

MARKETING PLAN OF THE GRAPHIC DESIGN INDUSTRY  
FOR SMALL-BUSINESS OWNERS IN THE  
CENTRAL VALLEY

A Project Presented to the Faculty  
of  
California State University, Stanislaus

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
of Master of Business Administration

By  
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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

MARKETING PLAN OF THE GRAPHIC DESIGN INDUSTRY  
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## DEDICATION

This Marketing Plan is dedicated to my sons, James and Nathan. Without you none of this would have been possible.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Dedication .....	iv
List of Figures .....	vii
Abstract .....	viii
 CHAPTER	
I. Executive Summary .....	1
Market and Industry Definition Background .....	1
Target Market.....	4
Product Demographics.....	6
Target Contact Demographics .....	6
 II. Situation Analysis .....	 8
Marketing Objectives .....	8
 III. Market / Customer Analysis .....	 10
Market Size .....	10
Market Growth.....	13
Market Segments .....	15
Consumer Behavior .....	18
 IV. Company Analysis .....	 20
Customer Experience .....	20
 V. Marketing Objectives.....	 23
SMART Approach to Marketing .....	23
Building Brand Awareness .....	24
Referral Programs .....	25
Infographics .....	26
Freemium with Content .....	28
Local Partnerships.....	29
Car Wraps .....	30
Social Media Contests.....	31

	LinkedIn Publishing.....	32
	Podcasts.....	33
	Launching New Products / Services .....	34
VI.	The Marketing Strategies .....	36
	Social Media Marketing.....	37
	Relationship Marketing.....	40
	Diversity Marketing.....	42
	Word-of-Mouth (WOM) Marketing .....	44
	Undercover / Stealth Marketing (Buzz Marketing) .....	47
VII.	The Marketing Mix .....	50
	Product .....	51
	Place .....	52
	Price .....	53
	Promotion.....	54
	Public Relations .....	55
	Sales Force .....	56
	Best Practices .....	58
	Content Marketing Software.....	58
VIII.	Data Collection and Methodology .....	61
	Marketing Research .....	61
	PEST Analysis .....	62
IX.	Results.....	69
	Forecasts / Market Analysis.....	69
X.	Conclusion .....	71
	References.....	74

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Population Estimates, As of July 1, 2017 for the Central Valley .....	12
2. Total Employer Establishments in 2016 in the Central Valley.....	13
3. Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, and Time-Bound (SMART) .....	23
4. Graphic Design Products and Services .....	35
5. Number of Graphic Design Firms in the Central Valley .....	63
6. Kings County’s Local Agencies and Programs .....	67
7. PEST Analysis Breakdown.....	68

## ABSTRACT

This Marketing Plan will discuss in great detail the many avenues that can lead to success for the Graphic Designer operating their small business in the Central Valley of California, as well as potential risks, pitfalls, competitors and different products and services that all go together to create the dynamic field of Graphic Design. The current plan contains enough information to educate the layman about the Graphic Design industry. There is a lot of hype or noise that surrounds new trends in the Graphic Design industry as everyone wants to stay ahead of the competition. However, trends can be bucked occasionally for instead a more insightful and pragmatic attitude to avoid the hype and fervor of recklessly chasing after the next fad. This strategy of chasing after fads can be equated to jumping endlessly through hoops, which is almost the same as not having a strategy. The balance or trick to this is to seize opportunities in a strategic fashion. Seize the opportunity in front of you and allow this Marketing Plan to serve as a guide as to why California is composed of the largest concentration of Graphic Designers. Take a journey with me.



## CHAPTER I

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In chapter one I will be describing the Market and Industry Definition Background to serve as a backdrop for the Graphic Design industry as well as the Target Market, the Product Demographics, and the Target Contact Demographics for the Central Valley in California. This will include details for two key players, William Addison Dwiggins and Paul Rand that are praised as being instrumental in the progression and maturity of Graphic Design. I have also listed several marketing terms that industry professionals should be familiar with in the Target Market section. I will explore the genesis of this industry and peel back some of the layers to determine major influences that have shaped this industry.

#### **Market and Industry Definition Background**

The Graphic Design industry is framed with a specific architecture of events and people that have yielded treasure troves of influence upon the industry. Throughout time there have been numerous definitions expressed in hopes to encapsulate all of the activities that the Graphic Design industry represents. According to Juliette Cezzar in her book *The AIGA Guide to Careers in Graphic & Communication Design*, “Graphic design, also known as communication design, is the art and practice of planning and projecting ideas and experiences with visual and textual content.” (p. 15). A Graphic Design business needs to be able to recognize what has and continues to shape the industry in which they operate.

The origin of the word Graphic comes from the word Graphicus, which is Latin and means a painting or drawing. With that etymology in mind, Graphic Design has therefore existed BCE (Before the Common Era) when art was still being etched and chiseled onto walls. Since then, Graphic design has trickled down and saturated every piece of history with its imagination and creativity from the culmination and compilation of the Holy Qur'an to the art of calligraphy in China and Japan to the Byzantine art to Mayan and Aztec art to finally the present day.

The term Graphic Design was originally coined in 1922 in an essay titled New Kind of Printing Calls for New Design produced by William Addison Dwiggins. W.A. Dwiggins was an American book designer in the 20th century. Mr. Dwiggins pursued multiple arenas of interest, such as book design, calligraphy, advertising, and even puppetry. He was well rounded and opinionated, especially when he attacked contemporary book designers by publishing a book titled An Investigation into the Physical Properties of Books in 1919. William is best known for his contributions to the improvement of book design and for the Electra and Caledonia typefaces. The book, The Time Machine was published in 1931 and authored by H.G. Wells, which Dwiggins assisted in designing. Dwiggins' work is described as ornamented and geometric. These two styles are comparable to the Art Moderne and Art Deco styles that were popular during Dwiggins' time.

Paul Rand is one of the most famous logo designers of all time having contributed to corporations, such as ABC, IBM, and UPS with his quintessential designs. From his corporate work, to his brochures, to packaging design creations; a

portion of Paul Rand's work is showcased at the Museum of the City of New York. Paul Rand was quoted as saying, "It is only by association with a product, a service, a business, or a corporation that a logo takes on any real meaning. It derives its meaning and usefulness from the quality of that which it symbolizes." (Rand, 1962, p. 2). Paul Rand associated the success of the logos that he designed, which are considered simplistic by many, with the quality of the corporation that the logo is representing. He is considered a master in his field and was also responsible for the Westinghouse and Enron logos.

It is important for a Graphic Design business not to silo themselves off from other business professionals for the sake of growth for their company. A Graphic Design business should understand that there are similar industries that the Graphic Design industry is closely intertwined with. Identifying these closely connected industries can open up potential opportunities for the Graphic Design business. The Graphic Design industry's NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) Code is 54143. The NAICS codes for the similar industries are as follows: Printing in the U.S. (32311), Industrial Designers in the U.S. (54142), Advertising Agencies in the U.S. (54181), Billboard and Advertising in the U.S. (54185), and Performance and Creative Artists in the U.S. (71151). Not surprisingly, when this field began all of the work was done by hand. Nowadays, the situation has changed, especially with web design. This is because business, for the most part, has shifted away from brick-and-mortar storefronts that require overhead costs to e-commerce or online shopping. There are many advantages and disadvantages to either option, though it is hard to

argue that brick-and-mortar storefronts are going to go the way of the dinosaur and become extinct.

California's Graphic Design background is comprised of some very interesting works, because of the state's role as the epicenter of the American film industry (e.g. Hollywood). California also gave birth to the hippie counterculture whose quest for freedom of choice and expression, led to leaps and bounds in art, fashion, and style. San Francisco and Los Angeles alone are responsible for global trendsetting waves that are still felt to this day. What is the Central Valley known for everywhere in the world? Its agriculture! More than 230 crops are grown in the Central Valley, such as: grapes, potatoes, rice, beans, corn, and much more.

The Central Valley in California is also a melting pot of different cultures and ethnicities that are contrasted beautifully. To the north of the Valley is Sacramento and to the south of Sacramento is San Joaquin. There is a lot to discover in the Central Valley: Highway 99, the diversity of Fresno, the Sacramento River Train, the Lodi Wine Country, street art and graffiti, and so much more that the Graphic Designer can draw inspiration from for their business ventures and projects.

### **Target Market**

The state of California is divided into 58 counties with San Bernardino County being the largest and Los Angeles County being the most populated. According to a report, *A Statistical Tour of California's Great Central Valley*, published in 1997 by the California Research Bureau there are 18 counties in the Central Valley in California (Umbach, 1997). The number of counties listed as those that encompass the Central

Valley can be dependent on the source. In this Marketing Plan I will focus on small-business owners that operate a Graphic Design business out of the Central Valley. I will describe their customers within that area, and evaluate the potential opportunities and threats to this industry, and provide a forecast of where this industry is headed.

When deciding how to reach a particular group of consumers with a specific product or service remember to construct a message summary that is not overly complicated. Keep the message simple. Declare a Call to Action that communicates urgency and prompts the reader to act. Deploy a pull through offer to create demand and promote the company. Prospecting is the first step in the sales process and should be the mechanism used to develop and drum-up new business for customers, clients, and buyers. This is done by developing specific strategies to reach target customers and to also develop a unique brand that customers can identify with and possibly grow an emotional attachment to. Craft a pre-event follow-up that can consist of e-mail blasts, social media showers, soliciting news articles, and blogging to reach a targeted market.

Leads and contacts, during a post-event follow-up, should receive them immediately with tailored content to maintain momentum, fend off potential competitors, and not to let the developed leads cool down. Tracking software can also identify visitors to your website to avoid any missed opportunities. In regards to business prospects there are some vital questions that the business owner should be asking, such as who else is involved in the sales decision? Do you have criteria for this purchase decision? If so, who defined them? Does the prospect have a business

pain that you can solve? Is the prospect capable of buying? When is the prospect planning to buy? These are all relevant questions to determine the needs of the business prospect as well as their plans and purchase intentions. This is called an opportunity qualification process and criteria.

### **Product Demographics**

Product demographics will assist the Graphic Designer in understanding who their consumers are, because a Graphic Designer essentially weaves together a visual identity for consumers and pulls the fabric to construct this identity from every source imaginable all in the hopes of creating some visually-stunning pieces of work. Drawing inspiration from a source that does not speak visually to the product demographic can sometimes make or break the future of a business. Understanding the product demographic or audience can result in an increase in sales for the Graphic Design business. According to a report released by the Demographic Research Unit within the Department of Finance on May 1st, 2018, the population of California is nearing 40 million people. Sacramento's population alone grew by 1.4% from 2017 to 2018 for an estimated total of 501,344 people. California's residents are composed of White non-Hispanics, Latinos, Asian American or Pacific Islanders, Black non-Hispanics, Native Americans, and more.

