

5 Don'ts of Graphic Design

I was going to give all the graphic design hopefuls a snark-filled article about the five things not to do when doing graphic design. However, after my interview with Scott Thigpen (Yes, that is a shameless plug). I felt that he provided “notes” that are much more helpful than any of my snark could ever be. The main points are his, but I have taken the liberty of elaborating on them. I hope that this at least gives graphic design hopefuls some confidence about entering the profession. So, here it goes, five don'ts when doing graphic design.

1. Don't take critique personally. Critique of your work is not a critique of you. Know the difference between people providing constructive criticism and mean people. People who provide constructive criticism do not attack you personally. Constructive criticism is meant to make you better and is a close examination of your work.

2. Don't devalue yourself. If you are doing work for someone, charge them according to your work. I am going to paraphrase Scott here: Your work is not worth \$25. It is worth \$2,500. It takes time to create. It takes time to make your creation come to life. That time is worth something and the piece you created it also worth something. You should charge for both. Charge accordingly.

3. Don't get complacent. Technology is always changing, so should your work. Think about the advertisements that you see on websites. They now pop up in front of you, move, and have sound. This once was a huge no-no. Now it is the only way to make the advertisements seen. Your designs should be seen. You have to create them in such a way that they are noticed even when there are distractions around them. Getting complacent will lead to designs that don't get noticed.

4. Don't not have an accountant. This is true especially if you are freelancing. You are an artist and maybe you are good with money, but it never hurts to have someone help you keep up with your money. Also, you have to pay taxes on your income, even the income you get from creating. It is an accountant's job to help you file taxes and not get audited. From what I hear, an audit is no fun. You don't want that to happen. Just have an accountant. You'll need one.

5. Don't let your client train you, you train your client. When you are doing work for a client, send them three designs that reflect what they are asking for. Don't let them tell you what you should do with your design or how it should look. Again, this is your creation, your design. And guess what? You are the designer, not your client.