MAY 2007

PLACEMENT

brief

let's get it On! | MEDIA GROUP

My Placement took place between May 01 to May 25 2007 for 4 weeks at Brief 8 in Lymington, which is part of the Let's get it On! Media Group. Brief 8 offer design, web, photography, film, TV, music, PR and marketing for all types of business regardless of size. Other companies within their group handle IT support and online local information magazines. The company employs 4 people who work on a variety of different jobs plus Jan the boss who deals with clients and commissions the briefs. One of these employees worked off site gathering local information for the Lymington dot com site, one handled the accounts for the group and the other two worked on internal briefs.

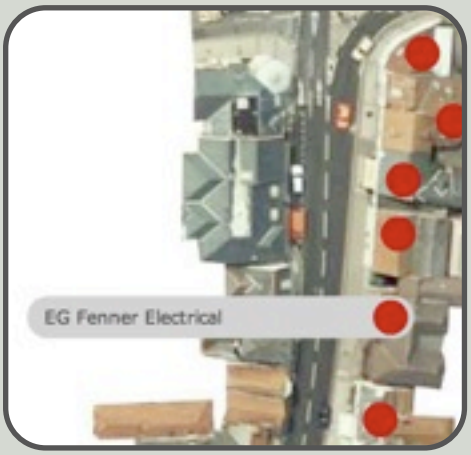
The company has a wide range of clients and has worked with the more well known like the BBC, ITV, Westover Hall Hotel and Chewton Glen to the smaller local businesses in the Lymington area like their own Lymington dot com online magazine website. Due to all these well known clients their website brings in more work for the team. The design of the site is well planned out, with what they offer along the bottom through links to related

information that you would need to know. You also get all the corporate stuff in a little link at the bottom of the site, being part of the Lets Get it On Media group and outside links to other work they do, not forgetting the all important contact details in an easy to reach place. In my mind the website works very well and is designed using Macromedia-Adobe Flash, it gives it a clean and crisp look.

On the first day I was introduced to everyone, shown around, undertook a health & safety risk assessment and completed the required forms. The workplace had about 5 computers and all the cables were nicely boxed in on the walls so that there was nothing to trip up on. There was also a separate room for where the snacks and tea was kept along with the fax machine, but the sink was on its own, not putting electrical equipment at risk.

During my time at Brief 8 I worked on a number of briefs however they were mainly design and web based. One of the first things I did was a little sample clip music player, with just play, pause and stop buttons for a website called St George's Day.com. It was so you could just listen to a thirty second clip of the song the website was offering to download for a small fee. So the way I went about this was to design a simple flash player in Macromedia-Adobe Flash, the brief was that it had to be red and white to tie into with the website as this was the main colour scheme. I also did other little bits for the St George's Day website such as buttons.

I also learnt about some basic CSS whilst I was there as I did not know how to use it in websites before I started at Brief 8, they said just experiment with it in a Dreamweaver document and get used to writing it, similar to HTML. Through doing this I figured out how to hack edit my weblogs with a little help from a Firefox plugin called Firebug. I was introduced to this nifty plugin as it displays and allows you to edit any live website locally on your machine, so you can easily manipulate the code that the website is made of. This helped me understand a lot about how CSS and other things work on websites.



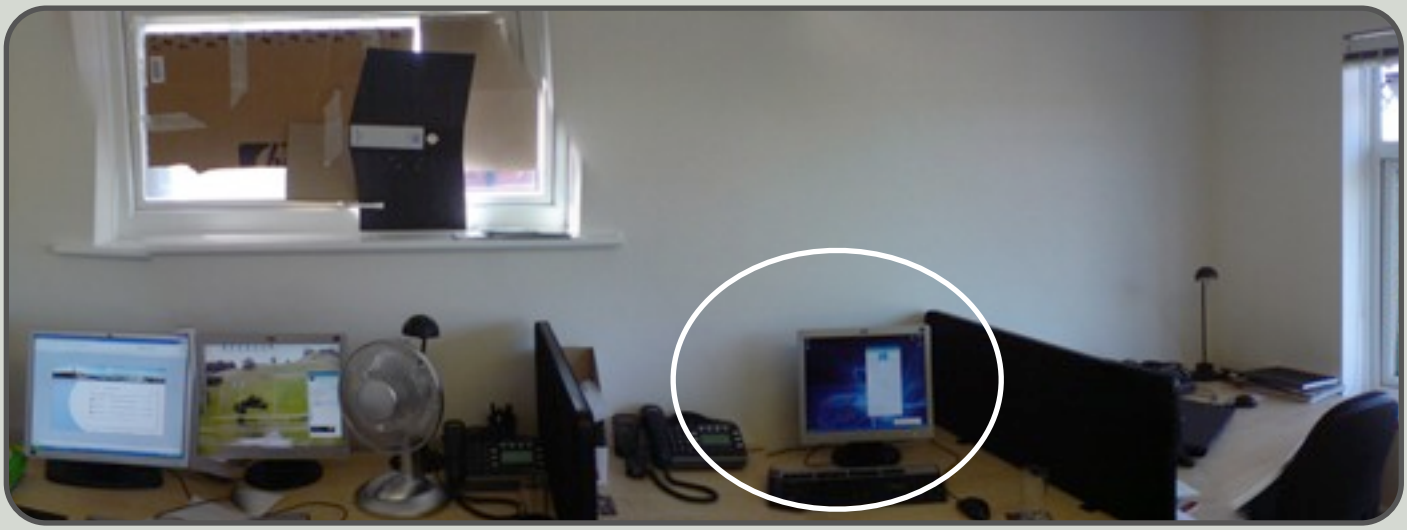
Towards the end of my time at Brief 8, in the last week I was asked to design a map of Lymington high street with shop and market day information to go on the Lymington dot com website. I decided to do a Macromedia-Adobe Flash based design with an arial view with maps and

photos so any user could find where things are, I also put in links on locations of businesses to their websites.

