

THE DESIGN PROCESS DEMYSTIFIED



Q How long will the design process take?

It depends upon the scope of the project and how efficient and available everyone is. A large corporation with several decision makers will probably require more time than an individual business owner. Commit to and follow a reasonable schedule and respond in a timely manner to design presentations.

Q What are the steps in the process?

1. PRELIMINARY

The client prepares general specifications for the project. The designer prepares a written proposal and loose schedule, which are subject to change after the initial meeting.

2. LAUNCH MEETING

Initial meeting where the client brings wishes and goals to the designer. They should include the following:

- Definition and position statement of the company
- Samples of materials
- List of words describing the image you wish to project, e.g., bold, trusted, friendly
- Description of target audience
- Ideas and dreams
- Where and how the materials will be used

continue



Each presentation of comps (comprehensives) is followed by revisions and approvals. The presentations happen in a meeting but minor revisions may be faxed or sent as Adobe pdf files.

3. PRESENTATION:

BLACK/WHITE COMPS

Designer presents roughs (sketches) or digital proofs, usually at a reduced size, that show the basic ideas rather than details. At this stage there is lots of discussion and input. If the black-and-white can stand up to scrutiny, it will only be enhanced by color.

4. PRESENTATION:

COLOR COMPS

Once a black-and-white comp has been approved, the designer presents color comps, usually as color digital proofs with PMS color swatches to show color accuracy.

5. PRESENTATION:

TIGHT COLOR

This stage may not be necessary for a small project. Loose color proofs of photos and four-color illustration are usually shown at this stage before the designer imbeds them in the final art.

6. FINAL ART

This final presentation before film output consists of color digital proofs. It is imperative to proof everything carefully at this stage before a sign-off. Check again for the accurate spelling of names, correct phone numbers, etc.

7. PREPRESS

The printer outputs bluelines of the art for final proofing before printing. Both the client and the designer usually proof the bluelines. Color proofs are created for four-color process printing.

8. PRESSCHECK

The designer supervises the printing and signs-off on the approved printed piece. As a client, you may also be present at the presscheck.

9. DELIVERY

Be sure the printed order is correct by spot-checking. Compare the printed piece to the signed-off proof.