# **The Rational Model & Graphic Design**

## **Graphic Design**

Traditionally, there have been two main ways to depict the design process. They're called the rational model and the action-centric model.

**rational model** - design is propelled by plans and known constraints, while the

**action-centric model** - design is motivated by improvisation and emotion.

## **Rational Model Design Process**

**The rational model** was described that the design process is naturally and inherently motivated by known objectives and parameters. A designer gets a project and begins to create his or her design based on what he or she knows about both the desired outcome and the restrictions. **The rational model**, therefore, claims that structure is essential to the design process.

**The rational model** suggests that designs are achieved through research. Through both previous and new empirically-sourced knowledge, the designer works to create a design that fits within his or her parameters and will meet the objective of the design.

This very scientific and methodical approach relies heavily on a design process that is controlled and regulated by dividing it into a clear progression of stages. Designers must work within this scheduled and planned system in order to create the best design.

There are a number of formulas for these stages:

**First**, generate initial designs based on initial understandings of objectives and parameters. The steps include

1. Producing an initial declaration of the design goals that will define the project, then analyzing these objectives,
2. Researching how other designs respond to similar objectives, then using this to further define the design needs, objectives, and parameters, and
3. Recording the solutions you develop to overcome design challenges.

Next, start actually creating the design based on your knowledge and research. As you do, try implementing your design solutions in a methodical way and record the results. Once you have created the design, test it out: see if it works, as well as if it meets the necessary objectives and parameters. If need be, go back to the beginning in order to re-design elements that need correcting. In the end, write a description and analysis of the entire process, noting what worked and what did not for future projects.

## **Pros & Cons**

**Pros:**

* It is the most efficient form of the design process for designers who are contracted by someone else. Basically, if someone hires you to design a website, you are given the objectives and parameters from the start, and this model ensures that the end product will fit within those requirements.

**Cons:**

* The rational model is simply unrealistic. Studies of designers have found that most designers do not actually work this way; the design process in action is not one that can be proscribed into specific steps and stages.
* The goals of a design can change frequently, and many objectives are not actually known when the project begins, so they cannot be incorporated into the plan from the start.

## **Lesson Summary**

There are two main methods for describing the graphic design process.

**Rational model**, which sees the design process as motivated by planning and conducted through distinct stages. According to the rational model, the design process is defined by known objectives, requirements, and parameters, and the designer creates his or her design through developing, testing, and analyzing the ideas about the project.

It is opposed by others who see it as unrealistic and not representative of the actual fluidity of the design process.