### **Target Contact Demographics**

In this Marketing Plan I will be analyzing specific products and services offered by Graphic Designers across the Central Valley and suggest how those products and services can be best marketed and delivered to the different

demographics of people across the Central Valley. No specific segments are emphasized for targeting. Instead, each segment is discussed in terms of its needs for the services provided by the Graphic Design industry.

## CHAPTER II

### SITUATION ANALYSIS

In chapter two, I will be stating Marketing Objectives that the Graphic Designer can employ to further develop their own value in their products and services. An efficient marketing strategy should be laced with defined goals to guarantee clarity, because if the path forward is murky and obscured with confusion then business growth and success will remain mired in secrecy and out of the Graphic Designer's reach. To circumvent this potential obstacle, I will also describe organizations, such as the Graphic Artists Guild, Ico-D, and the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) that a Graphic Designer or consumer can ascribe to for quality, integrity, and resources among others.

#### **Marketing Objectives**

The objectives for every Graphic Design agency is to create value for their customers through visual communication. Clients will seek out Graphic Designers for solutions to these communication breakdowns to enhance and communicate the inherent value that is already present in the business and bring it closer to the surface. A Graphic Designer that can create value for their client is giving that client a competitive advantage and which should always be the objective. There are multiple directions that a client can consider to market their business more effectively. These include: increase brand reputation, improve the quality of their product, enhance



customer satisfaction, acquire new customers, differentiate product from competitors, adapt to a new generation of consumers, and break into a new market to name a few.

Clear communication between the Graphic Designer and the client can help bridge the gap in bringing these marketing objectives to fruition. Clients seeking out the highest quality Graphic Designers with sound ethical standards should be guided to Graphic Designers that are members of the Graphic Artists Guild, which is comprised of different Graphic Designers, illustrators, and photographers that is organized into seven chapters across the U.S. and is also a member of the international organization Icofrada (ico-D, International Council of Design). More than 200 organizations are represented by ico-D in more than 67 countries. There is also the nonprofit organization, AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts) Professional Association for Design, which is not a member of Icofrada, due to membership fees, but is comprised of more than 25,000 members across more than 70 chapters across the U.S. that specialize in all forms of communication design.

## CHAPTER III

### MARKET/CUSTOMER ANALYSIS

In chapter three, I am going to define the landscape of the Central Valley to better understand the Market Size, the Market Growth, and Market Segments in this area as well as to pinpoint the Consumer Behavior that permeates the geographical center of California. It is important for a Graphic Designer to understand consumers through their behavior to better market to them, as well as to mold and target their products and services to serve the consumers. To illustrate these points, I will be pulling and showcasing data from various sources, such as: the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, including its Occupational Outlook Handbook), IBISWorld (an industry market research company), Glassdoor (a database containing company reviews, CEO approval ratings, and salary reports among others), the CareerOneStop website, the U.S. Census Bureau, Projections Central – State Occupational Projections, and the State of California Employment Development Department’s 2014 – 2024 Local Employment Projection Highlights – Fastest Growing Occupations.

#### **Market Size**

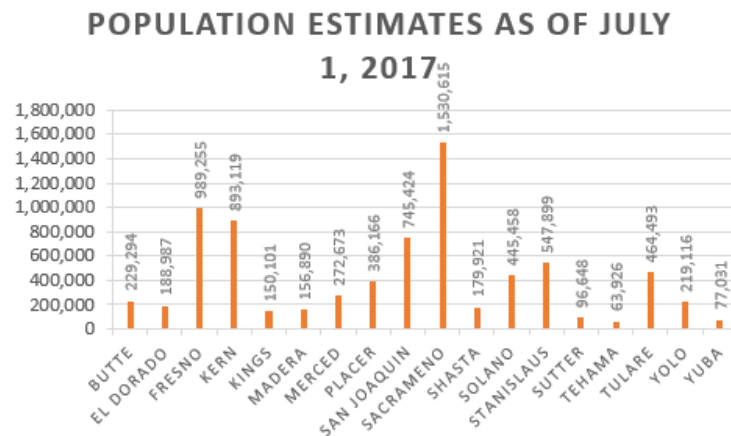
The Central Valley is approximately 450 miles long and approximately 60 miles wide or for a total of around 18,000 square miles (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016). The Central Valley is composed of the Sierra Nevada Range, the Sacramento River, the Klamath Mountains, the Tehachapi Mountains, and much more.

(Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016). The Central Valley is spread across 18 counties, and 25 cities with a total of 417 Graphic Design firms operating out of these areas. (Labor Market Information Division, 2018). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Occupational Employment and Wages for May 2017, California has the highest number of employed Graphic Designers at 30,180 with an average hourly wage of \$18.48. According to a U.S. Market Industry Research Report published in August 2018 by IBISWorld, *Graphic Designers in the US*, there are 132,343 enterprises, which can either be a project undertaken or a business (IBISWorld, 2018, p. 31).

Wage compensation is also based on years of experience. Glassdoor reports that a person just starting in the Graphic Design Industry with about a year's experience should expect to find employment with a starting annual wage of \$40,096. There is no adjustment found for education on this website. However, certain firms will take education in lieu of experience. The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook reports the median pay for all Graphic Designers in this field for 2017 was an annual salary of \$48,000 or \$23.41 per hour.

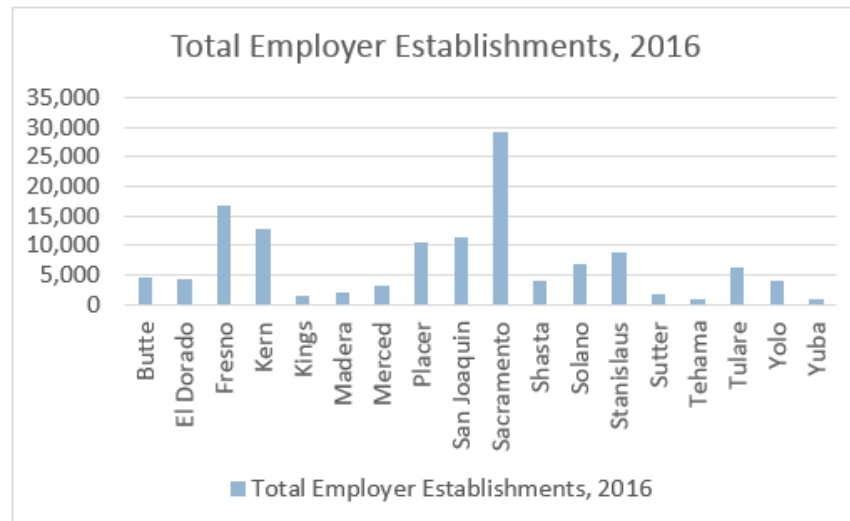
Advances in technology has reduced labor costs. However, the Graphic Design industry remains reliant on trained artists that are highly skilled and creative. These trained artists have the knowledge and knowhow to operate cutting-edge software. According to the data pulled from the CareerOneStop website, the wages for Graphic Designers in California is higher when compared to the wages earned

across the rest of the U.S. Illustrated within this section is a break-down of the wages for the cities in the Central Valley in California for the low, median, and high tiers. The CareerOneStop website is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and is a partner of the American Job Center network. The total population of California is approximately 39,536,653 people with the majority of this population comprised of Whites and Hispanics. The second figure on the next page illustrates the total number of employer establishments for each county in Central Valley.



\*Source: Based on information pulled from the U.S. Census Bureau

*Figure 1.* The population estimates of California for each county that falls into the Central Valley for California as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 according to reports compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau.



\* Source: Based on information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau

*Figure 2.* The total number of employer establishments for each county in the Central Valley in California based on information posted by the U.S. Census Bureau.

### **Market Growth**

According to reports given on Glassdoor.com, the national average for a Graphic Designer's annual salary is \$52,589. There are many different options for a Graphic Designer to make their mark, such as taking on an internship if available. After the intern has garnered a substantial amount of experience and training, the intern can climb the career ladder by becoming an associate/assistant. Another option could be in hitting the pavement and becoming a freelance worker, since the Graphic Design industry has low barriers to entry and people sometimes enter the industry to complete one or two projects and then slip out of the industry to take on a different challenge. A person can also open their own small business. A small-business owner does not have to operate and conduct their daily business functions out of a brick-and-mortar storefront, or even their own home, and can instead direct all of their

consumers and potential consumers to an online storefront. As many Graphic Designers likely already know, their options are only limited by their imaginations and their willingness to follow through with their vision.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, the job growth for Graphic Designers for 2016 – 2026 is reported at 4%, which is considered slower than average. From the same datasheet, it is reported that the number of Graphic Designer jobs in 2016 was 266,300 across the United States. For short-term projections, according to the Projections Central – State Occupational Projections, the base amount of employed Graphic Designers for all of California is reported as being 37,100 and from 2017 – 2019 it is supposed to increase to just 37,900.

This is reported as being a 2.2% increase with average annual openings of 3,820 meaning this field is underrepresented and Graphic Designers are underemployed. According to data pulled from the State of California Employment Development Department's 2014 – 2024 Local Employment Projection Highlights – Fastest Growing Occupations is that of a Web Developer with an estimated employment percent change of 48.9%. Web Developers either work hand-in-hand with Graphic Designers or are Graphic Designers themselves. The entry level education for a Web Developer is an Associate's Degree.

### **Market Segments**

According to a U.S. Market Industry Research Report published in August 2018 by IBISWorld, *Graphic Designers in the US*, there are eight major markets that

fully encompass the work for Graphic Designers, which are: Manufacturers (23.0%), publishers and media (17.5%), retailers and wholesalers (15.9%), other businesses (14.8%), advertising firms (14.7%), nonprofit organizations (8.0%), consumers (3.4%), and government agencies (2.7%) (IBISWorld, 2018, p.17).

Advertising firms take upon themselves the responsibility of creating, planning, and managing all aspects of a client's advertising needs. There are many different types of advertising firms, such as ATL (Above The Line), BTL (Below The Line), and TTL (Through The Line). There are also specialist advertising agencies that can fall into either of the previously mentioned categories, such as: digital advertising firms, healthcare advertising firms, financial/tech advertising firms, and in-house advertising firms.

An ad agency 'worth their salt' runs a tight ship with personnel that specialize in multiple areas of Graphic Design, such as: Creative directors, film/multimedia directors, brand specialists, account managers, social media and marketing coordinators, production coordinators, editors and content managers, sales representatives, and many others. However, there is strength in numbers and ad agencies can be swimming pools of creativity for someone that is inexperienced to learn and absorb from more senior, knowledgeable, and experienced staff.

