HOW TO CREATE A GRAPHIC DESIGN PROJECT OUTLINE

Before beginning the design phase of a job, it is helpful to create a graphic design project outline. It will provide you and your client with some structure when discussing and creating the pages and elements of a project.

FORMAT OF A GRAPHIC DESIGN PROJECT OUTLINE

How you format and present your outline is up to you. Make sure it is clear, to the point and easy to follow. You don't want there to be any confusion as to what is included in the project, as that can lead to problems later on in the process.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A GRAPHIC DESIGN PROJECT OUTLINE

What you include in the outline will vary depending on the type and size of the job. Remember that the idea is to get in writing what you, as the designer, are responsible for creating. This will give the client peace-of-mind as well, since they will know what is included in their project and that it is headed in the right direction.

Here are just a few examples of what to include for different types of projects:

- **Website design:**
  For a website project, include each section of the site with a detailed description of the content and pages. It is important to know how many unique designs and layouts you need to provide.
- **Book design:**
  Include an approximate number of unique page designs and standard page layouts you will be providing, as well as additional elements such as the cover and jacket. If you have discussed it in more detail, include the chapters and sections of the book and what is required for each.
- **Postcards, Business Cards, and Posters:**
  For one-page jobs, the outline will be fairly simple. It should include what content needs to be presented and in what format.
- **Package design:**
  For packaging, include each element to be designed. For a CD package, for example, you would include the liner notes, spine, back cover and CD label.
- **Brochures:**
  For brochure and other foldout designs, include the number of panels and what content will appear on each.

HOW TO USE THE OUTLINE

The graphic design project outline has several uses, including:

- **Help to determine the estimate and timeframe:**
  It is often a good idea to get an outline approved before quoting a price, as it will help you determine the time necessary to complete a job.
- **Include it in your Proposal:**
  Once approved, the outline can be **part of your final contract or proposal** so the scope of the project is officially agreed on.
- **Keep the project on target:**
  As you work on the project, you can refer to the outline to stick to the original plan. If the amount of content changes, this may affect the budget or timeframe.

Get into the habit of creating outlines for your graphic design projects, whether they are personal, for school or for clients. This will help to insure that **the design process** goes smoothly.