**1. Avoid your clients.**

When they call, don’t answer the phone. Leave messages only when you know they’re not there. Don’t respond to emails and don’t talk to them when you see them in the halls. Never ever have lunch with them.

**2. Be rude and abrupt in the few communications you do have with them.**

Don’t use proper salutations in your emails. Don’t say please or thank you. Keep your sentences short and grammatically incorrect and add numerous misspellings lest they think you care enough about them to use spell check. Never sign your emails or leave your contact info in a voicemail. Bonus tip: Eat and type on your keyboard while you’re on the phone.

**3. Interrupt your clients when they’re giving you direction or feedback.**

Know they have nothing of value to offer. If they do get a word in, shoot them a disdainful and dismissive look.

**4. Miss deadlines.**

Need I say more on this point?

**5. Say no as much as possible.**

NEVER say yes—just sigh and, if they happen to be in the room with you, roll your eyes for added effect.

**6. Bad mouth your clients to others in your company.**

Complain about their lack of understanding of design and that they’re control freaks (which you, of course, are not).

**7. Make it all about you.**

Take credit for as much as you can (and more). Never share credit with others. Bonus tip - Do not participate in any team building events, departmental social gatherings or new staff welcomes or leaving staff send-offs.

**8. Work on freelance projects on company time.**

If your manager can’t keep you busy that’s their problem. Never offer to take on a long-term project such as archiving all your stock images.

**9. Complain about your peers to your fellow designers, managers and staff in other departments.**

**10. Never do any work that you can pass off to a more junior member of your team.**

**11. Keep personal files on the company workstation—especially pirated music and movies.**

**12. Hand off files that are a complete mess to your production artists.**

Use lo-res images, apply font styles in your layout programs and don’t include dielines or correct dimensions, etc.

**13. Always, always make everyone else wrong and let everyone else know that you’re right.**

This applies to your company, your co-workers, fellow designers, managers, upper management, and clients—and for added value, apply it to your family and friends too! Nothing you can do is more effective at angering people and making you a pariah (resulting in getting canned) than asserting your rightness and everyone else’s wrongness.

**14. Pay more attention to the brand than your audience.**

It’s all about the logo and the brand style guide. Who cares if the design resonates with your company’s customers or not.

**15. Don’t worry about whether the piece is printable or not—that’s the printer’s problem.**

**16. Fight with HR for the highest salaries you can get for your team.**

Often HR tries to find seemingly comparable positions that exist within the company to use as a measure for your group’s positions. There are none, though they’ll go through contortions of logic to convince themselves that there are. Use whatever resources you have available to you—particularly professional organizations’ salary research—to make your case that a mid-level accountant’s salary should not be used to benchmark a junior designer’s compensation. You have to be competitive within the industry, not your company, to attract the best talent.

**17. Refuse to use, or at least amend, your HR-mandated interview process when staffing up your team**.

The standard questions for determining good mid-level managers in Finance, HR, Compliance and Manufacturing have almost no relevance to the practice of design. Discuss the primary functions and skills of designers and other creatives on your team with your HR staffing specialist and compare them to the corporate interview process. Illustrate the disconnect and how that disconnect could jeopardize your ability in determining appropriate hires.

**18. It is always easier to ask for forgiveness than permission, no matter what the issue or need—period.**

**19. If you have special space requirements, build a case for them and don’t give up until you get what you want.**

The design process presents unique needs for collaboration and presentation, and because design results in the creation of physical pieces we often need additional space for reviewing and storing press proofs and comps.

**20. Look out for your team.**

Companies often restrict managers’ options to reward their staffs for hard work. Compensatory days are a big source of conflict with creatives, who are frequently called upon to work late hours to meet deadlines, but their managers are not permitted to compensate them for those hours. I, and other managers I’ve spoken with, have provided offsite “research days” to their teams as a reasoned response.

**21. Use common sense.**

While compliance serves a very important purpose in the corporate world there are times when, given the unique expectations placed on your team, they can become an impediment. Don’t ever put your company at risk legally or ethically, but if you’re at a juncture where the success of a project means circumventing a well intentioned but low-level, risk averse policy, you might want to bend the rules.

**22. Rally behind your vendors.**

There is a rationale for restricting the vendors a corporate department can use—it just doesn’t happen to work for creative teams. This problem arises because the myriad of outside service providers creative groups need to partner with don’t neatly fit into Purchasing’s predefined categories. Enroll your clients as allies to support you in working with or circumventing Purchasing when these conflicts arise.

**23. Get them paid too.**

The single biggest cause of sour relationships with vendors is Accounts Payable. They throw up infuriating process and procedural roadblocks to getting your vendors paid in a timely manner. You need to be a thorn in their side to ensure that your outside partners are fairly and expeditiously paid for their services.