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**Jim Boomer • Jan. 28, 2013**



**From the February 2013 issue.**

CPA firms across the country continue to look for innovative ways to market their services, people and organizations as a whole. And branding and design are often important components to successfully executing an effective marketing strategy.

They can also be some of the most intimidating and resource draining areas within

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focus ranging from graphic design to professional writing.

## How it Works

- **Step 1: Develop Your Scope** – Describe what you want out of the project in words. The greater the detail, the faster the project can be delivered.
- **Step 2: Set Your Price** – Determine what you're willing to pay for the project. The higher the price you set the higher skilled resources you are going to attract to work on your project.
- **Step 3: Set Your Timeline** – Determine the deadline for submissions but make sure to consider your availability to provide feedback when setting the date.
- **Step 4: Submit Your Project** – Post your project online to “the crowd” and wait for submissions.
- **Step 5: Review Submissions** – Review submissions as they come in and provide timely feedback. If necessary, you can ask for minor tweaks to the submissions.
- **Step 6: Select a Winner** – Select your favorite submission from the pool of candidates. You will receive all the source files and the crowdsourcing site will handle the fee and payment

## Benefits

The benefits to leveraging crowdsourcing are numerous but here are some of the most compelling reasons to consider adding it to your marketing/branding toolkit:

- **Delivery Speed** – Timelines on projects can be significantly compressed by tapping into a large pool of resources.
- **Low Cost** – By offering your project up to this large pool of resources, you are creating competition for your dollars and competition typically drives the price down.

- **Diverse Perspectives vs. Single View** – When you use an in-house resource or an

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stand or do not stand and come up with something completely new, the crowdsourcing community as a whole tends to take the direction/feedback you outline for them very well.

## Challenges

Crowdsourcing certainly doesn't come without a few challenges but nothing that can't be overcome with the right attitude and proper management.

- **Perceived Threat to Existing Marketing & Design** – At first glance crowdsourcing seems like it would be a replacement for their jobs. However, I see it as a resource they can use in their toolkit. If viewed as another tool in the arsenal, crowdsourcing can actually make marketing and design more effective by helping them deliver fresh ideas on time and on budget.
- **Process can drag on if not properly managed** – While speed of delivery is one of the primary benefits of crowdsourcing, this certainly isn't a "set it and forget it" process if you want to get quality results. Someone needs to be focused on reviewing submissions and providing timely feedback to ensure that the pool of resources is headed in the right direction.

## When Should You Use Crowdsourcing?

As I said before, there are a number of crowdsourcing sites with a broad range of purposes. This leads to a variety of ways that you could employ this tool as a resource in your marketing strategy. Some of the most popular ways we are seeing it used today include:

- Changing or Updating your Logo or Branding
- Developing Marketing Materials
- Developing New Service Lines
- Packaging/Naming Existing Service Lines

- Writing Content for Website/Blog

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