

Is your designer costing you money?

by Gary Reichel

The pitfalls of using a graphic designer that is not experienced can have financial and emotional consequences. Designers must understand what software program to use for the task at hand. A designer that is not experienced can cost the customer time, money and unnecessary stress.

Often, I am asked what is my favorite program to use. My answer is always the same, "it depends on the job."

To help illustrate the point, it could be said that a good graphic designer is like a good chef. That to achieve the desired result, the individual will require the right tool and technique. If a chef is making rice and chicken, a pot can be used to boil the water and a frying pan can be used to cook the chicken. If a graphic designer is making a custom logo, an illustrating program can be used to do the illustration and a paint program can be used for additional effects. Of course there are many ways to cook chicken and rice and many ways to make a logo. That's the point! What do you want to do -- and what is the best software to get the job done? Each program has its strengths and weaknesses. Importantly, a designer needs to understand these differences and the pros and cons of each.

Different Design Software

Getting the job done is only half the battle. A file which is not prepared correctly can have financial and emotional consequences.

Financially, Financially, a file built incorrectly will result in unnecessary time required to rectify any problems. If outputting for print, the cost can be associated with the service provider or press house.

Most of my time as a pre-press operator was spent correcting graphic designers work. There are a number of things that must be understood when building a layout. Looking good on the screen is only a small indication of how the project will come off a press.

Designers must know how to correctly build a bleed

- Panels and folds must be checked for accuracy
- Designers must understand color separations, Pantone colors and how to use them
- ...and the list goes on.

If these and other topics are not understood, there may be a price to pay. Unfortunately, the one who pays (in most cases) is the customer, a print house or service provider usually charges to fix these problems.

Emotionally, Emotionally, the client also suffers. If no press check is done and the job is printed to the dissatisfaction of the client. The client may be left with no alternative but to accept the job. If the client has a last minute job for a presentation or trade-show, there may be no time to re-run the project.

A graphic designer without the proper experience can make these mistakes, and more. In regard to the internet, a designer must understand more than how to optimize images, put some text on the page and upload it to a remote site. If the designer does not understand search engine optimizing and basic HTML, the beautiful web page may never be seen. From the beginning of the project, search engine optimizing is something that needs to be incorporated into the design. If the web designer does not know the basics of optimizing, someone will have to go back into the web site and re-design, costing more money.

So you need a graphic designer

There are a lot of people working as graphic designers and web designers. Many of these individuals are well trained and understand what it takes to create a project that the customer

will embrace. However, many times a customer is paying for the mistakes that come from a designer's inability to produce a correct job for delivery -- be it press or web.

These are the designers that end up costing the customer in two ways; that is, financially and emotionally.

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