The Past, Present, And Future Of Graphic Design

Graphic designers are more important now than ever before. A graphic designer is someone who uses visual concepts that they designed to communicate ideas and captivate consumers. Graphic design is used by companies to sell and promote their products, or to develop a brand identity through the use of logos, graphics and colors. In order to be a reputable graphic designer, it is important to know the history of graphic design, the present trends and techniques, and future predictions for the industry. In doing so, it will help keep you informed in this fast-paced and competitive industry.

Graphic design first emerged after the invention of the printing press in 1440, but the origins go way back to prehistoric times, evident by early cave paintings drawn by cavemen. These paintings were found all over the world, and included things like animals, hunting, and simple hand imprints. It is not known whether these paintings were meant to communicate with each other or with their gods, but it is obvious that, from the beginning of time, humans showed an interest in visual communication.

The next development that led to the start of graphic design happened around 3000 BC when Sumerians formed one of the first written languages in the world. This written language was mostly likely created to help document inventory for trading, but eventually was adapted by nearby cities and spread. These early languages were logographic, which means they were simple icons that represented an entire word, instead of using phonetic sounds. This type of language is still used among us today, like how we can look on a restroom door at the symbols and understand if it is a male or female restroom. The use of these symbols back then suggests humans had a natural ability to communicate with visuals and foreshadows the use of logos in the graphic design world today.

To continue, advancements in Chinese printing from 200 CE to 1040 CE greatly helped to transform graphic design into what it is today. China discovered many things that would help shape visual communication, such as non-papyrus paper making, woodblock printing, and moveable type. Around 200 CE, China used wood reliefs to stamp and print designs onto silk clothes, and eventually paper. Then, in 1040 CE, Chinese artisan Bi Sheng invented the very first moveable type printing press that was made out of porcelain. This happened more than 400 years before Johannes Gutenberg brought to Europe a similar technology.

Gutenberg introduced mass communication to Western culture when he brought moveable type to Europe in 1439. People no longer had to rely on handwritten manuscripts and word of mouth to get their information. Gutenberg’s printing press allowed for the rapid and cost-efficient spread of information and introduced the use of commercial design. With the arrival of the printing press, people were able to easily and economically recreate art, designs, and text on a much bigger scale. Business owners quickly realized how helpful these visuals would be to promote business and increase profit, and because of this, modern graphic design was formed.

The first logos appeared in the late 1400s and were called “printers’ marks” at this time. This is due to the fact that the printing industry were the first to use these marks, which were mainly printed inside the covers of books, to identify what printing company printed said books. Not

only were the printers' marks used to identify a specific company, but also as a way to show off how well the logo was printed. How well a logo was printed determined how well everything else was printed. Fast forward to 1620, the first print advertisements were created. Then, in 1837, the ability to print colored, also called chromolithography, changed the game in the graphic design world, as people were now able to use color schemes and add realism to graphics. This was really helpful in capturing the viewers' attention, using color to stimulate a mood or feeling in the viewer, and capitalizing on artistic usage of color.

Around the late 1800s up until the end of World War II is when graphic design in its current form really started to develop in the modern era. Unlike the 19th century that was more about advancements in technology, the modern era was about learning how to capitalize on these advancements for artistic gain. Because printing was now common, and competition drove innovation, designers sought out new techniques and styles, which in turn impacted branding and advertising. From the 1950s on, graphic design and the world, in general, began to approach the digital era that we are now in. The introduction of one of the first home computers, the Macintosh by Apple, started a graphic revolution in computer-aided graphic design as well as the software released by Adobe, such as Illustrator and Photoshop, that allowed graphic designers to thrive and use new technology to make their designs better. The evolution of graphic design from cave paintings to computer software is awe-inspiring and makes me excited for my future in the graphic design industry.

The current technologies and principles in graphic design today are the things that attracted me to this industry in the first place. Things like logo design, advertising, color schemes, and the software used to aid in these designs are all things that interest me in the field, but graphic design encompasses more than just this. Modern graphic design has changed immensely from what it once was, and there are many new trends and principles that have emerged since then.

To begin, companies are investing more into graphic design for a number of reasons. Technology guarantees that brands have more opportunities for exposure on the web, and those who want to interact with their clients in a noteworthy way need to have an image. This is why people are investing more into graphic design, so they can have a professional yet personable image. Likewise, the online world implies that companies can break down analytics and find out which graphical elements are having the best effect on their business. Having an online presence means you have real-time data to analyze and see how different elements are performing on your site.

In addition, graphic designers today are embracing new techniques that allow them to advance in their work. For example, buyer behavior and psychology are both things that need to be considered when creating a design. The psychology of color, or how color affects your mood, as well as the impact of shapes, need to be considered to make sure they are conveying the right persona for each client. Another thing that needs to be taken into consideration is how design elements perform not only on a single platform but on multiple platforms. Logos and graphical elements all have to perform well on mobile devices, larger screens, and apps as well to make an impact.

