

Ria (Heila Maria) van Zyl
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Ria van Zyl was senior lecturer and head of Information Design at the University of Pretoria till early 2008. Her position involved co-ordination, management and development of course content for various subjects including Information Design, Design Studies, Professional Practice Management, Design and Production Management, and Visual Branding and Identity.

Before this she practised as designer for 15 years. She started her career in 1985 in product co-ordination and design of gift and home ware ranges. After this she spent time at Woolworths, a South African retailer, in the capacity of Packaging Co-ordinator and Technologist before starting her own consultancy. She was co-owner and manager of Graphcom Design Studio cc and practised in Cape Town and Bloemfontein, specialising in corporate design and packaging.

She completed her Masters Degree in Information Design at the University of Pretoria with a dissertation on 'developing a service quality framework for the graphic design industry'. She is currently focusing on post graduate students as guest lecturer and supervisor, and plans to pursue her Doctoral studies in 2008.

Field of Interests: interdisciplinary collaboration, design and production, designer-client relationship, strategic design and brand management, design theory and research, entrepreneurship, development of the professional practice of design and design for development.

She has published several articles and conference papers as well as a pocket guide: *Brand your business. Looks are important.* This pocket guide is part of the 'Be a Winner Pocket Books' series.

A career highlight was the opportunity to be group leader in the 2005 ICSID Interdesign, held in Rustenburg, South Africa. The theme of the workshop was 'sustainable rural transport'. Other community service projects included *various training workshops for people with disabilities in the marketing and packaging of their products, as well as communication design for Community Partnership Programs.

She regularly serves on advisory panels and professional bodies in South Africa.