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# TEACHING BY STORYTELLING

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**Teaching by Storydoing**

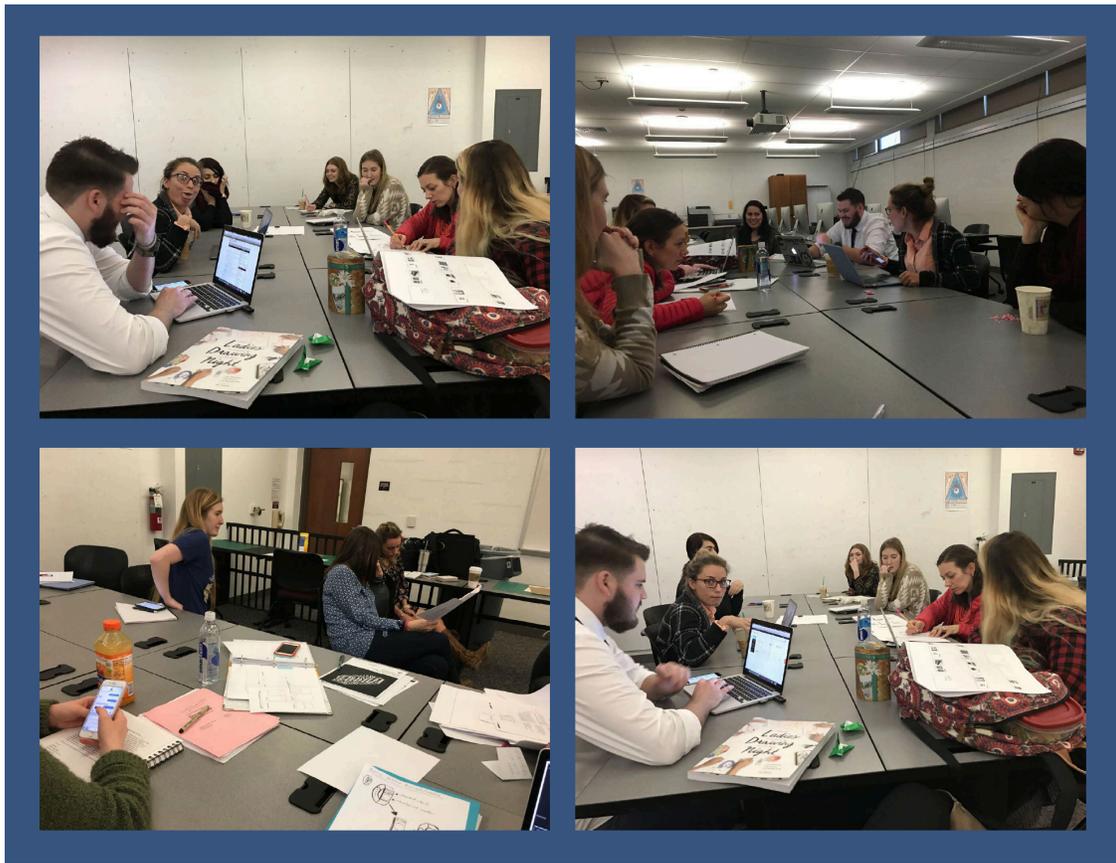
**Synopsis:**

The designer of 2015 is solving COMMUNICATION problems.

The designer of 2025 will be solving BUSINESS problems and SOCIAL problems.

The world of advertising has moved beyond a “hard sell” of products, services and organizations. “Storytelling” was once the way a brand, nonprofit organization, or candidate set itself apart from competitors. Top advertising agencies would craft elaborate stories that would make consumers fall in love, get angry, laugh themselves to tears, or break their hearts, all in the name of a brand. It worked. It was effective. But consumers are no longer passive audiences - they want to be part of the narrative. What a brand DOES is more important to consumers than self-serving messages.

This shift requires design educators to evolve from teaching brand communication (static ads or moving – in both senses – images), to teaching creative problem-solving and business-building.



**Fig. 1: deciding on a problem**

Students and professor work together to choose a problem to solve.

## Teaching by Storydoing

By Summer Doll-Myers and Ann Lemon

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania Communication Design

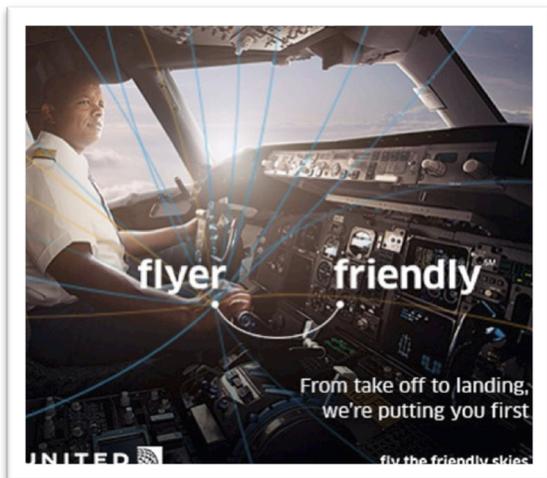
### INTRODUCTION

**Today, advertising does not build the whole story of a brand**

“Ask CEOs whether their company's products are differentiated, and 80 percent will say yes; in stark contrast, just 10 percent of customers agree.” (Ryan)

In today’s hyper-connected world, the most engaging, carefully constructed communication can be quickly undone in the “real world” by a bad Yelp review, or an embarrassing customer service failure. One has to look no further than the United Airlines “brand promise” of “Friendly Skies,” (Fig. 2) in unfortunate juxtaposition with the actual treatment of customer Dr. David Dao, who was forcibly dragged from his seat and beaten in an attempt to confiscate his seat on an overbooked flight. The resulting PR nightmare for United is ongoing (Fig.3).

