

How to create a visually attractive magazine on a limited budget



It is not impossible to create a beautiful magazine design – with just a little money available. We need to be realistic: the final result won't be the best in the world, compared to the major known publications. However, we must be optimistic: it is indeed possible to achieve good results.

I will not give, in this webinar, the perfect formula for a magazine page composition: the best page, text or photo size. It is not our goal to have, after 45 minutes, a template ready to be used on your own publication.

Our aim is to think how we can save money - and how we can save time!

So, I give you 10 tips to facilitate the work of the designer and help you achieve great results, based on my experience in the last eight years.

A low budget affects not only the design of the magazine, but also the entire editorial team. There are probably a few people working to make it happen. Sometimes, there is only the editor and one person responsible for sales. Sometimes, the editor himself is trying to sell the ads. Journalists, in most cases, are free-lancers. My point here is that there must be a lot of collaboration between the people involved, towards a common target.

So my first tip is:

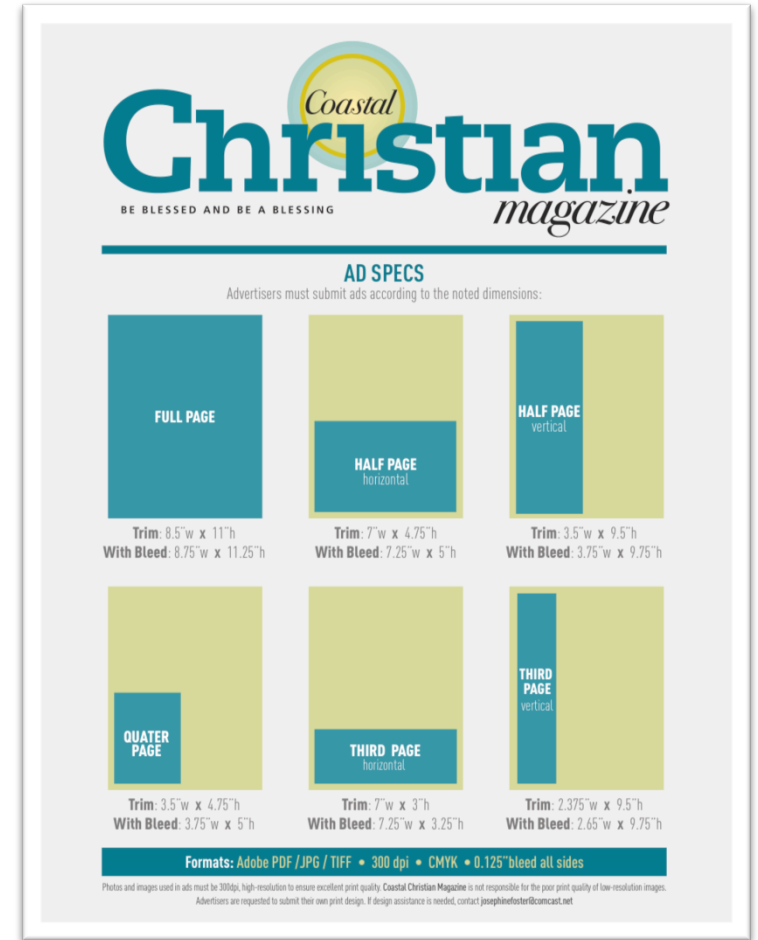
CREATE A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE INVOLVED.

Go a little beyond your basic tasks, and ask how you can help the magazine to achieve good promotion and sales. Be sure that, whatever you do to help the magazine, will be good for your design work.

An example: in one of my most recent works, I asked the person in charge of sales how it was going in ad sales. I found out that all information about prices and the size of the ads was included as part of a formal presentation email.

So, I suggested that we should make a PDF of the sizes of ads available, with trim and bleed information; the best way to save the files; the magazine's logo ... this helped the sales department to achieve better results because everything looked more professional. It was also useful because, with a better explanation about the ad specifications, the number of files received with errors greatly diminished.

