Full Bleed

Sue Pfleger—University of Applied Sciences Mannheim—Faculty of Design—Newspaper—1st Edition



»Blood effect« created with ChatGPT with the prompt »A thick line of red paint is dripping down in uneven globules and spatters over the head in the photo«. Prompted on 24.05.2026

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SIMONE ANGST-MUTH, PHOTO ©SUE PFLEGER

Interview with Simone Angst-Muth, owner of the samGartenmarketing GmbH in Würzburg, Bavaria

sue—What is currently the biggest challenge for you as an agency owner?

sam—At the moment, our biggest challenge is having to assert ourselves as a professional agency working strategically and conceptually in the face of AI. Particularly company directors of the younger generation believe that AI can solve everything.

However, if AI is to be used effectively, it needs to be fed with the right prompts. This only works if—as a strategic communication partner—you have carried out an analysis of the client's current and desired situation, understand where the client is coming from, what they want to achieve strategically, how their competitors operate, and what their unique selling points are.

In my opinion, this preparatory work—which is necessary for the development of communication strategies—can currently only be carried out by marketing and design professionals who are capable of understanding the human and entrepreneurial situation through personal conversation.

sue—What is the least glamorous part of running an agency?

sam—The production phase: it may feel unglamorous, but at the same time it is extremely important in the development process of a communication campaign. In fact, it is absolutely crucial to the success of a campaign. You need to have complete mastery over the printing technology. Many printers complain that designers today are often not sufficiently prepared for production-related requirements.

You need extensive knowledge about colour, materials—such as paper, foils and fabrics—onto which a visual identity is printed, and therefore also about printing techniques and the various production phases. This fine-tuning is essential to creating a consistent corporate design and ensuring that the final product is high-quality.

sue—What has changed most in the design industry over the past five years?

sam—There is an increasing lack of production-related know-how, which no longer seems to be taught in some communication design degree courses or in media design training.

At the same time, the visual language has changed: many consumer magazines today work almost exclusively with buzzwords, oversized fonts and very rough typography. Finely balanced colours and elegant typographic and graphic design solutions are less frequent than in the past.

sue—Which skill will become more important for designers in the future?

sam—Mastering the basics of production and design will become more important than ever to produce good media and to understand what is technically possible during the production phase.

Although the trend is strongly moving towards digital media, I have seen that appreciation for printed matter is starting to grow again. People value having something printed to hold in their hands. Designers today therefore need to master both sides: on the one hand they need technical know-how to create digital campaigns and on the other, they need deep knowledge and understanding of printing techniques in all their facets.

sue—What has been the worst design trend of recent years for you?

sam—These thick black lines with huge headlines and buzzwords. To me, this trend often feels neither harmonious nor aesthetically pleasing. It is simply eye-catching for the sake of attracting attention.

sue—How do you make your creative decisions?

sam—The target group a company wants to reach is always the central focus. Without a precise analysis of the target group's needs, their socio-demographic data and their communication channels, nobody in our agency even picks up a pencil to become creative.

The design must be tailored 1:1 to the company, its target group and the needs of the people and customers. This applies to the visual style, texts, colours and typography just as much as to the customer's overall marketing strategy.

It's not about simply throwing pictures and texts together into a flyer and thinking it's done. It is about sustainably positioning companies as brands in their target market through a tailor-made corporate design.

sue—What helps you when everything in a project goes wrong at the same time?

sam—Fortunately, that has never happened in 30 years. But I would probably first go into my garden and have a cup of tea! Seriously, though, because we work very strategically, are well organised and operate with foresight, we always keep all partners and timelines in view—the customers, suppliers and decision-making processes.

We make sure that everyone has enough time if there are changes in decisions and we need to pivot. We set priorities, keep the bigger picture in mind and take everyone involved along with us.

sue—Is there a motto or thought that accompanies you professionally?

sam—When a client comes to us, we see it not only as a sign of trust but also as a great responsibility, and sometimes it's difficult for us to let the »baby« take its first steps alone.

But, luckily, we are often allowed to stay involved and accompany our clients on their journey towards becoming a local, regional or national brand. For us, it's not about simply completing a job and closing the file afterwards. In fact, many of our clients are now with us in their second generation. It makes us very happy to watch our »babies« grow.