Advertising can only confirm what consumers already know to be true about a brand.



**Fig. 2: Brand story**

Image: mcgarrybowen,  
United campaign re-launch 2013.



**Fig. 3: Brand reality**

Photo: Joshua Lott / Getty / AP Images.  
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The new challenge in brand communication is no longer crafting stories, but creating change itself: “Storydoing” vs. “Storytelling”. Believe it or not, today’s Fortune 500 companies often turn to consultants, including their ad agencies, to understand what customers believe about

the brand, need and want – and to develop new ways of ACTING to meet those customer wants and needs.

“In an age where just communicating your brand isn’t enough...businesses need to think about brand building from the bottom up.” –Danielle Tiedt, CMO, YOUTUBE.

Consumers are overwhelmed with problems, and *telling* them about solutions isn’t enough. Whiter teeth – lower insurance premiums – better customer service – all these advertising claims become a blur unless they are “lived”, or passed on by a trusted friend as news.

Agencies, and the creatives who work in them, are now expected to help their clients “do”. How? By using creative problem-solving to make, do or invent something that attracts attention, causes action, creates an emotional response, and generates talk and free media exposure. Find a problem; answer it. Forget about shooting a lovely print ad!

An early example is the development of the Nike + app and sensor (Fig. 4) by the advertising agency R/GA. Charged with uncovering a true customer benefit and communicating it, after much research, the agency proposed, not an ad campaign, but a new product enhancement – a sensor and corresponding app that would track steps, miles, and other fitness data from the wearer’s shoe (this preceded Fitbits and Apple Watch by a decade). Instead of a flashy commercial starring the feats of Michael Jordan, Nike innovated by offering the customer a truly useful tool, and let word-of-mouth spread the news (of course, they also introduced the new product with a series of ads).



**Fig. 4: Nike+ shoe insert, show, and app logo**

Image: R/GA

Other agencies including Crispin Porter + Bogusky also have changed their process. Creative director and innovator Alex Bogusky required his creative teams to present each advertising idea in the form of a Press Release – rather than doing an ad (which interrupts the news), they

were charged with creating something hilarious, fascinating or useful (Which IS the news). Teams responded with ideas like “The Whopper Sacrifice,” where Facebook users were asked to “unfriend” 10 people and receive a free Whopper in return (“Who would you sacrifice for a Whopper?”) and the “Whopper Freakout” (Figure 5) – both of which made national news, as well as spreading like wildfire virally.



**Fig. 5: “Whopper Freakout” video**

Image: Crispin Porter + Bogusky

“The premise of the “Whopper Freakout” campaign is as enchanting as it is perverse: Burger King employees claim corporate overlords have stricken the belly buster from the menu one day so Academy Award-nominated director Henry-Alex Rubin (*Murderball*) can document fast food junkies twitching and spewing when they find they can't have it their way. Day two of the experiment saw competitors' sandwiches replace the Whopper and again, hungry fans got riled up and professed their love, before the King himself appeared to make things right. The results of the big BK joke contributed to an eight-minute webfilm full of brand evangelism, focus group-y responses (“Level of 1-10, how pissed would you say you were...?”), bewilderment and good old fashioned hunger-induced American crankiness. Customers storm back to the counter demanding their beloved Whoppers when they realize they've been served Big Macs or Wendy's burgers, only to have the counter attendants remind them that BK doesn't serve “fried” burgers. Other more wistful BK-goers give folksy Whopper-tinged anecdotes about family bonding and passage into manhood.” (AdAge)

“Don't make an ad,” Bogusky charged. “Make a thing, and then make an ad about the thing.” (Maravilla) What he means by that, is that an agency's job is now to “make a thing” – to invent, build, say, or stage something that will *create news* in order to compete for attention against every form of content – editorial, advertising, and otherwise – in the entire world, online and off, at any given moment. A tall order - and one that is not usually solved by, for example, a newspaper ad.

## CHANGING EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

### How do we teach these out-of-the-box thinking skills to undergraduate art majors?

This way of working opens up possibilities for teaching design thinking, teamwork, and collaborative problem-solving in new ways.

At Kutztown University, our Communication Design seniors are prepared with the typical graphic design classes in all the fundamentals – design principles, digital skills, typography, image-making, branding, page design, strategy, and so forth. They have taken introductory advertising design classes to learn about research, target market and competitive analysis, developing unique product insights and creative strategy, practice copywriting and art direction, motion design, storytelling, sequential imagery, and even digital marketing and social media advertising. In other words, they know how to come up with a “selling” idea, and create interesting and compelling ads to tell the story (Fig. 6). They are practiced storytellers.