Stay in tune with the magazine's communication needs. Sometimes small actions can help a lot. Talk to your editor.



ESTABLISH STANDARDS AND NORMS FOR RECEIVING CONTENT

It may seem simple, but some magazines just forget to set some standards. If you have established standards (agreed on with your editor), you will have more time to create, and won't need not spend extra time making corrections.

Before you start working on a magazine, create a pre-dummy (or a map – here in Brazil, we call it mirror), defining the content for each page of the magazine. This document will be the guide for you and your editor. If you pour out the content without this map to guide you can cause many pagination changes - increasing the chance to print something with errors.

MEN OF INTEGRITY												PRE-DUMMY July / August 2016			
Your Daily Guide to the Bible and Prayer															
COVER	AD	TOC	AD	FROM THE EDITOR	JULY 1	JULY 2 / 3	JULY 4	JULY 5	JULY 6	JULY 7	JULY 8	JULY 9 / 10			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			
JULY 11	JULY 12	JULY 13	JULY 14	JULY 15	JULY 16 / 17	JULY 18	JULY 19	JULY 20	JULY 21	JULY 22	JULY 23 / 24	JULY 25	JULY 26		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		
JULY 27	JULY 28	JULY 29	JULY 30 / 31	INTERVIEW		AUGUST 1	AUGUST 2	AUGUST 3	AUGUST 4	AUGUST 5	AUGUST 6 / 7	AUGUST 8	AUGUST 9		
28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41		
AUGUST 10	AUGUST 11	AUGUST 12	AUGUST 13 / 14	AUGUST 15	AUGUST 16	AUGUST 17	AUGUST 18	AUGUST 19	AUGUST 20 / 21	AUGUST 22	AUGUST 23	AUGUST 24	AUGUST 25		
42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55		
AUGUST 26	AUGUST 27 / 28	AUGUST 29	AUGUST 30	AD	AUGUST 31	FOR YOUR LIBRARY	AD	AD	LABEL AREA						
56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64							

CMYK: 30 / 88 / 93 / 34

ESTABLISH STANDARDS AND NORMS FOR RECEIVING CONTENT

Create folders labeled as the names of the articles to save images, and a different folder for the text copy. I suggest you to check the received image files right away, and verify if they all have high resolution for printing. If you find any low resolution images, request a new one.

Always talk to your editor. Ask him to send you the whole content for a story: revised full text (with the character count) + Images (or information about which images to use: if must be downloaded from stock sites; if it will be produced; or if you will have access to it via cloud sharing). The worst thing in the world is to get the copy of an article today; two days later an image to be used on that story; 5 days later an element to a special text box. That just doesn't work. Create, along with the editor, a work methodology. The organization of e-mails and it's content is one of the biggest time-saving factors.



