

**STUART  
MCMAW**



**CREATIV3  
PLACEMENT  
2017-18**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Chris McClenaghan

Director at Creativ3 to whom I reported for work. I would like to thank Chris for all his tremendous 'hands on' help during my time on placement. Always there for any technical problem I had or any questions that I needed to ask.

## Henry McCrory

Director of Creativ3, who is in charge of business administration and client management. Henry is a top motivator, encouraging me to keep learning and was more than happy to answer any of my questions.

## Josh Rolloos

Another placement student from IMD (Interactive Multimedia Design) who also spent the year at Creativ3. Josh was more involved in the video production and photography side of the business but that gave me another source of knowledge and meant we were not competing for the same type of work.



# INTRODUCTION

Creativ3 are a small design firm based in Carrickfergus, focusing on what they call the 3 core elements of media: Print, Web and Video.

Creativ3 was keen to take on two placement students this year to help ease the workload that was being placed upon Chris, one of the Directors. My main roles were quickly established as:

- Creating websites using Wordpress
- App and brochure design
- Video and photo editing.

I was also tasked with helping out on photography shoots, setting up the 'in house' studio and taking responsibility for 'behind the scenes' social media photography on all photo shoots.

# PLACEMENT COMPANY

Creativ3, founded in 1995, began as a printing company based in Belfast but have since branched out to cover all aspects of media. They are a small limited company currently consisting of 3 full time employees. The directors, Chris and Henry, firmly believe that video is the best way to create more engaging content and this is one of their main selling points to their clients.

One of Creativ3's principle clients is the HSC Public Health Agency. Throughout my placement year there was always ongoing work to be completed for them. This work would include App Design, Web Design and Video Production.

Early in 2018 Creativ3 merged with another company called iMarvel. They are a B2B Agency who focus on brand growth and LinkedIn marketing. The workload increased noticeably and became more consistent after this merger took place. This has greatly helped Creative3 and proved a valuable experience for me to witness the accelerated growth of a small business.



