

Interview Questions

Can you tell me a bit about yourself?

Allow me to break that down into personal and professional.

Professionally, I found my start in Web Design by way of the US Navy. On submarines, every department has additional duties and my department's responsibilities included the ship's intranet. That's how I was introduced to the world of web design. I had no experience. Zero knowledge. Nothing. I spent weeks and weeks training myself in HTML and CSS. By the end of my first tour, I had it down. Because of that experience, I was able to secure jobs in the design industry. I've worked for several companies and I've worked as a freelancer for the past 17 years; half my life. I moved from basic HTML/CSS to liquid designs, to responsive designs, to now mobile designs.

Personally, I'm a huge sports fan. I am a lover of all things Dallas. I enjoy working out, outdoor activities, my dog, not a fan of winter, huge video gamer. I also have a 13-year old son who has been designing small pc games since he was 10. He's attended GA Tech's program the past 2 years.

What are your strengths?

My strengths are in using design software such as Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, and Fireworks. I have tons of experience with Adobe products.

I pay special attention to detail and design with forward thinking such as designing for Mobile First.

I'm also a team player who knows when to offer advice. For example, if I know there is a better solution, I will make that known in a very constructive way.

What are your weaknesses?

My greatest weakness is creativity on the spot. If you ask me to design a concept right here, right now, I may not do a good job. I am very careful and like to take my time with designs. I like to put a lot of thought (maybe too much thought) into projects. I do tend to over think and overcomplicate simple tasks.

I've learned to overcome this a few ways. 1) I take a step back and reread the client's instructions. I try to make sure I am delivering the results that they want and not what I want. 2) I search the net for inspiration for my design. I don't copy material but I will get an idea of what I want to create.

What is your graphic design process?

1. Consultation
2. Implementation (Design Mockup)

During this phase I use tools such as Photoshop, Illustrator, Fireworks, and more to create a mockup for the client to review.

3. Revisions
4. Publication

What have you learned from your mistakes as a graphic designer?

I've learned to use tools for their intended purpose. Although a designer can use Fireworks or even Photoshop to create basic vector designs, it's ultimately not a great option. Illustrator is best for vectors. I was slow to learn Illustrator until about 2 years ago. I discovered that the issues I had using Fireworks were easily solvable if would just use Illustrator. That's when I began to purchase learning materials to better understand the differences between the 3 and how to use Illustrator more efficiently.

What are your graphic design career goals?

I want to create a logo that is as recognizable as McDonald's Golden arches or as widely viewed on my mobile devices such as the Google brand. I want to create something that will leave a lasting impression.

I would also like to take the lead on a project for a major client such as Macy's or UPS. I would love to look back and know that I created that awesome design package.

Why did you leave your last job?

I left my last job because I saw an opportunity as an entrepreneur and decided to take it. At the time, I had a client that accounted for over 1/3 of my monthly income. About 6 months ago that company went belly up and I lost 1/3 of my income. That was a hard lesson to learn as a 34 year old. It never crossed my mind that I could lose such a chunk of my income overnight. I need something stable and predictable. That's why I decided to re-join the workforce.

I applied to Moxie because of the photos on your website of the workforce. It seems like a really fun place to work. Contrary to most, I am very selective with the companies I reach out to. I want to join Moxie because I know my skill set matches and it seems to be a fun place to work!

What do you know about our company, brand?

Moxie appears to be a marketing, design, branding type firm.

What have you done to improve your knowledge of graphic design?

I've purchased a ton of books and video learning DVD's. I follow a ton of graphic artists on social media. My mentor is Michael Locke. I keep up with the latest trends online. I have a practice only day on Friday's where I typically don't take calls from clients. Instead, I pick a new subject to learn or continue an existing. One week it could be AngularJS another it could be Adobe Illustrator.

Can you tell me about a time you have to work under pressure and how you overcame it?

I had a client request a due date change from 1 month to 3 days (over the weekend). The project would take at least 2 weeks from start to finish. Somehow, somehow I pulled it off. I hired another freelancer to handle some of the design and literally stayed awake, minus a few hours, all weekend. The client had a showing at 8pm Monday night. I literally worked before and during the showing. I made edits before the client could even finish the walkthrough. The client had no idea. I crashed for the next day or so but the payout for the project and the rush was worth it.

