

How to Get
the Biggest

Bang

for your

Buck

working with

a design

professional

Welcome! Over the course of my corporate career as a graphic designer, I worked both as a designer and as a manager who hired the design services of others. The guidelines I share below outline what I learned through this experience. My goal in sharing them is to ensure you have a positive experience working with a design professional, based on an understanding of the design “lingo” you’ll hear. Most importantly, I want you to know exactly what to ask your design professional to provide so that you get **the biggest bang for your buck!** Let’s get started!



#1—BEGIN WITH MUTUAL RESPECT.

You are the expert on your business. Your design professional is the expert in the visual presentation of your business. Your project is a partnership.

#2—ESTABLISH A COMMUNICATION PROCESS.

Communication will flow both directions—from the design professional to you and from you to the design professional. While there is no single right answer for the communication method or timing, it is important to: 1) commit to a method; 2) establish a window for client responses; and, 3) establish a frequency for project updates from the design professional. Most important: honor your agreement!

Method: What is your preferred method for communication? Phone? Email? Texts? Facebook Messenger? Other?

Client Responses: Design projects will require you to review the work while it is in progress. How quickly can you respond to questions or requests for feedback? Without timely client feedback, design projects can go off track and important deadlines can be missed. Can you respond in several hours or do you need several days?

Project Updates: How often do you want your design professional to send you updates on your project? Weekly? More often?

#3—IF YOU HAVE THEM, SHARE YOUR GRAPHIC STANDARDS OR STYLE SHEET, LOGO FILES, PHOTOS AND OTHER IMAGES.

If this is your first project, to create your business brand, ask your design professional to include this list of assets in the project quote. Then share them with every design professional you work with.

These assets provide the starting point for every marketing project for your business! There is no reason to reinvent the wheel. If you do, every project will cost you more.

#4—BE READY TO DESCRIBE YOUR IDEAL CLIENT AND THE RESULT YOU WANT FROM YOUR PROJECT.

Two or three sentences about your ideal client and a short paragraph about the desired outcome of the project will start things off on the right foot.

#5—BE CANDID AND FORTHCOMING.

Your design professional needs you to tell them what you like and what you don't like. Provide specific feedback. For example, saying that a design "doesn't feel right" or "is not quite there yet" is not helpful. Instead, say you don't like the color orange, that you'd like to see a more playful typeface for the headline, or that you'd like to see photo examples that represent people of all ages and ethnicities. Share examples if you have them.

#6—ASK YOUR DESIGN PROFESSIONAL TO PROVIDE A CONTRACT OR LETTER OF AGREEMENT THAT INCLUDES A PROJECT TIME LINE TIED TO CALENDAR DATES.

This time line will include a series of steps with dates tied to them. For example:

Project start date: 3/21/19

First Design Round presented to client: 10 working days—Due Date: 4/3/19

Client Feedback: 3 working days—Due Date: end of day 4/9/19

Revision Round 1: 5 working days—Due Date: end of day 4/16/19, etc.

This contract or letter of agreement sets out clear expectations for both parties and brings clarity to the process. It is better to work out the details at the beginning, than to realize a misunderstanding has caused a difficult working relationship.

#7—EXPECT TO BE ASKED FOR A DEPOSIT TO BEGIN WORK.

It is common to pay 1/2 of the total project quote to start work, with the final 1/2 due at completion, when files are ready to hand-off. **Note:** If the project completion is delayed because the client has not responded in a timely fashion as specified in the contract or letter of agreement, the design professional may ask for the final payment per the completion date noted on that document. All entrepreneurs can appreciate the need for timely payment for our services!

For more complex projects, additional project milestones and payment dates can be established.

On the next page you'll find the #1 Tip to ensure your business gets the biggest bang for your buck when working with a design professional!

#1 TIP

Ask for the Native Files!

Tell your design professional that you expect to receive ALL files created to complete your project, including all native files. See the next page for a visual demonstration of how important this is.

Native files include: InDesign, QuarkXPress, Adobe Illustrator, PhotoShop (including all layered files and *full size image files), fonts (if not protected) and a complete list of fonts if some are protected and cannot be shared. You will want either the fonts or the list of fonts for future reference.

PRINT FILES

For print projects, your design professional will create a series of files for the graphic elements using the software programs noted above. These graphic element files are then combined in a page layout program like InDesign or QuarkXPress, which export to a PDF (Portable Document Format) file. The PDF file is the file that you will provide to your print vendor.

HOWEVER, the most valuable files are the native files used to create the graphic elements, especially layered PhotoShop files. You may not be able to open and use these files because the software programs are specific to the field, but other graphic design professionals will be able to open and update them. This ensures that the project you pay to create this year can be updated in the future. If you have only the final PDF file, you may have to rebuild the file from scratch to make an update to it. This is because PDF files have a limited ability to be updated. Starting from scratch again costs more than making an update! It is not uncommon for you to work with more than one design professional over the life of your business. If you have the native files, you can work with any design professional you choose without starting from scratch with each time.

WEB FILES

For web projects, your design professional will create a series of graphics in formats such as: jpg, gif, svg and png, to the proper web resolution and sized to fit the requirements of your website design. These will be combined with text and functionality to deliver the best user experience for your prospects and clients. As with print, request copies of all files created for your website and other on-line marketing avenues, especially full size image files..

