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 know 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.

1. Revisions
2. 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, someway 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 300×400 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?**