Basecamp

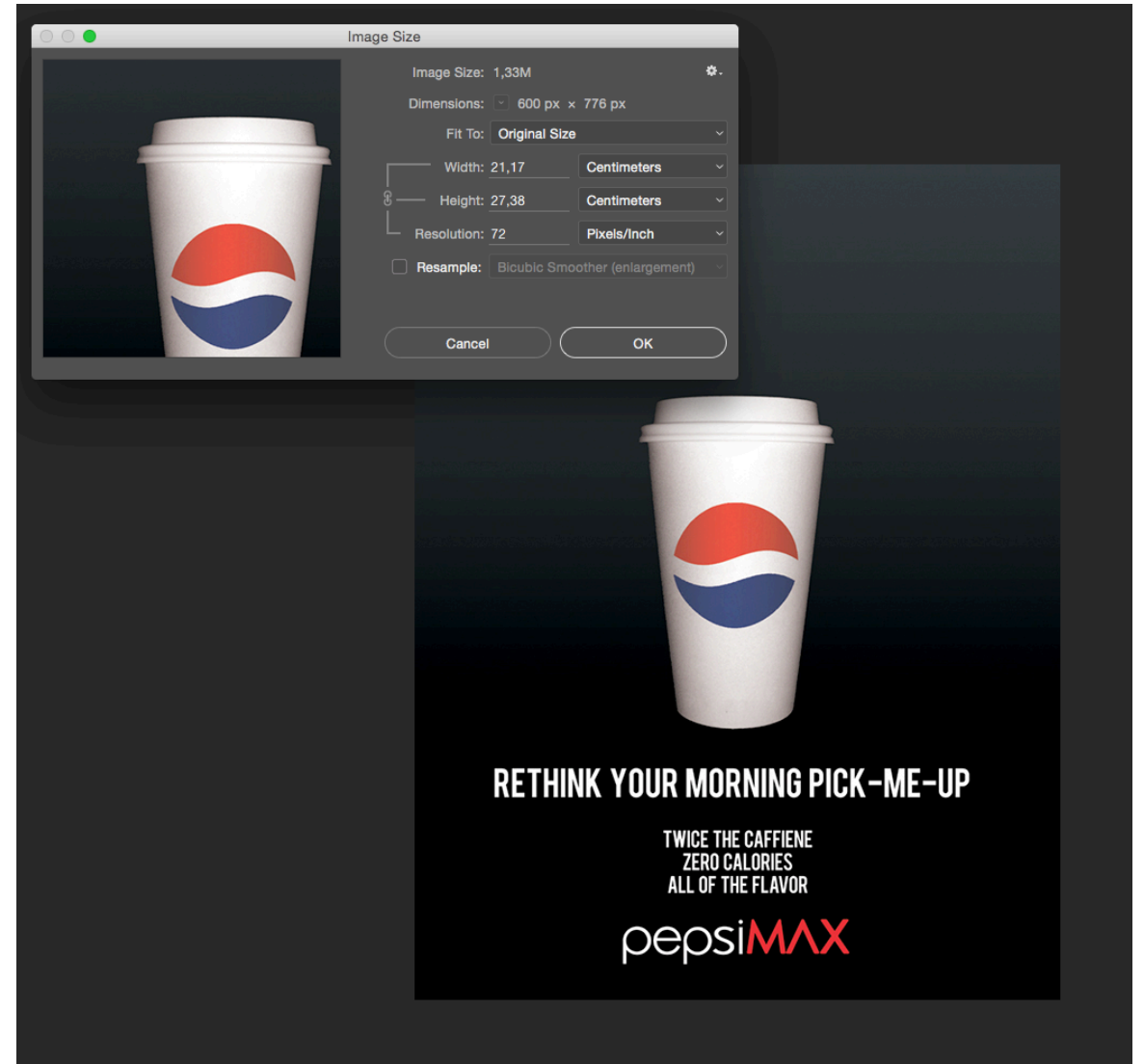
A good tool is project management websites. You can set deadlines, monitor what each team member is doing, upload files... Basecamp is a good option. You can start using it for free.

ORGANIZE THE ADS YOU RECEIVED

Make sure all ads are in the correct size, resolution, color profile, etc.

