Ten principles for good design

1. **Content always dictates design**
   Storytelling is the bottom line. Always start out with good content and draw the inspiration for the design from that content.

2. **Contrast is a key essential element**
   Variety is the spice of life. Think of all the ways to create visual contrast: dark vs. light, wide vs. narrow, tall vs. short, big vs. small. If you use these contrast principles you'll create good designs. Think of them as visual exercises for the reader.

3. **Layer information**
   Create visual hierarchy. Help the reader understand the method of your news judgment and organize pages. Package information by organizing it into modules. Modular design (everything in a rectangle) is still the most effective pattern of design.

4. **Keep it reader friendly and useable**
   Don't make it difficult for your reader to use the information you're presenting. Think about design strategies that slow down the reader: italic type, reverse type, all cap typefaces, type on top of pictures, grunge typography. Consider ways of helping the reader with content: drop caps, text heads, paragraph breaks, white space, increased story ledding.

5. **Don't overdo**
   Too much of anything in design can be dangerous. Take a step back from a finished design and squint your eyes. What do you see? Any element that becomes too distracting should be a danger sign. Pictures cut into shapes are currently one of the most overused design strategies.

6. **Type should communicate**
   Don't get predictable in design. Readers have a hard time deciding if the information is fresh, new and interesting. Take chances.

7. **Create alignments**
   Nothing guides and directs readers stronger than strong alignments (left, right, centered).

8. **Create dominance**
   Invite the reader in through clear dominant elements. Dominant elements need to be two to three times larger than secondary elements to carry the visual weight. Use pictures larger and in more dramatic shapes than feels comfortable. Readers respond to photographs. Remember that active shapes in design are more powerful than passive shapes.

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9. **Strive for innovation**

    Don't be afraid to to take chances with design. Sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't. Experiment.If it feels uncomfortable to you at first, that's possibly a sign that you're pushing your own personal comfort level.

10. **Above all, be functional with design**

    It's the bottom line. Don't decorate pages. Don't add anything to "fill up space." That means no clip art. If the design isn't adding to the information, the reader doesn't need it. Edit it out.Content should be good enough to maintain attention.