

Grids

Ever take a trip to NYC? It's a great place to explore.

When you visit, you'll find that Uptown Manhattan is easy to navigate. All the streets go east and west and the avenues go north and south.

Lower Manhattan is a different story. When NYC was first settled, streets and neighborhoods were built without much thought of ease of navigating so it's harder to find your way.

You might be wondering what NYC has to do with design or some of you might have already figured it out.

GRIDS! A way to organize not only streets, but design elements as well.

In design, a grid is a series of intersecting vertical and horizontal lines that create columns and rows, just like the streets and avenues in upper Manhattan. A Grid is used to develop an organized foundation to build within.

A grid is a framework; a set of guidelines; a solid under structure for aligning and repeating elements such as headlines, subheads, images, and text into an organized design.

The grid is visible in the design process but invisible to the viewer.

So when examining the need for grids, the NYC street metaphor is a good one.

The street grid for Uptown Manhattan makes navigating for vehicles and pedestrians easy. How easy is it for the viewer to navigate your layout, to find the important information at a glance? Setting up that grid will do the trick.

Grids are used in a very structured way in newspaper design and other text heavy publications. This is when it is important to keep the integrity of the grid. Basically, set up your grid and stay within the lines. Keep your text inside the columns.

Columns and rows can vary in size. A grid does not need to have equal size columns and rows and you do not need to fill in the entire column or row. This helps to develop interesting white space.

Grids can also be flexible. Elements in a page layout may or may not stay within the grid columns depending on how much repetition or variety is needed. A poster or one page flyer design is a good example of when the grid is used in a more flexible manner but, **YOU MUST ALWAYS BEGIN WITH A GRID** before you place any elements on the page. The grid will help you develop a more creative layout.

So you can see that a grid is the foundation where you begin to develop your layout. As you become comfortable using grids you'll be amazed at the number of creative layouts you can develop using the same information and it will definitely help you save time in the design process.

Give it a try!