

ANOTHER YEAR IS ABOUT TO COME TO AN END AND I NEED TO COME UP WITH IDEAS FOR 2017... I ONLY NEED TWELVE IDEAS, BUT THAT IS VERY HARD! IN THE MEANTIME, HERE ARE SOME...

Holiday Tips



The end is near! 2016 is almost over; the weather in Wisconsin has gotten much colder; and I need to come up with ideas for next year (see the end of the column to help me focus on ideas that you would like to see!)

I was in Mexico during a *Día de Muertos* (Day of the Dead) celebration (*Sandos Caracol Eco Resort* in Playa del Carmen, has created the *Xcalacoco Experience*) and I was amazed at the transformation of the resort and the histories and stories told regarding these sacred festivals.

Which is where I also came up with some of the questions regarding future articles. Don't worry, no alcohol was involved... at that time!

Since there are still weeks before Christmas, I am sure the advertisers want you to inject a little holiday art into their messages—no matter how big or how small the space.

Give a gift of ideas

The ideas for this page comes from a number of sources. I wish I could say that I get ideas from you, but I can't... get the hint? Most ideas for "discussion" came from things work-related or advertising I see in newspapers, magazines and even from the internet. One of the best sources I can recommend is *bamagazine.com* (*Before & After magazine*). John McWade (publisher and creative director) and his staff do an unbelievably amazing job of presenting and illustrating design concepts. The concepts, the thought process, the color choice, the art and even the typefaces are detailed to give a greater understanding of what goes into each topic and learning tool. PDF versions are available (no more print, per se). Some are free, some bundled, but check it out.

Add artwork

So on to some work-related topics! Holidays always bring the "add artwork" phrase to the instructions from the advertisers. The hard part is keeping the art from becoming a "fill" for some empty space and because a lot of our ads are small sizes—2x2, 2x3, 2x4—it gets difficult. The art below, called East Coast Christmas, is old—from the December 2007 issue of *Metro Newspaper Service*—but it's a vector file. There is no way that I would be able to use the artwork just the way it is, but it has so many great little "pieces" that I can easily use for small ads.

Since space is limited, I find that seasonal art, in a lot of cases, can easily be incorporated into a headline, as the following demonstrate.



Use art as part of the headline. In the example above, the geometric shape of a gift package can fit into a slightly longer heading. In the sample below, the art was used to fill the space created by the varying sizes of the words, breaking up the negative space and tying the headline to the art. Shapes created by "negative space" in an ad can actually be more dominant than the "positive space" (those elements that are words, photos or artwork).



In an ad that uses a lot of boxed areas, you can't go wrong with a bow or two... or holly. Holly always works. The idea is for it to be subtle and suggest the idea of a wrapped gift without actually creating a "package." That's the difference between design and decorate. Sound familiar?

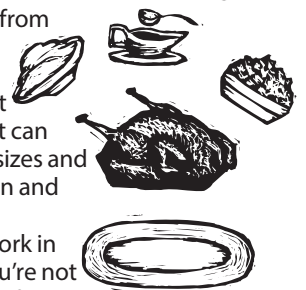
When information needs to be set off, you can always box that info and add art to the box. The problem with just filling "extra space" can result in a "spotty" look. The art should almost never over power the message in the ad. There are times when it can work, but small space ads just don't have room.

Deconstruct!

Looking back at the original, you could still use the garland, stocking, even the big city skyline. (Gestalt theory: Visual images may be analyzed and evaluated as distinct components.) I used the Christmas tree below as well. If you can't use the whole artwork, you can use "parts."

And speaking of "parts," back in the day I used to subscribe to *ArtParts*, a funky illustration service. If you go to *ronandjoe.com*, you can see a sample of their work...but they will direct you to *shutterstock.com* where their art parts are sold—and I have no idea about the pricing. Maybe I will put together a list of graphic design sites in the near future... so that takes care of one month, only eleven more articles to go!

This turkey art was from one of their theme packages. Because the art is somewhat stylized and solid, it can be used in smaller sizes and still stand on its own and be recognizable!



Sometimes artwork in an ad is so small you're not sure whether it is, in fact, a turkey or just excess ink from the printing press! If you are going to include any art or photo in your ad, make it large enough to matter.

A few questions...

Seriously, if you could take a little time to answer some or all of the questions, it would help me to focus on putting together information more pertinent to your needs. If you respond, I will send you 10–12 PDF pages covering Basic Design Fundamentals, Typography, Color, and Visual Literacy—FREE! So here goes:

1. What Programs and Versions do you use?
2. What topics would you like to see me cover?
3. How long have you worked with Graphic Design?

That's it... for starters. Send the answers to my e-mail address below with the word "Answers" in the subject line—and remember, I was on vacation when I came up with this idea, so cut me a little slack!

Wishing you all peace and joy!

Until next month!

I welcome your input and suggestions. I joined the free paper publishing business in the early 80s. I write for IFPA, Community Papers of Michigan... and still learning. E-mail: hanrahan.in@att.net Ellen Hanrahan ©2016