Along with the improvement of digital graphic design, careers in the field have also improved. With the large number of software that are readily available, like Adobe Creative Suite and Procreates, it's easy to download this software on a mobile laptop, phone, or iPad and work from anywhere. Designers no longer have to be glued to their offices, which also makes it easier

for them to work on the go, to freelance, or for companies to outsource designers without having to hire them in-house. All in all, the main role of a graphic designer has change greatly, from being low in importance to being a crucial part of any business team. Companies today rely on designers to not just create logos and designs but build them a brand identity and online presence. Graphic design isn't just about the graphical elements anymore, it's about establishing a connection between companies and consumers, and using images, words, colors, and designs to produce work that's reflective of the client.

Going along with this, designers need to be aware of the trends in the design world to make an impactful design. A trend that was unique and edgy in 2018 might be entirely outdated in 2019. There are many trends in graphic design now that are effective but may not be in the next couple years, and it's important to keep track of them. A big trend right now is a simplification. Consumers are busier and more rushed than ever and don't have the time or patience to deal with companies who don't convey their intent as quickly and simply as possible. That's why in today's society, simplification is key. In the past, designers and companies who wanted to make a big impact would make their designs complex and "loud," but today, the graphics that get across in a quick but effective manner are simplified.

Another trend that has been making a comeback from the 1920s is called "Art Deco." I've seen this a lot in my classes this semester and have even used this style in a couple of my projects, so I feel compelled to talk about it. Art Deco was all about flashy patterns and stark colors, while using a small color palette. This trend has recently emerged in logo work, comprised of linework and intense symmetry. Bold, bright colors are also used in modern Art Deco inspired designs which, if used right, can make a big impact in a short amount of time.

There are so many techniques, styles, and trends that have come and gone in the industry that it's important to remember which ones to use when and how to use them effectively. Graphic design changes to fast that sometimes it's hard to keep up. That is why companies look for designers that are well versed in the field and have a range of techniques and styles in their work. It's also important to familiarize yourself with trends and predictions for the industry's future. There are quite a few predictions designers are making about what the industry might look like in five to ten years.

To start, companies are becoming and will be more accepting to remote work. Instead of being constricted to a desk, designers are taking their phones and laptops home or working elsewhere, which can promote productivity. Designers can have the convenience to work from home and save on commuting, and the company can save on office space and supplies. Another prediction for the industry is that freelance design is going to become more popular with millennials. The idea of working for yourself and to get away from corporate culture is very desirable for millennials. The downfall to this is that work and income can be uncertain, and you need to have good management skills to be able to run your own business. Freelance does sound desirable to someone like me who's independent, but it would be best to work for a company and build up a professional portfolio before taking off on your own.

A design trend that is predicted to become more popular is three-dimensional design. While flat design has taken over in recent years, it seems as though it will fade out and be replaced with graphics that are three-dimensional. Something I learned in one of my design classes is that a lot of the apps we have downloaded on our phones have flat design icons, which means they don't have any depth to them. The design on app icons are usually flat and don't use any

shadows to display dimension. This is likely to change within the next couple years as three-dimensional design becomes more popular, not only digitally but everywhere.

One thing that’s very important to not just graphic design but seemingly a lot of other industries is mobile responsiveness. This is predicted to increase in the industry over the next couple of years. For graphic designers and web designers, when developing a company’s website and the graphics for that site, it’s important to make sure the website looks good and functions correctly while accessing it from a bigger screen, computer or laptop. What is overlooked when designing these websites and graphics is how it will look on a small screen, like a phone or iPad. When a website is responsive, it responds to the size of the screen it is being displayed on and adapts to it. Now that mobile responsiveness is becoming a bigger trend, it is important for websites and graphics to be displayed nicely on a smaller screen.

Lastly, artificial intelligence is set to shape the future of design. Because of advancements in technology, we are able to access so many tools with the click of a button. Taking the time to analyze data can be telling of how favored a design element is. With solid data, it is easier to change a design, so it has the most influence possible for a client. In the future, designers are expected to spend less time on creative projects and more time learning which features change site visitors into site customers and how to increase traffic. The design world is forever changing and it’s important to keep up-to-date with the newest trends and familiarize yourself with predictions to remain relevant and competitive.

In conclusion, graphic design has been around for a long time, but the roots of graphic communication stretch back to prehistoric times. Throughout its history, graphic design has seen an immense change. From the invention of the printing press, to the first logo, to computer-aided design and software, graphic design has made an impact that is unforgettable. It is important to know the past, present, and future of graphic design to be a reputable candidate for any company. Keeping up with current trends and styles and knowing how to use them effectively is a big part of graphic design. I am very excited about my future in the graphic design industry, and I can’t wait to use the knowledge I’ve gained about the graphic design world in my work.