



HOW TO GET PAID WHAT YOU DESERVE

From nailing salary negotiations with a new employer to learning skills that will sell, here's how to increase your slice of the pie

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The design industry is in good health at the moment. In the UK, the creative sector is currently worth £71 billion – and it employs an astonishing one in 12 members of the UK's workforce. "The market is buoyant right now," says Adrem Group's Nikky Lyle, who specialises in placing graphic designers and visualisers. "Lots of companies are crying out for good people. It's a candidate-led market at the moment. Salaries have shot up and the best people get snapped up very quickly."

"We're in a growth industry," agrees Be Kaler, director and co-founder of digital recruitment specialists Futureheads, who says that the recent climb out of recession has resulted in an employment boom. "There are many more opportunities than there were five years ago. A lot of people are coming to us wanting to earn more and the market will afford that at the moment. There are more jobs than there are good people, and employers genuinely have an expectation that they may need to pay a bit more – but you do need to be able to justify why."

The Major Players Salary Survey 2015 found that salaries have increased by between 5 per cent and 10 per cent across most creative disciplines. The majority of respondents work in integrated agencies – 27 per cent were found to have received a pay rise of more than 10 per cent in the last year, with more pay increases happening internally than through external job moves. However, over a third (38.6 per cent) of those surveyed were looking to change jobs within the next year, with 64.9 per cent citing better financial remuneration as a motivation.

There is some less encouraging news when it comes to the gender pay gap, however. The Design Week Salary Survey 2015 revealed a gender pay gap of 17 per cent in the design industry. In comparison, data from the Office for National Statistics places the UK's overall gender pay gap at 9.4 per cent. The Design Week survey found that male creatives are earning £35,809 on average, while females in equivalent roles are getting £30,733. Overall, the average designer in the UK earns £33,443, according to

FEATURED DESIGNERS



**NIKKY
LYLE**
ADREM GROUP

A specialist recruiter at Adrem Group, Nikky places designers and visualisers at leading firms in the London market. She studied design at KIAD and photography at Falmouth University. www.adremgroup.com



**DIANE
DOMEYER**
THE CREATIVE
GROUP

Diane is executive director of The Creative Group, a specialised staffing service placing interactive, design, marketing and advertising professionals with a variety of firms. www.creativegroup.com



