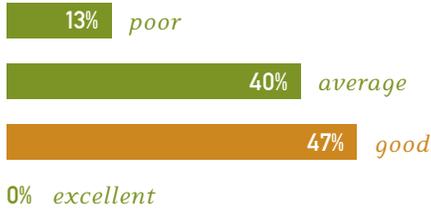


This survey was conducted in conjunction with a paper entitled *When a Profession Changes, How Can Curricula Respond?* that was presented at the FutureHistory conference in Chicago, IL. The survey respondents represent small, mid and large design firms in 9 cities across the US. No part of this survey may be reproduced without written permission by the author.

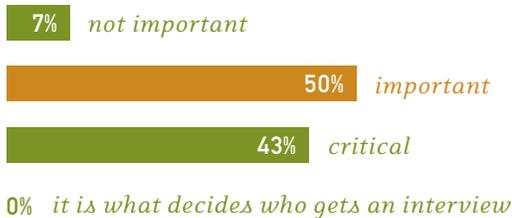
1. How would you/your firm rank the overall preparedness of recent graduates?



2. When a recent graduate approaches you/your firm for work, how important is the overall quality of their portfolio?



3. When a recent graduate approaches you/your firm for work, how important is the overall breadth of their education?



4. Rank in order of importance these three core competencies in a recent graduate, one being most important.

- 1 analytical and conceptual problem solving skills
- 2 formal typographic and design skills
- 3 computer and production technical skills

note: 1 and 2 were nearly even

5. In what three areas are recent graduates MOST prepared?

- 1 Image Creation
 - 2 Software Knowledge
 - 3 Aesthetics
- Typography
Production Knowledge
Design History
Conceptual Problem Solving
Intellectual Breadth
Marketing
Business

6. In what three areas are recent graduates LEAST prepared?

- 1 Marketing
 - 2 Production Knowledge
Intellectual Breadth
Business
 - 3 Conceptual Problem Solving
- Design History
Typography
Aesthetics
Software Knowledge
Image Creation

tie

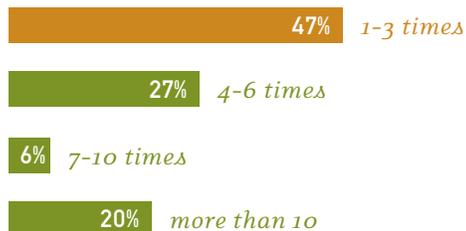
7. In what three areas would YOU like to have recent graduates be most prepared?

- 1 Conceptual Problem Solving
 - 2 Typography
 - 3 Intellectual Breadth
- Production Knowledge
Aesthetics
Image Creation
Design History
Marketing
Business
Software Knowledge

8. How important to you is it to see work that has been entirely authored by a recent graduate?



9. How many times a year are you contacted by an educator for any reason—advice, studio visit, critic, lecturer, internship?



10. Do you have any interaction with graphic design undergraduate students through teaching, lecturing, internships or as a critic?



11. Does your firm accept student interns?



12. If you accept student interns, what percentage of the time do they spend working directly with a designer?



13. Do you value a recent graduate that has had an internship over one that has not?



Some points raised by the survey responses

POINT ONE There is a disconnect between areas in which the profession perceives students to be most prepared, and areas in which they would like students to be prepared.

MOST PREPARED: software, image creation and aesthetics

VERSUS

MOST DESIRED: conceptual problem solving, typography and intellectual breadth

This raises the questions: are we spending too much class time on software; could that time be put to better use with students required to learn that on their own? Could our assignments be tougher in posing problems to solve, demanding more research, more knowledge and less form making? And of course, is the profession really prepared to accept recent graduates that are strong thinkers but less versed in software and aesthetics?

POINT TWO rethinking portfolio

– 80% rank the portfolio as critical or above

– 72% rank self-authored work as critical

– BUT only 43% rank intellectual breadth as critical or above

This raises questions about how the profession reviews a portfolio and whether this traditional approach to 'viewing' work should still be valid. If 2 of the 3 areas in which designers would like students to be prepared are 'conceptual problem solving' and 'intellectual breadth' can that really be evaluated in a cursory portfolio page flipping? If self authored work is 'critical' doesn't that involve greater intellectual breadth, and is intellectual breadth really as important as everyone is giving lip service to? Does the traditional portfolio content need to change along with the way designers review it?

POINT THREE internships and outside experiences

100% of the respondents said they valued students that had an internship experience. A few had a caveat about what kind of internship experience it was, but overall it was agreed to be very important.

There seems an opportunity here to partner more directly with firms and make the internship experience more significant/valuable for ALL participants. Offer to include professionals in the education process while they include students in the design process.

And following that, educators should consider engaging professionals and other educators in an ongoing dialogue to maintain a current curriculum and help manage expectations for everyone.