**Fig. 6: Traditional ad campaign**

Image: Award winning subway poster ads created by student Ciara Sweeney are an example of a traditional “storytelling” style

But in their senior year, we began to ask students to take all they have learned and forget it temporarily – to instead focus on inventing something that actually SOLVES A PROBLEM.

*Storydoing* has now become our method in several advertising design courses. Students are challenged to come up with a social or business problem and then...solve it. This approach requires a great deal of creative thinking and research, in addition to all the usual communication techniques of strategy, design, writing, and media selection.

It takes a while for students to get used to this thinking, but once they catch on, solutions start pouring out.

### **The assignments**

In years past, our 8-week senior level course entitled “Senior Seminar: Nonprofit/Corporate Advertising” required students to create a multi-media campaign for a corporation, usually consisting of a combination of traditional media such as print ads, television commercials, direct mail, etc. The results were interesting, and often focused on an aspect of corporate “do-gooderism,” launches of new products, an employee program, etc.

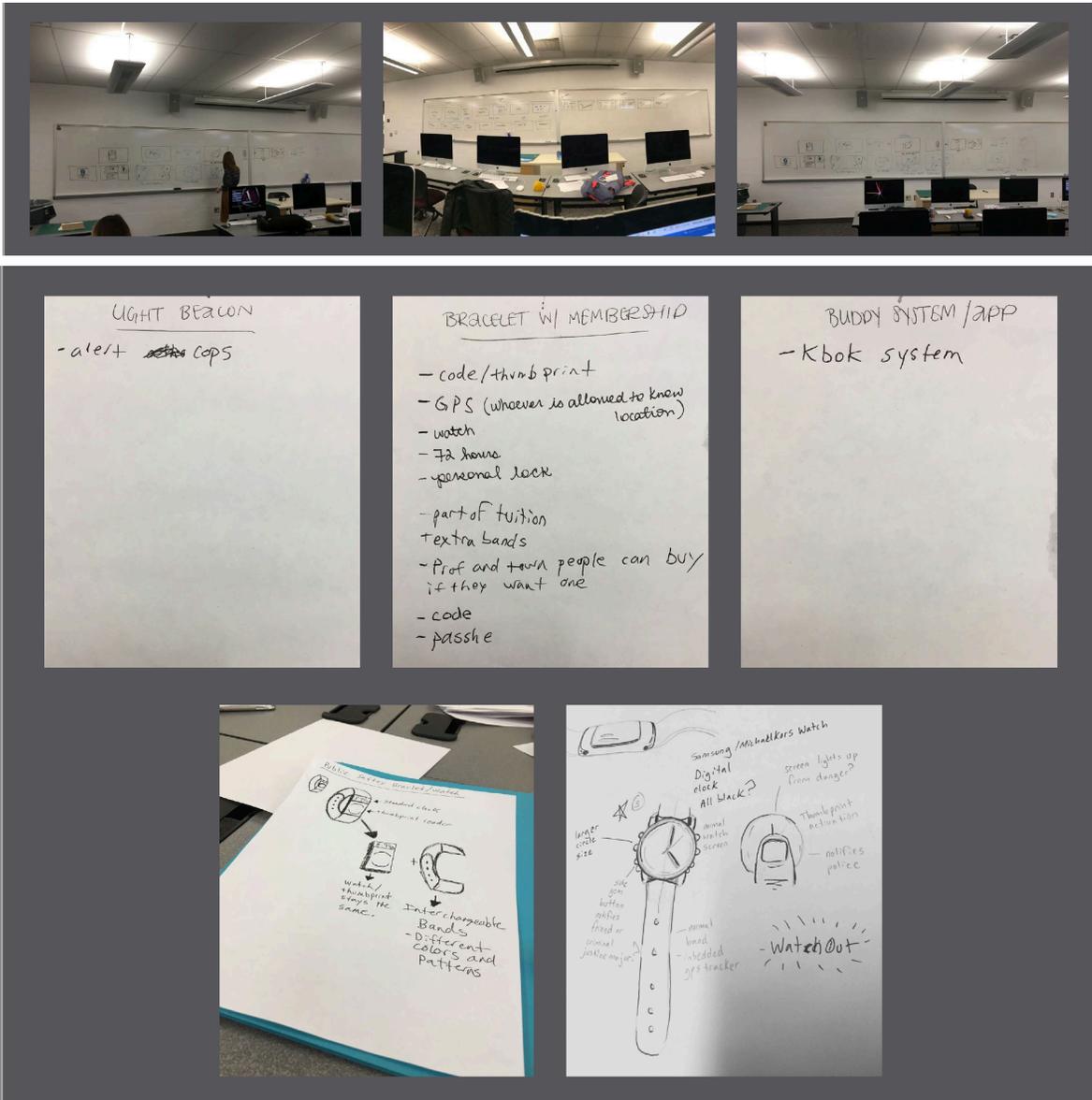
But, in response to the new media environment, increased transparency and a large amount of skepticism about the claims of corporations, this approach started to feel outdated.

The new assignment is focused on *Corporate Change* (storydoing, not story telling).

