Hall of Fame

BANGDESIGN - JOINING DOTS IN 3D...

A philosophy and a way of designing that has been hard-won over a successful 24-year career.

It's easy to think of the design process as being a linear one, as a journey from brief to solution in a straight line. After all, a designer starts off with a need, 'a brief' – be it for the design of a new product, a chair, an interior space, whatever – and then gradually nuts out a way to find a solution.

But is it really that straightforward?
Well patently no, or we wouldn't employ designers to come up with new ways to solve problems. The truth is that great designers somehow manage to wrestle a new or underlying order and logic from apparently random relationships and knowledge. Often the solution appears obvious once it manifests, yet somehow it hadn't occurred to anyone.

Put another way, it's about joining the dots in 3 dimensions – although many of the dots are related to each other in ways that aren't immediately apparent. At least that's how bangdesign has always seen the job at hand.

More specifically, the major thing the Sydney-based design firm has always brought to the table in the design process is an acute understanding of this three-dimensional network of interconnected opportunities, often linked in surprising ways that will lead to the ultimate destination.

Bangdesign's big picture perspective is about collating and comprehending as much information as possible. It's also a collaborative process between client and designer; one of finding the hidden blueprint, of finding the underlying structure of interconnected, interdependent links beneath the puzzle at hand; where a design solution will ultimately be found.

Understand this network and barriers are dissolved, productivity is enhanced and new opportunities have light shone upon them. The dots are joined. However, trying to explain bangdesign's philosophy has often eluded the company's principals Bryan Marshall and David Granger.
At least it was until modern science stumbled on Network Theory.

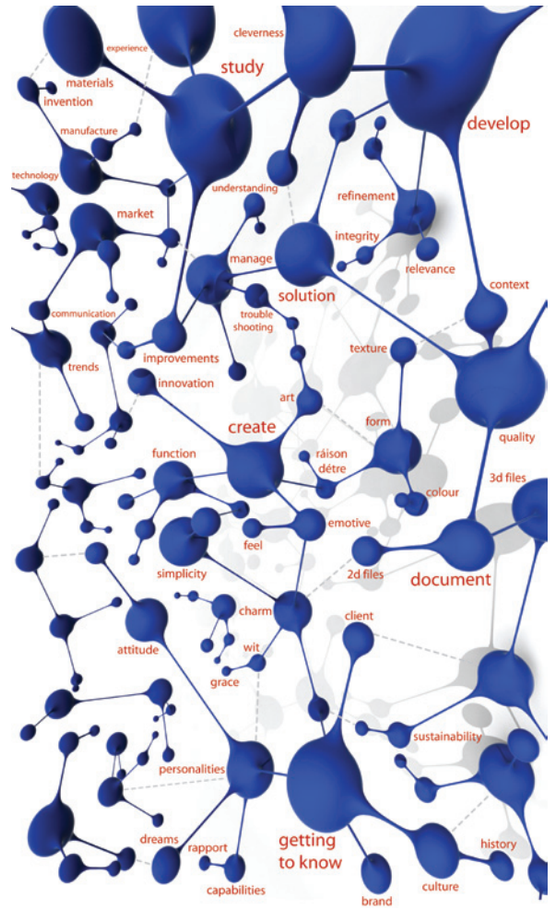
Network Theory and bangdesign...

Before Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, the notion that everyone and everything was interconnected wasn't quite as self-evident as it now seems.
Network Theory explains the phenomenon known as six degrees of separation. It's a theory suggesting everyone in the world is linked to every other person by, at most, six steps.

In the 1990s, mathematicians Prof. Steve Strogatz and Prof. Duncan Watts were curious to find out if there was a pattern behind the apparent random connections between people and events – as six degrees of separation suggested – and stumbled upon a mathematical formula that explained it.

Hungarian scientist, Prof. Albert-Laslo Barabasi then built on Strogatz and Watts' formula with the discovery that the links they had identified were also held together by a number of 'hubs', each with a huge number of connections.

Previously it was assumed that the links between countless web pages was random, now it's understood that the Internet's intrinsic nature is one of fewer bigger websites linking to an infinitely complex network of smaller sites. This discovery had predicted pages like Google and Amazon's existence.



More than that, Barabasi had found the underlying formula linking all things. He had discovered that a connected world of networks dominate our society, our economy and our environment. It was a new way of seeing the world that had implications for all systems and relationships – including how the design process unfolds. Network Theory doesn't offer a rigid structure or a simple formula to apply to the business of design but it does offer an effective way to make sense of the process.

It all begins with an initial 'getting-to-know' stage, which is vital in developing an intimate understanding of a client's needs and establishing a mutual trust between designer and client.

This is very much a collaborative process. Some factors might seem minor or irrelevant at first, but it can be something small, previously overlooked, or unexpected that helps fill in the total picture or provides the spark for making the more sophisticated solution.

The design process is indeed very much like finding the hidden blueprint; the matrix of influences that uncovers the dots and helps join then together in 3D.

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