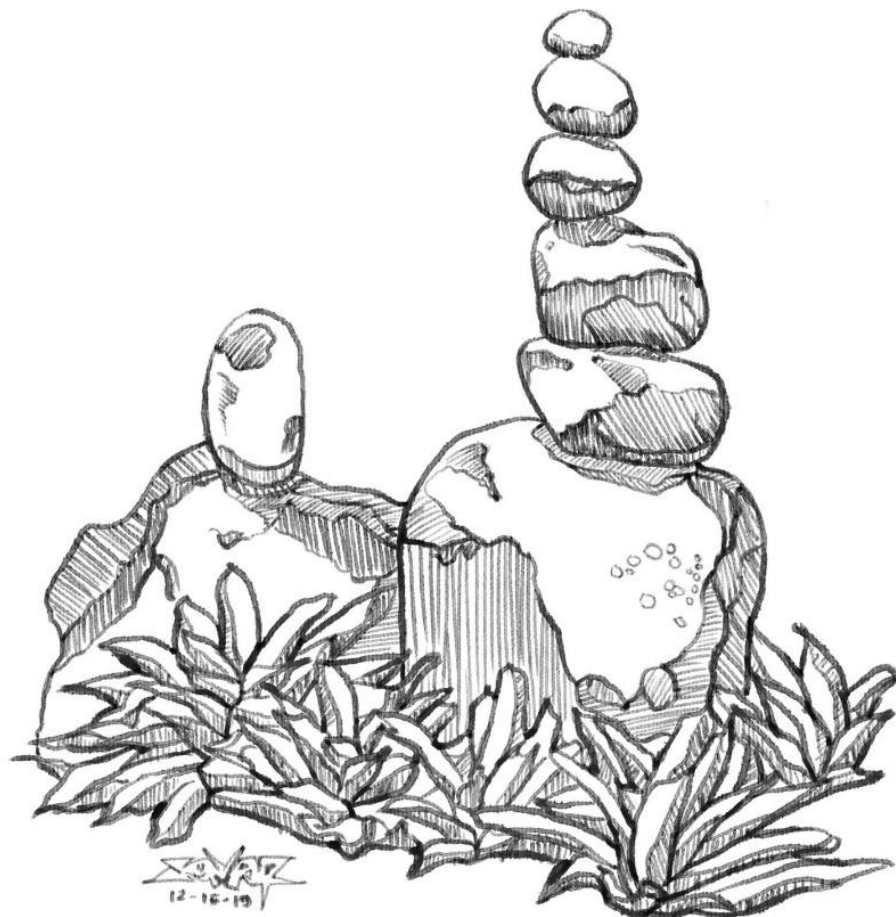


# graphic design

Project Management Like a Pro

A Seven (7) Step Guide for Beginners

JOMAR MISLANG



**“And, when you want something,  
all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.”**

*— Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist*

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# INTRODUCTION

Why I wrote this book?

“Demons, those are works of the demons.” Exclaimed vigorously by Mr. Miaga, my then college art professor.

Our whole class of 1<sup>st</sup> year art students were in shock upon hearing those words during lecture. Unfortunately, we never got an explanation as to why he uttered that statement.

Mr. Miaga was a great teacher and considered an institution in the college where I graduated. You will not feel like a full-fledged design student if you skip taking the Visual Perception class under Mr. Miaga. It feels there's this portion of Mr. Miaga inside of us, struggling or ignoring the need to explain our ideas.

As a designer, skills aside, we all live inside our bubble. We embody much of the beauty-is-in-the-eye-of-the-beholder mindset. I noticed throughout my school and professional career few designers can articulate their designs. And when these designers start work, much if not all are oblivious of some basic corporate or business skills. As a budding designer in the workforce, I struggled with my interactions. This book is my way to help fellow designers in the workplace or those that want to start a part-time design job to increase their social skills and business acumen.

As readers, you will learn some principles and tips that you can work on to improve yourself and push the design industry forward.

Here are some topics to be discussed in this book, **Graphic Design Project Management Like a Pro, A Seven (7) Step Guide for Beginners**:

- Help designers understand some basic business concepts.
  - Understanding the client and their needs are part of giving them good service. The clients' psyche and evolving needs of their customers are not easy and often require thoughtful analysis. Designers need to thoroughly consider the business requirements to try and anticipate their client's needs.
- Guide designers to rationalize and explain their design output.
  - It is not selfish to give yourself credit for your own honest work. Many of us fear that by pushing back we might lose an important client or business opportunity. The key here is justification. Being confident and subjectively explain your design output without being abrasive or defensive.
- Encourage designers to work more collaboratively with the client
  - According to Forbes, Israeli-American psychologist Daniel Kahneman found that people would rather do business with a person they like and trust rather than someone they don't, even if that person is offering a better product at a lower price. If people like you, they'll work with you. And the only way to get people to like and trust you is to build a customer relationship where you understand what they need to hear and feel from you.

