

Pre-press in a linguistic services group

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The transfer of Eurologos from “cut and paste” to modern graphic design

For some 20 years translation has been integrating pre-press into its positioning. It was the time when glue, scissors and copy stands were used. Scanners and compatible (non-dedicated) computers did not exist yet.

I was told that when Littera Graphis was created (in 1989), equipment still belonged to this generation of phototypesetters (even if already with Visual Preview). Converters were used between the fifty-odd systems and programs available on the market: and they were more than 15 times more expensive than a Mac computer today, for example. Truly prehistoric compared to current pre-press.

Eurologos has therefore lived through this entire historical phase, which has led us to current graphic design programs and equipment: compatible Macintosh and PC, InDesign, QuarkX Press, Photoshop, Illustrator and all other utility programs, including those for the Internet such as Dreamweaver or for localization such as Catalyst.

Eurologos was among the first companies in the world to integrate a full pre-press department in order to combine translation and copywriting activities with those of graphic design and layout: what used to be called “camera-ready”.

The advantage of the alliance between words and images

The two professions, one for the production of multilingual words and the other for images and layout, could not be more remote in the 80s: on the one hand there were the “translation agencies” and on the other hand the printers who were the only ones to be equipped with systems (phototypesetters) and personnel (graphic artists) able to prepare “plates”. Today there are graphic designers. But above all we have witnessed a double revolution that has transformed our era in twenty years:

- a. The extraordinary advance of globalization (and hence of the integration of markets)
- b. The creation of IT with the deployment of the Internet across the globe

It was inevitable that multilingual and graphic design activities would end up in an indissoluble alliance. Even if the professions remain very different, their complementarity seems to be well established and economically evident: savings on production (gone are the days of going back and forth between linguists and graphic designers belonging to different companies...) and shorter delivery times!

In a world where prices are going down and everything is high-speed, this was very convenient...

Eurologos’ pre-press objectives

Littera Graphis is competent in the three major areas of communication, i.e., pre-press, multimedia graphic design and localization.

The major resource for Littera Graphis is in the area of pre-press, which can also be called DTP (Desktop Publishing). This means managing corporate documents such as brochures or translating them into several languages, which is our asset thanks to Eurologos that is able to provide fast and reliable service to our clients in all languages.

Littera Graphis is not essential to all Eurologos offices. It indeed acts like an internal department for Eurologos, which in its positioning (see website), presents all its activities.

We do benefit from the existence of this subsidiary as we are able to canvas the language and graphic design markets separately: often the languages lead to the supports and, at the same

time graphic design leads to multilingualism. At the right time each Eurologos office will be able to decide whether or not it is in their best interest to create a Littera Graphis subsidiary.

Graphic design know-how: orthosyntax and the mastery of visual marketing

Good modern graphic artists must know how to do nearly everything. First study and analyze a project in order to be able to produce an accurate quote (also on the basis of quotes received by the printers). Then they have to be able to use all the latest versions of graphic design software (including the compatibility between PC and Mac). And, lastly, they must enjoy contact with clients in order to become “their” trusted graphic designer.

In order to do so, Eurologos graphic designers must first have overcome their teething problems, which may be summarized as the syndrome or the myth of “all-purpose creativity”, often ignorant of graphic orthosyntax: a fatal disease that is often contracted at school and that prevents us from being precise up to one hundredth of a millimeter (Didot point or pixel). But they must also be cured of the other graphic designer immunity disorder: that of thinking that creativity in addition to being able to do without graphic grammar, can also ignore operational marketing culture.

No, an attractive layout, amazing photo cropping, a well-stylized image can only be accomplished as a result of a very clever mastery of visual and conceptual communication marketing. Not an easy feat! Not to mention the graphic charter, i.e., the client’s corporate identity (its visual aspects, its dominant colors, its typography, its more or less serious style, amusing, commercial, cartoon, etc.), its visual jingles, up to its logotypes and its baselines... all these differentiations must apply to any job that the graphic artist must complete (from the business card through the triptych to the home page).

The profitability of pre-press: the speed of execution and the ability to play with the latest software

After the professional quality of pre-press, it is very natural to end up with the issue of profitability. The latter is totally linked to technical knowledge (playing programs like great pianists play the piano), to the ability specific to a talent that has been cultivated for a long time (stuck to the computer screen oblivious to the surroundings) and the idea that marketing is not a specialty for marketers but is at the basis of all professions: placing the logo or photo on the page depends on marketing considerations and not only on cosmetic ones!

To conclude, good graphic designers need three major skills.

They must, with meticulous precision know how to create a balanced layout, they must have perfect knowledge of graphic design software and be endowed with the imagination able to read the mind of their clients. With the exception of the second item (graphic design software), they must have the same know-how as graphic artists from the 70s and 80s.

Thank you