main idea.*

- *Offering alternative usually works. But alternatives should be accompanied with good explanation.*

- *I keep in touch with persons-in-charge to plan the projects in advance.*

Designer 2 and Client 2 agree in opinion that fruitful relations do not emerge by accident. They are formed by mutual effort of all participants of design process.

## **6.2.4 Results**

The main feature of Case 2 is that it illustrates relations of the graphic designer and client within strict commercial structure. Both designer and a client work for the sake of their employer's goals. Hard competition on welding market dictates rules of playing and challenges company all the time. For that reason, product manager and designer join their efforts to provide new solution for the best product performance. Their cooperation aims to

provide the whole package of materials and services that present and support product through interaction with customer. As marketing and non-marketing materials are produced for all subsidiaries in 12 languages, there is a constant flow of design projects. Therefore, Designer 2 and Client 2 realize importance of accurate planning and well organized work. They emphasize fast reactions, clarity, and consistency to be important for successful result. Foreseeing of possible impediments in design project and staying calm in complicated situations proves their professionalism.

Case 2 has discovered the following difficulties that arise during design project. As well as in Case 1, rounds of changes become one of the main problems. Although Designer 2 and Client 2 accept them as a part of reality, they tell that even small amendment entail changes in deadlines and delay production. Conflicts of opinions at preliminary stage also entail to delay of start. At the same time, they have positive effect because they bring to light possible impediments. As Client 2 works also with external studios, he mentions price negotiations as a difficult part of preparatory work.

Case 2 also offers ways to improve relations between the graphic designer and client.

- Respectful attitude
- High responsibility
- Strength to change opinion or behavior
- Precise information and strong clarification
- Clear negotiation of payment
- Flexibility and fast reaction



## **7. Possible ways to improve relations between the graphic designer and a client**

Previous chapters show that design process takes far more than great creativity. Understanding and satisfying client's needs may become a real challenge that includes many additional routine processes. For example, quick rough sketching means detailed visualization, fast interview with the client may take the whole day, and small brochure turns out to have more text than can fit in a book (Foote 1996, 268). This does not mean that designers are smart and their clients are not. The problem is that they look at one assignment from opposite viewpoints. Designer's world is very much oriented towards creative representation, and this is the way it should be. For the client, design is only one part of communication and marketing, and marketing is only one side of business (Foote 1996, 268). Chapter 7 adopts this perspective for further argumentation. Based on theoretical findings and analysis of practical cases, it offers practical solutions in order to improve relations between the graphic designer and a client.

### **7.1 More respect**

Theoretical findings of my research show that disrespect spoils relationships between the graphic designer and a client. Cases of 'Nimedia', 'Satamaoperaattorit', and 'Kemppi' suggest mutual respect to be the core element in successful cooperation. For that reason, this issue is put on the first place of practical solutions that help to find mutual understanding. All other details are easier to deal with when there is a common respect, honesty, trust, and attention (Browne 2003, 24; Rayle 2006).

The idea of respect has multiple ethical meaning. One of them is connected to mistaken tendency of treating the client as a bill payer. Treating client with dictatorship is a result of disrespect that brings no satisfaction of cooperation. Therefore, if designer wants to be listened and be respected, she has to treat her client with the same level of respect and sensitivity. Treating friends can be taken as a model for construction of relations (Shaughnessy 2005, 104). Indeed, it is more difficult than just selling design services because it demands more attention and emotional contributions. However, positive response from client gives satisfaction of winning in the honest fight.

The idea of treating clients as friends is adopted in both practical cases where designers and clients deal as equals. It is much to say about designer's effort because being pushed into inexperienced entity client may feel confused and nervous. And this can be understood: having already paid some money, she has no idea about result (Shaughnessy 2009, 21). In this case, client feels fear and starts to pester designer. For that reason, it is in designer's interests to make equal collaboration happen. After all, great work is a witness of mutually respectful and well-balanced designer/client relationship (Shaughnessy 2009, 20).

The idea of treating clients as friends stimulates my further research. It reveals designer's strengths that make clients feel secure and being sure in common respect and trust:

- No missing deadlines and being on time for appointments shows that designer acts businesslike; he is organized and reliable (Crawford 2005, 89).
- Adequate appearance (informal manner of speaking, friendly behavior, and appropriate style of wear) characterizes designer as a business person, not as creative 'something' (Foote 1996, 269–270).
- Going over working procedures, schedules, and deadlines makes design process methodical and controlled.
- Taking the initiative demonstrates that designer is determined and prepared for solving the problem.
- Asking questions shows that designer is eager to get information to produce effective work (Foote 1996, 269–281). It also helps to discover unusual procedures and specific details of the project.
- Saying 'Thank you' when project has been completed is a touch of friendliness that adds emotional and psychological contribution to working process (Foote 1996 281). Also, this is a good opportunity to continue collaboration.

Treating clients as friends does not mean servility and doing everything they say. It looks like cheating or professional disservice when designer implicitly carries out every caprice of the client. Client will listen to designer if they collaborate on equal terms as full-fledged participants with mutual respect (Shaughnessy 2009, 20). Also, openness and honesty helps to discuss difficult things easily (Crawford 2005, 92). This means establishing of rules for professional relations where designer understands client's needs, but asserts own independence. Thus, setting up the standards of relations in the very beginning may become an instrument to keep clients from interfering with good work.

