

Welcome to Frogmedia, the exclusive newsletter of Treefrog Technologies. This inaugural issue is the first of many issues aimed at helping business owners and management learn about the ever changing world of graphic design and marketing.

DO YOU KNOW?

BMW, or Bayerische Motoren Werke, was founded in Munich, Germany in 1917, originally to construct aircraft engines.

Pierre Omidyar of eBay wanted to use the name of his Internet consultancy, Echo Bay Technology Group, but changed it to ebay because Echo Bay Mines, a gold mining company, had already registered the name.

Bill Gates house was partially designed using a Macintosh computer.

American Airlines saved \$40,000 in 1987 by eliminating one olive from each salad served in first class.

Approximately 7.5% of all office documents get lost.

Coca-cola used to use the slogan "Good to the last drop," in 1908. This slogan was later used by Maxwell House.

Frosted Flakes mascot "Tony the Tiger" has a wife, son (Tony Jr.) and daughter (Antoinette) that were used in early advertising commercials.

If Wal-Mart was classified as a country, it would be the 24th most productive country in the world.



RASTER VS. VECTOR GRAPHICS

In the world of graphic design your image is everything. As a small business owner it is important to understand images and their limitations in order to communicate effectively with your graphic designer.

In this article we will explore vector and raster images. You will learn about their strengths, weaknesses, and when each should be used.

First, lets start with vector images. A vector image is an image defined by math instead of visual elements. For example, a typical photograph is defined by pixels.

Pixels are small dots that are colored. Put enough pixels together, you get an image. The more pixels, the sharper the image because there is more information. In contrast, a vector image is defined by coloring a mathematical point with a certain color. Put the math together, you get an image.

What is the advantage of vector images?

The most important advantage of a vector image is that it can be scaled to any size without losing quality. This is essential in designing large format graphics such as a billboard, poster, or even vehicle graphics.

What is the disadvantage with vector images?

Vector images typically do not handle artistic effects well. Effects like gradients, fades, edge treatments, etc. often look choppy or grainy in vector art.

Next, lets visit raster images. Raster images are the direct opposite of vector images. They are made up of colored pixels arranged to make an image. This method is typically used to create pictures and photographs.

What is the advantage of a raster image?

The biggest advantage of a raster image is the application of artistic effects. Raster image handle these effects in an efficient and precise manner.

What is the disadvantage to using raster images?

Raster images lose quality at large size. This means you can not take a typical 4x6 photograph and blow it up to poster size without losing quality.

So, how do we get around this limitation? First, start with a high resolution image with a high number of pixels per inch. The greater the number of pixels, the bigger image you can obtain without losing quality.

In conclusion, the best art for large format graphics is a combination of vector and raster art. Vector images will give your text and lines a high resolution and the raster images will take the needed effects brilliantly.

FROM THE OWNER...

This is a rare occasion where our company will actually talk about itself in this newsletter. We are about giving you information, not constant shameless plugs about our services.

In a nutshell, Treefrog Technologies provides creative design services for both web, print, and motion graphics. Our team of designers stresses a delicate balance between creativity and business results.

We also want to be your partner. Feel free to ask us any question you want about graphic design or marketing. Hopefully, we can answer the question. If not, we will try to send you resources that help.

Anyway, thanks for reading our newsletter, and we wish you many years of continued success.

Steven Franklin, Owner and President, Treefrog Technologies.

IN THIS ISSUE...

...Discover the difference between raster and vector graphics

...Learn the basics of company and product branding

...explore the difference between rasmash and html websites

BRANDING YOUR BUSINESS

Companies spend billions upon billions of dollars every year in an attempt to brand their product and corporate identity. Why?

Simple put, branding helps people remember what you do and who you are.

Further defined, branding is creating a lasting memory or impression in the minds of consumers. Ideally, this lasting impression is associated with a particular product or service a specific marketing segment needs.

For example, while watching TV with my 4 year old daughter a commercial came on for her favorite Italian restaurant. Before they even mentioned the name of the popular chain she exclaimed to me, "Daddy, that's where I get chicken alfredo." Curious, I asked her how she knew that. She replied it was because she saw in their logo. Even though she can not yet read the concept of branding was firmly placed in her thoughts.

