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### Interview with Graphic Artist

I interviewed an employee at my company (Computer Aid, Inc.) named Richard Wood. His official title is Web and Marketing Designer. He works with graphics, mainly in advertising, whether that is on the web or on paper (ex. brochures). He helps to create total campaigns for the marketing team. When the boss has an idea, he tries to illustrate what that could look like and make a pitch for that idea. This can help solidify what the boss was thinking or give them the chance to say that is not what they wanted. It also allows for a conversation/dialogue to open up. Some people will be very literal in what they want, while others can be very vague and not exactly sure what they want. Graphics are also considered to be subjective. What looks good to someone may not please another. The important thing to keep in mind when in this type of work is to be open to change.

Richard attended Cal Poly Pomona for Business. His previous work experience included being a manager at an Apple Store, the vice president of a trucking company, and working with graphics/advertisements/magazines at a bridal gown manufacturing company. He is now working at Computer Aid. A typical day includes multiple things from developing new web advertisements, to designing a new website, to programming the website. If there is a need to advertise or market a product, he does whatever needs to be done.

There are interesting aspects of his job as well as those that are frustrating. An interesting thing is getting something to work. Sometimes it takes a lot of creativity to come up with a solution. When you get a good rating on an advertisement you made, it gives you a sense of accomplishment. Another interesting thing that is challenging is trying to get someone to do something, like clicking a button, filling out a form, etc. On the other hand, things can be frustrating. Media is subjective. There is not really one standard for the way things should be done to gain the most profit. It depends on the audience. Everyone has different taste, so one advertisement would be suited for one group of people, but maybe not suited for another. Richard feels that some of his best work was rejected by people. That is hard, but he says it is important to always ask "What can I do to improve?" You must keep yourself from getting

down because someone did not like your idea/design. You have to get right back up and try something else.

I asked about some of the things to keep in mind when designing a website and how each page should look. He said you need to keep three questions in mind because when a user visits a site, they should immediately be able to answer each of the following questions:

1. Where am I?
2. Is this where I want to be?
3. What can I do here?

It should be obvious to the user what site they are on, the purpose of the site (so they know if they want to be there), and what “calls for action” are there (can you do the action online, do you have to call someone, or can you just browse an online catalog?). The important thing to keep in mind is that you should not make the user think. Things should be overly obvious so they can answer these questions and navigate around the site quickly and conveniently. Content should be available and readily apparent (do not make them search for things). The only reason someone will come to your site is if they want something. The user experience is self-centered. You must tell them why they should stay at your site and what they can do there.

A few other things that can draw people into a page are human eyes and proper use of content. Our eyes are naturally drawn to human eyes. If you have a picture of a human face on your page, the user will look at it and be drawn in to interact with the page. Your site should also be scannable. People do not read sites anymore, they scan. Using bulleted lists and headings is very important so people can get the purpose of the page quickly and easily. It is also important to keep the user’s interest. You must satisfy whatever their need is. It also helps to give them eye candy—something else to do. On the other hand, you should avoid excessive effects that are visually overwhelming.

Richard gave a few things to keep in mind for people looking to pursue web design. It is important to be creative, personable, and open-minded (compromise your ideas for what the client wants). Also, each web page should have a point. It is about getting the user to the desired result. If you cannot get the user to do anything, you are only an artist, not a marketing designer.