CONVERTING PRINT GRAPHICS TO WEB GRAPHICS AND VICE VERSA

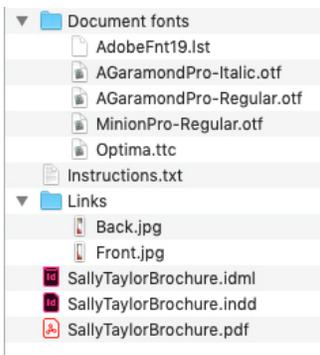
Print resolution is much higher than web resolution: 300 dpi compared to 72-100 ppi. For this reason, it is a simple process to convert CMYK print graphics to RGB web graphics. However, it is generally not possible to convert web graphics for print use because they are too small. This is why it is important to get the *full size image files, not only the images formatted for web use. If you have the *full size image files, you can incorporate them into your print marketing to ensure your business presentation is consistent across marketing platforms.

Native Files Visual

TOP LEVEL To the left are images of a 2-sided brochure (sometimes called a rack card) I created for Sally Taylor Insurance. The print vendor for this project was given a single file:

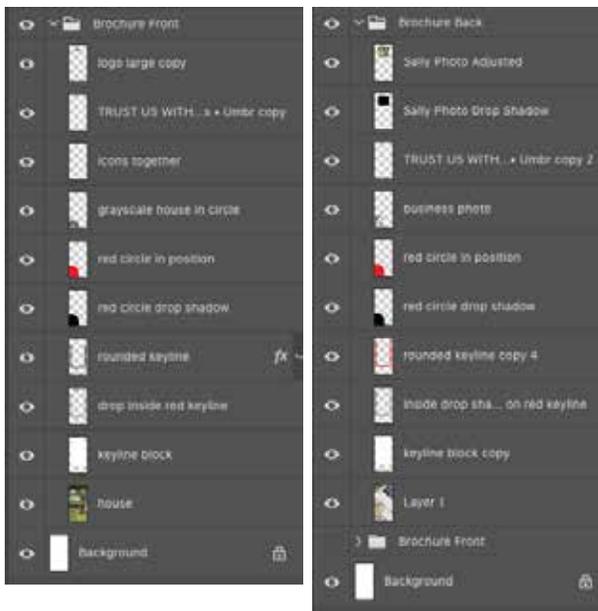
SallyTaylorBrochure.pdf.

Print vendors like PDF (Portable Document Format) files because they are stable and include all of the graphics and fonts. The file prints exactly as designed. The downside to this stability is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to update them. Let's assume, for example, that in one year from today, Sally Taylor moves her office and starts to sell life insurance. If all she has is the PDF file, she will not be able to update it!



NATIVE FILES LEVEL 1 The first level of Native Files includes the list of files to the left. No longer a single PDF file provided to the print vendor, we see that 5 different fonts and 2 different graphics “Links” were combined in SallyTaylorBrochure.indd (indd stands for Adobe InDesign, a page layout program). Let's say that when Sally contacts her design professional to make the update, she learns that she is on maternity leave for several months and is not available. If Sally has this set of files, she can contact any design professional and they can easily update her office address, *but not add an icon for life insurance!*

NATIVE FILES LEVEL 2 This second level of Native Files has great value to your business! It is this level of file that gives your business **The Biggest Bang for Your Buck!** Let's see how. The “Link” file Front.jpg in the Level 1 list above was created in Adobe PhotoShop and contains 10



separate layers. Back.jpg is also created using 10 layers in PhotoShop. In addition to these files, the set of icons was originally created in Adobe Illustrator (IconSet.eps) and then imported into Adobe PhotoShop.



In order to update both the office address and add a new icon for life insurance, you need to request that your design professional provide you with what I am calling “Level 2 Native Files,” the layered PhotoShop files. With these files, you can update a marketing piece. Without them, you will likely have to pay to recreate the piece and that costs you more. money

GLOSSARY OF DESIGN TERMS AND FILE TYPES

PRINT

CMYK (stands for C=Cyan, M=Magenta, Y=Yellow, K=Black), also know as 4-color process.

Common CMYK file formats include .tif .jpg .eps (graphics) .indd .qxd (page layout)

Print vendors ask for CMYK PDF files with image resolution of at 300 dpi (dots per inch) at full size

Large format print vendors (those who produce banners and signage) ask for CMYK PDF files with image resolution at a minimum of 100 dpi at full size

There are other color systems available. For example, logo files sometimes use PMS (Pantone Matching System) color, also referred to as “spot” color. Talk to your design professional for a more comprehensive definition and explanation for how your project might utilize spot color, including metallic inks or foil stamps. They can guide you regarding the associated cost.

ON-LINE

RGB (stands for R=Red, G=Green, B=Blue).

RGB colors can be expressed by values for each component or as a Hex codes. See the box below for an example.

Common RGB file formats include .jpg .gif .png .svg

On-line vendors ask for RGB files at 72 or 100 ppi (pixels per inch), optimized for web display

ONE COLOR, EXPRESSED THREE WAYS. The blue color of this text is expressed in print (CMYK) as C=86, M=61, Y=0, K=0 and on-line (RGB) as R=0, G=102, B=204 or Hexcode=00CC66

VECTOR GRAPHICS (also known as .eps graphics)

Adobe Illustrator and other drawing programs produce vector graphics. This is the best file type for logo creation as they can be reduced to a very small size and enlarged to a very great size and still look perfect. Adobe Illustrator also produces .svg files (scalable vector graphics) for on-line use.

RASTOR GRAPHICS (also known as .tif, .gif, .jpg, or .png graphics)

Adobe PhotoShop produces raster graphics made up of pixels. Pixels are small squares of color. This is the best program for working with photo images.



THERE'S MORE! Email me at Robin@DoubleVisionArt-Design.com to receive a copy of “*The Truth About Trades*.” It provides insights on the challenges with trading services, which at first glance can seem like such a good idea to save money.