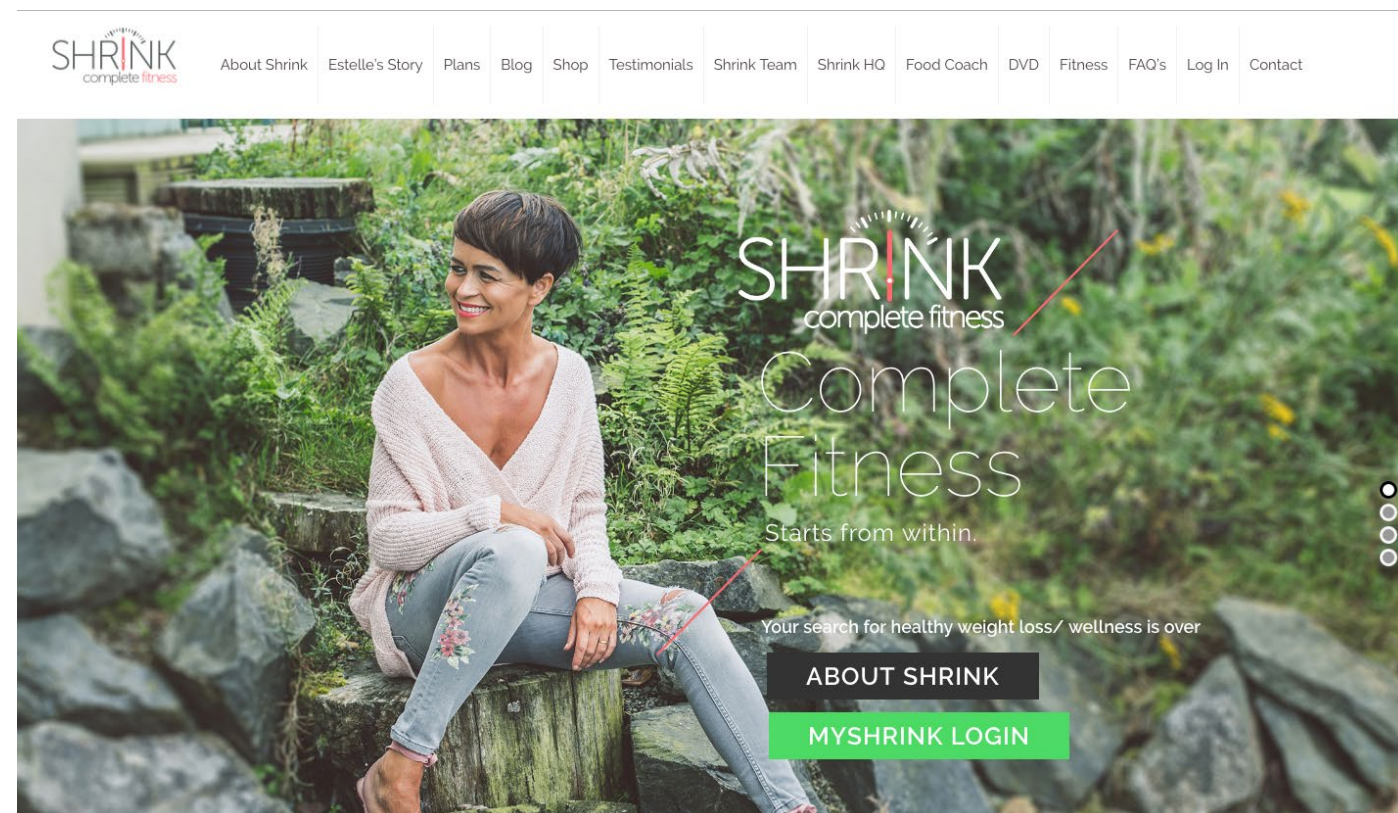
# MY ROLE

My first few weeks at Creativ3 were used to help familiarise myself with the programmes that I would be using throughout my placement year. Some I had used before but some were completely new to me.

## Website Design

My main role was quickly established at Creativ3 as working on web design and development. The company had been using Wordpress for some years for their web development work, so I had to quickly learn how best to use it. I did discover many advantages of using the programme, not least when dealing face to face with clients. The programme's simplicity helps the client better understand their own website and how it can be updated with revised content at any time.

As part of my role I assisted in the design and development of a website for Shrink Complete Fitness. This particular client required a site which was primarily image based while maintaining the functionality required to allow users to log on to their account and access required information easily and clearly.

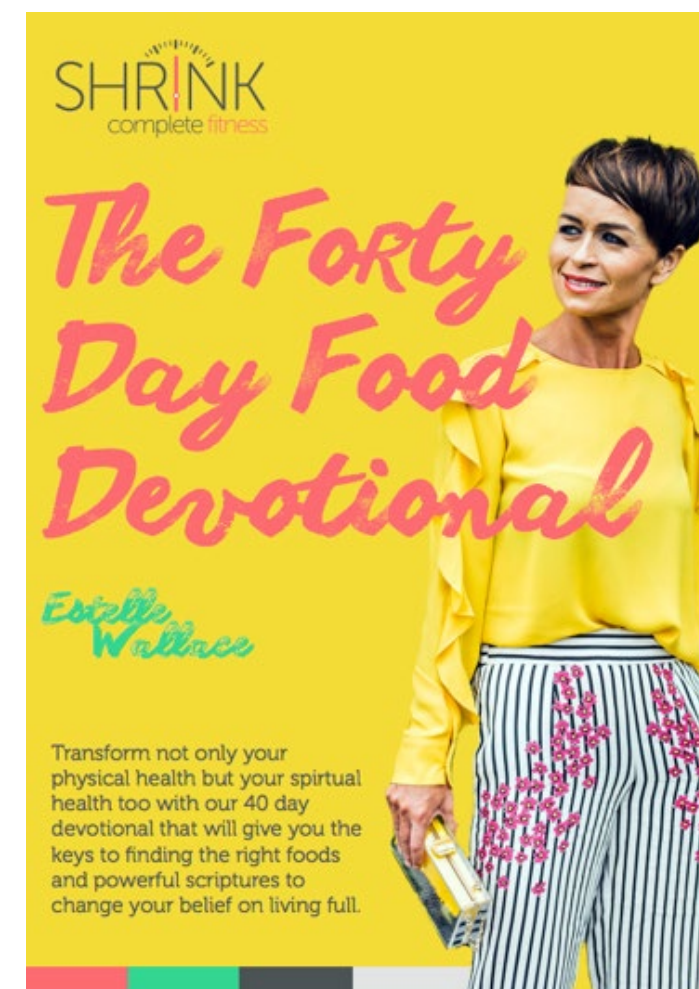


4

## Brochure Design

During my placement I was often tasked to create brochures or e-booklets using InDesign, a programme that I had only briefly used in the past. Chris had however been using InDesign for many years and so he became a valuable source of knowledge for me as I learned first the basics and then on to a more in depth level.

