

Can you survive and thrive with a split personality? Certainly, if the split suits you. **NANCY NIMOY'S** identity, which began with the simple appeal of a first and last name using the same number of letters, both ending in y, captures her struggle over whether she's an illustrator or a painter. Her identity also expresses her feminine and tomboyish sides.

Does your personality have to be "you"? Not if you don't want it to be. The founder of **BIG LAWN FILMS**, a production company known for its humorous work, is the same creative mind that came up with the talking Chihuahua during his days at Chiat Day. For starters, he liked the idea of an identity that didn't literally say "lawn". At first we proposed garden gnomes, but then he pointed out that he might get sick of looking at garden gnomes every day. The winning identity captured a certain charming American hopefulness, and a sexy happiness, that he liked — especially because it diverged so wildly from his own sense of self.



Can you find your identity in something else's? If you can get away with it, why not? For **TOM SCHNABEL**, the influential music producer who, through radio programming such as Café LA and CD compilations such as Trance Planet, has helped to elevate the profile of world music, a love of France and things French led to an identity based on more-or-less-direct copy of the logo for Ricard, a popular French aperitif. It's, you know, one of those logos that blossom on café umbrellas all over Paris.



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Print ads, brochures, exhibit booths, point-of-purchase displays, packaging, identities, promotional films, motion graphics, book design, CD covers, with a reverence for type, delight in color, and dedication to humor and subtlety.

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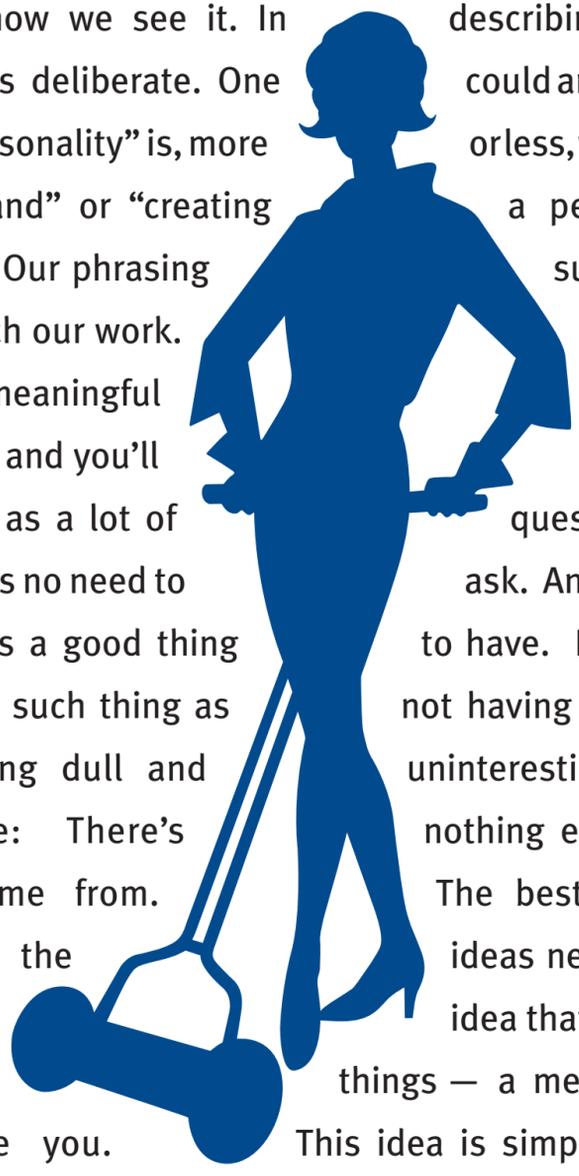
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1 FULLY GROWN	134 GALLONS	175 KILOWATT HOURS	122 POUNDS	222 POUNDS

In praise of personality.

In the world of business, graphic design has a lovely and important role to play: to breathe life and character into products and services and the organizations that create them. To plumb their soul. To give them personality. At least, that's how we see it. In choice of terms is deliberate. One "bringing out a personality" is, more "developing a brand" or "creating Well, yes and no. Our phrasing which we approach our work. we do universally meaningful "What's a brand?" and you'll answers (as well as a lot of personality, there's no need to that personality is a good thing better. There's no such thing as is, however, being dull and Something else: There's personalities come from. driven. Not that the specific type. The can be a lot of pun, what have you. whatever else you set off to do.

describing our mission, our could argue that what we call orless, what others might call a perception of value". suggests the spirit in And it renders what and concrete. Ask get a variety of questioning stares). With ask. And nobody questions to have. In fact, the more the not having a personality. There uninteresting. nothing esoteric about where The best of them are idea- ideas need to be big, or of a idea that drives a personality things — a metaphor, an image, a This idea is simply a point that fixes



And not that arriving at the right idea, or the right personality, needs to involve a lot of mumbo jumbo or hand wringing. For those who feel the need, we've developed a proprietary process (called, let's see, *ByAllMeansTakeItPersonally™*) using a 20-page questionnaire that we plug into a very complicated matrix. Of course, if you'd rather, we can simply embark on an experience with you and your company and become involved in a more free-flowing exploration of ideas and issues.

began to pay slightly less attention to the visual quality of the materials they were producing. Part of the genius of Quiksilver is its finely attuned radar: Randy and his team picked up on the change early, and moved to address it.

