



The key points to consider when
choosing a designer or design
agency to work with



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Choosing the right design agency

The success of your marketing, and indeed your company, can depend on getting the right designers on board. However, with every man and his dog claiming to be a designer these days how do you know what you're getting and who you're working with?

Due to a massive increase of designers working from their bedrooms, and Printers pretending to be designers, and offering cut price work without the necessary design experience it can be difficult to separate the good from the bad. Before you choose to hire a designer you need to ask yourself the following questions:

What are you actually getting for your money?

Will your design look good now and in the future?

What will be your relationship with the designer, and can you share your ideas?

Will you be able to contact your designer in the future for any changes?

Will your website be cross compatible and accessible to those with disabilities?

This short guide will aim to answer some of these questions before you make the mistake of choosing the cheapest option. We will help you choose the right resources for you and your business, now and in the future.

Pricing

Let's first look at pricing, after all it is probably the first thing you'll consider when choosing a designer or design agency to work with.

A quick Google search for 'cheap web design' shows many companies offering 'web design for £99'. Yes, it's cheap. But what are you really getting for your money? Well, for starters, not a lot in terms of creativity. Looking through an agency's portfolio you should be sure to check how similar each piece of work they produce is. After all, you want a design that makes you stand out from your competitors and grab potential customers with innovation and creativity. Many cheap designers re-use templates, styles, colour schemes and photos throughout their entire client base.

As for size and functionality, most cheap designers will only allow a certain number of pages on your website. The '£99 deal' will get you two pages. Does this matter? Well, yes, actually. Most of the designer's time goes on the look of the website and any extra features, such as e-commerce or a blog, and not on adding pages of content. You should try to avoid companies that charge per page and look to use those which give set estimates based on hours worked. You never want to feel limited on the number of pages required and must ensure that additional pages will not incur undue expenses.

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The Design

We touched on the design of websites briefly above, but let's look at it in a little bit more depth.

As mentioned earlier most designers charging a small fee will simply re-use templates with a slightly different colour scheme and photos. This gives your website a generic theme instead of a design unique to you and your business that you can be proud of.

As the client paying for a service, you should always be able to get your ideas across to the designers, instead of being pigeonholed into a re-hashed design. This allows your company to look unique to all of your visitors, differentiates you from your competitors and helps the designer create something that you can both be happy with. Even in the corporate world, web design should never be about remade templates and lowest common denominator work, and you should try to avoid agencies or companies that don't adhere to these values.

Today more than ever your website is the public face of your company, as more people search for businesses using search engines, a website is just as an important part of your image as your shop signage. Nobody knows your business better than you do, so instead of being pigeon-holed into re-hashed designs your designer needs to work with you to create something tailored towards your business. Even in the corporate world design should never be about remade templates or lowest common denominator work, and you should avoid agencies that don't adhere to these values.

Working with the designers

Throughout the design process you must ensure that your designer is never more than a call away. You can therefore discuss the design progress and put your ideas across. The majority of the discussions will happen at the start of the design process, and any ideas you have should be taken on board and discussed to check feasibility and see how they can be used.

Generally a small deposit may be required before work begins, however, you should not provide full payment until the work is complete and you are happy with the end results.

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Accessibility

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is an international consortium of member organisations, full time staff and the public working together to develop Web Standards. Since 1994 W3C have published more than 110 such standards, called W3C Recommendations. It is imperative that the agency you choose for your web design acknowledges these guidelines and will work to ensure your website displays correctly on any web browser. They must also ensure that your website is accessible to those with disabilities.

It is imperative that the agency you are working with acknowledges these guidelines and will work to make sure your website will display correctly on any web browser (such as Firefox as well as Internet Explorer) and allow equal usage for those with disabilities.

The Future

Its two years into the future and your business is expanding. You open a second office, or perhaps decide to add an online store to your website. Your current website, which looked great two year ago, now looks massively outdated and is no longer compatible with modern internet browsers. You may want flyers designed to send to tell people about your expansion, or maybe add the news of your new store and directions on how to find it on your website. Will your current design agency make these changes at a reasonable cost? Can they make the changes at all? Do they have the capabilities to design flyers, posters or web advert banners?

You should be asking yourself these questions now. The answer lies in choosing a creative agency who will not only work with you at the start, but also throughout any changes you decide to bring in. You need to choose a company who will be able to carry out the full array of work, from web design to flyers, copywriting or even catalogue design. This helps your various forms of marketing all have the same look, approach and feel.

You should build a close relationship with your designers, who should value both your custom and your opinion. Not only will this benefit you in terms of brand consistency, but will also work out cheaper in the long run.

In Conclusion

At Flock of Pigs Ltd we work tirelessly to deliver stylish and functional designs every time. We mix our creative flair with your industry experience to create and market brands that show your company the way you want to be seen.

If want to avoid the headaches of searching for multiple agencies depending on your needs, or the pain of getting hold of a part time designer when you need urgent changes made to your website, at a price that is suitable for you and your business, please get in touch at www.flockofpigs.co.uk and speak to one of the team. You ll love working with us, and in the future you will realise we were a key part in your businesses success.

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Introduction to Flock of Pigs - The sister company to ROMA Publications Ltd

Here in the flock we feel that getting professional help in promoting your business should be near the very top of your company's agenda.

As one of Rochdale's premier graphic design studios we are looking to help businesses create a bigger noise within their marketplace. Whether you're an ambitious start-up or a proud market leader, we can help you reenergise your public profile with a bespoke creative solution.

We offer a full service from corporate identities, logo design and branding to brochures and leaflets/flyers through to advertising design, exhibition stand designs and websites. The studio offers high quality creative design that both start-ups and SMEs can find affordable and worth while.

Flock of Pigs Ltd was set up to primarily offer design services to small to medium enterprises who would perhaps not be able to afford large agency fees. We are committed to providing a quality, yet affordable, creative design service to our clients and always aim to produce work that our clients instinctively know is right for the promotion of their business.

Please tick below any design requirements that you may be interested in and fax this sheet back to us to 01706 759254.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Logo Design / Redesign | <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibition Stand / Popup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Branding Design Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Website Design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brochure Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement Design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leaflet Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Design Requirements |

We look forward to hearing back from you.

Thanks and regards,

Phil Ainley - Partner & Art Director