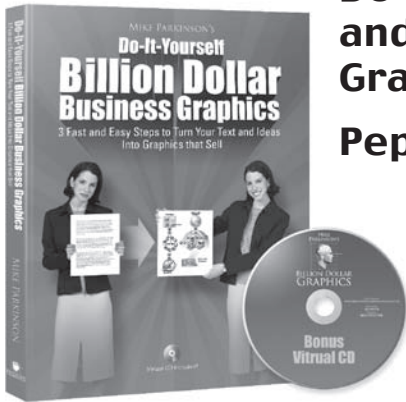


Book Review

Do-It-Yourself Billion Dollar Business Graphics: 3 Fast and Easy Steps to Turn Your Text and Graphics into Graphics that Sell by Mike Parkinson

PepperLip Press, 2007; US \$49.95

by Robert S. Frey



Just released in 2007, Mike Parkinson's handsome hardback book, *Do-It-Yourself Billion Dollar Business Graphics*, provides busy business and technical professionals with a practical and useful hands-on desktop guide to "thinking graphically."

Among the considerable value-added elements is the Primary Objective, Audience, Questions, Subject Matter (P.A.Q.S.) Questionnaire, which can help anyone translate concepts and ideas into compelling, audience-centered graphic images that contribute to telling a fact-based story.

Loaded with full-color designs and illustrations that bring the theoretical foundations of excellent presentation techniques to life, *Billion Dollar Business Graphics* can help you convey your business messages to customers in ways they will respond to enthusiastically (and, ultimately, in ways that influence them to make decisions and take positive action on your organization's behalf).

Well-conceptualized graphics can evoke enthusiasm and emotion in general. In his work, *Seeing Is Believing* (1998), Arthur Berger claims that visual images have the power to generate intense feelings and emotions precisely because they connect with people's beliefs and values. Parkinson certainly agrees, and delineates between surface (*cognitive*) communications conveyed through graphics and subsurface (*emotional*) communications conveyed via the same medium. Think of flags and eagles and the emotional swell of patriotism those images generate.

Advertising understands the power of such visual images, especially in combination with verbal messages. Sandra Moriarty, professor of journalism and mass communication at the University of Colorado-Boulder, asserts that visual and verbal communication modes are *interdependent*. Visual communication

may be different from language-based communication, but Professor Moriarty contends that both are equally important.

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Graphics obviously touch us at a common core of our humanity, and are clearly a critical vector of communication in our world both today and tomorrow.

today and tomorrow. In his book, *The Rise of the Image, The Fall of the Word* (1998), New York University journalism professor Mitchell Stephens writes profoundly that "at some point in the second half of the 20th century—for perhaps the first time in human history—it began to seem as if images would gain the upper hand over words." David Natharius, Professor *Emeritus* of Communications and Humanities at California State University, Fresno, discusses the term "visuality," or the social and psychological process of constructing the meaning of perceived visual data. Dr. Edward Tufte (described by *Business Week* magazine as the "Galileo of graphics" and by *The New York Times* as the "Leonardo da Vinci of data") explains that visual communication transcends language, culture, gender, and technology of information display. (In *Billion Dollar Business Graphics*, Parkinson includes a reference to Dr. Tufte's concepts.)

My own two decades of proposal development for the Federal Government confirm how powerful and persuasive good graphics can be. I always strive to include some type of graphic on each proposal page to add visual interest and increase the reader's comprehension of the ideas being expressed. Parkinson's 149-page, full-color book is full of practical ideas and real-life examples of how such a graphics goal can be achieved. It also includes editable graphics and templates on a continuously-updated, virtual CD that can be accessed via the Internet.

One of the most helpful aspects of this new book is that it includes multiple illustrations of how graphics concepts evolve from a raw idea to a piece of high-caliber artwork. Business and technical professionals are often challenged to visualize how rough sketches will appear in polished form, and the book supports this challenge. In addition, the book links graphics concepts and finished artwork with "primary objectives" of the graphics. These objectives include showing how a customer will benefit from a given product, explaining the roles of

different companies working together, and instilling pride in a company's staff.

The glossary and subject index in *Billion Dollar Business Graphics* are clear and useful, as are a number of "Quick Notes" sprinkled throughout the pages that offer compelling and relevant quotes and insights into graphics communication. Such elements are beneficial additions to this already outstanding contribution to the field of practical visual communications.

Having worked in a professional capacity with Parkinson as a customer for the past seven years, I can

personally attest to the compelling power of his graphics. In *Billion Dollar Business Graphics*, he has written and illustrated what he knows best. Organizations of all sizes can benefit in very tangible ways by leveraging the concepts and approaches presented in this book. If you want to sell your products, services, and knowledge more effectively, keep Parkinson's book open on your desk. Use it every day as you conceptualize and develop your presentations, business proposals, and marketing collateral. **Positive results will surely follow.**

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Which proposal would you rather evaluate?

