Image editing & graphic design

Description

Image editing involves modifying or improving poor-quality digital images using different techniques, tools, or software to create the best possible version of those images. Graphic design is the art or profession of using design elements (such as typography and images) to convey information or create an effect. This field presents prospective virtual assistants with a great opportunity to operate remotely. Indeed, graphic design revolves predominantly around the client commissioning the designer to produce pieces of work. This flow of information can easily take place electronically.

Investment & Cost of entry

To start working as Virtual Assistant in image editing or graphic design, the following equipment is required:

- High-resolution desktop PC or laptop, monitor & printer, reliable hard drive + relevant accessories (**€€**)
- High-quality smartphone for pictures or videos + relevant accessories (**€€**)
- Image & video editing software (**€€**); could be cheaper if using freeware
- Training and certification in photography and photo editing, e.g., on editing software (**€€**)

SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGE EDITING

FOR VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

Virtual Assistants' Top Ten Tips for Social Media

1
Use high quality images from credible sources

2
Always make an editing checklist

3
Remember to remove distractions from your images

4
Be careful with filters

5
Adjust the brightness & reduce those shadows

6
Fix your saturation

7
Don't contrast to contrast

8
Use collages

9
Add text to your images

10
Add a watermark to your image

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GRAPHIC DESIGN 1/2

in 10 easy steps

1. Definition

Creative Brief: Client's vision for the project - provides designer with set parameters and guidelines.

2. Research

Which problem an I trying to solve for the customer?

3. Brainstorm

Grab a pen and paper: What's the message of the design?

4. Creation

Sketch offline on a big sketch pad!

5. Design build

Get feedback from the client: come up with variations on final design.

6. Refine

Client gives feedback: refine your designs & ask other designers for feedback.

7. Feedback

Present your reworked design to the client: tell a story with your design!
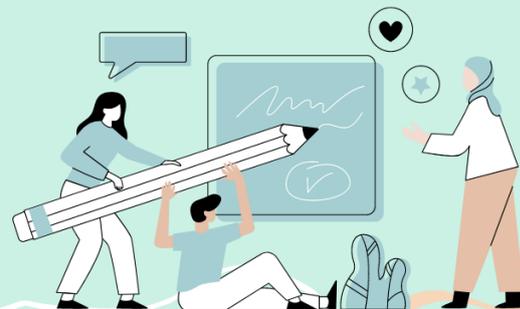
8. Revise

Gather your feedback, structure it and improve your design: that's your approval process.

9. Final delivery

Congrats! You delivered a final design to a hopefullly satisfied customer.

10. Pay Day

Done! Don't forget to send out the invoice.

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Environmental Impact

The environmental impact:

- High-resolution computer usage (office energy use) (🍃)
- Paper creation and use (🍃)
- Inks and solvents (🍃)
- Printing waste (🍃)

Ways to reduce it include:

- Try transferring some of your electricity consumption to green power – even if it's just 20 %, this will help reduce your carbon footprint.

- Request ink free of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), choose an eco-friendly printer and try to print only when necessary – go digital!

- Request paper bleached with Totally Chlorine Free bleaching (TCF), look out for certified paper stock from environmentally friendly sources, use post-consumer recycled paper when possible, and use thinner paper as long as it doesn't have an impact on the end-product quality! Size, shape, colour, printing style all influence the size of a graphic designer's ecological footprint, so choose sensibly in accordance with each commission's requirements.

A Virtual Assistant in the image editing and graphic design sector should be flexible and able to adapt to changing working conditions. For example, most graphic designers need to have a good understanding of social media nowadays. Build a website or use your personal social media (such as setting up your own Instagram portfolio) to show off your image editing skills to potential customers. This can also turn customers into regular clients. If you're a newcomer to social media, look at websites such as Canva, where you can find templates for social media posts. ArtStation and DeviantArt also provide creative inspiration for budding graphic designers.