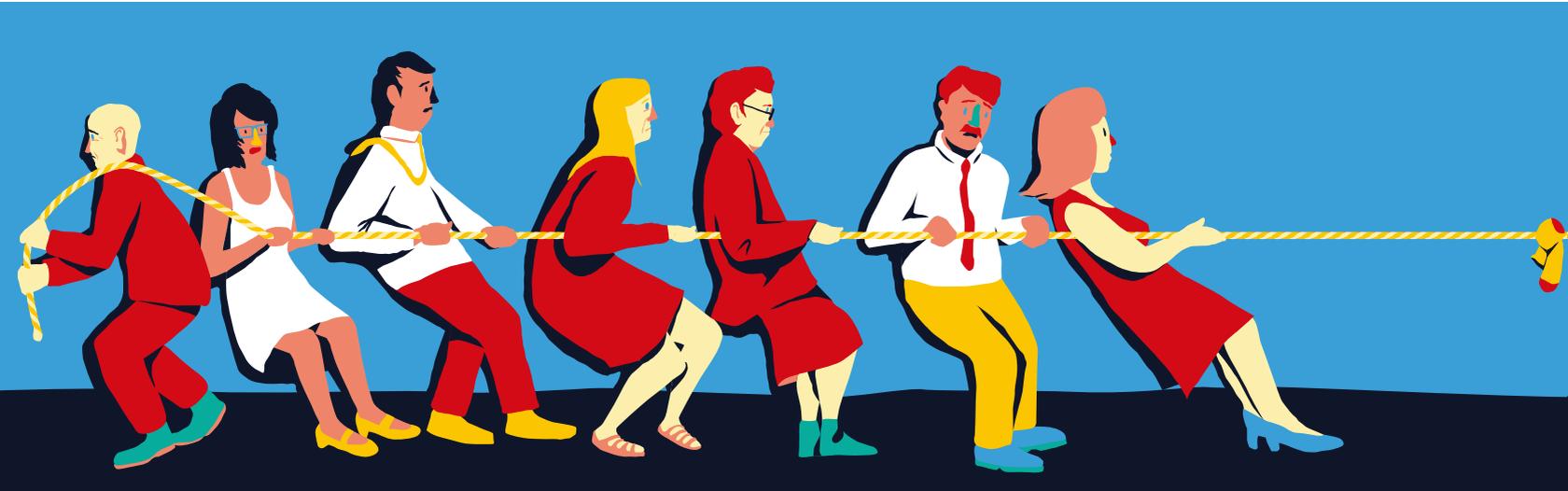
**TED
LEONHARDT**
CONSULTANT
AND AUTHOR

Ted is a consultant to the creative industries, focusing on negotiation. Author of *Nail It: Stories for Designers* on *Negotiating with Confidence*, Ted previously owned a design agency. www.tedleonhardt.com



**BE
KALER**
FUTUREHEADS

Interactive talent-spotter Be is a director and co-founder of London-based digital recruitment consultancy Futureheads. She has over 15 years' experience recruiting for digital roles. www.wearefutureheads.co.uk



WAYS TO MAKE MORE

Expert recruiters and negotiators give us their top tips for improving your current situation

1. QUIT PLAYING GAMES

Apply for better-paying jobs and be honest about your situation. Diane Domeyer, executive director of The Creative Group, says it's vital to avoid playing games. "Tactics such as misleading a prospective employer about your current salary or other job offers in an effort to obtain higher pay almost always backfire."

2. DON'T DRAW LINES

Always keep your options open when negotiating a contract. Whether you're negotiating with your current employer or a potential new one, Domeyer says it's a mistake to give ultimatums too early on in the contractual process. "Look for common ground and avoid an adversarial stance. You want to start off on the right foot."

3. THE TIME IS NOW

Start looking around ahead of time rather than waiting until you're thoroughly fed up. "Often, by the time people ask for more money they're quite disgruntled about what they're currently on," says Be Kaler of Futureheads. "Try to have the conversation before you get to that stage."

4. KNOW YOUR BOTTOM LINE

"Always have a Below This I Walk number in mind when going into a meeting," says recruitment consultant Ted Leonhardt. "If you don't go in with one, in a weak moment you can find yourself agreeing to something you later regret. Our brains flick between emotional and rational responses – the rational mind is the slowest part."

5. IF NOT NOW, TRY LATER

Be aware that pay rises don't have to come instantly. If you can't negotiate more money now, try asking for a delayed or conditional pay bump to be written into your contract. Be Kaler of Futureheads suggests asking employers to consider writing a pay rise into your contract. "They might say: okay, we can pay that when you've delivered X, Y or Z."

to the Design Week survey. London salaries continue to outstrip the rest of the UK at an average of £36,791, followed by £32,795 in the rest of the South East, £30,599 in the East Midlands and £29,643 in Scotland. The lowest-paid jobs are in Northern Ireland, where the average designer's salary is £21,818.

"London is still the hub, but Manchester is somewhere to watch," says Nikky Lyle. "The BBC has moved there, the government is investing money and there are some great studios there that are beating London agencies to awards." Designers in Manchester earn £27,279 on average, according to Design Week. "The cost of living is much cheaper, but it's the same quality of work and you can still work with London-based clients."

"We've had lots of openings though in Manchester and we have clients opening offices there as well," she continues. "We've just had an agency from Manchester here in London interviewing people and other clients from Manchester have approached us wanting to meet people."