What's in it for you?

The questions below are the topics that this book will tackle.

Soon as you land a prospective client, this is where this process starts.

1. Fast track your client onboarding discussion
  - How do you match the client's requirements & expectations?
  - How do you start solving a design problem?
  
2. Smoothen the business journey with your customer
  - How can you document each party's commitment?
  - How can you become a design pro?
  - How do you make an effective graphic design?
  
3. Generate business
  - How do you make a good design great?
  - How do you create repeat business?

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

As used in this book, the following terms and expressions shall have the following meaning set out below:

**"Client"**<sup>1</sup> means a person or organization using the services of a lawyer or other professional person or company.

**"Customer"**<sup>2</sup> means (i) a person or organization that buys goods or services from a store or business or (ii) a person or thing of a specified kind that one has to deal with.

**"Party" (individual) or "Parties" (collectively)** referred to herein means the designer and the client involved in the design contract.

**"Creative Process"**<sup>3</sup> refers to the way in which people come up with new ideas or solutions for problems.

**"Framework"**<sup>4</sup> means a basic structure underlying a system, concept, or text.

**"Case study"**<sup>5</sup> means a particular instance of something used or analyzed in order to illustrate (and rationalize the design) a thesis or principle.

**"Creative Brief"**<sup>6</sup> is a document that serves as a blueprint for what is to be created. A creative brief is short and focused, providing specific information including the objective of what is to be developed, the target audience for the message, the key messages that are to be communicated, the media to be used, and any other insights that may help guide the creative team. Whether the goal is a TV, magazine, or Internet ad, they all begin with the same foundation.

**"Target Market"**<sup>7</sup> refers to a group of potential customers to whom a company wants to sell its products and services.

**"SMART Goal Setting"**<sup>8</sup> is an acronym that you can use to guide your goal setting. Its criteria are commonly attributed to Peter Drucker's Management by objectives concept.



**“Contract or Agreement”**<sup>9</sup> means a legally enforceable and binding agreement between two or more persons or parties. A business arrangement for the supply of goods or services at a fixed price.

**“Royalty”**<sup>10</sup> means a legally-binding payment made to an individual, for the ongoing use of his or her originally-created assets, including copyrighted works, franchises, and natural resources.

**“Soft skills”**<sup>11</sup> relate to how you work. Soft skills include interpersonal (people) skills, communication skills, listening skills, time management, and empathy, among others.

**“ Work Breakdown Schedule”**<sup>12</sup> or WBS is a hierarchical list of all the work in the project in terms of deliverables.

**“Return on Investment”**<sup>13</sup> means a performance measure used to evaluate the efficiency of an investment or compare the efficiency of a number of different investments. ROI tries to directly measure the amount of return on a particular investment, relative to the investment’s cost.

**“Key Performance Indicator (KPI)”**<sup>14</sup> means a set of quantifiable measurements used to gauge a company’s overall long-term performance. KPIs specifically help determine a company's strategic, financial, and operational achievements, especially compared to those of other businesses within the same sector.

**“Research Data”**<sup>15</sup> means any information that has been collected, observed, generated or created to validate original research findings.

**“Persona”**<sup>16</sup> are fictional characters, that represent the different segments that might use your service, product, site, or brand in a similar way.

**“Business Design”**<sup>17</sup> means a human-centered approach to innovation. It applies the principles and practices of design to help organizations create new value and new forms of competitive advantage. At its core, Business Design is the integration of customer empathy, experience design and business strategy.

**“Broadcast”**<sup>18</sup> means to tell (something) to many people; make widely known.

**“Pework”**<sup>19</sup> means work done as preparation for some other activity : preliminary work.

## CHAPTER 1: LAY DOWN THE CARDS

How do you match the client's requirements & expectations?

Do you want to increase the chances of having a good match with your potential client?

Create a good, work in progress DESIGN PORTFOLIO.

Why it's important to create a good portfolio?

