

Four options

In GDE730 I created a list of personal interests which resulted in four ideas for development. Out of these I had a real interest between the correlation of design, Christmas, and emotions.

Why Christmas

Christmas has always been an important time to me. A time to spend with family and make memories. Creativity around this festive period has boomed since the millennium, but, are we using it for the right messaging?

Emotion

Designs that hit you 'right in the feels' can make you remember them long after viewing. Do you remember the man on the moon? This comes with a real power and responsibility.

Mood boards – a little bit of each

The mood boards created for week 2 shows how Christmas is mainly used as a tool for commercial gain. Yes, a John Lewis advert makes you feel warm and fuzzy, but to what end?

Play and Explore

Going back to my own childhood I was able to develop two potential ideas which had the 'heart' of Christmas. Their ultimate goal remained unknown at this stage, but the concept was in place.

The Two Ideas

One idea was developed from an early project, GDE730. Whilst this had merit, conversations with a colleague highlighted that the second option had a more universal appeal.

Collaborating with a colleague

At this stage I had a brain storming session with my Junior Designer who helped to focus my thoughts about character creation and what would resonate most with my audience.

Refocussing the concept in a new domain

I still had to find a purpose to my idea. Creating for commercial gain in such an emotive way didn't sit right with me. Instead, I decided to focus on an area I had personal experience of – mental health.

A new brief?

With this new direction in mind, I reassessed the brief. My audience had changed, as had my goals. Could Christmas be used as a springboard for discussion around Mental Health and goodwill?

From brain to page

Usually, I think about designs within my capabilities. With the safety of a self-initiated project, I decided to aim for something outside my comfort zone to see how far I could get.

A friendly Character

Starting with sketches and programmes I felt comfortable with I was able to create an initial concept. The idea in my mind was different to what was produced, however, so I used words to convey this to a reader.

To the drawing board?

With a character developed, I started working on a storyboard. My ability to draw the scenes as intended were not turning out as I had hoped. How could I realise a legible storyboard quickly, in an aesthetic way?

Technology to the rescue

Thankfully, technology provided a solution. Previs Pro is an app which allows you to create scenes with characters and lighting in a manner which is efficient and effective.

Does it work? – Time to evaluate

From feedback from my fellow cohort in the crits and from speaking with work colleagues the message is clear and important. Jade Martin, a member of the community said, "xxxx".

My 9 year old daughter understood the concept and when asked if everyone was happy at Christmas, responded with, "xxx"

Feedback from peers and colleagues

My Junior Designer liked the idea but thought it could be improved, "xxxx". I think I had my own personal experiences in mind, and it would be good to be more inclusive.

Does it answer the brief?

I believe it does. Mental health is important to me and can be particularly low around Christmas. My father said, "xxxxx". The advert needed to start a conversation and I think it does that.

What would I change?

My wife said, "xxxx" and that is true. Any interaction, big or small can make a difference to someone's mental health. Therefore, I would like to include some smaller examples and some from a variety of cultures and people.

Future developments

I had a conversation with my parents about the concept and together we surmised that the orb was actually a metaphor for mental health. With this in mind, it could be taken out of the Christmas arena and used at other times of the year to highlight the subject.

Summary

I think this initial idea does answer the brief. There are areas which could be improved and ideas for development. It is an exciting prospect of linking an emotive ad campaign with an important issue such as mental health and I believe this is a perfect way to start meaningful conversations.

To that end, I will let my 3-year-pass on some wise words we can all take on board. "xxx"