The process for this project , 4 weeks long from start to finish, was:

1. In teams of two, find a Fortune 500 Company
2. Identify or define problems with the company (Fig. 7)
  - a. What do people not like about it?
  - b. What is it lacking?
  - c. How could it be more helpful?
  - d. How could it repair any damage it has done?
  - e. How could it be a better corporate citizen and make the world better?
  - f. What technology does it have that can help problems of others?
3. Find a way to FIX THE PROBLEM, by creating a list of 10 solutions (in an elevator pitch format) to share with the class (Fig. 8)
  - a. Could it invent a new product, technology or app?
  - b. Could it offer a more helpful service to customers?
  - c. Could it define the company mission and take some action?
  - d. Could it contribute to a social cause?
4. Chose 1. Write a press release that will announce this new solution to the world. (Fig. 9)
5. Convert the press release to a script/storyboard that explains the problem and shows your solution. No more than 2 minutes.

6. Consider other ways to announce the solution – this could incorporate traditional or social media, press coverage, a launch party, an event, or some other means of attracting attention.
7. Create any materials you will need for case study video (program name, product mockups, illustrations, diagrams, etc.)
8. Shoot/ animate/ compile stills using iMovie, premier, or AfterEffects.
9. Record voiceover from written script and find royalty-free music and sound effects for audio.
10. Upload final edit of video to Vimeo.
11. Present final case studio video to class.



**Fig. 7-8: Brainstorming solutions to a campus safety problem.**

Images: Summer Doll Myers



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
*John Deere turns pressure from angered farmers into an innovative software launch that is unmatched by competitors.*

**MOLINE, ILLINOIS- March 20, 2017-** The first day of spring brings a large workload for farmers around the country. Many John Deere customers angered by the 2015 corporate release that John Deere would not allow any farmer to own his/her tractor due to legal limitations of their software, have since turned to competitors for better results. Independent farm owners can breathe a sigh of relief as John Deere announces it's new software upgrade, and a team of technicians to go with.

The software release will take place on March 24, 2017 when John Deere locations across the US will allow farmers to take a short Q&A about their tractor, and sign up for the new software package. The package will include an updated software system equipped with a "Call" button that will allow the farmer to call their technician and get immediate customer service, in addition to a technician on site within a 48-hour time frame. John Deere has added the technician service known as the "Deere Gang" which is unmatched in the market for farm equipment customer service. Each farmer will be assigned a "Deere" that installs the computer system (which includes a lifetime warranty), and will be responsible for the maintenance on the software per the farmers' request.

"We heard our customers loud and clear, and they wanted their independence back," said John Deere's CEO Samuel R. Allen. "This new software system allows farmers to legally own their tractors, without infringing on software piracy issues. That's where the Deere Gang comes in; they will be specialized in the programming and installation of our new system. We have created thousands of new jobs and hope to raise revenue exponentially with the release of the software package. We'll be providing innovation and customer service unlike anything our market has ever seen."

To increase consumer attention and interest, John Deere will be creating specialized vehicles for the Deere Gang to drive that will be well equipped with antlers, John Deere green, and large yellow letters headlining "Deere Gang: At Your Service". John Deere's marketing departments will trend #DeereGang across social media and promotion through printed and commercial advertising to increase awareness to farmers across the country. "Allen always used to tell me, 'if there's a will, there's a way,' and we received the will through angry letters from farmers for a full year," said Ken Golden, John Deere's Director of Marketing and Public Relations. "Now that we have a way, there's no better way than the John Deere way."

**About John Deere**

John Deere is one of the world's leading corporate companies in farm equipment. Beginning in 1837 when blacksmith John Deere fashioned a steel-plow to aid in farm work, since has been the upheld value that John Deere products would be constantly changing and adapting to meet the needs of the farming business. John Deere has since grown into a worldwide company with store locations throughout the United States, and headquarters and divisions in Europe, Central and South America, and Asia. While prided on "the big green tractor," John Deere also offers residential products, agriculture equipment, construction machinery, clothing, and promotional products. John Deere has been ranked 97<sup>th</sup> in America's Fortune 500 ranking, and 364<sup>th</sup> in the Global ranking. For more information, please visit [www.deere.com](http://www.deere.com)

**Media Contact:**

Ken Golden  
John Deere Director of Marketing, PR  
217-892-7456 ext. 3699  
[Golden.Ken@deere.com](mailto:Golden.Ken@deere.com)

**Fig. 9: Writing a press release helps to clarify whether the idea is newsworthy.**  
Image: Megan Witt

## **THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN EXCITING.**

Student Adam Noone came up with this useful invention that would be hypothetically created in collaboration with Polar USA (maker of fitness watches) and Google. Name “Peripheral” (Fig. 10) it consists of a watch-like wristband for the child, and a paired app for the parent’s phone, as a solution for busy parents to enable more free-roaming outdoor play. “Peripheral is the best way to keep an eye on your children while multitasking. Using GPS technology, Peripheral allows you to track the locations of your children while allowing them freedom to play.”

One of the most difficult things for college students to do is to imagine the wants and needs of people that are different in age, life stage, gender, privilege, etc. For some reason, approaching assignments as problems in search of solution rather than “ads” helps broaden their perspective and enable more interesting solutions. For this project, not only did Adam design an interesting app, he developed a distinctive logo and look for the video and the product itself.