There are many successful advertising firms located throughout the Central Valley, such as Never Boring Design Associates, California Consulting, LLC, PSI Advertising, Un/Common, and Misfit. There are also creative freelancers, but those individuals are in constant need to market themselves without the strength in numbers

of a team standing behind them and lack of regular income. This can be done in the Central Valley, but might require some cold calling and knocking on peoples' doors. In every new situation with unfamiliar people, the creative freelancer will need to pull out their 'elevator speech' and convey to the listeners why they are the superior choice versus a team of individuals. This might come down to price, communication, or being more available than a typical agency. Creative freelancers also do not have bosses to answer to, just the clients themselves. There are numerous websites designed to help people find available freelance jobs, such as Upwork, which takes 20% of a freelancer's earnings when they first start using this site. Over time, the amount of earnings that Upwork takes, declines.

Efficient product packaging can result in consumers taking notice and purchasing that product and inefficient product packaging can result in that product collecting dust and remaining unsold. Consider what type of paper packaging the product will be contained in, or is there a different option that has not been considered? When designing product packaging, not only does the design that goes onto the packaging need to be kept in consideration, but also the configuration of the package as well.

A critical question is how people are buying the product, because if the product is sold exclusively online then the design is going to be different than if the product package were competing visually against other products. Also, if the product itself is delicate and broken easily, the Graphic Designer will need to come up with a design that can ensure the product remains intact on the way to the consumer's home.



If the logo is going to be printed onto a package, there needs to be a vector file accessible, because vector files allow for more flexibility with what the user is able to do with them. A “vector file” is a source file that is sent to the printer, whereas a “raster file” is the output file. Different vector file types include EPS, AI, and PDF. When approaching this market segment, the Graphic Designer will need to understand the market that they are entering and be familiar with these different file types and packaging materials.

According to Labor Market Information (LMI) for California listed on the Employment Development Department’s (EDD) website, there are over 4,217 magazine and textbook publishing companies across California. For the publishers and media market, a Graphic Designer must possess extensive verbal and written communication skills and with such a diverse mix of cultures across the Central Valley. Speaking and understanding a second language, particularly Spanish, would not hurt either.

Being familiar with the different cultures is valuable experience as well, because all of the textbook knowledge will definitely pale in comparison to experiencing it first-hand. The Graphic Designer should also possess computer and social networking skills. There are many different types of publishing, such as: trade publishing (children and young adult), independent and regional publishers, electronic publishing, and educational publishing.

## **Consumer Behavior**

When deciding on visual specifics consumers have difficulty making up their mind, because there are so many different directions as to what can look appealing. As described by AIGA Professional Association for Design this situation that consumers experience can be due to cognitive dissonance. Also, there is a lot of content out there for consumers to consume with their eyes and consumers are like hummingbirds in the sense that they are distracted easily. The value that has been instilled into the product from the Graphic Designer must be communicated effectively, so that the consumer will realize and understand the prize that they have in front of them. When the consumer and artist sit down with one another in-person, over the phone, or through some other digital means of communication, there must be a clarity brought forth from the consumer that is able to detail what exactly the consumer wants.

If it is not a precise fit, the consumer should be able to describe it well enough, so that the Graphic Designer can make a decent head start. Determining the preferences of the consumer is important. If the consumer or customer is specific type of business, such as a hospital, there might be material or other specifications that must be followed. Sometimes the Graphic Designer and consumer just do not mesh well enough for the project to have any means of success. The Graphic Designer should attempt to stay flexible while trying to jump through every hoop that the consumer is creating and sometimes demanding. If the consumer knows exactly what he or she wants, but the Graphic Designer determines there is a better route to take or

alternative product that works better for whatever reason, the consumer might be inflexible and unwilling to falter from their preconceived vision that they built up in their mind.

## CHAPTER IV

### COMPANY ANALYSIS

In chapter 4, I am going to describe the different approaches that a company can take to forge their marketing goals and objectives with a well-honed and crafted customer experience. I'm going to break down how a Graphic Designer can deliver a first-rate experience for their customers. This experience is partly molded from a well-designed Vision and Mission Statement. Think about your objective statement and your company's culture as you read through this chapter and consider how it speaks of your business as well as the products and services that you offer.

#### **Customer Experience**

Graphic design is the ultimate customer experience complete with bathtubs full of visuals that will leave the client awe-inspired and clamoring to see more of what the Graphic Designer can create. It is like a magic show and the magician never reveals their tricks. A Graphic Designer should excel in customer service and there are many ways to do this. When a client comes in they are filled with some doubt over how to get the ideas from their head and into the hands of a competent creator that can bring it to life. A Graphic Designer must have patience for the client that they are working with to help facilitate this experience.

A customer's experience can be shaped from the moment they walk inside of the store or from the moment the customer goes to the homepage online. Not only is the customers' experience formed from the temperament from the Graphic Designer,

but also from how seemingly knowledgeable the Graphic Designer is of the market and how to best carry the project to completion. Now, a ‘diamond in the rough’ will not be immediately apparent to the customer and that is where the storytelling abilities of the Graphic Designer need to kick in. The business owner needs to be able to describe why the product in front of them is so great to begin with.

Accounting for emotional and psychological components from the Graphic Design business that can potentially impact the customer is important. The process in acquiring new customers to taking them through the sales pitch of what services and products are possible through that specific Graphic Design business can determine the customers’ experiences. The company’s Vision and Mission Statement should also make a concise impact and speak to the customer on what that business is about and what it is capable of. Whether this is a one-man show or work that is carried out by a team of professionals, the approach should remain consistent with the core beliefs of that business, so as not to create mixed signals on the business’ identity.

The customer experience does not just occur pre-sale, but also after the deal has been made and is completed. There should be something inherent within the business that is carried through to the customer experience that can create an emotional connection with the customer. If the small-business owner does not already have one they can set out on creating a consistent customer experience strategy that can analyze feedback from the customer on each specific experience. Is the website easy to navigate and purchase services and products from? Is the layout of the store clean with interesting visuals in sight? Is the staff well-dressed and courteous to the

customers? These are all valid questions that the small-business owner should have locked in to ensure the best customer experience that they can provide.

## CHAPTER V

### MARKETING OBJECTIVES

#### SMART Approach to Marketing



*Figure 3.* Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, and Time-bound all encompass the SMART acronym.

The SMART acronym first appeared in the November 1981 issue of *Management Review* titled *There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management goals and objectives*, written by George Doran, Arthur Miller, and James Cunningham (Doran, Miller, Cunningham, 1981). However, the graphic below is my creation. A Smart marketing objective should be **specific** to the target market that it is trying to impact. Does the marketing objective identify the problems or opportunities that the business is facing or can benefit from? The marketing objective should be based on real-time feedback and not outdated information. The marketing objective needs to also be **measurable** meaning is the data qualitative (nonnumerical, descriptive), such as the features of a Graphic Design service that the consumer is searching for or quantitative

(numerical), which would be more along the lines a specific type of Graphic Design service or product that is preferred in a certain geographical area.

The marketing objective should be based on information that is **actionable** and can create a significant impact on the way that the Graphic Designer conducts business to improve overall performance. A **relevant** marketing objective should address a specific issue that the Graphic Design firm is experiencing. The implementation of the marketing objective should have a clear beginning and ending date to measure success and to allocate necessary resources and should therefore be **time-bound**. These marketing objectives can be formed around the following examples: Developing distribution channels, converting prospects to customers, and engaging existing customers for repeat business.

### **Building Brand Awareness**

The target audience must be able to connect with the brand on an emotional level to build brand loyalty. Brand recognition is also important, but brand awareness takes the customer interaction to the next level by establishing a stronger connection to their customers. A brand could be compared to a soup metaphorically speaking, because a brand incorporates the company's name, logo, content, and business offerings all bundled together for each customer's experience. There are several strategies and products that a business can use to build brand awareness that I am going to describe in this section. These include, putting a referral program into action, creating and showcasing infographics, implementing freemium with content for



customers, developing local partnerships, providing car wraps, establishing social media contests, and becoming a LinkedIn publisher.

I am also going to describe the idea of creating your own, or joining someone else's, podcast. This strategy should be considered to inform and educate existing and potential customers on previous achievements, how the company is performing, or future plans and operations. I will provide more details regarding all of these options on how a Graphic Design business can use them for their own benefit further in the Marketing Plan.

### **Referral Programs**

Referral programs are business strategies that have built-in incentives and rewards that existing customers can take advantage of that will ultimately lead to additional business being generated. But the question comes down to structure. How should a business structure their referral program to provide the biggest bang for their buck? The referral program will need to be incentivized with something enticing enough that the customer is willing to take part in the referral program. Examples for some possible structure ideas include, signing-up a friend to get money back or referring a friend/family to receive a reward back.

These referral programs can be tied into special events or holidays to add a specific theme to the referral program, which can improve chances of success of the referral program for the business. An important feature for any referral program is not to bombard a customer with a referral program, as soon as they sign-up for that company's services, because there is a time and place for everything and this might

overwhelm the newly-acquired customer and ultimately turn them off from using that company again in the future. Referral programs can be placed inside of newsletters, physical items that are sent to the customer, ‘thank you’ e-mails, blogs, and more. The referral program must be built around something substantial enough that the customer will want to refer their friends and family.

Whether the business is located solely online or a brick-and-mortar building, the business owner could dedicate a wall, a page, or a small section of their business as a section that is dedicated to saying thank you to specific customers with something along the lines of a picture of the customer as an example. This could be a wall dedicated to customers that follow through with the referral program. The business owner could also create a ‘special club’ for customers that participate and successfully refer their friends and family that comes complete with special perks and privileges. Also, if the business does not follow through with the reward built into the referral program for the customer that fulfills their end then that customer will become discouraged with the business overall. For the small-business owner operating a Graphic Design business there could be a referral program structured around customers receiving additional services that the Graphic Designer offers or is capable of, such as art and illustration, packaging and labels, or something different.

### **Infographics**

As the saying goes, “a picture is worth a thousand words” (Barnard, 1927). I personally love infographics, because it allows me to take in and absorb a lot of information at one time, while still remaining visually appealing. Businesses can use

infographics to display large amounts of information in a 'snapshot' type of presentation. A business owner in the Central Valley can create a variety of infographics with relevant information about the surrounding community. Human beings, to an extent, consume with our eyes. Infographics are graphic visual representations of 'bite-sized' information that can be absorbed quickly.

