

BESPOKE MODUS OPERANDI 2010/11

How it all works

1. You telephone or email THE ADVERTISING SHOP, and we ask what you need (branding help, a logo, ads, leaflets, postcards, posters, banners, direct mail, radio scripts, market research, new website?), explain what we do, give you a brief outline of likely costs and generally convince you that we're really nice, know what we're talking about and can make a big difference to your business.
2. You decide you'd like to talk to us in detail about your requirements, so we schedule in an initial consultation. It usually lasts around two hours and is charged at a flat rate of £150+VAT, payable at the time of the meeting, though this is redeemable in full against work commissioned us on the day or within two weeks of the consultation. If your business is local we'll usually come to your workplace for this, to get a feel of your business operation, though we can meet at our offices or over a coffee or two in central Bath – wherever's mutually convenient.
3. Wherever possible we'll give you an immediate estimate at the end of your consultation. You can opt to go away and mull things over before you commit yourself; or pay a 50% deposit there and then so we can get cracking. For copywriting, consultancy or research briefs we ask for full payment upfront – please blame previous customers who thought it was fair to read our copy or reports, use the contents to enhance their businesses... and somehow forget to settle their invoices.
4. Once we've received your deposit or fee we'll start work, and will contact you as soon as we're ready to present initial ideas or drafts. Projects including a visual element will often be shown to you as 'scamps'. These are basic layouts – with headlines, visuals and sometimes copy – that let you see the 'concepts' we've developed and gain a clear understanding of what your final work will be like. Visuals may be hand-drawn but are usually produced on screen and look very much like finished artwork. At this stage we probably won't have used final photos or produced stuff to print-quality standards (we often borrow appropriate stock shots from photo libraries to give you an idea of how your work should look – you can buy the rights to use these if you want to).
5. After showing you our ideas we'll ask you complex technical questions like "which one do you like best?" Then we'll ask if you'd like us to make any changes to your chosen option/s. You have one month to suggest reasonable amendments (such as word, picture or colour changes but not rewrites or new designs) from the date we first present work to you, after which we'll assume you're happy with what we've done, and your final invoice for work completed will become payable immediately, whether or not it goes into production.
6. We'll tweak and hone the artwork and copy so it's just how you want it, and then invite you to check it with a fine-tooth comb and sign it off to say you're satisfied. And as soon as you've done that – and paid your bill, of course – we'll release it to a printer or publisher in high res format, or launch your website.
7. We'll negotiate and book media space on your behalf and will organise and manage printing for all marketing literature we create. We can also set up and host your website if we write, design and build it. Except in exceptional circumstances, by arrangement, we do not prepare artwork for you to take to other printers. That way we can keep our quality standards high and costs low - and if anything goes wrong we cover the cost, not you. We always obtain two or three quotes for every print job to find you the best price.
8. THE ADVERTISING SHOP will store relevant paperwork and any materials you've provided for reference for three months after your job's completed – and our emails and electronic files for a year after we last hear from you – before we erase them from our system. It's entirely your responsibility to collect your stuff within these timescales and although we'll try, we aren't under any obligation to remind you.

The financial bits

Please note that all costs given are net and subject to VAT at 17.5%

THE ADVERTISING SHOP charges £75 per hour per senior designer, art director, copywriter and/or consultant for creative and research work and £100 p/h for our Creative Director if you specify that you would like her to work hands-on on your project. Unless finer details of the brief are woolly we can generally give you an estimate before we start. However, this will assume that you can supply all logos, photos and other info we need in useable form (i.e: at the correct resolution – normally 300 dpi, or as eps files) for the size they need to be printed, without delay. If you ask us to re-create them (or carry out any other unforeseen but essential work to get your job out on time) it can add a couple of hours to the job, which will be included in your final bill. We'll always try to advise you about this in advance.

If you don't already have appropriate digital pics for your literature or website we'll be happy to carry out a bespoke search for suitable stock images for you via picture libraries, at an extra cost for our time of course, and for the rights to use the images. Alternatively, we can commission a photographer or illustrator to create your very own images from scratch.

Unless listed as such on your invoice or receipt, prices quoted do not cover the costs of the rights to use stock photographs or illustrations that we may show you in low res format for demonstration purposes, or for any other suggested images for which we have not yet purchased the rights on your behalf. Neither do prices include image manipulation of photographs supplied by you or found by us to change colours, brightness or achieve special effects etc. Any copy and design prices we mention include getting your work ready for print, but do not include printing, for which we can quote only when we know exactly how many copies you want, what size they'll be and on what sort of paper or card, for example.

