

*Time is what we want most, but what we use worst.*

Time affords us the potential for the exploration of any and every concept. However, it is a fleeting resource that is all too often undervalued. There is never enough time to get everything done to the quality that you envision. The trick is in optimizing the limited time that you do have, in order to yield the greatest result.

*Design allocates 200% of the time you afford it. Spend frugally.*

Design is a demanding relationship that is jealous of your time. Be restrictive. Be firm. The more rope you give it, the more it has to hang you with. Allow design only so much of your schedule, and stick adamantly to this plan. Refuse the temptation to break budget for a higher quality finish. The law of diminishing returns applies. It is already good enough.

*Deliver the deadline!!!*

This is absolute; the litmus test of professional validation. No one employs a designer who cannot produce results. Integrity and reputation hang upon your ability to meet deadlines. There is no smoothing around the line, so don't invite a 'win some, lose some' attitude.

*Iteration is overrated. Do it right the first time.*

Repeated refinement is the supposed ideal, yet it is rarely actualised in process. More than often, designers compromise their finish by embarking down one or two avenues, only to complete both to half-quality. While an iterative process does tend to produce holistic, better-evaluated results, reality often doesn't allow for this luxury. You can only work within your means, so design as if the first time is the last time.

*Avoid stress to the greatest possible extent.*

Stress is inevitable; a symptom of a busy schedule. The designer's greatest adversary, stress acts as a plug to production by exhausting its victim with procrastination and pressure. Mitigate the impact by shifting your focus to the individual tasks, rather than the deadline, and endeavoring regardless. If possible, delegate jobs to reduce the workload. Remember that stress is only as powerful as you allow it to be.

*Conceptualize fast.*

A concept drawing needs only to communicate a design idea visually. The notion that something has to be beautifully presented to succeed past the developmental stages is misleading. Often over-presentation is detrimental, as peers are disinclined to contribute out of the fear of spoiling the sanctity of the visual style. Invest in clarity, simplicity and speed of production for your concepts. Don't be an artist; be a designer.



Embrace software.

No matter how fast you are the computer will always be faster. Learn to tap into the virtual design studio to conceptualize, craft and produce. The technological pipeline is not a bastardisation of traditional design process; pen and paper are more efficient as stylus and screen.



Fallback.

Don't reinvent the wheel. Often misinterpreted as a speed bump, research is actually completion's strongest catalyst. Invest in the inaugural stages of your proposal by seeking out existing exemplars and development diaries. Exploit other's mistakes and ride the wave of collective experience. Act like it has already been done before, and, more often than not, you won't be disappointed.

Make your creativity reliable.

Inspiration and passion are fickle things, and therefore shouldn't be a designer's backbone. Rather, a firm understanding and adherence to process is essential in maintaining a consistent quality of design. Should a creative block strike, a professional needs to employ fallback policies, in order to maintain their turnover rate and reputation. Solid design routine is the only proven insurance.

Be committed, even if you're not in love.

Feelings are variable and a shaky ground upon which to build the foundations of a project. Falling in love with what you do is not a prerequisite to completion. Nor is indifference reason to stop. Employ external motivators for those times where it feels like the work is dragging. Deadlines, often perceived negatively, can be lifelines in these situations. The important thing is to stick with it. If you take it on, then you're with it to the end. Productivity is the best feeling of all.

Work smarter, not harder.

Efficiency is the aim of the game. Impress others with your turnover rate, rather than your dedication. Long hours and sleepless nights may get the immediate job done, but overall productivity will suffer in the long run. Aim instead to minimise effort and time investment where you can.

Tick the boxes first.

Get your priorities straight. Complete the brief and then expand.