Respect also means admission of possible mistakes. Designer as well as a client is not always right and “does not have monopoly on wisdom” (Shaughnessy 2005, 105). Also, conviction in self-righteousness provokes distrust and doubts of designer’s or client’s competence (Crawford 2005, 92). However, the level of high professionalism is defined not by absence of mistakes, but by quick admission, and corrections of mistakes. Thus, professional designer must give an answer, why the fault happened and what to do to rectify the situation (Czulinski 2004, 31).

From client’s viewpoint, design profession has more respect when client is sure that she addresses to the real expert. Since there are many ‘so called’ designers, it is better to check the background of the specialist: the level of education, working experience, and response from other clients (Giffen 2004, 25). This helps to find designer that corresponds to the requirements of the project. In order to find a ‘good’ designer, client may check herself by answering questions ‘ Does this person do the sort of work I want?’, ‘Is the set price acceptable for me?’, ‘Am I on good terms with this person?’ (Shaughnessy 2005, 51).

For the client, the most important psychological issue is to have consultant that understands what the client really wants. However, it is not about the lowest price, the greatest aesthetic images, or the shortest schedule. It is about understanding who is the client, speaking the same language to her, and acting as trusted advisor (Rayle 2000). Trusted advisor differs from other just creative suppliers by:

- Understanding client’s present needs and prediction of future needs
- Help to think forward and make decisions
- Staying calm and comfort even in tough situations
- Giving reasoning and recommendations, not just conclusions
- Interest in long term result (relations are more important than current assignment)
- Have interests to the client at heart

Above mentioned distinctive features belong to determined designers that are committed to their profession and think over the boundaries of design. These professionals need only one thing from the clients – let them do their job and trust them with the same level of openness and honesty (Busch 2008a). Indeed, client has the final say, however, the one thing that graphic designer knows better than all the rest is graphic design (Busch 2008a). And nothing pushes designer to strive for the best than ethical attitude, trust, and respect. Thus, common willingness to act according ethics is a basis for fruitful cooperation. It can change the temper of relationships.

## **7.2 Socially responsible design**

Theoretical findings and practical cases offer the idea of mutual respect and emphasize social responsibilities of design. This means the needs of audience should prevail over desire for visual experiments and personal ego of the graphic designer and a client (Nini 2004, online). This is the step towards creating a more significant ethical model for design as socially responsible profession. In this case, the graphic designer and a client should think about transforming customer's experiences for the better. This attitude means aspiration to work out solutions that interrelate with people, environment, and ideas on the level of high sensitivity and delicacy. (Starck 2007) Therefore, sense of social responsibility should be included in creative process. Responsibility towards society also implies collective consciousness, respect to the project goals, and mutual respect in designer/client relations of. This becomes one of conditions for profitable work.

Attempt to be responsible and ethical concerns everyday behavior and decisions that may affect many people. Individual power to act ethically and steps towards responsibility in day-to-day relations lead to global changes (Busch 2008a). Indeed, issues about design that change the world may seem unsophisticated. One may argue that if during two thousand years society can not overpower prejudice, lies, and dogmas, "it is utterly ludicrous to think that one designer can" (Burgoyne 2008). However, this does not mean responsibility should not be taken. Even if ethical attitude does not change the globe in general, both designer and a client should try to address a broader range of problems, incorporate new technologies, and respond innovatively. This will turn design process to easier and more natural way.

In the world that constantly searches for new meanings and directions, ethics and social responsibility should become a rule rather than an exception (Busch 2009). Responsibility should be chosen as a strategy for individuals and organizations focused on long-term objectives. Designers adopting responsible attitude as an element of their thinking are already more strategically trained than many others (Busch 2008d). They can take a leading role in shifting towards sustainability and global responsibility. Thus, ethical attitude can create a new profession – socially responsible design. Also, future design can not be based on present stereotypes and middling vision. The next part offers appropriate ways that help to overcome stereotypes.

## 7.3 Overcoming stereotypes

Analysis of literature review discovers stereotyping about design and designers. Case studies emphasize the ability of designer and client to challenge each other and look for innovation, differentiation, and competitive advantage. This issue gives a platform for research that aims to overcome stereotypes in design and relations between the graphic designer and a client.

On the one hand, mental generalizations and labels are necessary to control the fast changing world around. Stereotypes help to learn quicker, they categorize things and leave an imprint in mind (Thoman online). On the other hand, categorizing is dangerous, especially in design because designer's train of thought becomes inflexible. It is harmful for designer, client, and projects itself. In this case, the tactical role is to move one step forward. This means not enlisting ideas making them more attractive, but generating ideas (Brown 2009a). Design thinking also means openness to experiments, exploring new possibilities, and aspiration for new knowledge and experience. This prevents designer from producing of mediocrity. Thus, trying to think out 'from the box' helps to transform the way products, services, processes, and meanings are performed and developed.