**Fig. 10: “Peripheral” app launch video.**

Image: Adam Noone

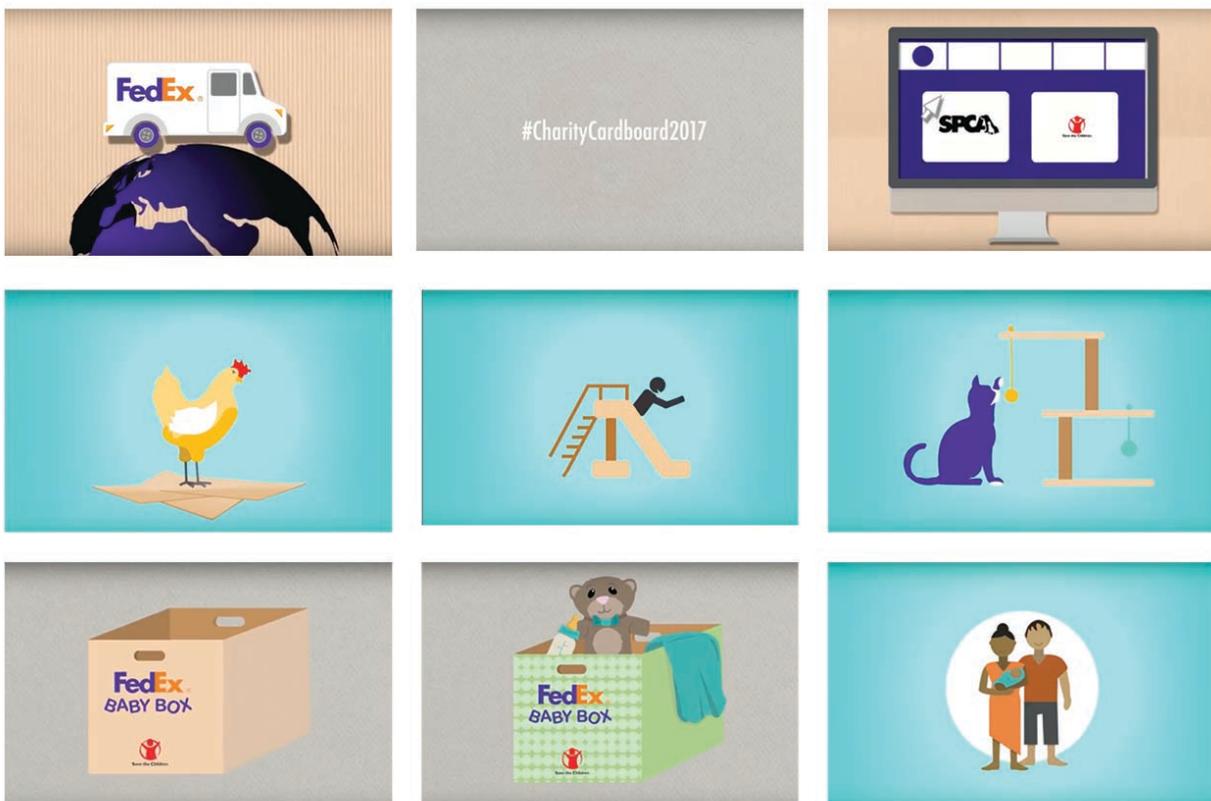
Winner, Graphis New Talent Annual: Gold (2017)

See the full video at <https://vimeo.com/163949664>

The next example of story-doing is a “passion project” for Fed-Ex, that focuses on the company's missions to find ways to help better our world (and to overcome a major corporate PR problem: wasted cardboard boxes). In this clever solution, Fed-Ex would partnered with multiple other cause-driven companies to support everything from pets in need of rescue, to struggling parents who need baby supplies, all while simultaneously recycling boxes.

Once they identified the problem (cardboard waste) the students quickly thought of many possible solutions. The breakthrough came when they realized that FedEx could offer their resources to back ALL the charities rather than narrowing the solution to one particular cause.

For this video, the students told their story in a cut-paper, stop-motion style of animation.