- To showcase tangible proof of your work.
  - Showcase your specialization, your uniqueness, style, passion, & experience.  
This information should resonate with your client. What type of designer are you – visual, marketing/advertising, user interface, publication, etc. Do you design cars? What type of car – sedan, coupe, utility, sports, etc.
- For the client to gauge your capability.
  - Soon as the client understands the style and quality of your work:
    - helps the client with their decision-making process
    - the negotiation and the project discussion with your client is on point
    - you are clear with the expectations of what you can deliver
    - you don't need to force yourself into work you don't want to do
    - you have a better bargaining power
    - you can close the deal sooner

- Your portfolio is a reflection of the capabilities you need to work on
  - Your portfolio shows the difference between your current work and your goal as a designer. How near or how far are you? It shows what you need to work on. You need to be honest and show the work you've accomplished.
  - If you've worked on a collaboration, mention this information. No matter how big or how small your contribution, this shows the client that you are a team player.

How can you create an impressive portfolio?

- Just starting, I recommend you do these:
  - Personal projects
    - Design whatever interests you. You are not just building your portfolio but you are also polishing your work & style along the way.
  - Redesign existing brands
    - Put your own spin, personality, and style to it.
  - Join a design contest
    - Sharpen your skills. Learn how other designers create their art pieces.
- A curated list of your works
  - Create a cover page with a summary of your best work. The objective is to give the client a taste of your design style. Elaborate your work on the succeeding pages.
  - Pick top ten (10) of your best work. Your client should have an idea of your capability & quality of work upon seeing your best ten (10) work. Ensure your designs are cohesive across all your work.

- Highlight your strength and show your versatility
  - Be specific – show that you’re the best at what you do. Focus on one (1) or two (2) key design styles or disciplines.
  - Clarity – show that you can grasp abstract ideas, concepts, & business requirements into visually striking, effective, & relevant designs.
  - Display personal character – what makes the design uniquely yours.

#### Additional information as needed

- Describe your creative & development process
  - What’s your design process – research, journey mapping, prototyping, mock-up, sketching, etc.?
- Describe your design framework
  - A framework shows a structure of how things are done. It proves to the client that you don’t just copy/paste, imitate, or worst plagiarize design just to accomplish the task.
- Right to publish works & testimonials
  - You can either include these clauses in the contract or seek permission from the client:
    - Design works will be published in the designer’s portfolio.
      - When accumulated, this will show the breadth of the designer’s capabilities to handle different design requirements.
    - Testimonials will be asked, and should the client agree, they will be published in the designer’s portfolio.
      - The purpose of the testimonials is to shows that you are reputable, trustworthy, & collaborative.

- Include Case Studies
  - Case studies of previous work will elaborate more on the design output & process. Show the value you have contributed. How did your design solve your client's need? Is your design unique in that it sets the client apart from their competition? Did your design bring in business results? Provide qualitative and quantitative information when available.
  - You may choose not to publish but instead send this information to prospective clients for additional reference.

## CHAPTER 1: PRO TIP

- Like the evolution of your craft, your portfolio is a work in progress. Update your works, content, details, presentation, and storytelling.
- If the client is asking for a specific design requirement, only send your best and most relevant work. Save both of your time; do not bombard the client with unrelated design works. Send your portfolio and other works separately.

## CHAPTER 2: LAY OUT THE DISCUSSION

How do you start solving a design problem?

For a more straightforward and objective discussion with the client,

ask for a DESIGN BRIEF & do some REQUIREMENTS GATHERING

Some clients who know the goal in mind and come prepared with a creative brief. However, some can barely describe the requirement. Business and creative/design requirement/s are not often straightforward. You can help your clients by asking the right questions... this is an integral part of your collaboration and process. Ultimately, the goal is to arrive at a better understanding of the design brief.

- Is design a straightforward solution to your problem?
- The way to accomplish business needs requires you to understand what the client wants to achieve and how to get there. Through your discussion with the client, gather this information:
  - Vision – what the client wants to accomplish
  - Mission – a general statement of how the client will achieve the vision
  - Strategies – a series of ways of using the mission to achieve the vision
  - Goals – statements of what needs to be accomplished to implement the strategy
  - Objectives – specific quantitative actions and timelines for achieving the goal

- Action Plans – specific actions that need to be taken for reaching the milestones within the timeline of the objectives
  
- Sample
  - Vision – To guide companies to grow in the digital age
  - Mission – To help companies with their digital transformation
  - Strategies – To encourage companies to use digital tools to complement their existing processes and grow their business
  - Goals – To reach and educate companies in need of digital transformation
  - Objectives – To create four (4) print & eight (8) digital advertising materials on digital tools by the end of the month
  - Action Plans – To source a months’ worth of content that will be created into a series of advertising materials.
  
