



INTRODUCTION TO BRIGHT CREATIVE

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This document clarifies what you can expect of Bright Creative, and provides a detailed outline of how we work.

Who Are We?

Bright Creative is a one-person studio in Vancouver BC, run by Dave Shea, who is well-known in the web design and development community as one of the early promoters of standards-based design. (more about Dave: <http://mezzoblue.com/about/dave>)

When a project calls for it, specialized contractors may be brought in to increase the capacity of the company and complement our core skill set. However you can usually assume you will be dealing directly with me.

Who Do I Work With?

With a high profile in the web design community, Bright Creative faces the double-edged sword of overwhelming interest from companies looking to hire our services, and capacity of a single person with which to tackle it. Choosing projects selectively is, regrettably, necessary. There are only so many jobs I can personally handle at a time without completely losing the plot.

I often prefer working with companies that are looking for a dedicated designer that can take care of a wide variety of web and design-related tasks. While I can and do work with subcontractors when necessary, I prefer to handle most tasks myself, and try to choose projects that allow this level of involvement.

EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS I'D BE INCLINED TO TAKE ON:

- A new company looking to build their web site or application, requiring web/UI design and information architecture, icon design, light content management setup, and front-end coding.
- An established company with an existing web site or application looking to improve the look and feel of their UI.

EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS I RARELY TAKE ON:

- A company that has already produced a set of web templates with another graphic designer, simply looking to convert them to XHTML/CSS.
- A project that requires extensive skills outside the business' core competency. (See 'What I Deliver', below)



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There are, of course, no hard and fast rules. Sometimes I make exceptions if the company that approaches me has a really great product, or really interesting people. There are a ton of factors, so don't take the generalizations above as gospel, but they're a good yard stick.

What Do I Create?

An ideal set of deliverables from my standpoint would be designing the overall look and feel for a site/application, creating individual page templates, and doing the front-end coding (XHTML/CSS), allowing someone from your company (or a third party contractor) to handle the technical implementation of those templates.

Additionally, tasks like light scripting, content management system setup, usability design, and information architecture are possible if the conditions allow it. I'm well-versed in multiple templating languages from a variety of CMSes, and have a good handle on basic usability design and information architecture planning.

However, projects that require more formalized application programming, usability testing, or information architecture should involve a third party that specializes in that area.

How Do I Work?

Most projects require a certain amount of custom process and back and forth that's very difficult to plan out ahead of time. That said, a general outline of a typical design project might look something like this:

1) Discovery and Analysis

Learning about your company and product/service, figuring out the goals of the design project, and planning a set of deliverables.

2) Proposal

From the discovery, generate a proposal to address your requirements. If you're happy with it, we commit to working together.

3) Initial Design

Taking what's been learned in the previous steps and coming up with an initial set of mockups that address as many of those issues as possible.

4) Feedback and Refinement

A predetermined number of rounds where you provide feedback, I make revisions to the initial design, you provide more feedback, I revise more, etc. Repeat until we're all happy, or the predetermined rounds end, whichever come first. (And of course, in the latter instance, we'd talk about further work if it comes to that. Lucky for all of us, it rarely does.)

5) Coding and implementation

Once the design is finalized, I build out the templates and someone implements them. (Sometimes that's me, often it's you or your people.) In many projects, at this point there will be further changes to the initial templates that require extra work;



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these usually come in the form of extra pages, templates, or content styling that came about after the initial deliverables have been determined. It's common that we don't have a clear picture of what all is needed at the beginning of the project, and closer to the end that becomes much more obvious.

6) Final Pass

After everything's "done", we do a quick review to make sure it all looks and works the way it should.

How Quickly Can I Get It Done?

Two words that are death to any project for me: "tight timeline". Unless it's a very small project, a lot of work needed in a short amount of time pretty much guarantees I won't be able to tackle it.

As a one-person company, I often juggle a few projects at any given time. Managing them effectively means realistic timelines, which means I almost never take on new projects that require immediate action. Planning out a few months at a time is not uncommon.

On the other end of the spectrum, I rarely commit to projects that will run over a few months in length. Longer term contracts that don't have a clear end date can be just as hard for me to work with.

A good timeframe for me is somewhere between one and three months from start to finish. Never say never of course; if your project is particularly attractive and I have an appropriately-sized hole in my schedule, both generalizations are flexible.

How Much Do I Charge?

Obviously it depends on the project itself. There's usually a fairly specific range my projects fall within, which runs from \$5,000 USD at the low end to \$25,000 USD on the high end. Anything below that range would have to be a very basic, quick project for me to consider. Anything above that range usually requires more people and capacity than I can provide.

How Will We Communicate Throughout A Project?

Not many of my clients are local. I'm used to working long distance. Email and the phone are our best friends for bridging the geography. Rest assured, it works fine.

Kicking off a new project generally requires an initial conversation or two to make sure everyone's on the same page. Skype or phone are the methods of choice here. Email works too.

Status reports and communication during the course of the project are best done with email in order for both of us to have a history to refer to; I have a policy of not using an instant messenger application with clients, because it's simply too distracting.

Payment may be made electronically or with a mailed check. Most projects require a percentage deposit up front, and milestone payments throughout.



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If I Can't Take On Your Project, Will I Recommend Someone Who Can?

I'd love to be able to play matchmaker, but those I'd personally recommend are quite busy themselves, and therefore not good recommendations. And the person I'd be recommending likely wants to know more about your project than I'd have detail for by this point, so I'd end up stuck in the middle brokering a hand-off.

All in all, I find it's a losing proposition that rarely works fluidly, so I stay away from making personal recommendations. Instead, please allow me to refer you to these two sites:

- <http://www.authenticjobs.com/>
- <http://jobs.37signals.com/>