What kinds of design projects interest you?

I love designing pages for telecom, real estate, and fitness clients. For some reason, those attract me the most.

How good are you at sticking to deadlines?

I live by a few mottos. Time is money. I can sleep when I'm dead. And find a way or make one. That's my philosophy in life.

What graphic design software are you most comfortable working with?

I typically start by designing a fully functional mockup using Photoshop. Once the mockup is complete, I use either Dreamweaver to code the design with HTML5, CSS3, jQuery, etc... If the client prefers a CMS, I use Wordpress, Joomla, Drupal, Magento, Shopify, or whichever works best for the client.

What graphic design software do you know best? Which one could you improve?

I am most familiar, in this order, with the following tools

Adobe Fireworks

Adobe Photoshop

Adobe Illustrator

Adobe InDesign

I could stand to improve my skills using InDesign. I rarely work with clients to produce print material.

What do you think are the most important qualities in a graphic designer?

A graphic designer must be able to listen and accurately interpret what the client's wants and needs. Each design element must be uniform for both visual appeal and branding purposes. A good graphic designer never stops learning.

How comfortable are you being told what to design?

I am very comfortable being told what to design. I believe a good designer ultimately wants the client to be happy with what they have. Although I'm not afraid to provide professional advice when I feel it's necessary, I do so in a way that is not threatening. For example, if the client requests me to design graphic A and I notice the design is out-dated. I will design graphic A and also another graphic B that I think looks much better. Then I will give them both to the client to decide.

How well do you take criticism?

Positive criticism can only help me to become a better designer. I never become offended when someone offers a better solution to what I am doing.

Do you sketch your designs first before converting them to digital format?

Absolutely. I typically use an application such as Photoshop, Fireworks, or Illustrator to design a mockup. Then, I code the design in an application such as Dreamweaver. I always design my sites with Mobile in mind first.

How many designs do you usually sketch before choosing one?

I have a different approach. I work on a design until I either hate it or love it. If I hate it, I start from scratch. Sometimes I take ideas from previous sketches but often times it's totally different.

Do you have a tablet at home? What is it and why do you like it?

Yes I have a tablet; I have an iPad. I like my iPad because it's so convenient. I can update a client's website while at the gym on the elliptical. I can go hangout at a bar with my friends while working on a client's backend. If I could download Adobe products, I would be in heaven.

How long would it take you to plan, design, and complete a 300x400 banner?

It would take about 2 hours to complete that size banner. Mostly likely, I would create it using Illustrator so that it is scalable. I need one hour to sketch a concept and design using the application. I would leave myself an additional hour to check for errors, add additional design elements to enhance the look, and compare quality to similar designs.

How familiar are you designing graphics for [online marketing, newspapers, etc.]?

I am very familiar with online marketing and newspaper graphics. I've included several in my portfolio.

You may be given strict parameters for your designs. Will that stifle your creativity?

I design what I am told to design. If I feel that the proposed design lacks the quality or relevancy, I will make that known in a constructive way. For example, I would create two designs. One design would be as I was instructed; the other design would be as I envision it should look. I then let the director decide.

You are told to create a design without any instructions. What do you do?

As long as I know what it's for, who it's for, and why they want it created, I can pretty much come up with anything.

Question for the Interviewer

Will I have the ability to work after hours and from home during down time? In other words, how do we handle those urgent situations from a client? Am I restricted only to normal business hours? As a freelancer I typically start my work week on Sunday. I hate the rush of Monday mornings I like to start the week one step ahead.

What version of Adobe are you guys using? CS6? Cloud?

What is the top priority for the person in this position over the next three months?

What are some challenges that will face the person filling this position?

Do you have any hesitations about my qualifications?

Can you tell me about the team I'll be working with?

Where do you think the company is headed in the next 5 years?

What is the typical career path for someone in this role?

What are the biggest challenges facing the company/department right now?

What's the next step?