**Fig. 11: “Fedex Charity Cardboard” commercial**

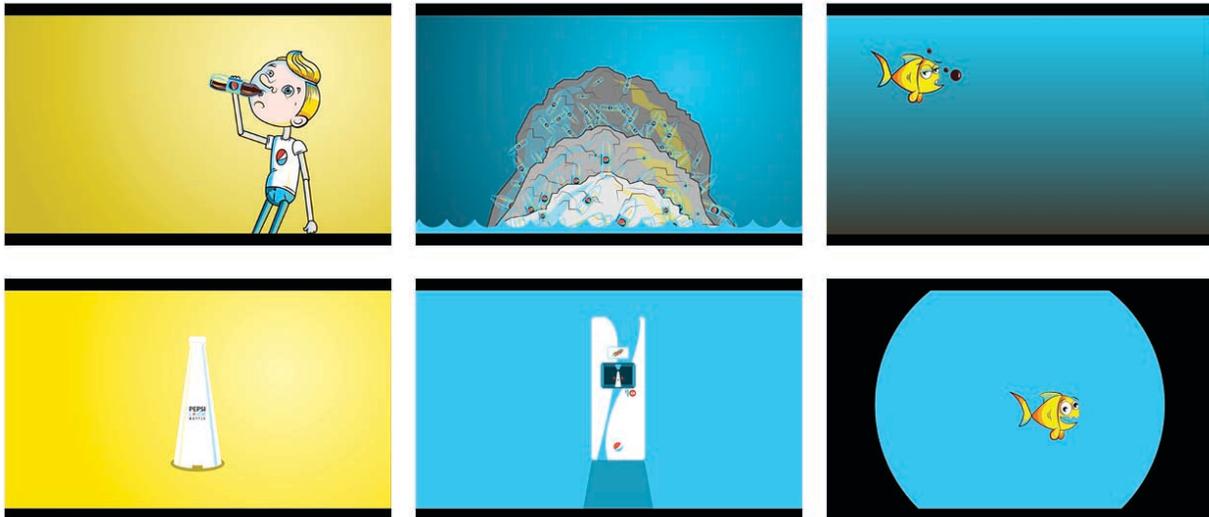
Image: Vicki Norman and Becky Macdonald

Winner of Graphis New Talent Annual: Gold (2017)

See the full video at <https://vimeo.com/193377868>

Another student solution that deals with postconsumer waste in a clever and practical way was “The Pepsi Lock Bottle” (Fig. 12). This reusable, refillable bottle was invented by seniors Phil Gemmell and Shannon Cowie.

The bottom of each bottle would feature a beveled Pepsi logo that acts as a key, which unlocks paired vending machines. When unlocked, the machine vends a premeasured serving and enables customers to mix their own flavors. This simple invention could let Pepsi start a major trend, be a better corporate citizen, and reduce global plastic waste.



**Fig. 11 Pepsi Lockbottle**

Image: Phil Gemmel and Shannon Cowie

Winner of Graphis New Talent Annual: Gold (2017)

See the full video at <https://vimeo.com/205316950>

Increasingly, companies are investing in publicizing their corporate social responsibility work for charitable causes. But some students chose to take on a purely nonprofit organization or social cause rather than a corporate message. The problem-solving approach could be applied in creating messages for government organizations, social media posts for nonprofits, or public service announcements from media organizations.

One team took on the current debate over vaccinations. “Get Factsinated” takes a neutral approach to the vaccination question by acting as an informative campaign. This infographic video presents facts and situations suggesting what happens when people vaccinate, as well as what happens when they don't.



**Fig. 12: “Get Factsinated”**

Image: Pat Coyle

Winner of Graphis New Talent Annual: Gold (2017)

See the full video at <https://vimeo.com/193396960>

**Taking on a large project in a large group:**

For our first attempt at using the Storydoing process, we had students pair off in teams of two, but were surprised by their willingness to work together as one large group and the productivity of shared brainstorming sessions (as would happen in a studio or Charette situation).

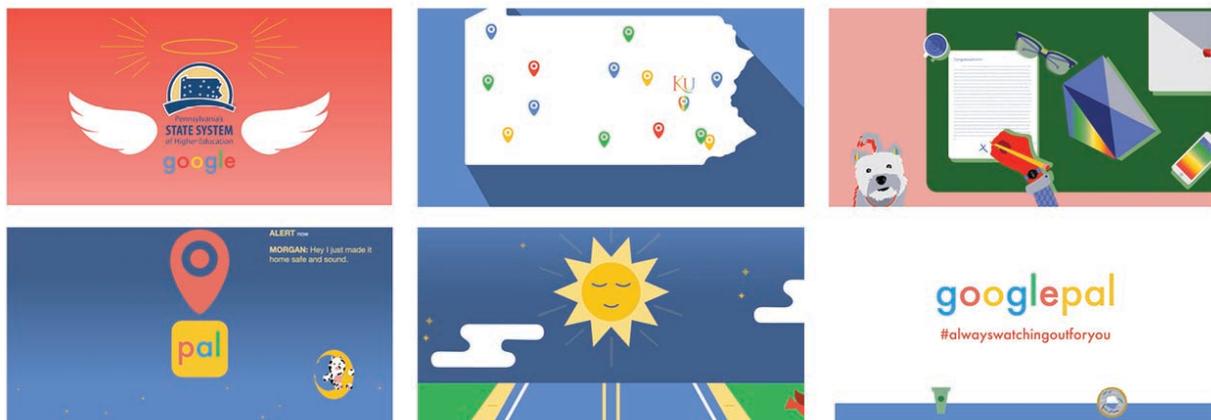
So, for another course section that had an unusually close group, and a small class size of seven students, the group discussed various problems and options and chose to work together as one large cohesive team.

As always, the problem for team projects is twofold – a) scheduling time for group work and b) figuring out how to assess the students as a team. The first obstacle was solved by accomplishing most of the planning and ideation time during class studio hours, as well as delegating out-of-class tasks and communicating via a class Facebook page. Tasks were divided according to students talents and interests, and the final project received both individual and team points.

Maria Scileppi is the Director of 72U, the Los Angeles advertising agency 72andSunny’s creative residency program. “72U is a 12-week program designed to take participants to the next level creatively and professionally while making things that matter in culture.” Speaking at the 2016 OneClub Education Summit, Scileppi identified the two most important qualities for creative employees: rapid problem-solving and the ability to work as part of a team.