Designers are earning more outside the UK than within it. The Design Week research puts the average overseas salary at £41,324, although it is of course worth noting that this will vary greatly between different cities and countries across the world. So, where might you consider looking? "Companies in San Francisco are keen to hire London staff," says Be Kaler. "And I went out to Singapore earlier this year and was surprised by how many London digital agencies have got satellite offices there now. If you set up in Singapore, you can service 18 other business districts within a two-hour flight zone."

FREELANCE EARNINGS

Freelance designers appear to be earning more than employees, with average salaries of £34,659, although it's important to take into account the extra costs associated with freelancing. Designers working for consultancies are earning an average of £33,680, while designers working



in-house receive the lowest average salaries at £31,587. Be Kaler says client-side opportunities have increased, though: “Our agency/client split used to be 75/25 and it’s probably 50–60 per cent in favour of client-side now.”

While employers are keen to hire new staff, Lyle observes that they are being more cautious in their selections. “They want to hire people that are keen to develop and push themselves. The main thing they want is for designers to be as creative as possible.” Lyle notes that client-facing skills are always a plus, while, on the digital side, the Major Players survey revealed that the most sought-after candidates are digital designers with front-end development knowledge. Speaking more generally, Be Kaler recommends improving breadth rather than simply becoming a specialist in one area.

In the USA, The Creative Group’s 2015 Salary Guide predicts a 3.5 per cent rise for creative salaries over the next year. “The job category with the biggest pay jump is the interactive field, with a 4.4 per cent average rise,” says Diane Domeyer, executive director of The Creative Group. “A number of digital positions are expected to exceed this figure.” For example, mobile designers can expect starting salaries to increase by 6.8 per cent to the range of \$71,000 to \$109,500.

“Gaining digital and mobile skills will increase your marketability and open doors to new opportunities, no matter what your specialty,” advises Domeyer. “Even if you are applying for positions that don’t require these skills, acquiring them can give you an edge in today’s competitive job market.” Salary gains for more traditional roles, such as

graphic designers, will be considerably less, but these professionals can still expect an average increase of between 3 and 3.2 per cent in 2015.

What sorts of employers are paying the best salaries? “Try looking for jobs in corporate, tech, start-ups and charities,” suggests Futureheads’ Be Kaler. “Look for well-funded start-ups that have gone through a round of funding, which usually comes with a timeline for delivery.

They may be up against the wall as it will stall everything if they don’t have the resources. They may also be willing to pay a bit more because it’s harder to attract staff without an established brand – or an HR or IT department.”

Start-ups often seek a broader skillset because they don’t have a raft of established teams and departments to call on. “They also understand that someone leaving an established agency or corporation, they’re going to be walking away from more than just a salary but are relinquishing security, a pension

and an established career path.”

At the other end of the scale, big-named brands are realising that they can’t attract candidates on name alone, Kaler reveals. “It used to be that the sexier the brand, the less you needed to pay. People are more discerning and brands that take that approach can lose out.” It’s a similar story with charities, she adds. “To attract the right staff, they are having to break their pay scales.”

“THE JOB CATEGORY WITH THE BIGGEST PAY JUMP IS THE INTERACTIVE FIELD, WITH A 4.4 PER CENT AVERAGE RISE”

DIANE DOMEYER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CREATIVE GROUP

MONEY ISN’T EVERYTHING

Just don’t make the mistake of looking solely at the numbers. “Lots of people take a job purely based on



STUDIO SITUATIONS

How do design pay and prospects compare at different scales? We take a look at three types of design agency

1. START SMALL (UP TO 10 STAFF)

Some of the best starting salaries for designers can be found in well-funded start-ups. For example, research by Google Ventures found that design salaries being paid by tech start-ups in San Francisco broadly reflect those being offered by much bigger, established companies. Larger agencies may offer more corporate perks, such as equity in the company, and have greater scope for internal career moves, but the ‘mucking-in’ approach at a start-up means you can gain a much broader range of experience and can potentially own and adapt your role instead of moving to a new one.

