

Top Ten Gems of Wisdom On Client Revisions

The following gems of wisdom were mined from the responses to the Future Results Now! 2003 survey on Managing Client Revisions. Thank you to those who shared so generously.

Number 1. Your financial survival depends on you being comfortable talking to your clients about process and revisions up front.

2. Factor a lack of perfection (yours and theirs) into your estimates.

3. Over-communication never hurts. Tell them how many revisions you've allowed for and at what stage. Then warn them when they are getting close. Don't let revisions slip by and pile up – it only makes it harder.

4. Get understanding on mutual responsibility up front. Even to the point of checking with the client's accounts payable department for phased billing.

5. Invest the time to understand the client and project up front, after a quick budget-qualifying question. Then, quote to allow for all contingencies and never go over.

6. Don't assume. You may think you're O.K. allowing for two revision rounds but if you don't communicate that to your clients you could still end up in trouble.

7. It's the designer's responsibility to manage the process, despite time pressures.

8. An uneducated client will always cost you money.

9. Teach your staff to value their time. They are not productive when doing changes.

10. It's a constant learning process. Learn with your clients and take the time to develop mutual respect.

So, I can't count. Here's number 11. *When your client tries to make a change after they have accepted the original design they may just need reassurance that their original acceptance was the right decision. Review the project goals with them and the logic behind the original design. Work with them to craft the words they can use to help others in their organization see that the original design will meet their objectives.

** with credit to Theo Stephan Williams in "The Graphic Designer's Guide to Pricing, Estimating and Budgeting" a very useful book on the whole topic of managing clients and pricing to make a profit.*

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