

Create a Concept

A design concept can be defined as the creative solution to a design problem.

Conceiving a concept is the hardest part of the creative process, the part that separates the creative designer from the mediocre one.

It's the underlying logic, thinking or reasoning for how you design a piece—the primary idea behind the piece. It is derived from instances or occurrences, born of a thought or notion. Some people call it a plan or scheme. Others say it's simply a new combination of old things (recreation)

You can formulate it or stumble upon it. You can discover it doing research or talking to the client. It can come to you in the middle of the night or in the shower. Even a song or movie can trigger a concept.

Essentially, it means you have a reason for what you are doing, for the imagery and colors you select, for cropping something or using a particular font. This reason and the elements you use to convey it should accurately communicate the established objectives.

Here are some ways to help you develop a concept.

Develop the Concept

Your point of departure when developing the concept should be the objectives and strategy. You must know your subject and do your research. Then you think. Feel. Listen. Ruminare.

- **Define your problem in your own words.** Ask yourself: What do I have to do? How can I communicate it visually?
- **Know the message.** What do you have to communicate? Do you have to persuade people to buy something or give them information?
- **Think.** Use your intelligence. Your genius. Think it all the way through.
- **Make a list of anything and everything related to your subject.** Talk to people. Ask what they think about your product or company. Do a little homespun market research.
- **Brainstorm.** Take your list and think of anything analogous to it. Don't judge during brainstorming. Just keep thinking.
- **Use a good dictionary.** If you have an idea, look it up. Expand on it. Understand it fully.
- **Look at visuals.** Paintings. Book covers. Photographs. Wood type. Ephemeral Old toys. Anything7.
- **Fool around:** Find some visuals related to your subject. Crop them. Chop them up and reconfigure them. Feed them through a fax or copier. Change textures. Explore.
- **Ruminate.** Go away and do something else. Put your project on the back burner. Relax.
- **Take notes.** Always have a pad and pen handy. (Don't trust your memory; you may forget. Besides, writing it down may lead to something else.) Write down everything you think of. It may be something you can use.
- **Change directions.** Maybe you can't think of anything because you're headed down the wrong path. Try another way.
- **Analyze great movies or books, or other great designs or ads.** Figure out how other people came up with concepts.
- **Trust your intuition.** If you have an idea, run with it. See where it goes. But . . . know the difference between a cliché and a fresh idea.