2. MEDIUM PROSPECTS (11-50 STAFF)

The Design Week Salary Survey 2015 found that designers working for independent studios tended to earn slightly less (£33,364) on average than those at networked consultancies (£35,480). While medium-sized agencies may not offer the same salaries as bigger, global firms, they provide the best of both worlds – you’ll have opportunities for sideways and upwards moves, but will probably still know the names of all of your colleagues. Medium-sized agencies often have a culture of seeking project input from across the company, so you’ll potentially have a chance to get stuck into a wide range of projects.

3. LARGE-SCALE AGENCY (50+ STAFF)

You’ll potentially find higher salaries at larger, more established agencies, with plenty of scope for career moves – which could include a cross-global move to an office in another country. You’re likely to have a much more clearly-defined role, with different skill sets clearly covered off by designated teams. Bigger agencies can offer multiple opportunities for freelancers, but some will contract through smaller agencies rather than using individuals. The company should have a bigger budget for training and other benefits, but there will also be more layers of corporate hierarchy to deal with.

› salary,” says Kaler. “Think of the 10 things that are most important to you. These will be different for everybody and they might include things like the location, pay, type of work, style of business, company culture and working hours. Look at all of that holistically and take the money out of the equation until last,” she advises. “People can make the mistake of choosing one job over another just because it pays £2,000 more. An extra £150 a month will be nothing if you’re unhappy.”

“Salary is only part of the equation,” agrees Diane Domeyer. “You should know what is most important to you going into the conversation and weigh up all aspects of the offer. One of the biggest mistakes job candidates make is accepting whatever offer comes their way. But you shouldn’t shy away from discussing salary, specially since many employers are open to it.”

How do you go about negotiating a better offer? Whether you’re trying to persuade your boss to give you a pay rise or fleshing out the details of a potential job offer, it’s absolutely vital to do your homework beforehand – forewarned really is forearmed. “The most important thing to do before deciding whether to negotiate is to conduct background research,” says Domeyer. “Review salary guides and speak to recruiters. Try to find out if the company is growing or has recently reduced its staff, as these events can help to inform your bargaining power.”

WINNING AT NEGOTIATION

“You need a solid foundation for any kind of compensation request,” Domeyer says. For example, consider the impact of the projects in your portfolio. “Create a list of your achievements in previous roles and relate your work to any possible contribution to the companies’ revenue. Has your work helped generate business or build visibility? Have you developed more efficient processes and procedures? If you don’t have answers to these types of questions, it will be difficult to make a case.”



Negotiation expert Ted Leonhardt is a specialist consultant to the creative industries and author of *Nail It: Stories for Designers on Negotiating with Confidence*. He says that the Harvard Negotiation Project (bit.ly/harvardng) is the gold standard for negotiation advice and strategy. "But there's one thing it recommends that is impossible for creatives and that is to separate your work from yourself. A creative simply cannot do that."

Leonhardt emphasises the pivotal importance of "bargaining hard, but with respect", along with the need to

remember that potential clients and employers are human beings too. "Creatives are often terribly apprehensive about bargaining for money. They think the client is going to behave as if they are buying a used car and try to drive a hard bargain, when they're usually very civilised."

Leonhardt is clear on the fact that preparation shouldn't stop at background research. He says it can also be helpful to rehearse potential scenarios and practise how you might respond. "We can fall back into certain behaviours when we're under stress, like going into fight" >

SHOW ME THE MONEY

Check out our guide to current design salaries in the United Kingdom and find out whether you're actually earning what you're really worth

JUNIOR DESIGNER

Junior designers earn £22,000, according to the Gabriele Skelton Salary Indicators report. The Major Players Survey 2015 puts junior designers in London and the South East on £24,000 in agencies and £28,000 client-side.

MIDDLEWEIGHT DESIGNER

Middleweight designers in London and the South East do better in agencies at £35,000 compared to £28,000 client-side. The Gabriele Skelton survey puts the average UK middleweight wage at £26,000.