Whether that information is basic or raw data, explicit knowledge, inputs, outputs, graphs or plots, spreadsheet models, financial planning systems, forecasts, etc., there are a lot of free infographic templates and tutorials available online. For the layman, however, there is a lot of room for error which is where the Graphic Designer can come in and take that information and compile it in a way that is visually appealing and stunning that catches viewers' eyes and pulls them into the subject matter enticed to learn and explore more. The decision on whether a potential customer decides to learn more or walk away happens in just a few seconds. That is another reason why infographics are so appealing, especially if it is complex or intricate information. That complexity can be extinguished by the captivating visuals of an infographic. A small-business owner can utilize infographics to draw attention to their business and illustrate why their services and products are superior to the competition by offering facts, testimonials, percentages, definitions, and more all onto one graphic. What makes the information splayed across the infographics so appealing is that it can be done in such a creative way so as to become fun and a learning experience.

### **Freemium with Content**

Mash together the words free and premium and you get freemium. The concept of freemium works like this. A service or product is offered at a basic level with the lure of enhancing that service or product being available for the user. It could be something as simple as a free t-shirt that is emblazoned with the brand from that business. Another example of a freemium with content product would be an app or a downloadable video game that comes with basic functionality, but to upgrade or enhance that video game or app then the user would need to pay money.

This approach provides enough knowledge and insight for the customer to understand and get a sense of what that product or service is all about without the business having to invest a lot of time and money in marketing campaigns and strategies. The word free usually comes with an eye-roll from the person hearing it, because typically nothing is free in this world. A notable freemium with content example that I personally like, and which is a well-known brand is Skype even though there are plenty of alternatives to what Skype provides. For the small-business specializing in numerous Graphic Design services, this could be the strategy to employ to showcase their specific design style in their community and to hit their target markets. If the Graphic Designer offers a total of 30 different types of services through their business, a customer could be given the option that if they sign-up or pay for one-type of service for an intended product, an additional service (that the business or customer is allowed to choose) could be made available for the customer for free.

There could be services that the small-business owner offers that are much simpler to complete and less costly. Therefore, those services could be the ones made available to the customer that are free and the premium content or services are the ones left at a cost to the customer. The premium services are the ones that are more difficult and require more resources and time, but they could be the ones offered to the customer at a basic level. Strip down the premium portion from the premium services and offer the basic version of those services for free.

### **Local Partnerships**

Local partnerships can be crucial for a small-business owner, especially when they are first starting out. A local partnership can be developed wherever there is a need for the types of services that the Graphic Designer offers. For instance, the Graphic Designer could reach out to the local sports teams and offer to provide the designs for their sports apparel in bulk at a discounted rate, as long as the Graphic Designer is able to obtain exclusive rights for the designs for those sports teams. There are many other directions also that a Graphic Designer could partner with to begin to develop that community network. The Graphic Designer could obtain the exclusive rights to work with people from the local motorcycle club to create the designs that will go on the back of their jackets. Some of these biker clubs can be found on websites, such as Harley Liberty or Biker Basics or Rider Clubs. There are also Veteran organizations, such as the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) or the American Legion that are typically available in most cities and counties that are looking for artists to put to work as well.

These partnerships do not necessarily have to be founded on the premise of putting the Graphic Designer immediately to work either. Instead, there could be a different agreement in which the Graphic Designer provides services at a discounted rate or free in exchange for marketing from a local influencer or a marketing specialist. There are options etched across every community in the Central Valley and the small-business owner does not have to look far to find them. If the partnership can be beneficial for both parties then it should be a 'green light' to move forward and start working together.

### **Car Wraps**

A car wrap is vinyl graphic that is applied directly over the paint of a vehicle and it is a great way to advertise a business and is a less costly alternative than traditionally painting a vehicle for, ultimately, the same effect. A paint job can cost \$10,000 or more, compared to the cost of a car wrap of closer to \$5,000. The lifespan of a car wrap usually tops off at seven years and that is usually the maximum amount of time it will last.

There are also different options for car wraps, such as partial wraps and full wraps. Car wraps are essentially moving billboards that highlights the business for everyone to see. A Graphic Designer must have some proficiency in Graphic Design programs, such as Adobe Photoshop/Adobe Illustrator to design vehicle wrap files that are print-ready. Template files that can be purchased online are not always accurate either. Upkeep for a car wrap consists of just soap and water.

## **Social Media Contests**

Social media contests are typically run in conjunction with a social media marketing campaign. Before venturing off to initiate a social media contest, the small-business owner should first reassess their goal and budget. Every venture should have clearly articulated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that the business owner wants to fulfill. Essentially, this is the reason for the venture in the first place. The social media contest can be a great way to rally people to a business owner's products and services. To generate buzz around what that business can offer. The small-business owner can begin a social media contest to build anticipation for when their business actually opens.

The main theme for any social media contest should be to change the people that participate into customers. The social media contest should also be simple enough for the person participating, because if it is overly complicated or has too many rules, people are not going to want to participate. The length of the contest should be included. The contest can be structured around many different premises, such as sharing the contest multiple times, a voting contest, a photo contest, a video contest, just to name a few. Another consideration for a business owner looking to implement a social media contest would be age. This guideline should be outlined in the rules. After the contest has finished, there should be some sort of follow-through performed by the business to analyze the people that entered the contest and work to turn those people into repeat customers.

## **LinkedIn Publishing**

LinkedIn is specifically targeted towards providing business and employment-related services through its website and mobile apps. LinkedIn now has a publishing platform that allows the extensive network of business professionals that have already amassed onto the platform to read, comment, and post their own content. LinkedIn is not like other social media websites in which people post on other social media platforms for “likes” (e.g. Facebook and Instagram). Instead, LinkedIn is for business professionals that can network either within their own business field or outside of it to continue growing in their selected career field. A business professionals’ LinkedIn page can also serve as a resume.

For the content providers that are valued by their peers in providing the highest amount or most valuable content, those providers become something called ‘Top Influencers.’ LinkedIn publishing is content uploaded from individuals with expertise in their field. LinkedIn publishing allows readers and content providers to promote themselves and their businesses, as well as to network and build relationships. The small-business can use this platform to share what they have already learned and experienced in their industry with other business professionals. The small-business owner can also receive valuable feedback from the content that they publish on LinkedIn from their marketing strategies to business ideas to implementation of different products and services.

Another possibility would be for a small-business owner to open their own business. This possibility might seem intimidating or scary for a Graphic Designer



without much Graphic Design knowledge or experience, but with enough confidence and after reading this Marketing Plan the interested parties can then take the plunge to open their own business. Similar to a library, there is so much content already published and uploaded to LinkedIn that a lot can be gained by reading and sorting through other business professionals' content. An influencer on LinkedIn is typically someone that has developed extensive knowledge in their industry and has developed followers as a result of the content that they have shared and published. They have become known as an authority figure on the subjects that they write about.

### **Podcasts**

A podcast is similar to a radio station or “Terrestrial Radio” that is available through the Internet. The information shared during a podcast recording is accessible anytime. A podcast can serve as a newsletter in which the small-business owner records and shares insight into their products and services, as well as any upcoming promotions, and any special content that the business owner feels like divulging on the podcast.

It is also a great way for the business owners to interact with their community by sharing an overview of their day-to-day lives in regards to approaching what a Graphic Designer in the Central Valley experiences and faces with their clients, their competition, and so forth. There are three podcasts that a business owner should frequent to expand and broaden their knowledge when opening, maintaining or growing their business, which are *The Pitch*, *How I Built This*, and *StartUp* (Smith, 2017).

### **Launching New Products/Services**

In this section, I am going to discuss some possible strategies and ideas to consider that Graphic Designers can use when launching their own new products and services. As you can see from the list below, Graphic Designers have plenty of options to choose from when it comes to possible new products and services. Whether it is a fizzle or a blast off of epic proportions, gauging future reception before launching a new product or service is tricky. Once the new product or service is released out into the public it becomes critical to test the market on how well the launch of that new product or service. There are several different Graphic Design techniques, which are also listed in this Marketing Plan.

If the market is already heavily doused in that product or service then chances are that the market is not going to be very receptive to the launch. The market can be bombarded with a deluge of similar products and services. The strategy should change to how can the Graphic Designer present this differently. Victory might lie in how a service is being delivered, or an existing product might need to be recycled into a more modern and trending design.

Upon launch, the implementation must be centered on the target audience. Who is the new product and/or service going to impact and will the impact be a benefit for the business? Another reasonable question before launching the new product or service is how to ensure that the target market is impacted and the business owner should understand what the problem is that they are trying to solve? The business owner should dip their toe into the water before diving in headfirst and this

can be done by getting expert opinions and testing the market. The business owner can implement trial runs, so as not to invest fully in a new direction without valuable feedback of the impact it is going to have.

• Social Media Page	• Website Design/Redesign	• Letterheads and Envelopes	• WordPress Theme Design
• Brand Guide	• Banner Ads	• Logos	• Brochures
• Business cards	• Posters	• Billboards	• Signage
• Illustration and Graphics	• Clothing or Apparel	• E-mail Newsletters	• Trade Show Banner
• Cups or Mugs	• Menus	• Resumes	• Book Illustrations
• Product Packaging	• Character or Mascots	• Wedding Invitations	• Magazine or E-book designs
• Beverage Labels	• Greeting Cards	• Album Covers	• Tattoos

*Figure 4.* An overview of possible Graphic Design products and services.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MARKETING STRATEGIES

How does a business turn an intended target group of people into customers? In this chapter we are going to find out. A business of any size needs a blueprint, a plan of action, or a game plan to locate potential customers and turn them into loyal consumers of their brand, because the World of Business is a maze of possible dead-ends, road blocks, obstacles, and sometimes even success. Capturing large amounts of data and addressing the noise within the data is essential. According to a book written by John F., Jr. Tanner Jr., *Analytics and Dynamic Customer Strategy: Big Profits from Big Data*, “I think Big Data is like that. You hear a lot of hype! And tough decisions to make while filtering your own industry noise and market distractions. Do you pivot now or hope your organization can manage a defensive ramp-up when the deluge hits? I suggest pivot!” (Tanner, 2014, p. 3).

It comes down to what products and services the business offers and how can the business showcases those products and services in the most attractive ways to other people, so that those people feel compelled to convert into consumers. If products and services offered by the business do not reach the needs of the target market, good marketing can fill in the gaps of why that business is superior from the competition. There are several different marketing strategies that a business can deploy as part of their game plan, such as: Transactional marketing, evangelism

marketing, cause marketing, cross-media marketing, paid advertising, guerrilla marketing, database marketing, and so on.

