

How to hire a visual identity

What should be in the proposal and what to ask before signing.

Visual identity is a system, not just a logo. Use this guide to check what a proposal should include and to compare studios with criteria.

What a complete visual identity includes

- ☐ Logo and variations (main, horizontal, vertical, symbol, versions for light and dark backgrounds)
- ☐ Color palette, with codes for digital and print use
- ☐ Typography: title and body fonts and how to combine them
- ☐ Graphic elements: patterns, illustrations, icons and photography style, when they make sense
- ☐ Brand guidelines: usage rules, clear space and correct and incorrect uses
- ☐ Applications: stationery, packaging, social media and other pieces

Red flags

- The proposal talks only about a logo, with no strategy or usage rules.
- The studio shows no process, only final images.
- It is not clear what is included and what is charged separately.
- Editable files and usage rights are not mentioned.
- Promises of guaranteed results for your business.

Ten questions to ask the studio

- 1 Does the project start with research and strategy or go straight to design?
- 2 What exactly will be delivered: files, formats and guidelines?
- 3 How many rounds of revisions are included?
- 4 Do the final files and usage rights stay with my company?
- 5 How does the studio show the reasoning behind its choices? Are there cases with context and challenge?
- 6 Who will actually work on my project?
- 7 How does payment work and what happens if I want to adjust the scope?
- 8 How will communication work during the project?
- 9 What do I need to provide and at what moments do I need to decide?
- 10 What happens after delivery if I have questions about applying the brand?