

Graphic Design

Graphic Designer Job Description: Common Tasks

Your graphic design job description will likely include the following kinds of tasks:

- Brainstorming and mocking up design ideas
- Presenting ideas to clients
- Meeting with clients and adjusting designs to fit their needs or taste
- Projecting budgets and schedules
- Using computer software to execute designs
- Working with others, such as printers, programmers, developers or other technicians, to complete the final

Skills Needed in a Graphic Design Job

Artistic Sensibility – In the last few decades, computer software and technology have drastically changed the graphic design industry. Even so, there is no substitute for artistic sensibility. Knowledge about design elements, such as color and composition, is vital for graphic designers. Artistic ability and creativity are essential.

Technical Skill – A graphic design job requires the technical skills to use design software programs such as Photoshop or Quark Xpress. You may learn other specific software in graphic design school; however, a general interest in computers and an aptitude for learning new technology will be beneficial. As technology continues to develop, graphic designers hoping for longevity in the field need to be able to adapt.

Communication Ability – Sometimes known as visual communication, graphic design requires the ability to effectively present ideas—both verbally and visually. You'll need to be able to sell your ideas to clients and work with them to achieve the end product they want.

Organization – Graphic designers need to be organized in order to meet deadlines and stay within a budget. General business skills will come in handy, since many graphic designers work on a freelance or contract basis.

Problem Solving Ability – Graphic design is a brainteaser. Choosing just the right fonts, colors and lines to create a balanced composition, while simultaneously conveying meaning, is complicated. In order to succeed in a graphic design job, you'll need to have strong problem solving skills and love a good challenge.

Graphic designers—or graphic artists—plan, analyze, and create visual solutions to communications problems. They find the most effective way to get messages across in print and electronic media using color, type, illustration, photography, animation, and various print and layout techniques. Graphic designers develop the overall layout and production design of magazines, newspapers, journals, corporate reports, and other publications. They also produce promotional displays, packaging, and marketing brochures for products and services, design distinctive logos for products and businesses, and develop signs and signage systems—called environmental graphics—for business and government. An increasing number of graphic designers also develop material for Internet Web pages, interactive media, and multimedia projects. Graphic designers also may produce the credits that appear before and after television programs and movies.

The first step in developing a new design is to determine the needs of the client, the message the design should portray, and its appeal to customers or users. Graphic designers consider cognitive, cultural, physical, and social factors in planning and executing designs for the target audience. Designers gather relevant information by meeting with clients, creative or art directors, and by performing their own research. Identifying the needs of consumers is becoming increasingly important for graphic designers as they continue to develop corporate communication strategies in addition to creating designs and layouts.

Graphic designers prepare sketches or layouts—by hand or with the aid of a computer—to illustrate their vision for the design. They select colors, sound, artwork, photography, animation, style of type, and other visual elements for the design. Designers also select the size and arrangement of the different elements on the page or screen. They may create graphs and charts from data for use in publications, and they often consult with copywriters on any text that accompanies the design. Designers then present the completed design to their clients or art or creative director for approval. In printing and publishing firms, graphic designers also may assist the printers by selecting the type of paper and ink for the publication and reviewing the mock-up design for errors before final publication.

Graphic designers use specialized computer software packages to help them create layouts and design elements and to program animated graphics.