

7 Approve a written estimate.

A professional design firm will provide a written estimate summarizing the work to be done, the project schedule and the estimated cost. Read it and approve it.

8 Expect to see at least two or three proofs for your design.

Once you approve an estimate, the designer will develop first proof concepts or layouts for you to review. If you need a new or updated visual identity, a wordmark or logo is usually the first item to be designed, and a selection of preliminary designs may be created for you to consider. First-proof designs are refined to reflect the feedback that you give to the designer. Most projects require at least two or three proofs to reach a final design. Additional proofs can increase costs dramatically, so it helps to be well-prepared at the beginning of your project.

9 Stick to the schedule. Provide materials and feedback promptly. Delays can reduce the amount of time that the designer has to prepare your materials and still meet your original deadline. Give the designer the time required to do a professional job.

10 Approve the final design in writing.

Take responsibility for ensuring that there are no errors in the final design. Examine it carefully and sign a hard copy proof. Keep one copy for yourself and return another approved copy to the designer.



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WORKING WITH A PROFESSIONAL DESIGNER

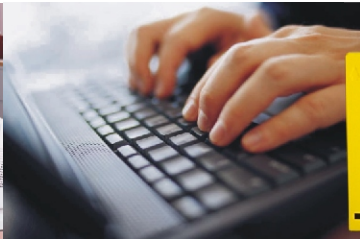


10 steps to better design

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A trained designer has the skills and the knowledge to avoid many common pitfalls that can cost both time and money. A professional designer understands the many complexities of preparing computer files for commercial printing. Here's a brief outline of how you might work with an experienced designer on projects that require a professional touch:

1 Assemble background material. Bring any materials you may have, including an outline or draft text; existing documents or previous literature about your product, service or business; and perhaps even some information published by your competitors. Bring a CD or disk with any existing digitized artwork or photography. Bring samples of things you like to help the designer understand your personal tastes.

2 Summarize your messages. Whether you require a poster, a banner, product sheets, an advertisement, consider what makes your product or service unique or desirable. A written list of messages or benefit statements helps your designer understand what to emphasize in your materials. Explain who you expect to read your materials – and, in the case of an ad, where you intend to publish it. Provide any advertising specifications that you received from any publication in which you're buying advertising.

3 Identify specific colors and typefaces associated with your company or product.

Provide sample color swatches or Pantone Matching System (PMS) color numbers for colors and give specific names for fonts. Without this information, it might take several hours for a designer to identify an unnamed font or color – adding unnecessary cost to your job.

4 Provide a realistic estimate of your budget.

An experienced designer can determine whether your budget is feasible and often knows ways that you can save money. A professional designer will work to recommend solutions to suit your budget or tell you if your budget is unrealistic.

5 Make an appointment for a preliminary meeting.

Set a specific date and time to meet with the designer to discuss your requirements. There is usually no charge for an initial consultation, and the designer will assess your materials to establish your creative goals and confirm a cost estimate for your project.

6 Give the designer a detailed explanation of what you need.

Cost-effective designs are prepared to suit a variety of different applications. Even if you're only interested in one project to start, attempt to tell the designer about all the different media you may require in the longer term. Typically you might need letterhead, a second sheet, business envelopes, shipping labels or large printed envelopes, or other items like invoices. Your designer needs to know if some items may be printed in one or two colors, while others will be printed in four or more.