The seven-person collaboration in class is an accurate replica of a real-world project team. The problem the students settled on solving also meets the 72U goal of “making things that matter in culture.” The tech-based solution is based on one class member’s actual experience of calling the campus police when confronted with a late-night walk home alone, and hearing that the police can’t do anything to protect pedestrians.

Their script reads “Students walking home alone or to their car at night should not feel endangered. If you have ever felt threatened, or experienced a twisting feeling in your gut on your nightly walk home, your solution is GooglePal. This campaign partners the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education with Google to introduce a student safety watch at college campuses throughout Pennsylvania. The watch ensures students get home feeling secure and unharmed.”



**Fig. 13: “GooglePal”**

Image: Ciara Sweeney

Illustrations by: Ciara Sweeney, Alexis Manduke, Brandon Cody, Taylor Kreamer, Luda Ronky, Alyssa Tooley and Morgan Mahoney

Animation by: Ciara Sweeney and Luda Ronky

See the full video at <https://vimeo.com/214732276>

## **AN UNCONVENTIONAL COMPETITION – AND UNCONVENTIONAL SOLUTIONS**

In January 2017, a new advertising competition for students (snarkily named “the Young Shits Awards”) was launched (see [youngshits.com](http://youngshits.com)). Each month, a young creative at a prominent agency creates an assignment, posts a brief online, and judges the entries, due the following month.

The fast-paced turnaround mimics the pace of a real agency assignment, and the prize is an interview and mentoring session with the judge(s). One first prize (face to face interview) and two runner-ups (online mentoring and portfolio review) are chosen each. In June 2017, on our first try at entering the competition, two Kutztown students nailed the second place prizes.

The competition brief itself is evidence of the shift towards “storydoing”: the assignment was to “create an anti-Muslim-Ban activation based around a product innovation.” In advertising lingo, this means “Invent a new product that will motivate a person to take action against, or raise attention about, the Trump administration’s Muslim Ban.”

The brief further explained:

“Choose any type product you want. It can be a cologne, item of clothing, an app—whatever makes sense. Just put an interesting, creative spin on it. You can also approach the functionality of the product any way you want—it could be designed specifically for use by people affected by the ban, or simply make the point that it’s unjust. Obviously, we don’t expect you to create the product yourself (though you can, if you’re able), especially if it’s complicated. Just show us:

- A detailed write-up of what it is and how it works
- Some images that show us what it looks like
- An example or two of how you would promote it (e.g. a short video, posters, a mock-up of a website, etc.”

In past eras, a competition to raise awareness about a social issue or cause would likely have asked students to create a poster, a television commercial, or a newspaper ad. Today, the goal is to create a product that is so newsworthy it becomes a viral sensation.

We took on the competition in our second semester Intro to Advertising Design class (3<sup>rd</sup> year students), coaching students through this somewhat challenging brief. Our process was:

1. Discuss and see examples of brand activation products and innovations.
2. Divide into teams. Student teams researched and presented information on
  - a. The competition and previous winners.
  - b. The actual wording of the Muslim Ban.
  - c. Articles and statistics about the effect of the ban, including effects on families, on society, on immigrants, on non-Muslims, and on travelers.
  - d. Muslim contributions to the United States economy, society, history, etc..

3. As a class, we made a large brainstorming sheet full of reasons to oppose the ban, from emotional appeals like “it divides up parents and children” to factual arguments like “1 out of 7 doctors in America are Muslim.”
4. With a partner, students came up with 3 specific reasons to oppose the Ban.
5. Using those reasons, each team developed 10 ideas for products, described in a sentence or two.
6. Students presented ideas to another team and to professor and narrowed to best 3.
7. Students wrote more detailed descriptions and did sketches of 3 ideas.
8. The single best idea from each student was selected.
9. A full description and finished rendering of product was done.
10. Students then sketched 10 thumbnails of ways to promote their new products.
11. The best advertising ideas were also rendered as finished mockups.

The two winning entries are shown below.

“The M-Ban Sneaker” was developed by Leo Zelino. Leo focused on the inconvenience the Ban places on airport travelers – whether they are Muslim or not. When the ban was enacted, people ended up spending hours in long lines in Customs and Immigration at airports worldwide (Reuters). Leo’s solution was to design a sneaker especially for unpredictable international traveling. The “M-Ban” sneaker contains an expandable, lightweight folding blanket made of micro-thin cloth for sleeping in airports. It has extra cushioning for standing in long lines. It even contains a sample of 100% United States dirt in the sole so you are technically “never off of American soil. “



**Introducing the M-Ban Sneakers**  
 Designed to make things easier for Muslims that have been banned from entering the United States.  
 Target Demographic 20 - 40 years old.  
 Advertised during sporting events and billboards near Airports. Sports and Health magazines.

**Fig. 14: Sneakers for airports**  
**Image: Leo Zelino**

The other winning entry was the “Doctor Me” kit by Brian Almond. The kit is a parody product meant to illuminate the fact that one out of every seven doctors in the United States is Muslim. This helpful product allows people who may find themselves short of a doctor, due to the immigration Ban, to doctor themselves! Instructions for self-operating, surgical tools, bandages, and even self-administerable anesthetics are included.

