**Size and Scale**

You must learn to make very conscious decisions about the size of each element in your design. Your natural tendency will be to want to make body copy large (so you can see it more easily on the screen) and to make visuals relatively small (less “in your face”). But, in advertising, that's not the way such decisions are made. You always must keep the nature of the product, the message and the prospective purchaser in mind.

You may want to use a very large image to achieve a sense of intimacy with the viewer or an extreme close-up of an enticing detail. That's what Aveda used to illustrate its message that their cosmetics contain no petrochemicals to damage human hair or skin.

You may want to show an object smaller to put it in a context or so that it appears more distant from the viewer. Gevalia gourmet coffee had an interesting story to tell about the history of its product. It chose to use several small curiosity-evoking images to break up the relatively long text.

You may want the headline type so huge it virtually shouts from the page. Or you may want it relatively small to create a more subtle, sophisticated look that whispers.

You may even want to show objects in different scales to make a point. **Scale** means the relative size relationship among pictorial elements. Scale disparity can heighten the drama of the visuals and help make a point.

Both the ads on this page have visual elements in different scales. For instance, if the two visuals in the Aveda ad were in the same scale, either Barbie dolls are being marketed in the size of human females or Aveda is selling lipsticks in tubes about 1/8
inch long. But most viewers don’t think that way. They relate familiar objects to the sizes they know them to be.

In most instances, viewers are bright enough to understand what is real and what is not. They suspend disbelief when they see objects in different scales in ads because they also are rational enough to separate the message from the imagery—as long as the disparity isn’t misleading.

Would you consider the Nestles ads at left misleading? Probably not. It is highly unlikely that anyone who sees the ads expects to bake cupcakes the size of footstools or brownies so big a real child couldn’t even lift one from that tiny little bag of chips shown at the bottom. The underlying message is: Recipes made with Nestles chocolate are so delicious your kids will wish for desserts this big.

Nor does it take a rocket scientist to figure out that the scale discrepancy in the Easy Spirit ad isn’t intended to suggest that the company makes shoes in a size range from Barbie doll to the Jolly Green Giantess. From the designer’s perspective, however, showing the shoes in different scales is a way of visualizing that there’s big comfort in a dainty high-heel shoe.

The scale relationship of the objects in the Now cigarettes ad is a little more subtle. Have they come out with a foot-long smoke? Well, that’s about the length of the average gavel. Even if you were fooled by the visual discrepancy, it’s pretty clear that the ad isn’t about size.