Abstract

This report contains information about the conceptual development of an identity system including multiple t-shirt graphics and a catalogue for a fictitious clothing company called “Good News”. It will also contain inspirational material that was used during the development process, conflict issues that arose and their resolution.
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Chapter 1.

(Introduction):

Growing up as an active skateboarder, I have always been influenced by the culture and the clothing that the industry supplied. While studying design at Cuseta Community College, I became super interested in creating t-shirt graphics of my own and experimented with screen-printing my designs onto clothing. This interested lead to the creation of a clothing company called “Six Am International”. I was the primary designer for the company that lasted about 4 years.

After transferring to Cal Poly to continue my studies, I became involved with the Christian faith. This had a great influence in my daily life and continues in my life today. The combination of my skateboard background, the screen-printing and t-shirt design experience, and my ongoing relationship with the Christian faith has culminated into this project: Good News Clothing.

Purpose:

The purpose of this senior project is to create a series of t-shirt designs that combine the powerful messages contained within the Bible with eye-catching graphics.

Objective:

This experience will help me to gain a greater understanding of the apparel industry and increase my knowledge of catalogue design as I hope to have a career as a
graphic designer in the clothing and apparel industry. This project will help to launch my career by giving me a solid portfolio piece that showcases my talent as a t-shirt graphic designer.

I also want to do this particular project because I feel that there is a need to create a Christian clothing company that has a design based aesthetic. Most of the Christian clothing companies today focus on the message behind the t-shirt and little on the appeal of the graphics. I want to combine both of these aspects in this project.

**Limitations:**

The first and most drastic limitation that I was faced with was that of time. Being a student, I am always stretched for time, usually when it comes to completing projects by their deadlines. This project was no different. I was faced with the challenge of completing twenty different t-shirt graphics and a catalogue within a nine-week period. This would not be that complicated if it was the only thing that I had to do during the nine-week period, but like all of my other classmates, I had to juggle multiple projects at the same time. The result of this time crunch was a Senior Project that had to be held back in some aspects. The first area that my project was held back was the creation of the catalogue. I spent the majority of my time developing the t-shirt graphics that went into the catalogue and little on the catalogue itself. The second area was that I wanted to actually screen-print some of my designs on t-shirts that could be displayed within the catalogue, but with my time running out, this was not reasonable.
Another limitation that I had to face was that of money. Like my battle against the clock, I also had to battle with the almighty dollar. Even if I had enough time to screen-print my graphics, my budget would not allow for this to happen. The average one color, screen-printed graphic on a t-shirt would come to about 7 to 8 dollars per shirt, usually with a minimum of 20-30 shirts. Not to mention the set-up fees. This was in no way feasible with my budget. The battle against money also played a role when it came time to create my catalogue. I was limited when it came to the size, the complexity, and the type of binding used in my catalogue. This meant that I would not be able to use any specialty papers, inks, cuts, or folds. This challenged me to be more creative in my design work because I had to create an effective and interesting graphics that would fit into my limitations.

Chapter 2.

Inspirations:

As I have developed into a graphic designer over the last 6 years many different things have inspired me along the way. My stylistic approach to design is constantly being shaped as I live day by day. Everyday things such as music, nature, people and culture influence the choices that I make while I go about solving each problem that I face. When it came to the problem of my Senior Project many different things contributed to the influence that shaped the outcome.

The first mayor influence was one that has been pushing me from day one; skateboarding. I’ve always been immersed in the skateboard culture. This culture is rich
with strong colorful graphics, gritty, contrast-rich imagery and a grungy, in-your-face approach to design. The main outlet for this kind of imagery is in the form of skateboard graphics, like those from such companies as Zero, Foundation, Toy Machine, and Enjoy (see figures 1-2). Clothing, from companies like Matix, Element, RVCA and Active (see figures 3-7). Videos, like the 411 and the Transworld series. And most importantly, magazines such as Thrasher, Transworld, Skateboarder, and SLAP (see figures 8-14). The clothing companies and graphics proved to be most influential in my process with this Senior Project because they combine strong visual graphics with cutting-edge screen-printing technology that results in visually dynamic contemporary apparel. This inspiration helped to steer my creativity energy in a direction that resulted in a more experimental solution to the problem than would have been if this inspiration were out not available.

Another mayor influence that helped shape my Senior Project was one that is all around me; nature. Living in the country, I am continuously being influenced by the randomness of nature. From the smallest blade of grass to the tallest tree, I find inspiration for my designs everywhere I look. A lot of my t-shirt designs share similar visual characteristics; organic swirls and swooshes (see figures 14-15). These elements not only create harmony among the pieces, they are inspired directly from nature. Similar elements can be found in roots, vines and tree branches.

Finally the most influential aspect and the motivation behind my Senior Project was that of the Christian Faith. As I dive deeper and deeper into the Christian Faith and my relationship with the living God, I find more and more inspiration. Living in this
world, I have come to the understanding that we are all looking for something to make us feel important, something to give our lives meaning and to give us hope for the future. Studying the Bible has inspired me to share with the world that this “something” can be found, and that there is “Good News” out there. My Senior Project is a direct result of this inspiration, combined with the previously listed inspirations and my passion to create good design.