Overcoming stereotypes is very much concerned with ethics. Ethical behavior is possible only when personal inner stereotypes are outdone. For example:

- Assuming the worst about people. The point is that if one seeks failure and disappointment, finally it will be found. In this case, one should reconsider such default behavior to assuming the best about people. It is critical for designers that often think badly about clients. Actually, there are no bad clients. Designers end up with the clients they deserve. (Kothary 2009, online)
- Assuming everyone as ignorant. A common stereotype of designer is assuming that everyone understands designer's thoughts despite the fact that she never vocalizes them (Kothary 2009, online). People think in different way and what is obvious to one is not obvious to another. In this case, designer should watch, listen, and communicate appropriately. This is critical for designer.
- Thinking in absolutes. We all tend to judge about thing only in two-valued way: all or nothing, good or bad, black or white. We do not accept compromise; we do not like to conform. But we should learn to see the value in gradual improvement and take opportunity of making small amends.

- Thinking first about money. If designer wants to make money from graphic design business, she should center in the work – not the money (Shaughnessy 2009, online). If money is put on the first place in the project, it inevitably becomes a failure. Indeed, designers should be paid properly for their work, but the quality, not the size of fee should become the main motive for designer. It also concerns clients: cheap design looks cheap. Thus, good design should be paid properly.
- Assurance that all the good jobs go to other designers. In reality, when the project starts it does not have positive or negative value. Designer determines the success or failure of the output (Busch 2003). Therefore, there are no good or bad projects; there are only good or bad reactions for made order.

In the world full of rubber stamps, overcoming personal inner stereotypes and adherence professional principles leads to respect. Moreover, aspiration and standing for ethics, morality, and professional standards is a way to be an effective graphic designer, produce meaningful work, and attract clients. That does not mean that designer with principles always wins. However, this designer wins more often than one, who believes in nothing. Demonstrating professional integrity leads to positive changes in design, related fields, and in society. Willingness to behave ethically is a basis in profession. It needs to be supported by sufficient knowledge, experience, and information. The next part affirms the importance of proper information for design process.

## **7.4 More information**

Theoretical findings and case studies define lack of information as one of the main reasons of misunderstandings between the graphic designer and client. Most misunderstandings and unexpected results happen because assignments are not thought precisely and important details are missed. In this case, getting information is needed to produce work that responds both strategic and representational actual needs. Information helps to sharpen project's objectives and reduce the risk of unfounded concepts and disorder creativity (Foote 1996, 270). In the context of relations between the graphic designer and a client, the success of joint work depends on designer's ability to ask right questions. Thus, removing of uncertainties is less costly before starting a project than later when the product is ready.

Being a part of a team or working individually, designer should coordinate information jointly. All individuals that may do contribution to project should be included in conceptual input (Foote 1996, 271). It is better to get information not only about assignment, but also about the client though it company or individual. Indeed, project limitations in budget and schedule, client's personal prejudices, considerations, and manner of working should be clear to designer. The way of getting information depends on designer's style of communication. It might be formally structured interview, warm conversation, or written questioning. Whatever method is used, there should be enough time to pick up all necessary facts (Foote 1996, 272). Even if client does not have time for answering the questions, designer should insist on taking all the information for qualitative implementation of the task. Persistence sets professional designer apart from simple creative supplier.

Trying to produce 'good' design solution with lack of information is like trying to choose a present for person which one has never met before. Designer even can not start designing until she understands client's organization and what aims to accomplish (Crawford 2005, 88). That is why, good design brief is important. Setting up an assignment questionnaire helps to collect basic information to start design project. There are the following things suggested to ask. For advertising design in commercial field (Foote 1996, 420–421):

- Information about a company or entrepreneur. What are history, culture, activity, goals and perspectives, and strategy?
- Project objectives. What is the purpose of the work? What is the message and topic of the project?
- Target audience. Who are customers? Have they already known about the product, service? What can motivate them?
- Product or service description. What are specifications, components, manufacture, delivery, and marketing efforts? How it is used? What is unusual or unique in the product?
- Customer benefits. What are specific and important benefits for the user? Benefits must be proved, only fact should be accepted, not opinions or generalizations.
- Competition. What similar products or services are available and what are their advantages? Concrete facts should be collected, not opinions or generalizations.

- Creative considerations. What limitations and constraints does client have? For example: budget, schedule, standards, personal likes and dislikes, number of copies, use of color, paper size, etc.?
- Media considerations. How will the ad run, how brochure will be distributed, how customer will be reached? How does the distribution affect budget, time, and technical requirements?
- The most important point. If customer or user could choose only one thing to remember about the product, what would it be? That is the focus of creative concept.

Social and cultural design of non-commercial field has different questionnaire (Bennett 2006, 79):

- What is specific character of the system?
- What is the larger context of system?
- What audience is included into communication inside and outside system?
- How communication (activity, behavior, beliefs, and attitudes) may be changed by design?
- What tools suit better to reach the communication goals? Are they adequate for this audience?

Answering the questions, a client gives her explanation to designer at the beginning of a project. Written design brief structures questions and answers, outlines the aims and objectives of design project. (Grefé 2009b, 26) It manifests client's expectations and defines a scope of work. From the perspective of relations between the graphic designer and a client, a thoroughly stated design brief is a critical part of design process because it helps to develop trust and understanding in the team. Moreover, it serves as a reference that helps to check if result corresponds to objectives mentioned in design brief. Thus, design brief is an honest way to keep everyone honest.

