Acknowledgement and compensation: a study of graphic design national awards

Reconhecimento e recompensa: um estudo sobre os prêmios nacionais de projeto gráfico

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ABSTRACT

Methods for performance assessment criteria and the compensation policy are means to recognize and strengthen bonds. National design awards assess professional performance and can be understood as the outcomes of making an effort to achieve excellence. It investigates how the assessment of employee performance in the editorial area is linked to the systems of acknowledgement in graphic design awards. The method comprises bibliographic review, questionnaire and exploratory qualitative analysis. The results indicate that, in addition to professional acknowledgement, the awards enable reflections on "value" in editorial design, and may raise discussions about design, market, innovation, technology, semantics, among others.

KEYWORDS

Editorial design; Professional acknowledgement; Human performance.

RESUMO

Os métodos de critérios de avaliação de desempenho e a política de remuneração são meios de reconhecimento e fortalecimento de vínculos. Os prêmios nacionais de design avaliam o desempenho profissional e podem ser entendidos como os resultados de um esforço para alcançar a excelência. Investiga como a avaliação de desempenho de funcionários da área editorial está vinculada aos sistemas de reconhecimento em prêmios de design gráfico. O método compreende revisão bibliográfica, questionário e análise qualitativa exploratória. Os resultados indicam que, além do reconhecimento profissional, os prêmios possibilitam reflexões sobre "valor" no design editorial, podendo suscitar discussões sobre design, mercado, inovação, tecnologia, semântica, entre outros.

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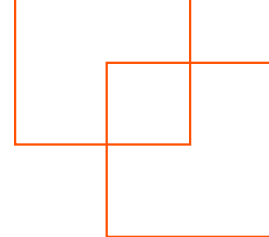Editorial design; Professional acknowledgement; Human performance.
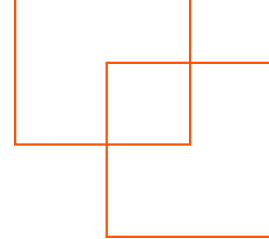
INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgement and professional compensation come from a process of assessment of results based on a time-span, focused on the present moment, or a near past. That is, future behaviour is unpredictable and the distant past is no longer of interest to company assessors, according to Bergamini and Beraldo (2007).

In national editorial awards, the effort focuses on assessing and compensating book professionals for first editions published in the year preceding the award. This way of recognizing human work is recurrent in the creative branch. According to public notices of the area, sometimes there is financial compensation, some other times there is only the implicit value of prestige and its consequences.

Research method: 1. Literature review – elaborates on how human performance connects to ways of compensation and acknowledgement in companies. Relevant information is also raised on the operation of national awards of graphic design (published on their websites), in addition to data available in cataloguing in publication data (works of own collection). 2. Data collection - comprises a questionnaire with three open questions, sent by e-mail to two publishing studios and two publishers, who have received national awards in the category in recent years. 3. Exploratory qualitative analysis, with an interpretation of the expressed contents by using the writing of the subjects as part of the writing, and exploring relationships between the answers (Alves e Silva, 1992). Of an exploratory nature, the textual outcome is anchored by the review of the literature and gathered information, and seeks to build a "first knowledge of themes and facts which are less studied and less known (...) for a thematic further development" (Chaer et al., 2011, p.254), bringing a contextualized exert on the theme.

The focus of the objective of research on compensation and acknowledgement methods is on understanding the perception of publishers regarding Brazilian editorial awards, how they work and how they can impact the career of designers responsible for graphic projects, and thus start a discussion on the subject. The research period was the first half of 2021.

2 HUMAN PERFORMANCE AND COMPENSATION IN COMPANIES

The human performance and assessment methods and the remuneration policy in companies can be understood in two ways: on the one hand as a set of reliable instruments to ensure a fair work environment and, on the other, as a means of offering acknowledgement to the people who work in the company, reinforcing employment and interpersonal bonds. This difference is justified by questionings that have been raised due to the interest of employers in applying such assessment methods, considering that there is a movement for the business rehumanization and that human factors are under constant review (Bergamini, 2007).

