



M A T T E R S

CREATING A KILLER COVER

Creating a crisp, compelling cover

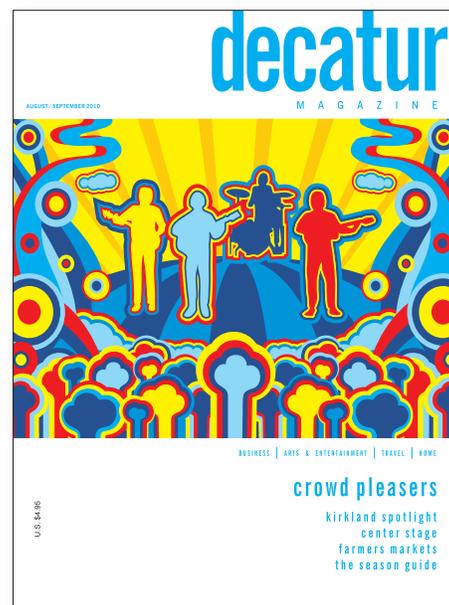
How many of you remember the magazine cover that featured a very pregnant Demi Moore in her birthday suit?

It was shocking for sure, but it must have made an impression if we all remember it 20 years later. Since Demi is likely not available for your next cover shoot, let's take a look at ways you can create a memorable cover without her.

It goes without saying that the purpose of a cover is to entice your readers to open the magazine and read the contents. The importance of

Custer believes that if a cover is welcoming and intriguing and has a clean design, people will be more tempted to look at it. "They should think, 'Wow. That's interesting. What's that about?'" she said.

Sharon Cordell, who owns In Graphic Detail and has 20 years of experience, agrees wholeheartedly. "People are more likely to react to something intriguing," she said. "They should think, 'What a beautiful cover. I can't wait to see what's inside.'"



this goal is underscored by the fact that your readers have less time to read these days, and you have plenty of competition for their attention. So in other words, you have to make your cover count.

"In this day and age, people are bombarded with all kinds of messages, from their computers to their radios and TVs and iPhones," said Ellen Custer, president of 2d – A design collaborative, who has 32 years of graphic design experience. "Statistics say that people will only look at something for a split second before they make a decision to read it. And if they put it down, it's 10 to 1 that they don't pick it up later."

So how do you go about creating a terrific cover? Custer and Cordell offer the following tips.

1 Keep it simple [silly]. Indeed – this is the golden rule of design. "Don't put 10 pounds of stuff in a 5 pound bag," Custer says. "When there are too many graphic elements, the page becomes visually polluted. The eye doesn't know where to go, and you have to give the eye something to focus on."

Cordell concurs. "Keep it simple because you don't want to confuse the reader," she says. "In addition, it's irritating when there's too much going on. And it should also be said that a lousy cover can kill a magazine."

2 Believe in balance. Whether you prefer symmetrical design or asymmetrical, the overall cover should be balanced. “Don’t overpower your image with your type,” Custer says. “There should be one strong image to draw the reader’s attention. Blend the elements you use wisely – whether it’s light and dark or boldness and subtlety.”

Custer also recommends dynamic movement. “Pay attention to the lines and angles in your photo so you can create underlying movement with your graphics and type.”

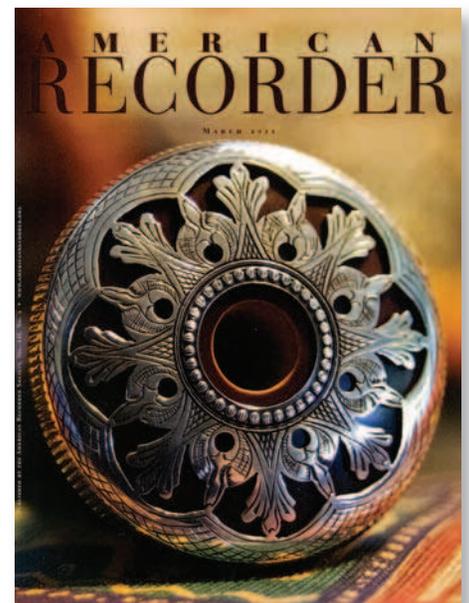
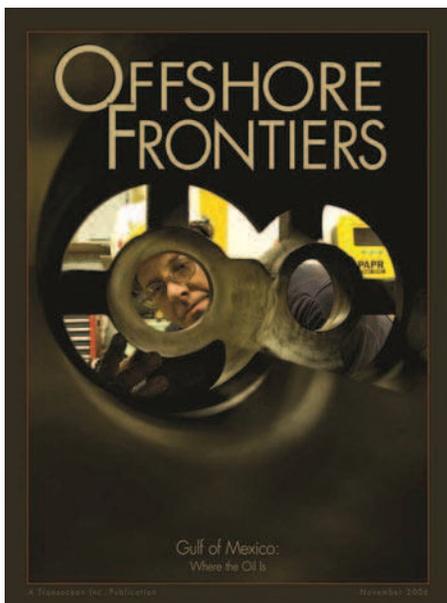
3 Tone it down on the typefaces. “People have a tendency to choose many cool typefaces and put them all on one page,” Custer said. “It would be better to curtail your exuber-

