HOW TO CHOOSE A GRAPHIC DESIGNER WITHOUT LOOSING YOUR MIND

If you haven't already experienced it yourself, then you've probably heard some of the horror stories about trying to find or work with a graphic designer. It can be difficult, time consuming and frustrating to say the least, but in all fairness it's no different than any other profession. Think about how some people must feel when they have to work with some of your competitors.

You'll want to evaluate some basic things first - things that are vital in any industry. Is your potential designer on time to meet with you? Do they treat your staff with respect or do they treat them they like they don't matter? Did they do their homework before coming? Once you've nailed down the basics, your list of potential designers will probably be a lot smaller. Now you can start to look at some of the things that are more specific to our industry.

Presentation - Everything from how a designer dresses to how they package their sample work will tell you something about them. Take a look at their clothing but avoid basing your opinion on your personal fashion preferences. Instead, look at details that will tell you how much effort they put into their own appearance. Clean shoes are a great indication of someone that pays attention to details. Trimmed fingernails are another. You'll also want to pay attention to whether the work presented in their portfolio is straight. Though these may seem like little details they will mean a lot in determining the attention to detail that your designer will take in your project.

Preparation - Did your designer run up to your office door chasing his wind blown papers across the parking lot or did he stride confidently to your door, materials in hand? Did he show up with a pen and notebook? This is important unless you want to spend a lot of time later reminding them many of the things that you've already told them. A designer that isn't prepared for the initial meeting is not going to conduct day-to-day business any differently.

Point of view - Everyone has a different view of the world and it's a given that those with a similar point of view will work better together. With that in mind, it's important to find a designer that shares your beliefs. The advertising for your multi-million dollar SUV dealership will never achieve spectacular results as long as you are using a designer that believes that all corporations are big evil things bent on destroying society for a buck. If your designer doesn't understand where you're coming from they will never be able to tell your prospects.

Portfolio - This is really a classic case of "size doesn't matter - it's how you use it!" When considering designers you may be loosing out if you dismiss a designer because of a small portfolio. The designer that came by in a 3-piece suit with a three inch thick portfolio isn't necessarily the one for the job. Maybe the girl that has no college degree and a portfolio with nine pages of work that she did at home is a better fit for you. The most important thing really is quality. The designer that brings everything may not be able to decide what to present and what not to present which could mean that they will have the same problem in delivering a clear message to your audience.

There is one more thing to consider when you choose a graphic designer - they know what you don't when it comes to design. When you say "let's add more colors" or "make the text bolder" there is usually a good reason that they're rolling their eyes. We recommend that after you've done your homework and choosen a competent graphic designer you let them do their job. Graphic design is a lot more than just making something look nice. There are a lot of technical details that have scientific backing that you may not know about. In most cases it's in your best interest to focus on what you are an expert in and let them focus on what they are an expert in. You will see far better results that way.