An introduction to

Design and Print

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audiences wales

Learning on demand

User friendly arts marketing training guides

Audiences Wales is the arts marketing and audience development agency for Wales. Learning On Demand resources are produced by Audiences Wales with financial support from the Arts Council of Wales.

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Working with a designer

Graphic design agencies are constantly seeking creative, interesting projects. They will want to work with you, and will help in any way they can to ensure you get the best design service they can provide. A good creative designer will want to establish a successful creative relationship with you, send you away happy so that you will return and will also recommend their services to others.

The Designer's role

The designers fundamental role is to promote your product or service visually. They will translate your message into a visual statement in whatever form that takes, whether it's a poster, leaflet, brochure, folder, exhibition or website. They can advise you on the best ways to produce this visual statement and the best methods to use. If you give your designer a thorough brief in terms of who your target audience is and what your product/objective is, they should be able to provide you with a creative visual solution that will convey your message to your chosen target market.

Choosing a designer

When choosing a designer, try to put aside your own personal likes and dislikes- you need to find a designer that's right for your project and organisation, that understands your product, who may have experience in designing for your field. Have a look around, check out a few websites, look at other print you think is good and see who has designed it. Recommendations are also good - ask other people in your field who they use and if they would recommend them. When you've chosen one or more companies you think are right for you, ask them to come in to show you their portfolio and tell you more about their company. Remember it's about more that design ability. Do you like them? How do they work? What is their process? Can they work to your timescales? Can they work to your budget? Who will be working on your project? You may feel you'll get a better service with a larger, well known agency but this is not always the case. Larger agencies often use account managers who will be your contact, but the design work will then be re-briefed by them to the designer, who you may never meet, whereas a smaller agency offers the opportunity to meet and work with one designer throughout the project. All design agencies are keen to take on new clients and will be happy to come and meet you.

Costings

The first thing you want your designer to provide is costs. If budget is a top priority, gather costs before you meet designers, then you can just meet companies who can meet your budget constraints. If creativity is more important, don't be afraid to ask a designer if they can adjust their costs if you like them but they're too expensive - they may say no, but they'll beused to people asking!

For the designer to provide costs, you need to tell them:

- What is it? Is it a poster? Leaflet? Brochure?
- What size?
- How many pages?
- Full colour/ two colour/ one colour?
- Quantities
- Will you provide images? Will they need to source imagery?
- Do they need to provide illustrations or create photoshop images?

Design Brief

Even if this is the first time you've placed a piece of print, remember you are the client. The designer has the experience to advise you on the best creative solution to your brief, but you need to make sure it does respond to your brief; to this end, it is imperative you give a full brief to the designer.

This needs to cover:

- What is the product you're promoting?
- If it's a performance, is it drama, comedy, a musical, dance ....
- Who is the target audience?
- What's the age range?

Have a look at other print for similar productions. These could be a good visual guide for your designer - even if it's to say "I hate this - i want something completely different". Make sure you and your designer are clear on the message the piece of print should be conveying; it's no good you both getting carried away on creating a beautiful minimalist, abstract and cutting edge design of your target audience is aged 70 and over. Remember - it's not you that needs to love this piece of print, it's your target audience. If your company already has a corporate style, such as a particular font that must be used, or colours, or corporate guidelines on logo usage, let the designer know at the first briefing as all of these things will influence the final design.

You will need to provide your logo as a high-resolution image, ideally 300dpi (dots-per-inch), as a jpeg or tiff- your designer can advise you further on suitable formats.

The more comprehensive the brief you provide, the more likely you are to be happy with the result. If you have given the designer all the information they need, you should be happy with the initial visuals they show you. If it's wrong, tell them, discuss what needs changing- be specific - is it the image, the colours, the layout? Try to be constructive and explain why something isn't working. If they haven't answered your brief adequately, then ask them to re-work the design. But if you change the brief halfway through a project, be aware the designer may charge you for author's amendments as you are asking them to design something twice.

