

## The Design Process

- The Brief
- The Estimate
- Design Concepts
- Presentation
- Design Development and Approval
- Artwork
- Print
- Invoice
- Your commitment

## The Brief

We need to know things such as:

- Your existing brand values and positioning
- Your objectives
- Your target audience
- What you want to say
- What makes you different from your competitors
- Examples of organisations or work that you admire, or dislike
- Existing corporate guidelines or restrictions
- Environmental policies that might affect the project, for instance if you prefer to use recycled papers or environmentally friendly inks.

## The Estimate

Once we understand the brief we work out an estimate and get your approval on the costs before we start work.

Our estimates are split into clear sections:

- Creative work
- Outsourced items
- Expenses
- Terms

This is a realistic estimate of how much time we will need to complete the project, based on an hourly or daily rate. If we take longer than we estimated – and this is not due to changes in the brief or extra items that were agreed between us – then we won't charge you for the additional time. We think it's a fair offer.

## Design Concepts

Great design work rarely comes in a flash of inspiration. It's more likely to be the product of years of training and experience, combined with careful market research and discussion, and lots of sketching and testing. It doesn't happen in a rush, which is why we build a realistic amount of time into the estimate. Depending on the size of the job we will produce two, sometimes three, concepts for you to consider. Through imaginative use of colour, imagery, typography and construction, each approach will take a slightly different direction, but all of them will answer the brief.

We want you to become one of the many clients who tell us we have an instinct for tuning into what they want to achieve and coming up with the right ideas first time, every time.

## Presentation

This is when we show you visuals or mock-ups of our ideas and explain how we arrived at them. Putting aside personal preferences or the current design vogue, we hope you will step into the shoes of your target audience and assess how well our ideas will win them over. Your initial reactions are important and we'll be watching carefully for the look that tells us you like our ideas.

At the end of the meeting we encourage you to take the concepts away and live with them for a while, or show them to colleagues to get their opinions on how well the work answers the brief.

## Design Development and Approval

Once you've had time to review the concepts, agree on your chosen design and discuss any modifications with us, we start work on development.

If we are organising text and images for you we will brief the copywriter and photographer and schedule the work. If you are handling this yourself, we will agree a date when we need the material, and talk to you about the style of images we think will work best with the design.

There are several production elements of a job that can dramatically influence the look and feel of a job. For example, coated and uncoated papers can produce very different results, which is why we like to show you examples of how your job might look using different paper.

## Artwork

Although we take care to monitor changes and iron out any wrinkles all the way through the design process, the artwork stage sees us double-checking the fine detail. Every page layout is carefully examined to make sure that images, text, colour separations and cutter guides are accurate to a fraction of a millimetre, and the job is made ready for the printer.

We are happy to proofread the final artwork, or you can do this yourself if you prefer. The artwork must be thoroughly checked, because any last-minute changes at this stage can add to the cost.

Please let final mean what it says. Making changes now to text that was given to us as 'final' weeks beforehand creates extra work and could lead to mistakes.

Before the job goes to print we will ask you to approve the design and layout by physically signing each page of the colour copies to show that you are happy to move onto the print stage.

## Print

A good printer is a designer's greatest ally and we have built up good relationships with some of the best in the business. We only work with suppliers who have similar values to our own and the same dedication to quality and service.

The printer uses our artwork to produce a set of final proofs that we will ask you to sign, before the job finally reaches the presses. This is the most important sign-off – it really is final and by signing it, you take legal responsibility that the content is correct. This is not something we can undertake on your behalf.

Once production gets underway we monitor progress, visiting the printers if necessary to see the job coming off the machines and being dried, folded, collated and packed ready to meet the delivery date.

Although the printing presses themselves are fantastically quick, the manufacturing process itself cannot be rushed. We usually include a small time buffer in the schedule for any hitches or extra drying time needed at this stage. We like to hold finished samples of every job, and when your job is delivered to you, we will also receive a handful of samples so we can check them before we call you to make sure you are happy with the end product.

## Invoice

None of us like nasty surprises, especially where money is concerned, so your final invoice will be clearly itemised.

Any extras that were added on after the initial estimate was prepared will have been agreed and documented well in advance of your invoice, to maintain a tidy paperwork trail.

## Your commitment

Please be honest with us – about your budget, your deadlines or anything else that will help us to deliver the best possible service for you.

Our efficiency depends on accurate scheduling and any delays in receiving information from you, or getting your approval at each stage can result in disruptions to the production schedule and ultimately your delivery date. If you cannot meet agreed deadlines, please let us know as soon as possible so we can adjust the schedule.

If you come to us with an urgent job and a crucial deadline we will do our very best to hit it, but we can't work miracles and it wouldn't be fair to expect us to push another client's job aside to make room for yours.