



# How to hire a graphic designer

Now that you've decided to hire a graphic designer, how do you go about finding one? Here are eight things to look for to make sure you find the right match.

## 1. Define your expectations

What kind of graphic designer are you looking for? Do you need someone who is more technical in nature (i.e. to create a manual) or someone who is more flashy (i.e. to create a full-color magazine ad)? Are you looking for a designer you can build a long-term relationship with or will this be a one-time, one-shot deal? Before you start looking, make sure you know exactly what kind of designer you need. Not only will it make the review process go that much faster, but also it will help ensure you find exactly who you want.

## 2. Check the designer's marketing materials

Are they done professionally? Do they inspire confidence that the designer can complete the project to your expectations? Do you like the way they're designed? A designer's promotional materials are a reflection of the designer – make sure you like what you're seeing.

## 3. Examine the designer's portfolio

Not every designer is going to be right for your project. The best way to get a handle on this is to look at the designer's work. Do you like his or her style? Sense of color? Fonts? How images are handled? This is very important – if there are things you don't like then you probably aren't going to be happy with how the designer lays out your project.

## 4. Check references

Take a look at any testimonials the designer has provided. Still not sure? Call the references. Don't forget to ask about the relationship the designer had with them.

## 5. Interview the designer

It's not necessary to do this in person, but don't skip this step. Not only can you find out about the designer's poli-

cies and work ethics, but you can also learn about more intangible things, such as a designer's confidence, if you two can communicate and if you and the designer "click."

## 6. Read the fine print

Whether it's a proposal or a contract, get it in writing and make sure you know what it does (and doesn't) include. Don't forget to read any terms and conditions (such as a deposit) and make sure you're comfortable with them before you start the project.

Don't forget to ask who owns the design when the designer is done. Some illustrators and photographers retain the copyright on their work and you just license the use for your particular project. In the case of WWD, we give ownership of all the work we do to the client once the project is paid in full.

## 7. Ask about other resources

Has the designer formed partnerships with other vendors, such as copywriters, photographers, illustrators, etc., whom you may need to complete your project? (We all can't be DaVinci.) You can save money using independent designers over an agency, but if they don't have the resources you need to complete your project, you could end up paying for the difference in the time you spend tracking down multiple vendors.

## 8. Trust your gut

When all is said and done, make sure you feel good about your decision. Listen to that little voice inside you telling you if this is the right person for the job or if you need to keep looking.

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