



Who on earth needs a Professional Designer!

You can do it yourself...right?

Well let's clear that one up straight away...WRONG!

In this computer age the readily available Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Publisher, makes everyone a designer. At least that's what some would have you think. Although it may seem like a great cost saving move for small and even medium size businesses, the implications of embarking on the DIY design route can work against you in real terms.

Here are just five reasons your business will benefit from using a Professional Designer.

1: It will save you and your business time and money.

Running a business is demanding. Just making what you do happen, takes time, energy and focus, so can you really afford the added pressure of also trying to create an effective logo, stationery, brochure catalogue or marketing campaign?

By the time you get to grips with that free "design software" and are then only vaguely familiar with it, you will have spent dozens of hours, and the results may even be a little disappointing. Couldn't your time have been used more productively?

Think...if you could have earned £1500.00 for your business in the time you spent doing a job that a designer would have charged £150.00 to do...have you made a sensible choice?

The other major problem is that your marketing activity gets "put off" when you're busy, even if you really need it! This means fewer customer, fewer sales and without those your business is in trouble.

Hiring a Professional Designer means that your marketing campaigns are put into action quickly and effectively and can start earning your business money sooner rather than later.

2: Your brand will stand out from the crowd.

Having a unique and polished brand is vital if you're going to stand out from the competition in a crowded marketplace. If you look just like everyone else in your field how will you ever get recognised? And recognition is the key.

Customers are far more likely to buy from a business they think they've seen before so looking eye-catching, professional and memorable puts you a step ahead of your competitors. Remember:

- **If your branding and company literature looks poor, unprofessional and makeshift, that's exactly the slot you'll fill in your customers' minds, and unfair though it may seem, they're unlikely to buy from you.**
- **Professional Designers know that visual perception is the dominant sense in humans and is the superhighway to the parts of the brain that decide what's worthy of attention and what is not.**

- » **Being eyecatching literally opens the door to your customers' psyche, allowing you to get their attention instantly, then giving you the opportunity to build on their interest.**

Your logo and consistent brand identity is one of your most valuable marketing assets, speaking volumes about your business.

A first impression is a lasting impression...it's something you can't afford to get wrong.

3: Your brand integrity will be maintained and enhanced

Once you have a solid logo or brand identity you need to frequently and consistently put it in front of your target audience to establish the recognition that will keep you front of mind when they are making their buying decision. A professional designer will:

- » **Maintain a brand continuity in everything you produce or present to the marketplace, which reinforces who you are and your real value to the customer.**
- » **Maintain the cohesion of design elements that ensure everything produced looks like it belongs under your corporate umbrella.**

Using different logos, fonts, colours and graphic styles along with inconsistent messages creates confusion and the viewer has no real perception of what the business "looks like" in marketing terms. Not only does this reflect badly on your business...it looks unprofessional.

Poor design damages your name and brand in the mind of your customers...a real lose, lose situation.

4: It will save your business money.

This may seem counter-intuitive, but by simply looking at the way a business owner would approach a marketing project and the way a Professional Designer would consider it, all becomes clear.

Most business owners work on instinct:

- » **They stick with what they know and what they've seen others do.**
Let's take an example. To many, marketing is simply about putting a "we sell this" message on a leaflet or flyer they've "designed", getting thousands printed and mailing them to everyone they can think of (and statistically most will have no interest in the product). When the response from this kind of "scattergun" activity is less than rewarding they understandably become disillusioned and cynical about the value of "marketing and design".

They've spent their time (at a cost to the business) and real money on databases, printing, and postage...for little or no return.

From a Professional Designer's point of view:

- » **There are some key questions that need answering before they start to create anything.**
Because good designers think strategically, they would first: consider the objective of the campaign; the relevance of the marketing message; what's in it for the potential customer and the reason they would respond; the means by which the message will be delivered (leaflet, postcard, email etc), and most importantly, exactly who would be most interested in receiving it.

With those boxes ticked, they would have a clear vision as to how the finished product would be crafted and packaged for maximum effect and return.

Crucially, a professional designer would advise "testing and measuring" the piece before investing large sums in its production and distribution. It makes more sense to print hundreds rather than thousands to first assess the response. If as expected the return on the smaller investment is high then there's no good reason not to invest more in it as long as it continues to give a good return.

In a nutshell, Professional Designers get things right from the start and reduce wastage in activity that simply isn't appropriate for your business.

Reducing wastage reduces your costs, adding directly to your bottom line.

5: Corporate pride breeds confidence in sales.

Having the right tools for the job removes uncertainty in any sales process.

If a new piece of plant or software, for example, suddenly makes your business eminently equipped to deliver a specific product or service, you and your sales team would have no qualms about vigorously promoting and selling it, knowing that everything's in place to deliver.

They have something they are confident in and are proud to present and be associated with.

So let's imagine that scenario expanded to include your entire business.

If your sales team are meeting potential customers, but are armed with sub standard business cards and marketing literature, how likely are they to hand this over when they know that it could damage the credibility of the company because it looks unprofessional? This undermines their confidence that they will be taken seriously by the customer and that what they have to say will be believed.

It's not doing your business or their self-esteem any favours.

A strong and robust corporate identity is something the salesforce can get behind and be proud to have their name and reputation associated with. This engagement is good for them and the company. If they feel that there has been time, effort and thought put into the tools they need to do their jobs well, it will make them feel valued as employees and confident that they are truly delivering a quality service or product to customers who will respect them.

A company that can be seen to have pride in it's appearance and the way it presents itself will be valued more by it's employees and it's customers.

Good design is the art of good business.

One final thought...

There are many more excellent reasons for investing in professional marketing design for your business, but even if you're still unconvinced, the five reasons above give you a sound basis on which to develop your own efforts.

So whether you choose to go pro, or go it alone...good luck.



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