

The buddy book.

Buddy's for graduate designers.

Starting a new job is daunting for anyone, and arguably more daunting at the start of your career entering a studio of more experienced designers.

It's usually the design studio manager's role to guide and supervise the junior and it can be time consuming, especially in the first few weeks.

Our solution was a 'buddy book'.

It was an A5 booklet that was given to all graduate designers (and interns) on the day they started. The buddy book contained information that we thought they might need, to save them asking. More importantly, it listing the designers the junior would be 'paired' with, and for how long.

'Buddying' up the designers has a number of advantages:

- » rather than just a quick hello in the kitchen, the new designer gets to work one-on-one with everyone in the studio
- » it shares the load of the design studio manager, leaving them to get on with their job
- » it gives the newbie a better understanding of all aspects of the studio, and
- » it gives the new designer permission to ask questions with the knowledge that they are not bugging anyone or being a pain.

Our buddy book was written and printed inhouse. It was well designed, using studio branding, usually A5, sometimes saddle stitched, sometimes wiro bound. It was always personalised with the graduates name and for the first few weeks it became their bible.

Your buddy book could be a short film or a secure area of your website/intranet.

We paired buddies for a week at the beginning when the pairing might be time consuming, moving to a monthly buddy system after the first four weeks.

Contents.

Cover

A welcome message, our logo and their name.

Who we are and what we do.

The aim is to give the new employee an 'elevator spiel' – a 25-words-or-less description of the studio that they can use when they talk to their parents/friends/teachers about where they work. We included:

- » what makes our studio different from others
- » why we are in business: what makes us get up in the morning
- » basic info about our clients: who they are and what type of work they do (this helped if they answered a call).

Our community.

A list of all staff members, their job description and a photo. Of most value in a large studio where you meet many people at once, it's also useful in a small studio to help avoid the embarrassment of not hearing, mis-hearing or just plain forgetting a name.

The buddy for that week.

Each spread from here on supplied a bit of background on the buddy for that week, including conversation starters like how they liked their coffee and what they like to do outside work.

The aim is to help the newbie feel comfortable and show that we all had a life outside the studio.

Important information.

A listing of information that may be needed in an emergency, including:

- » First aid: explain who is responsible for first aid and what to do if they need first aid. Explain emergency evacuation procedures.
- » Health and Safety reporting: an explanation of your health and safety reporting process
- » Workplace bullying, harassment and discrimination: explanation of the studio policy regarding bullying, harassment and/or discrimination.