

CASE STUDY: SAM

GRAPHIC COMICS FOR ORGANISATIONS

SAM MAKES COMICS FOR JOURNALISM

AMDEO WORKS FOR A TRANSPORT UNION

AMDEO WAS LOOKING FOR FRESH WAYS TO TELL HIS UNION'S STORIES. HE HEARD ABOUT GRAPHIC COMICS IN A WAY THAT INSPIRED HIM. HE APPROACHED SAM TO HELP HIM SOLVE THIS PROBLEM.

WE CAN'T JUST RECYCLE STOCK IMAGES AND WRITE NEWS ARTICLES BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING FOR FOREVER AND A DAY.

BUT FIRST HE MAKES SURE HIS IDEAS ARE RELEVANT THROUGH COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH WITH HIS CLIENTS.

SAM'S SUPERPOWER IS DIGGING DEEP INTO A STORY TO IDENTIFY THE SPIRIT OF AN ISSUE AND THEN USING THAT TO COME UP WITH NEW VISUAL METAPHORS THAT ARE STARTLING AND PRECISE.

CARTOONS CAN BE MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN THEY SEEM. THERE'S A LOT OF MACHINERY THAT'S INVISIBLE BEHIND THE GOOGLY EYES.

IT WAS THE VERY OPPOSITE OF BEING ALIENATED FROM YOUR LABOUR. IT WAS VERY EXCITING.

IN TIME, EVEN RELUCTANT STAKEHOLDERS CAN SEE THE POWER OF COMICS FOR AN ORGANISATION.

TEAMS LIKE THIS CAN HELP CREATE AN ENTIRELY NEW LENS THROUGH WHICH TO VIEW A SITUATION.

ONE THAT EVERYONE IN THE ORGANISATION CAN SHARE.

I SEE NOW

EVEN THOUGH HE IS A FREELANCER OR A GIG WORKER, SAM FEELS A GREAT SENSE OF PROUD OVER WORK LIKE THIS.

GRAPHIC COMICS FOR ORGANISATIONS

SINE WAS IN THE DAY WHEN PRINT WAS INVENTED

CARTOONISTS AND ILLUSTRATORS HAVE FOUND WORK CREATING IMAGERY THAT SUPPORTS GREAT IDEAS.

The copywriter comes up with the ideas.

while drinking this single malt

This illustrator makes the ideas look pretty.

while drinking this terrible wine.

SOME OF THE STORIES WERE FUNNY

I drew a brain on a bald man's head at a science event.

It was for educational purposes.

SOME OF THEM WERE INTERESTINGLY PRACTICAL

As an archivist I brought an artist's eye to their collection.

I started taking staples out of old zines because I knew they rust and destroy paper, which I might not have known if I didn't have zine-making experience.

Get the brief. Make the thing. Hand it in.

THESE "TRADITIONAL" ROLES ARE FOCUSED AROUND THE DELIVERY OF A CRAFTED PRODUCT.

What parts of this copy are making me want to visualise?

If someone was reading this what would they imagine?

THAT'S what I draw.

THE ARTISTS WE SURVEYED DID A LOT OF THIS KIND OF WORK.

IN FACT, WHEN ARTISTS WERE ASKED ABOUT THEIR THREE MOST USEFUL SKILLS, ILLUSTRATION WAS THE MOST COMMON SKILL CITED.

WE LEARNED THAT LOTS OF GRAPHIC STORYTELLERS UNDERSTAND THEIR PRACTICE AS A SPECIALIST CRAFT.

BUT WHEN WE ASKED ARTISTS TO DESCRIBE A SPECIFIC SITUATION WHERE THEIR SKILLS PROVIDED USEFUL IN AN INDUSTRY OUTSIDE THE ARTS THEY OFTEN TOLD A DIFFERENT KIND OF STORY.

JUST LIKE TO MAKE STUFF

IT WASN'T THE SKILLS THAT THEY WERE USING WHEN THEY WERE ALONE IN THEIR STUDIOS FOCUSING ON THEIR CRAFT THAT WERE MOST NEEDED.