We include an hour of amendments (given to us in one set) per 3 pages of printed or online work in the estimated prices; further amendments will be chargeable at the normal hourly rates.

Standard telephone calls and emails are also included, as are meetings we call to present work. However, we will charge £20 per hour for the administration associated with more complex projects, rounded up to the nearest half hour, to cover protracted telephone calls, composing and dealing with lengthy emails, packaging artwork, post office visits etc, and this will be added to your final invoice. Meetings requested by you after the initial consultation are charged at £75 p/h (minimum fee is for half an hour) , or £100 p/h if you specify that you want to see our Creative Director, and expenses such as postage, travel or mileage outside central Bath, are additional.

If your job 'grows' significantly during the project's lifecycle because you ask us to do more than was initially agreed, we may ask for top-up funds to pay suppliers. Where possible you'll be advised in advance of extra costs that may be incurred and may opt to de-commission work exceeding the estimated price, though you will have to pay for all work already carried out in line with your instructions. Amendments or extra work that have to be carried out as a result of misinformation provided by you or other representatives of your organisation will be chargeable in addition at £75 p/h.

Payment terms

By commissioning any work from us and paying a deposit you agree to accept our terms, found in this document and on our website, as mentioned on every invoice. Larger projects are charged incrementally as we complete individual elements, and the balance of payment is due on all work as soon as it is completed. We won't release finished artwork or goods to you or our printers until we receive payment. Regarding printing and media costs: until you pay us, no materials or ad space will be ordered. Otherwise, if you have a change of heart, we could end up having to dig into our own pockets for promoting your business in the press, or for 10,000 flyers with your name on them. And where on earth would we put them?

How you can pay

We're not that fussy, actually, as long as it's on time! We take debit or credit card payments in person or over the phone, and although there's no charge for paying by debit card we levy a 2.5% surcharge on credit card payments to cover the bank's exorbitant fees, and 3% for Amex. You can also pay by cheque.

If you book more than six months' worth of ads you'll need to set up a standing order for media payments to our bank account so we don't have to keep chasing you for money every week or month. That's just too stressful, boring and time-consuming for all parties, especially when your deadline's looming.

Are you likely to want your creative work delivered yesterday? If so we're usually able to accommodate last-minute requests but it means re-shuffling our schedules or getting more designers in, so we may make a surcharge for a 48-hour turnaround or sooner.

Cancellation policy

Your deposit tells us you're serious about going ahead. We'll schedule in your work and plan resources, so will only refund 50% of it if you change your mind. That being a given, it's your prerogative to cancel a job at any stage, though you'll still have to pay for work that's already been done, even if we haven't yet presented it to you – and sometimes we'll have completed the whole job. In particular, please note that you'll be responsible for paying the final invoice for commissioned work carried out (concepts, copywriting, design, research or other tasks) even if you do not proceed with production for any reason whatsoever.

99% of our clients are delighted with the first ideas they see. Unless time or money is exceptionally limited or you know precisely what you want, you'll be shown at least two creative approaches. But commissioning any creative work – a portrait, jewellery design or haircut – is always a leap of faith. You choose your artist, agency or hair stylist, look at their work, decide if they empathise with your needs and make your decision to brief in your work. One set of amendments (colour, size, small copy changes etc, taking up to an hour in total) is included free of charge. And if we've matched the brief and created work that doesn't feel right for subjective reasons, we'll try to find a solution that pleases you at no extra charge. But once any work has been completed the bill still stands, just as a portrait artist would demand payment if you objected to him depicting your double chin when you'd told him to paint you warts and all.

Copyright

With the exception of logos, which become yours to use as and when you wish, copyright of all work we produce for you remains ours unless you opt to buy it from us. This is standard ad agency practice and means that if you want to re-print leaflets, for example, or re-run or re-publish our ad or even just words we've written or a design we've created - in any media - you must book through us (which we prefer) or, if you book space directly, pay us a supply fee of either £75+VAT or 15% of the total media or print costs, whichever is the greater, per one-off insertion in a publication. We'll ask for proof of the amount you're paying the publisher or printer, and reserve the right to contact them directly before supplying artwork if you cannot provide this information.

When you book media space through us we usually get a better deal for you, a superior position and, since we receive commission from the publisher, we won't charge you for booking, sending, checking and proof-reading your ad on your behalf. It's free. And it's a no-brainer if you ask us. If we find that copyright's been infringed we will ask you to make the appropriate payment to us immediately and failing this, reluctantly, we will take legal action to recover these fees.