Design brief is a part of empirical research that includes designer's self-conscious dialogue and analysis of facts. The more critical visual performance become in communication today, the clearer message should be conveyed. Gathered information and theory provide a strong platform for designer to look at all elements of certain problem from external point of view that is not based only on designer's instinct and internal considerations (Bennett 2006, 73–79).



Setting down a design brief, developing of theoretical research, and recording of clear parameters for the business relationships at the outset can not poison creative process. Moreover, designer that has clear business objectives is highly appreciated and recommended for other projects. Thereby, signing the contract helps to eliminate surprises during project implementation and resolve things quickly if they start to go wrong. Contract negotiations should be concluded by making decisions about the scope of services to be provided, the risk that both parties are willing to bear, and the base fee to be paid. Each project has some fundamental issues that should be negotiated and agreed in the contract (Ferrini 2006):

- Basic and additional services. Agreement must indicate what services are included in the base amount of the fee and what is included in the extra charge. If some service is not indicated it should be paid as additional service.
- Design phases. Client should understand the scope of design. To make it clear, design process can be divided in phases. Each stage should be explained to the client. Written design brief helps to explain what stages are included in design process.
- Revisions and approvals. The amount of revisions must be agreed for each phase of design. After approval every revision is billed as an additional service.
- The construction budget. Financial goals of a client must be respected and controlled. However, she also should be aware that designer can not guarantee fixed price.
- Termination. If one of participants wants to end the relationship clear mechanism of parting should be provided. The agreement must set forth notice requirements, cure periods, and final payment terms. Agreement must include conditions for termination.
- Ownership. If the agreement is silent, a designer has the full ownership and copyright of all designs and documents produced for the project. To avoid misunderstandings, a client should be informed about it.
- Dispute resolution. The agreement must include information of how disputes are handled: mediation, arbitration, litigation, or all three?
- Limitation of liability. Relative risks and rewards must be mentioned in the agreement. Both parties must understand and recognize the limits your of liability.

Negotiating contracts is a part of designer's professional life. It is usual way to formalize all business issues between the parties. In this context, agreements should spell out obligations of the parties in straightforward terms and clear language. (Taute 2009, online) However, each client is unique and speaking clear language with a client may require individual approach. For example, communicating at level of top-managers and decision makers demands global vision of how project may help to reach business goals and affect on people's acts and beliefs. As high-level audience has many things to think about besides design, message should be delivered briefly, but data-intensively (Taute 2009, online). Meeting with a senior leader can not last for hours. For that reason, designer should think about essential issues in advance and be ready to proceed to them immediately. In addition, to build effective communication with high-level executives, designer may use business books and publications. It may help to become familiar with their way of thinking and behavior.

Communication level of marketing people requires another approach. Even if these people have worked with designers before, relations are not always easy. Designer should define specific goals of a project and become sure that everyone in the team understands the responsibilities (Taute 2009, online). For example, if marketing person stands behind designer's back during creative process, there should be arguments for it, not just a wish to play with the layout. Thus, experiments with visual performance are part of designer's job.

Searching for the methods of speaking the same language with staff-level professionals might seem easy at first glance. As it is designer's job to think about design, they may agree with every offered solution because they blindly trust to designer (Taute 2009, online). In this case, all responsibility lies on designer's shoulders. For that reason, it could be useful to introduce some key issues about design process. This will involve junior professionals in joint work. Also, taking into account that staff-level professionals rarely can be decision makers, designer should find the person that approves the project. If designer just delivers the project without opportunity of direct presentation she should provide responsible person with information for presentation (Taute 2009, online). This helps to avoid circles of endless corrections and losing information in communication chain.

Getting information, asking the questions, receiving adequate answers are the ways to find clarity inside the project team. However, there are additional techniques that add credibility in design process.

## **7.5 More clarity, credibility, and flexibility**

Getting information about the assignment and the client is only one of initiatives that support design process and helps for good start. Another one is giving information. Each stage of creative process should be clear for every participant of the project (Giffen 2004, 26). This does not mean that client has to know the ‘backstage’ of creative process. However, nor designer, neither client should leave until they both have a clear understanding of what happens next (Giffen 2004, 27). A client as well as a designer needs to control the project. Such integration stimulates client’s sense of ownership, helps to set acceptable deadlines, preserves from rush jobs, and adds more clarity (Puleo, 2008). Therefore, it creates comfortable long-term relationships.

Transparency is important not only for interchange of information, but also for preparing concepts and their presentation. Approaches and languages used by designer should be clear to her client even on the stage of rough sketches. Designer should keep in mind that what seems perfectly clear to her may be uncertain to client. For most designers, putting effort to artistic presentation is natural, but many clients may interpret it as emphasizing art over communication (Foote 1996, 273). Designer may see preparing variety of concepts as providing valid alternatives for a client choice. However, many clients may interpret this as missing of clarity (Foote 1996, 273–274). To avoid the feeling that client has trouble appreciation of high artistic concepts, designer should select adequate solutions that correspond to the project goals, not to the greatest creative challenge. Thus, ability to work out clear solutions is the main indicator of successful designer.