can be the strongest colors,” she says, “especially if it’s a sophisticated cover.”

5 Don’t be afraid of space. Custer said a lot of European designers are using a lot of white space right now. “White space has value because it gives the reader a place to rest his eye.”

6 Communicate clearly. If you’re working with a designer, Cordell says to be as specific as possible in describing what you’d like to portray on the cover. “Don’t expect us to read your mind.”

Custer said a good designer will listen intently. “It’s a collaborative team effort, and to make it work we have to be able to communicate. We really want to help you succeed, and therefore we want to produce our best work for you.”



ance when playing with fonts. Only use two on the cover. I like to pair a serif with a nonserif.”

Unless a cover calls for a very unusual typeface, Cordell suggests sticking with traditional typefaces. “They don’t detract from the message, and they usually give you a more professional-looking cover,” she says. “Don’t go with a clever and cute typeface just for the heck of it.”

4 Be cool with colors. Colors shouldn’t compete on the cover either. “The color wheel is very helpful; purple goes with yellow, orange with blue, and red with green,” Custer says. “You want colors to complement each other.”

Cordell is a big fan of gray and beige. “They

7 Do NOT micromanage. This is designers’ biggest pet peeve. “Sometimes publishers are really wedded to an image they have in mind and don’t want anyone changing it,” Custer said. “We see your vision, but we have ideas on how to make it better.

Please do not be offended because it is not your field, and please be open to hearing our views. You should give the designer the creative freedom to do what she does best.”

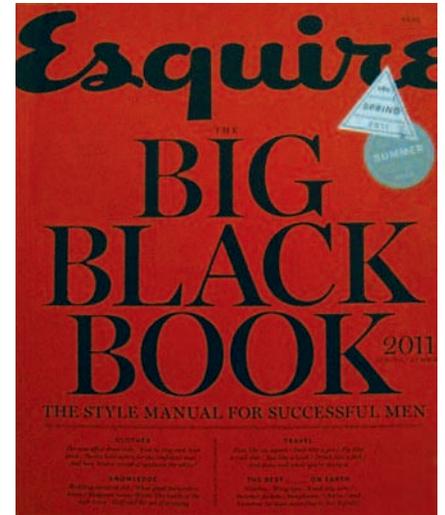
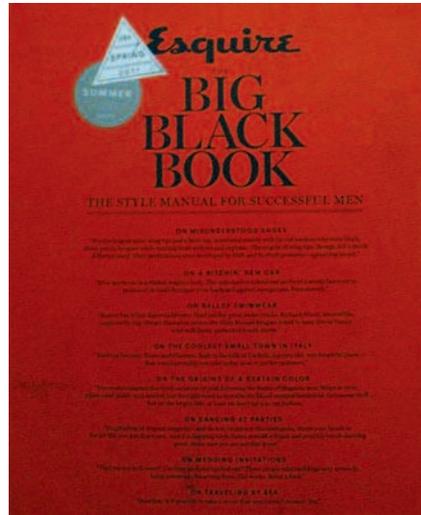


Cordell agrees that designers should be given enough leeway to let the creative juices flow. “This way, you’ll get a much more interesting cover,” she says. “A publisher will come up with standard, run of the mill ideas that are never the slightest bit controversial. A designer will try to come up with something different.”

8 Always be on the lookout. Custer said that essentially she lives her field. “My mind is like a little notebook; when I’m out and about my graphic radar is always on,” she said. “When I’m outside, I look at color combinations. When I’m in a store, I’ll look at their displays to see how they combined colors or used type. I’m a very visual person, and that’s how I get my energy. I try to be like a sponge and absorb it all.”

