



These key pieces of your marketing program should be the expression of all that's outstanding about your organization.

Creative Smarts At Work

Printed materials convey your services and their benefits, and provide an overall sense of your organization's value. These pieces, also known as collateral, can include brochures, business stationery, rack cards, print ads, annual reports, display graphics, catalogs, or anything that can be printed on paper.

Process

The process of creating print materials starts with establishing a direction to guide the stages of design development. At the beginning, I'll ask you to do a "homework" assignment:

1. Gather examples from organizations similar to yours. It is important to understand the context in which your printed pieces must compete. They should stand out in terms of their superior quality.
2. Looking at your examples, decide which ones you like and which you don't. Summarize your reactions to the examples' visual styles, organization, content, or anything else that stands out to you, for better or for worse. Be specific as to why you did or did not like a particular piece.

The phases of design are as follows:

1. **Research** – After gathering the above information, we'll discuss the mission and purpose of your organization, its goals, its audience and how it should be engaged, how to position your organization, and any other questions that may have a bearing on print design. A creative brief will be written as a summation of this phase, to guide project development going forward.
2. **Content Development** – After the creative brief has been approved, draft copy will be prepared and submitted for review. One or more rounds of approvals may occur at this point. Once copy is finalized, supporting imagery will be acquired and/or developed.
3. **Initial Layout Design** – After content development is complete, a draft layout design will be created.
4. **Layout Review** – The draft layout will be reviewed and discussed, and alterations may be requested.
5. **Layout Design Refinement** – A second draft with requested layout refinements will be produced and submitted for review. At this point, you may be ready to approve the draft as final, or you may request another round of alterations.
6. **Design Finalization** – Alterations will be executed and a second draft submitted for review. (Two rounds of approvals is the norm.)
7. **Final Design Approval** – When the final design is approved, files for reproduction will be produced and delivered.

When the client is a group or a board, I recommend that the group designate a smaller sub-committee that is authorized to manage the project, go to meetings, evaluate the design, and report back to the larger group.

GETTING STARTED

Please answer these questions in as much detail as possible. Your responses to these questions will guide the design process and help us provide you with a brochure that supports your mission goals and your marketing objectives.



1. What is the purpose of the printed piece?
2. What is the most important thing that it should accomplish for your business or organization?
3. What do you offer to your clients or audience?
4. What are your key messages?
5. Who and where is your market? What are their general demographics?
6. Who are your competitors?
7. What makes you unique? What sets you apart?
8. Why should your market go to you and not to your competition?
9. What is your market positioning? (How you would like your audience to perceive you.)
10. How will you distribute the printed piece?
11. What should readers do after they have seen it?
12. Does your company have established branding or other graphic elements that need to be incorporated into the visual design?