> Companies' concern with productivity is giving way to new methods aimed at excellence and improvement of the quality of products and the lives of the people who produce them. [...] In this context, the knowledge management of the members of an organization needs to be related to the organizational values which are compatible with the implementation of this process, that is, with a corporate culture based on the creation and sharing of knowledge (Fialho et al., 2010, p.11-12).

Fialho et al. (2010) consider that there was a leap in customer expectations and, consequently, in the demands of organizations, which currently need people capable of identifying, interpreting and acting on shared information, in strategic knowledge management. The authors claim that "the root of organizational values is motivational" (Fialho et al., 2010, p.30) for any position or team in the company; motivation boosts behaviour from an internal disposition to the achievement of a goal. They argue that efforts that generate compensations suggest appreciation and foster job satisfaction.

For Amorim et al. (2008), compensation programs keep workers motivated, satisfied and with a high sense of justice, in addition to contributing to increased productivity, with labour costs under control. The management of human resources in organizations has been concerned with the influence of compensation policy on human behaviour. The sharing of incomes linked to goals can be a strategic practice in several spheres since financial compensations promote the
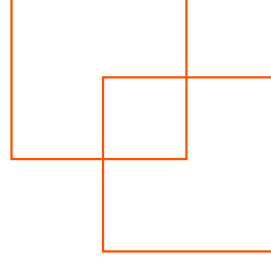
idea that people can grow together with the company. Compensation can be based on positions, stakeholders, skills and value aggregation, each instance with particular interests for managers. People management must start from a systemic view in which internal and external factors permeate the company, in a combined structuring of values that evolve in societies (Fisher, 2002 apud Silva, 2013).

The research by Gonçalves et al. (2016) shows that the problem in adopting the compensation system owes to the difficulty of measuring the value added to the work performed in the organization, and there are not many academic studies on the subject. The authors consider that there has been a change in labour relations starting the last century, culminating in management of compensation – management of greater complexity, which ceases to be prescriptive to become strategic in terms of intellectual capital, enabling the systems of compensation and acknowledgement for performance to achieve the company's objectives. According to Costa et al. (2010), "values" represent motivations based on a judgment of what is good, desirable. The result of this judgment is the attitudes concerned, that is, people's behaviours are guided by values. Academic studies on compensations in private, public or hybrid organizations have been carried out since the 1980s, following the growth of the third sector, according to the authors. They set forth that the interest in compensation relates mainly to the values associated with work, such as effectiveness/efficiency (quality, productivity, competence), organizational management system (tradition, hierarchy, professional posture and organization), respect for the employee (acknowledgement, qualification of human resources, career plan, organizational environment) and preferences for compensation. In general, according to the aspects mentioned in this research, the authors arrived at a homogeneity among the organizations surveyed.

There are many ways to measure business performance and establish compensation and acknowledgement systems. Compensation management "directs, motivates and compensates
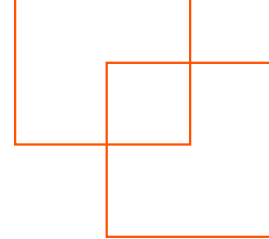
people's work and contribution" (Silva, 2013, p.5). According to the author, the compensations can be financial in a straightforward way (as compensation), indirectly (as benefits) or non-financial (as autonomy and professional growth). For Vroom (1997 apud Amorim et al., 2008), compensations can be intrinsic – per task performed, establishing the working relationship based on satisfaction, personal and professional growth, and acknowledgement in the profession; or extrinsic – financial benefits, promotions or other benefits established by compensation programs.

Miranda (2018) sets forth how performance awards started to be implemented in organizations and how they led to approaches related to innovation by the various authors studied over time. A synthetic framework of authors (RBS) has been developed with publications since the 1960s, a time when innovation is called a threat to companies, skipping to the 1990s, when innovation is already presented as a process of improving products or business practices. In the 2000s, innovation is integrated into the strategic management of companies and their partners, showing itself as a culture that brings competitive advantage and improvement of human performance. At the end of this decade, awards appear as a way to achieve innovation, expand patent registration, enable closer bonds with academia, and even leverage cutting-edge research in companies. Finally, according to Frey (2017 apud Miranda 2018), awards become a universalized phenomenon in fulfilling a social demand for acknowledgement.

