

# Graphic Design for Marketing

Graphic designers (also known as visual communication designers or marketing communication designers) function as creative problem solvers, design planners and strategists, as well as skilled communicators and technologists. They demonstrate a passion for design and creativity, high-level design and critical thinking skills, a solid understanding of business and marketing, well-developed research capabilities, and a broad-based understanding of the social, cultural, and environmental implications of design. They are team players, team leaders, and can be employees, freelancers, or self-employed entrepreneurs.

Today, the visual communications field is broader than ever before, providing graphic designers with wide-ranging career opportunities. Graphic designers may create such things as visual identities for corporations, marketing campaigns for businesses, fundraising campaigns for non-profit organizations, layouts for publications, promotional posters, websites and interactive applications, shopping mall way-finding systems, packaging for all manner of products, advertising campaigns, signage in museums, retail displays, user-oriented marketing communications, and more.

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## STUDENT PROFILE

GDMA applicants come from diverse backgrounds and demonstrate a keen interest in design, particularly visual communications. They will have explored various aspects of art and design through such things as drawing and illustration, typography, photography, computer-based projects, video production, painting and sculpture, or perhaps through different types of crafts. Some applicants may also have communications, marketing, public relations, or business-related experience.

Applicants may come directly from high school, or transfer from other post-secondary institutions, or they may already hold a degree from a non-design field. They may also be mature individuals who want to make a career change, or they may have experience in the graphic design industry and want to upgrade their credentials.

It is strongly recommended that applicants have solid English language communication skills, some computer and word processing experience, basic mathematics, an awareness of the graphic design profession and its significance locally and nationally, as well as an understanding of how graphic design and marketing fit together.

## CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The field of visual communications design is fast-paced, exciting, continually changing and expanding, and today, it is broader-based than ever before. The GDMA degree program prepares graduates for a wide range of entry-level graphic design positions.

### Generalist Graphic Designers

GDMA degree graduates will qualify for entry-level positions as graphic designers in firms providing corporations, small businesses, non-profit organizations, and others with services that may include such things as the creation of marketing strategies, interactive media design, publication design, advertising design, direct marketing design, and display design. Understanding consumer behaviour and end-user needs will also qualify the graduate for employment in marketing, advertising, or public relations firms that offer graphic design as one of their services.

### Specialist Graphic Designers

Throughout the curriculum, GDMA students are exposed to a range of specialty areas within the graphic design industry.

Professional graphic designers might choose to specialize in such things as marketing communications strategies, interactive design, packaging design, advertising design, display design, or the design of integrated media.

### In-House (Resident) Graphic Designers

The diverse skills acquired by graduates of the GDMA program will equip them to work as in-house graphic designers in large corporations or institutions with their own marketing communications departments.

### Self-Employed, Freelance or Entrepreneurial Graphic Designers

The GDMA graduate will have a solid understanding of the graphic design industry and marketplace through field studies and a mentorship, as well as business and marketing courses. They will have prepared a comprehensive portfolio along with self-promotional materials and marketing that will help them to effectively market their services to various types of clients.