

A LITTLE BOOK OF
revelations



Hello. We are Thoughtful.

Thoughtful is an ideas agency for the 21st century.

WHY THOUGHTFUL? We like having a name that reflects our most deeply held belief: that thoughtfulness is the rock on which the strongest client/agency relationships are built.

WHY IDEAS? We think in terms of messages not media. We want to find the best, most effective way of communicating with your audience. Who knows, it may be that 48 sheet poster you asked for...but let's consider what other options there may be.

WHY 21ST CENTURY? We believe that what the world needs right now is more businesses that want to make not just dosh, but a difference. That have principles and aren't shy about mentioning them. That conduct themselves ethically, respect the environment, grab any opportunity to do others a good turn, and always return their shopping trolley to the trolley park.

It's all summed up in our 10 commandments. If you can spare a little time, we think they may come as a revelation...

I Thou(ghtful) shall hold responsive service above all else.

A slightly controversial way to start, we know. Because, of course, designers are supposed to swear on their sainted mothers' lives that ground-breaking creativity is their one and only Holy Grail.

But, having spent a combined quarter of a century working for some of the UK's best creative agencies, we've learned that what most clients really want more than anything else is to be treated – well, thoughtfully.

WHICH IS WHY WE PROMISE TO:

- ☞ take your call whenever you need to talk, if humanly possible
- ☞ return your call, when it isn't, within 30 minutes
- ☞ always be on time and on budget
- ☞ make sure all deliveries arrive on time (and, of course, at the correct address)
- ☞ be open and honest about all charges
- ☞ provide accurate print quotes when we say we will
- ☞ do everything else when we say we will

Our aim, very simply, is to make you feel that for us, nothing is too much trouble. (Yak's milk in your organic Japanese green tea? No problem – will that be full fat, or semi-skimmed?)

II

Thou(ghtful) shall put brilliant
creative ideas a very, very close second
to responsive service.

Well, you didn't think we would try to sell you Thoughtful on a "creativity is a waste of time" platform, did you? Of course not. Our faith in the power of a great idea powerfully executed is the foundation of our belief system.

But another belief we hold pretty firmly is that the kind of clients who will want to work with us don't need to hear a sermon on the subject. (They'd never even talk to an agency unless they were certain weapons-grade, industrial strength creativity came as standard.)

Also – and, however hard we try to avoid it, this is going to sound a tad self-congratulatory – we feel we don't have much to prove when it comes to our creative track record. (For chapter and verse, take a look in The Bible†.)

III

Thou(ghtful) shall not work for any company involved in unethical practices (or Manchester United).

We don't just want to do some good work, we want to do some good. So we've written our own Thoughtful ethical policy. Like to hear our 5-Point Plan for running a Profitably Principled Business?

- 1 We'll never work for a tobacco company or any organisation involved in unethical practices, such as child labour or the fur trade.
- 2 We'll use ecologically sound materials whenever possible (so don't expect the classic "50 cubic metres of foamboard" presentation from us).
- 3 We'll strongly encourage our clients to use only those printers and paper suppliers who take their environmental responsibilities seriously (saving energy, reducing waste, minimising use of chemicals, and so on).
- 4 We'll introduce – and rigorously follow – our own recycling and energy conservation policy.
- 5 We'll support charities we believe in by giving our time for free.

As for Man U – well, let's just say we'd rather sell our souls to the Devil.

Thou(ghtful) shall collaborate.

Just imagine if all your creative suppliers – ad agencies, design consultancies, branding gurus, web specialists and the rest – could work together, in brotherly (and sisterly) harmony. No turf wars. No jockeying for position. No hyperactive-toddlers-at-a-birthday-party-squabbling-over-the-last-chocolate-finger-type behaviour. Just everyone doing what they're good at, and sharing ideas with each other, for the good of your brand.

We can't guarantee that heavenly vision will come to pass. Because it depends on everyone playing their part. But we can and do promise that we'll always do our Thoughtful best to make collaboration work.

Any Doubting Thomas types out there? Then just consider this: we didn't even design our own identity. Such is our faith in the power of collaboration that we even chose to put our own image in the hands of another design consultancy.

Without Underware[‡], Thoughtful would look very different.

[‡] See back cover.