Every small-business owner should take some time in identifying and attempting to understand each of these at least on the surface-level. As stated there are many to choose from, but the five discussed here (social media marketing, relationship marketing, word-of-mouth marketing, diversity marketing, and stealth marketing) are the ones that I think can have the greatest impact if executed correctly.

### **Social Media Marketing**

There are over 63 social media platforms and according to the Global Digital Report for 2018, there are over 4.021 billion Internet users worldwide and 3.196 billion social media users worldwide. The concept of social media marketing is very simple. It is the execution of social media marketing that is not as simple. Each social media platform is going to provide many different functions and capabilities. For instance, Facebook has approximately 1.60 billion active users every month. Therefore, the business that decides to run their marketing campaign through Facebook will have access to a much larger audience thanks to all of the pre-existing infrastructure and users. Facebook can market or promote a business, brand or the products by using paid Facebook ads.

Most notably the last U.S. Presidential election between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump was reported as to being heavily influenced and swayed by certain nefarious groups and individuals by the social media platform, Facebook. WhatsApp is owned by Facebook, but continues to operate as a separate entity and is a different

platform that requires a different approach. WhatsApp allows its users to send messages, audio, or video for free to other WhatsApp users. According to the official WhatsApp website, this app “was built with the small business owner in mind.” (WhatsApp Inc., 2018).

There are also social media platforms that were built intentionally for conducting international business. However, there is a growing consensus that the more connected global society becomes there is no longer an ‘international’ business, but instead just simply business. Furthermore, with the growing capabilities and features of technology conducting business worldwide can be done out of a single bedroom in someone’s house. For instance, there is an app called Tencent QQ that was initially launched in China and has approximately over 80 countries using it. What makes this app so attractive is that it has a built-in translator that can translate the text people use to chat with. Over time this type of technology will continue to evolve and improve. Marketing campaigns can hit or miss with the correct advertisements. A specific social networking platform that allows its users to upload and share photos and clips of video is Instagram. This application has built-in filters that can add effects to a user’s photo. The filters can make a rather mundane photo look much more interesting. Many of these apps are owned under one company and as a consequence are much more interconnected, which can be beneficial for the Graphic Designer.

At the time this Marketing Plan is being written even U.S. Presidents are utilizing social media platforms, such as Twitter and entire industries are feeling the

effects after the U.S. President sends out a tweet across Twitter. It is amazing to see in real-time how the entire world can change from a sentence or two that is sent out across a social media platform. Different generations of people also tend to prefer different social media platforms. For instance, younger generations seem to prefer Snapchat, which is an image messaging social platform where users can instantly share photos and portions of video with one another.

This type of information can be especially useful for businesses trying to market themselves to younger audiences, whereas apps such as Facebook is sometimes perceived as a social media platform that only older generations use. A company's past, present, or future products and services can also be marketed across these social media platforms. Facebook has built-in features that allows users to implement a Facebook Sales Group to buy, sell, and exchange goods in the Facebook Marketplace.

Notably, there is also an app called Fiverr headquartered out of Israel, which is an online marketplace for freelance services that is accessible to customers worldwide. It is this type of reach and accessibility that is changing the entire fabric and landscape of how business is performed and conducted. Needless to say, this global accessibility is also changing the Graphic Design industry. The reach of a business has broken through its typical confines thanks to the Internet being born from advances in technology. Businesses are being given more options to forego the typical brick-and-mortar business and simply develop and maintain an online marketplace. I will get more into the topic of brick-and-mortar businesses later.

## **Relationship Marketing**

According to an article published by the National Law Review, “acquiring a new client costs five times more than retaining a current client” (Fordwich, 2010, p. 11). Relationship marketing is not focused solely on sales and transactions. Instead, this form of marketing is focused on creating customer loyalty through strong connections. These connections can result from the business creating an immersive brand experience and these experiences strive to strike an emotional chord with their target. If you or your firm is proficient at capturing big data, then you can also establish a relationship with your customers through analytics by interpreting the data that is captured through marketing campaigns, surveys, and events as examples. Better customer engagement will result in higher levels of customer satisfaction that the business can generate and increases the odds the business will retain that customer over a longer period of time.

There are many businesses that are represented by a single person’s face, such as John Schnatter who founded Papa John’s Pizza, but was forced to step down from the company after Mr. Schnatter made some disparaging comments about Roger Goodell, the National Football League commissioner (Haag, 2017). Relationship marketing is centered on developing the best and strongest connection with the customer. If the customer falls in love with a brand, such as Coca-Cola, that customer will in-turn fight for what they love and argue that the brand the customer loves is the superior one and list their reasons why. The converted customer that has been



instilled with the love for their newly-discovered brand becomes an advocate and will venture out into the world to proselytize the 'good faith' regarding their brand.

Relationship marketing is a personal touch that shows that the business has undertaken special effort and consideration, which is noticeable to the customer. This can be done in several ways. One of which is for a company to listen to their customers feedback, extract useful information from that feedback and infuse it into their products. I am not saying the company should catch every comment and remark given to them by their customers and attempt to please everyone, but to instead sift through the mounds of feedback that is given to them. A brand should have a strong or a unique identity that can easily be identified by their customers. When a small business is working on establishing itself in its community, the business owner can generate interest by offering limited free services for first-time customers, as well as by providing loyalty programs and conducting special events. A business owner should not attempt to please everyone, but instead to determine what services the Graphic Design business offers and promote those products and services in a universal way.

Whether those products and services are for corporate identity and branding, merchandise design services, art and illustration, print design services, Graphic Design services, or web design services they should all have something similar and familiar that the customer can identify and associate with that small business. That association can be identified with the small business owner by the way the product was constructed. Those products can have a similar style or tend to be somewhat

humorous if that is the small business owner's particular style. By constructing and delivering products and services in an identifiable way, those products and services can stand on their own to establish the relationship with the customer. The small business owners can also offer their services to a local non-profit or to the government.

### **Diversity Marketing**

There is not one definitive perspective on any topic or subject in the world. There is always a different perspective that the recipient can benefit from and possibly broaden their own horizon and understanding of how the world works. With that, let us discuss Diversity Marketing and why it is so important, especially in the 'ultra-connected' business world that we all live in. Customers can come in all shapes and sizes and it is important for even a small business operating out of a small community to understand this. The definition of diversity as defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary is "the inclusion of different types of people (such as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization" (Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2018, p. 2). The Central Valley in California is comprised of 18 different counties which comes with many different cultures of people all with different values, expectations, and ways of interacting.

The way to market to a person that is older versus marketing to someone who is still a teenager will be completely different. The same rule goes for gender as well as ethnicity, religion, family size, physical environment, profession, and much more. This means that when a small business owner is attempting to reach a wider and more

diverse audience, that business owner will need to adapt and mold their message and services to that diverse group, because this is not a one-size fits all type of scenario and cannot be treated as such.

Also, depending on the background of the business owner attempting to reach out to the diverse group of customers will also determine the initial approach and strategy. Let us play out a What-If scenario. In this fictitious scenario assume a small business owner is about to open their business in the Central Valley and is around the age of 25 when he or she starts their business. There might not be a very deep or thorough understanding of how to market their services and products to an older-aged customer. The small business owner in this scenario would need to adapt their products and services to an older audience.

Brainstorming sessions on how to reach a more diverse group of customers can lead to a more creative process, which can benefit more customers in the long-run. This is a strategy process to accentuate the firm's brand. There are many generations to consider when marketing a firm's products and services, such as: Traditionalists (1945 and before), Baby Boomers (1946 – 1964), Generation X (1965 – 1976), Millennials (1977 – 1995), and Gen Z (1996 and after). Each of these generations is vastly different on how to reach and market to. Building awareness is crucial and trial and error can be a painful process for the small business. For instance, in England a backwards peace sign is interpreted as a rude gesture (Gawne, 2015).

Also, Indians prefer not to receive gifts or items in general from other people if they are using their left hand, because the left hand is thought to be the hand that people use to wipe themselves in the bathroom (Hays, 2015). Thai people consider the head to be sacred and it is considered extremely disrespectful to touch someone from Thailand on their head (Smarter Travel Media, LLC., 2017). In Africa and the Middle East, it is considered normal for men to hold hands as a sign of trust and friendship (Fountain, 2005). Let us not forget that it is seen as being polite in Taiwan to burp loudly after a delicious meal (Nelson, 2018). If you give the thumbs-up sign to someone native to Germany, the German native will simply think you're counting (Harker, 2018).

Now, factor in these cultural differences to people in the U.S. and they might seem pretty bizarre. However, if a business owner does not approach these cultural differences with respect and hands an Indian customer an item with their left hand because they are left handed this is potentially disrespectful and might lose that business owner that customer. I would say that a small business owner should take some time to educate themselves on just how diverse the market is, because it is better for business and can result in a more creative process that will be appreciated by a larger range of customers.

### **Word-of-Mouth (WOM) Marketing**

Word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing is also seen as one of the most valuable forms of marketing. According to the Nielsen Global Trust in Advertising Report released in 2015, "The most credible form of advertising comes straight from the

people we know and trust” and based off of the same report “Eighty-three percent of online respondents in 60 countries say they trust the recommendations of friends and family” (Nielsen, 2015, p. 1). The findings from this report are interesting, because more than 30,000 consumers were polled from across 60 countries.

Consumers trusting what they are told from their friends and family actually makes a lot of sense, because those are the people that are the closest to the consumer. In this day of interconnectedness and every piece of content being available through different web-based platforms we, as a society, tend to view success more as who has more subscribers on YouTube or more followers on Instagram. There are ways to exploit the algorithms that companies like YouTube use to help channels with content amass more followers. What I am getting at is it is easier to blindly seek higher numbers of followers, instead of attempting to build real connections with people.

Therein lies the magic of WOM, which is establishing and creating those connections. The main and ultimate goal of WOM is to get people talking about the brand, as well as about the experience that he or she had witnessing this company’s engagement of its consumers. The company could engage their intended target with stunning visuals, delivering something unique, something that is emotionally moving to its audience, creating buzz, or something different altogether, because there are a lot of options on how to do this. For instance, a small-business owner just dipping their big toe into the ocean of commerce of Graphic Design could hold a special event that includes the business owner’s backstory followed up with a reason why this field

of Graphic Design means so much to them and thereby engaging the attendees of this special event.

