

Winter cold keeping you inside? Come explore with us. Our winter issue of Communiqué is all about navigation – from a nautical-themed invitation to hunting down your website to navigating the streets amidst the new look of NYC taxicabs.

Society Sparkle



[The Hispanic Society of America](#), a free museum and library for the study of art from Spain, Portugal, and Latin America, has a remarkable collection tucked away on Audubon Terrace in upper Manhattan.

For their annual Benefit Gala, the Society asked Aaron Design, Inc., to create a contemporary look, a considerable departure from their tradition. Aaron Design analyzed the nautical design from a treasured holding of the Society's library and adapted it for the invitation package. The design is based on the compass rose and rhumb lines found on a map of the world by Juan Vespucci, explorer Amerigo Vespucci's nephew.

For the actual event, Aaron Design created banners on which Goya's painted maidens danced. Swaying between the hall's 35-foot columns, the banners fit both the event and the Society's mission.

The event drew guests from all over the world. Coverage in the society press, including a front page story in Mexico City's *Club* magazine, featured photos of the table place cards as well as the banners.

"We received many compliments from people from Spain, Mexico and New York on the invitations," said Renée Niño de Rivera, PR and development consultant to the Society. "People who toured our building the day after the Gala even asked to see the map that inspired the invitations. Aaron Design did a wonderful job of conveying the cultural treasures of the Society and creating the excitement needed to launch a successful event."

News Flash!



Cloud Nine

Aaron Design celebrated its ninth birthday with cake, ice cream, and a wonderful growth spurt. Last year saw us with four talented young interns in the office and awards aplenty. We're looking forward to next year, when we become a pre-teen!



Aardvarks in the Blogosphere

Wake up your right brain! Check out Aaron Design's new visual blog, [Aardvarks](#). It's filled with images that the aardvarks at Aaron Design have unearthed for you. Visit for a fast creativity fix, a smile, or a change in perspective.

Three Cheers for the Arts!

Aaron Design won three awards for work with clients in the arts: two Silver Davey Awards -- one for Cherry Lane Theatre's 2007 season calendar and one for the trade show banners for Art Resource/Artist Rights Society -- and a Creativity Award for painter [Hilde Overberg](#)'s website.

Search Engine Optimization 101



They say you can find anything on the web. But can people find your website? Here are a few pointers that will help you leverage the power of the web to connect your services with potential clients.

Think Google. The 800-pound gorilla of search engines, Google accounts for about 60% of all searches. An added bonus: Google searchers tend to be more results-oriented and web-savvy – desirable traits in prospective customers.

Think Like A Hunter. Most prospective customers are searching Google for a solution – not for you. Which search terms are prospective customers likely to use? How would someone find your company if they had no idea you existed?

Think Specific. Short of Google's pay-per-click Adwords program, there's no magic formula to get your site on the top of the search results. The more specific the terms you use in Search Engine Optimization (SEO) the less competition you'll have – and the better your chances for a higher ranking. For example, a search for "New York museums" yields 13 million results, while a search for "NYC Kahlo art museum" produces a much more manageable 28,000.

Think Content. Beware of Google's blind spots. It can't read text that's displayed as a graphic image or Flash animation. So, while your product name may look great as 3-D graphical text in an Old English font with a drop shadow and animated flames, it's going to be invisible to Google. And if Google can't see your product name, neither will any of your prospective clients.

Think Filenames. Make sure filenames contain keywords that also appear in the page text. This will help the page rank higher in Google for those keywords. So "cancer-center-patient-care.html" is an excellent filename for a page devoted to that topic. (Note that keywords are best separated with dashes.) Beware of website software that invents filenames for you – a filename like "productPage3b.html" just wastes space.

Think Connections. When determining the relevance of any given page for a search term, Google looks at who links to that page. Links from both your site and especially from outside sites help build your rank. It's important that sites linking to yours are reputable and ideally related to your product or service.

Think Beyond Keywords. Keyword metatags used to be the number one way to get found. Now, due to rampant abuse, keyword metatags are worthless. (Google completely stopped paying attention to them in the late 90s.) Focus on appropriate and specific title tags, links, filenames, and headings.

Think Integrity. Are you outsourcing your Search Engine Optimization? Be wary. You'll find no shortage of services that promise to get your site ranked highly; many of these are outright scams. Others use unethical techniques that might get your site ranked highly – until Google catches on and demotes your site or bans it entirely. Google spends over \$1 billion a year in R&D – much of it on developing new ways to improve the relevancy of their results. Trying to game Google's results is about as fruitful as trying to beat the house in Vegas.

Thank you to Don Pavlish of [PavlishGroup](#) for this article. [PavlishGroup](#) partners with Aaron Design to create smart, elegant, and informative websites that strengthen your firm's brand.

Good Design, Bad Design: Taxi!



We all see examples of design that make life easier – and design that should never have happened. [Share](#) your finds with us. We'll send you a Good Design/Bad Design T-shirt if your example is published.



Good Design: Flower Power

NYC taxicabs sprouted flowers in September. The blooms are the work of a public arts project called *Garden in Transit*. The project provides creative therapy for seriously ill and disabled children and has been expanded to include children and adults participating through schools, after-school programs, hospitals, and nonprofit groups. While the design is a bit of a throwback to the 60s, it definitely brightens the urban landscape.



Bad Design: A Checkered Future

Just as the taxis sprouted flowers on their hoods, their sides sprouted new graphics. The design started out as a simple typographic solution, but the Taxi & Limousine Commission wanted it to be flashier. The designers added the T in a circle, separated from the rest of the word. Then the NYC logo (designed by another firm for a different purpose), was added as well. The checked pattern along the trunk looks more NASCAR than historic Checker Cab. On top of it all, the fare listing is now one-quarter of the size it used to be – impossible to read from a distance. Instead of a fresh new look we've ended up with a five-car pile-up.

About the Firm



Aaron Design, Inc. creates innovative visual marketing solutions that capture the spirit of your company or the passions of your organization. We craft extraordinary designs for print, exhibits, corporate identity, and electronic communications including:

- > **Striking** brand identities
- > **Sophisticated** marketing and corporate communications
- > **Impressive** and **intelligent** publications
- > **Eye-catching**, accessible websites
- > **Inventive** event and promotional materials

Our award-winning team helps demanding corporate and nonprofit organizations meet business goals. We'd love to help you meet yours. Contact us by [e-mail](#) or call us at 212 414-1522.

Questions? Comments?

If you have a topic you'd like to see in a future issue of *Communiqué* or questions on anything in this issue, [e-mail](#) us.