

# Recognising good (and bad) clients.

## What defines a good client.

There are a number of factors to consider when trying to identify good clients.

### Personality fit.

Look for clients you would like to work with.

Check out their LinkedIn profile and connections.

Are they the type of person you'd like to work with?

If there is no empathy to begin with, walk away.

### Size.

Do you prefer to work with small family businesses or large corporations?

Set an ideal size and use that as a starting point.

### Industry segments.

What areas are you interested in?

Where do you have existing clients?

Do you enjoy working in that space?

Answer these and then start to build a list of your 'perfect client'.

### Budget.

What type of budgets do they have?

Are they spending money on design and marketing?

### Payment.

Do they pay on time?

Do they haggle over estimates?

### Length of relationship.

Are you interested in one-time gigs or a long-term working relationship?

If you are thinking long term, estimate whether a particular customer would have enough projects to sustain a relationship.

## What defines a bad client.

### The client is abusive.

This is an easy one. You and your work should be treated with respect and dignity, and you should not tolerate any kind of abusive language or behaviour.

### You don't get paid on time.

You are not a money lender. Part of a respectful relationship is meeting payment terms. A customer who doesn't understand this will hurt your cash flow and, eventually, your business.

### You get phone calls at nights or on weekends.

Clients have to respect your time and not act as though they own it. You are selling your professional services, not yourself.

### The scope of the project always increases...

and they refuse to increase the budget. You start a branding project, and then the client asks you to extend the project to a website.

The responsibility for setting expectations is yours, but if you do that, and the client still pushes for more without being willing to increase the budget, then you'll end up with an unprofitable business.

### The client doesn't respect your professional judgment.

To take orders from the client moves you to a transactional designer and a host of overseas competitors, all working at low hourly rates. It kills your productivity, erodes your portfolio and stunts your skills.