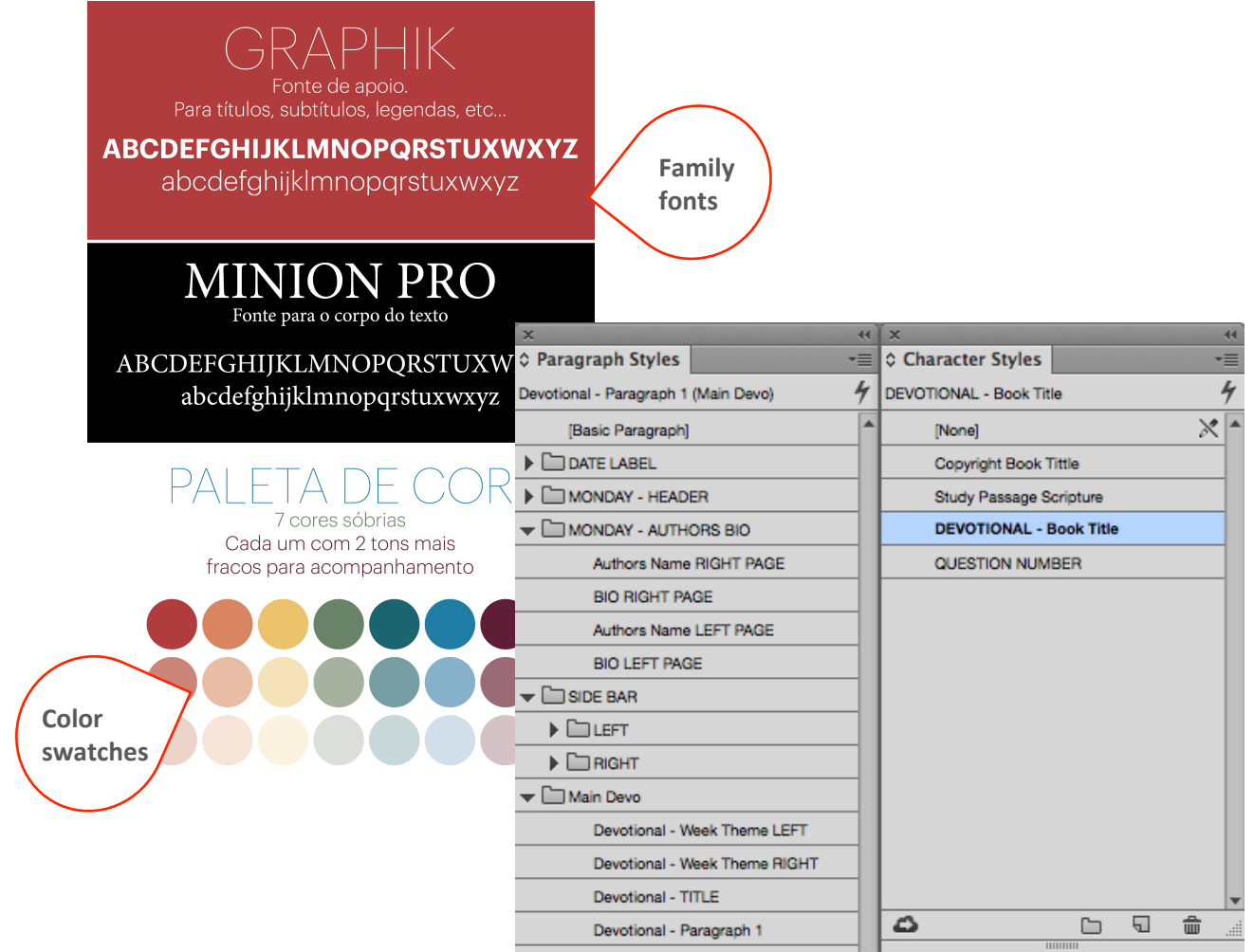
Do not take the risk of delaying the launch of a new issue because you did not check the ad on time.

If you ask your client for a new file, it may take a while to receive it, because not every client has an in-house designer.



PREPARE YOUR FILE BEFORE YOU START WORKING

Attention designers: it is essential to create your template with the definition of *headers and footers, color swatches, paragraph styles, character styles, master pages, margins, etc.* If you do not set it before, your file will look like the beach the morning after a carnival party: a pure mess. Organize the elements of this file will take you precious time. Also, if you don't set up parameters, you have a good chance ruin the design concept that was approved earlier.



DO NOT BE AFRAID OF WHITE!

One of the biggest mistakes that I noticed in small publications is the attempt to fill up every little space of the page. Usually the result is a heavy, polluted design. We don't need to be afraid of white space in the magazine. What we need is to understand the harmony between text, images, and empty spaces - where our eyes can take a rest. This may seem simple, but don't ignore it. The definition of empty spaces can determine how beautiful the magazine will be. The key word is balance. And remember that less can be more. A good font and a beautiful image can make much more impact than the combination of various elements.

