**Placement Report**

**Introduction**

For my placement I worked at Prestige Designz who are based in Leicester and are rated one of best Web Developers in their city. Other services they provide also include Graphics Design; Printing and Signage; Video Animations and Photography. Their main clients include companies who are freshly starting up or existing ones that need help creating websites or update/maintain their existing ones; design and print business cards; flyers, signage and fitting. In other words, they’re well known for helping new businesses start and help set up everything for them that may be essential.

Few of their well-known clients include ‘Mumtaz’, who were chosen to cook for the queen at an event at University of Huddersfield back in 2007. Prestige Designz have also done graphics design work for some Leicester City FC players (not allowed to disclose names) in the past. They have also done branding work for Amir Khan who is a professional British boxer and former world champion as well as for his missus who is a model. Apart from these clients who are very well known throughout the country, Prestige Designz have also worked with clients that are well known in Leicester, such as SKR Legal Solicitors and Dr Slush (have many branches across the UK) to name a few.

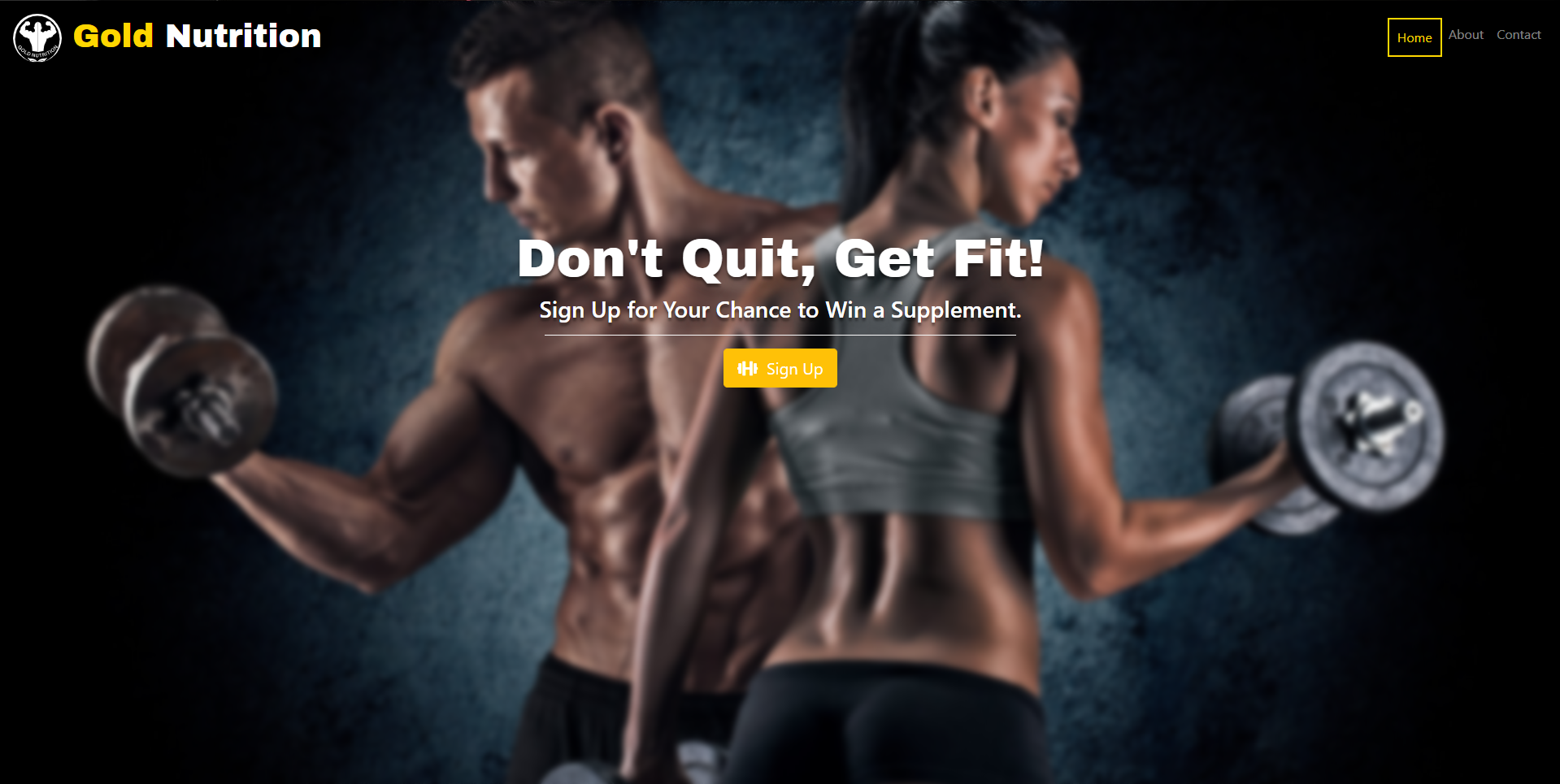
My role in the company was mostly help doing the front-end for the website as well as doing graphics design work such as designing logos (for websites, signage etc); flayer, business cards, menus. I mostly used HTML and CSS languages as front-end languages and occasionally some JavaScript. When I first started my placement, I was only working on smaller scale web development projects and occasionally graphics design projects; mainly logo design. But as I improved at my role and got better at the job, I was assigned to bigger projects for web development and given more variety of jobs for graphics design work instead of just designing logos. I had some knowledge on HMTL and CSS before starting, however I had to learn everything from scratch when it came to graphics design.

