

[Your letterhead]

[Date]

Good day [recipient],

I just received information regarding your organization's logo design competition and frankly, I'm quite disappointed. This type of competition (and its structure) is unethical and ultimately unfair to the graphic design community.

The competition expects designers to invest time and resources purely on speculation. Designing on spec is not the norm, nor is it an accepted practice in the graphic design industry.

Graphic Designers are a valuable part of the communications, branding and marketing mix, trained in solving business communication problems. Your organization's logo is its face before the public, the visual expression of its culture, mission and scope. Taking away the interaction between Client and Designer by creating a logo competition significantly reduces your chances of finding a suitable mark. It may be "pretty," but without the research behind it, it's bound to be off the target. So, in this highly competitive market, why would organizations such as yours feel justified in minimizing the designer's contribution?

Creative competitions sidestep the importance of the client/designer relationship. Competitions and speculative projects are about winning the work. The collaboration within the client/designer relationship is about truly understanding the problem at hand and helping the client reach their goals.

Beyond this, it may have serious legal consequences if the design or a similar design is already in use by another group. Again, without the background homework researched by a trained designer, you can't be sure. Is your organization really prepared to take these risks when lawsuits are piling up faster than the national debt?

Now let's turn around and look at it from a different angle, would your organization request the same of other professional service providers? Would it make sense to ask a group of attorneys to create your legal documents on speculation? Would you think to ask accountants to do your tax returns by the same method? A plumber? I seriously doubt it.

The Graphic Artist Guild has set out professional guidelines for art competitions. Please take the time to read the information found by following the link below. Hopefully, it will shed some light on what your organization is asking of the design community.

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At the end of the day, choosing a designer or firm is about getting the right professional for the project. Requests for speculative work erode the relationship and ultimately are a substitute for a client doing their homework.

Sincerely,  
[your name]

