



**Society of  
Graphic Designers  
of Canada**

**Société  
des graphistes  
du Canada**

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**General Project  
Competition Guidelines**

**Professional Practice  
Series**

# Competitions

The following are the competition rules for clients to follow if they request that members compete for project work as recommended by the Society's national executive.

The Society's Code of Ethics, Article 38, states that: *"A Member may compete in any design competition for projects of general, community or public interest if they are of a non-profit nature and if the rules of competition have been approved by the National Executive of the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada or conform to general competition rules approved by the National Executive of the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada. Furthermore, a Member may take part in any open or limited competition for work whose terms are specifically approved by the National Executive of the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada."*

Please note that these rules refer to competitions for project work. Please do not confuse them with rules for contests (competitions and juried exhibitions by design-related organizations which give awards to recognize excellence in design

**The Rules of Competition**

Should a client desire evaluation of design within a competitive context amongst members of the Society, the Society requests and recommends that they either follow these rules, or request specific approval from the national executive.

Since receiving specific approval from the national executive may take more time that is convenient for everyone, the Society encourages clients to attempt to follow these general rules:

**1.** Evaluate several members or firms through referrals, interviews, professional standing and presentation of their past work. By reviewing the work of several designers, a client can match a designer's expertise to the requirements of a particular project, rather than having too many design firms competing on a project. While this process requires more investment of time for each candidate, it reduces the number of candidates that require client evaluation, and provides evaluation at a more thorough level.

**2.** If you are certain you require a presentation of creative ideas from more than one firm, it is recommended you pay an honorarium to each competitor for their presentation. The honorarium should relate to what a reasonable design fee would be for a similar project under normal circumstances. If such an expense cannot be justified for the project, choose a firm based upon past experience. Limit the number of candidates for the competition to those designers you are seriously interested in, and notify each candidate about whom they are

competing with, or at least about how many firms are in the competition. Limiting the number of competitors increases the motivation for all candidates to participate fully. This is especially important when the honorarium is less than the design fee would be for the same amount of work.

**3.** Select design firms that can demonstrate similar capability. Selecting firms with widely differing levels of expertise and administrative support can skew the results of a competition.

*Should you require any assistance or advice on how to proceed with a competition, or any further information on our society, please contact the Chair of our Ethics Committee through the National Secretariat. ☎*