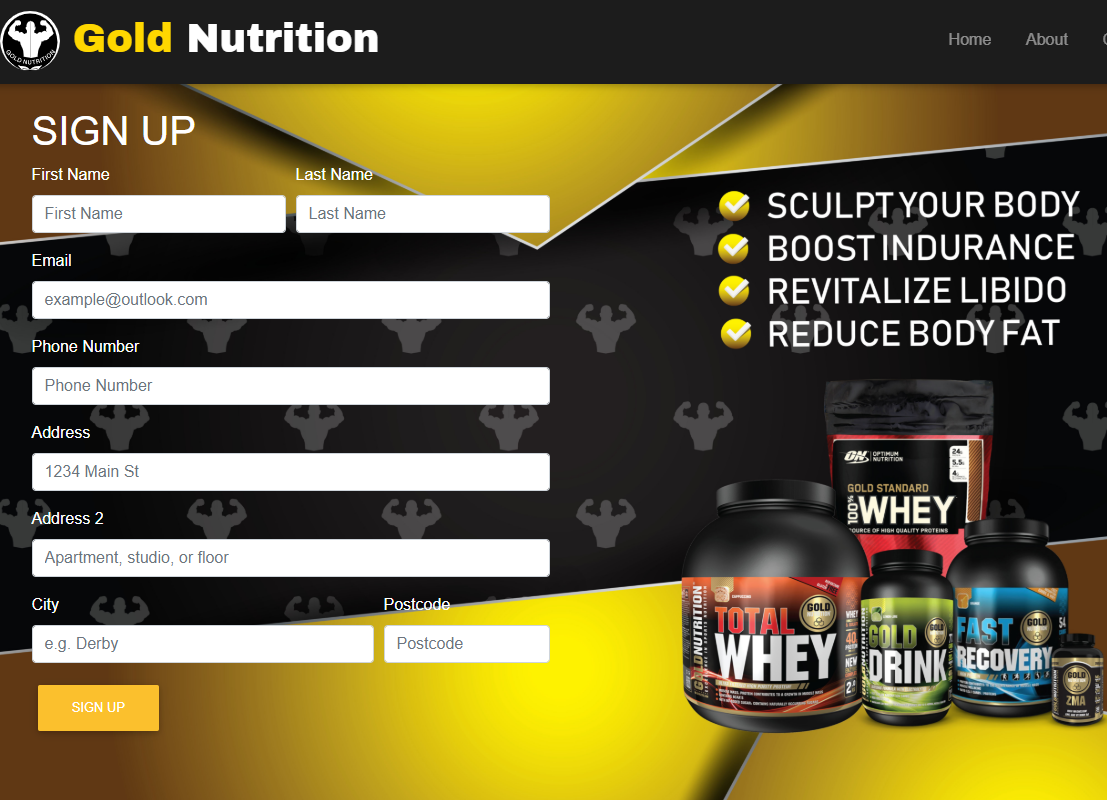
**Activities**

Out of all the projects that I have done, the project which I will never forget is my very first graphics design project which got approved by the customer. Normally when I created, for example logo designs etc, the customer wouldn’t like it and would find faults in it, thus Jeovorne or someone else had to give it the finishing touches so it met the client standards. That’s why this project is one of the main turning point for me as I was starting to have less and less confidence in my graphic design skills since my work was never approved. For this project I had to create a logo and a promotional leaflet for a Caribbean food centre called ‘Hot Pot’ with their menu on the back. I first did some research and concluded to have the Caribbean colour theme on the leaflet. I had to first decide the right font to use and then started the logo design for which I thought I should play with the word ‘Hot Pot’. I told Jeovorne of my idea and he really liked it and encouraged me to try it. So, for ‘Hot’ I wanted to add something which symbolised hotness, so I thought of replacing the letter ‘T’ in the word using a red chili instead. However, it didn’t look right to me, so I decided to use a flame instead (which also symbolises hotness) of the letter ‘O’ which looked great. So, for the word ‘Pot’, I substituted the letter ‘o’ for an actual pot’. After finishing it, I sent it off to Ali for some feedback, but he approved it straight away. I then started working on the leaflet design which took longer than expected as I was keep having to make changes. I also struggled as this was my first leaflet design, so I didn’t know how to approach it and where to start. So, like with any project, I started with some research on leaflet designs and when I had a design in mind, I started working on it. I used the Caribbean colour scheme as the background and used some Caribbean cuisine pictures too. After making the front side of the leaflet, I proceeded to work on the back side where I had to put their menu. I used different colours and pictures as well as make heading (which contain important information) bold to make it more eye catching. After having it approved by Ali, we had a meeting with the client to show them the finished leaflet, and he really liked the way I had designed it which helped me with my confidence and helped me believe in myself a bit more.

One of the most memorable projects I enjoyed working on was a creating a family board game for a client which, if I had to describe, was like snake and ladders as it followed a similar principle (not allowed to disclose too much information on the project as it’s still not finished). It was a very big project which I took a great pleasure being part of. We were required to design the game from scratch, do logo design for the game; logo design for the company logo (as this was their very first project and they plan on making more in the future); packaging and design for the packaging; website for the company which will contain everything about the company and where they will sell their products. I was first assigned to make few logo prototypes for their company logo while Jeovorne and few others worked on the packaging for the game. First, I did some market research and looked at other board games such as monopoly, Ludo, Snake and Ladders etc. After doing research I concluded that I had to make the logo design colourful and eye catching as the target audience were kids. After creating a few logo designs, I sent them to Ali for some feedback. After making the improvement, I once again sent them to Ali for feedback; this process was repeated a few times until he was satisfied with the designs and approved them. Once the designs had been approved, we arranged a meeting with the client. The client