



icreatemedia

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How We Work Together

Thank you for your consideration. I know that working with a designer like me for the first time often prompts a few questions. Sometimes more than a few concerns, too. How successful will I be in interpreting your needs? How can I do it most effectively? How can I do it most efficiently? How much will it cost?

My Charges

Like all service organizations my invoices are based on the time I invest in a project. Currently I bill my time at \$65 per hour, about 20% under what other designers of my quality and experience charge. Project costs range from a low of a few hundred dollars up to thousands, depending on my clients' needs and budgets. I always provide a detailed proposal and estimate for approval before starting. I adhere to my estimates unless project specifications change.

Laying The Foundation

The first thing I do after being assigned a project is schedule information-gathering meetings between myself and your key staff. I am interested not only in scheduling, budget and job specifications, but also in your preferences, target audience, and objectives. And, of course, I will want to know all the user features and benefits of the product. Although this process is somewhat time-consuming (I don't like meetings any more than you do), it is also crucially important. It will help you sharpen your focus and objectives, and it will help me ensure that what I produce is not only creatively excellent, but strategically targeted.

Developing The Right Ideas

Despite popular misconceptions, good creative work doesn't often come in a flash of inspiration; usually it comes from lots of trial and error. This is why I also need to take the time to consider several approaches (concepts), work them through, try them out. Then revise them. In addition, there are usually some practical and functional ends I need to tie up before submitting my ideas—sub-contractor availability, printing estimates, scheduling requirements, etc. All this, plus the need to schedule my workflow in a businesslike fashion, means that I normally ask for up to two weeks, depending on the job's complexity, before I submit my rough approaches (concepts) for your review. Of course, if you have a rush project or deadline pressure I adjust my workflow and timing accordingly. It is my experience that it is best if I first present my rough concepts to your project manager and just one or two others. This ensures that we all stay focused on the problem and are not distracted by too many personal opinions. My rough concepts consist of grayscale pdf's or pencil sketches. They are adequate to convey what I believe is the best approach to take, taking into consideration your budget, schedule, objectives, and preferences. On the other hand, they are not so well-developed as to have wasted time and effort if I need a course correction. After presenting, I'll ask for comments. The more objective and specific you can be, the better I will be able to respond. Comments are my input for revising the rough concepts into a finished one. Revision normally takes me about a week, and I schedule a second presentation shortly thereafter. From the input at this second presentation meeting further minor refinements are made as necessary. I also finalize the production timetable, and the scheduling of additional services such as layout, animation, electronic art, manipulation, and optimization.

Ensuring Your Satisfaction

I recommend the finished project be routed to the appropriate decision makers for fact and detail checking only, reserving stylistic and subjective decisions to your project manager. To avoid costly confusion, it is also important that all communication with me come from the project manager. During the course of the project I keep your project manager informed of my progress. Activities that will affect the schedule or budget are identified in writing. My goal is to keep your project moving ahead quickly, smoothly, and cost-effectively; to make sure that I'll produce even better results than you hired me for.

Sincerely,

Marc Castillo

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