Chapter 3. (Process)

Step 1

(Research of Clothing Companies):

The first and one of the most important steps in the creation of my Senior Project was the research step. In this step I researched clothing companies that related to the t-shirt graphics that I was creating, whether they were related stylistically or by their content. I researched two different types of t-shirt companies; ones that were artistically driven and had design based graphics (see figures 17-19), and ones that were specifically Christian based clothing companies (see figures 20-22). While researching the first group of t-shirt companies, I was looking for both visually engaging designs and new and fresh applications of these designs.

I found that a popular trend in contemporary screen-printing is to print the graphics over seams and stitches (like on the shoulders or the neck) and to bleed the graphics off the collar or the bottom of the shirt. These techniques produce t-shirts that have an edgy feel to them (see figures 23-25).
Another popular trend in t-shirt design today is what the industry calls the “all-over print.” This technique is used when a design calls for the application of a graphic to cover the entire shirt, front, back, sides and sleeves (see figures 26-30). Experienced screen-printers can apply a graphic seamlessly across an entire shirt without flaws. Another way to get the “all-over print” effect is too either print or dye the fabric with the desired graphic prior to the cutting and stitching of the garment. This technique produces dynamic t-shirt designs, but is not always perfect because the graphic does not always match up from seem to seem after it is stitched together.

The other area that I researched was the Christian clothing companies. I found that the majority of these companies focused on the message behind their t-shirts rather than the graphics themselves (see figures 20-22). These t-shirt designs were powerful in their message but lacked visual integrity. I was only able to find a handful of Christian clothing companies that bridged the gap between powerful messages and visually engaging imagery (see figures 31-33).

**Step 2**

(Content Gathering):

This was a very important step in the creation of my Senior Project because the success of my t-shirt graphics depended on powerful messages along with visually engaging images. The majority of the content for my t-shirt graphics came from the Bible. I did a lot of reading and note taking when it came to this step. I looked
specifically for Bible verses that had powerful, to-the-point messages that anyone could relate to. Most of these verses dealt with issues about the relationship between man and God, and the sovereignty of the Lord almighty.

After I had gathered a good amount of Scripture, I focused my energy towards image gathering. The images that I chose to use came both from copyright free graphics that I altered and pictures that I took. I focused on simple, black and white images that supported the Scripture and bridged the gap between message and visual engagement.

**Step 3**

**(Preliminary Sketches):**

During this step, I worked hard on developing preliminary sketches for each of my t-shirt concepts (see figures 34-35). Some of these concepts included; freedom in Christ, hearing the word of God, finding life in Christ, the artistic hand of the Lord, centering the Christian Philosophy in your life, spreading the word of God, surrendering to the Lord, being in debt to the Lord, the eternalness of God, there is love, giving all we have to Christ, These sketches were used as inspirational blueprints when it came time to create the digital graphics. These sketches were simple and to the point, focusing on the overall layout of the different visual elements for each t-shirt design. I also made a lot of notes in this step (see figures 34-35) explaining to myself different concepts that I had for future references, such as which Bible versus I would use for each shirt.

**(Type Studies):**
I needed to find a typeface that would not only support the overall concept behind my Senior Project; it also needed to be legible and visually engaging when reduced into a logo or wordmark. Because my project was called “Good News”, I wanted to play off of the “news” aspect and use a typeface that was classically used in newspapers as headliner type or other “text heavy” applications like those seen in books and magazines. I began with classic serif typefaces such as Times New Roman, Baskerville and Garamond (see figure 36). These typefaces are very legible but lacked visual excitement. I ended up using the serif typeface American Typewriter (see figure 37) because it was both legible and had strong visual elements that created interest in my logo design. This typeface would be used as the primary typeface for all the t-shirt graphics and the headline copy of the catalogue. I chose to use Gill Sans Light for the body copy of the book because it is also very legible and provides contrast from the American Typewriter typeface (see figure 38).

(Logo Creation):

It was at this time that I created a logo for Good News. I knew that I wanted to create a simple, letterform-based logo because my t-shirt graphics were very image driven and complex. After many sketches, I came up with a clean, contemporary logo, made from the combination of the lowercase “g” and lowercase “n” of the American Typewriter typeface (see figure 39). This logo could be easily applied to any of my t-shirt graphics and catalogue and can be easily recognized when reduced in size.
Step 4

(Digital creation of graphics):

The next step was to transfer my concepts from sketch form to digital replications on the computer. The first phase of this step was to create a t-shirt template for both the guys and girls t-shirts. I accomplished this task using the vector based Adobe Illustrator program. I then began to edit my photographs and sketches using the Adobe Photoshop program. I experimented with color and other photographic filters like contrast and saturation until I felt that the chosen image had the visual tone that I was looking for (see figure 40). The next phase in this step was to transfer the edited images from Photoshop to Illustrator so I could begin to create my t-shirt designs.

