

When you delegate jobs to the designer(s), make sure you provide clear direction. Define and prioritize project objectives and set firm review and completion dates. Supply the necessary information and resources needed to meet strategic objectives, as well.

Your thrill will come in directing and encouraging the designer(s) to do great work. This is no small challenge or achievement. There are far fewer people who can successfully manage creativity than there are good designers. If you find yourself feeling half-empty because you miss the passion of design, the decision to manage is by no means irreversible. On the other hand, managing a creative team may be your opportunity to grow your talent—to design and maintain a fully functional department, rather than just a project.

Dante Quarante, executive director of package design at E&J Gallo, has built a world-class in-house creative group responsible for all strategic brand development, brand reinventions and line extensions for Gallo's global portfolio of 60-plus brands. quarante@ejgallo.com

FINDING A JOB

What's the best way to find out which companies have in-house design departments, aside from calling all the corporations in my city?

Jennifer Zinsmeyer Murillo graphic Designer

SAN ANTONIO, TX

Julie Sims responds: First, consider joining your local chapter of the American Marketing Association (AMA), because you're apt to meet many professionals who work for corporations with design departments and who may even be recruiting new staff. You can find information about the San Antonio AMA chapter at www.sa-ama.org.

You also should become an avid reader of your local business journal. It's a valuable resource for learning about companies that are expanding or relocating to your area—all of which provide good job prospects. Business journals also publish lists of the biggest firms in your area in a variety of categories, as well as the best places to work.

Obviously, the bigger the business, the more likely it is to have an in-house design department, so this information can be very helpful. (Most business journals also offer a compilation of their "Book of Lists" for purchase.)

As you try to identify opportunities, keep in mind that a broad job search can be overwhelming. Consider narrowing your targets to a specific industry—one that you find particularly interesting or full of opportunities. For example, if you're interested in tourism, you may be able to schedule informational interviews with in-house design professionals in this field who can refer you to additional organizations with in-house design departments. Once you've targeted a company that you'd like to work for, make sure your resume gets into the hands of the hiring manager. Often, you can **32»**

call the company to find out the name of the creative services director.

Finally, consider reaching out to recruiters/staffing firms that specialize in placing design professionals. They will likely know which companies have in-house design departments and may even be able to match you with a rewarding position.

Julie Sims is communications director with The Creative Group, a specialized staffing firm placing creative, advertising, marketing and web professionals with a variety of firms on a project and full-time basis (and HOW's official career partner).

www.creativegroup.com

BUILDING A CREATIVE DEPARTMENT

I'm the first creative team member in a 5-year-old, six-person marketing firm. My title is creative director, and I think I was hired with the idea that eventually I'll build a whole design department. I'm excited about this opportunity, but I don't think I have a head for business and managing growth, so I'm not sure how to get started. I'm assuming I need to make a plan and maybe get it approved by the core group? How much should I do alone, and how much (or when) should I involve them? How do you grow a department? What is a normal workload for one person? I've only been here six months, and I'm struggling with burnout already. I don't want to blow this—please help!

Stephanie Davis Creative Director

MOUNT PLEASANT, SC

Susan Lamb responds: Building a creative department: great opportunity or daunting proposition? The process can be overwhelming. However, a little careful planning, negotiation and soul searching can produce an amazing in-house department.

The key to successfully developing an appropriate creative team for your company will rest in your knowledge of the company, your employer and their goals. The more research you do in those areas, the more solid your plan will be. Here are some questions to get you to the heart of creating your proposal.

Who's really in charge? Find out who has final sign-off of your hiring plan. If possible, you should focus your presentation to just a few people. Office politics can often affect the outcome of an initiative, so be mindful of anyone who could hinder your success. Build goodwill with colleagues, but don't feel that you have to present your plan to a committee.

Once you've identified the deciding party, determine how they like to be involved. Are they hands-on, preferring to be included from the beginning? Or do they expect plans to be thoroughly researched and complete? If they're the latter and you're feeling a little uneasy about a cold run, find someone you can use as a sounding board for your ideas before you make the final presentation.

What are the expectations of the new creative team? Your understanding about the role of the creative department could be quite different than your employer's. Find out what they're really thinking. Will

the creative department be solely a support group for marketing projects, or will the group play a strategic role as partners to the marketing side of the firm?

This is something you'll need to address as you move forward. If the firm sees creative functioning as just a service center, take the opportunity to show that the prospective team can provide more value to the company than they realize. Clearly outline how your group can help the company grow and how you envision them interacting and collaborating with the rest of the firm strategically and day-to-day

Where's the company headed? Discuss with your employer their vision for the company as a whole. Assess present needs and gauge future growth. What are the plans for the company? Will new industries or capabilities affect the amount of work in the short and long term? Ask them to identify those new priorities so you can better anticipate what kind of positions (web, copy, interactive, etc.) will be needed. You might consider setting up a couple of hiring scenarios based on varying rates of growth and needs.

What's your budget? Is it enough to support what the firm requires of the department? Can you build an effective team by sticking to it? Where can you afford to rethink positions if you've exceeded the budget? Do your best to adhere to the budget, but if you feel there's a serious shortfall, don't hesitate to approach your employer about it before you continue.

Burnout in a fast-growing company is not uncommon. To figure out how to eliminate it, you'll need to

first define what it really means to you. How far can you push yourself before you cease to be effective and/or lose your sanity? Sixty or more hours? Saturdays? Sundays? Where do you draw the line? Determine your limit, and try to develop reasonable expectations for yourself and your future team. You'll need to allow for some tough deadline schedules, but realize your team cannot function well working six or seven days a week for months on end. Be honest with your employer about your concerns. Maintaining manageable workloads will help you retain great employees and lower the chance that they'll leave due to too much pressure.

Additionally, get creative. Incorporate group retreats into your budget. The occasional break can help re-energize the team, especially after large projects. You don't need to spend a fortune, either. A field trip to the grocery store to look at packaging or an afternoon taking photos can go a long way in diminishing stress.

Once you've crafted your suggestions and developed your presentation, be confident in your proposed plan. The knowledge you gather over the course of the process will make your pitch stand on its own. The value to your employer will be obvious. **BOW**

Susan Lamb is lead designer for a large law firm in Seattle. During the last nine years, she's worked in several in-house creative departments for companies in the *software*, luxury-bedding, beauty-product and engineering *fields*, slambdesign@yahoo.com