- What are you trying to solve?
  
- Understanding the statements above will help you focus on the important aspects of your design solution. On the example above, most if not all of a designer’s task is to address the objective. Both parties should have the same level of understanding that the objectives are SMART:
  - Specific – elaborate on what are you trying to accomplish
  - Measurable – agree on terms that show that objectives have been met and define project completion
  - Achievable – Ensure that your goals are realistic and based on available resources and budget coverage
  - Relevant – make it appropriate to the customer and the client



- Time-bound – agree on target dates or deadlines of deliverables, and hold each other accountable to them
- Keep your focus on the objective
  - Straight-through requirements require straight-through solutions. Complex requirements need more than design; they will involve many other resources to address the creative brief like research data, prototyping, user interviews, industry/competitor analysis, etc.
  - The creative brief will be the guide for both parties in the discussion process. Creative ideas, facts, preconceived notions, assumptions, & hypotheses are to be examined in conjunction with the creative brief.
- Add value
  - Sell yourself and sell your work.
    - Continuously look for ways to add value. It should be clear to the client what defines your work, what you are known for and good at.
  - Tailor-fit your solutions. Avoid a cookie-cutter approach.
    - Make clients understand and feel that their requirements are unique. Customize and if possible personalize.
  - Ask questions. Be curious. Get more out of the client.
    - Show some deep interest and look beyond the monetary gain you get out of the job. Have a deeper interest in your project by tapping into your passion and looking beyond financial gains. Besides understanding the

brand & project background, target market, vision, and objectives ask your client the following:

- How does your requirement align with the business goals?
  - What does the customer journey look like?
  - What do you want your customers to see & feel?
  - Are there mandatory brand and/or design elements?
  - What are the desired perceptions to drive the desired behaviors?
  - What's the call-to-action?
  - How much creative freedom/leeway is allowed?
- 
- Ensure you have the same understanding of the creative brief
- 
- 
- Meet with the client and create notes or minutes of the meeting (MOM)
    - Some details include:
      - Discussion points
        - Note all the details. You may even ask the client that you will record the session.
      - Action items
        - Track deliverables to show that you are on top of the project.
      - Point person/s responsible for each task if working with a team
        - All task is essential, whether it's delivering commitments or simply replying to an inquiry.
        - Set a deadline and accountability for each task.
      - Items that need a decision and/or further discussion

- Discuss the project blockers, pre-requisites, and dependencies from the client or other stakeholders before a task can move forward.
- Validate your understanding
  - In your own words, try to repeat what the client said. Get the assurance that you and your client are on the same page.
- Next steps
  - Based on the action items, address what needs to be prioritized immediately.

## CHAPTER 2: PRO TIP

- You may do the MOM while you are actually in the meeting. Seek permission from the client should you want to record the conversation. The objective is to get all the necessary details of your discussions accurately.
- Summarize the agreements & action items before ending the discussion. Ensure you and your client is aligned and route the MOM ideally within 24 hours or immediately if possible. Ask the client to acknowledge receipt.

## CHAPTER 3: LAY OUT THE PLAN

How can you document each party's commitment?

A vital part of building relationships and completing business transactions is creating a  
CONTRACT or AGREEMENT

The client and designer should agree on all the facets of the service engagement. Below are recommended essentials to be placed into the contract.

- Scope of the requirements or project details
  - Work or specific service/activity that is going to be done
  - Itemize each task required
  
- Payment Details
  - Compensation
  - Invoicing terms
  - Payment deadlines and penalties
  - Number of allowed revisions
  - Turnover of RAW files or the Final Artworks
  - Royalty
  - Termination or cancellation fee
  
- Term
  - Validity of the contract

- Deliverables & Milestones
  - Breakdown of the deliverables laid out in a calendar.
- Confidentiality & Non-competition
  - The agreement that both parties will keep information, discussions, services, processes, product, and/or customer information confidential and private. Project details are discussed only with key people that are critical to the delivery of the project.
- Force Majeure or Fortuitous Events
  - Occurrence of an event that is outside the reasonable control of a party and which prevents that party from performing its obligations under a contract. Examples may either be an “act of God,” or natural occurrences such as floods or typhoons, storms, earthquakes or other cataclysmic events; or an “act of man,” such as riots, strikes, wars, governmental prohibitions, robbery, etc.
- Communication Channels & Contractibility
  - Communication channels that a client can reach you – email, SMS, voice call, video call, or chat? Understand that people express themselves and communicate <sup>20</sup>differently. Some might prefer calls than to chat or vice-versa.
  - Time or day can you be contacted – office hours, 24/7, holidays?
- Roles and Responsibilities