Creating a concept is just one step, effective representation is another one. Logical and clear presentation is a core element in creative business because it is the only way for a client to judge how project is going on. Moreover, presentation is the only way to catch designer’s ideas and to keep project away from exhausting effort and endless modifications (Foote 1996, 274). To the contrary, bad presentation may ‘kill’ even a great concept. Designer that can not sell her idea properly is not going to be very successful. After all, there is no excuse for a bad presentation by person that is trained to communication ideas. Thus, advocacy and firmness are put on the same level among importance characteristics of great designers.

Effective presentation never means explanation of why designer did so-and-so, used so-and-so typeface, so-and-so color, and so-and-so composition. This depresses the client because she just does not need this information – the result is right in front of her eyes (Foote 1996, 277). Moreover, such explanation sounds unconvincing because designer will not be

there when customer reads the booklet, clicks the link on a web page, or looks at logo. If design needs explanation, something is wrong. (Crawford 2005, 91) In this context, not inner processes of design should be presented, but concepts addressed to stated client's needs. For that reason, designer should talk to the point while presenting ideas. It also concerns with client while criticizing ideas.

Clear and coherent work also demands more flexibility. According client's expectations, designer should be opinioned and pliable. Practical cases of this research prove that client expects an expert with strong point of view that contributes nothing less than absolute best effort. In this case, not to lose her soul, designer should have a bit of 'could-not-care-less' attitude. Looking at things with more positive and easy attitude is the only way to stay in control even with 'difficult' client (Crawford 2005, 94). After all, clients and designers are tied together in one team, whether they like it or not, whether their expectations are equal or not. This joint cooperation is not a confrontation full of threat and fear; it is a great opportunity for them both to expand their experiences and learn from each other. This may become one more contact point in their relations. Thus, flexibility will show the 'right' way for productive cooperation.

Another significant stage that demands clarity is payment negotiation. Payment strategies are described separately in the next part because they may evolve deep tensions.

## **7.6 Payment strategies**

Case 2 has mentioned price negotiations as one of the factors that can spoil relations between the graphic designer and a client. Though it is a very sensitive issue, it demands special attention. The following section presents several techniques helping to define payment schedule and prevent barriers on the way to successful relationship.

To minimize the risk, a designer and a client should know how to protect their financial interests (Foote 1996, 163; Stone 2006, online). There are general ways to do it: being accurate and prepared for unexpectedness, knowing how to bill and collect. However, creative industry has one distinctive feature that determines payment procedure: each job and each client has unique objectives and requirements (Cohen 2002, online). What works right with one client, may be wrong with another one. In this case, the best strategy is to personalize payment process to every design project.

Price and payment may become a very difficult psychological issue for designer because she works not in financial sphere and for client because she might have no idea about design costs. However, payment negotiation is an integral part of every business that helps to establish professional relations because it irons any potential disagreements and impediments beforehand. (Cronan 2005, online) For that reason, it can not be neglected and should be taken as a part of every-day practice.

One of the ways to protect designer from working on spec and doing billable work is up-front partial payment (Cohen 2002, online). This strategy is becoming a common procedure within design industry. It is usually based on a percentage of the total project fee or estimate. To make up-front payment strategy work effectively, designer should enforce it consistently, firmly, and without apology of the clients. (Foote 1996, 167) Probably, clients may give objections reasoned by ‘Why should I pay for work I haven’t seen yet?’, ‘We don’t have any money right now, but are expecting a large check in soon’, or ‘Our corporate procedures preclude me from processing any up-front payment.’ However, it is better to emphasize that up-front payment is a reasonable to avoid the effect of extending the client’s credit and getting payment promised only upon acceptance (Cohen 2002, online). Thus, partial up-front payment gives the client immediate financial stake in the job.

To avoid payment delay and shorten the approval and processing time, designer should also be familiar with the payment policy of her client (Cohen 2002, online). All financial documents received from the client should be read carefully. For example, client may include special conditions or descriptions that may or may not be applicable to the project and relationship. Therefore, fully evaluation of unique needs of each client and project helps to develop an effective payment schedule.

Payment process may include several progress payments based on a percentage of estimated costs. It should include a due day of each payment and designer’s specific responsibility to present completed task by concrete date. The advantage of incremental payment is that it reduces financial liability throughout the project, even if client delays payment. Payment may consist of following phases: the first third of the estimated costs is paid prior to the start of the project; a second third is paid at midway of the project; and the final third is paid when delivery is completed. Progress payment can be the same amount or can be different amounts; the alternatives depend on requirements of certain client and project. (Cohen 2002, online)

Even established payment agreement might not be followed through correctly. There will be clients, who will not pay for various reasons. In this case, designer has choice – she

may accept the failure and learn from experience, or she may ask for help through arbitration, collection agencies, claims court, or civil court (Cohen 2002, online).

Nevertheless, payment strategies, negotiating schedule, and collecting payment should be a flexible process. It should be adapted to requirements and needs of both designer and client. Although payment negotiation eats a lot of time and energy, payment contract should be worked out precisely (Stone 2006, online). Therefore, well thought-out contract is one of the guarantees of successful relations in creative business because it alleviates tension between the graphic designer and a client and adds lucidity to their joint work.

