Valiant.

Quality Assurance Policy

Valiant Design: Statement of Commitment
Valiant Design is a branding, website and marketing agency established in 2002 to service clients in multiple sectors and roles.

We supply:
- branding and digital strategy
- Branding and website design, design for marketing collateral, campaigns, packaging and digital and web development
- artwork production
- copywriting, video, photography and illustration
- print

In all projects we aim to provide our customers with products and services that meet and even exceed their expectations. We feel that this is ultimately what distinguishes us from our competitors and encourages and maintains the long-term relationships we have with our clients.

We are committed to continuous improvement and have established our own Quality Management System that provides a framework for measuring and improving our performance.

This policy and our Quality Management System are made available to our customers, suppliers and all our staff and associates. We require all associates and freelancers to read our policy and ensure our values are embraced and undertaken within their working practices whilst contracted by us.

Signed

T.S. Keeble
Director

Quality Assurance Management
Valiant Design director Tina Keeble has ultimate responsibility for quality standards within the company. She is responsible for ensuring the policy is communicated to everyone involved within the organisation and its effectiveness is monitored and reviewed annually. All employees are encouraged to be responsible for the quality of the service and product within their direct control.

Some of the key performance indicators we use to monitor quality are:
- creativity
- accuracy
- value for money/ROI
- adaptability and flexibility
- on time, on budget
- responsiveness and turnaround time

Our Step-by-step Management
Our step-by-step project management system is flexible enough to suit the specific requirements of our clients and helps us to provide the service we are renowned for. Ensuring we understand our client and their business is crucial to our design process. We support our clients throughout a project and seek client sign-off at each key step.

Our goal is to successfully deliver projects, on time, on budget, and to meet or exceed client satisfaction.

Step 1: Briefing
Each project will begin with a thorough briefing session. This is the opportunity for everyone involved in the project to:

- understand the client's business
- get to know you, your roles and responsibilities
- define your audience
- list out the key messages
- establish the deliverables and discuss design, photographic, illustrative and copy styles, and
- confirm your timetable, budget and requirements

We ask you to provide a written brief, including timelines. Alternatively, following the initial meeting we will produce a full contact report detailing the meeting and your requirements. We will ask you to sign this off prior to proceeding to our next step.

Step 2: Detailed Quotation
From the signed-off brief we will supply you with a full quotation. We provide transparent costing throughout. The costs are itemised according to the various stages of each project. Where it is not possible to provide exact costing for any step, such as photography or copywriting, which may be dependent on the chosen design direction, we will provide minimum and maximum parameters. If a budget is allocated at the start of a project we will always ensure the presented designs will fall within a client's budget. As a result the client is always aware of the maximum they might be charged and avoid any unexpected surprises at invoicing stage.

Sometimes a project may evolve and the brief or specification may change. Any changes to the original brief are evaluated and any additional costs that are likely to be incurred are communicated immediately to our clients. We will ensure you are happy to sign off and agree any extra costs before we proceed. We can provide regular budget updates throughout a project.

Step 3: Potential Risks
Wherever possible we will highlight any potential risks that might be involved in the successful completion of the project. We will always recommend solutions to ensure we can overcome or prevent them.

Step 4: Research
Research can often be part of the briefing for the project. If so we will undertake the research prior to beginning any design work. All results will be fed back to the client for discussion and any changes in direction that arise from the results will be written and presented to the client for sign-off prior to the design stage. Research is especially important within a direct mail campaign to ensure the best results are achieved.

If the client has already undertaken research, we will ensure we have a full understanding of the results. Depending on the project and the audience, we will usually undertake some research of our own at our own cost, to ensure we provide you with the best results for your project. This enables us to fully understand your target market.

Step 5: Design
We will present a minimum of three different concepts for each project. Each concept will answer the agreed brief and give you a thorough understanding of the overall approach, image style, colours and tone of voice. Each concept will comply with any existing brand guidelines. We will collate all feedback on the design work and provide a contact report for you. When you are happy with our understanding of the development required, we will progress to the next step.