This powerful concept is much more than an amusing anecdote of a father and daughter. It gets at the heart of branding, and why it is important for any business, regardless of size. Branding helps customers remember you over your competition and increases your bottom line.

Good branding can be extremely powerful. Nike is so successful at it that they now rarely have to use their corporate name. Simply by using the "swish" logo they can convey everything they need to. While the vast majority of businesses are not on the same playing field as Nike, these concepts can often be used in an advantageous way.

OK, so you are on board with needing a corporate identity, now what? Here are some helpful hints to begin to center this concept.

- Look at your business and what you want people to remember about you.
- Look at competition and what they are doing. Is there a big player in your specific market? If so, look at their corporate identity. It is important that your business does not remotely resemble what they do. Good identities are unique, not copycats.
- Think of how you may utilize this new identity. It should be consistent, and on everything you do. From letterhead, to delivery vans, your logo should be loud and proud.
- If you are having trouble with this concept, it might help to hire an outside design firm. Our firm handles corporate identity conception and implementation. We can help develop a concept that works for you.

Some possible benefits of branding include:

- Increased profitability and sales
- The ability to charge a premium price
- Lower marketing expenses
- Less volatility in sales
- Expansion of the brand name into other product lines

Each of these topics will be discussed in depth in further newsletter issues.



FLASH VS. HTML WEBSITES

From the inception and growth of the then Macromedia now Adobe product Flash a debate has existed in website design circles whether this was a good product for the web. In this article we will hopefully shed some light on the use of Flash for the web, and the difference between Flash and HTML coding.

What is Flash? Flash was a program originally developed by Macromedia to provide motion graphics. Flash allows a designer to use motion to move both text and pictures in a graphic format creating movies.

Because of the interactivity of Flash, it may also be used to produce web content. Flash websites are usually more interactive and visually engaging than HTML websites. However, Flash does have some drawbacks when it comes to producing websites.

First, lets look at the benefits of using Flash:

Benefit #1: Flash allows designers to think creatively. There are less design limitations in flash than in using straight HTML coding to design a webpage.

Benefit #2: Flash websites allow for greater interactivity and incorporation of multimedia sources including audio and movie clips.

There are also drawbacks to utilizing Flash.

Drawback #1: Flash is not as search engine friendly as HTML. Although there are many ways to let a search engine "see" Flash documents, HTML pages are better index by search engines. This is because search engines only see a Flash movie, not the content inside the movie. In order for a search engine to index a Flash site, the contents must be exported to an HTML file.

Drawback #2: Flash requires the use of a different programming language, Actionscript, and can require a learning time for those not used to programming in Flash.

Drawback #3: Flash does require a player to be installed on the user's machine. For machines not running Flash player it requires the user to install the player before they can view the site. While almost all computers have the flash player installed, it can be a mild annoyance to some.

MARKETING TREND: INTERACTIVE MARKETING

Where is the world of marketing headed over the next 1 to 2 years? Lets take a look...

One top trend for 2008 is more interactive and online marketing. The staples of the marketing world have been "traditional" marketing avenues such as newspaper, t.v., radio, print, and direct mail. As consumers are turning time and energy away from these forms of entertainment, business are forced to find new ways to reach them.

Welcome interactive marketing. Interactive marketing refers to marketing tactics that encompass a variety of media, all based in the online world. For example, an e-mail campaign might be used with strategic search engine and banner ad placement to reach a targeted market demographic.

Why is this effective? Simply put fewer people are reading newspapers and print ads. Fewer people are also watching T.V. commercials with the growth in popularity of DVR systems. Even video games are now attracting much attention away from traditional media outlets.

What does this mean for the typical business owner? You must adapt. The advertising dollars you spent 5, 10, or 15 years ago are most likely not reaching the same amount of people it used to. At the minimum, consider adding e-mail campaigns to your marketing tool kit. E-mail campaigns can be a relatively quick, easy, and cost-effective method to reach new consumers. In future issues we will explore e-mail marketing campaigns in depth.

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