U

Thou(ghtful) shall put mistakes right,
without needing to be asked.

As the wise man almost said: To err is human, to put the error right without someone ringing up and yelling at you, or getting their solicitor to write you a threatening letter, is very unusual indeed.

At Thoughtful, we're definitely human (just ask any of our long suffering partners). But we aim to be part of that small minority of businesses that, when they very occasionally do screw up, move fast to undo the damage.

If it's fairly and squarely our mistake, it's our responsibility to put it right. Right?

VI

Thou(ghtful) shall not discriminate twixt big and small clients.

Being Thoughtful means we give all our clients the most precious gift an agency can bestow. Time*.

And yes, we did say all our clients – Davids and Goliaths alike. We'll give every project the same care and attention, regardless of size or budget.

But it's not just about our time. In a world of purchasing decisions based on the briefest of brand encounters, there is nothing more valuable to you than your customers' time. We're evangelical about the power of great communications in winning it for you.

VII

Thou(ghtful) shall not employ account handlers.

OK, before anyone is tempted to cast the first stone, we'd better make it clear we've absolutely nothing against account handlers. We've worked with some fantastic ones over the years. (Bless you all, Eileen, Paul, Phil, Rachel and Tree.)

But putting a middle-person between client and creative is not the Thoughtful way. For us, the responsiveness of our service and the quality of our work clearly depend on open, honest and direct communication between you – the person commissioning the project – and us – the designers sweating blood to get it right.

VIII

Thou(ghtful) shall not steal fonts, or anything else.

We have a confession to make.

In the past, we've occasionally asked a mate to email us a font, or stumbled across something useful on the web and carelessly shoved it in our virtual back-pockets.

But we've seen the light. These days, everything belongs to somebody. Nothing comes for free. And, as Thoughtful, we promise we'll always pay our way.

We won't steal credit either. When we collaborate with talented illustrators, photographers, type designers, printers, art directors or writers, we'll never forget that their contribution to the finished piece of work is of value to them, and needs to be fully acknowledged. (By the way, thanks for helping us put the apostrophes in the right places, Lindsay.)

As for paying our bills, charging fair prices, and telling shop assistants if they give us too much change – well, you have our word: we'll always do our best to do the Thoughtful thing.

IX
Thou(ghtful) shall support
& nurture new talent.

As St Augustine (or, on second thoughts, maybe it was George Benson) so memorably put it: “We believe that children are our future, teach them well and let them show the way”.

Each of us at Thoughtful owes a huge amount to the people who helped us earlier in our careers. We intend to repay that debt by doing our bit for the next creative generation.

We hold regular Sunday services, where we get down on our knees and appraise portfolios. We give guidance to any young creative who seeks it. And we also like to showcase their work, give placements and sponsor students who need a bit of help with the cost of materials or the loan of a Mac.

Just ask and – if we can all see that unmistakable spark of commitment and desire – you will receive.

X

**Thou(ghtful) shall not rest
on the seventh day.**



Yes, we do have homes to go to. And no, we're not workaholics. But we do get an almost spiritual high out of what we do – and if doing it to the very best of our ability (or maybe just a little better) means working a seven day week, well, that's a price we're very happy to pay.

For us, being Thoughtful means being ready to move heaven and earth for our clients.

Whenever. Wherever. Amen.



LET US GIVE THANKS.

Lindsay Camp for giving us a voice.
We're speechless.

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Akiem Helmling, Bas Jacobs
and Sami Kortemäki at Underware
for creating one hell of an identity.

info@underware.nl

Thoughtfully printed by Beacon Press.

print@beaconpress.co.uk

† The D&AD annual; the advertising and design industry's Good Book,
a chronicle of the year's finest creative achievements.

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‡ If you were coming here expecting to see a picture of us naked, sorry,
we're much too thoughtful to do that to you. Underware is a graphic design
studio which specializes in designing and producing typefaces and
corporate logotypes. They have studios in Den Haag, Helsinki and Amsterdam.

...

* In our business, there's no such thing as a truly original idea.

We first came across this over 10 years ago, in the classic design book
'Smile in the Mind' by Beryl McAllhone and David Stuart.

...

Our Little Book of Revelations was printed using pureprint[®] environmental print technology.

We think it's the thoughtful thing to do.

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