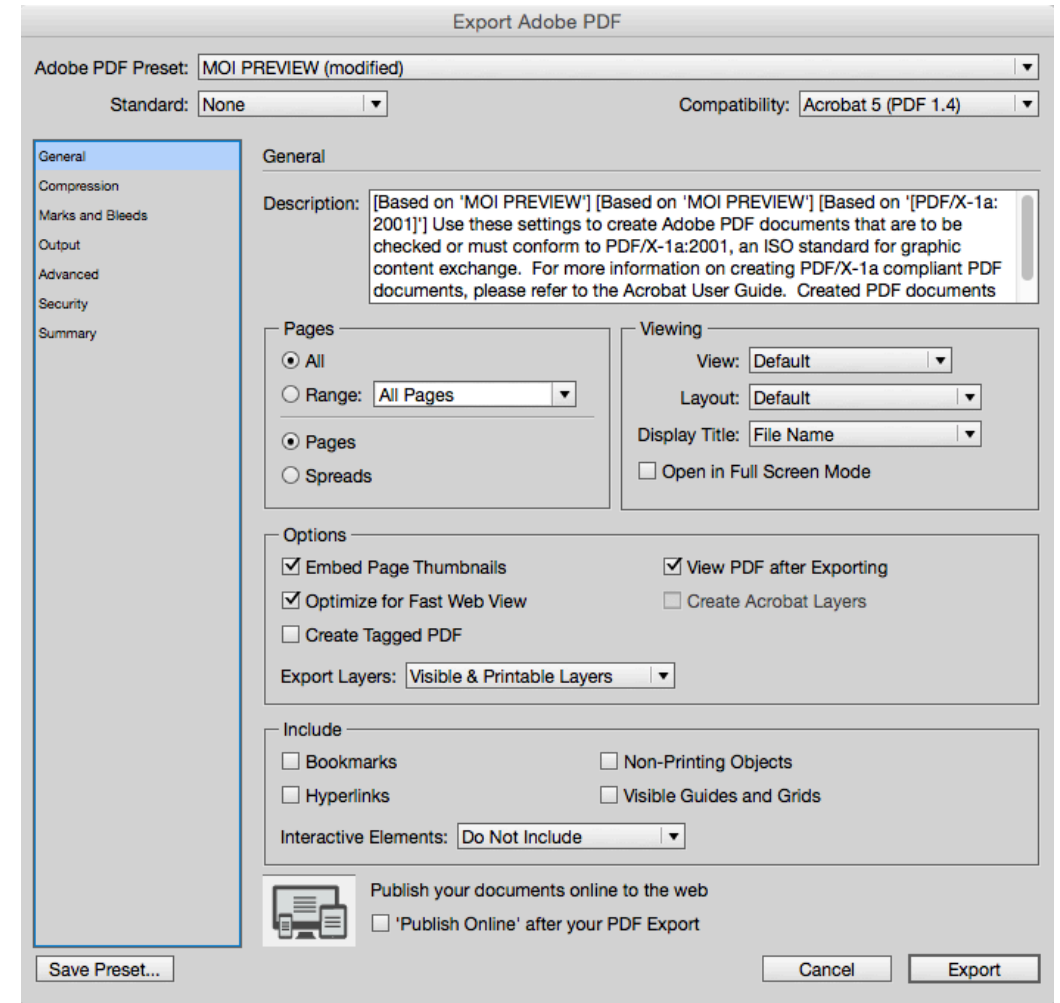


White space
The
"Breathing
Area"

CREATE PDF PROFILES TO SAVE FILES FOR REVIEW / PRINT

The best way to send files for review is creating a medium resolution PDF file. I suggest you to create your own profile - you can use it a 150 or 200 dpi resolution, and you won't need bleeds for this one. If you have your own profile, you will save new files very quickly, not worrying about setting up the PDF every time.

Check with the printer company how you must send the printable and final file. Create a new PDF profile for it, so, you don't have to set up everything each issue.



Keep an eye open for free images / vectors / illustrations

A lot of things changed in the last five years. The offer of free images greatly increased - and the quality of the images as well. Nowadays, you can find much more quality material, without being dependent on paid stock websites.

Of course, the number of designers using those images also increased. It's not hard to find the same free image in different publications and websites.

