

## Can't live with them, can't live without them...

'I could have done that myself...if I only had the time'. Familiar? But usually you couldn't have...and you didn't have the time! You hire consultants to create things that you can't, to bring an 'edge' which you can't deliver competently yourself. Yet the scenario that ends in tears is all too familiar, usually because someone forgot it is a two-way street; communicating and listening are key to successful projects.

In this edition we look at the how clients can get the best from their consultants and designers. To start, Genevieve Adkins and Aaron Lawton examine the client:consultant relationship from both sides, coming to much the same conclusion about what makes a successful relationship. John Veverka provides advice on how to select a consultant or designer, whilst other authors look at the particular issues surrounding delivery, live interpretation and working with artists.

Several common themes have emerged, including the need for a good brief as the basis of any successful project (see page 8 for guidance). Other key themes are:

- Be honest - if you want them to think for you, tell them so.
- Communication - prepare a proper brief and talk, regularly!
- Trust - let them do what they are being paid for.
- Creativity - grow the industry, it's in your interests. Un-paid pitching only dilutes, inviting the safe and the mundane. You pay for creativity.
- Take a chance...let creativity and innovation flourish. We don't need more of the same - we need better.
- Perspective – keep it! It is really a ménage-a-trois you are entering as there is always a third party in the relationship – the 'consumer'.

Good consultants are nurtured by good clients - and the more good consultants there are out there, the more fun you will have.

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