3 EDITORIAL DESIGN TEAMS AND NATIONAL AWARDS

Teamwork is a constant practice in product design. Editorial design teams, especially for unconventional publications, are composed of professionals from different specialities. According to the cataloguing in publication data, the following professionals stand out: editorial coordination, editorial planning and graphic design (in which there may be works of illustration, photography, art direction, graphic design, among others), graphic producer, production assistant, as well as professionals for image processing, publishing, editing,
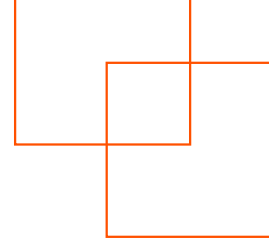
diagramming, among others. In the specific cases of pop-up books, there may still be professionals responsible for paper engineering. The teams are sometimes composed of specialists in different countries, involving other teams in these locations and graphic industries, and the printing of special works is mostly Chinese (as stated in the publications of personal collection).

The awards of the editorial area are traditional means of valuing the book market that support them. They involve publishers but are not restricted to the internal environment of these organizations, often composed of small teams that outsource creative and graphic sectors. These are awards from a whole category of professionals, similar to what happens with some productive sectors, such as furniture (for example, the Design Hall, Idea Brazil and the Museu da Casa Brasileira), ceramics (for example, Oxford Award), among others, and major international awards such as the IF Design Award for the design of various products. Awards that periodically point to innovations highlight designs and designers, releases and trends, encourage and honour professionals and companies, inform interested parties, heat online and fairs, and keep their markets always in the media. Some national awards involving the book object: Jabuti, Fundação Nacional do Livro Infantil e Juvenil (FNLIJ), Aloísio Magalhães (Biblioteca Nacional), UNESCO Chair of reading, among others. International Awards: Lad Awards (Latin American Design Awards), Bologna Prize for the Best Children's Publisher of the Year (BOP), Biennial of Illustration Bratislava (BIB), International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), among others. In addition to the annual editorial awards, there are the so-called hors concours (out of competition, in free translation), which are eventually granted by the authorial work as a whole during the outreach events. In the case of FNLIJ, since 1992, the hors concours awards occur when the one who receives the most votes has won at least three times as a writer or illustrator. Special Awards were also awarded (in 1997, 1998 and 1999) for works in a new edition by deceased authors, or from previously awarded collections (information published on the awards' websites).

The largest annual editorial award in Brazil and outstanding in Latin America, the Jabuti Award, from Brazilian Publishers, was in its 62nd

edition in 2020. As stated on its website, it was conceived in 1958 to promote the sector in the global market and professionalize the country's publishers. Today it seeks to approach the reader. In addition to content appraisal, with the axes of literature, essays and innovation, with their specific categories, there is the "book" axis, in which the categories are: cover, illustration, printing, graphic design and translation. The imprints of the book of the year, award-winning book and finalist book are made available to the publishers (Fig. 1), tagged by colour, to be attached to the winning work. They can be used on websites, social networks and other ways of promoting it.

Figure 1. Jabuti 2020 Award Imprints

Source: Jabuti Prize website.

In the edition of the 2020 Jabuti award, as stated on the website, the graphic project had its first place with the work launched in 2019: "Contemporary Architectures in Paraguay" (Fig. 2); Responsible: Maria Cau Levy, André Stefanini, Ana David, Christian Salmeron; Publishers: Romano Guerra Publisher and Editora Escola da Cidade in partnership. In the image of the work released by the first publisher, the considerable size of the seal and its position – on the left, first look at the Western reading, and a golden point in the composition – symbolically represent the weight of the acknowledgement that this award brings.