One can imagine the coverage by local newscasters as people discover this product on shelves across the country, and the amount of free media the ensuing commentary would earn.

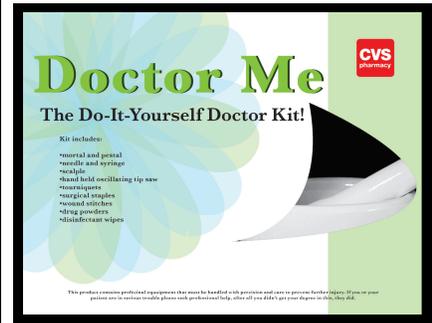
This month’s brief is to create a campaign that encourages “nap positivity” – to change American attitudes towards napping, which has been proven to have many health benefits. We can’t wait to see what the students come up with.

# Doctor Me

The Do-It-Yourself Doctor Kit!



Doctor Me kit comes with everything you need.



Front view of packaging as it would appear.

One in every seven doctors are Muslim, according IntraHealth International. This means 15,000 doctors, or 27.9% of US doctors, are Muslim. If the Ban were to go into effect it would cause a dramatic shift in the number of trained personnel in the medical field. This is why CVS and the American Medical Association (AMA)

have joined together to create “Doctor Me”. “Doctor Me” is a special do-it-yourself medical kit. “Doctor Me” comes with packets of drugs with ingredients listed, along with your very own mortar and pestle, so you can make your own prescriptions and refills. It includes a needle and syringe for shots as well as

scalpel, a hand-held oscillating tip saw, tourniquets, surgical staples, wound stitches, and disinfectant towels, PLUS an adjustable clamp-on mirror, for when you need an emergency operation.

## Fig. 2 D.I.Y. Doctoring Kit

Image: Brian Almond

See the assignment and projects at: <http://www.youngshits.com/>

## **THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

So, how did the students react to this new way of thinking about advertising and media, and new approach to communication solutions?

"The Storydoing project allowed us to try and create something beyond a simple statement or a narrative experience. Deciding upon a problem proved to be more challenging than arriving at a solution." - Andrew Cygan

"Coming up with a problem teaches you to think in ways you wouldn't normally. The simple fact that we are tasked to think about problems outside of our own lives is new. It's hard to put yourself in that mentality but doing that effectively makes for great solutions and strong concepts." - Adam Noone

"The Storydoing project is a twist on what we are familiar with. Instead of building a brand image through traditional ads we had to convey something that would create an action that could potentially generate free media impressions." - Heather Zabroski

"For a concept to encourage action, we as a group needed to list possible reasons a viewer would be willing to participate. Problems, solutions and then benefits to create the overall positive appeal to the brand." Vicki Norman

"Creating a campaign through the act of 'story-doing' vs. storytelling required me to adapt to a completely different creative mindset than I was used to. Identifying a problem to which there are very few solutions is hard as it is; coming up with a solution to said problem is harder, but even more rewarding. I think the key to making a successful campaign is making the audience feel like they're part of the solution too." Patrick Coyle

### **OK, so, fun in the classroom. But does it work "on the job"?**

Anecdotally, as we check in with our graduates who are working in the agency world, we have heard of the following briefs from clients:

- Designer Amanda Schatz at Quaker City Mercantile was recently charged with drawing attention to Hendricks Gin – last year's invention by the brand was a giant, cucumber-shaped blimp that makes appearances at events. The team created Hendrick's playing cards, a picnic-friendly British Gin-delivering Taxi, a Penny Farthing bicycle riding experience, and a program of tastings and special menus at restaurants, which all dovetail with Hendrick's positioning as "an unusual pairing of cucumber and rose."
- Art Director Corinne Bolanos at Vayner Media recently created a social campaign and accompanying TV commercial for the Girl Scouts to reposition the benefits of being a leader.
- Graduates Nate Renninger and Wyatt Glennon recently designed a custom interactive tour for Blue Cadet Interactive that incorporated drone footage, wayfinding materials and a dedicated app for the Bethlehem Steel Stacks historic site.

- Art Director Danielle McShea helped design the name, brand and even a custom copper-tubing bathtub-style bar tap to launch “Taft’s” restaurant in Cincinnati, named for President Howard Taft, who allegedly got stuck in the White house bathtub.

As creative whiz Alex Bogusky writes, “The old rule was to create safe, ordinary products and combine them with mass marketing. The new rule: create truly innovative products and build the marketing right into them. Today, it's within the product itself that a brand has the most leverage with consumers. So where should companies start? They must take their brands back to their foundations and realize that the message is not the product, but that the product is the message.” Students enjoy thinking like inventors, brand-builders, and social entrepreneurs.

“Having a clear and distinctive story is critical in building a brand today. However, there's a distinction to be made between broadcasting your story--storytelling--and living your story, or storydoing. Understanding the difference between the two and making that shift toward the latter is fundamental to building a business.” (Ryan)

We believe that our new way of teaching advertising seminars by using the storydoing approach strengthens their skills in teamwork and problem-solving, raises the conceptual level of the projects, and that our students will be able to use these skills in everything from branding themselves and their own portfolios, to work for paying clients and – who knows? – by “doing” so, they just may change the world!

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