

IDEO

OVERVIEW

By the time I joined IDEO, it was already an industrial design and engineering powerhouse. One of its many secret weapons was its state-of-the-art model shop, where the proposed design of the product was modeled in hard foam and then painted with extraordinary precision, to accurately portray the future design of the client's product. The finished version is referred to as the "appearance model."

Around my third year there, IDEO started to expand its capabilities to include the design of spaces, experiences and services - things that aren't hard products. Given the company's long tradition of model-building, I thought that we needed a new kind of model shop that could provide the same function for these new, immaterial designs. The model for these, I figured, was a story, and the best way to tell and deliver a story to a remote client was with a video.

I pitched the idea to David Kelley, and he gave me a starting budget and asked me to give it a shot.



I can't show any examples of IDEO's appearance models, but this example from Priority Designs website is a perfect example. The device on the left is a finished appearance model, the one on the right is an earlier "sketch" of the final form.



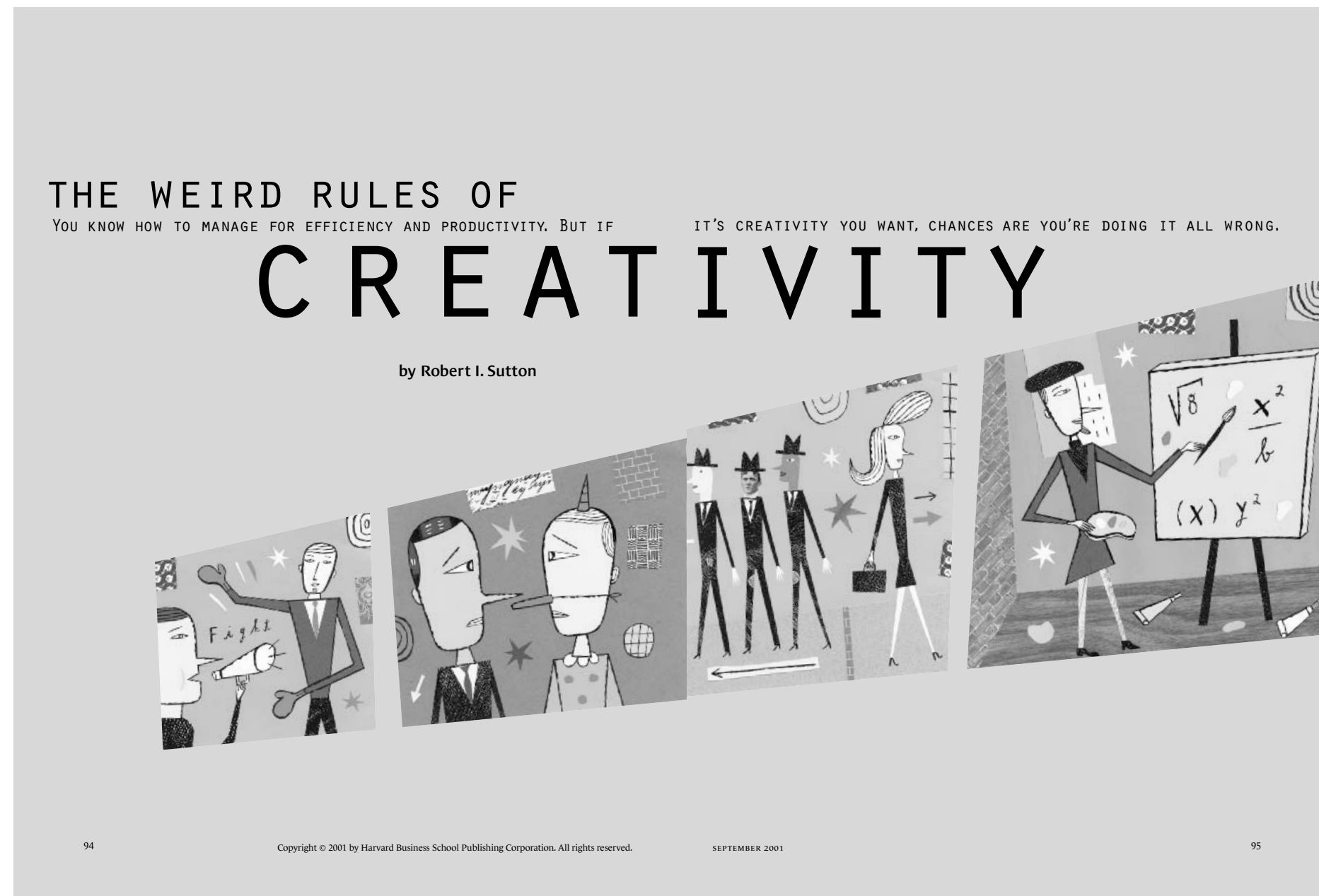
Duane, 34
Single guy, Shopaholic

Stills from a small sample of the videos I made at IDEO.

The premise was simple: create short videos to help clients understand our how design ideas would manifest in the final product, and how they might be experienced by the end user in terms of both function and feeling. I coined the term “video prototype” to describe this work.

