peruse my list of speaking topics

EMILY COHEN

helping you design your business

Over the years, I've developed many great presentations and workshops that I've presented to conferences and organizations, large and small, across the United States as well as Canada and the UK. My topics are customized for the following specific target audiences:

› established small to mid-size design firms (great for AIGA events)
› principals, project and account managers
› in-house corporate and institutional teams

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Best Practices Any Design Firm Should Know (most popular topic!)

This session highlights the best top business practices that are the foundation of truly successful design organizations. These best practices cover organizational structures, staffing strategies, pricing, client management, and marketing. After working with hundreds of leading creative/design teams for 20+ years, I have compiled a list of smart business strategies that define successful firms. This session is very broad in topic, but provides very practical and actionable strategies that can easily be implemented.

Creating Winning New Business Presentations

Learn the essential components of a successful new business presentation exploring the who, what, where, when, and how of the all-important new business meeting. This session walks you and your firm through the step-by-step processes in planning, organizing, and running a successful in-person new business presentation. The best practices presented are culled from both designer and client feedback on experiences with the good, the bad, and the ugly of new business presentations. Topics covered include: ways to engage with your client, how to avoid common pitfalls, and the best ways to talk about and present your work and your firm.

Case Studies *

This session shows you how to frame the value of your design work in a way that potential clients will understand and respect. Learn the ideal framework for successful case studies including an exploration of various formats and different value-based metrics that can be used to demonstrate your design team's worth.

You Just Don't Understand: Managing Creatives in a Left Brain Culture *

It is not always easy for creative types (right-brains) and analytical-types (left-brain) to communicate and work together. Many creative teams include, are led by, and/or report to left-brain managers; therefore, learning the necessary skills to work together is essential. This topic will help teams understand the behavioral and personality differences between left- and right-brain types. In this session you will learn best-practice strategies that improve how these types can better communicate, work with and manage each other.

Stronger Leadership, Stronger Business: Staffing and Managing Your Team for Success *

Wondering how to leverage and build your firm's team and better optimize creativity, profitability, and operational systems? During this session, you will learn inspirational organizational and management systems and structures that will ensure a motivated and dedicated team. Learn to understand the difference between strong leadership and management and how these skills are critical to a successful design. This session includes recommendations on organizational structures and individual team roles and explains why effective account and project management strategies improve teamwork and staff morale.

Effective Proposal and Pricing Strategies

This topic will provide insight and expertise on writing winning proposals and creating smart pricing strategies that will help you get paid what you and your team are worth. Learn how to write winning proposals that effectively communicate your services, qualifications, voice, and vision. This session will teach you the steps needed to pre-qualify clients, define objectives, communicate project parameters, and customize your proposals. Discover the common mistakes made and ways to structure and communicate project information and pricing structures that capture your client's attention and interest.

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Advanced Proposal & Pricing Strategies

For experienced design firm principals, this session will reveal new insights and important (yet sometimes subtle) strategies and techniques that will improve how you write, present, and negotiate their proposals and fees. In this session, you will learn how to take current efforts to the next level; focus will be less on winning all projects, but winning the most qualified and profitable engagements. Learn ways to re-focus attention away from price as a key selection criteria and more towards expertise and value.

Pursuing and Qualifying Clients

Do you rely on referrals for most of your new business? Are you allowing existing clients to shape your firm's direction? Do you desire practical rather than theoretical advice? In this session, you will learn tips and tools for pursuing, not only attracting, the leads you want. You will gain an understanding of the step-by-step processes of qualifying prospects and identifying opportunities to ensure they are the right fit for your team and firm. You will learn to streamline the intake process so that the opportunities they continue to pursue fully support and enhance their business model.

Managing Projects and Clients for High Impact *

This session will focus on common client and project management challenges and will explore key communication tools and strategies that build and nurture long-term, mutually rewarding client relationships. You will be guided through the entire relationship cycle, from the development stage through to the end of a project, with a focus on high-level best practice communication strategies that facilitate and improve seamless client and project management processes.

Managing Different Generations and Behavioral Types *

The session will define some well-known generational and behavioral types, from "Generation Xers" to the Millenial generation and from "followers" to "leaders". During this session we will focus on ways you can customize your organizational structures and management styles according to each type's unique challenges and opportunities.

Must Have Clauses for Creative Contracts

This session will focus on why lawyers should not write contracts and what the real hidden purpose of contracts is. Hint: It is not to protect you in court! The session will also highlight important, yet unexpected and often overlooked, clauses you must include in any contract.

Creative Briefs: Aligning Expectations and Measuring Results *

What is a creative brief? Why do you need one? When do you write one? This session teaches creative teams how to use and write smartly crafted creative briefs. You will learn common mistakes and best practices to ensure the creative brief and the development process work together to support the value and power of thoughtful, strategic design to achieve creative results-driven solutions.

Moderating Panel Discussions

I can also moderate or participate in panel discussions on a range of topics related to professional practices, including, but not limited to: business models, operational structures and systems, organizational staffing structures and systems, proposals, project, staff, and client management, etc.

* These topics can be modified to specifically address the needs of either design firms on in-house corporate/creative teams.