10 QUESTIONS TO ASK A GRAPHIC DESIGN COMPANY

When your company needs a logo or other design work, choosing the right company can be an overwhelming process. There are thousands upon thousands of design pros out there that all claim to be the answer to your prayers.

Unfortunately, not all graphic design firms are the same. Pricing structure, creative process, talent, knowledge,

file delivery, and even payment terms can vary greatly from one company to the next. How do you know which company is right for you? It's ok if you aren't quite sure. Most companies simply don't know what to look for when it comes to graphic design.

That's why we've created this guide. Consider it a road map for choosing a graphic design company that will not only create a logo that is an extension of your brand, but will also deliver top-notch service. These ten questions will help you understand your own needs a little bit better, and they will help you find an agency that can meet those needs.

Are you ready to get started? Great. So are we!

The Netmen Corp Team

QUESTION 01

WHAT IS YOUR PRICING STRUCTURE?

It's always important to understand how a graphic design company prices their services. The two most common pricing structures are hourly and flat-fee. There are pros and cons to both types of pricing structures, but flat-fee schedules are the easiest to budget for, as they avoid surprises when your invoice arrives.

At The Netmen Corp, we work on a flat-fee schedule. We offer unlimited concepts and revisions, and we work until the client is 110 percent satisfied. Our clients know that we won't stop until we achieve a design that they love -a design that speaks directly to their brand and to their goals. Our clients also know that any extra work we put into the project won't mean an increase in price. All of our clients are equally important, and our pricing structure reflects our unparalleled commitment to customer satisfaction.

110% SATISFIED

QUESTION 02

DO YOU CHARGE FOR REVISIONS?

Some graphic design companies offer low pricing up-front, but then charge a premium for revisions. Other firms may place a limit on revisions. These types of restrictions can impede the creative process, and can leave clients with designs that don't meet their specifications or expectations. It is critical to understand the design company's revision policy before signing a contract.

The Netmen Corp does not charge for revisions. We know that revisions are just part of the process, and we build that into the agreed, individual price-per-project. This means that our clients can choose a design and then tweak it as-needed in order to achieve the look that is perfect for their brand. Typical projects go through two or three rounds of revisions that may include color, fonts, and layout tweaks, though some will require more, and some will require fewer revisions.
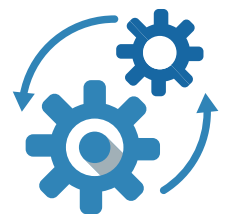
QUESTION 03 — IS YOUR WORK ORIGINAL OR DO YOU OPERATE OFF OF TEMPLATES?

It is very important to understand whether or not a design company creates unique designs, or if they work with templates. Template work is not created specifically for the client. It is a generic concept that can be purchased by anyone. A benefit of template work is that it is either free or extremely inexpensive. However, you end up sharing a logo or web design concept with other companies - possibly even a competitor, and that work may not be reflective of your brand message.

Custom design work, on the other hand, is created from scratch by a team of artists and designers who take the time to study the client's band, message, and goals. Custom design allows the creative process to flow freely, and ensures that a client's brand messaging will shine through.

Designers will typically craft several concepts based upon a document called a creative brief, and once those concepts have been flushed out with the creative director, they will be refined. The team will then submit anywhere from five to seven completely unique designs for the client to choose from. At The Netmen Corp, all of our designs are 100 percent original and are created specifically for each client.

QUESTION 04 — WHAT IS THE DESIGN PROCESS?

Before you sign a contract with a design company, it is important to get a feel for their process. That way you know what to expect from the team, and you will know what is expected from you, as a client. Though design is a creative process that requires free-thinking and idea flow, you want to look for a company that can communicate their process clearly.

At The Netmen Corp, we have a very specific process that includes:

* ● *Creative Brief – We send each client a form that helps us gather information about their company, their products and services, their clients, and their style preferences.*

- **Team assembly** – We put together an internal team to work on the project that includes an Account Manager, Creative Director, and graphic designers. That team is selected based upon the information gathered in the creative brief. We always try to match teams with clients based upon their unique strengths and abilities.
- **Presentation** – Our team will take the completed creative brief and use it to create an initial presentation, which is typically scheduled within three business days of our receipt of the brief.
- **First Presentation** – The account manager will send the client five to seven design concepts the day of the scheduled presentation. The client can review those concepts and then provide feedback. These presentations can be conducted over email, telephone, or Skype, depending upon the client's preferences and schedule.
- **Refining** – Based upon the client's feedback, the team will then get to work revising and refining designs based on the chosen concept. Once those revisions are completed, they will be re-submitted for review.
- **Revise** – The Netmen Corp always offers to work with each client until they are 110 percent satisfied with the design. The submission/feedback process will be completed only when the client has approved a design.
- **Approval** – Once the client approves a design, they will be expected to make their final payment.
- **Delivery** – Upon receipt of final payment, The Netmen Corp will deliver all files to the client.

