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How We Work Together

Thank you for your consideration. We know that working with an organization such as ours for the first time often prompts a few questions. Sometimes more than a few concerns, too. How successful will we be in interpreting your needs? How can we do it most effectively? How can we do it most efficiently? How much will it cost?

Our Charges

Like all service organizations our invoices are based on the time and materials we invest in a project. Project costs range from a low of a few thousand to tens of thousands, depending on our clients' needs and budgets. We provide a detailed proposal and estimate for approval before starting any contract project. We adhere to our estimates unless project specifications change.

Many of our clients prefer to put us on retainer for a specific number of hours per month. This guarantees priority and time dedicated to your needs and we recommend it for clients that have ongoing needs or for projects that may require many rounds of creative or functional input.

We invest significant time and energy getting to know our clients and customizing our services to meet their needs. As a result we typically do not work on a strict per-hour, or 'pay-as-you-go,' basis.

Any expenses we incur while working on your project for

would need to be approved by you in advance and may be invoiced separately from project or retainer payments. We typically break contract projects up into three major milestones, with equal payments due at each:

1. Acceptance of proposal (deposit 33%)
2. Acceptance of Creative Concept / Alpha Version (33%)
3. Acceptance of Final (34% + materials)

We may bill travel expenses for meetings or on-site work more than 25 miles away from our offices, located in Plymouth, MA. We will advise you of this in advance.

Laying The Foundation

The first thing we do after being assigned a project is schedule information-gathering meetings between our creative team and your key staff. We are interested not only in scheduling, budget and job specifications, but also in your preferences, target audience, and objectives. And, of course, we will want to know all the user features and benefits of the site or product we'll be working on together.

Although this process is somewhat time-consuming (we don't like meetings any more than you do), it is also crucially important. It will help sharpen project focus and objectives, and it will help us ensure that what we produce is not only creatively excellent, but strategically targeted.

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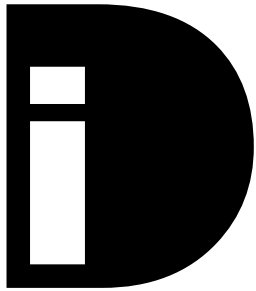
Developing The Right Ideas

Despite popular misconceptions, good creative work rarely comes in a flash of inspiration; usually it comes from lots of trial and error. This is why we also need to take the time to consider several approaches (concepts), work them through and try them out. Then revise them. In addition, there are usually some practical and functional ends we need to tie up before submitting our ideas—sub-contractor availability, printing estimates, scheduling requirements, etc.

All this, plus the need to schedule our workflow in a businesslike fashion, means that we normally ask for up to two weeks, depending on the job's complexity, before we submit our rough approaches (concepts) for your review. Of course, if you have a rush project or deadline pressure we adjust our workflow and timing accordingly.

It's been our experience that its best if we first present our rough concepts to your project manager and perhaps one or two others. This ensures that we all stay focused on the problem and are not distracted by too many personal opinions. We usually like to present concepts for larger projects in person, but we can also present remotely or post them to a password-protected website.

Our rough concepts typically consist of PDF documents or screen mockups (flats). They are adequate to convey what we believe is the best approach to take, taking into



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How We Work Together, cont'd

Please take a moment and refer us to someone you know. A recommendation from you goes a long way to help us stay focused on projects instead of advertising

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consideration your budget, schedule, objectives, and preferences. On the other hand, they are not so well-developed as to have wasted time and effort if we need a course correction.

After presenting, we'll ask for comments. The more objective and specific you can be, the better we will be able to respond. Comments are our input for revising the rough concepts into a finished one. Revision normally takes us about a week, and we schedule a second presentation shortly thereafter.

From the input at this second presentation meeting further minor refinements are made as necessary. We also finalize the production timetable, and the scheduling of additional services such as installation to a server.

Correct & Effective Code

We take pride in providing lean, clean and correct code. Any programmer or producer worth their rate will tell you that their work is as much an art as it is a science. There are myriad ways to achieve a desired goal, but usually only one or two that meet our standards:

- Error free and validated (where a standard exists)
- Databases normalized, properly indexed and optimized
- Works across major browser platforms & variations
- Well-documented and easy to maintain
- Optimized for search engines
- Lean, sharp graphics and optimized multimedia

- No plug in requirements (unless specified by client)

Typically all production or programming work is done according to a well-defined specification that we both agree to before beginning a project. While it takes a bit longer to kick off a project this way, it always saves time, energy and frustration in the long run. You want to know you're getting what you're paying for and we want to know that we're providing it to you in a timely fashion. We will also define and plan out any ongoing support or hosting needs that you might have.

We'll typically deliver an 'alpha' version to you first to get initial feedback and corrections. It will be running on one of our password-protected development servers. It will be functionally comprehensive but not complete. Often what's on paper isn't quite what you want once it's translated into code so this is our chance to check assumptions and revise the specification if necessary.

The next milestone is a 'beta' version – still running on a protected development server. This version will be complete and accurate to our agreed-upon specification. While there may be a few bugs, you should expect that otherwise it's a completed product.

This is your opportunity to check the product against the specification, try to break things and generally be comfortable with the product. We'll create a punch list together of any items that need to be revised or fixed.

This will be what you base your final approval on, so this step is crucial. We'll let you know how long any revisions will take and schedule a final review.

The final review will be based on the punch list created. We want you to be 100% satisfied with the product and this is our final quality assurance step. Once you give final approval for the project, we will arrange for delivery to you or for installation to your servers.

Ensuring Your Satisfaction

We recommend the finished designs and/or code be routed to the appropriate decision makers for fact and detail checking only, reserving stylistic and subjective decisions to your project manager. To avoid costly confusion, it is also important that all communication with us come from the project manager.

During the course of the project we keep your project manager informed of our progress. Activities that will affect the schedule or budget are identified in writing. Our goal is to keep your project moving ahead smoothly, and cost-effectively. We strive to produce even better results than you hired us for.

Conclusion

We hope this document has been helpful to you in making the decision to use Indigo Digital. No one document can cover everything, so please don't hesitate to call or email if you have any questions or concerns.