

What is an RGD?

As a Registered Graphic Designer (RGD), I am a professional who has been certified by the Association of Registered Graphic Designers, the non-profit professional Association governing my industry, with over 4,000 Members across Canada.

I am a qualified, experienced professional.

Registered Graphic Designers have successfully completed RGD's Certification Process and have demonstrated their knowledge and abilities in as professional graphic designers.

I am a problem-solver.

Registered Graphic Designers have the knowledge, experience and skills to assess and address a variety of challenges. They provide strategies and solutions that help companies, organizations and entrepreneurs to further their goals and objectives.

I am accountable.

Registered Graphic Designers engage with clients in professional, contractual agreements. They fulfill their commitments responsibly and work to the best of their ability to match or exceed expected project outcomes.

I am ethical.

Registered Graphic Designers are subject to and governed by the Association's Rules of Professional Conduct. These rules serve as their guide for an ethical, professional graphic design practice, and details their responsibilities to clients, the profession, the government and the community.

I stay informed of developments and trends.

Registered Graphic Designers stay current by augmenting their knowledge – including new information on accessibility, consumer trends, demographics, research methods, production processes, advanced digital technologies and efficiencies. With this growing foundation, they constantly integrate best practices and tools into their work.

I am passionate about design.

Registered Graphic Designers understand that a strong and unified voice advances the practice of graphic design. They are committed professional members of the Association, and raise awareness of the important role and value that design brings to business, society and culture.

I can connect you with reliable industry suppliers.

Registered Graphic Designers access a network of suppliers, services and allied professions. They can assemble a team to execute simple or complex projects including illustrators and photographers, writers and translators, printers and product manufacturers, developers and social media strategists, to name a few.

Why ask for an RGD?

Untrained, unskilled individuals may offer "design services" but their lack of up-to-date knowledge, professional experience and ethical accountability could put your deadlines, budgets, project outcomes and reputation at risk.

How to choose a designer?

Before hiring any designer, review their experience and work samples, request and contact references and meet with candidates to discuss your project. Designers need to understand your strategic objectives and the goals of your project to determine the costs involved. Use the information provided by all candidates to choose a designer who is capable of meeting your needs. For greater assurance, choose an RGD.

What do graphic designers charge?

In an industry that spans a broad range of offerings and skill levels, comparing pricing for graphic design services can be like comparing apples to oranges. To ensure the best design value for your dollar, a number of variables must be considered.

Hourly vs. By Project Billing

Hourly

According to The 2012/2013 Survey of Salaries and Billing Practices for the Communication Design Industry produced by RGD and Creative Niche which surveyed 2,890 creative professionals across Canada, the average hourly rate for a sole proprietor* across the country is \$74/hour.

A sole proprietor's hourly rate will vary depending on what services are required. While a service like photo re-touching will be on the lower end, web and mobile development, brand strategy and art direction will be associated with higher costs. A designer's hourly rate is generally reflective of what they are worth based on experience and expertise.

By project

Project fees are focused more on the value of the work itself than the number of hours a designer spends on the project. As a creative process, it can be difficult to predict exactly how long a design project will take, and the number of hours often varies depending on the skill level and working style of the individual designer.

Considerations

Whether a designer charges by project or by hour, how much the entire project costs will be based on an assessment of the work's value and the amount of effort required to provide a successful end product. A designer must understand the full scope of the project and the client's needs before quoting a price.

** A Sole Proprietor is an individual operating a government-registered business. Rates will differ significantly for firms or agencies, which have a much more varied and extensive supply of resources and expertise.*

Pricing Factors

There are many factors a designer needs to understand before he or she can provide an accurate quote. To establish a price, designers need to understand:

- The scope of the proposed project:
 - a). Deliverables
 - b). Number of concepts and revisions
 - c). Volume of work / future business
- Anticipated expenses
- The urgency of the project
- Estimated number of hours required to complete the project

Be aware that the rate quoted at the beginning of the project will change if the scope of the project changes. If additional features are added or if you decide to take an idea in a new direction not covered by the initial plan, the designer's costs will reflect these changes.

Intellectual Property

Also keep in mind that designers maintain ownership of the computer files for a project they have worked on. As a client, you are paying for the deliverables stated in the original estimate. All concepts, working files, ideas or adaptations remain the property of the designer unless otherwise negotiated. This also applies to materials such as fonts, software, photos and illustrations, templates, style sheets, etc. You may wish to negotiate with your designer to purchase these files for a price based on the time it would take to convert the files, the cost of the media and the value of the project.

Further Resources

To better understand the position of graphic design professionals and ensure that business relationships remain ethical and in the best interest of both clients and designers, it is important to fully understand the nature of the work. For more information on Pro Bono and Spec Work, visit rgd.ca.

For more information on design industry salaries and billing practices, download the 2012/2013 National Salary Survey of CreativeEarnings.

Further details on hiring qualified professionals for design services can be found at rgdontario.com/talent/hiring.php.