

# It's good to be a graphic designer

*By Todd Bertsch*

After reading the November issue of How Magazine's article by Bryn Mooth, entitled "[Follow Your Heart](#)" (which is a very awesome, inspiring article, I might add), I felt compelled to share my thoughts on why I feel it's good to be a graphic designer.

Well, we know it's not for the FAME & Glory. Or the humongous salaries. However, there are several reasons why we must not take for granted our great gift of communication; the excitement that we bring into text everyday, the designs and imagery we bring to life, the magic...

## **A skill.**

We're designers because it's fun and exciting. A God given talent. A skill, we sometimes take for granted. Most people in the business world don't have a skill to hold tight to their chest. They may have the intelligence and a degree, but not a skill. We have something tangible. A portfolio. A gallery of designs. NOT many people have this. A skill that we can tap into to manufacture extra money for our families. Which reminds me of an enlightening conversation around the fire pit. I was talking to a friend a couple weeks ago and he said "You know Todd, I really envy you." I said, "Really? Why?" He says, "You have a skill. And you have the opportunity to use that skill at home to make extra money anytime you like." He continues... "Your lucky. I would love to have something like that." Then it hit me. He's exactly right. Sometimes we quickly forget what we have. Thanks for the reminder Ken.

## **Passion.**

Passion for every project big or small. Some say we're quirky or even weird. Damn tootin'. We have to see the world in a different way. Otherwise the world would all look the same. Every time we lay our fingers into the keyboard or wrap our hands around that mouse, it's magic. It's our STAMP. Like a masterpiece of artwork on display at the Louve, it has our name on it and we're damn proud of that. We are a unique breed. Other colleagues envy us. That's right, we actually like to come to work. It's like being a kid in toy store.

## **Power.**

The power to communicate, to deliver a message so important and so invoking that it triggers something inside a human being. Something that makes them stop and think. The power to influence someone's decision. Shape lives. Contribute our skill and time to life saving organizations. It's your canvas. Your time.

## **The thrill.**

True, we all have our not-so-posh days of setting paragraphs of text, cutting a background out of an image, or copying and pasting many lines of code. But at the end of the day, you have to admit, it was fun. Like a never ending roller coaster. You can't be totally creative everyday. But when you're in the zone, it's a great feeling. What a thrill.

## **The security.**

As Bryn Mooth professed; Designers are here to stay. Most everything else can be automated and shipped overseas. But not good design. Nope. This delicate, fragile and often times crazy profession, needs creativity and wit, in which can't be shipped out. UPS, Fed EX, DHL...Nope, ain't happening. Yep, most of us are labeled as the "strange ones". Sorry, we see things differently. With that comes a shield of security. True the economy has not been the most prosperous, but at least we are not being shipped out.

## **The stories.**

That one story you'll never forget.

It's like golf. You could be destroying the greens all day long, then you sink that one 30 foot putt for par, and your hooked. You'll be back for more. I think of graphic design like that sometimes. You may not win many awards for your work. You may not get the pat on the backs that you know you deserve from your clients or peers. But, there will be that one story. That one experience that locks you in. That 30 foot putt for par. Here's one of mine:

It was senior year of undergrad school and a few design buddies decided we would get together and start to develop some freelance work. One of the guys had landed us a small project. Not a big money maker. Not a glamorous design project by all means. But it was an opportunity none the less. The project entailed creating an invitation to promote the opening of a new downtown club's Martini & Cigar Room (the couture of the time).

So we designed the invitation with a newly designed Martini Lounge Logo with a personal touch. How such a small element could make the piece come to life. (Here's a pic of the [actual piece](#).) We proceeded to punch an actual cocktail toothpick through the paper. Thank goodness their staff helped us out with that task. The amazing part about being at the opening was watching the full experience. The full life cycle of the invitation. The recipients (a few select hundred people) arrived with invitation in hand, eager to join the celebration. And to enjoy a few stinky cigars. But, the interesting part of the evening was when we noticed that everyone (or most everyone) was stilling holding onto their invitation. In fact, they even asked the hostess if they could keep it. They just didn't want to part with it. Now that was cool! It was a good day.

**Design is all around us.  
It's Everywhere.  
We can not get away from it.**

**In the end, it's what we do. It's all we know.  
We are graphic designers...  
... and that's a good thing. •**

**About the Author | [More by Todd Bertsch](#)**

Todd Bertsch received a Bachelors degree in Fine and Applied Arts, with a concentration in Graphic Design, from the University of Akron. He has been working for both design firms and his own design consulting firm [bertschdesign](#) for over 10 years. He's also the Editor/Creative Director of the popular graphic design resource portal [designdump.com](#).