Using my sketches as a reference, I went from t-shirt to t-shirt experimenting with image, type, color, scale, contrast and other visual elements, such as swirls and swooshes to solve the problem that each t-shirt presented. This process took up the majority of my time because I was constantly coming back to finished designs to tweak and perfect them (see figure 41).

Step 5

(Catalogue Experimentation):

After I had finished all 24 of the t-shirt designs, the next step was to design a catalogue to display them in. I began by researching clothing companies that shared similar characteristics with my designs. I found that most of these companies only had
online catalogues or had their t-shirt in larger company catalogues and didn’t have any of their own. I wanted to create a unique t-shirt catalogue that specifically displayed the Good News designs.

I also looked for interesting and inexpensive ways to bind my catalogue. I thought that it was important to create a catalogue that was interactive and exciting, something that made the viewer want to pick it up and flip through it. I found interesting binding and folding techniques such as double binding, accordion and barrel folds. I also came across simple binding techniques such as the “Grommet” and the single post “Chicago Screw”. These techniques fasten the printed material with a single simple bind in one of the corners (see figures 42-43). This allows for a quick and simple “flip through” experience for the viewer. It seemed to be the perfect solution for my catalogue problem because it allowed for an inexpensive binding method that created a lot of space to organize my t-shirt designs. It also allow for quick and inexpensive updating.

After I had decided on the binding that I would use, I began the layout and organization of my t-shirt designs. The problem was to create a catalogue that displayed all twelve of the guy t-shirt designs and all twelve of the girls. I decided to put the guy designs on one side of the catalogue, one design per page, and the girls on the other in the same layout, so when the viewer is flipping through the catalogue, they would flip it over to view the other side (see figures 44). This creates a fun advertising experience that the viewer can easily understand. My cover design and title page explained the concepts behind my clothing company.
Step 6

(Rough Comp with Layout):

This was an important step because it was the step in which I figured out how the entire project was going to be organized and put together. I printed out each page of the catalogue. I then trimmed out each one and assembled them in the correct order (see figure 45). The next step was to add the grommet in the upper left corner of the catalogue, this proved to be a little challenging because I had to punch a hole in each page, keeping them perfectly aligned from page to page (see figure 46). After the catalogue was comped up, I carefully examined it and made little adjustments where needed to make it perfect.

Step 7

(Final Comp and Assemblage):

At this step, I took and printed out the perfected catalogue pages, starting the assembly process over again. I printed the final comp using a HP 9800 DeskJet printer on HP Premium Plus Semi-gloss paper. This time, I had to be perfect, paying super close attention to every detail when I was cutting and assembling. This step was somewhat easier because I had done it before and knew exactly where everything had to go and how it was all to be put together. The final result was a super clean t-shirt catalogue that solved my Senior Project dilemma (see figures 47).
Chapter 4

(Summary and Recommendations):

From the conception of the project, to the research and information gathering, to the sketching and comp-making, and through the final printing and assembly, this Senior Project has been an ongoing learning process. Not only did it force me to work hard and focus to get the project done in time, it also showed me that it was possible for me to design a huge amount of work that share similar characteristics and one that can display my talent as a graphic designer. This project stretched my design skills into areas that I had not yet ventured, including catalogue development and binding techniques. It also increased my passion for t-shirt graphic design, proving to me that this area of expertise is not only growing more and more exciting, but also more and more creative and design focused.

If any future students take on the task of creating t-shirt and catalogue designs I have a few recommendations. First, I would recommend that the student put a lot of emphasis in researching the project and the apparel industry. Because this industry is huge and is constantly growing larger, the designer must be well informed. The designer needs to have a solid understanding of the screen-printing industry, including techniques and processes, because this knowledge will help the designer to create graphics that can easily be applied to clothing.

I would also recommend that the designer would put a lot of effort into the research of the t-shirt industry art. With so many people designing t-shirts, it is almost
impossible to be original in your designs. The designer needs to know what others have done so that he or she can create designs that reflect their own vision without taking someone else’s concepts.

Lastly, when it comes to the creation and application of the actual Senior Project, I would recommend that the student put a lot effort into time management. If the student lays down a strict timeline from day one and sticks to it they will be successful. This is definitely the most important element of the project. You can have a great design and concepts but if you cannot apply these within a set amount of time, your Senior Project will be unsuccessful.

**Bibliography**

(Still in progress)
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Figures 14, 16, 40, 45, 46 and 47. Louie Dahlquist personal photography.


Figure 29. Original, Obey, T-Shirt, http://bigsteez.wordpress.com/tag/all-over-print/, March 7, 2009.


Figures 34 and 35. Louie Dahlquist personal sketches


ABCDFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefgijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
American Typewriter
Fig 37

ABCDFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefgijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
Gill Sans Light
Fig 38

Fig 39

Fig 40

before

after

before

after

Fig 41