Step 6: Design Development
Following client feedback, we will develop the preferred concept for a second presentation. Our aim is for this to be as complete as possible. To achieve this we will develop copywriting, photography, and illustration choice.

Copywriting

A detailed outline of the copy will be supplied to the client for confirmation. The client should sign this off before progressing. This helps to ensure that we avoid major changes later, which might incur cost increases and time delays. This is followed by the first draft of the full text. The client can make revisions as necessary. When the copy is approved it will be integrated into the design development.

Photography and Illustration

As part of the design development step we will provide a suggested image list for the client to sign off. If photography were commissioned we would require the client to sign off mood boards and/or mocked up interpretations of the required shots. We use a selection of specialist photographers to suit the style, subject matter and budget of our clients. We supply our clients with a selection of suitable portfolios to choose from and our clients are invited to meet with the photographers before making their final decision. We ensure that all photographers we work with comply with our Quality Assurance policy.

Step 7: Artwork Preparation or Web Build

Our artwork preparation ensures all requirements including bleed, trapping, colour format, image resolution and typography are thoroughly checked and signed-off by the studio member of staff responsible for the project as well as the workflow manager.

When artwork is complete we will provide a full colour pdf proof. We will also recommend a printed digital proof and can quote for this accordingly. When the digital or printed final proof is signed-off by the client we prepare files for print.

For web work we will show all files on a secure server accessed only by the client for final sign-off, prior to uploading and going live.

Step 8: Print Process and Management

Files sent to printers are always accompanied by full colour run-outs, a full colour mock-up and a print order with full specification listing stock choice and weight, colour specification, quantity and finishing requirements.

We always insist on client sign-off on final colour proofs for printing. This can be in PDF format. However, in our experience greater accuracy is achieved when checking hard copies. Any steps we can undertake to prevent wasted materials, inline with our Environmental Policy, are preferred.

We have formed long-term partnerships with a number of experienced print companies that meet our environmental and quality assurance values. We choose the most appropriate print company dependent on the project. We always obtain print quotes from three different printers to ensure we get the most competitive quote to fulfill our clients' requirements.

As part of our print management role we will always attend and check each project on press to ensure it meets or exceeds our and our clients' expectations.

We are happy to work directly with a client's approved print suppliers when required. In this case, we charge a print management fee. In the case of large print runs this can prove more cost effective for the client.

Step 9: Delivery

Dependent on the project, delivery can be as simple as ensuring your project is delivered to you within your timelines. With direct mail we will manage full mailing of campaigns and confirm in writing all delivery details.

Step 10: Review

Valiant Design believes it is of benefit to all parties to review the project and process, and measure their effectiveness in delivering the desired results. We see this as a means of progress, a vital part of the project, and essential in building a long-term relationship.

In the unusual case of a client being unhappy with any part of the progression of their project, they will have direct access to a director of Valiant Design.

Safety Procedures

At Valiant Design we are absolutely aware of the safety and security of our client's work. We have an ongoing 24-hour hard- and software support contract with an external facility to ensure we can address any problems immediately.

We have installed state-of-the-art server and back-up systems to ensure we will never lose more than a single day's work. Our flexible approach will always ensure that we catch up on any lost time straight away to ensure we never miss a client deadline. All electronic information and data is automatically backed-up daily. In addition to our automated back-up system, all work is backed-up onto a portable hard drive and removed from the premises daily.

To ensure our client has continuity throughout their project, each employee is responsible for keeping full, accurate and up-to-date notes on the progress of their projects, so that anyone else would be able to takeover with a minimal learning curve. The project manager is responsible for overall co-ordination of each project. Full project progress meetings are held within Valiant Design at least weekly to ensure awareness of each stage of any individual project by all of the team involved.

Our 10 Step process has enabled us to deliver quality on the projects we have been contracted to undertake. We review this process regularly to ensure it meets the changing demands of technology and marketing requirements.

We hope to work with you in the future so you can put our process to the test.

Signed

T.S. Keeble
Director