

Tell us a little bit about your work history background.

I got my first ad agency job at Grey Worldwide back in 1997 – and lasted about four hours before saying "I'm just off to lunch" and never coming back. Since then I've been working in various agencies around Auckland, including a long stint at AIM Proximity. I then freelanced for a year, but missed filling in the timesheets and the free grog. In 2004 I met some nice people from Lowe and Draft, and they promised me daily timesheets and Hahn beer, so I was in like a robber's dog. Now I love the place.

How would you describe your current role with Draft?

I run the interactive department, which sits within the creative department. We keep things nice and flexible, so sometimes we're working with other creatives on integrated campaigns, and sometimes we're doing our own stuff. I do less designing and developing these days, more art direction and management. But I still love working in ActionScript and actually building things.

What are your thoughts about the interactive industry combining with the advertising industry?

It's a very strange relationship, kind of like Bobbi Brown and Whitney Houston. A few slaps, then straight back into bed together. Most agencies really struggled with how to deal with interactive. I remember when it was perceived to be an up-skilling problem: "Let's just send our art directors on a course and we'll have this web fad covered." Then it was in vogue to split off specialist sub-companies: "Doug in accounts knows what these GIFs are, so let's put him in charge of a whole new department. We'll call it InTer@ctiv!" It was insane. I think most agencies came out of that thinking it was far too painful, and decided to freelance the whole thing out.

But freelancing it out doesn't work. It results in an agency just doing banners with pun headlines. You need to develop a culture, and you need to spread that culture to the clients, or else you won't get the briefs or the budgets and you don't develop the skills. Interactive is a specialist field without doubt – it's not just another ad medium – but it should be integrated seamlessly into the larger agency. That balance of integration/specialisation is the thing that's tricky. Saatchi has their

way, which works for them – with a large specialist department. We do it differently, with closer integration into the creative and account service teams.

But it's not easy. Agencies historically are set up around established media

that evolve quite slowly. So print art directors don't need to spend half their day researching what this week's Pantone colours are. And before you shoot a TVC, you don't need a sixty-page technical specification explaining in excruciating detail how the camera will be powered, and what wattage the lights will be. There are all these extra difficulties and overheads with interactive work. So there's a big difference between the conventional agency model and the model you need to do good interactive work. That creates headaches, and makes it tempting to leave it to specialist contractors. But I believe it's worth sticking with it – forcing your company through the learning curve – because if you can get a truly integrated agency at the end, you'll blow the opposition away. Then you can retire to Okarito and raise emus with Keri Hulme.

Any revolutionary insights into the future?

I think only one or two of the decade's best New Zealand sites have been made. There are unique things about our culture, and about our online culture that have only started to be explored. So much potential, such a keen audience, just the right size. That's not revolutionary in the Che Guevara sense though. More like in The Goodies sense. Oh well. Japan will beat the USA to Mars! How's that?

Have any hot tips for web/multimedia graduates desperate to break into the advertising industry?

Firstly, assume that you will be interviewed by an aging creative director who wouldn't know web design from welding. Grey 11pt Tahoma and subtle drop shadows will mean nothing. Big ideas and creative balls

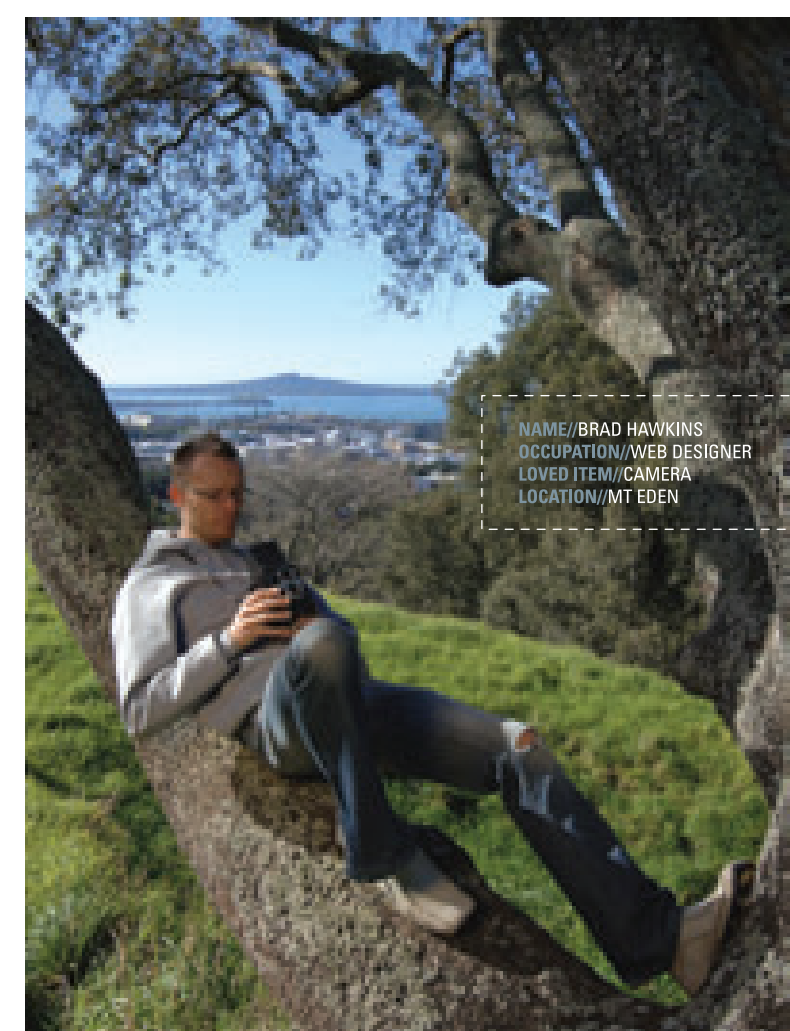
are what they're interested in. So ignore web design for a while and spend some time thinking of some really cool ideas. It doesn't need to be huge in scale or scope. It doesn't even need to be a website. It could be a viral animation, a social network

website you did entirely in CSS.

Secondly – and this is even more important after you are hired – back yourself. Interactive is not about being hidden away in the basement with IT working until 4 am on embarrassingly nerdy things. Well, it often is, but it shouldn't be. If that happens, everyone loses. You need a prominent office, you need a copywriter, you need good briefs and budgets, you need to concept with the creative director, you need decent timings, and you need to go home at 5:30pm. So you can play Warcraft with your nerdy friends. Haha.

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OCCUPATION//WEB DESIGNER
LOVED ITEM//CAMERA
LOCATION//MT EDEN

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