SENIOR DESIGNER

Senior designers in the UK earn £36,281 on average. Focusing on London and the South East, Major Players finds salaries of £48,000 in-house and £50,000 agency-side.

DESIGN DIRECTOR

Design directors earn an average wage of £47,005 in the UK. In London and the South East, this goes up to around £55,000.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Creative directors' pay is at £52,587 on average in the UK, but wages are considerably higher in the capital, with an average London salary of £100,000.

FREELANCE DESIGNER

Freelance designers earn around £150 per day at junior level. This rises to £240 at mid-weight, and £400 or more at creative director level. For branding design in particular, average day rates are £110, £200 and £300 respectively.

EDITORIAL DESIGN

This is the lowest-paid sector in the UK; salaries for editorial designers sit at an average wage of £27,237 per year.

BRANDING DESIGN

The average UK wage for branding specialists is £36,998: that's £22,000 for junior roles, rising to £32,000 at mid-weight and £40,000 at senior level. Creative directors can earn £80,000.



› or flight mode,” he says. “The stress of negotiation will cause you to feel some anxiety and fear, and that’s normal. Everyone does it, but we all pretend that we don’t.”

“If you think about things overnight, you’ll have the opportunity to get your frontal lobe fully engaged in the process and to move from an emotional space into a rational one,” Leonhardt continues. That’s why you should plan for the process of negotiation. “Creatives often resist this because they’re uncomfortable with it and are in denial. They can go into the situation unprepared and can find themselves rolling over and giving in because they’re feeling uncomfortable with the situation.”

Clarity is important, too. “We give details of salary expectations from the beginning,” says Kaler. “Otherwise you can reach the end of the process and find that expectations don’t match. The offer may have been signed off with HR and now they’ll have to go back with egg on their faces. There should be no surprises at offer stage.”

What do you need to do to impress potential employers? It all comes back to your portfolio. “Portfolios absolutely matter, says Nikky Lyle. “Clients say they look at them straightaway, often before they open CVs, and creatives can sometimes really let themselves down. If something wouldn’t be good enough to leave their office to go to a client, then why are you sending it through to them?”

Taking care over your presentation – of yourself and your work – can make all the difference, she says. “You get people with brilliant portfolios who can’t be sent for interviews before their overall presentation. Brush your hair and don’t show scruffy print-outs of your portfolio. I always recommend graphic designers show things on an iPad and then bring out printed samples as well.” It’s all about how valuable you make yourself, she says. If you want to earn more, get the maximum value from yourself. ●

Next month: Sharpen your persuasion skills with our expert guide to selling your design concepts to skeptical clients...

AROUND THE WORLD

We examine the current career prospects for designers in key locations across the globe



UNITED KINGDOM

The average designer’s salary is £33,443. Freelancers earn a bit more at £34,659. London (£36,791) and South East (£32,795) designers earn the most, Wales and Northern Ireland the lowest.



GERMANY

Graphic designers earn an average salary of €28,893 per year. It’s a broad range: starting salaries begin at €12,289 and taxes tend to be high, but the cost of living in Berlin is relatively cheap.



SPAIN

Salary Explorer puts the average Spanish designer’s salary at €28,836. According to Coroflot, designers in Barcelona earn the most at €30,000, but this is taken from a relatively small sample.



SOUTH AFRICA

The Ad Talent Salary Survey puts graphic designers’ salaries at R15,000 and R12,000 for smaller agencies in Johannesburg and Cape Town; average salaries in larger studios are R28,000 in Johannesburg and R20,000 in Cape Town.



UNITED STATES

Starting salaries range from US\$38,750 to US\$56,500. According to Coroflot, graphic designers earn US\$58,000 on average in San Francisco, US\$50,000 in New York and US\$48,000 in Portland.



AUSTRALIA

Graphic designers earn AU\$63,000 on average in Sydney and AU\$54,000 in Melbourne. Branding and corporate identity roles span a broad range in Sydney, with an average of AU\$96,000.