

"There is the jigsaw puzzle aspect of design. The components are put together to tell a story so that the sum is more than its individual parts. In putting the puzzle together, some of the pieces will be changed to improve their fit and some of the pieces will be rejected because they don't contribute enough to the whole."
DTP advisor

Graphics & publication design

Change in basic ministry brochure design more than doubles response rate

Brochure background:

The Samaritan Counseling Center is a counseling ministry affiliated with local churches. One of its primary ways of letting people know about its services is through brochures that are displayed in the literature racks of supporting churches.

The brochure plays a critical role in the success of the ministry. If the brochures aren't picked up, people won't know about the service or be led to support it.

Brochure changes and results:

Jan Hepler, the administrative assistant and person responsible for desktop publishing at the center revised the brochure. After its revision and distribution, the literature racks had to be refilled more quickly in then next six months than they had in the entire previous year.

Jan's reasons for the change:

"The brochure was very formal and to the point. It wasn't gentle in its message. I learned from DTP design and writing workshops to make it more gentle and open for people. It's working—people are picking it up!"

Why the new design works—the Lion's Voice comments:

Successful DTP design in ministry always consists of more than what looks nice or what typeface works best on what paper.

DTP design in ministry must always first consider the people the piece is directed to. Asking yourself the following two questions when designing a piece is useful: 1) Where are people physically? 2) Where are people emotionally?

After you answer these questions, then translate your answer into your graphic design.

How the answers worked out in the case of this project:

Where are the people physically?

People will be picking up the brochure in a public place, probably the church they attend. To pick up a brochure that shouts "Counseling" across the top, in front of your spiritual peers might be a scary thing to do. Our minds can whisper that to pick up a brochure like that might get folks wondering what you needed it for.

On the other hand, in the same public place, reading the message, "When someone you know is hurting. . ."—that could be for anyone. I might be picking it up for my neighbor; I might want to see if it is a ministry of helps I want to support. It isn't personally threatening to pick up a brochure with that message.

Where are people emotionally?

People who are in need of a counseling service are hurting. On the former brochure, after announcing counseling, it states, "A guide to the professional services of the Samaritan Counseling Center, a program supported by local churches of the Pikes Peak Region.

If you just discovered your husband is having an affair or your kids are on drugs, do you really care about professional qualification, or who supports the service? Mentioning the church involvement on the cover may in fact cause some people to fear that the people in their churches would find out about their problem.

How much better the revision gets across the message that, "The Samaritan Counseling Center is here to help."

Design priority:

As the folks at the Samaritan Counseling Center demonstrated, knowing how to create pleasing graphic design is always important, but knowing the hearts of the people the design is for is the most important design priority of all.

Before:

Though clear in its meaning, the stark message and layout of the brochure didn't invite hurting people to pick it up.

COUNSELING

A Guide to the Professional Services of

The Samaritan Counseling Center

A program supported by local churches of the Pikes Peak Region

After:

This more gentle presentation of the same information invites people with a need for it to pick up the brochure.