There are many options and the small-business owner does not need to create an event out of nothing and can instead include themselves in already-established events. For example, events happening around the Central Valley include the Via Arte Italian Street Painting Festival that occurs in Bakersfield in October or the small-business owner could attempt to include themselves in the Wine and Chocolate Weekend that occurs at the Madera Wine Trail in February. Roping in new customers can be costly for any business. However, to gain more traction and gain success in these ventures, customers must be engaged with their brand. Wendy's engages remarkably well with their consumers on Twitter by sending out thoughtful and funny remarks in real-time to consumers sometimes regarding their competitors and nobody seems to be doing it better in their marketplace, especially at a corporate level. Becoming so popular on the Internet for a brand team was not easy, but Wendy's has tweeted out some memorable one-liners that has definitely resulted in people talking about the brand in a positive way.

WOM can also be achieved by tapping influencers who are willing to use and endorse the small-business owner's products. An influencer is a person who has established themselves as being credible, marketable, and popular in a specific industry. Companies might look for a Facebook influencer or a YouTube channel that has amassed an extensive number of subscribers. Influencers include: athletes, bloggers, musicians, actors, journalists, or entrepreneurs. Influencers can be broken

down further into categories, such as mega-influencer, macro-influencer, and micro-influencer.

When people like David Beckham decide to wear certain brands to their events the world takes notice. That is an influencer. I am not saying that the influencer that the small-business owner reaches out to has to be a global phenomenon. Even a micro-level influencer aligned with that small-business owner's intended target of customers can be a win-win for both parties. Here's a quote I like that has to do with creating traction and momentum, "If I started a fire, do I need to tell you to gather around it? No. You'd do that naturally." (Saasquatch, 2017, p. 6). I like this quote because once that initial foundation of interest or seed has been planted in a consumer, they are going to carry that interest on with them and consequentially grow more interest with the other people they interact and share their experiences with.

### **Undercover / Stealth Marketing (Buzz Marketing)**

A great example of stealth marketing occurred in 2002 and was brought about thanks to Sony Ericsson, who at the time was one of the first companies to produce a cell phone with a digital camera. To market this feat of importance, Sony hired 60 actors, all equipped with the company's newest creation, and sent those actors to 10 major cities. The actors asked strangers passing by on the street to take their photo using the Sony Ericsson phone and taught teach the stranger on-the-spot how to use the device. When products and services can be shown to consumers without the consumers' explicit knowledge then that would be stealth marketing.

There are so many instances in movies when this occurs, such as when a specific brand is showcased during important sequences in a movie. This is called Product Placement. There is an entire movie dedicated to this marketing style called *The Joneses*. There is also Ghostwriting in which the business owner themselves could take to social media or a blog post to provide instances on how satisfied they were with their own company. The practice of stealth marketing can be seen in a negative light. Stealth marketing, and the tactics used to deploy them, sometimes falls into is ethical dilemmas. There are more gray areas than some people are comfortable with in stealth marketing. Just like everything else, stealth marketing has been taken online in which brands will pay marketers to post positive reviews about their products and services all anonymously of course. Another popular stealth marketing tactic is Fake Media. This tactic or term has been in the news a lot lately at the time this Marketing Plan was being written.

For the small-business owner stealth marketing should be used at their own discretion. Stealth marketing is used to generate buzz. That is the idea behind it. The deployment of stealth marketing is to market or advertise to consumers without the consumer actually knowing that they are being advertised to, because people have become desensitized to advertisements and tend to tune out typical advertisements. The point is to catch the intended target off-guard, so that the potential customer can develop an unbiased opinion regarding the product or service. If the small-business owner has already cultivated a small amount of satisfied clients, the business owner can request the clients to recommend their services and products to other people or to



perhaps be more vocal about their satisfaction. There is also the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) Guide Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising that business owners must adhere to (16 CFR Part 255, 2018).

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MARKETING MIX

In chapter seven, The Marketing Mix, I will be analyzing and defining the importance of the 4Ps: Product, Place, Price, and Promotion. The Marketing Mix should be accessible and ready for the Graphic Designer to draw from at a moment's notice for their marketing needs. The Marketing Mix is a model but it does not have to be set in stone. As the Graphic Designer adapts to new environments and obstacles, so too should the Marketing Mix. I will also be examining Public Relations, Sales Force, Best Practices, and Content Marketing Software to add supplementary information to the 4Ps that you might not have already considered to advance your own business.

A Graphic Designer can cultivate an assortment of different tools to meet their business needs and influence consumers to purchase their products and employ the Graphic Designer's uniquely designed services. I will be listing the most widely sought after products that a consumer will seek out a Graphic Designer for as well as how a Graphic Designer can price their services and products fairly in a highly competitive market. The place are where sales are made and attention is garnered for a Graphic Designer. California is comprised of the most Graphic Design business out of the United States. Read on and discover for yourself the different strategies and resources that can be employed for the betterment of your own business.

## **Product**

The product in this industry ranges from advertising illustrations, to user interfaces, and website design. According to a U.S. Market Industry Research Report for *Graphic Designers in the U.S.* published in August 2018 by IBISWorld, products and services distribution in this industry are as follows: Advertising and corporate branding (48.5%), web design and development (16.6%), print media design (13.7%), other Graphic Design services (13.2%), and ancillary services (8.1%). This information tells us that advertising agencies and corporations make up the majority of work for Graphic Designers. Graphic Designers typically receive projects or ideas for projects that require immediate attention and need to be finished quickly. Branding and advertising are both different ingredients that go into the marketing process to boost the company's reputation and increase sales.

A Graphic Designer needs to be able to produce a quality product, while still balancing and meeting set deadlines for when the work needs to be wrapped up. Designing letterforms is another strength that many Graphic Designers have and should utilize to add value to: magazines, books, newspapers, menus, product packaging, logos, and advertisements. As the use of technology becomes more prevalent and commonplace in the industry, so too do the products and services that the Graphic Designer offers meaning that it is important for the Graphic Designer to have a proficiency in, at least, a couple of Graphic Design software programs such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign, Inkscape, CorelDRAW, and

GIMP. A general understanding of how to work with HTML and basic web programming scripts is also essential for a web developer.

As shown in this section there is a small list of different Graphic Design techniques, which depend upon the type of product that the Graphic Designer is attempting to piece together. There is also a warehouse full of different apps available for smartphones for Graphic Design professionals. All of these different types of software can be utilized for the betterment of a service or product.

### **Place**

A Graphic Designer will have two different types of customers: B2B (business-to-business); or B2C (business-to-consumer). Direct sales and distribution can occur on the Internet, catalogs that can serve as portfolios of the Graphic Designer's previous work, or from sales teams that seek out prospects that might be interested in the firm's available services. Indirect or wholesale distribution depends on one or several third-party distributors to the wholesalers to finally the retail stores.

The sales made by the Graphic Designer can be a finished piece of work or from the labor involved creating something akin to the client's vision. The Graphic Designer can develop these distribution channels at local events or a simple social gathering and the Graphic Designer can possibly make a sale at the same time. The sales can be a result of published, printed, or digital media. Distribution channels can be developed from local partnerships or from word-of-mouth. This report was mentioned in a previous section, but according to a U.S. Market Industry Research Report published in August 2018 by IBISWorld, *Graphic Designers in the US*, the

state with the largest amount of Graphic Design establishments is California at 15.5%. According to the same report, the other states where a lot of Graphic Design traffic is generated is New York at 10.1%, Florida at 7.6%, Illinois at 6.1%, and Texas at 4.7%. California, “The Golden State,” is at the top of the heap for where Graphic Design work is generated in the U.S. There are several Graphic Design companies headquartered out of different sections of the world, such as London, Barcelona, Madrid, and Amsterdam.

### **Price**

This is the most difficult decision to determine for a Graphic Designer. Outsourcing has been occurring more frequently due to advancements in technology, which has been thinning the potential profit margins for domestic Graphic Design firms (IBISWorld, 2018). However, there are many decisive factors that can assist the Graphic Designer in making this decision. Possible factors include: scope of the project (what is the client trying to accomplish), the resources that the Graphic Designer would need to invest (time and actual materials), payment terms (cash up front or a set amount of money over time), timeline (what needs to be delivered when), and deliverables (a client’s expectations of the final product). Books to look into when financing your business are *Financing Your Small Business* and *Raising Capital for Dummies*. Performing follow-ups with the client is also important to determine the longevity of the product or service. The pricing for each product and service should be agreed upon by the business owner and the client with a signature and date to coincide that agreement.

There should be steady communication between the Graphic Designer and the client over the life of the project as well, so that both parties feel secure in what the other is doing and to be able to clear up any possible confusion regarding the final product. The Graphic Designer should never agree to a project that is going to eat them out of house and home. What this means is that the Graphic Designer needs to know what he or she needs in order to survive and keep their business open. This also means that through each phase of the project, the Graphic Designer understands and considers the realistic costs and demands to complete the project. The Graphic Designer should not try to oversell their abilities and skills or spread themselves too thin in between multiple projects and time constraints.

### **Promotion**

This section might be primarily for freelance Graphic Designers that are busy hitting the pavement every day attempting to reach new heights of business that do not operate out of a brick-and-mortar storefront, but all should still have a website designed and ready to go. This would be for customers to peruse and view the freelance Graphic Designer's available products and services. Every social media page that the freelance Graphic Designer operates should be showered with the distinctive brand and personality of the freelancer. Networking in person and across social media is going to be important for the freelancer looking to make a name for themselves. If there will be a lot of face-to-face interaction with clients and potential clients, the freelancer should also take some time to hone their image and how they come across to their clients.

The Graphic Design industry has low startup costs, so it is easy for a freelance artist to jump in and out of the industry for a project or two. The freelancer is a self-promoter and must take hold of every opportunity given to them with both hands. If the opportunity is not apparent, it is up to the freelancer to create the opportunity. A Graphic Designer should attempt to take advantage of as many Graphic Design conferences as they can fit into their schedule. There are plenty out there, such as: AIGA Design Conference, HOW (award-winning design magazine), Design Live, Adobe MAX, SXSW (South by Southwest), Creative Pro Week, The Brand New Conference, Circles Conference, 99U Conference, WeMake, and much more.

There are many different methods and strategies that a business owner can take advantage of when building awareness for their brand. A brand is like a unique personality that has been meticulously crafted by the business owner. It is a culmination of different resources pieced together to form an identity with which customers can engage. What that brand stands for and symbolizes speaks to its target market. As an example, when a person thinks of Nike they also think of sports, because after years of careful and strategic planning and execution the brand of Nike has become a global backbone of design and athleticism. Through worldwide marketing efforts and renowned athletes endorsing the brand Nike transcends cultural boundaries and is instantly recognizable to nations of people all with a Swoosh.

