

20 AWARD-WINNING LOGOS & IDENTITIES

# HOW

INSPIRING DESIGN SUCCESS

EXCLUSIVE

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2018 DESIGN TRENDS  
+ INSIGHTS FROM DESIGN SUPERSTARS



# CREATIVE BOOM!



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6 EMERGING INNOVATIONS  
DESIGNERS MUST WATCH

**SINGAPORE**  
EXPERIENCE THE WORLD'S  
HOTTEST CREATIVE HUB

THE DOUBLE TAKE  
**MEET POSTER  
DESIGNER  
OLLY MOSS**

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# born this way

*Millennial designers bring their values to the workplace. Adobe's vice president of design explains strategies for collaborating with these young professionals—and what other generations can learn from them.*

Words Jamie Myrold

**N**ot long ago, work-life balance was a hot topic, explored in detail across books, webinars and conferences. But the way we live has changed—and quickly. The rapid adoption of mobile devices and cloud computing has blurred the boundaries between work life and personal life, blending the two so inextricably that they can't be separated any more than coffee and cream can be separated once they're in the same cup. Today, the hot topic is work-life integration.

To design for an always-on society, a designer needs to connect with users differently than when designing for enterprise software that lives inside the corporate network and isn't used outside the office. In a mobile world, users are more than their roles or permission levels; they're people who are busy trying to do a good job while giving their families and friends the attention they deserve. Young designers seem to have an intuitive understanding of this. According to a 2015 study, 90% of millennials check personal email at work and work email from home. They're the first generation to grow up with mobile devices and the first to consider their digital lives as meaningful as their physical lives. Now that they're having kids of their own, some of them are checking to see which URLs are available before they settle on baby names. This cohort is perfectly aware that their future employers will check their social media profiles, and they aren't worried at all; the idea of having a work persona that's separate from their private persona is alien to them. They know who they are and what they stand for, and that helps them make choices they believe in.

## ► DESIGN/BUSINESS INTEGRATION

These designers are coming out of school with more business acumen than earlier generations. Design school used to be solely about design; today, it's normal for business topics to be integrated into degree programs, which makes perfect sense because the digital economy is design-driven. Adobe's 2016 "State of Create" study found that 60% of younger workers say creativity at work is important. Although one would expect younger people to be more idealistic, the young designers I work with are very practical. Instead of coming up with a vision and sticking to it, they tend to do the work of connecting with tech and business partners in order to gain an understanding of constraints before they ever start to wireframe. As a result, they waste fewer cycles and they can communicate a concept faster and at a higher fidelity than designers have been able to do historically. This isn't to say that millennials are not idealistic, but their idealism tends to come into play after their research is completed. They tend to bring a strong set of values to work, and that provides a framework for their ideals. They aren't afraid to take a stand when they're convinced that their concept is in the best interest of the user, the product and the company, but they can adjust their ideas when management or the market decrees a change in direction.

## ► TRAITS TO TAKE AWAY

Of course, there is no age limit or expiration date on idealism, values or business acumen. Designers from other generations can enhance their own skills by adopting some traits from their millennial colleagues.

### More Employers are Using Social Media to Vet Candidates<sup>1</sup>

2016	60%
2015	52%
2006	11%

### Creativity & Age<sup>2</sup>

Percent of workers who describe themselves as creative, by age

Gen Z	55%
Millennials	47%
Gen X	42%
Boomers	36%

**Embrace Uncertainty:** People with a strong sense of who they are tend to be more confident, and that comes through in their work. They don't need to have answers for everything; they treat the design process as an exploration rather than a solution. That's in line with today's practice of constant iterations, in which improvements are not necessarily linear and there isn't ever a perfect ending.

**Receive and Give with Grace:** Don't get too attached to ideas in their early stages. There will always be additional input that can change the direction of the original project. That's a two-way street; while executives may make decisions that will impact your work, they are also eager to gain more knowledge from people with other perspectives. Your insights are valuable, so share them.

#### HOW TO CONNECT WITH MILLENNIALS

*Voicemail and email are yesterday. Text messaging and face-to-face are the way to go.*

Don't bother leaving a voicemail when you want a millennial's attention; according to a 2016 study, 71% of millennials find voicemail too time-consuming to bother with. You'll have a better chance with an email, but be aware that a millennial is as likely to read your message in bed, in the bathroom, or behind the wheel as in the office, so while they'll read your message, they may not answer it. To get a millennial's attention during the workday, send a text. But if you really want to get a millennial's attention, take a walk. Most millennials value interpersonal interactions over digital communications, to the tune of 55% in the U.S. and 60% in the U.K.

**Dig Deeper:** Look beyond the design. Design isn't just the pixels on a page or the labels in a wireframe, it's about blending technology and business in a way that serves the users and supports the product strategy. Keep peeling the layers of the onion, visualizing each step of the way, in order to understand how the parts interrelate and how the product can be made more strategic.

**Build Relationships:** Designers whose education emphasizes project work tend to enter the workforce with the ability to collaborate and lead. Others may have to learn those skills on the job, but that's okay. Get leadership practice by volunteering to manage projects and, if necessary, seek out management training. To be a good collaborator, be a good communicator. Keep others up-to-date on your progress and contribute ideas regardless of whether they enhance your role. If one of your ideas gets cut, don't take it personally; move on to another. There will be plenty of other chances to see your concepts come to fruition.

#### ▶ A NATURAL AFFINITY

While work-life balance made sense for generations that expected a 9-to-5 job and a 40-hour week, the rise of mobile culture has made it hard to build a wall between work life and personal life. Anyone can refrain from logging into corporate systems over the weekend, but it's hard to ignore a text that pops up on your phone. Once read, the seed is planted—work needs me. This generation doesn't see work communications as an intrusion. They weren't quite born into this mobile culture—they beat it by a few years—but they certainly were raised in it. Dipping in and out of work activities in off-hours isn't a problem, as long as the interface makes it easy. Technology is part of their memories; it's played a role in their relationships; it's been a tool in their education. Millennials are the closest thing to "native speakers" that we have. **HOW**

*Jamie Myrold has been vice president of Adobe Design for over 12 years, leading exceptional user experience design.*

1. Data from "Social Screening: What Hiring Managers Look for on Social Media," 2016. 2. Data from Adobe's 2016 "State of Create" study.