

HOW TO WORK WITH A DESIGNER



Q Do I need a professional graphic designer to prepare my collateral?

Yes, if you wish your business to be perceived as professional and competitive. A professional designer has the expertise to efficiently create materials appropriate for you.

Q Where do I find designer prospects?

Ask business colleagues for referrals. If you see a designed piece that appeals to you, find out who created it. Professional organizations such as AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts) have listings of designers.

Q What does the graphic designer do?*

- Manages the project—schedules, stays within budget
- Receives bids, recommends, hires, supervises creative professionals and vendors
- Researches and acquires materials as, stock art
- Art directs and designs the materials
- Supports the design with your marketing strategy
- Guides you through the creative process
- Generates electronic files
- Supervises the printing and delivery

Q How do I screen for the best designer?

You may contact three or more designers. Prescreen by asking them to send samples. If possible, preview Web sites or online portfolios. Initially, set up no more than three interviews—too many choices are confusing. During the interview, notice your rapport with the designer, see more work samples, and ask about the working process. Choosing a designer is just one of many decisions you will be making throughout the development of your materials.

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*Any or all of these tasks may be the role of the designer



Q What should I expect to pay?

Prices vary widely. An experienced designer will charge more than one who is just starting out. The design proposal should clarify the basic charges with additional estimates for illustration, photography, and related services. It is usually more cost-effective to receive an estimate for the project rather than to pay by the hour. This way, you and the designer work together to stay within that budget. Be sure you understand in detail what the proposal covers. Many designers expect a down payment, often half of the total estimate, assuring you that you will receive priority.

Q How can I convey my wishes?

A professional designer is able to conduct a thorough interview and convey your needs into a visual language. The designer may prepare a creative brief to which you can respond. It is critical for the designer to have background material on your company. It is helpful if you have samples of work that you like or even dislike.

Q If I am not satisfied, what should I do?

The creative process requires sharp communication and decision-making skills. The designer should be willing to hear your wishes and your criticism and respond with the right blend of tact and authority. Be open and clear about your disappointments yet be willing to solve the problem. If communication and results continue to go downhill, it may be time to terminate the agreement.

Q Do I own the final art?

The artist who owns the original illustration and photography, negotiates with the client to sell the art outright or charge reuse fees. If the design is estimated for a local market and then the client wishes to expand that market nationally, the designer may legitimately charge a reuse fee. These issues should be addressed before the project begins. A good source is, *The Graphic Artists Guild Handbook, Pricing and Ethical Guidelines*.