### **Public Relations**

Develop a brand bible and make sure that it is applied across each fissure of your firm. A brand bible sounds ominous, but it can provide the clearest and most

transparent guideline for every feature of how a company's brand will be cared for and implemented. A company's brand bible can be the company's A – Z of policies in providing a clear and easy-to-follow overview. It keeps the services and products strewn together and executed by the company consistent. The brand bible can also provide guidelines on how that specific company will interact with customers and potential customers. The brand bible establishes character for the business and a unique identity that will help set that business apart from its competition. The brand bible can encompass a preferred color palette, website and social media guidelines, as well as font types, and image styles used for each business that the firm interacts with. As the size of the business grows, so too can the brand bible. There is no preferred size that a brand bible must follow. The brick-and-mortar storefront is also important and should be structured conducive to the customers' expectations and needs. A customers' sensory perceptions are affected by the store ambience and if there is a negative connotation associated with the storefront, which will ultimately affect business.

### **Sales Force**

Marketing metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are difficult to capture for any marketing team. After the dust settles from another completed marketing campaign these are the pieces of information that are the most valuable. Managers depend upon these metrics for direction that ultimately affect the firm's next project and marketing campaign. The metrics can be pulled from a variety of sources, such as the orientation of the market, an environmental characteristic, or



something different altogether. Reaching out and gathering impressions from building awareness and likeability and preparing for possible recalls from shipped products are all steps in this ladder to shed light and provide insight into what a customer wants and do not want.

Whether those metrics are being evaluated to understand a consumer's reaction to a service, product, or brand it is all relevant and important information. There are so many considerations and levels of customer engagement that have to be considered when running and maintaining a business, such as the customer acquisition cost (CAC), customer retention, lifetime value (LTV) of a customer, and many more. As an example, a business will want to understand how effective the website that represents the business at bringing in customers is. A brand will want to figure out how customers are finding out about their brand. That is why there are so many surveys in circulations being distributed to gain a better understanding of consumers' likes and dislikes, preferences, and so on. If a business decides to use or distribute surveys to their customers, there should be a hook or incentive attached to the survey, possibly, in itself, may bring in more business.

There is a cloud computing company called Salesforce that provides a platform for enterprise organizations to be able to connect better with their customers, as well as to capture and understand their customers. This is third-party software that a small business owner should take advantage to avoid lengthy alternative options, as well as to propel their business to the next level and gain a better understanding of

their customers. There are several cloud services that Salesforce offers, including Sales Cloud and Marketing Cloud for each company's specific needs.

### **Best Practices**

A Graphic Designer, over time, might change their style, but changing their style constantly will confuse their customers who want a consistent voice to follow. A collection of colors and fonts that are typically used for that business, as well as considerate letter spacing, and the effort to 'keep it simple' is always a golden rule. Every project should be researched on top of the direction, critiques, and comments given by the client before the Graphic Designer sets out on creating pieces for the project.

This and other loose guidelines should be adhered to for the Graphic Designer to strike success, such as creating unique content and not jumping on each new bandwagon that they come across. There is plenty of inspiration to draw from, but that content should not be copy and pasted. A Graphic Designer should also not spread themselves too thin by taking on multiple projects that they cannot hope to finish in time or spend a sufficient amount of time on to create a project that they can be proud of.

### **Content Marketing Software**

Content marketing is a marketing strategy that focuses on generating material to target and engage with a specific audience and market, as well as to measure the effectiveness of the content. Companies are veering away from more traditional methods of marketing to more innovative methods. Content marketing software is a

new and innovative method that vendors are gravitating towards to make data-driven decisions. Vendors such as Oracle, Adobe, Salesforce, and many more from all over the world offer content marketing software. G2 Crowd is a business solutions review platform and has captured real-user feedback as to who the best content marketing software provider is and Skyword was identified as being the best. G2 Crowd captured this data in their Grid Report. Skyword offers: Content marketing software, industry-leading services (e.g. content strategy and development, program management, creative services, editorial management), and a global community of freelance storytellers.

According to the President and CEO of Crafter Software, Mike Vertal, “The modern Web is immersing us into a new era of engagement. As a result, today’s leading enterprises are constantly striving to achieve higher levels of user engagement by providing fresh, personalized, and relevant content to target audiences, all through a consistent multi-channel user experience.” (2016, p. 27). Crafter Software was recognized by eContent for 2016 – 2017 as an industry leader with a new and modern approach to SaaS-based Web content management. Marketing teams are employing content marketing software in droves, because it is one of the newest trends to hit the industry. What makes content marketing software so attractive is that it is able to execute so many different tasks at once.

This software can take the creation of a Graphic Designer and enhance and manage that content for the Graphic Designer, as well as the distribution, tracking, sharing, and sourcing of that content. Contextualizing this software to fit specific

target markets that the company is attempting to break into or further develop content for. This software can come built-in with analytics that further breaks down and disseminates chunks of data for possible patterns. All of these companies are now in a race against one another to develop the 'perfect' content marketing software that can perform these multiple tasks and execute them in the most proficient manner.

## CHAPTER VIII

### DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

#### **Marketing Research**

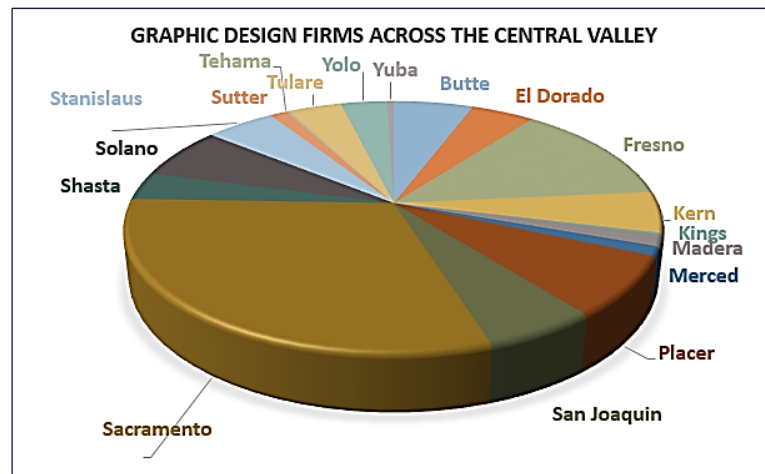
There are two main types of research available to the Graphic Designer interested in learning more about their customers or competitors: primary (field) research, and secondary (desk) research. Primary research is the gopher work in which the Graphic Designer collect new data, such as surveys and focus groups. Secondary research on the other hand, uses data not specifically collected for the problems at hand, but useful in solving it. It is also called desk research, because it is organizing, compiling, and making sense of raw or unorganized data readily available. The Graphic Designer may make use of marketing research to uncover additional information about their product, or conduct product testing, customer satisfaction testing and brand loyalty testing.

In the area of pricing, for example, experiments may be designed whereby different price points are tested for their impact on customer attitude and interest. Insights may also be gained with secondary data pulled from sales data or government publications that cover wider markets. Interviews should be structured beforehand, so that explicit results can be obtained. Surveys can be incentivized if results from that method are difficult to obtain or the surveys can be sent to existing programs and completion of the survey can be rewarded somehow by the Graphic Designer with samplings of their products or services.

### **PEST Analysis**

PEST is an acronym for Political, Economic, Social, and Technological. This type of analysis attempts to account for the unforeseen in the areas indicated by the letters in the acronym. It is not a crystal ball, but instead is a measurement tool that strives to define the current and future impacts of Political, Economical, Socio-cultural and Technological changes on a small business. I consider this measurement tool to be especially useful when trying to determine the direction of the Graphic Design Industry in the Central Valley, because the landscape is rapidly changing. This analysis tool will help to provide a better vantage point on what those changes might look like and eventually mold this landscape into.

The total number of Graphic Design firms located throughout the Central Valley in California is currently at 417. To determine the PEST Analysis there are some factors that will be consistent no matter which county the business owner plans to operate out of to establish and maintain a Graphic Design business. If the business owner plans to operate their business under a name other than their own, a Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed with the business owner's host county and may need to obtain a Home Occupation Permit. The business owner must also contact the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for assistance with tax ID numbers to obtain a Federal Tax ID number. The Graphic Design business must abide by required tax laws.



\* Source: Based on information provided by the Labor Market Information (LMI) website for California.

*Figure 5.* This graph showcases the number of Graphic Design firms in each county in the Central Valley in California.

Other factors to consider includes: the physical location of the business, the nature of the business, signs ordinance guidelines and fees that must be adhered to, and any business that has employees are required to contact their insurance agent to obtain Worker's Compensation Insurance. Should there be a need to erect a new building to house the Graphic Design business, a work permit will be required for the construction company. Regarding freelance Graphic Design work, no license is required, as long as the person performing the freelance work is doing so under their own name just like the aforementioned 'rule of thumb' for brick-and-mortar businesses. The CalGOLD database provides information on California requirements to obtain business permits, licenses, registration requirements from all levels of government, and much more. This section breaks down, county by county, exactly what is required to open and maintain a Graphic Design firm.

Butte County requires business licenses or permits for the activities only within the unincorporated areas. The following cities are available for the business owner to choose from, such as: Biggs, Chico, Gridley, Oroville, and Town of Paradise. Butte County also has several business resources available for the business owner: 3CORE, Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD), Butte College Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Butte College, The Training Place, Chico State – Center for Economic Development, Chico State – Center for Entrepreneurship, Chico State – Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Northern California Regional Land Trust (NCRLT), NoRTEC, SCORE – Counselors to America’s Small Business (which pairs people with mentors), and Butte County Economic and Community Development Offices. For qualified businesses, Butte County also has a program called the Butte County Business Incubator Program. Business incubators are companies that assist new and startup businesses to develop. Some cities in Butte County have different restrictions and rules when setting up a business, such as the Town of Paradise where no business license is currently required (ButteCounty.net, 2013).

However, there are required permits. El Dorado County has similar requirements to Butte County for opening a business. It should be noted that the business services that El Dorado County provides are not as comprehensive and streamlined, as those offered by Butte County. The El Dorado Chamber of Commerce does, however, offer a section dedicated to business tools that is comprised of business articles and websites. El Dorado also offers a survey titled El Dorado Hills



Business Confidence Survey. The most useful tool I found that El Dorado County offers business owners and operators is their ‘Guide to Economic Development.’ This guide has the following sections: Strategic Advantages, Site Selection, Development Services, a section on What’s New, Greater Sacramento Economic Council, a breakdown of Local Partners, Reports and Studies, Demographics, and a section on contact information (Elevate to El Dorado, 2018). El Dorado County also promotes the county with a YouTube video titled “Elevate to El Dorado” and another one titled “Everything is Possible in El Dorado County.” There is also a link to an “Interactive Exploration of El Dorado County,” which contains within it a ‘Historic Coloma Story Map,’ a ‘Filmed in El Dorado County Story Map’, and an ‘El Dorado County Business Park Story Map’ (Elevate to El Dorado, 2018). These three selections are all interactive story maps.