Provide a deadline. Even if you don't have a particular date you need something by, set one anyway. Designers typically work on several projects at once - you don't want yours to always be put to the bottom of the list in favour of more urgent jobs because you haven't given them a deadline. The designer should then provide you with a schedule listing when they will provide first visuals, how long you have to proof it, when it needs to go to print and how long printing will take.

Tendering Process

If you're planning to hire a design company to produce all of your print and design for several seasons or years, you may wish to consider tendering the work. This involves putting together a comprehensive design brief and asking several designers to provide costings and design proposals. The advantage of this is you will know before hiring a design company that they can come in within your budgets and that their design ideas suit your market. But be aware you are asking designers to work for free here. No design agency wants to work for free but they are all aware that tendering is part of the industry, and if a good contract is on offer, they will be interested. It is unlikely many good agencies will tender for smaller jobs such as a one-off poster or leaflet, unless there is the promise of a longer term contract available. As tendering can be a lengthy process, involving researching several companies, collating the brief, interviewing candidates or reviewing submissions, save this for long-term or big projects.

Design

Image Use:

- Resolution: 72dpi for online use
- 300dpi for print use
- You can print in two colour or duotone - two pantone colours,
- or one pantone colour (mono)
- or full colour which is a split of CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black)

  n.b - white does not count as a colour as it is not printed, so a black and white image is classed as one colour or mono.
- Online and onscreen images are often made up of an RGB split (Red, Green, Blue), but printed materials are always produced in CMYK. Remember this if providing a full colour image to a publication for an advert - an RGB image will come out in black and white, so change it to CMYK.
- If you have a specific colour combination in mind for your design, by all means talk to your designer about it. They will advise on complementary colour combinations and what they feel works best with the design.

Computer equipment and software

Most designers use Apple Macintosh computers, but can read Word documents from a PC for copy. Provide images as jpegs, tiffs or hi-res PDFS. The most common programs used by designers are Photoshop for image manipulation, Illustrator, particularly for logos, and Quark Xpress or Indesign for document layout.

Copy

When it comes to copy, this is often a battle between designer and marketeer. You want to convey as much information as possible on your piece of print, while the agency will want to keep a balance between image and text. A compromise can be reached! The text on a poster needs to be kept at a minimum as a poster will be viewed from a distance and people need to take in all the relevant information in just a few seconds, the same is true if you are going for a large outdoor advertising campaign; bus sides, ad shells, banners etc. If you know you have a lot of information to go onto a piece of print, let the designer know from the start as they can plan the design to allow plenty of space for text.

If you are planning to overprint on posters later, touring venue details for example, again let the designer know as they will need to provide space for this.

If you are looking for bilingual copy or multi-lingual copy, your chosen designer should have contacts for translation agencies and be able to source this for you.

If you are providing copy, you will be responsible for proofing text and checking it is correct at proof stage and printer proof stage. All designers will assume that content is your responsibility and will require final sign off from you as approval to proceed to print. They will only check proofs for colours, layout, image quality.

If you're aware of your responsibilities at the out-set of a project, costly disputes and reprints can be avoided.

Printing:

It may be easier to ask your designer to organise printing for you. This way, you deal with one person who can provide you with all the costs and deal with all the print for you. They have extensive experience of working with printers and will know the best printers for your particular job. They will probably gather several costs before providing you with the best one. They will organise artworking, printers proofs and delivery, all as part of the design service.

Paper types:

There are many different paper stocks, which fall under these categories:

- Paper stock is coated or uncoated.
- Uncoated paper has a rough textured finish and is currently very popular. But bear in mind that the ink will sink into the rough paper rather than sit on top and colours will not be as vibrant as proofs you see from the designer and printer. Use uncoated stock for stationary or anything with a form for filling in. Some coated papers will not handle writing very well.
- Coated stocks can be either glossy, silk or matt. Gloss will be very shiny, reflecting lots of light. Silk has a more subtle sheen and matt is a smooth paper but with minimal sheen. You can ask your designer to get you paper samples - if possible ask to see examples of printed jobs on the paper you are interested in as the ink coverage on the paper will affect the finished look.

