

Title of Entry: “A New History” Coffee Table Book

Institution: University of Michigan, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA)

Category: 35 - Excellence in Design, Miscellaneous

Individuals to Receive Credit for this Entry:

Brandon Gheen, Multimedia Designer

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Budget & Costs:

The budget for the project was set at a cap of \$25,000 for 1,500 copies. Costs involved in the production of this book included printing, embossing the sleeve in which it was packaged, and sealing it in protective shrink-wrapping. Additional costs included three minor alterations on press and several photos that had to be purchased from the University of Michigan Photo Services. Not including proof and press time, the creation of this piece took less than three weeks, and no freelancers or consultants were hired. The total financial cost for the project was just under \$20,000.

It's rare that LSA Development, Marketing & Communications (DMC) works on such elaborate pieces, but the significant budget was allotted to this project to create a lengthy (100-page) book with significant, meaningful content and nostalgic value.

Project Staff:

LSA DMC is an integrated development, marketing, and student recruitment office that addresses advancement opportunities for the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts at the University of Michigan. Each of the staff mentioned below is employed by DMC.

Evan Hansen, Director of Marketing & Communications, developed the concept, provided project management and oversight, wrote all of the copy in the book, took several of the photographs, and collaborated with Multimedia Designer Brandon Gheen on creative direction. Mr. Gheen designed the New History “logo” that was used on all the materials related to this piece, designed all components of the piece, and worked with print representatives on other production work – e.g., folds, embossing, et cetera.

Results, Effectiveness:

LSA DMC attempts to assign clear objectives to every project and task in which it engages. Developing effective metrics by which to analyze the direct emotional or

secondary fundraising impact of this book proved difficult, especially since this is a thank you gift rather than targeted fundraising or recruitment collateral with clear, finite numerical goals. However, it is clear that the final product created an emotional, nostalgic sentiment with its audience and that it met all design objectives. Alumni, LSA staff, and the Dean were all pleased with the end result.

Design Objective: Commemorate the end of a \$350 million fundraising campaign and thank donors with a memento that would have a long shelf life

- By focusing on how LSA has grown throughout time, DMC was able to position the campaign as a transformative event in that history (hence the title of the book and the event at which the book debuted, “A New History”), creating a sense of pride in the way in which the recipients participated in shaping that new history.
- *Too many dates or too much* commemorative text would have turned the book into a pure memento. By focusing on actual historical events, the book serves as a genuine coffee table or decorative historical text that can be of interest for years to come both to the donors and to any alumni friends.
- The Dean received several unsolicited emails from event attendees that commented exclusively and specifically about how much fun the book was and that it was “a fantastic trip down memory lane.”

Design Objective: Juxtapose the old and the new

- The theme for the campaign finale and for this book, “A New History,” aimed to look back at the campaign in a way that would inspire a future-forward view. Oftentimes, campaign finales simply signal the end of the campaign; DMC wanted to signal the beginning of a new direction for the College. The use of both classic and modern design elements is the visual cue to match the text.

Design Objective: Tell a story through photos and words that conveys many of the College’s most transformative moments throughout history to those who care about that history the most.

- The final piece provides a comprehensive historical look at LSA in several key areas that all its former students remember, with each section generally culminating in the transformative impact of the capital campaign to which these alumni contributed.

Design Objective: Be elegant enough that alumni would be proud to display the book on a coffee table, sideboard, or other piece of furniture on their homes

- Obviously, DMC cannot count the number of homes in which this book is prominently displayed, but already several fundraisers have anecdotally reported seeing the book on display in people’s homes on visits or during events that have taken place since the campaign finale.
- The embossing and the 2-color approach were very carefully chosen in lieu of a 4-color piece with the intent of minimizing the view of this piece as a “brochure” and maximizing its impact as an interesting historical text for donors’ *alma mater*.