

ect roles, not corporate titles, and tailor the individual's project experience so that it is related to the proposed project.

The design professional will definitely be asked to present relevant experience. The submission should include only the most relevant examples, and it should explain why each example demonstrates the design professional's capability to do the client's job. The client may ask how the designer will approach the project. This question affords designers the opportunity to tell how they will address (and solve) the client's concerns. They may wish to briefly restate the problem, so it is clear that they understand the issues involved. They may want to state a planning or design philosophy, relating it directly to the particular situation. The client may even require that designers develop a preliminary work plan that identifies specific tasks, responsibilities, and timeframes. They may also ask designers to provide references. Designers will find it well worth the time to call every reference they list, tell them to expect the call, educate them about the potential project, and cue them about important points of emphasis. These calls to references also give design professionals an opportunity to touch base with their references.

What should the design professional do with all that marketing material in the submittal? Use a "Supplemental Information" section for preprinted project pages, reprints, project lists, and award lists. The client may choose to look at it or not, but he will not have to wade through volumes to get to the information he really seeks.

A good submission produces results. The client

- *Knows that the designer understands his concerns.*
- *Knows that the designer has the team, the experience and the approach that can address those concerns.*
- *Looks forward to meeting the designer in person.*

SELLING YOUR SERVICES

Presentations depend less on technical expertise or experience and more on personalities and planning. Presentations can be in many different formats, from simple meetings to multimedia events. Regardless of format, there are two major objectives. The first objective is to deliver a clear message. Design professionals do that by developing a theme based on their firm's strengths, making the theme seem beneficial to the audience, and focusing on what the client wants and needs to know. The second objective is to establish team chemistry. A team's selection is based on trust. The design professional should strive to make the clients think they would be comfortable working with the design professional, and that the firm is eager to solve their problems.

Understanding Your Audience

Design professionals must develop a presentation that resonates with the audience, and to do that, they must understand that audience. Of course, designers have a tremendous advantage if a client has hired them previously, or if they have been courting the client for a period prior to the selection process. In such a case, the designers seeking the project will have a sense of the personalities, preferences, and dynamics of the selection committee. In other cases, designers need to know everything there is to know about the project. But it is not enough to know about the proposed project. It is also necessary to understand the concerns of each member of the committee, and these concerns may differ from individual to individual. Ideally, designers should understand every angle, and play to each concern. They should also consider the style of the client, so that they may mirror that style to a certain extent. A bunch of suits pitching to some dot.com executives in jeans does not telegraph chemistry. On the other hand, the presentation will not work if the professionals giving it come across as blatantly phony. Presenters will be most comfortable (and persuasive) just being themselves.

Preparing for the Presentation

To get ready for a presentation, it is good practice to invite all who can contribute—even if they may not actually attend the presentation—to a strategy