

History of Character Development of Norm & Al by Email

September 11 – Initiated by a voice mail left by David E. Stone for a design firm, PepFX, found on the internet

September 11 (P) - Hello David, Do you just need us to create the 2 logo characters? What delivery format do you prefer? We usually deliver the characters as JPG, Bitmap, Tif, but perhaps a Flash file would be better in your case? Will you use the characters in Flash or will they remain just graphics/illustrations? What should the characters be (humans, animals, if yes then which, etc.)? Should the style be cartoonish or realistic? Please answer the above questions and I hope to be able to give you a price then.

September 11 (DES) - Thanks for your prompt response and for taking my request seriously. The name for the "amusement park" which will just be an exhibition and not a real business is "Ordinary World". I wanted to name the two characters, "Norm" and "Al" as in "normal". These characters would exist only as graphics/illustrations and as cartoonish human characters similar to those you did for Reticulated Homecare Inc. Ideally, I would want them to appear similar to each other (but with some difference) and "normal". I hope that is helpful and enough information to generate a quote.

September 11 (P) Yes, that is enough information for a quote. Ok, we usually charge \$300 for character development. Since you said that they should be somewhat similar to each other (but still different..), I can make you a special offer: \$400 for both. I hope our offer is within your budget. Let me know.

September 11 (DES) - This is possible. Not being in the business, however, there are many questions I have regarding this process. Please forgive my naiveté. What would I receive? Some possible images that I would choose from? And then an emailed graphical file of the two characters in several poses...or what? And what is your timeframe to develop these?

September 12 (P) - Your questions are logical, actually I could have explained a bit more right away. This price includes the basic character development. "Basic" means 1 pose. The price for additional poses is usually \$100/pose, and I am sure that if you need this, we can again offer you a discount for the 2 characters. How would it work is as follows: We will create a few rough sketches of different people (cartoonish characters) and show them to you. You can choose one of those, or if none of them is what you had in mind, then you would need to describe in more detail what you had in mind. After you have selected a draft, we create the finer version of it and present it to you for review. I hope this answers your question. Timeframe for the first drafts: 2-3 days. Then it depends on you also and how fast you give feedback, etc. Approximately another 2-3 days for completion.

September 13 (DES) - Thanks for helping bring me up-to-speed. I do have another question. I would assume that I would own the rights to these characters once I approve them...is that correct?

September 13 (P) - Yes, that's correct.

September 14 (DES) - Ok, I think I'm very close to doing this. What do we do next? Am I to describe the characters in more detail or do you have enough info based on prior emails?

September 16 (P) - Are you ready to proceed with the project, or is there anything else that needs to be clarified? Please let me know.

September 16 (DES) - Thanks for your email, Sabina. I am ready to move forward, however, I'm struggling with creative issues. Mainly, my concern is not wanting to decide too much about the characters, Norm & Al. I am fascinated by you developing these characters based on the prior information; that they are somewhat similar and are ordinary. However, I don't want to waste your time by developing concepts only to have me reject them.

I am not your usual customer (although I don't really know what constitutes a usual customer). I am as equally fascinated about the development process as I am the final product. So, I guess my question to you is...if you are willing to do preliminary sketches based on the basic guidance above? If so, I will promise to give much more input once I see those so as to then nail it down.

September 16 (P) - I forgot one thing. Should we create an account for a company name or just your personal name? Please let me know as soon as possible.

September 16 (DES) - Although there will be an eventual business name, One Year in LA, it currently does not exist, so let's stick with "David E. Stone" currently.

September 16 (P) - :) Ok, we can do that. I will inform the billing department of the project, they will create your account and add the specifications. As soon as we receive the deposit from you, and it is confirmed, we will start with the sketches.

September 16 (DES) - A reiteration and slight clarification: Cartoonishly "ordinary" but not overdone.

SOME ACCOUNTING EMAILS ARE EXCHANGED AND THEN ON SEPTEMBER 22, 2003, THESE PRELIMINARY SKETCHES (SEEN TO THE RIGHT) ARE RECEIVED

September 28 (P) - I have sent you a page with the character drafts several days ago, but I haven't heard from you since then. Did you have a look at them? Can you tell me what you thought about them?

September 30 (DES) - I'm so sorry for not having responded sooner...just very busy. I have taken a brief look at them. I promise to get back to you by the end of this week.

October 6 (P) - It's been another week since we talked. Do you think you could give us the feedback for the drafts, so we can continue with the development process?

October 6 (DES) - Yes. I will send you an email later today.

October 6 (DES) - It certainly is a tough job selecting one over any of the others but I think the first one seems to embody the concept of ordinary. So, I'm selecting #1. Thanks for your patience.

October 7 (DES) - I did want to confirm that you (finally...again, my apologies) received my character selection

October 7 (P) - Yes, we have received it! We are working on the "couple" now (the same, yet different :)

October 8 (P) - Here are Norm and Al. What do you think?

October 10 (DES) - I've studied them for a couple of days and I think they are, indeed, "ordinary". Good job. Do you now take them to a final step where you make them look more three-dimensional (like the professor)?

October 10 (P) - Great, I'm glad you like them. We weren't planning on making them look exactly as the professor (style-wise), but if you would like, we can do that. I'll let you know when we have an update for you.

October 10 (DES) - Since they are "ordinary", I think it would emphasize the ordinariness of them to have them look more three dimensional than they are now. But please save these, in case, the 3d images don't work out.

October 10 (P) – Here they are. What do you think?

October 16 (DES) - I think I would like to see more detail in their faces (especially eyes) which will be especially important if I ever crop them to head shot size. Can you work on their faces some more?

October 17 (P) – Did you have a look at the characters? What did you think?

October 21 (DES) - I think we are almost there. Could you send me a large file so I can crop them to full size head shots?

October 21 (P) - I can send you the larger resolution files as soon as the final payment has been confirmed. We can even crop them to head shots for you if you would like, additionally to delivering the full body images. Can you tell me which pair of eyes you liked better?

October 24 (DES) - I am partial to eyes on the guy on the left (is that Norm?). Just curious...what do you think about these two characters?

October 24 (P) - When you say "what do you think about these two characters?", do you mean me, or "us" here? It's a matter of taste (I know saying that doesn't help much), but some prefer the left guy, some prefer the right guy. The left guy looks better when enlarged though. We have tried out one more thing, and I think it makes him (Norm?) a winner. It's a very small, but significant difference (the black outline of the eyes has changed), and you can also see him in a larger view. What do you think?

October 24 (DES) - I like it. Looks like we have a winner.