

In a now-famous interview with Charles Eames in 1972, interviewer Madame L. Amic asked if Eames had ever compromised. He replied, “No, but I have willingly accepted constraints.”

senior designer, project designer, technical manager, and studio support staff. However, the client and design team members also need to know that appropriate extra resources and talent are available when needed. For example, the project may call for the knowledge of an expert in programming, lighting, or technical integration. The design team needs to know how and when to enlist support from such experts; and the client needs to know up front that this additional assistance may be required, as well as how specialized resources may affect project costs, if at all.

Communicate for Effectiveness

During both the predictable times of project routine and when unexpected or possibly difficult situations arise, effective communication is the strongest bridge between client and service provider. Successful communication occurs when both parties' messages are received and understood as intended. Good communication does not rule out the possibility of disagreements, but it does open the door to constructive discussion about the best course of action for meeting the client's business objectives. Designers can better ensure that clients will feel satisfied if they use the following strategies to encourage familiarity with procedures, clarity, and a heightened flow of information between individuals.

USE STANDARD COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

Designers can accomplish some communications according to "formula," that is, where the designer follows a standardized, familiar format for project status reports, scheduled meetings, contracts, and so forth. For the designer, such tools simplify the work of preparing communications, and thus they preserve time in which the designer can develop thoughtful, creative content that will address the client's business needs. For the client, standard communications tools lend a helpful measure of predictability. Once clients are acclimated to a standard report format, for example, they will know exactly where to find the information they need—and the designer will have created a positive experience in which the client feels knowledgeable and in control.

SPEAK IN TERMS CLIENTS CAN UNDERSTAND

The process and profession of design often utilize a vocabulary that is unfamiliar to "outsiders." To communicate effectively, designers must avoid jargon or a professional lexicon hard for clients to understand. If this seems