- As the designer, you might be the one providing the service however, the client plays role in supporting the success of the project. Elaborate on the following:
  - Comprehensive project details
  - Payment terms
  - Approvals
  - Supporting documents for marketing claims
  - Design elements (purchased by the designer or provided by the client)
  - Mandatories
  - Legal obligations
- Copyright, Intellectual Property, & Infringement
  - Add ownership of the design and documentation produced.
  - Include penalties for infringing ideas, comprehensive studies & final design output.
  - Check with your local laws & regulations for detailed understanding & stipulations.
- Confirmation & Signature
  - Acknowledge that both parties understood the information written.
  - Provide a government-issued ID. Establish that signatories have the legal right to perform the obligations on the agreement.
  - Notarize as necessary

### CHAPTER 3: PRO TIP

- Even if a contract is a couple hundred, thousand, or a million-dollar deal, treat the contract with the same care and attention.
- If you are in doubt, seek legal counsel experienced on this matter.



## CHAPTER 4: LAY THE FOUNDATION

How can you become a design pro?

What skills do you need even before the design development starts?

### SOFT SKILLS

“These are attributes that influence how well you work or interact with others. These are the skills that form relationships with people, create trust and dependability, and lead teams. (These) are essential for your success, your company, and personal life.” – virtualspeech.com<sup>21</sup>

- Communication skills
  - First is learning how to listen with empathy then process your thoughts before speaking. Learn to articulate your thoughts without using technical terminologies. The author, coach, and motivational speaker Anthony Robbins describes that to effectively communicate, “we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.”
- Articulate
  - Amateurs want to jump right in and create something, sometimes only spending a few minutes with the client. How can you deliver the message if you didn’t take the time to understand the design requirement/s?
- Time management

- Learn how to use a Work Breakdown Schedule, especially for big projects. Itemize the task into bite-size chunks.
- Prioritize task, then prioritize again. Seek out what is crucial, relevant, and will create an impact. Time is a resource; plan & track where it is allocated. The bible states that “the plans of the diligent surely lead to success” Proverbs 21:5.
- Honor your commitments
  - It boils down to your integrity as a designer. “Your” commitment means no one forced you to do it. If you tell the client it can be done in a week, honor it. It creates a positive impression that you take accountability. Philosopher, playwright, and novelist Jean-Paul Sartre describe commitment as an “act, not a word.”
- Customer service & satisfaction
  - Customer service is the new product. We now live in the age of empowered customers. Clients should feel that their need is being addressed. There are great designers but only a few can manage their clients well. Clients are willing to pay a premium for quality service.
- Persistence
  - Design revisions are the norm. Designs will be scrapped, redone, reused, repurposed, or revived. The key here is managing the client’s expectations on the design output. Thoroughly explaining the rationale for the design is part of the designer’s job to educate the client. E.g. telling the client that making the font bigger does not make the design better. Adjust the contract stipulations as necessary.
  - Why do revisions happen?
    - Both parties did not specify (or the lack of it) the number of allowed revisions.
    - Project expectations were not properly addressed.

- There were revisions to the design brief, thus there was a need to revise the design output.
  - The designer was not able to address the objectives of the design brief.
  - The designer failed to elaborate the theories and concepts applied to the design
  - The designer was intimidated by the client's dissatisfaction with the output and reworked the design instead.
- Conflict resolution
  - There are cases when you need to work with a team and should there be disagreements.
    - Seek to compromise varied opinions.
    - Understand where the other party is coming from. It's often the effect of a much deeper cause or reason.
    - Focus on addressing the task.
    - Move toward a solution.
    - Should there still be disagreements, refer back to the creative brief and/or consult the client before moving forward.
- Revisit the objective
  - If you are on a stump revisit the project goal and objective.
  - If the goal and/or objective has changed, revisit the agreements with the client. Amend the contract and timelines as necessary.

- Trusting the process
  - Amateurs have goals. Professionals have processes. Processes are repeatable, efficient & dependable habits that one builds over time. Work habits will sustain you whether you are inspired or not. Stop waiting for inspiration to happen.

#### **CHAPTER 4: PRO TIP**

- Done is better than perfect.
- Create that environment internally and externally, that no matter what, you're going to get the job done.