## **7.7 Keeping clients coming back and getting new clients**

Practical cases mention staying in contact as another way to keep relations between the graphic designer and a client. This issue gives motivation for research that discovers how to keep clients. It goes beyond limits of existing relations and helps to establish long-term cooperation. Indeed, good design helps clients to construct their opinion about designer and remember her. However, as soon as project has been finished client forgets about designer because there are many other things in business to take care (Foote 1996, 278). Thus, keeping clients coming back becomes one more strategy to establish long perspective relations and get new design projects.

Whether designers like it or not, most clients think of them only once or perhaps twice, during their design process. And they might remember designer once when they have a look at the brochure, web page, logo, or poster that she has done. No more. (Foote, 1996: 278) Nevertheless, most likely designer's name comes to mind when the client is looking for specialist for certain kind of job. For the graphic designer, this means that relations with a client are not finished at the moment when the previous project is done. For continuing relations with new projects, designer may wait until client addresses her and uncovers new talents. However, the better way is to be initiative because clients may not know all designer can do (Foote 1996, 278). Therefore, this strategy is good business stimulation that helps not only keep old clients, but find new ones.

There are several ways to make clients remember designer (Foote 1996, 279):

- Asking for reference. Reference may become a good feedback from client and foundation for further business. Positive response is useful in working with new clients.

- Staying in contact. When project is completed, staying in contact may support relations with a client. It might be e-mails, greetings, showing of work samples for other clients.
- Looking out for ways to mention designer's versatility. Assignments are not equal; designer can show different expertise from her practice.
- Asking for more business. Straight question about new assignment clears up when and what kind of design client needs next time.

For keeping clients, getting new ones, and staying in good relations with them, designer should also think about marketing and self promotion. No matter how successful designer is, effective marketing can bring more clients, bigger assignments, more profit, and greater satisfaction (Sheldon 2008, 68). Unfortunately, this strategy may have a low priority in everyday haste that eats most of time and prevents of thinking about future plans. Also, the world has abundance of good graphic artists, who have no profit from their talent only because they do not pay enough attention at marketing themselves (Bowen 2004). For that reason, designer should always keep in mind that success depends not on what she does, but on how it is marketed and promoted.

For successful development, designer should know her specific strengths in terms of services, creativity, and value. Probably, even the best clients will not tell directly about designer's strengths and weaknesses if they are not asked (Bowen, 2004). In this case, the best way to get constructive information and recommendation is to ask. Client's survey is one of effective and cheap marketing tools that provide certain feedback about issues designer wants to know: price, quality of services, capabilities, and client's attitude (Bowen 2004).

The main issue is to decide what designer most wants to learn and to develop by constructive and structured questionnaire. This is a good foundation to get structured answers for further analysis. Constructive findings of survey may help to identify the weaknesses and develop plan for correcting them (Bowen 2004). Moreover, it may become an effective instrument for extension of services and making a good marketing message. Also, client's survey is an investment in keeping a good working relationship (Bowen 2004). Therefore, it provides new insight, and it is the fastest and most economical way to build a successful cooperation.

Client's survey may become a good motivation for changes. It may identify the areas where designer is the best in and the areas that are not significant for business development. Questioning evaluates designer through client's eyes, who actually does not buy creativity, but solutions for business problems. The understanding of individual strengths is critical because

it builds confidence in personal abilities that provide initial level of success (Foote 1996, 197). However, survey findings may also bring to light that designer is doing not exactly she enjoys and wants to do. The analysis of collected data may become a good motivation to change the business (Foote 1996, 198). In addition, by making survey, designer reveals business initiative and selling skills that are more important in getting and keeping the clients than creative talent and design experience.

Recognizing of personal strengths and matching them to the client's needs becomes a basis of sales strategy that should be easy and effective (Foote 1996, 218). Designer should be realistic in what she can offer to the client; only true differentiate ideas should be taken on marketing. Having identified individual distinctive features, designer should choose ways to get clients and assignments: referrals based on reputation and direct promotion.

Referrals are the best way to enlarge established reputation among acquaintances. Designer may ask to personal friends, suppliers, former employers, other noncompetitive designers, illustrators, and photographers to share the list of contacts (Foote 1996, 220–222). This list can be used to the announcement letter or occasional reminder letters. For this mailing no response is appropriate, but promotional effort is significant. In addition, joining professional clubs, award competitions, and design campaigns may provide more visibility and the potential of new contacts (Crawford 2005, 49–50). Volunteering for associations and participating in activities outside from creative community may also become a source of the contacts. Thus, keeping eyes opened helps designer to develop productive and favorable working relations either now or later.

Besides increasing the referrals and building a network, direct sales effort is another way to control the amount and type of business. Direct promotion aims to make designer's talents known to the right potential clients, in the right manner, and at the right time. Proper way of communicating with a client is the key to success. There are several practical means that designer may choose (Crawford 2005, 50–57; Foote 1996, 223–226; Sheldon 2008, 73–76):

- Cold calling. Designer has opportunity to show portfolio to perspective client without setting up an appointment. Cold calling are effective only at small companies with relaxed environment. In major organizations cold calling is discouraging and terribly inefficient.
- Telemarketing. Equivalent of cold calling for making contacts by telephone. It takes little preparation, has low cost, takes little time in comparison with cold calling. Telemarketing may be considered as interruption, which puts designer at disadvantage.



