

Plan Now or Pay Later:

How to Get the Most from your Graphic Design Dollar

by Michele DeFilippo

Professional design and typesetting make your book stand out and sell better. Designers and typesetters want you to get the most for your money and need your help to deliver a top-notch product on time and at a reasonable price.

The most important thing you can do once your manuscript is complete is STOP. Do not pass Go, do not collect \$200. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done, but *please* don't begin production until you, your editor, and all your friends and relatives have read the manuscript as many times as necessary to make it perfect.

Once page layout begins, seemingly minor changes can quickly add up to big bucks. Adding a sentence to your manuscript in a word processor takes a few seconds and costs nothing. Adding that same sentence on a page proof may cause all the text after it to reflow and lead to time-consuming layout adjustments.

Ask your designer to create a sample chapter, and work together until you're satisfied with the type style, type size and layout. Changing this sample is far less expensive than changing hundreds of pages later.

Another way to save money is to understand the difference between editing, proofreading, changes and corrections, and do them at the appropriate time.

Editing is the perfecting of the words that make up the manuscript. It is the responsibility of the author and should be completed before typesetting begins.

Proofreading is the comparison of your typeset pages to the manuscript, and is the responsibility of the typesetter, if you so choose. Most typesetters will correct typos or call your attention to text that sounds odd, but they are not experts in your field and should not change your content or punctuation. Imagine the havoc that would ensue if they did!

Changes and *corrections* sound alike, but they're not. A *change*, or *author's alteration*, (AA) is exactly that. A misspelled name is considered a chargeable AA, because only the author can reasonably be expected to know the information.

A *correction*, or *typesetter error*, (TE) should always be fixed free of charge. Accidental deletion of text that was in the original manuscript, or type set in the wrong font is a non-chargeable TE. Marking your proofs with these abbreviations will give everyone a sense of how the job is going and avoid hard feelings at billing time.

If, despite your best efforts, you must make changes to your page proofs, you can still save money by doing it efficiently.

First, *make all your changes in one pass*. It takes many hours to change an entire book multiple times. Consolidate your changes into one or two rounds and you won't have to deal with "sticker shock" later.

Second, *add several weeks to your pre-press schedule for changes*. It's stressful for everyone and unfair to your typesetter to hold to the original deadline when days or weeks of work have been added to the project. If you finish early, you can celebrate.

If you make changes, expect to pay for them. Your typesetter's written estimate should specify how many rounds of revisions are included, and quote an hourly rate for changes beyond that. If you don't see these items, be sure to ask. If you do see them, talk it over. Everyone wants the job to go smoothly.

Most of all, remember that your typesetter is a human being who cares about your book as much as you do. If you ask for 60 changes at midnight, it's not helpful to point out that the typesetter must be blind for missing one.

A little planning can produce your book on time and on budget, with publisher and designer alike looking forward to the next one.

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