## CHAPTER 5: BUILD

How do you make an effective graphic design?

Eliminate guess work.

Use DATA & RESEARCH to understand the design requirement & target market

According to Economist.com. “the world’s most valuable resource is no longer oil, but data.”

Graphic Design is art but with a purpose. Data-driven insights will help guide the design solution.

- Understanding the design requirement
  - Ask the client for:
    - Competitor analysis
      - Evaluating the client’s competitors helps you position your design and messaging at an advantage.
    - Industry information
      - Analyze market insights. Spotting industry trends and their application on your design creates more relevance and appeal.
- Formal and/or Informal research data
  - Design problems are getting more and more complex. To effectively communicate with the target market is both the designer’s and client’s responsibility. The client should provide a more in-depth understanding of their target market to the designer. On the other hand, the designer needs to absorb, understand, and make sense of this information. All this

information is articulately translated to the design elements to communicate the desired message to the target market.

- Quantitative
    - Numerical data can be used to understand the context and scenarios applicable to the design. E.g. Creating more digital ads vs print collaterals because a majority of the target market is reached through digital means.
  - Qualitative
    - This Information elaborates the how, why, what's, about the target market's culture, environment, customs & biases that aid in solving the design problems. E.g. Using all other colors except black when designing medicine packaging. The color black is often associated with death.
- 
- Understand the users
    - Target Market
      - Understanding the target market allows you to reach the right audience effectively.
    - Use a customer persona
      - Demographic profile
        - Age
        - Gender
        - Marital Status
        - Ethnicity
        - Income bracket
        - Education

- Employment
  - Etc.
- Psychographic profile
  - Attitude
  - Habits
  - Interest
  - Personality
  - Etc.
- Reason for the target market to engage in your design
  - Brand recall
  - Readership
  - Usage
  - Information
  - Instruction
  - Direction
  - Advisory
  - Warning
  - Etc.
- Analyze the emotions and feelings of your customer
  - Reason for doing or not doing the intended call to action
    - Reading & not reading
    - buying & not buying
    - using & not using
- Create an empathy map
  - What does the target market –
    - Think and feel?
    - See



- Hear
- Say
- Do
- What are their pain points?
- What do they hope to gain from your product or service?

Use Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to measure success

All businesses track ROIs on their initiatives. As a designer, you need to contribute to the company's KPI to say that your design provided value to the client.

- Measure the KPI
  - Critical that all the elements of the design work cohesively together and contribute to the KPI. Success is also closely related to the user-experience, value proposition, and the promise the company aims to provide. Creating signage that says PUSH or a digital banner that says CLICK HERE, should work as intended. Sample, a company logo with a design element of a wing, suggests that the company's industry is in aviation or the company values speed.
  - Print
    - Brand recall
    - Call back or customer feedback
    - Redemption for the use of tracking/promo code
    - QR scans
    - Store and/or website visits
    - Hashtag

- Digital
  - Brand recall
  - Impressions or Views
  - A/B Testing
  - Performance marketing
    - Sale
    - Lead
    - Open rate
    - Click-through
    - Visits
    - Response rate
    - Etc.
  
- Designer
  - Completion rate
  - Turn-around time
  - Compliance & mandates
  - User feedback
  - Client satisfaction or rating
  - etc

Go beyond visual impact

- Create an emotional connection
  - The most memorable designs are either good or bad, anything in between is negligible. These designs stir your imagination, curiosity, reality, and sometimes morality. Evoke and surface people's emotions as great designs should be felt.

- Create a call-to-action
  - Remove friction and lead the customers to the desired action. As a designer, you help your client communicate the value of their service or product to their existing and potential customers. In turn, this will translate to sales, customer leads, and revenue as the bottom line. The message is most powerful when paired with a value proposition. E.g. Call now and get 50% off!

## CHAPTER 5: PRO TIP

- Understanding the use of data
  - You and your client may have limited access to all the information but find some time to unearth them. Data-driven insights are grounded in reality, factual, and reliable.
- Design Requirement
  - Make the client understand that industry information and research material may it be formal (done by a reputable research agency) or informal (client experience and customer feedback), will increase the quality of your design output.
  - There should be tons of research materials available online. Use your resourcefulness to understand the available information or lack thereof.
- Users – you may indicate these additional insights:
  - Primary and secondary target markets
  - Positives & negative attributes
  - Your design solution - what it is and what it's not
  - Intended & unintended
    - audience
    - message
    - use/purpose
- KPI
  - You measure your success because you know where your time and effort are focused. Work towards improving the outcome for your design, clients, and professional growth.