- Letters. This is universally appropriate way to contact present clients, but not very serious way to impact new clients. Letters are fast to prepare and inexpensive. Personally addressed, they leave strong positive statement about designer.
- Direct mail. Personally contained mailing means independent effort whether it works or not. Effectiveness of direct mailing depends on what mailing list is used. Well made mailing to the right people demonstrates a high degree of communications sophistication and creates immediate impact.
- Advertising. It is not primary promotional method that costs expensively and may have not very effective result. The payoff for advertising creative services is long-term, not immediate.
- Internet marketing. The effect from promoting design services through personal web page is minimal. But it is a good opportunity for the clients to check how designer's business is going on and whom designer is doing business. Web page can be used as a digital portfolio that is easy to access to look at work samples.
- Blogging. Designer's blog is a marketing message written in everyday friendly language that shows designer's style of personal and professional communications and helps to stand out from the crowd. Blog can be used as indirect marketing tool that conveys designer's sensibility.

Graphic designer's self marketing is an integral part of design business to stay visible for past clients and for seeking new prospects (Sheldon 2008, 76). Marketing is important for short-term goals to get business by sales efforts and for long-term objectives to become known for getting better assignments easier. For being competitive and for moving to a higher level, designer should not slow down after meeting short-term goals. (Foote 1996, 226–227) Moreover, in present environment where priorities shift, people move, memories fade, only continuous contact keeps designer in business.

Understanding of personal strengths, turning them to a differentiate idea, developing of a consistent sales strategy, and choosing the right methods of marketing help designer not only to get new assignments, but to extend individual expertise for establishing of profitable, trusting, and respectful relations with the client. Nevertheless, months or years may pass before clients come. However, when they come they will know exactly why this particular designer is the best for them.

## **7.8 Adaptation and compromise**

As any other kind of business, creative business requires adaptation to existing conditions. This aspect is just outlined in practical cases. However, this does not make it less important. In many respects, social responsibility and the role of problem solver puts designer in the clients' shoes and requires communicating with them in a way they are interested in. It requires taking sincere interest in what clients want and balanced combination and of separate knowledge, emotional contribution, and creative experiments (Fehr 2009). Therefore, each project requires a sort of compromise. Besides, high competition forces designer to adapt her personal preferences to public needs. Thus, adaptation is another designer's strategy to keep comfortable relations with a client.

Designer's complains about client's demands, budgets, and deadlines. However, in every industry one can find something to complain to and it should not keep designer from doing a good work. After all, high demands lead to great design solutions for communicating ideas. (Warburton 2005) Accordingly, designer should understand that the final product is not only designer's offspring – photographers, illustrators, copywriters, and editors may participate in work. Also, client's inestimable input can not be ignored. No less as designers they love the end result. Thus, for successful cooperation, it is in the interests of designer to stop moaning and groaning and to find compromise.

Instead of complaining on clients and educating them, designer should rethink personal attitude and probably change style of working (Shaughnessy, 2009: 19). Such pragmatic method shows distinctly that design is not for pleasing yourself. Certainly, most designers like what they do; it is not a bad thing. But the sense of pleasing yourself at the expense of client is a reason of countless conflicts and relationship meltdowns (Shaughnessy, 2009: 20). Therefore, designer should find a balance to combine own satisfaction and client's satisfaction. As each new client evolves new challenges, adaptation and searching for compromise never ends. Learning how to deal with particular client gives experience and professional growth.

Client's attitude to designer should also be reconsidered because designer is not a middle person or expensive layer in complex business structure (Giffen 2004, 27). Designer helps to navigate through client's needs. For example, clients may say that she needs a brochure, but after consultation with designer client realizes that she needs a direct mail and e-mail campaign. This means that designer helps to figure out marketing needs, rather than just design needs. In this context, design becomes one more significant tool in business and brand

strategy. Therefore, compromise due to collective conscience is one of preconditions of success for both graphic designer and a client.

Though compromise is a fact of life, it might be a troublesome topic in person's individualistic culture (FitzGerald 2007, online). In this context, the necessity to compromise, adapt to circumstances makes design difficult to practice (Green 2005, online). However, compromise concerns the graphic designer, client, and every stage of relations between them. Thus, it can be adopted as a guiding principle to make relations between the graphic designer and a client easier.

## Conclusion

Successful design solution does not appear itself. It is a result of effective relations between people who create it. That is why this research underlines the importance of personal attitude of design process participants. This attitude should be based on honesty, openness, trust, and responsibility. Also, it combines knowledge, desire for learning and improvement, talent, high creativity, enthusiasm, and energy.

This research emphasizes graphic designer's proactive position based on clear understanding of her social role. Graphic designer is a creator of visual communication that shapes personal opinion and influences on mass behavior. By creating design projects, designer builds up modern society and trends of its future development. This means designer takes responsibility of success or failure of design. Therefore, it is the designer should try to establish a relationship of mutual respect with a client.

This research shows client as equal in rights participant of design process and expert in her industry. This means client has a significant level of responsibility of design project. The clearer goal she states the better result designer distributes within provided constraints. Also, it is a client's choice to accept or reject designer's solution. Thus, client should remember about her belonging to design.

