



How We Work Together

First of all, thank you for your consideration. I know that working with a new marketing firm may prompt a few questions. Sometimes more than a few concerns, too. How successful will I be in interpreting your needs? How can I do it most *effectively*? How can I do it most *efficiently*? How much will it *cost*?

My Charges

Design is a creative process. There is a certain amount of inspiration involved, so our time invested is only one of many contributing factors. It is impractical to charge based on how long it takes for ideas to come together. What we are selling is our years of experience, the effort we've expended developing our skills and talents, and the resulting expertise. We are selling our brains and our attention and creative imagination applied to your specific problem. What we are selling is peace of mind.

Project costs range from a low of a couple thousand dollars up to tens of thousands, depending on your needs and budget. I always provide a detailed proposal and estimate for approval before starting. I adhere to my estimate unless project specifications change.

Laying the Foundation

The first thing I do after being assigned a project is schedule an information-gathering meeting (we did some of that at your office already). I am interested not only in scheduling, budget and job specifications, but also in your preferences, target audience, and objectives. And, of course, I will want to know all the features and benefits that you want your design to have. Although this process is somewhat time-consuming (I don't like meetings any more than you do), it is also crucially important. It will help you sharpen your focus and objectives, and it will help me ensure that what I produce is not only creatively excellent, but strategically targeted. I value your time as a busy professional, so any meetings scheduled are short, productive, and requested only when necessary.

Developing The Right Idea

Despite popular misconceptions, good creative work doesn't often come in a flash of inspiration; usually it comes from lots of trial and error. This is why I also need to take the time to consider several approaches (concepts), work them through, and try them out. Then revise them. In addition, there are usually some practical and functional ends I need to tie up before submitting my ideas – sub-contractor availability, printing estimates, scheduling requirements, etc.

All this, plus the need to schedule my workflow in a businesslike fashion, means that I normally ask for up to two weeks, depending on the job's complexity, before I submit my rough approaches (concepts) for your review. Of course, if you have a rush project or deadline pressure I adjust my workflow and timing accordingly.

It is my experience that it is best if I first present my rough concepts to you and perhaps just one or two others. This ensures that we all stay focused on the problem and are not distracted by too many personal opinions. My rough concepts may consist of mockups, drawings, static images, and block diagrams. They are adequate to convey what I believe is the best approach to take, taking into consideration your budget, schedule, objectives, and preferences. On the other hand, they are not so well-developed as to have wasted time and effort if I need a course correction.

After presenting, I'll ask for comments. The more objective and specific you can be, the better I will be able to respond. Comments are my input for revising the rough concepts into a finished one. Revisions normally take me about a week, and I schedule a second presentation shortly there-after.

From the input to this second presentation meeting further minor refinements are made as necessary. I also finalize the production timetable, and the scheduling of additional services such as photography, stock photo acquisitions, licensing (if necessary) and touch-ups.

Ensuring Your Satisfaction

I recommend the finished designs and layouts be routed directly to you for all approvals, including fact and detail checking, along with stylistic and subjective decisions. During the course of the project I will keep you informed of my progress. Activities that will affect the schedule or budget are identified in writing. My goal is to keep your project moving ahead quickly, smoothly, and cost-effectively; to make sure that I'll produce even better results than you hired me for.