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Figure 2. Work "Arquitecturas contemporáneas en Paraguay".

Source: social networks of Romano Guerra Editora, Facebook cover.

In the sphere of children's and young adult books, the Fundação Nacional do Livro Infantil e Juvenil (FNLIJ) has also holds annual awards since 1975, among other programs to promote books and reading practices, according to their website. For Silva and Soares (2020), the entity was part of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), an international non-profit institution that awards the highest award in the area, the Christian Andersen Award. The authors emphasize that the foundation is maintained by publishers, thus promoting the publishing market of which they are part.

With the awards, FNLIJ seeks to distinguish national editorial products by indications of "highly recommended" and "FNLIJ award" by category for this audience, directly valuing the companies, teams and independent professionals involved and, indirectly, influencing purchase decisions amongst reading mediators. According to the 2020 regulation, the award has 18 categories: children; image; informative; young adult; literature in Portuguese; playbook; illustration; poetry; editorial project (since 1990); retelling; theater; theoretical; translation/adaptation (children/young/informative/retelling); new writer; new illustrator (FNLIJ website).

The readers-appraisers are voluntary expert readers in children's and young adult literature selected by the foundation. They receive from the publishers the competing works for a year, for reading and appraising. Lists organized by category are drawn up by the foundation and delivered to appraisers, and serve for appraising until the final resolution. Appraisers must write an explanatory justification about

their chosen finalists, all with the greatest secrecy. According to information from the institutional website, when commonly agreed, works that are not awarded but have quality, become part of the FNLIJ Basic Collection.

According to Silva and Soares (2020), the editorial project awards show, through the explanatory text of the appraisers, the materiality of the work, such as format, binding and weight, and by expressive techniques used: illustration, typography, diagramming, colours. The targeting reading audience (children and adults) of awarded works was also taken as proof of quality in this study. They attest that the quality of the works has increased if compared with past productions.

The 2020 award-winning book in "Best Editorial Project" was "Pinocchio: O livro das pequenas verdades", released in 2019 by Editora Boitatá (Boitempo's children's imprint), by Alexandre Rampazo. The project is composed of a brochure in "à la française" verticalized format, meaningful illustrations and one of the pages in concertina opening. Two images published on the web by the author show the stamps of the awards and acknowledgements of the work. The seals are in a privileged space in the image, next to the cover (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Work "Pinocchio: o livro das pequenas verdades", by Alexandre Rampazo, 2019. The cover with the seals and promotion of acknowledgement (in allegorical graphic form of laurels of victory).

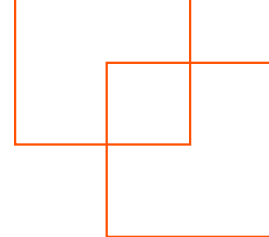Source: social networks of Romano Guerra Editora, Facebook cover.

The images released from the core of the work (illustrated book) show the authorial optics of this retelling, as an original parallel narrative to the children's novel "The Adventures of Pinocchio", by the Italian writer Carlo Collodi. It addresses the search of the character for humanization, a process that involves meeting the expectations of others. The specular semantics employed by Rampazo presents a scene reflection with a neutral background on an open page (Fig. 4), reinforcing the idea of an emblematic non-narrative image.

Figure 4: Open page inside the work "Pinocchio: o livro das pequenas verdades", by Alexandre Rampazo, 2019.

Source: Alexandre Rampazo's website.

The book received many honours such as the UNESCO Chair Award for reading, Jabuti 2020 finalist, National Library Award (2nd place), the nomination of thirty best of Crescer magazine. According to the publishnews website, the award of Crescer from Editora Globo is in the 15th edition and had the appraisal of 41 Brazilian appraisers to highlight 30 works released in Brazil in 2021 (national or translated). Together with important digital influencers, such as Dayse Carias from "A Cigarra e a Formiga", these are initiatives that have brought a lot of information targeted at reading mediators stakeholders, and acknowledgement to the professionals involved in the design of the

works (Carias has 36.2 thousand followers on Instagram).