During my time there I came across the issue of copyright in connection with using images from the internet, and Jan told me to use stock images. Stock images are free to use images that you can get from certain websites, CD's and DVD's. It was pointed out to me the issue of publishing photos of people, especially children on the internet as you don't always have permission and or even know them. This also applies when there was a photo of a book launch in a book shop and all the other books in the background had to be blurred. If permission is not given for the publication of any image it will be necessary to obscure the detail.

During my placement it has helped me find my weaknesses & strengths in work and I am now more confident because of it. So my weaknesses are mainly code based in website construction, in particularly CSS, however my skills have now improved over the summer. I am also not so good at answering the phone in a place I don't know but that got better as the weeks went on. So my strengths are punctuality, working well doing what was asked of me, communicating well with the team and bringing my design skills to the team. I would say I also worked well in the team at Brief 8 and after my time there I still want to work in the web design industry and specialize when I finish my course. I enjoy just experimenting in my spare time on my Mac Book Pro.

When I finished my placement I had hoped the company may have been able to offer me some more work, although they did say they were not really in a position to pay a further wage. Although I stayed in touch nothing permanent has been offered as yet.



My Diary for the days I worked

May Tuesday 01 - I was nervous as it was my first day and I had not met the rest of the team. I also found out where I would be working, I have marked it on the image above. The first thing I did was design a little music player, just little bits for the St George's Day website, which I did during my first week mainly.

May Wednesday 02 - I was asked to design a set of red buttons for the shop section of the St George's Day website.

May Thursday 03 - I was asked to redesign for a client that Jan had just secured, it was for the main identity logo of the Stanwell House Hotel in Lymington.

May Monday 07 - I was asked to redesign a section of Brief 8's sister company 'on-places' website, it is an online magazine. Jan wanted me to design it to look professional to fall into line with the New Milton dot com site as this is the look he wanted to use on all 'on-places' websites. The main banner at the top of the websites is what he was focusing on. Images can be found at the end of this essay and through out. So I just started designing banners for the web page to start with.

May Tuesday 08 - I then started to plan out the layout of the webpage, looking for relevant images on stock image websites on the internet.

May Wednesday 09 - After finding a layout that worked I had some help building the actual webpage as they used CSS to construct webpages at Brief 8, as I am not familiar with this type of code.

May Monday 14 - I was asked to design a new website that would be called Buzios, this site would be a combination of different content management system's (CMS's), and there had to be a calendar, photo upload and to view plus an area to post news. This website was for a sailing boat called Buzios that Jan's friends and family could use and

leave information about their time on the boat and when they use it. The first thing I did was to start looking for the right type of font to go into the design and images to use.

May Tuesday 15 - I started searching on google for open source content management system's (CMS's) for each section of the site I was working on yesterday, as these are normally free.

May Wednesday 16 - I came up with a design and showed Jan my ideas for the Buzios website and CMS's.

May Friday 18 - I was asked to design and build a map of Lymington high street with the positions of the shops and market stalls to go onto the Lymington dot com website. The first thing I did was to use Adobe Illustrator to draw out the high street with all the different roads coming of it.

May Monday 21 - I showed Jan what I had so far, I then started to draw the shops on as squares. But it didn't look right and I had not left enough space for the market stalls. Time for plan B.

May Tuesday 22 - I had an idea to use google earth aerial shots into my design. So I cut out and pasted into my Illustrator document and tried it that way. That didn't work in Illustrator but gave me an idea of how it could work.

May Wednesday 23 - I took the aerial shots and decided to make an interactive map designed and built with Adobe Macromedia Flash with drag-able content so that it could be a set size.

May Friday 25 - Today was my last day and I had to show Jan my final design of the Lymington map I had come up with, he liked it a lot. I said good bye to everyone and thanked them all for the experience.

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NEWS IMAGES CALENDAR

Conclusion

I enjoyed myself very much during my time at Brief 8 and feel I had learnt the value of a hands on experience and its importance. I think one of the reasons that I enjoyed it was that I got on very well with all the people as they were nice and friendly, it taught me a lot about working as part of a team. I didn't just work on my own all the time, I worked with other people some times which I think has benefited me a lot.

I also enjoyed learning about the content management system work in particular as it was interesting on how simple it was to set up, and I had not understood the term before properly. So that was a great learning experience along with the CSS work I learnt about as well, as this was another aspect that I didn't understand fully but unlike CMS I had heard about CSS and new a little on what it does already. From the work I did on CMS and CSS I now have my own blogging system on my own website which has some webpages using CSS to help display the layout of them. Therefor what I learnt I have practiced and has enabled me to enhance my own site.

I liked the range of work I was given as it was not always web based. I was also asked to design corporate identity's (logos) and there was also a letter head I was asked to help with, I found that my earlier work I had done at college on a Graphic Design course useful on these projects. It was nice to just help out where I could on other tasks I was set some of the time.

As Brief 8 were not in a position to offer me any permanent employment I have renewed my efforts to obtain employment to gain more experience. The whole experience of my time at Brief 8 has increased my enthusiasm to specialise in web design or a related industry when I graduate.