MANY ARTISTS SAID THEY FELT MOST VALUABLE WHEN THEY WERE INTERACTING WITH NON-ARTISTS: TALKING, SKETCHING AND IMPROVISING.

INSTEAD IT WAS SOCIAL, COLLABORATIVE AND IMPROVISATIONAL SKILLS THAT WERE MOST CRUCIAL TO THE WORK.

THE ARTISTS DESCRIBED THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH VISUAL LANGUAGE IN A ROOM WITH OTHER HUMANS, WHERE DECISIONS WERE BEING MADE OR PROBLEMS WERE BEING SOLVED.

TO NON-ARTISTS THIS SKILL CAN SEEM LIKE A KIND OF MAGIC!

LOUI'S JOB IS TO CREATE VISUAL METAPHORS THAT ARTICULATE A LEGAL CONCEPT

LOUI HAS BEEN MAKING COMICS SINCE THE 1980S.

CAPILLA IS A PIONEER IN CONTRACT LAW.

THESE TWO WORK TOGETHER TO HELP ORDINARY PEOPLE GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTRACTS THAT THEY SIGN BY REPLACING LEGAL JARGON WITH CAREFULLY CRAFTED VISUAL LANGUAGE.

SHE'S DEVELOPING A NEW KIND OF LEGAL CONTRACT THAT UTILISES COMICS.

My first job was for a motorcycle magazine.

Capilla's job is to apply legal rigour to the visual language to ensure that it is as precise and unambiguous as possible.

Graphic Law is a new field with huge growth potential.

A POSSIBLE SOURCE OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMIC ARTISTS!

CASE STUDY: MARC AND PENNI

GRAPHIC LAW

LOUI HAS BEEN MAKING COMICS SINCE THE 1980S.

CAPILLA IS A PIONEER IN CONTRACT LAW.

THESE TWO WORK TOGETHER TO HELP ORDINARY PEOPLE GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTRACTS THAT THEY SIGN BY REPLACING LEGAL JARGON WITH CAREFULLY CRAFTED VISUAL LANGUAGE.

SHE'S DEVELOPING A NEW KIND OF LEGAL CONTRACT THAT UTILISES COMICS.

My first job was for a motorcycle magazine.

Capilla's job is to apply legal rigour to the visual language to ensure that it is as precise and unambiguous as possible.

Graphic Law is a new field with huge growth potential.

A POSSIBLE SOURCE OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMIC ARTISTS!

TECHNICAL SKILLS

GRAPHIC STORYTELLERS SPEND A LOT OF TIME IN THEIR STUDIOS MAKING STUFF.

HERE THEY DEVELOP USEFUL TECHNICAL AND PROCEDURAL EXPERTISE

HOW ARE THESE CRAFT SKILLS USED IN WORKPLACES?

I learned everything I know about printing from comics.

At my job I am able to communicate with printers when nobody else has the confidence or language for it.

- FINE DRAFTSMANSHIP,
- DIGITAL IMAGE MANIPULATION,
- LETTERING,
- PRINT PRODUCTION,
- WEB DESIGN,
- TECHNICAL DRAWING,
- MASTERY OF TRADITIONAL MATERIALS,
- DIGITAL PAINTING,
- AMONG OTHERS!

To make my webcomic I had to learn how to work with code.

That experience led me to a non-creative day job where I run a web development company.

A LOT OF GRAPHIC STORYTELLERS TOLD US THAT THESE CRAFT SKILLS WERE USEFUL IN ALL SORTS OF WORKPLACES, EVEN THOSE THAT WEREN'T IN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES.

THEY DESCRIBED THEMSELVES TAKING ON A LOT OF THE JOB AS CREATIVE WORK THAT IS MORE AND MORE COMMON IN ALL WORKPLACES.

Can you pretty up our Annual report?

Sure. Does this can get off the phones?

