

# Gary Hicks

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## Profile

I have more than 14 years' experience as a professional designer. Outside of work you can find me at the gym where I like to stay fit nursing a love/hate relationship with Leg Day. I am loyal and no stranger to hard work or long days, I go the extra mile to get things done.

## Education

### GCSE | 1997 | LEALANDS HIGH SCHOOL

- Art: A\*
- Graphic Design: A
- English: B
- Math: B
- Ten GCSE C+ or higher

## Software

### FLUENT / EXPERT LEVEL

- Acrobat, Dreamweaver, Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop, QuarkXPress, Visual Studio
- Office, MailMerge, SBS, Exchange, IIS, SQL, Apache
- Google Analytics, Raven SEO, Social Media
- Wordpress, ASP, ASP.NET, PHP, MVC, OpenCart

## Skills & Abilities

### BRANDING

Having worked both an in-house' and designer for clientele, I have seen many approaches to branding over the years. To advocate, to understand branding –it is more than just design –it is to genuinely care about a product and someone's business. I feel privileged to have worked closely with many directors –often early in the business development, and at times challenging marketing preconceptions –I believe a lot of designers miss out on this, crafting not just designs but *brands*.

### DESIGN

I am very well experienced with both print and digital pipelines; responsive web, iOS UX, and across the full spectrum of print design –complicated layouts, colour management and sourcing printers and chromalin proofs etc. Responsible for many projects at a time, my management skills have been honed and as a result I am a much more versatile designer ready to integrate and not shy of pressure.

### I.T. SYSTEMS AND MANAGEMENT

As I.T. administrator for every company I have worked for over the past 14 years, domain names, FTP, DNS, hosting, security and mailboxes as a result are all the more familiar to me –not just because I work with them day to day in website design –but because I hands-on experience with the underlying tech.

### "HELLO WORLD"

Since my first line of code (see title), I was hooked. Fluent in ASP, PHP and SQL, I am well versed in MVC frameworks such as Zend and OpenCart. I am currently teaching myself iOS development in Swift.

### MARKETING

Highly skilled in SEO and assessing and implementing online, mobile, e-commerce and social media marketing, I frequent SeoMOZ & many sources daily so my practise is in sync with the latest developments.

## Experience

### **DESIGNER | I.T. MEDIA DESIGN LTD | 2000 – 2003**

- Bespoke websites
- ASP E-commerce websites
- In-house design and designing for clients
- Flash intros
- Small Business Server
- 3D Studio MAX
- QuarkXPress
- In-house and on-site client IT services

Fresh from college, halfway through Computer Sciences I managed a high pressure position being solely responsible for all website and print design, and eventually IT. Inside and out of work, I had to teach myself a lot of skills -both in service of the roles being asked of me and on my own inclination to expanding the services we could offer. Design and its tools have seen a number of changes in the 14 years past, and I value the perspective that seeing the changes have given me.

Seeing an opportunity I developed a rapidly deployable template based on my own bespoke e-commerce website. As a result we made complex e-commerce a re-sellable, rapidly deployable service and -in the process -great business with lucrative maintenance and hosting contracts.

On a day to day basis, I would juggle responsibilities between in-house demands -including taking care of design and responsibilities for the Director's other businesses -and advocating on behalf of our clientele, often working long days to get what needed to be done, *done*.

A lot was asked of me, looking back, it was a hard working environment but one that taught me a lot about business, design and what is possible if one pushes oneself to achieve. I am grateful and look back fondly seeing how much I taught myself in design and programming and as a result what we achieved together as a company and to our clientele.

The office space comprised several local companies, of whom each relied upon me to keep their network & hardware running smoothly. I also had the opportunity to visit several clients onsite to implement IT.

### **I.T. & GRAPHIC DESIGN ADMINISTRATOR | CYBERFLEX LTD | 2003 – 2004**

- Bespoke websites
- ASP E-commerce websites
- In-house design and designing for clients
- Flash intros
- Small Business Server
- 3D Studio MAX
- QuarkXPress
- In-house and on-site client IT services

Cyberflex Ltd, a sports supplement retailer/distributor based in Northern Ireland, needed a website and branding for its multi-level membership -*MemX* -that would facilitate a rewards scheme and unlock discounts respective to membership level. The website was written entirely by myself in ASP and with security built into each function.

Cyberflex Ltd also had a high street presence -three shops -and their terminals were all connected to the website -unifying stock control between high street and online sales. A reporting function generated stock and sales forecasts as well as an annual profit and loss report -invaluable tools to the company director and accountant. Programming in ASP will always be a great love of mine, I really like the language. Achieving so many technical feats galvanised my belief that being a coder and designer provides a great synergy.

**I.T. & GRAPHIC DESIGN ADMINISTRATOR | GENERSYS PLC | 2003 - 2012**

- Bespoke websites
- ASP E-commerce websites
- In-house design and designing for clients
- Flash intros
- Small Business Server
- 3D Studio MAX
- QuarkXPress
- In-house and on-site client IT services

Beginning as a freelance designer, I met with the directors when the company brand existed only in name – Genersys. Having been given a blank canvas, I went away and designed the logo, and later their website. After two years self-employed work, and having commuted to London daily (it was really tough!) I would later move to London and be employed as the company's graphic designer.

My responsibilities included designing all of Genersys Plc -and our Partners' around the world -websites and printed material. In 2007 I was fortunate enough to be sent to Mexico City for two weeks where I was to work closely with the directors there to create additional branding and website for Genersys Mexico.

With many IT responsibilities; ranging from, network infrastructure and security; software and computer hardware procurement, and software licensing including Large Volume; managing our online assets such as hosting, mailboxes and our many domain names and the registration processes involved; VPN and file sharing access not just locally but internationally, my time was often divided several ways. No one day would be the same, and though I liked the challenge it was a very difficult task to successfully manage all of my responsibilities myself.

As the sole designer at Genersys Plc, I was responsible for design of, administration and implementation of more than 46 installers' and subsidiaries websites and their mailboxes for Genersys Plc. With a template I had produced, powered by ASP I could rapidly deploy websites for installers. I provided Genersys Plc with full analytics and tracking for all of our UK and International websites through Google Analytics.

Whilst at Genersys Plc –starting as a pet project I developed at home –I built a bespoke intranet, written in ASP and SQL. It would later develop into a fully-fledged CRM/CMS Extranet:

- Allowed our London headquarters' Managing Director to track and manage sales performance around the world. This unified many spreadsheets, files directories.
- Enabled HQ directors to track sales and our partners' performance around the globe.
- Over several years the extranet became an integral component to the directors' daily activities and afforded a better synergy between sales and marketing.

**DESIGN & BRANDING | AVON ENGINEERING SUPPLIES LTD | 2011 - CURRENT**

Working again at the conceptual stages of the company, with a clean canvas I provided all branding, logo and website design. The business needed a website that would make the process as selling –at times –complex configurations of its tools easy and secure as possible.

I developed the e-commerce website based built upon the PHP MVC framework OpenCart. I had to write many custom features for the website and of course a bespoke theme.

I have developed a lot of marketing and SEO guidelines for the company and we are currently in the stages of implementing an SEO package for the site, social media push and marketing campaign.