Paper sizes:

Standard Sizes:

A6 10.5cm x 14.85

A5 14.85cm x 21cm

A4 21cm x 29.7cm

A3 29.7cm x 42cm

A2 42cm x 59.4cm

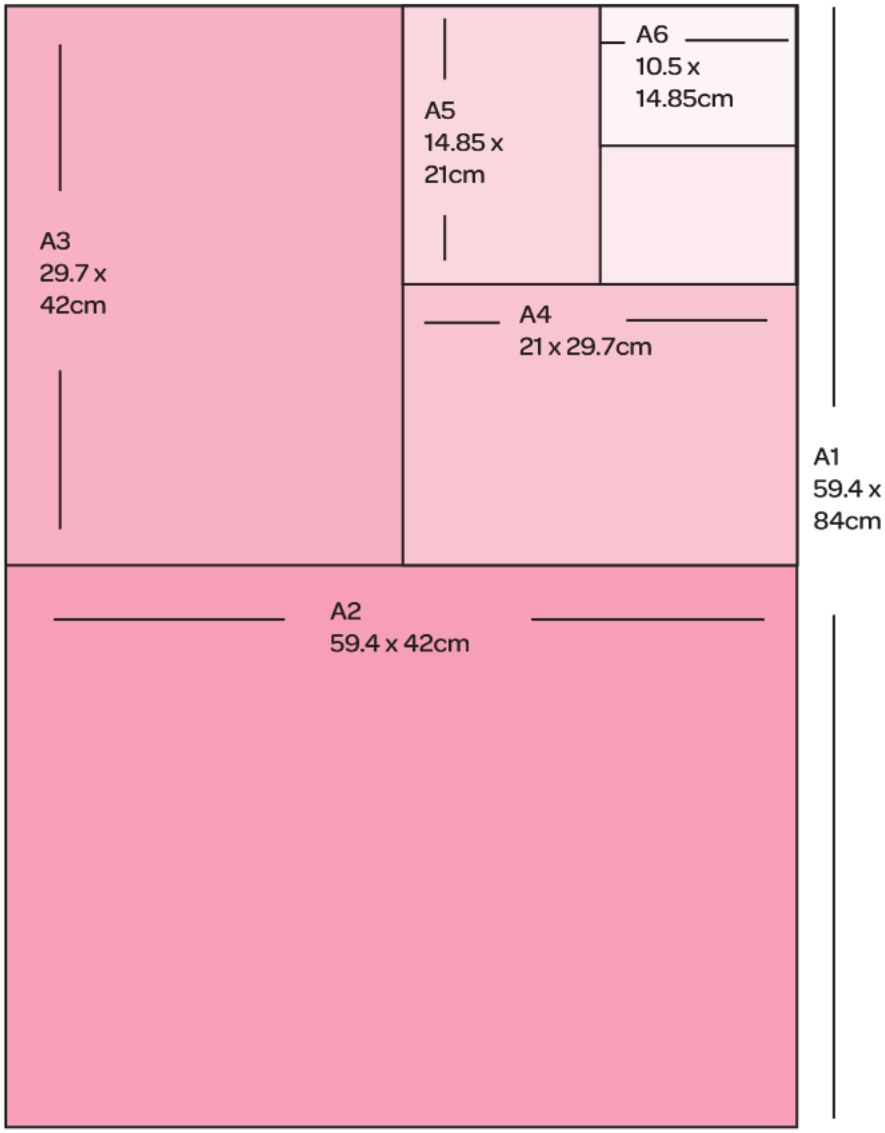
A1 59.4cm x 84cm

A0 84cm x 118.9cm

Double Crown 51cm x 76cm

Other common sizes;

one third A4 (also called DL) 9.9cm x 21cm



Paper sizes:

Standard leaflet size is A5, Letterheads are usually A4, compliment slips DL, Posters A3 and/or A2.

Although it's useful to know the standard sizes, your designer will advise you if you wish to try something new. Your leaflet can be designed and printed at any size (or shape - more about that later!) You can have something designed as portrait or landscape, on a single sheet or folded into a four page. Or concertina folded to give a multiple page leaflet out of one sheet of paper.