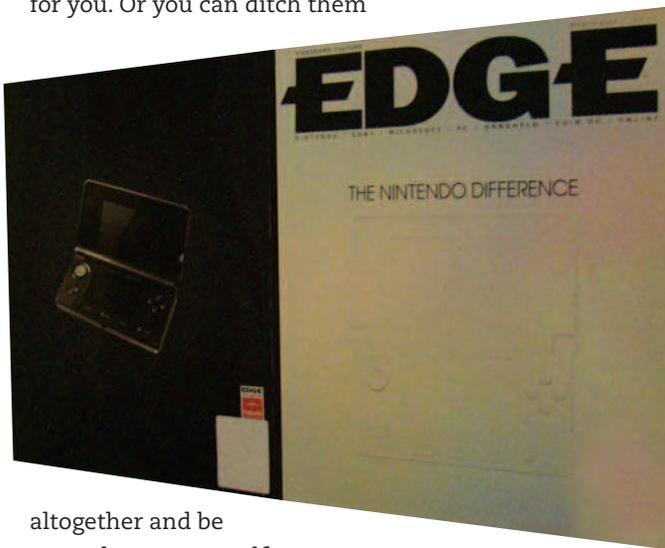
Cordell has the same mindset. “Indeed – designers are always looking for the next great idea.”

Here’s to hoping the next great idea lands on your cover. 



Trends for 2011

Even if you don’t follow them, it’s nice to know what the “experts” have labeled as the design trends for the year. At the very least, they’ll be a good source of ideas for you. Or you can ditch them



altogether and be a trendsetter yourself.

- Minimalism in design.
- Big, bold photographs.
- Composing various photos together.
- Rounded corners in graphic details.
- Shiny graphics.
- Larger sans serif typography.
- Retro art, as in bright colors and pop art.
- The color of the year is honeysuckle (a medium, soft pink).

Source: Ellen Custer

Good books on design

For those who are interested in reading more about design, Ellen Custer highly recommends the following books.

- “Principles of Two-Dimensional Design” by Wucius Wong
- “Principles of Form and Design” by Wucius Wong
- “Layout: The Design of the Printed Page” by Allen Hurlburt
- “The Grid: A Modular System for the Design and Production of Newspapers, Magazines, and Books” by Allen Hurlburt
- “Minimal Graphics: The Powerful New Look of Graphic Design” by Catharine Fishel



If you’re interested in having a killer cover designed for your publication, Johnson Press of America is happy to offer assistance. For more information, please contact your CSR.

One on one

JPA profile: Victor Escamilla, shipping associate

Number of years with JPA: 16

Why he loves JPA: Escamilla cites three reasons why he loves his job: his hours (7-3), his duties, and the people he works with. His job is quite varied; he bands and shrinkwraps skids, is a folder operator, works on machines in the bindery, makes mail runs twice a day, and is responsible for preparing materials for recycling. "It's never the same old, same old," Escamilla says. "It's usually something a little different every day. I get to go from one end of the building to the other, so I know pretty much everyone here. And I get to go outside when I go to the post office, which is nice."



Victor Escamilla

Family life: Escamilla has a 16-year-old daughter named Tiffany who attends Pontiac High School. Father and daughter even like some of the same bands, like Ozzy Osbourne and Nickelback.

Hobbies: Escamilla has been a Chicago Bears fan since childhood, but has never been to a game. He started watching in the Walter Payton era, and remembers 1986 very well, when the Bears won their first Super Bowl. His team crushed the New England Patriots 46-10, setting a record for the highest Super Bowl score at the time. He is also a huge NASCAR fan; Matt Kenseth is his favorite driver. Kenseth was mentored by Mark Martin, whom Escamilla followed closely for years.

Escamilla has been to the Brickyard 400 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway eight times.

His wardrobe does in fact include Bears jerseys, NASCAR T-shirts and rock 'n' roll T-shirts.

Cool fact: Escamilla is a huge classic rock fan. He remembers listening to music on the radio when he was 10 years old. He listened to WLS 890 AM in Chicago. His favorite bands are AC/DC, ZZ Top and Ozzy Osbourne. 🎸



ZZ Top



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RECIPE

Hamburger Casserole

2 pounds of hamburger, browned
half a bag of tater tots
2 cans of cream of mushroom soup
6 slices of cheese
Season-All

In a large bowl, mix browned hamburger and 2 cans of mushroom soup together. Grease a 9x12" baking pan, and then place tater tots on the bottom of the pan. Next, spread the hamburger on top. Add a little Season-All, and then place 6 slices of cheese on top. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes.

— *courtesy of Victor Escamilla*

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