## CHAPTER 6: POLISHING TOUCH

How do you make a good design great?

There is no one way to approach great design, but we can all work towards it.

“IFEQ” DESIGN FRAMEWORK by Jomar Misláng

The concepts below work hand in hand and are two sides of the same coin. Each combination is regarded with equal importance. This framework is a guide to achieve your best work. An infinite process that is always a bar higher than the previous.

### 1. Innovative & Infinite

#### a. Innovative

- Means new, ground-breaking, state-of-the-art, or advanced. It can either be the design itself or the tool by which the idea improves the business outcomes, product, or service.

#### b. Infinite

- A timeless piece of design work that stands the test of time. It is often simple, sophisticated, and exudes quality. Works great as a focal point or a complement for its intended use.

#### c. Both innovative & infinite

- Design that is highly relatable for new and existing customers or users. These designs push the technology/industry forward but still staying grounded and familiar.

## 2. Form & Function

### a. Form

- Deals with beauty and taste. Something that looks and feels pleasant, positive, or artful.

### b. Function

- Relates to something mechanical, electrical, industrial, hardware, software, or interface, and has practical use.

### c. Both form & function

- Users intuitively know the purpose of a well-designed product. It does not try hard to communicate nor does it need to explain itself. Paul Rand, a famous American Art Director & Graphic Designer is quoted saying, “Design can be art. Design can be aesthetics. Design is so simple, that’s why it is so complicated.”

## 3. Efficient & Effective

### a. Efficient

- All design elements contribute as a whole. It is on-point and does not distract from its purpose. In my opinion, the famous French writer, poet, aristocrat, journalist, & pioneering aviator, Antoine de Saint-Exupery explained efficiency perfectly in one of his famous quotes. He said, “...not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.”

### b. Effective

- This means it has the qualities required to achieve the objectives for which it was produced. The design cleverly and intentionally influences the desired behavior of the customer.

- c. Both effective & efficient
    - Highly influential, relatable & purposeful designs add value. Design is the bridge between the brand and the user, often in an unconscious manner.
4. Quality & Quantity
- a. Quality
    - Measured upon in a distinct level of excellence. Score, compare, benchmark then, improve. Align yourself with the industry. Clients and buyers, in general, use this to see how you fair vs your competitors.
  - b. Quantity
    - There is no shortcut to anything worth doing. Thomas Edison created 10,000 failed prototypes of his electric bulb before succeeding. As he famously said, "I have not failed. I have just found 10,000 ways that will not work."
  - c. Both quality and quantity
    - In design or any endeavor worth achieving, you work on an upward growth process to increase the quality. University of Oregon Head Coach Mario Cristobal tells this to his players "Don not practice until you get it right. Practice until you cannot get it wrong."

## CHAPTER 6: PRO TIP

- Strive to provide value
  - Understand that the moment you enter the industry of graphic design; you are no longer serving your ideals but designing for your client, their users, and/or customers. If your work is part of a solution that help improve the lives of your client or their customers, you've made a positive impact to society.



## CHAPTER7: BUILD YOUR NAME, BRAND, & REPUTATION

How do you create repeat business?

There are various ways to keep clients coming back. Here are some suggestions that you can use.

Ask for client FEEDBACK, TESTIMONIALS, and REFERRALS.

We are now living in the era where customer service & customer experience is the new product.

Make sure that customers are happy, back for more, and your brand ambassadors.

- Provide exceptional service
  - Fulfilling your end of the agreement is just doing your job. Going beyond the expectations separates you from your competition.
  
- Ask for constructive feedback
  - This is a retrospective of your work performance. Take a pause and reflect on these are some questions you need to ask your client:
    - what you did well
    - what you need to improve
    - what you need to stop doing
  
- Ask for testimonials
  - Simply put, you trust the friend of your friend. It's an indirect way for your clients to endorse your services. When you satisfy the client's needs, they will become your brand ambassadors without even asking.

- Ask for referrals
  - Respectfully ask the client to recommend referrals with similar needs that match your capabilities as a designer. A list of random names is not quality referrals.
  - Never demand this request. It is a bonus in your client engagements.
  
- Pay it forward
  - Whenever you can, provide referrals to your clients as well. Clients will be more inclined to give referrals in exchange. This also ensures you are also top of your mind of your clients and potentially hire you again for another project or sometimes they may ask for expert advice.
  
