



Make the Right Choice

**A helpful 15 point Checklist Guide
to designer selection.**

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The most fundamental problem faced by clients, particularly those new to working with designers, is how to select the design studio that will most effectively work with them to develop successful design solutions.

This Checklist Guide has been developed by Zynke Design to assist you in evaluating and comparing different designers and design studios, and to help you “Make the Right Choice”.

The first page of the Checklist Guide lists a series of seven questions composed by our national governing body, the Australian Graphic Design Association (AGDA). Zynke has identified a further eight questions on the second page. By finding answers to all 15 points, you can make a more informed decision on your choice of designer.

Zynke has provided its own response to each of the 15 points. Of course, we encourage your independent assessment of both Zynke and other studios.

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Note

References to the term “designer” are intended to represent an individual, firm or company.

Disclaimer

Although this document constitutes a promotional piece for Zynke Design, it is intended as a helpful guide for clients sourcing graphic design services. Any bias in the configuration and order of questions is not intended.

Checklist Guide to Designer Selection

Do you share a mutual professional chemistry?

1

To achieve good results, you need a good relationship based on respect and trust. It is important to know who you will be dealing with and that there is the chemistry there to work well together.

Zynke's response.

There seems to be no special formula for professional chemistry. Either you click or you don't. But, one thing is certain. We are always honest about who we are and what we can do. We know our strengths and our limitations, and we know if and how successfully we can help you.

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Does the designer understand your needs?

2

Your design firm must understand what your needs are, who your audience or market is, and the project constraints (time, budget, materials, approvals)

In addition to identifying your immediate requirements, we believe in understanding your business at a deeper level. We will explore your industry and target markets, your business ideals and philosophies, your future goals and visions.

Do you understand the methodology behind the design process?

3

Different design firms have different design processes. They vary in degree of formality, documentation and account management. You need to select a firm with a management approach that suits your company and you.

Staged design is our preferred method of approach. This technique allows the client to be heavily involved in the design process, promotes open and regular communication and, ultimately, reduces the risk of client dissatisfaction.

We also prefer to maximise time invested in the creative process rather than formal presentation. Clients employ us for design and not window dressing. Concept visuals remain informal and basic, hence maximising creative time, reducing expenses and providing you with the best value for money.

Does the designer have a good track record?

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Look at their previous work. Ask questions about the original brief and the success of the project in fulfilling that brief. Was there anything learnt from that project or others by either them or the client that would benefit your project?

Zynke Design has eleven years of experience in the graphic design industry. We have completed a large variety of projects across a broad range of industries in both Adelaide and Melbourne. A snapshot of our portfolio can be found in the gallery on our web site (www.zynke.com.au) or we are happy to present you with material portfolios demonstrating our design experience and expertise.

Can the designer offer you a list of referrals?

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Ask the design firm for referrals so that you can speak to their other clients about satisfaction with the working relationship and the results. In this way, it is similar to what you would do if you were hiring an employee.

Most of our marketing materials feature a series of client testimonials. We are very proud of these references, and we are also happy to provide you with a list of referral names and contact details. We encourage you to investigate how we work in close partnership with our clients.

Do you understand the fee structure?

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Ask how their fees are structured (with a breakdown where necessary) so that you can budget for other projects as they arise.

Our design fees are quoted on a base hourly rate. All costs are fully itemised on quotation, so that you know exactly where and how your money is being invested.

Is the designer offering good value for money?

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Different clients have different objectives and budgets. It is unreasonable to expect high budget results on a low budget. Conversely, if it is a major project with a big budget, you will want to be sure that your design firm thoroughly understands and can handle the extra project management load these types of projects carry. You get what you pay for.

Zynke is not the cheapest, nor are we the most expensive. We simply invest the necessary time to ensure that the job specifically meets your requirements. Obviously, the greater the quotation, the more hours we believe necessary to provide you with the best possible outcome.

Our primary goal is to offer clients optimal value for money. We minimise overheads, self-promotion costs and advertising expenditure, passing on savings to our clients. Our business growth comes from return business and referrals.

Checklist Guide to Designer Selection

Zynke's response.

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Is the firm's primary operation graphic design?

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Many clients mistakenly use an advertising or PR company for their graphic design needs. It is important to recognise the difference. The function of advertising is to push the product to the buyer. The function of graphic design is to pull the buyer to the product. Ultimately, design must be satisfied for advertising to be effective. Quantify your needs and choose accordingly.

Zynke Design's primary operation is graphic and digital design.

Does the designer retain copyright?

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Many clients are shocked to learn that copyright remains with the designer, even after payment for the design work. The designer can choose to transfer copyright to the client at an agreed cost or license the use of designs per application. Make sure you resolve this issue at the outset.

Zynke transfers copyright to the client, at no additional cost in most instances.

Is the designer a Member of AGDA?

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AGDA is the Australian Graphic Design Association. Members are bound by a national Code of Ethics and Professional Practice that is instrumental in protecting the client, the designer and the graphic design industry. You can learn more about AGDA by visiting their web site at <http://www.agda.asn.au>.

Jon Barratt, Manager and Senior Designer of Zynke, has been a Professional Member of AGDA since 1994.

Does the designer have other qualifications?

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It's worthwhile noting other qualifications, associations or memberships held by the designer. Although often regarded as "just pieces of paper", these "pieces of paper" represent commitment, recognition and experience - byproducts of success and cornerstones for good results.

Jon Barratt is also an Associate Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management. Senior design staff are well qualified in design and visual communications.

Is the designer prepared to pitch free designs?

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BEWARE! Designers who subscribe to this practice are breaking AGDA's industry Code of Ethics.

It sounds great for clients, but free-pitching can be devastating. Why? Because it reduces the probability of a successful design solution. The result will ultimately be "what looks best" rather than "what works best". Design means solving a problem, and to achieve this, one must properly understand a company and its market. Quite simply, clients will not get this depth of research and understanding from a free-pitch. For further information visit AGDA's web site at <http://www.agda.asn.au>.

Zynke is unequivocally opposed to free-pitching. It cheats the client and our industry, and seldom results in anything more than a waste of time and money.

Unsupported design solutions jeopardise the effectiveness of all future processes (ie print, web and advertising).

Does your design consultant actually do the job?

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A common problem in the design industry stems from organisational structure. Briefing is conducted by the Project Manager who then passes the information onto Production who in turn passes it onto the Designer. This practice often results in distortion of the brief through second-hand misinformation, resulting in unsuitable and unsatisfactory results.

Your Zynke consultant is your Designer and will be the manager of current and future projects from commencement to completion.

Does the designer offer any guarantees?

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Difficult situations emerge when clients are dissatisfied with results. The designer expects payment for work that is not acceptable to the client. It is worthwhile researching the designer's protocol in this event. Do they guarantee your satisfaction?

Zynke Design guarantees your satisfaction (conditions apply).

Is the designer primarily client focussed?

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Seems simple, so simple that it can be overlooked. Investigate the business motivations of the designer. Are they working to help you reach your goals or to help them reach theirs. What is the fundamental message behind their mission statement.

At Zynke, we recognise that "our own success can only truly be measured by the successes of the clients we help".