QUESTION 05

WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION WILL I, AS A CLIENT, NEED TO PROVIDE?

Beware of any design firms that say they don't require your input on a project. Logo and design work can't be created effectively without some participation from the client.

The Netmen Corp will require basic company and contact information from each client. We also will ask for style references and guidelines, and we ask each client to fill out some information in the creative brief. The brief is very straightforward, and we provide examples and reference material to help each client complete the form with as much detail as possible.

This information will help us understand the company and its goals, the clients that they serve, etc. The more information we have about our client companies, the better. In order to create designs that align with our clients' goals and branding, we must work together in a collaborative way.
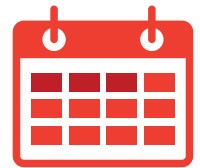
QUESTION 06

WHAT KIND OF TIMEFRAME CAN I EXPECT?

As a client, you always want to know how long a project will take. It is important to remain flexible, because creative processes can sometimes go longer than expected, or shorter than expected. However, a design company should be able to give you some specific timeframes so that you know what to expect.

At The Netmen Corp, our first presentation is delivered within 3 business days of our receipt of the completed creative brief. We deliver revisions every day and new presentations (if needed) within 2 business days. Design processes may vary depending on how often a client provides feedback on our designs and how many revisions are required. While every single project is unique, the usual timeframe for our projects is 15 days. Some may go longer, and some may not. We stay in very close contact with each client so that there are no surprises.
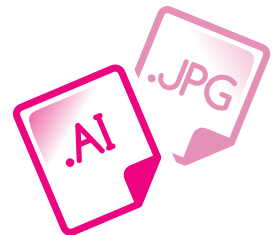
QUESTION 07

WHAT FILE TYPES WILL BE DELIVERED AT THE END OF THE PROCESS?

This is a critical question for any design company, because you don't want to pay for files you cannot use. It's important to know ahead of time what formats you will need. Always ask potential design firms if they will deliver files in those specific formats.

The Netmen Corp delivers vector files in Adobe Illustrator and JPEG for web use. Vector files are ready for printing and will let you enlarge or reduce the logo without sacrificing quality. This means that you will be able to use the logo no matter what type of document you're working with. You'll have perfect resolution whether you're printing business cards or highway billboards.

QUESTION 08

DO I RECEIVE THE COPYRIGHT TO THE GRAPHICS?

Understanding who owns the rights to the design is extremely important. If the graphic design company owns the rights, clients may have to attribute the work each and every time it is used. This can create a hassle, and potential legal snafus.

Look for a design company that gives up all rights to the copy, allowing your organization to use the design freely and without attribution. All clients of The Netmen Corp own their work once final payment has been received, and attribution is never necessary.

QUESTION 09

CAN I TRADEMARK MY NEW DESIGN?

Some design firms may have clauses in their contracts that restrict or prohibit trademarking. Once a client has remitted final payment for their designs.

The Netmen Corp has no restrictions on trademarking, however the trademark process is the responsibility of the client. We always suggest our clients speak to their legal advisor on how to proceed with the trademarking.

QUESTION 10

CAN I EDIT THE FILES AFTER THE PROJECT HAS BEEN COMPLETED?

Sometimes, companies will need to make small tweaks to their logos over time. The organization may adopt a new color scheme, or the name of the company may change slightly. You will want to make sure that you can make small changes to your files as-needed. *The Netmen Corp delivers vector files that can be edited in Adobe Illustrator. It is important, however, that the client own the software and that someone on staff will be able to manipulate the files if the need arises.*

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Now that you've read the ten questions to ask a design company, you can use this page as a reference. Tear it out and keep it somewhere handy. The next time you're interviewing graphic design firms, use this guide to help you make the right decision for your logo or design project.

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