had a monthly meeting scheduled with us so we can keep her up to date on the progress of the project; she can provide us with feedback so we can make any changes she requires. This will help us make sure we are meeting the client’s requirements at every step, so we don’t have to go back and change things when the project has come far. During the meeting, she didn’t like any of the designs and gave us her feedback. The one thing which she liked about the designs I had done were the colour scheme which she wanted to keep. After we had discussion about the logo design with the client, we then got feedback on the designing of the game which Jeovorne and Omarji oversaw. After making the changes which she had wanted, I designed 3 more logos and then got them approved by Ali; another meeting with the client was arranged. The second time she liked one of the designs and approved it. Now I was in-charge of creating the packaging design (the picture that goes on the front of the box where the game name is etc). I again started with doing some research first, so I have an idea what to make. After doing some research I created four designs and got them approved after getting feedback form Ali and Brisco. I really liked 1 of the four designs and was very confident as well as convinced that the client would choose this as it portrayed the game very well; I believed this to be my best work thus far. Even my teammates were convinced she would choose this design, however, when we had the meeting with her, she didn’t like any of the designs at all. I was very upset, and dishearten and my confidence took a very big blow. It was so bad that I just couldn’t think of any other designs to make and was upset for a few days, so Brisco had to pass the job onto someone else and I was told to make start on the website instead. He told me to make a landing page (it means that the website wont contain much content, just design the website and publish it first for exposure and make a page saying “Coming Soon” or something). I started by using a template which I had used for another project. The website didn’t take very long to do as it didn’t contain much content thus, I got it approved by Brisco straight away. I was then assigned to work on the designing of the game with Jeovorne’s team. While working on the game, my placement came to an end, so I didn’t get to see the finished product sadly.

Another project I would like to mention is a website project I did which was an individual project. One of the main reasons why I liked this project was because this website looked very professional and I was very satisfied with it as it was fully responsive and looked good. The website was about selling supplements called ‘Gold Nutrition’ and aimed at people that go to the gym. I didn’t have to do much research for this as I previously had experience buying supplements online. I started by using a template which I had from other projects. I used bootstrap framework throughout the website which made things simple. I then created the logo on illustrator for the website and created the home page; after I finished rest of the pages. I was first having troubles finding the right pictures to use because they can have a very big impact on your website. I had to spend a very long time finding the right pictures to use. Another thing I was struggling with was making the website responsive as I was unaware of the features bootstrap provided for making your website responsive. After trying to do it myself, I went to Ali for advice and he was the one who made me aware of it, which made things a lot easier and the code cleaner. After I finished the website, I sent it off to Ali who gave me some feedback. I then applyied the changes, we arranged a meeting with the client who liked how the website looked and was very satisfied.





