

Potential Client Pitfalls

Here are some issues you the client, may want to take into account as you begin this "adventure" with our students. In the past, these situations have caused projects to slow down or stop.

Not enough time or energy

A very common problem has been to underestimate the amount of time involved in creating a Project. It takes a great deal of time to provide the storyboard, assets, filming schedules, graphics, texts and pictures which make up your project. Assets should be submitted as a digital file whenever possible. If others in your organization will be providing any of the content, or be part of filming, please contact them now and set deadlines and schedules with them. We recommend you gather your data as soon as you are notified that you have been assigned a team. There will be many questions to answer, a lot of which are included in the original client survey, and will need to be updated as the project progresses. Here's an example of just a few below:

- Major categories of information
- Order of the categories and sub categories
- Logo design
- Repeated elements (photos, graphics, logo, links, etc.)
- Color scheme (which is required)
- Hosting and maintenance (websites only)

Building a house

Compare creating these Projects to building a house. Although someone else is building your home, you, the client, will need to decide what materials will be used. As your team creates your project, you will be asked to make numerous decisions. It's important to the success of your project that you can make decisions quickly.

Please consider the following observations we have made regarding client "types" from previous semesters:

Client identity examples

For many teams, developing a design that pleases the client is the biggest challenge. It will help your team if they know what type of client you are (several examples are listed below) Please read through them and decide what approach you want to take when working with your team.

Anything goes

Many clients do not have a design background or do not have a clear idea of what they want for the design. They often give the team a great deal of freedom to design whatever they feel will work best. This type of client is somewhat "hands off". The advantage of this approach is that you do not need to spend as much time working with the team and the project usually proceeds fairly quickly. The disadvantage is that the project may not reflect enough of the client ideas and "feel".

Do it my way

This type of client is on the opposite end of the spectrum from the "Anything goes" client described above. They have extremely specific ideas about what they do or do not want. They

want to see the project design at every step of the process, and may want to make changes throughout the design process. The advantage of this approach is that the client is able to see their ideas come to life without learning programming, filming, editing, audio production, Photoshop, CMS, HTML or WordPress. The disadvantage is that this will take a great deal more time on the part of the client. In addition, some clients find that what they "thought" would be great in a Project, does not turn out exactly as they anticipated. If you have strong ideas about what you want in your Project, the students will respect your wishes, just let them know at the first meeting.

The yo-yo client

Our students have created extremely successful projects with both the "anything goes" and the "do it my way" clients. The bigger problems have occurred with a client who wants control but does not have the time or expertise to make the necessary decisions. This client type may tell the students to use their own judgment, but once they see the results they are often dissatisfied and begin to change many aspects of the design. Another problem is when the client's instincts are in contradiction with the basic principles of design and production. Some clients change their mind after they see the results of their suggestions and continue to make suggestions, which they often find disappointing. Since we are on an 17-week timeline, and currently in week 4, it is essential that a direction be agreed upon as soon as possible. If you find your team is having a difficult time developing a plan, I recommend you give the producer or designer some general requirements, and then let them use their training to come up with 1-2 options for you to review. The instructors can also meet with the client and the producer or designer to mediate the situation if needed.

I feel so misunderstood

The information which will be included in your Project may be crystal clear to you, but very confusing to students. Be prepared to explain what your terms and abbreviations mean. Your patience is appreciated as they sort through the assets and ideas you share with them.

Disorganized Client

Another possible client problem, is the "the shoebox syndrome". As with an accountant during tax season, folks often bring their shoebox with receipts with the hopes the accountant can make sense of it all. We can't do this. Clients need to spend time organizing their content so that the information contains just what you want to see in your final project. If the assets need to be renamed, broken up or combined, please do so before giving them to the students. If your information is old or inaccurate, please update it before passing it along. The phrase "garbage in garbage out" definitely applies here. It will be much easier for the students to create your project if you take the time to review your materials and ideas before you pass them on.

Split Personality

These clients have an internal conflict among their members and there may be "office politics" at play. We ask that there be only 1 decision maker, a committee may give that decision maker their marching orders, but we need a single voice. Students do not have the skills required to mediate conflicting visions from the client side for the project.