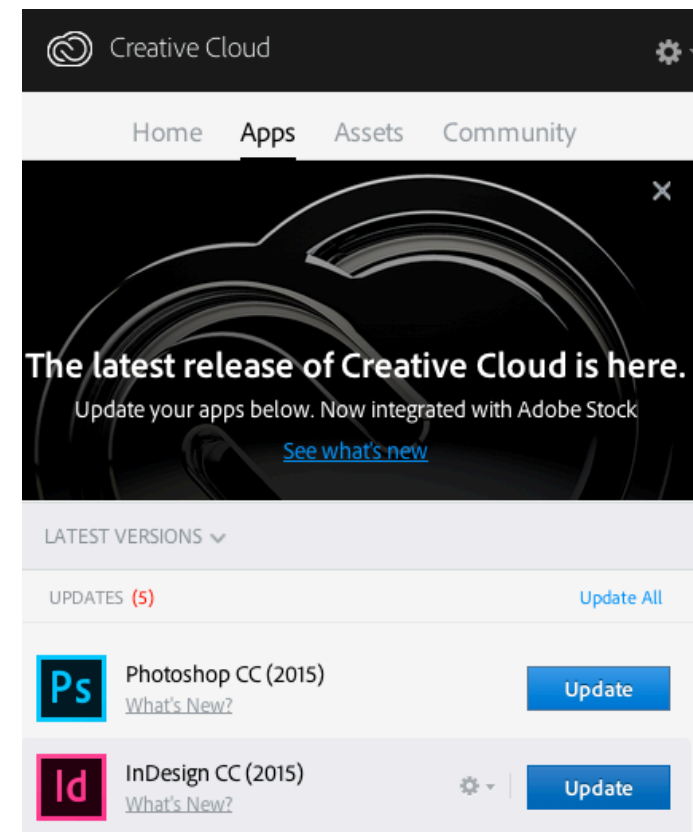
My suggestion is: sign in to those websites, and take a look at the catalog. Save the images you loved and organize them on your computer with labels. (Do not forget to save the copyright information). Before using your image, open it in Photoshop, and make some edits; try to add your identity to it; it may be a composition of 2 or 3 images; or mixing images and vectors; or cutting something out of the photo.

This is even more important regarding vectors. Nowadays, if you need a background with rays and stars, you google it, and download a free file. But you need your specific sky with rays and stars. So, go on, download free files - but put some work on these files before using it.

At the end of this presentation I will list some links to free stuff online.

INVEST A PORTION OF YOUR MONEY IN YOUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Probably, the designer of a low-budget magazine has more than one single client. I believe some low-value investments can make you save some time. For example, paying the Adobe Creative Cloud package. It is not as expensive to sign the monthly deal, and you will have access to software updates and additional applications (as Lightroom). Also, think about the possibility of paying a storage service in the cloud. I use and I like a lot the one called Sugarsync. If you can't spend money on that, you can start with some good free options as BOX and DropBox. This cloud storage is important because you will always have a backup of your work, and the saved files will have download links.