**Achievements**

It has been a unique experience working at Prestige Designz where I learnt a lot of interpersonal/technical skills, and other skills I improved on while on the placement. Firstly, I would like to talk about the technical skills I learnt. When I started, I had basic knowledge on HTML and CSS languages as I had worked on ASP.NET at university which is a similar, yet different way to code the websites (as it doesn’t rely too much on those languages). The main improvement is efficient/clean code and learnt a lot of advance techniques; the main one being able to use bootstrap framework which had so many build-in features and without it I think making a website would be a bit more time-consuming as well as difficult. You didn’t have to hard code a lot features (due to bootstrap having them built-in already ) and with bootstrap 4 you don’t have to use CSS to style your website because if you use the attributes provided by bootstrap, it will style it for you. I learnt flexbox technique which was extremely helpful making my website look more professional as it makes it easier for you to manipulate the content on the website. I also learn the grid method which is like nesting content and makes it clear (which content is part of which section); this makes your code easy to understand and looks more professional. I also learnt a bit of JavaScript and DOM manipulation but am not very fluent at using them yet as they were not used very often for front-end, however, it’s additional knowledge which could be useful if I chose to pursue a career in web development. I also learnt how to work on Adobe Illustrator and can now design a verity of things from logo design to leaflet design. Before starting my placement, I had no knowledge of Illustrator, not even the basics; thus, I’m grateful for learning new skills and having knowledge of something I never thought I would learn.

There are a lot of professional and personal skills I learnt during my placement which will help me in my future jobs and in everyday life. One of the obvious improvements was my coding skill as it is cleaner and more efficient compared to before. I also learnt how to contribute in meetings and how to deal with clients in a professional manner when negotiating with them. When I started, there were times when I used to arrive late due to traffic or train being delayed, but now I am very punctual; I now have made my habit to leave a lot earlier and take these obstructions into consideration. During my placement, a lot of the work required me to work in a team which helped me improve my teamworking skills, so now I am a better team worker and have learnt to communicate well with my teammates. I have learnt to manage my time very well as over the past year I’ve had to manage multiple projects at once over a small course of time. My verbal communication has improved the most compared to other skills as it was very bad when I started as I would stutter when I felt nervous which was an issue since my role required me to communicate with clients verbally in meetings, and occasionally over the phone.

One of the main skills which I worked on during my placement was my self-confidence. When I started my placement, I was very nervous and didn’t have the confidence to think my work would be at the standard they are looking for and they would be disappointed with me as I don’t have much experience developing websites or doing graphic designs. I felt uncomfortable in unfamiliar territory, meaning if there was something new I had to attempt and I didn’t have knowledge on, I would feel nervous; I would think I didn’t have the ability to complete the given task before even attempting it. My lack of confidence really effected my work as it would stop me from working to the best of my abilities. This became an issue anytime I was given new tasks to do as I got better at my role, or when I first had a meeting with a client, thus I had a talk with Brisco on how we can improve my confidence. He told me to believe in my abilities and be more confident; if I didn’t have what it takes, then he wouldn’t have taken me on for the placement year. He also told me that its ok to make mistakes, that’s how you learn, if someone is not making mistakes, then he is doing something wrong and not learning. In conclusion to the talk, he told me to first attempt the task before giving up and thinking I can’t do it; if I can’t do it even after attempting it, it’s ok because there are lots of people around me who are willing to help me. Confidence is something I’m still working on, but compared to before, I believe I am a lot more confident in myself and my abilities. During the placement I also wasn’t good at taking part in meetings as I would often speak out of turn and ask too many irrelevant questions. This took me some time to improve on but over time, I was able to fix my habit on asking too many questions. I am now very professional at meeting and ask relevant questions which will help with the project. I really struggled taking criticism from client and colleagues as It made me feel my work is not at the ability they want, and it overall just didn’t feel good. However, I learn that having your work critiqued was in fact very useful as it helps you see the areas where you can improve on which helps you grow and makes you better.

Confidence will still be one of the main areas for improvement for me, although I am a lot better, I still feel it needs more improvement. When I started my placement, I feel I was at 30% and now I am at 70%, so there still room for improvement. Another area I feel I need to improve would be my presentation skills, which I didn’t get much opportunities to improve on as I become very nervous being the centre of attention, and sometimes this results in my voice sounding shaky or my hands/legs shaking uncontrollably. I would like to work on my leadership skills as I feel it’s something I don’t do very often which is linked with my confidence issue; and having this skill will be very beneficial for me in the future and as well as something I personally would like to be good at since employers look for people with leadership qualities. Overall, I enjoyed my placement and gained a lot of inside knowledge on how a small company operates and how it feels being part of it.