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Eight type and layout facts
you need to know *now*

July, 2009

Hi Ted,

My clients call on me to write powerful, compelling copy. But the fact is, if the graphic designers who lay out my words don't really understand what works visually, they can make the most motivating copy invisible and useless.

That's why I only work with designers who know the current research on typography and layouts and *use* that research in their work.

If *you* want to know what layout and typography techniques are most effective, I urge you to order a copy of a fabulous book called *Type & Layout: Are You Communicating or Just Making Pretty Shapes?* by Colin Wheildon. (NOTE: I have no financial connection to this book whatsoever. I just think it's terrific!)

What makes *Type & Layout* "must" reading is that it uses controlled, scientific readership studies to determine what works.

Here's what David Ogilvy, the advertising master,
has to say about this remarkable book:

"Hitherto, designers have had to rely on their guesses as to what works best in choosing the typography and layout. All too often they guess wrong. Thanks to Colin Wheildon, they no longer have to guess. No guesswork here. Only facts"

Here are just some of the important conclusions Wheildon comes to. Ignore them at your peril!

On Headlines:

Wheildon has a lot to say about headlines, and well he should. Just as the job of an envelope (in direct mail) is to get opened, the headline's job is to get the reader into the body copy. That, of course, is where the heart of the message is communicated. It doesn't matter whether you're producing an email, a brochure, a Web page -- you want your headline to be easy to read and to communicate quickly. Check out some of Wheildon's key research findings . . .

1. "Headlines set in capital letters are significantly less legible than those set in lower case."

2. "The darker the headline, the greater the comprehension level. Black headlines are well understood by nearly four times as many readers as brightly colored headlines."

3. "Slightly condensing headline type makes it easier to read. Settings between 70 per cent and 90 per cent of natural width appear to be optimal."

4. "Using periods at the end of headlines may have a detrimental effect on readers' comprehension."

On Body Type:

A headline may be eight or nine words long, but body copy can run on and on. This means that readablity is an extremely important issue. People just won't stick with you and keep reading if your art director or graphic designer makes things difficult. Here are a few more of Colin Wheildon's findings that make excellent sense . . .

5. "Body type must be set in serif type if the designer intends it to be read and understood. More than five times as many readers are likely to show good comprehension when a serif body type is used instead of a sans serif body type."

6. "Text must be printed in black. Even copy set in deep colors is substantially more difficult for readers to understand. Seven times as many participants in the study demonstrated good comprehension when text was black as opposed to either muted or high intensity colors."

7. "Black text printed on light tint has high comprehensibility."

8. "Text set in capitals is difficult to read."

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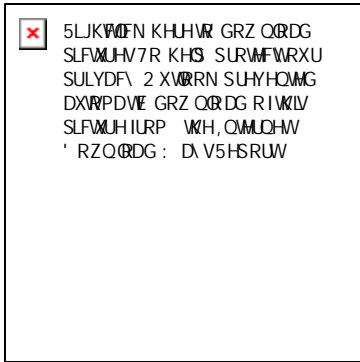
[CLICK HERE](#) for more information, or to order a copy of *Type & Layout: Are You Communicating or Just Making Pretty Shapes?* from Amazon.com. Price: $29.95 US.
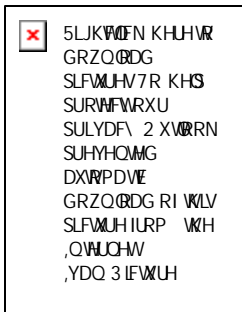
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Let's go to work!

How to get in touch . . .

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Phone: (415) 461-0672
E-mail: ivan@levison.com
Fax: (415) 461-7738
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