One of the clients I created a brochure for was Shrink Complete Fitness. I was given the content and was asked to create an introductory brochure that would be sent out to all new members of their fitness programme. I kept the design of the brochure in line with that of the website that Chris and I had designed and developed for them not long before. The client was very pleased with the results and has since had more work completed by Creativ3.

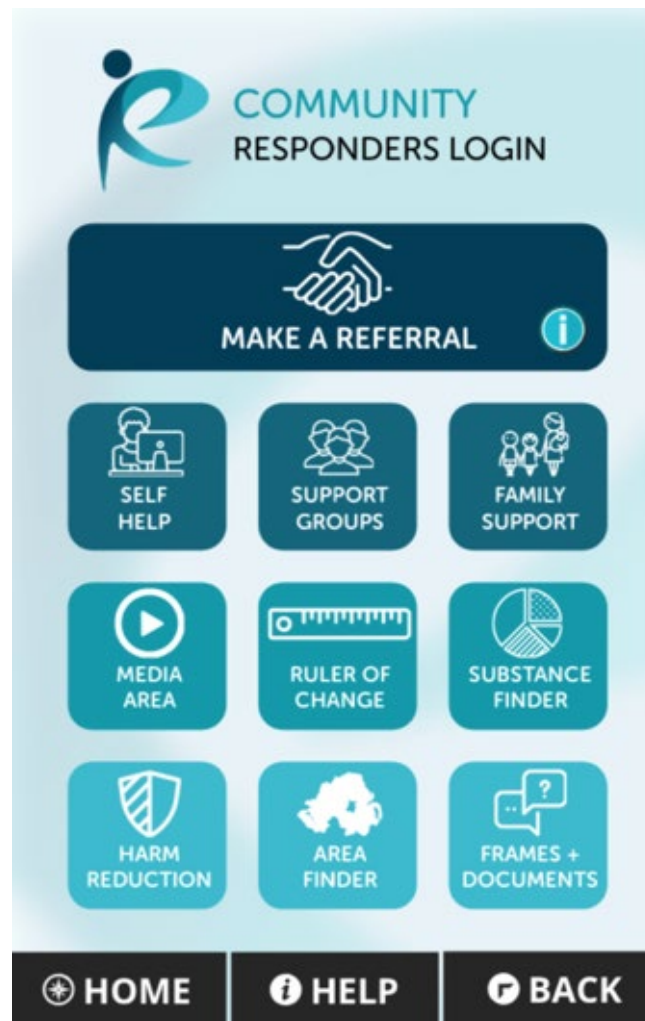


5



## App Design

I was introduced to a programme called Articulate which is primarily used to create working prototypes for both web and phone based apps. My first experience using Articulate was when we were approached by NI Dacts, who are part of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to prototype an App called Responders. This turned out to be one of the larger projects I worked on throughout the year. Chris had already come up with a rough sketch which he then tasked me to recreate with InDesign and then to prototype it using Articulate. Articulate allowed the client to easily try out and test the app and provide feedback during the process of us prototyping the App



## Social Media

I was put in charge of a handful of social media accounts. Many of which I was required to post at least once a day. I found this to be an exciting challenge, having to observe which posts received more interaction and then alter future posts to optimise the reach.

## IT Support

As a slight departure from the norm, I was given the responsibility to work on site with one of Creativ3's longstanding clients, GSP (The Greater Shankill Partnership). This involved 2 additional days per week working at the Spectrum Centre in Belfast. There I was put in charge of many facets of IT support including setting up printers, updating software or inputting data.

## Design Consultant

While working at GSP I was put in charge of their Winter Festival event (an annual Christmas Festival on the Shankill Road) creating social media post, posters, banners and tickets for the events.

After the festival concluded I have been kept on a retainer and am still called on to complete work for them. Working with the CEO of the company I have compiled annual reports, created presentations and designed posters and leaflets for several community based events.

# REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

## Placement Skills & Competencies

### Teamwork & Planning

I believe I have learnt how to work well within a team. I quickly realised how beneficial and effective it is to work well as a group. When Creativ3 merged with iMarvel we had to manage working with designers in England, so a Monday board (a work management tool) was created. This made everything easier allowing us to see tasks written down while managing to get the best from 20+ people. As I was always able to ask for feedback on my work I had the strong sense of teamwork and the general environment helped me have a thoroughly enjoyable time.

### Commitment to Excellence

I am committed to offer the best I can on any job, and before handing over any piece of completed work I was known to be meticulous in my checking, often being asked to check others' work prior to submission.

### Motivation

Henry continually pushed both Josh (the other placement student at Creativ3) and me to always remain a 'student' – to always be open to new learning and never be comfortable with what we already know. There must always be something else to be aiming towards. I found this type of motivation to be very encouraging and of course ties in well with the main reason for the placement year.

## Independence

Chris and Henry were really keen on their LinkedIn marketing and were constantly posting Podcasts in order to build up a relationship with their audience. I have seen first-hand just how powerful doing this can be. It is obviously something we were taught about on the Personal Branding Module. You have to sell yourself which is something Henry, in particular, always said to me. What makes me different to everyone else? Is there something unique that I can bring to the table? This helped me realise just how independent I need to be. It is completely up to me to sell myself as someone worth hiring.

## Communication

I now feel a lot more confident when talking to clients, even something as simple as picking up the telephone took a lot for me to do before I started working, but in an office environment I had to quickly get used to using the phone and speaking to clients in person. Being situated in a small industrial estate, surrounded by other businesses, also gave me the opportunity to meet with other unrelated business staff on a daily basis.

## Responsibility

I was occasionally given the responsibility to manage the office while the directors were off site. This involved answering the phone, taking messages and dealing with client queries.

## Flexibility

Quite a lot of the work during my placement year was off site, away from our base in Carrickfergus. This therefore involved arranging transport, meeting 'early start' deadlines and generally being flexible to all work requests, and on many occasions being asked to work outside of normal business hours.

## Researching and Information Gathering

Much of the work at Creativ3 was concept based, with broad ideas discussed and agreed with a client. I was responsible for researching content for a number of weekly social media posts (eg Alcohol and You and Sinister Labs).

## Work Ethic

Unusually, because I was given the opportunity to work for one of Creativ3's clients during my placement year, this gave me a unique insight to see both sides of a business/client relationship. It can be very enlightening to see the design business through the eyes of a client along with their expectations.

# RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK

My placement year was a real 'eye opener' as to what it is like to work for business clients and the demands some of them bring, especially when completing work for a public sector entity.

Clients often find it difficult to convey clearly their requirements for their own project. I found that I could spend time coming up with solutions based on the information I was given, only to find the client had changed their thoughts and now wanted something completely different. Project scope creep can be a challenge to contain. I have therefore learnt to be more tolerant of criticism and to take all feedback as a learning experience.

# CHALLENGES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

At first, the one thing I found a major challenge was getting my initial ideas on to the page. Listening to a client and having to work out exactly what it is they are looking for, then managing to bring it to fruition. Thanks to working with Chris and Henry for the year I have gained valuable experience in how to deal with this aspect of the design business.

# IMPACT OF THE PLACEMENT

After completing my placement I now realise how much I enjoy working in a design agency. The fact that I wasn't always doing the same type of work every day and just how much variety was involved really appealed to me. It is definitely a place to which I would love to aim to work.

# PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

One of my main objectives for the placement year was to seek the opportunity of understanding how a small design agency works in practice and how to properly apply the skills I have gained throughout my time at IxD.

# CONCLUSION

First I'd have to say, I have found placement to be a very worthwhile chapter in my degree course, providing an invaluable experience. It has not only been beneficial, but enjoyable and has left me motivated and looking forward to getting started in the 'real' workplace.

This placement has boosted my confidence and increased my skillset. I am more competent in dealing with clients and work colleagues alike.

I am pleased to say that both Creativ3 and GSP have retained my services and have already called upon me for additional work.

I had a fantastic time while on placement and would do it all again in a heartbeat.