I produced over 100 videos during my tenure, the majority of which were client deliverables that remain confidential (this was well before iPhones or YouTube, so our clients appreciated receiving these “exotic” deliverables.) I also made videos that were for public consumption, or were showing already-released products we had designed, and I will post a small sample of these on my website.


For a bit more context, here is an excerpt from a September 2001 Harvard Business Review article by Bob Sutton that summarizes my role there nicely.



“Another way to spark creativity is to hire people with skills you don’t think you need. If this sounds ridiculous, consider that the practice is not uncommon among product design companies, which live or die on innovation. This attitude led IDEO to hire Craig Syverson because he seemed to have a lot of “cool” skills in areas like computers and the arts. When IDEO’s managers offered him a position, they weren’t quite sure what the job would entail or if they needed his skills at all. Syverson experimented with several jobs, but soon focused on video production work even though, at first, there was no demand for custom videos from IDEO clients. As IDEO’s focus expanded, however, from designing products to designing user and customer experiences, Syverson’s ability to capture how people use different products became a crucial—and profitable—service to clients.”

Link to full article: <https://hbr.org/2001/09/the-weird-rules-of-creativity>

This is a LinkedIn recommendation I received from Bill Moggridge, co-founder of IDEO. With Bill's passing in 2012, LinkedIn removed his profile and his subsequent recommendations, hence I am including a screen capture of with this entry. It was a great honor to be mentored by Bill during (and after) my tenure at IDEO, and I miss him to this day.



Bill Moggridge 1st
Cofounder at IDEO
San Francisco Bay Area | Design

Bill Recommends

Show: **All (3)** | [Colleagues \(3\)](#) | [Service Providers \(0\)](#) | [Business Partners \(0\)](#) | [Students \(0\)](#)

[Craig Syverson](#)
Media Discipline Lead at IDEO

I have known Craig ever since he joined IDEO to help us develop our media skills in 1995. I worked closely with him for ten years as we made videos about projects, evangelized the use of media for prototyping design experiences, and expanded our abilities as interaction designers. My admiration for his work was initially based on the excellence of his projects, as his work was always original as well as appropriate to the context. As time went on, my pleasure in knowing him as an individual increased, as he proved himself as a wonderful colleague and friend. I admire him and trust him completely, a sentiment that is shared by the other people that he has worked with. I am deeply impressed by the sophistication of his methodology, the wisdom of his judgment, and his knack for knowing what is "cool" while at the same time steering away from anything shallow or gimmicky. He has amazingly broad talents, spanning the arts, design, media and communication skills. He is a truly "renaissance man," able to contribute to a community in many ways, with a broad cultural perspective and diverse experience. *October 1, 2009*

Bill (Cofounder at IDEO) managed Craig indirectly at IDEO

Bill and I had a kind of deal over the years: he would coach me on the principals of UX and I would coach him on video production.

When Bill set out to write his seminal book *Designing Interactions*, he supplemented it with video interviews with prominent people in the field. He did most of these interviews at my production studio at IDEO, and I would occasionally help out with the shot. Sometimes he forgot to let me know an interview was taking place, and on more than one occasion I had people like Sergey and Larry suddenly walk into my office asking for him.

When the book was getting prepped for publishing, Bill asked me to author the DVD of his videos that was included. Some of my photography was also used in the book.



Designing Interactions was published by the MIT Press in 2006



IDEO

By contrast with designs that would hide the capsule, the proposal from this Palo Alto, Calif., industrial design firm — specifically, Blaise Bertrand and Craig Syverson — purposely exposes it. People would be encouraged to post, paste and paint on the six-foot kiosk that contains the capsule. Over centuries, the column would bulge with layers of protection — and information.

IDEO was asked by the New York Times to submit a concept in a worldwide competition they were sponsoring to build a thousand-year time capsule. I was asked to lead the project, and came up with the concept of a “living” monument rather than a buried one. I worked with Industrial designer Blaise Bertrand to draw up the rough specification and create the conceptual renderings. Our proposal was one of the finalists, and the concept was published in the New York Times Magazine. Santiago Calatrava won the competition, so we didn’t feel too bad that we didn’t.

Bibliographic references (IDEO-related)

Moggridge, Bill. DVD design and authoring. *Designing Interactions*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007

Kelly, Tom. Video Prototyping. In *The Ten Faces of Innovation*. New York: Doubleday, 2005

Nussbaum, Bruce. "The Power of Design," *Business Week*, May 14, 2004, 64

Sutton, Bob. "The Weird Rules of Creativity," *Harvard Business Review*, September 2001, 92

Muschamp, Herbert. "Designs for the Next Millennium," *New York Times Magazine*, December 5, 1999, 136

Awards Received

Design Distinction, 2002 ID Annual Design Review, "personal skies," multimedia exhibition for the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

2002 IDSA Award, Environments, "personal skies," multimedia exhibition for the Museum of Modern Art, New York.