There is a great resource for individuals in starting a business in the City of Fresno, which is available at the following URL, [www.fresnostartup.com](http://www.fresnostartup.com). There is a plethora of information within this guide, such as business plan ideas and considerations, as well as a breakdown of taxes for types of businesses, licensing information, and different options to hire an employee. To start a new business in Fresno County, the new business owner must first obtain a Zone Clearance to confirm that the type of business is permitted at the desired or intended location. For instance, there is a Home Occupation Zone Clearance for businesses that are going to operate out of their own home. There is a \$27 dollar fee to process this application.

Afterwards, the new business owner can proceed and pay all applicable business taxes.

Kern County is comprised of 11 major cities: Arvin, Delano, Ridgecrest, Bakersfield, Maricopa, Shafter, California City, McFarland, Taft, Tehachapi, and Wasco. The Kern Economic Development Corporation offers business incentive programs and connections (Kern Economic Development Corporation, 2018). The Business Assistance Center of Kern County Community College District (KCCD) also has available business training and consulting services (Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, 2018).

The City of Bakersfield Economic Development Department promotes itself as a one-stop shop for new and expanding businesses (City of Bakersfield, 2018). The City of Bakersfield a “web-based application” to find zoning information, identify representatives, and find other geographic information. There are also apps available to keep tabs on specific cities, such as the Bakersfield Mobile App.

Kings County offers a lot of online information regarding Enterprise Zones, which offer tax incentives to taxpayers that operate their business within that zone (Kings EDC, 2018). These incentives are: hiring credits, sales or use tax credits, business expense deduction, net interest deduction, and net operating loss (NOL) deduction. Based on Labor Market Information (LMI) there is also only one Graphic Design business operating out of Kings County (California Labor Market Information, 2018). Kings County is home to the Naval Air Station in Lemoore, CA (Lemoore, 2018). Kings County does not have a Small Business Development Center (SBDC), but it

has a Small Business Administration (SBA) (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2018). There is also a Job Training Office (JTO) and an Employment Development Department (EDD) office (Kings County Workforce Development Area, 2017). The table below highlights some of Kings County’s local agencies and programs that business owners can take advantage of for the benefit of their own business.

<p><b>KingsWorks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local agency that provides job search, training, education, and support for recipients of cash assistance (City of Hanford, 2018).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Kings County Economic Development Corporation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers various services to include: Business financing, workforce development, local, state and federal incentive programs (Kings Economic Development Corporation, 2018).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recycling Market Development Zone (RMDZ)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers below market loans for qualifying businesses (City of Hanford, 2018).</li> </ul>
<p><b>The College of the Sequoias</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is a two-year California community college that offers educational and other programs for Tulare and Kings County residents (College of the Sequoias, 2018).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Proteus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local agency that provides training, education, and community services (Proteus, Inc., 2018)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Facade Improvement Grants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main Street Hanford offers matching facade improvement grants for businesses located in the downtown area (City of Hanford, 2018).</li> </ul>

*Figure 6.* Kings County’s has many different resources available to small-business owners.

The point with this section is that each county has business resources built into the county’s infrastructure to assist the economic development and overall growth for small businesses. There is a proverb from the 1670s that states, “What’s good for the goose is also good for the gander” (Wordsworth, 2014, p. 3). The growth of small businesses is good for the small business as well as the county that the business operates out of. This preexisting infrastructure should be utilized by the business owner to further their own business goals, grow their network, and make themselves stronger within their community because of it. For mentorship and guidance find a

SCORE chapter near you. There is a PEST Analysis breakdown organized in a table on page 69 for each section (Political, Economical, Social, and Technological). This table illustrates very specific and real considerations that will turn into business-limiting obstacles if not properly addressed. The information listed in the table below references various sources, such as: The U.S. Copyright Office, the Insight Personal Finance website, the American Institute of Graphic Arts non-profit organization, the Society for Experiential Design non-profit organization, the Trusted Choice website, and IBISWorld.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Political</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copyright <b>laws</b> for Graphic Designers (Kattwinkel, 2007). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Trademarks</li> <li>○ Intellectual Property</li> <li>○ Work made for hire</li> <li>○ Client owning the Graphic Designer's copyrights</li> <li>○ Copyright infringement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Innocent Infringement</li> <li>▪ Derivative work</li> <li>▪ Transformative work</li> <li>▪ Fair Use</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Crowdsourcing</li> <li>• Fine Art Awards / Grants / Opportunities (Insight Personal Finance, 2017).</li> <li>• Grants / Funding for Entrepreneurs</li> <li>• AIGA Design for Good resources (American Institute of Graphic Arts, 2018).</li> <li>• Graphic Design Scholarships</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Economical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure from family members to pursue 'safe' fields that guarantee employment</li> <li>• Graphic design industry is <b>labor intensive</b> (IBISWorld, 2018).</li> <li>• Available work for Graphic Designers tends to be <b>dictated by</b> special events, product launches, marketing campaigns, holidays, and so on (IBISWorld, 2018).</li> <li>• Funding Cycles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contracts, one-time projects, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Business <b>insurance</b> (Consumer Agent Portal, LLC. 2018). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Professional indemnity policy</li> <li>○ Client relationships breaking down <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Legal advisors, legal fees, mitigation costs, client damages, compensation, unpaid invoices, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Social</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of <b>minority</b> representation in the industry</li> <li>• Industry professionals getting swept up into <b>hype</b> or <b>fads</b></li> <li>• Lack of industry connections and network</li> <li>• <b>Ethical</b> Codes of Conduct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>AIGA</b> (American Institute of Graphic Arts) Codes of Conduct / Standards of Professional Practice (AIGA, 2010).</li> <li>○ <b>SEGD</b> (Society for Experiential Design) Codes (Society for Experiential Design, 2014).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>OHS</b> (Occupational Health and Safety) / <b>WHS</b> (Workplace Health and Safety)</li> <li>• <b>Hazards</b> at the Workplace</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Technological</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hardware and Software costs</li> <li>• More technology means higher competition, which <b>reduces</b> profit margins (IBISWorld, 2018).</li> <li>• Outsourcing to different countries for cheaper products and services</li> <li>• Working with computers / devices / other equipment</li> <li>• Storage and filing of <b>confidential</b> information</li> <li>• <b>DMCA</b> (The Digital Millennium Copyright Act) (United States Copyright Office, 1998).</li> </ul>

*Figure 7.* A PEST Analysis breakdown of the Graphic Design industry to encompass the Political, Economical, Social, and Technological factors.

## CHAPTER IX

### RESULTS

#### **Forecasts / Market Analysis**

Richard Grefe, the former director of AIGA, stated in 2014, “With a steady influx of 14,000 new graduates of four year design programs entering the profession each year while demand for many disciplines of design remaining relatively flat, a large number of designers are underemployed and there has been little upward pressure on wages for over a decade” (p. 4). What this means is that the Graphic Design industry is not dying. It is simply evolving thanks in large part to the advancements in computer software (e.g. Adobe Photoshop/Illustrator).

Technology has both helped and hurt the Graphic Design industry. On one hand, advances in technology has helped designers increase their productivity. On the other hand, technology has also increased competition, including foreign competition, and lowered the barriers to entry even further. As a result of foreign competitors being able to access different types of computer software and produce their own products and services, customers have greater bargaining power, which narrows the profit margins for Graphic Designers.

Larger firms typically have more advantages and as a result are not as heavily affected by price competition as smaller ones. Those advantages can be stronger brands, financial resources, technology, higher skilled staff members, and so on. Graphic design firms that specialize in multiple products and services are better

positioned to effectively compete with foreign competition. There is speculation currently in the Graphic Design community that the design showcasing disjointed text or a glitch effect in visuals or bright colors/gradients (e.g. the Instagram icon), reminiscent of the 1980s may be making a comeback. What usually happens is it comes down to the individual piece of art or project that the Graphic Designer has created. Each era or generation will be saturated with their own design and art preferences though.

It is a compilation of all of these different ideas and creative input that when painstakingly pieced together create something truly awe-inspiring. The main drivers of this industry are the Graphic Designers toiling away creating unique content that speaks to its audience. After all, art is in the eye of the beholder. It is up to the person viewing the piece to form their own opinion of it.

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

My appreciation goes to all of the readers who took the time to cover all the material presented in this report, so thank you. From the history of the Graphic Design industry, to the Labor Market Information (LMI), to marketing strategies, the goal has been to present the Graphic Design industry in a way that sparks curiosity and interest for the casual reader, as well as offer some takeaways for those who have interest operating in this industry someday. Graphic Designers who take the time to develop their skills in multiple areas of their industry (i.e. photography, typography, computer software, etc.) can truly make themselves invaluable to their customers.

Such Graphic Designers have the potential for becoming a “Swiss Army knife” in their field. Readers who decide to work with a Graphic Designer should choose one that is affiliated with one of the numerous professional design organizations previously mentioned. For the ambitious Graphic Designer, to develop multiple portfolios for different target markets and to subscribe to “Graphic Design USA” (GDUSA) magazine has become an imperative (GDUSA, 2018). Graphic Design USA also makes keeping up with the latest news, people, projects, trends, technology, products, and services in Graphic Design not only convenient and easily done but actually enjoyable for the busy business owner.

One of the facts brought to light in this report has been the delicate bridge between the Graphic Designer and the client and how miscommunication, too many



deadlines, confusing project guidelines, conflicting personalities, and so forth can all culminate into a bad experience with ultimately nothing to show for it. Given the low barriers to entry for this industry, it is advised that one should try gaining a broader understanding of the market by possibly being a freelance Graphic Designer first. The option of taking on an internship at a Graphic Design firm, if available, should also be considered. There are many benefits to a Graphic Design internship, including the confidence gained from working in a professional environment, the opportunity to acquire new skills, a chance to network with industry professionals, and it will look great on your resume.

Graphic Designers that are looking to build their reputation or to make a name for themselves should scout for available community projects and events. The Graphic Designer can then seize the opportunity to create and build a marketing campaign around that project or event. For instance, there are currently three ongoing projects that a Graphic Designer could choose to structure a marketing campaign around, such as California's High-Speed Rail Project, the Golden State Warriors Basketball Arena that's being built in San Francisco, or California's Delta Tunnel Project that seems to be in constant need of promotion. The Graphic Designer should also attempt to stay current with the latest software, as well as arming themselves with a Wacom as they encounter different design needs. Keep creating and making your community better for it. The world needs your ideas and eye for design.

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