

## Writing a Proposal

Proposals can take many forms, from one simple page to several pages, depending on the project. It should be printed on your letterhead, and should be accompanied by a cover letter. All proposals should include at least the following:

- **Project Description**

Describe the project in detail. With simple projects, the description could be a single paragraph. Both the designer and client should be clear on what the project entails. This is fundamental, as it often happens that the scope of the project changes, and revisions to the fees will become necessary.

- **Basic Services**

List what the designer actually will provide the client with. Those services usually include: research, brainstorming, comps, design, coordination of all other individuals involved in the project, and quality control of the finished design. It is important to be very detailed in the services description: define how many concepts you will produce, how many comps, how many rounds of major revisions, and so on.

- **Additional Services**

List other services, not strictly design-related: for example copy development, illustration, photography, etc. It is important that the contract is clear on what services you are and are NOT including.

- **Final Production**

The designer will choose how involved he/she will be in the final production of the project. However, it is important to discuss it in your proposals; many designers offer to supervise the printing: the client will be responsible for the costs, and get billed from the vendor directly, but the designer will supervise and coordinate the process. Buying the printing services directly, and reselling them to the client at a mark-up, could be a good way to make a profit, as long as you have enough capital. Remember, though, that you will become a vendor, responsible for charging sales taxes.

- **Client's Responsibilities and Liability**

It's a good idea to put in writing what the client will be responsible for, such as copy development, arranging for the printing, proofreading, etc.

- **Fees**

List your fees clearly. You can choose either a lump, per-project sum or other compensation, such as an hourly rate or tasks-based rate (design work, research, production, print supervision, photoshoot, etc.)

- **Payment Schedule**

List how and when the fees and expenses will be paid, and include your initial payment or deposit. It is important to ask for a deposit, to confirm the client's good faith and commitment to the project. Also, since this fee should be non-refundable, it will compensate you in the event the client cancels the project. It also covers some of the initial expenses. Try to avoid starting a new job without a deposit fee.

- **Revisions and Additions**

Be specific on what services are and aren't covered. Include a clause that states that additional changes, change of order, major revisions, etc. will be charged at additional cost, and state how this cost will be calculated. This applies also to rush work, which will be charged at an extra price.

- **Rights**

Designers should retain as many rights as possible to their designs. It is a basic concept in the copyright law. This is why you, as a designer, are considered a provider of services instead of a vendor of property in the eyes of the sales tax authorities in many states including California. This way you can avoid charging sales taxes. It also prevents unauthorized modifications of your work. Be clear on what rights the client will acquire, if any, in your proposals.

- **Other**

- Late Payment: Invoices are often payable within thirty days. You can add a collection fee, if they are not paid on time. There are, however, legal limits to this amount.
- Reimbursable expenses
- Termination
- Any other necessary clauses, such as samples request, credits, third-party contracts, etc.

Based in part on the article by Roger Whitehouse, originally published on "Professional Practices in Graphic Design", Tad Crawford, ed. Allworth Press, 1998. The article was reprinted with permission by AIGA in the 2002 article "The AIGA Standard Form of Agreement".

# Proposal # 000000

**Commissioned by:** Your client  
Your client's address and phone number

**Project Objective** – To redesign the company's marketing brochure. The company will use the brochure as a main marketing tool, to increase sales. The current brochure is 24 pages, 4 colors, 8 1/2 x 11, consisting of text and photographs, and describing the company's services.

**Project Description** – The designer will create a new cover and internal layout design for the brochure. The designer can change the current dimensions and format if deemed necessary and agreed upon by the client. The brochure will also include a vicinity map. One or two perforated, self-reply cards will also be included in the brochure.

**Design & Production** – The designer will create 3 design concepts for the cover and the internal layout. After approval of one general direction, the designer will produce a tight comp for the chosen idea, and then proceed to create the final piece. One major round of revisions during the early design stage and necessary minor changes during the production stage are included. Additional changes, and more extensive revisions, especially late in the process, will incur additional charges. The designer requests the client's written approval at any milestone of the project. Upon request, the designer can supervise the printing of the job: the designer will then provide the client with bids from different vendors, arrange the printing and be present during press checks.

**Client Responsibilities** – The client will provide all the text for the brochure, and will be responsible for its accuracy. The client will provide photography for the brochure. Alternatively, the designer can provide and select imagery for the project, to be agreed upon and billed to the client. The client will agree to provide the needed material to the designer on time for the designer to meet the set deadlines. The client will be responsible for buying the printing.

**Time Table** – Initial design concept presentation: April 1, 2004  
The brochure will be delivered to the printer by April 19, 2004.

**Payment Schedule** – The client agrees to pay 1/3 of the estimated fees up front, at the approval of this proposal. A final invoice will be produced upon the brochures' delivery. The client agrees to pay the full balance within 30 days of the final invoice.

**Estimated fees** – To redesign the company's marketing brochure the designer estimates the following fees:

<b>Original Design</b>	\$ 0000 (includes comps and design)
<b>Production</b>	\$ 0000 (production of the brochure, including diestrike and reply card design)
<b>Print Supervision</b>	\$ 0000 (arranging the printing, supervising it, and necessary press checks)
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$ 0000

Fees are based on the agreed upon terms and project specification only. Any departure from the specifications will require a change of order, and a possible increase in fees, charged at the hourly rate of \$00.00.

**Other** – All tangible materials in all circumstances remain the property of the designer. All rights and ownership apply to preliminary concepts, works in progress and finished material, whether the project is completed or canceled. The client, however, will be entitled to limited and specific usage rights of such materials only for the purpose of reproduction, after which all materials will be returned, unaltered, to the designer within 30 days of use.

**Consented and agreed to:**

**Designer** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Client** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

# Invoice # 000000

**Commissioned by:** Your client  
Your client's address and phone number

**Project Objective** – To redesign the company's marketing brochure. The company will use the brochure as a main marketing tool, to increase sales. The current brochure is 24 pages, 4 colors, 8 1/2 x 11, consisting of text and photographs, and describing the company's services

**Time Table** – The brochure was delivered to the printer by April 19, 2004, as agreed.

**Payment Schedule** – The client agrees to pay the full balance within 30 days of this final invoice.

## Itemized Fees

<b>Original Design</b>	\$ 0000 (includes comps and design)
<b>Production</b>	\$ 0000 (production of the brochure, including diestrike and reply card design)
<b>Print Supervision</b>	\$ 0000 (arranging the printing, supervising it, and necessary press checks)
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$ 0000
<b>Deposit</b>	\$ 0000
<b>BALANCE DUE</b>	\$ 0000

**Other** – All tangible materials in all circumstances remain the property of the designer. All rights and ownership apply to preliminary concepts, works in progress and finished material, whether the project is completed or canceled. The client, however, will be entitled to limited and specific usage rights of such materials only for the purpose of reproduction, after which all materials will be returned, unaltered, to the designer within 30 days of use.

We appreciate your business, and we are looking forward to working with you again soon in the future.

Sincerely,

Your name here      Date