At the same time, they asked us to address a few nagging problems: How to keep the loyalty of the 13-year-old girl who loves Roxy once she turns 16 and suddenly decides it's the last thing she wants to wear? And how to keep Roxy underground and cool enough for a shop



At **QUIKSILVER**, that's certainly what we've done with Roxy and with Alex Goes, Quiksilver's ambitious brand aimed at a slightly older female audience. There, we're fortunate to be collaborating with Quiksilver's Creative Director, Randy Hild, a man with an unerring eye and, not surprisingly, a lot of personality of his own. For Roxy, our mission has been to age the personality a little bit. We're currently in the midst of this effort, a one- to two-year process.

ROXY is a phenomenon, a fashion business with steam-roller success. The company couldn't believe its good fortune: Anything with the Roxy logo sold, and advertising was largely a matter of showing a girl with a smiling face on a surfboard — the heart of a look Roxy pioneered and owned. Then two things started to happen: Roxy began to be copied, and the Quiksilver team

in SoHo and give the mall retailers something they could sell?

The answer isn't exactly a makeover. We began with an honest assessment of what shouldn't change: the heart symbol, for its audience one of the most recognizable symbols in the world; the strong sense of water, of course; and the logo. But if the elements didn't change,



what we did with them did: We uncoupled the symbol and logotype, which looked a bit crass together. We cropped the symbol, making it a bit more sophisticated while keeping it recognizable. And we exploded the type. The four letters of "Roxy" were simply too juicy to leave alone. By doing so, we achieved something that's far from understated — and that's a real counterpoint to

the noisy, scratchy identities of other, competitive lines.

As for the Roxy girl herself, we've decided introduce a broader and more honest range of emotions into the imagery, and to work exclusively with a limited number of women photographers — Pamela Hansen, Christa Renee, Peggy Sirota — who can capture the more nuanced expressions we're after with compassion rather than cruelty. Not that a male photographer couldn't do it, and not that we're certain of the result. We're simply looking for a different dynamic, and dealing with the fact that a lot of the girls shown are team riders, not models, who are likely to be more comfortable in a more low-key situation.

All of this works on the premise that girls will respond to something less aspirational and more honest, in how they're shown and how they're marketed to. For us, the effort to evolve the Roxy personality has afforded a chance to steep ourselves in a world we don't live in. Inevitably, a little bit of our own sensibility — simple, bold, relatively

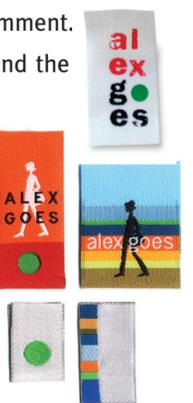


quiet — will also find its way into the work.

The Quiksilver culture is conducive to this way of working. It's a culture that allows everyone to comment. It's built on levels of trust, not levels of approval — including a level of trust in one's own instincts, and the ability to have a real influence in shaping the personality.

If Roxy is built on the knowledge that at a certain age everyone wants to conform, then **ALEX GOES**, Roxy's "big sister" brand was all about the idea of individuality. For this reason we stayed away from graphics on the clothing, aside from a subtle green "go" light. We developed a series of 50 different woven labels. The images were aspirational and eclectic. Certainly, we had a formula: to make the image look amazing. Beyond that, Alex Goes wasn't about visual consistency. It was about a consistency of spirit that manifests itself in different ways. Not every company should aspire to variety, wackiness, whimsy or humor. (FedEx, for one, is rightly all about consistency.) But in certain categories, creating a personality with a wide, surprising and even inconsistent range of expression, makes perfect sense. Unfortunately, for all concerned, Alex shone brightly before being "temporarily put on hold"... a victim of our present economic climate.

