Free and Low Cost Design Resources for Smart Nonprofits

Let's face it, good graphic design is expensive. And it's an expense that smaller nonprofit organizations often find unjustified. Where to turn if you don't have the resources for a new logo, a direct response device, or a newsletter design?

You can find creative graphic design on a budget if you know where to look. Decide which pieces of your package will require design work. Perhaps your reply device is the only component that will require outside assistance.

Craigslist or Upwork: When my daughters were young, I trained as a graphic designer and worked briefly in the field. But my skills are rusty and I no longer have access to design software. Enter Craigslist or Upwork. I've used CL many times when I needed a quick response device created for a direct mail package. And I've hired designers on Upwork for bigger projects (my yearly fundraising calendar was created by an Upwork designer).

TechSoup: If you or a member of your staff has design skills, TechSoup is a wonderful resource to pick up some of the best design software, such as Adobe Creative Suite, at far less than retail.

Scribus: Libre Desktop Publishing, a page layout program for Linux, FreeBSD, PC-BSD, NetBSD, OpenBSD, Solaris, OpenIndiana, Debian GNU/Hurd, Mac OS X, OS/2 Warp 4, eComStation, Haiku and Windows.

Piktochart: An 'easy-to-use' info graphic maker.

Canva: Canva is an online graphic design platform. It offers free access to a wide assortment of design tools and options, as well as premium options for paying customers. I use Canva myself for quick logos, presentation slides, and other graphic needs.

Fiverr. Graphics, marketing, fun, and more online services, on budget and on time. I use Fiverr for small jobs (retouching a photo, editing videos, podcast introductions, etc.)

Pixlr: A free online image editor.

NonprofitToolkit: Templates and training for nonprofit marketing.

Crowdsourced Design

Crowdspring is an online marketplace for crowdsourced creative services. Entrepreneurs, small businesses, startups, big Brands and agencies who need a custom logo design, website design, other graphic design, industrial design or copywriting post what they need, when they need it and how much they'll pay. Once posted, creatives from around the world (over 100,000 from 200 countries) submit actual work. Buyers choose from among actual work (currently an average of more than 110 entries per project), not bids and proposals.

DesignCrowd is a similar concept.

99designs: At 99 Designs, you'll post a contest and have dozens of designers posting to your project.