

WHY D.I.Y.?

Get the fullstory on the true value of professional graphic design.

A survey conducted by the National Design Council recently revealed that “54 per cent of UK firms are planning to use design to stay competitive during the recession and beyond” and advise that “by applying good design companies can develop new products and services that respond to changes in consumer behaviour “

Why then are so many businesses compromising on the effectiveness of their marketing materials and damaging their brand presence by taking it upon themselves to ‘knock-out’ a flyer, poster or heaven forbid, their own logo, using desk top publishing software? If it is just to save costs on a professional design service, we would argue that this is false economy - the use of low-resolution Internet clip art and twee fonts like Comic Sans lead to poor first impressions, as well as lost opportunities and profits, to name just a few reasons why.

After all, you may own a pair of scissors, but that doesn't mean you would cut your own hair or call yourself a hairdresser!



We asked our favourite designer and illustrator Wendy Walker, of Ovy Design for her advice - you can contact Wendy at:

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“Your products run for election every day and good design is critical to winning the campaign”.

Proctor & Gamble

Why should we outsource design?

Most businesses do not have the creative talent to handle design in-house, even if they have an experienced marketing team. Additionally, designers provide perspective on the product being promoted, bringing with them objectivity that can't always be found in an in-house department. The designer will spend time researching the best approach to the client brief and can create themed campaigns that help enhance a company's or product's brand image. You might also benefit from their wider experience with other clients that operate in different markets.

Whether your business is just starting out, or you want to refresh the look of an established company, a graphic designer will be able to help with everything from logos to product packaging. It is also important to be consistent with each of these areas where the core design principles or corporate guidelines will overlap. Your designer can help create a set of guidelines that, once in place, form the bedrock of your company image.

How can design help us stay competitive?

In the current economic climate we're all looking at reducing overheads and cutting costs where we can but these cut backs shouldn't be to the detriment of your brand image or market presence. Past recessions have shown that many businesses try to stem their losses by cutting marketing budgets, delaying new product development and reducing research and development. However, research shows that companies that don't invest in these areas during a recession are more than twice as likely to fail than those that do – the latter often emerging stronger and more competitive than before. If you carefully plan your budget and are realistic about what you hope to achieve you can still utilise the services of a professional graphic designer or creative agency.

Doesn't design cost an arm and a leg?

Good quality, effective design doesn't have to break the bank. There will always be a place for the large agencies, on costly retainers, that deal with the huge corporates and retail giants. However, as more companies outsource their design, smaller, boutique agencies are flourishing and they can benefit your business with the provision of cost effective, quality design, finished to agency standards but delivered with more flexibility and a personal touch. Good design has become more affordable as the client only pays for design as and when they require it.

How can we get the most out of a small budget?

A good designer will take the time to get to know you and your business to fully understand what you ultimately want to achieve. It is important to reveal your budget to the designer at the start so they can present a quotation offering a series of options enabling you to cherry-pick the elements you can take forward within your current budget. It is vital for you to present a clear, comprehensive brief as it is fundamental to achieving satisfactory results within budget and time frames. The brief encapsulates what you want the designer to achieve, sets out the parameters for the project and gives focus to the designer's creativity. However, it should not be too prescriptive - let designers provide input based on their experience in similar projects.

Trust your designer

A common pit fall is the client who decides to hire a professional and commits the time and finance only to revert to old habits and ignore the designers advice. Allow the designer creative freedom - your business is your expertise, design is theirs. Good communication will lead to a creative relationship that ensures your marketing materials produce results, create a powerful impression and most importantly, increase profits.