Simple knowledge of image editing software is in demand as a skill for all sorts of jobs these days.

Can you pretty up our Annual report?

Sure. Does this can get off the phones?

Simple knowledge of image editing software is in demand as a skill for all sorts of jobs these days.

GRAPHIC STORYTELLERS AT WORK

HOW DO COMICS MAKERS USE THEIR SKILLS IN INDUSTRIES OUTSIDE THE ARTS?

This poster illustrates some of the things we learned when we asked cartoonists and comics makers to talk about the use of their skills in work outside the arts.

Most comics making in Australia is small-scale, a creative practice supported by a community of volunteers and enthusiasts rather than a mass-media art form.

But we learned that the skills shared between artists in this small comics community are transferable to all kinds of professional settings.

It turns out that the ability to tell stories with little pictures can be reframed as a communication expertise, one that is particularly useful for organisations.

INTERPRETIVE SKILLS

WHILE MAKING COMICS FOR ENTERTAINMENT AND SELF-EXPRESSION, GRAPHIC STORYTELLERS DEVELOP AN ABILITY TO CRAFT BEAUTIFUL IMAGES.

BUT GRAPHIC STORYTELLERS HAVE VALUABLE ABILITIES THAT ARE LESS APPARENT THAN CRAFT SKILLS.

THEY CAN TRANSLATE IDEAS INTO VISUAL LANGUAGE AND VISUAL METAPHOR QUICKLY.

MANY ARTISTS WE SURVEYED SAID THAT THESE INTERPRETIVE SKILLS WERE AS VALUABLE AS THEIR TECHNICAL ABILITIES.

IMPROVISATIONAL SKETCHING.

ACTIVE LISTENING.

STORYTELLING.

SYNTHESISING TECHNICAL JARGON INTO VISUAL LANGUAGE.

READING AND REFLECTING BODY LANGUAGE.

VISUAL INTERPRETATION OF DATA.

THE TRICK WAS TO PRESENT THEMSELVES NOT JUST AS PROVIDERS OF FINELY CRAFTED IMAGES BUT AS COMMUNICATION EXPERTS

WHO CAN BRING VALUE TO AN ORGANISATION THROUGH THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF VISUAL LANGUAGE.

I'm a senior consultant in the tech industry.

I use my creative skills to design new products, ways of working, commercial and cultural strategies.

It's a combination of all of my creative skills that enables me to work in this space.

WORKING WITH COMPLEXITY

As important as those technical skills are, there's an emerging field of much more free-flowing conceptual drawing that more and more businesses and roles are appreciating.

This sort of drawing happens on whiteboards and is often rubbed out and lost after it has made an impact in a meeting.

but is nonetheless powerful.

Comics gave me the ability to think in pictures.

to translate complex business ideas and messages into a simple cartoon illustration.

GRAPHIC STORYTELLERS DESCRIBED THEIR ABILITY TO DRAW SIMPLY, CLEARLY AND QUICKLY AS AN INCREDIBLY USEFUL COMMUNICATIVE TOOL.

THEY OFTEN FIND THEMSELVES ACTING AS INTERMEDIARIES BETWEEN PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT FIELDS.

24% OF THE ARTISTS WE SURVEYED SAID THAT THEY FOUND IT EASY TO VISUALISE AN IDEA THAT WAS COMPLICATED FOR OTHERS TO UNDERSTAND.

67% OF THOSE ARTISTS SAID THAT THEY HAD DEVELOPED THIS ABILITY THROUGH THEIR CREATIVE PRACTICE.

I produce reports with infographics, diagrams or flowcharts for government departments.

I have been able to develop or improve these illustrations to help convey information more meaningfully by applying the visual literacy I learned through creating comics.

I am an engineer and data scientist in my day job.

Finding good ways to visualize designs or data so that they are comprehensible to both technical and non-technical audiences is invaluable.