During the pandemic, graphic project categories have had logistical problems. The channelling of the works to the appraising committees becomes unfeasible for several reasons, including the closure of sectors related to the public notices and the remote work of its members. This was the case, for example, of the 2020 announcement of the Aloísio Magalhães Award (National Library), while other categories proceeded by digital means, as stated on its website.

4 DATA COLLECTION WITH PUBLISHERS AND GRAPHIC DESIGN STUDIOS

The assessment of human work performance in the area of editorial design encompasses a consultation with four respondents, here cited as R1 and R2 (graphic editorial design studios), R3 and R4 (publishers). They represent companies that have received graphic design awards in recent years. The consultation consisted of a questionnaire composed of open-ended questions sent via electronic address to the person in charge of the company's communication (email available on the websites), out of which three questions were answered about the subject: 1. How important are design awards for publishers/studios?; 2. Is there any means of compensation (financial or otherwise, benefits, get-togethers, commemorative objects, among other means) for the professionals awarded in graphic design in this company?; 3. What is the perception of acknowledgement for the career of award-winning designers?

The questionnaire technique is proposed in this format to draw on objective meeting points between the evaluation of human work performance in the area of editorial design and the systems of acknowledgement in graphic design awards. It aims at a preliminary study involving the perception of value attributed to the awards and their consequences for companies and professionals.

Respondent R1 estimates that the award is "paramount to reinforce the importance of design as an essential part of a book", considering that there are "three authorial voices (and narratives) that make up a book: text, image (if any), design" (R1). For R3, diligence in the graphic
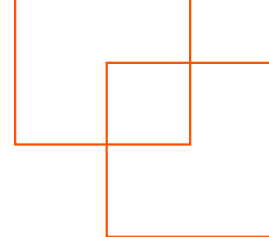
design is a guideline to be followed, either by the main brand of the publisher or by partner publishers, here called co-editors. With a paradigm break in editions and collections, the addition in aesthetic care from the 1980s is kept from then on in the R3 company. Considered the heart of the production, the high graphic standard moves the professionals involved to carefully articulate design and content. The acknowledgement through the awards is the result of this work, and there is a noticeable distinction of Brazilian editions today, which can be confirmed at international book fairs (R3). For R4, the awards are "important to highlight the quality and professionalism of the publisher", reason for a "great commitment of the editorial team". This respondent seems to reinforce the teamwork involving the product, so that acknowledgement is shared.

Regarding the means of compensation of companies working with editorial products, R1 reinforces that the categories of graphic design in the awards confirm the importance of the "creative construction" of the book as an object. "The compensations vary from one prize to another but are the same as the other categories" (R1). In R2's company, when winning a big national prize, "the designers involved in the project went to the ceremony to receive the award and shared the corresponding financial value. In addition, each one was given a trophy." For R3, university publishers in the public sector cannot provide financial or similar compensations, but nominal acknowledgement occurs via social networks and the publisher's website, a current prominent means of promotion and acknowledgement. R4 maintains that there are "cash bonuses in cases of awards".

Regarding the perception of acknowledgement for the career of the award-winning designers, the perception of R1 is positive. The editorial environment has understood the value that design enables. It certifies that, even so, "acknowledgement is still necessary", and understands that academic studies in this sense can help in the reflection on the importance of design for the book as an object. R2 ensures that award-winning studios gain prominence in the area and start receiving more proposals, involving larger and better projects. In addition, they experience acknowledgement and trust from partner companies.
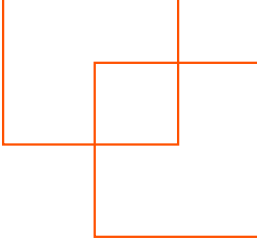
Since the award they have won, they have made successful editions, as well as graphic design workshops and creative processes. R3 considers that the awards bring an excellent return to designers: "With the increase in the exposure of designers on social networks, it was enhanced" since before the knowledge about "the work of a designer depended a lot on personal visits, portfolio presentation in meetings, etc." He reinforces that the market is attentive to the link between the results of prizes and greater prestige, that is, an award-winning graphic project gives visibility to the professionals of the book. In the perception of R4, the award-winning professionals in his company already had a consolidated career, thus showing that the awards are the result of hard and continuous work in the search for excellence.

