

Ten Tips on Hiring a Graphic Designer

Don't Wait

1. Don't wait until the last minute

Designing a business identity, a brochure, a website, a display ad or a billboard takes time. Don't short-change yourself by procrastinating.

Don't Rush

2. How to find a graphic designer:

Ask owners of businesses the same size as yours, friends, relatives, and customers for designers they've used. Check out professional groups, such as the Graphic Artists Guild. Go online, and see who's available in your area. Keep in mind that if your project will be in print, and not online, that the skills are different: a good website designer doesn't necessarily know how to design for ink on paper.

Do Your Homework

3. When you are interviewing a prospective designer, be prepared!

Let them know what you are looking for: a corporate package, media placement, logo only, brochures, etc. Know beforehand how much money you can afford to spend on it. They are there to help you get the most for your money and can suggest ways to save money.

Really Look

4. Really look at their portfolio. If they don't have one, don't hire them.

Is their style attractive to you? Designers or design houses generally can design anything, but we all have our strengths and weaknesses. Make sure that you like what you see.

Ask Questions

5. How long have they been in business?

You must weigh the benefits of education versus experience when you choose your designer.

Industry Standards

6. What programs do they use?

Industry standards are QuarkXpress, Adobe InDesign, Pagemaker, Photoshop, Illustrator, and Freehand. If you hear Publisher Gold, CorelDraw, or Word 98, look for someone else!

Who's Talking

7. Who will design the actual project?

For example, a large design firm can call on a host of designers. Ralph Colonna, of Colonna-Farrell, may not actually work on your job; your project may be given to their current design intern.

Money Matters

8. What's their rate; what might they charge for other comparable jobs?

Is there a minimum charge for a job? Do they charge hourly or by project? What's a normal turnaround, and what are the rush charges for less than 24 hour turnaround? Don't ever assume that it will take "Just a few minutes..." And keep in mind just how few new clients or customers it will take to cover the costs of your project.

Apples & Apples

9. Do they have an estimate/contract for you to sign?

A contract protects you as well as the designer. Putting the project in writing ensures that the two of you are talking about the same project. There are also usage rights and copyright laws to consider. Make sure to ask any questions regarding any small print you don't fully understand.

Trust Your Intuition

10. Check in with your intuition

Do you think that this designer will give you what you need? Do you want to work with this particular designer? Has this designer really listened to you?



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