WORKING WITH VISUAL METAPHOR

COMICS IS A LANGUAGE OF NESTED VISUAL METAPHORS

MANY OF THE ARTISTS WE SURVEYED SAID THEIR ABILITY TO PRESENT NUANCED INFORMATION USING VISUAL METAPHOR WAS A POWERFUL WORKPLACE SKILL.

VISUAL METAPHORS CAN BE ENORMOUSLY VALUABLE IN ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BECAUSE THEY ARE EFFICIENT FRAMING DEVICES FOR BIG IDEAS OR KEY MESSAGES. THEY HELP CREATE A SIMPLE SHORTHAND FOR UNWELDY IDEAS.

In my day job at a union the skills I've developed through cartooning come in handy every single day.

One time I used visual thinking to help workers understand a complex legal term in their employment contract.

It was relatively easy to come up with the right visual metaphor and to then flesh this out in a comic. It made the important information broadly accessible.

HELPING HUMANS LEARN

I work as a pedagogy teacher at a university.

I help teachers teach better.

I use my creative skills in that job often.

28% OF THE ARTISTS WE TALKED TO DESCRIBED THE USE OF THEIR CREATIVE SKILLS IN AN EDUCATIONAL SETTING, FROM INTERNAL TRAINING WITHIN ORGANISATIONS TO PUBLIC-FACING EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

GRAPHIC STORYTELLERS OFTEN FIND THEMSELVES DESIGNING RELATABLE RESOURCES THAT HELP PEOPLE LEARN NEW SKILLS AND UNDERSTAND NEW IDEAS AT ALL STAGES OF LIFE, FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD THROUGH TO OLD AGE.

comics skills are very useful in schools, especially in "future focused learning spaces" where the priorities all relate to our skillset!

A HUMAN TOUCH

10% OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS SAID THEIR CREATIVE PRACTICE HAD LED THEM TO DEVELOP SKILLS IN LISTENING AND OBSERVATION.

OTHERS DESCRIBED THE VALUE OF THEIR ABILITY TO DRAW HUMANS INTERACTING WITH EACH OTHER IN NARRATIVE FORM. GRAPHIC STORYTELLERS ARE ATTENTIVE TO BODY LANGUAGE AND FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND HAVE AN ABILITY TO REFLECT NUANCED EMOTIONAL MOMENTS IN A FEW LINES.

MANY ARTISTS ALSO DESCRIBED HOW CLIENTS APPRECIATE THEIR HAND-MADE DRAWINGS AS "FRIENDLY" OR "HUMAN", HELPING TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONS AND PUBLICS, PARTICULARLY WHEN COMMUNICATING A COMPLICATED SYSTEM, ABSTRACT CONCEPT OR PRECISE DESCRIPTION OF AN EMOTIONAL REALITY.

I worked with a couple of social workers for STARTTS, teaching comics to survivors of torture and trauma.

I worked with a large company, helping workers develop a visual language to describe the way they see themselves, the job they are trying to do, and the road map that will take them to the goals they are trying to achieve.

The major skill is listening to people talking and then drawing pictures of what they are thinking.

(which is what they are saying.)

CASE STUDY: JOHN HENRY

SERVICE DESIGN

HE STARTED MAKING COMICS AT ART SCHOOL

I turned every assignment I had into a comics project

He's been working with Australian graphics since the 1980s. Recently, he edited and printed an outpouring comic anthology.

NOW THESE TWO USE THEIR SKILLS IN AN EMERGING INDUSTRY CALLED SERVICE DESIGN OR USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN.

THEY HELP BIG ORGANISATIONS DESIGN NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

THEY OFTEN USE A KIND OF COMIC CALLED A JOURNEY MAP TO EXPLAIN THE WAY REAL PEOPLE MIGHT INTERACT WITH COMPLEX SITUATIONS.

THEY FIND THAT VISUAL STORYTELLING CAN GIVE DECISION-MAKERS EASY ACCESS TO THE EMOTIONAL AND HAPTICAL EXPERIENCE THAT PEOPLE MIGHT HAVE WHEN THEY START USING A NEW SYSTEM OR PRODUCT.