Some issues featured in this research can be highlighted to show in topics the differences and similarities between what the business theory attests to the practices explained by the respondents of the editorial branch (Table 1).

Table 1: Differences and similarities between acknowledgement policies and national graphic design awards.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT POLICY IN COMPANIES	NATIONAL GRAPHIC DESIGN AWARDS
It depends on an internal corporate culture	It depends on publishers' associations, governmental or private organizations
Customer expectations for diverse products, including the book	
The basis of organizational values is motivational	
Compensations and awards suggest appreciation and generate job satisfaction	
Compensations increase productivity in the company	Awards raise the technical and creative standard and give visibility to companies and professional teams
Financial compensations depend on the interests of managers	Financial awards depend on the sector and the power of the associations and organizations involved
It is difficult to measure the "value-added" to the work	
Compensation management is strategic to the company's objectives	
Companies compensate for effectiveness/efficiency, systematic management, and/or respect for the worker	Awards compensation for results: high graphic standard, well-articulated form and content
Compensations can be: direct (compensation), indirect (benefits) or non-financial (intrinsic value)	
Performance awards drive innovation and personal and professional acknowledgement	

Source: developed by the authors.

Table 1 shows that there is a public expectation for product innovation and that the compensation and acknowledgement of workers form strategic policies that seek to achieve them. The measurement of added value to work remains an issue to be discussed in companies.
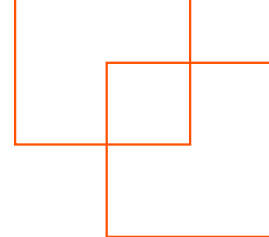
5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The results of the research point to what is considered good design over time and how much companies are dedicated to achieving it, since the focus is on the corporate vision. It is noteworthy how publishers' associations establish and at the same time benefit from the awards, as well as the award-winning professionals themselves. Just like in any company, which creates its compensation programs to motivate innovation at work. Other studies may derive from this, addressing the perspective of designers, not included by the extension of the format of the article.

Awards can delineate desirable attributes in an object such as the book, motivating professionals and driving companies to innovation. Considering the book an object of secular use, an important aspect of this analysis is to reflect on how to promote innovation in book design, a theme for a greater scope. The awards also enable a reflection on "value" in editorial design, since they can open positive and annually renewed discussions about the market, innovation, method, technology, among others, and on more subjective issues such as verbal-visual articulation, aesthetics, semantics, activation of intrinsic motivation in professional acknowledgement. All these factors interrelate in creative work management, focused on human factors, from the project to the reading. As a contribution of the research, it is pointed out the perception that awards are important moments to map criteria, verify what stands out in editorial design over time, an approach still underexplored in academia.

Although they should not be considered an end in themselves, in the sense of competitiveness rather than the pursuit of mastery and ethics in design, the compensations in the form of national graphic design awards seem to confirm the impact they have on companies and professionals' careers is positive. In addition to moving the book market, they set up a timeline of good national production, bringing visibility and prestige to professionals and companies. Validated by experts who compose the appraisal boards, promoted by events, marked by indicative stamps/seals, systematically highlight the value of design in publications that best associate form and content, which
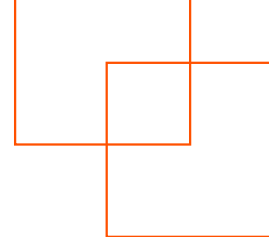
can masterfully articulate the technology and human sensitivity of an entire era.

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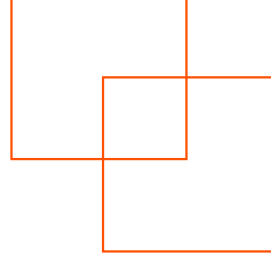
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