How we earn our money

Think about it. We start off with no knowledge of your company, your customers or you. So we take a brief (an hour or two), look at your current literature and website (another hour) and assess what your competitors are doing so we can better it. We familiarise ourselves with your main selling point/s, decide which are compelling enough to convince customers to read on, and devise some earth-shatteringly clever lines and visual ideas for the concept (another couple of hours). And only then (we're exhausted already) can we get down to actually setting up the document to the correct size on the Mac, importing and re-sizing your logo and/or choosing and cropping or treating photos from your disk, writing the copy, selecting appropriate colours and typefaces, re-arranging - and re-arranging and re-arranging - the headline, text and visuals on the page so they look great, amending all the colours so they're in the right CMYK form for printing, presenting the initial ideas to you, and incorporating any amendments before proof-reading your job ready for you to sign off for printing. Often all in one day. Phew. We're tempted to double our prices.

Quality control

We have eagle eyes at THE ADVERTISING SHOP and are proud of our attention to detail. We proof-read everything again and again to make sure that there are no glaring typographical errors, colours are correct, branding guidelines are followed and your logo hasn't slipped off the page.

But you have to do your bit, too, by making sure you're happy with the way your work looks and reads. This is important right from the start but at the end, when we're about to go to print, it's absolutely critical. Ultimately it's your call, and in checking and signing off the final proof you take responsibility for any errors, however caused. So please read it carefully, because you'll be confirming that: you're satisfied with what we've written, designed and typeset; that it's honest, true, legal and decent; that everything's included that should be; and that names, contact details etc are accurate and complete. Your email or signature at this stage represents a confirmation that work is complete and is an instruction to print, record a commercial or produce whatever task is being processed.

Logos

You get full copyright if we design a logo for you, to use when you wish - it's only fair. But they're so small. How can it take a day to design one? Well size doesn't matter when it comes to designing your logo. After all, you're likely to use this mark for many years, so the association must be accurate, appropriate and, well... good. We also have to ensure your image and branding are spot on, and that the logo will work in any size or format, in print or on screen, in colour or black and white. We could come up with an infinite number of ways to portray the essence of your company or brand, but have distil it into a few options to show you or we'd take forever. Sifting out our best ideas from the also-rans takes time, too.

Advertisements

Many clients ask THE ADVERTISING SHOP for a clever idea and layout for a generic ad - or suite of ads - that they can roll out as and when it's needed. It's a great money-saving idea. But frustratingly, each publication sells space in different sizes from the next and demands artwork in a different format. So unless you say you want an advertisement for a particular newspaper or magazine, in a specific size, we'll create ad concepts to a random but appropriate size for your need and budget. Then, each time you decide where you'd like to place it, we'll charge an hour's production fee to amend it to the right size, get it into the right format and send it to the publisher for you, all for a measly £75. Bargain. If you ask us to re-run an ad that exactly the same as before in every detail, we charge a £20 admin and supply fee to cover time spent liaising between you and the publisher and booking it in.

Information gathering

Our business is no different from any other. If clients want us to produce their work quickly and efficiently, they need to be quick and efficient too. The more relevant info you give us the better. The more unnecessary paperwork we get, the longer it'll take us to sift through it at your expense. We're happy to do it, but feel bound to remind you that our time isn't free. It's up to you how you use it.

If you're happy to fork out on our fees for the time it takes us to dig out information about your organisation via the internet, and wade through all your old literature and marketing stuff, fine. Otherwise, as soon as we get the green light to start you'll have to provide us with accurate, up-to-date information about your business as well as Pantone or CMYK references, high resolution copies of your logo/s and so on.

Our zero tolerance approach to bad copy

Sometimes clients ask us to do things like change sentences so that they don't read as rightly as what we'd want it to. Naturally we're more than happy to make amendments if facts have changed, you don't like the way something's phrased or would prefer different colours. But – with respect – if you ask THE ADVERTISING SHOP to write something that's grammatically incorrect or just reads badly, we won't let you make us do it. In short, we won't produce work for you that we're not proud of, and if you're our sort of client you wouldn't want it any other way.

The "could you justs"...

Could you just try this out in five different colours? No, actually, I've decided I'd like black and white after all! Could you just see what the headlines look like in capitals? Landscape instead of portrait? And could you just scan in these pictures and re-size them for me? After all, each little request only takes ten minutes. So yes, of course we're happy to do all these things – but each little task takes us time, so if you ask us to do more work, please don't be surprised when the time is mentioned and charged for on your invoice!

Changes to charges and the way we work

This information is correct at the time of printing and until further notice. However we reserve the right to make changes at any time and without warning. In this case, existing clients will be informed of any changes to terms if and when they ask for or commission new work.

THANKS FOR READING!