If you are on a tight budget, bear in mind the most economical way is to stick to a standard size as you will get more out of the flat sheets- most printers print onto A2 paper for example, so if you have an A5 leaflet, you will get 16 leaflets out of one sheet, with no wastage.

You can always ask your designer or printer to give you different cost options to give you an idea of what you can get for your budget. Remember layout will need to be decided at the beginning of the design process as the designer will need to know what size they are working to, how many pages etc.

Print Process:

Printing can be done on either a digital or litho press. Digital printing is ideal for short-run, fast turnaround projects; 500 leaflets or 100 posters for example, can be digitally printed in a few days.

Litho printing will provide you with a high-quality result and is more economical on bigger runs.

If you are not sure what is best for your project, ask your designer or printer.

If you are unsure of exact quantities, ask for basic amount plus a run-on cost. For example 5000 leaflets plus a cost for a 1000 run-on. The biggest cost in printing is the set-up cost; the cost to make the plates and set the whole thing up on the press. When the job is actually running, the cost to keep it running for a few thousand more is minimal, so it's better to have the maximum you think you may need from the outset; The run-on cost for a 1000 extra leaflets may be as little as £8. But if six months later, you realise you need another thousand leaflets, you will have to pay the set-up costs again which may be hundreds rather than tens of pounds.

Paper Weight

Paper is measured in gsm (grammes per square metre). A standard leaflet weight would be 130gsm or 150gsm. Standard for posters is 170gsm. Brochures can be 130gsm or 150gsm. Remember the heavier the item, the higher the postage costs if you are planning a large mail-out. Letterheads and compliment slips are generally printed on 100gsm and business cards on a heavier 300gsm board. Generally, anything heavier than 170gsm will be referred to as a board by the printer.

Special finishing options:

Beyond the basic print options, there are various special finishes the printer can provide to give your piece of print something extra. They can be expensive but look very effective.

Spot UV: This is a high gloss varnish that can be applied to target areas; you can pick out text, or your logo, or an image or photograph to have the spot UV applied to. This is particularly effective when printing on a matt stock to emphasise the contrast.

Matt or Gloss Laminate: This is a coating applied to the finished print.

Die-Cut options: This is when a piece of print can be cut to shape - any shape! Your designer will create a cutter guide for the printer to work to so if you want your leaflet to be in a shape of a flower, it can be. You can also have cut-outs on a cover to reveal something underneath.

Extra colour options: You can have metallic inks as an extra colour, which will be produced as an additional plate at printing stage.

Binding options for brochures: Brochures are usually 'saddle-stitched', with two staples holding the brochure together. A thicker brochure of more than 48pages can be perfect bound, where the spine is glued and the brochure is given a spine. This can be a more expensive finishing option but will give a great result.

Proofing:

When your designer presents visuals, ask them how colour accurate they are. What you get from a desktop printer is likely to be different from the final printed project. Printers usually provide colour calibrated digital proofs which show you exactly what your finished print will look like. Again ask the printer/designer if they are colour accurate. This is your opportunity to carry out last minute proofing and double-checking of everything so you don't end up with any costly re-prints. Be aware that any changes at printer proof stage can incur extra costs.

If colour matching is critical, you can ask for a wetproof, which is a printed sheet directly from the press. This is the most expensive option if you need to make changes as it will involve making new plates.

Some printers will provide PDF proofs unless you specify otherwise. This is quick and convenient, but gives you no indication of final colours.

If you are producing a brochure, your proofs may arrive imposed as printers pairs on large A2 sheets. Don't panic if you can't work out why some pages are upside down, and they don't sit in logical order. The printer will have used imposition software and the designer will have provided the printer with a hard-copy proof to show them the correct order of pages.

Your checklist for printers proofs:

- Are all the images there?
- Is all the text there?
- Are there any mistakes in the text?
- Are you happy with the colours?
- Are you happy with the image resolution?
- Are your images clear and vibrant?

Mark any amendments clearly on the proof, or talk them through with your designer. If the amends are minor and time allows, ask to check a final PDF proof before they proceed to print. If there are major changes, particularly with colour or images, ask the printers to run another set of proofs.