When selecting images for social media purposes, it's good to stick to a couple of rules:

- Only use high-quality images from credible sources, images with compromised resolutions damage your brand's reputation.
- To save time, it's important to make a checklist for editing images to ensure you don't miss anything – this way you'll work efficiently and improve the quality of your production.
- Always remove unnecessary objects or people from images, this way they won't distract from the overall picture.
- Filters are great fun and can improve an image, but be careful! They can also remove the natural aspect of your image and could make it appear false and unrealistic.

- When adjusting brightness or reducing shadow, be careful not to overdo it – this is a delicate balance!

- Adjusting photo saturation can help to make muted tones more vivid, however the opposite can also be true, so be careful. Remember you can also adjust parts of the picture rather than its entirety.

- Once you've got your photo on the computer, you can modify the exposure level curve and regulate the lighting.

- Make use of collages if you want to depict an event, person or object several times. Your followers won't feel spammed and you've combined everything you need into one collage image!

- Adding simple text to your image can help your audience relate to it better and get your message through. Make sure to keep the text simple and minimalist though, so that it doesn't overwhelm the image!

- Add a watermark to your images – this way, you're selling your name and brand with every photo and it prevents image theft! Keep it small and pop it in the corner of the image.

- Consider your pricing structure – make use of rate comparison websites to see what others are charging.

- Communicate with your customers and keep it professional.

Challenges

Where and how do I find my customers as a Virtual Assistant?

- The customer is king! Image editing and graphic design are both sectors where it is paramount that you meet the needs and expectations of the customer before your own. Imagine that you have delivered a finished

product to your customer, and they have decided after seeing it that they would like some changes made to the finished design. You won't necessarily agree with the changes, but in order to keep the customer happy, it's important that you make them without complaining 😊

- As a creative thinker, it might prove tricky to stick to regular working times and manage your time well – but if you want to be a Virtual Assistant in this field, it's really important that you make an effort to stick to your deadlines as you will often be working on multiple projects at a time.

General Advice/Solutions

There are different ways of addressing these challenges:

- Use freelance job sites on the web to look for precisely the clients you need. Sites such as Fiverr, Upwork, FlexJobs and 99designs offer low-cost or free platforms where you can look for freelance design work. Don't be too picky when you're first starting out! Even little jobs may develop into something more, so relax and take what you can get.
- Always ask for nice, clear instructions when gathering information about a commission for a customer. That way you won't be unsure as to how to present it and it's less likely that you'll need to make changes to it later. Advise your customer about what looks best and make gentle suggestions, however, at the end of the day, if your customer wants
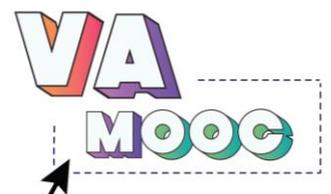
something a certain way, then it is your job to deliver it – otherwise you might not benefit from a returning customer!

- Time management can be a real challenge when working virtually in design. You may have several different commissions on the go at the same time. To keep your working hours under control, stick to a reasonably strict timetable and use apps such as [Trello](), [Plutio](), [Cushion](), [Timely]() or [Hectic]() – that way you can manage your clients, projects, invoices and proposals via oneinterface.

Who is this role best suited to?

- This role is best suited to people who feel comfortable working remotely and ideally already have some experience in the graphics and image editing sector. This might mean you have certification for using specific graphics programmes or have experience using them.
- If you're brand new to graphic design and image editing, having a creative mind will help you play around with colours. This role is best suited for you if you are looking to work independently.

References:

- Hipsocial. (2022). 9 best and quick image editing tips. https://hipsocial.com/best-and-quick-image-editing-tips-every-social-media-marketer-should-know (last accessed on 22.07.2022).
- Lee, P. (2019). 10 Steps to start a graphic design business. https://millo.co/starting-your-own-design-business-how-to (last accessed on 22.07.2022).

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