Even in cases where the category demands a level of consistency, a fluid approach can still play a role. In lighting, for example, a category we know well, we tend to deal with older clients and older companies with established meth-



ods. They tend to be surprised by the level of play (in the sense that a steering wheel has play) in the program. For **PEERLESS LIGHTING**, this level of play comes from defining the personality simply around light. While consistent, it is also highly conceptual and abstract. (See The Knowledge, #3.) For **GOTHAM**, this level of carefully considered play began with a return to the company's visual heritage. When we were asked to make them over, we found fantastic elements in earlier incarnations of their identity. We were taken back to the 1950s and

backed itself into a see-say identity that involved (naturally) red, yellow and blue. At about the same time, the company had also invested in a superb new eight-color press. Given the presence of the big new machine and the company's classic, almost constructivist-feeling logo, we suggested a Machine Age-inspired approach to the new set of posters the company wanted to create to inaugurate its new press. Rather than oversaturate sensibilities with a run at the entire spectrum, we initiated a more disciplined, subtle use of the 4-color



1960s, when a lot of truly beautiful work — some of the best ever created — was done for otherwise-dry corporations. The spawned a spirited new “classically radical” vision of modernist design for the company.

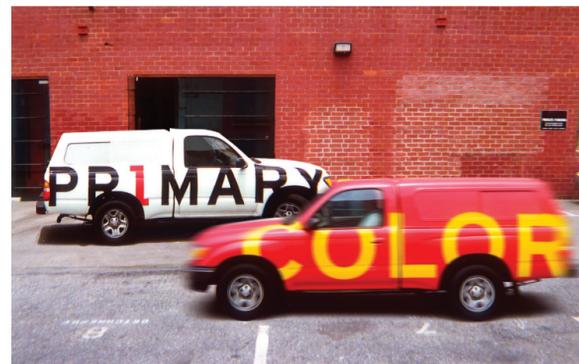
process, plus four individual spot colors. We also suggested it might be best to think of “primary color” in terms of color being the company's primary interest, not its creative palette. Score another for non-literal thinking.



It's vital to emphasize that dry is not dull. Dry is a personality type with a dynamic all its own — one that requires patience, at times, to express, but also one that can be utterly engaging.

In some ways, **FOUNDATION PRESS'** personality is Primary's antithesis. It's patently goofy — and lovable for that very reason. Our contact asked us to develop an identity that would appeal to graphic designers and allow them to print classier work. “Thinking laterally, not literally” (yet again),

PRIMARY COLOR, an excellent Los Angeles printer, is an outstanding example of an intrinsically dry and straightforward company that nonetheless lends itself to inspiration. Owned and operated by a family of hard-working, savvy businesspeople, Primary Color is decidedly not tongue-in cheek. But interesting? Yes. At the time we came on board, the company had more or less



we found ourselves drawn to Victorian times, to an era before graphic designers existed, when companies went directly to printers to have their identities created. We thought about an identity for a printer as inspired by Victorian tradesman's cards, but without any reference to Victoriana. Hence the naïve statements and the intentional mistakes, the multiple cards to choose from, the dispensing with a standards manual, the invitation to embrace.

Looking for a type of business beyond fashion that's infused with personality? Try restaurants. Quite often they're literally about the personalities of the owners. This is certainly true of **BERGAMOT CAFE**, where we often get lunch. There, the personality is very much that of the owner, Jeff, his right-hand man, Brian, and the two young guys they have working for them. Here they are, making great food in the middle of a big, sprawling arts complex. Well, why not refer to that? The idea for their identity was simple: Use silhouettes to show the people at the counter and the



people making the food. We infused the idea with a bit of the guys' own sense of humor, and with a nod to the fact that the web is an important part of their business. And so their identity is infused with all kinds of sayings. **A café by bachelors for bachelors. Don't feed the artist.** Better sandwiches through multitasking. And so on.

Since opening Bergamot Café, the same team has launched two additional concepts. The first is a soup specialty café, for which we developed an identity based on a soup splat. The idea left them a little gobsmacked at first, but they soon came around to its funny informality, and to the variety it allowed: a different splat for every printed piece. The second restaurant is a tiny placed called **NOOK**, tucked away in a horrible mini-mall, a place where all the signs are the same — and a restaurant scarcely bigger than a big sign itself. Signs went on to inspire the identity, which serves the double purpose of guiding you to this hard-to-find destination.



The personality for **FATHER'S OFFICE** is something else again. A neighborhood bar with a loyal following in a great location, the place has been around since the beginning of time, like an old insurance office. We captured that timeless, low-key presence in its logo, a paperclip. And then we went on to imagine a quirky intelligence behind the entire program, as if the identity were put together by a guy who'd rather be sitting at the bar. Hence the subtle mistakes in the type, the offhandedness, the continual shifts and changes. We put more than a little of ourselves into that guy at the bar.





PERSONALITY



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