SugarSync 

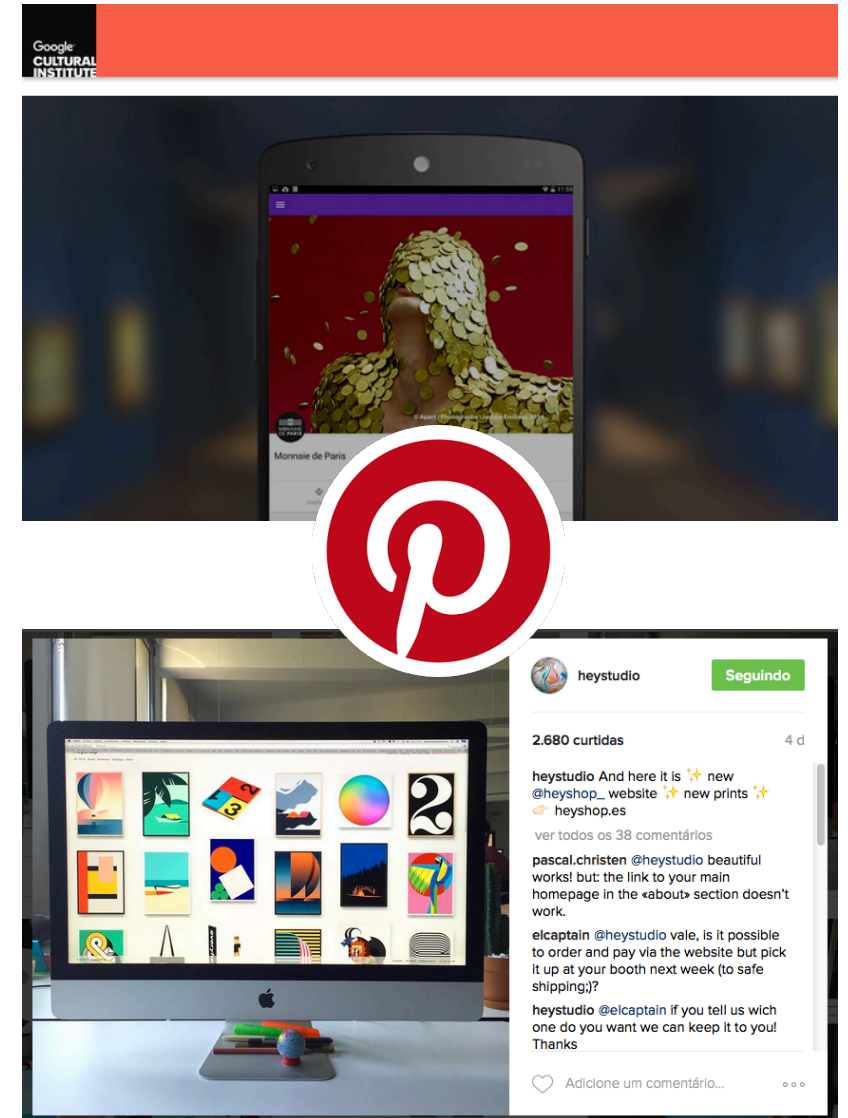
 Dropbox

 box

SEEK REFERENCES THAT INSPIRES YOU

Working with little money can be exhausting. So it is very important to seek creative references to refresh our mind and inspire us. I do not mean references for a special need (like magazine covers on **Pinterest** - *if you do not know Pinterest, go online and take a look*), but everything that brings beauty into your life. Visit museums, listen to good music, go to the theater, to the movies.... try to add beauty as part of your life. You will realize the importance of spending time out of the office – to, then, spend less time in the office.

Use social media wisely and think about it for your professional life: follow people who are references in your work field; artists you admire; profiles that shares relevant content for your work.



Conclusion

The success of the magazine is also your success. If the magazine has a good commercial return, the higher the budget, and the higher the payout. I believe that, even with a small budget, amazing results can be achieved.

I do not want to show here samples of beautiful (or terrible) work. Design is very relative to the taste and look of each one of us. We can find a beautiful, low-budget magazine, and an ugly, big-budget magazine. The most important thing is common sense. Knowing what combines; which elements match with one another; what is the good design stuff you can use – and which ones should never be used.

Put your best into it. You'll see great artwork.

Important links:

Low cost stock images:

www.123rf.com

www.depositphotos.com

Free Stock Images

www.pixabay.com

www.unsplash.com

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_page

<http://gratisography.com/>

Free Stock Vector

www.vecteezy.com

www.freevector.com

www.freepik.com

Free Fonts

www.behance.net/collection/4860923/Free-Fonts

www.dafont.com

Sites with great freebies (images, vector fonts):

<http://freebiesbug.com>

<http://dbfreebies.co>

<https://creativemarket.com>

<http://www.designfreebies.org>

Inspiration:

www.pinterest.com

<http://nascapas.blogspot.com.br>

www.magnation.com

www.rijksmuseum.nl/en



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