Now, I think I finally get what we're creating here.

We use visual language to make something real that isn't yet real

Comics can explain a reality that doesn't yet exist

DRAWING PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

I use skills that I developed from making comics in my work designing museum galleries and mapping visitor experiences within those spaces.

WHERE THE ARTISTS

TO MAKE A COMIC, A GRAPHIC STORYTELLER HAS TO CONCEIVE OF HYPOTHETICAL HUMAN EXPERIENCES AND WORK OUT HOW TO NARRATE THEM FROM PANEL TO PANEL AND SCENE TO SCENE.

WHEN THIS SKILL IS TRANSFERRED TO OTHER INDUSTRIES, IT CAN BECOME UNDERSTANDABLE AS PART OF THE DESIGN OF NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, PARTICULARLY SERVICES THAT MAY EXIST IN A FUTURE THAT HASN'T HAPPENED YET, OR SERVICES THAT REQUIRE COMPLICATED USER INTERACTION.

14.6% OF THE ARTISTS WE SURVEYED SAID THAT THEY USED THEIR SKILLS TO HELP PEOPLE COMMUNICATE IN MEDICAL OR HEALTH CONTEXTS.

WHEN ARTISTS DEVELOP EMPATHY SKILLS AND ATTENTION TO FINE DETAILS, THEY CAN ALSO DEPICT PERSONAL ROUTINES AND EMBODIED SENSATIONS - LIKE PAIN - IN A WAY THAT IS MEANINGFUL TO BOTH ORDINARY INDIVIDUALS AND EXPERTS.

Use of visual narrative is an integral part of human-centred design work.

I've been employing skills accrued through work in comics on many product/service/system design projects.

It's useful in mapping customer journeys, prototyping solutions and generally synthesizing information into visual artefacts.

DRAWING STORIES FOR HEALTH AND MEDICINE

My illustrations are utilised in surgery education

I have made comic art that provides health and safety information for Aboriginal women in custody.

Once I created a series of illustrations: facial expressions depicting happy, sad, angry etc. for use during a psychological therapy session.

GRAPHIC STORYTELLERS HAVE THE ABILITY TO HELP PEOPLE UNDERSTAND HOW COMPLICATED MEDICAL IDEAS ARE CONNECTED WITH THE ROUTINES AND EMBODIED EXPERIENCES OF DAILY LIFE.

14.6% OF THE ARTISTS WE SURVEYED SAID THAT THEY USED THEIR SKILLS TO HELP PEOPLE COMMUNICATE IN MEDICAL OR HEALTH CONTEXTS.

WHEN ARTISTS DEVELOP EMPATHY SKILLS AND ATTENTION TO FINE DETAILS, THEY CAN ALSO DEPICT PERSONAL ROUTINES AND EMBODIED SENSATIONS - LIKE PAIN - IN A WAY THAT IS MEANINGFUL TO BOTH ORDINARY INDIVIDUALS AND EXPERTS.

CASE STUDY: MARC AND PENNI

GRAPHIC MEDICINE

MARC MAKES COMICS

PENNI IS A NARRATOR

TOGETHER THEY HAVE A SIDE GIG MAKING VISUAL STORIES FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH SECTOR.

THEY WORKED WITH A TEAM OF RESEARCHERS AND CLINICIANS WHO WERE CREATING ONLINE RESOURCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.

MARC AND PENNI HELPED SOLVE A KEY PROBLEM: HOW TO GET YOUNG PEOPLE TO REALLY READ THE DRY CLINICAL MATERIALS.

IT'S ALL WORDS. THE KIDS DON'T SEE IT AS BEING RELEVANT TO THEIR LIVES.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE COMICS. THEY WANT MORE OF THEM. IT'S RUNNABLE.

BETWEEN THE CLINICAL WORKERS AND THE LIVES OF THEIR PATIENTS.

MARC AND PENNI USED THEIR GRAPHIC STORYTELLING SKILLS TO CREATE A BRIDGE...