Timescales:

Design

This is dependant on the complexity of the job. A designer and printer will always try to work to your timescales but allow as long as possible to ensure you get the best service and results.

These are ideal timescales for an agency to work to:

24 page season brochure- 10 days for design and layout, 10 days for two sets of proofs, 10 days for printing from sign off.

Leaflet and poster- 1 week to design, 1 week for proofing, 5-7 working days for print from sign off.

All designers can work to tighter timescales, but make them aware of urgent deadlines from the outset, as jobs have to be booked into the printers to allow time on the press and busy design studios need to ensure they have the capacity to devote time to an urgent job.

Print

When you have signed off the design, allow the designer a day to get the design artworked, 2 days for the printer to provide printers proofs and then a further 3-7 working days for printer depending on size and complexity of job. Any extra finishing such as laminating or die-cutting will take extra time. Artworking is the process of getting a design ready for print. After client sign-off, the designer will check text and images, check colours, collect images and fonts and prepare a final version for the printer.

Delivery

If the print is to be delivered to one local address, this is usually included in the cost. If you want split deliveries - to go to various venues on a tour for example - mention this at the beginning when gathering costs as there may be an extra charge.

Timeline (average timeline for a poster and leaflet)

Glossary

Pantone : The idea behind the Pantone Colour Matching System is to allow designers to 'color match' specific colours when a design enters production stage - regardless of the equipment used to produce the color. The Pantone Color Matching System is largely a standardised color reproduction system

dpi: Dots per inch which indicate the resolution of images. The more dots per inch, the higher the resolution and the better quality the image.

CMYK: CMYK (short for cyan, magenta, yellow, and black, and often referred to as process colour or four color) is a subtractive colour model, used in colour printing, also used to describe the printing process itself.

RGB: Colour model short for Red, Green, Blue. Used onscreen.

jpeg: This is a method of compression for photographic images, so an image can be compressed in order to email quickly for example. To save an image as a jpeg, choose this option by following 'save as' in the file menu. Your image will be saved as name.jpg

tiff / eps: These are file formats for storing images, including photographs and line art. To save an image as a tiff or eps, choose this option by following 'save as' in the file menu. Your image will be saved as name.tif or name.eps

PDF: This is a file format enabling you to save a complete document, layout, images and fonts, as one file. This is good for proofing as a PDF is easily emailable, but a PDF document is difficult to edit. You can share a document with other people by saving it in Portable Document Format (PDF). Even people without the application that created the document will be able to read it as long as they have a PDF viewer, such as Preview or Adobe Acrobat.

artworking: This is the process of getting a design ready for print. After client sign-off, the designer will check text and images, check colours, collect images and fonts and prepare a final version for the printer.

Printers Proofs: A printed sample of work to be checked for errors in text, positioning or quality of colour reproduction.

Printers Plates: A metal plate which has the inked images involved in the offset plate lithography printing process. It is important to realise that each colour in a printing job requires a separate plate. In order to keep costs down, it is advisable not to have too many special colours.

Litho Print: A printing process by which the inked image to be printed is transferred (offset) first to a rubber layer before coming into contact with the paper which takes up the inked areas.

Digital Print: Printing straight from electronic artwork (no plates used as with litho print). Typically printed out of four colour process. It's ideal for short runs up to about the 1,000 mark

gsm: Grammes per square metre. Standard measure of paper weight.

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For further information or to clarify anything in this guide, please contact info@savageandgray.co.uk

Further reading / resources:

www.audienceswales.co.uk
Wales' arts marketing and audience development agency.

www.savageandgray.co.uk
Design agency Savage and Gray offer innovative and effective creative strategies.

www.designwales.org.uk
Design Wales provides design support for Welsh business and undertakes a wide range of activities to encourage and develop the use of design in Welsh industry and education

www.designdirectorywales.org
Wales has a creative and diverse design industry and the Design Directory for Wales provides free and efficient access to details about the design expertise available here.

www.design-council.org.uk
The national strategic body for design. Helping businesses become more successful, public services more efficient and designers more effective

www.harcourtlitho.co.uk/your-print-a-z
For further clarification of print terms and processes.

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