- Reconnect with your clients
  - Your objective is to be top of mind and not irritate your previous client.
    - Check back on the client after several months or a year. Ask if they have design requirements and/or can point you to referrals. Repeat.
  - Another way to be top of mind is to share FREE newsletters and relevant industry updates. People like free stuff. It shows that you keep up with the times.
  - Repeat clients take little to no resources vs finding a new client.
  
- Network
  - Expand your network:
    - attend industry or related events
    - attend seminars/webinars
    - join communities or clubs

- Broadcast
  - Sharing what you do PUSHES you to be more of what you are, and it PULLS you towards like-minded individuals and possibly clients. Start by talking to one person, then two, and more. Grow your confidence and make networking an integral part of who you are.
- Reciprocate and offer
  - You may want to tell the world what you do, but you also need to pay attention and share your network with others. If you need help to grow your business, you should also be willing to help others grow theirs.

## **CHAPTER 7: PRO TIP**

Ask for feedback almost immediately after rendering the service or submitting the designs. The intent is to capture fresh insights from the client. It will be harder to chase the client for feedback and for them to remember your recent interactions. Making incremental changes soon as you receive feedback shows maturity & willingness to better yourself creatively and socially.

## SUMMARY

1. Fast track your client onboarding discussion
  - How do you match the client's requirements & expectations?
    - Chapter 1: DESIGN PORTFOLIO
  - How do you start solving a design problem?
    - Chapter 2: REQUIREMENTS GATHERING & DESIGN BRIEF
2. Smoothen the business journey with your customer
  - How can you document each party's commitment?
    - Chapter 3: CONTRACT or AGREEMENT
  - How can you become a design pro?
    - Chapter 4: SOFT SKILLS
  - How do you make an effective graphic design?
    - Chapter 5: DATA & RESEARCH
3. Generate business
  - How do you make a good design great?
    - Chapter 6: "IFEQ" DESIGN FRAMEWORK by Jomar Mislang
  - How do you create repeat business?
    - Chapter 7: FEEDBACK, TESTIMONIALS, REFERRALS

## AFTERWORD

Why manage your graphic design project like a pro?

For designers to realize that for them to succeed in this field:

- Soft skills are equally important as hard skills
  - Soft skills are personality traits you have spent your whole life developing. These define your overall habits in the workplace. You can influence and give a positive impact to others to further your career.
  - Hard skills are your technical knowledge and acquired through education or training.<sup>22</sup>
- Social skills are equally important as craftsmanship
  - Often a building blocks for children and teenagers but more critical as you become part of the working society. Your confidence in your skills as a designer and how you approach design problems reflect your attitude, manners, and behavior.
- Being a good communicator is equally important as being creative
  - Like creativity, communication is a process. Do some prep work, use simple language, be honest, authentic, and practice. Albert Einstein once said, "if you cannot explain it simply, you do not understand it well enough."

Push the design industry forward. Grow and defend it. Your deliberate action to make the design industry flourish is one key to ensure we all enjoy making a living out of it.

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- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/client>
  - <sup>2</sup> <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/customer>
  - <sup>3</sup> <https://study.com/academy/lesson/creative-process-definition-stages.html>
  - <sup>4</sup> <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/framework>
  - <sup>5</sup> [https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/case\\_study](https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/case_study)
  - <sup>6</sup> <https://study.com/academy/lesson/the-creative-brief-definition-influences-importance.html>
  - <sup>7</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/t/target-market.asp>
  - <sup>8</sup> <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLMD476.html>
  - <sup>9</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/contract>
  - <sup>10</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/royalty.asp>
  - <sup>11</sup> <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-are-soft-skills-2060852>
  - <sup>12</sup> <https://projectinsight.com/project-management-basics/project-management-schedule>
  - <sup>13</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/returnoninvestment.asp>
  - <sup>14</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/k/kpi.asp>
  - <sup>15</sup> [https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/14062/research\\_data\\_management/61/research\\_data\\_management\\_explained](https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/14062/research_data_management/61/research_data_management_explained)
  - <sup>16</sup> <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/personas-why-and-how-you-should-use-them>
  - <sup>17</sup> <https://www.the-cma.org/about/blog/what-is-business-design-about-anyway>
  - <sup>18</sup> <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/broadcast>
  - <sup>19</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prework>
  - <sup>20</sup> <https://www.marketing91.com/five-types-of-communication/>
  - <sup>21</sup> <https://virtuallspeech.com/blog/importance-soft-skills>
  - <sup>22</sup> <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/hard-skills-vs-soft-skills>