

5 Tips For Outsourcing Graphic Design

 blog.teamweek.com/2015/03/5-tips-for-outsourcing-graphic-design/

Alari Aho

These days it's really important that your products look good and are functionally awesome at the same time. This applies especially to mobile apps and modern webapps. Each startup faces the following dilemma – should we **hire a graphical designer** as a full time team member **or outsource** it as much as possible?

It's easy to outsource webpage or logo design. Usually it's a one-off effort, and does not change much over time. It's a totally different thing with the application itself – as a startup you **develop it constantly**, and all these changes you're releasing should be aesthetical. So, the need for a designer is constant.

At [Teamweek](#), we have **decided to go on the outsourced path**, and have been doing this for a couple of years already. We need a top-notch designer, as the application design is a really important part of [Teamweek](#) to achieve the simplicity and clarity this team planning calendar needs. But, it's nearly impossible for a startup to hire a high-level designer without him/her getting bored over time. They're usually loaded with work, so it's very hard to motivate them to drop everything and join the team full time.

Another aspect is that **good designers are really fast and efficient** with their work. They can produce enough views in a couple of days, which developers can easily spend a month or so implementing.

Our experience is that the **best way to cooperate** with a top notch designer looks like this:

- **Work in sprints.** We plan our design requirements in clearly defined chunks, which can be implemented in a 4-6 hour design sprint. This forces us to plan well ahead, thus saving time during the design session.
- **Set a recurring schedule.** Keeping a constant pace (1-2 times a month) helps us to get regular input and also keeps the designer on topic. If you have longer pauses, it gets more time consuming for a designer to get back on track with your app.
- **Small steps.** Do not set too ambitious goals for a single sprint. The idea is to focus on a single feature or a view and really work on it.
- **No UX for a designer.** It's a very rare occasion when a designer is also good in usability analysis. Usually we have a really clear understanding what's the UI flow, and have produced several mockups beforehand to make it clear and understandable. Tell the designer what you want and he/she will make it look good.
- **Rinse and repeat.** Regularly re-visit designs after they have been implemented in code. Small tweaks and updates ensure that you have a consistent and solid aesthetical experience.

What is your experience with designers? How have you managed to get the cooperation to work out?