In this work, the goals of the graphic designer and a client intersect – they focus on producing of effective design solution. In this case, positive relationships and mutual understanding are critical for them. Therefore, my research takes a look inside design process and its practicalities and discovers reasons of disorder in designer/client cooperation. This study concludes with guidelines for graphic designers and for their clients that help to avoid mistakes in joint design process, find mutual understanding, improve their professional relations, and produce better design solution.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Interview questionnaire for the client.

### Tell about yourself

1. Information about field where you work
2. What is the role of design in company or field of activity you work in? What is the need in design? (is it communication, marketing strategy that makes people act, or instrument to make thing aesthetically pleasant and attractive)
3. What is your position in business hierarchy (owner of business, top manager, department manager, staff level professional)
4. Why your position is related with working with designer?
5. What is your role in design process?
6. Please describe your feeling during joint work with designer (empathy, risk of receiving unexpected result, desire to get result as soon as possible)
7. Are you the only person who works with designer? (If no, what are the other members of working team?)

### What designers do you work with?

1. What are the projects that you order to graphic designer? (Brochure, logo, web-site, poster...)
2. Do you work with in-house designers, with free-lancers, or with design-studios?

For those who have in-house designer:

Why is it important to have in-house designer?

What projects you order to in-house designer and what to outside studio? Why?

3. What are the differences for you as a client in working with individual designer and with studio?
4. Do you address new projects to new designer (or studio) or you work constantly with one designer (or studio)? Why?
5. What is the difference between those, who worked with you before and who work with you for the first time?
6. What is designer's role in design process? (Is designer mediator of your ideas or producer of ideas?)

7. What is your attitude to designer?
8. How do you think what is designer's attitude to you as client? (as dictator, as equal, as follower of his/her ideas)

### **What are relations between graphic designer and the client?**

1. What are the most common difficulties that you have faced in working with designer?
  - Does designer always understand what you need?
  - Do you get what you expect to get from designer?
  - Confrontations according concepts
  - Rounds of changes in visual representations
  - Unexpected results
  - Missing of deadlines
2. Do problems appear at the beginning of process, in the middle stages, or in the end?
3. What are the reasons of misunderstanding between you and designer?
  - Lack of responsibility and unethical behavior (designer's personal preferences against product purpose)
  - Bad design brief (lack of information)
  - Misunderstandings in contract negotiations
  - Clarity is missing
  - The trouble with technology
4. Please, describe your best and worst experience in working with designer (or studio)?  
(example)

### **How relations with designer can be improved?**

1. What helps you in relations with designer?
  - More respect
  - Précised design brief
  - More information
  - More clarity, credibility, and flexibility
  - More personal contact
  - Compromise and adaptation
2. How do you manage to find compromise with designer?
3. What motivates you to address certain designer again?
4. What can you do to improve relations with designer?

## **Appendix 2. Interview questionnaire for the graphic designer.**

### **Tell about yourself**

1. What is your education in design?
2. What is your working experience in design?
3. Information about where you work now (design company, design department at big corporation, freelance, own design studio) the role of design at your company.
4. What are your career plans?

### **Who are you as a designer?**

1. Why did you choose design as profession? What makes you a designer?
  - Is it a communication tool between producer and consumer?
  - Is it a way for designer's self expression?
  - Is a tool to sale the product better?
2. What are your responsibilities as designer at the company? (performer, mediator between client and customer, producer yourself )
3. What does differ you as a designer from decorator? (Creativity, non-standard view, strategic thinking, innovative thinking, sense of commercial purpose, ability to anticipate public expectations, long-term humanistic purpose)
4. What is your personal contribution to design project? Please describe your feeling while you are creating? (empathy, inner dialogue, risk of receiving unexpected result, intuition, inner belief to do things better)
5. Please describe how do you find compromise between your ideas and project goals and requirements. (example)
6. What additional skills besides design skills do use in your work? (communication skills, team working skills, scientific approach, )
7. What important skills for design have you obtained at your working place, not at educational institution? (public speaking, communication, team working, good presentation)
8. What are the differences between these skills?
9. What is the role of educational institution in growing up young designers?
  - Is it important to have a degree in design?

### **What are your clients?**

1. Do you work for private individuals or companies?

2. What are the differences for you as a designer in working with individuals and companies?
3. Do your clients have experience in working with designers before?
4. What are the difference between those, who worked with you and first time clients?
5. Did you have situations in your design practice when client treated you as dictator, as equal, as producer?
6. What is your attitude to the client? (do you treat your client as a friend or patient)

### **What are relations between graphic designer and the client?**

1. What are the most common difficulties that you have faced with the client?
  - Do you always understand what client needs?
  - Confrontations according concepts
  - Rounds of changes in visual representations
  - Unexpected results
  - Missing of deadlines
2. Do problems appear at the beginning of process, in the middle stages, or in the end?
3. What are the reasons of misunderstanding between you and the client?
  - Lack of responsibility and unethical behavior (client's personal preferences against product purpose)
  - Bad design brief
  - Misunderstandings in contract negotiations
  - Clarity is missing
  - The trouble with technology

### **How relations with the client can be improved?**

1. What helps you in relations with the client?
  - More respect
  - Précised design brief
  - More information
  - More clarity, credibility, and flexibility
  - Promotion and marketing for keeping the clients
  - Compromise and adaptation
2. How do you manage to find compromise?
3. What helps you to keep clients back?
4. What can you do to improve relations with the client?