

~ Made To Be Unique ~

Professional Digital Art and Product Designs for Small Business
With Biblical Standards and a Powerful Presentation



Lesson 3: Graphic Designer Wages

Activity: Image Size and Compression Guide

Have you ever heard the expression, **“Don’t muzzle the ox”**? It’s another important standard in life and in the world of freelance design that I would like to address. What we’re talking about here is strengthening your morale, taking care of your needs, fueling your interest, and even finding energy as you work on professional projects over time. Let’s get down to the nitty-gritty. What it really covers is compensation—being paid for your time, your skill level, and the extra effort in what you produce.

While most believers are very charitable and giving, they too have needs; they all need to eat, drink, have shelter over their heads and pay their bills. So, at some point in time, they have to be compensated for the work they provide. Even Paul addresses the human need for workers to be compensated, whether on the missionary field, at home with the kids, on the job miles away, or even in the living room on the computer doing cool digital art projects (wink). We all need some form of compensation.

Deuteronomy 25:4 (NKJV) - “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.”

1 Corinthians 9:9 (NKJV) - “For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.” Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.”

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Let's keep in mind that this course is directed at the prospect of helping you design products for small business purposes, whether you want to learn how to create products to sell or how to provide graphic design services for hire on an hourly wage basis.

So, what is a graphic designer's typical hourly wage anyway? This is a very complex and flexible answer. While many professional graphic artists are hired for a minimum of \$75 an hour, there are many freelance designers who are commonly paid \$120 an hour on up. Some professionals have successfully found a way to charge stiff rates of \$300 an hour on up. At the same time, there are highly qualified professionals who provide their services for \$10 an hour or less for various reasons of their own. Reasons for lower rates can be charity purposes or investment opportunities in their future; some simply cannot acquire enough projects with a more desirable hourly income. Many times, a lower pay rate is due to an artist's not knowing how to market their skills appropriately or how to even be found in the search engines. Many of these hard-working freelancers become discouraged and lose interest in even trying.

In the future, I will be providing marketing courses to show you just how to let the world know about your talents and/or your custom-designed products. I'll show you how to reach a much broader audience of potential future clients and also how to increase your earning potential and hourly wages! I will include valuable resources on where you can advertise your products and services as well as how to get your designs on actual products for sale at no cost to you. So, keep your eyes open for those helpful marketing classes yet to come!

Quick research activity on graphic designer wages

Don't take my word for it . . . Do some research and find out what others are saying. Google "hourly rate for graphic designer" and see what others are saying about graphic designer pay rates.

Read through several webpages and write down your observations. What is the most common rate you see graphic designers being paid? If someone is sharing how much they get paid, see if you can browse their website and portfolio to get an idea of the quality they provide in their graphic designs. It is healthy to observe the variety of skills others offer and how they market them. Research is always great for setting goals for yourself as you become a quality graphic designer. You're welcome to browse through my website and portfolio for inspiration or ideas as well.

How to find the right rate to charge your clients is to start small and work your way up. Most importantly, gather together a portfolio of projects you've worked on over time, display them in a beautiful website gallery, include as much positive feedback (widely known as testimonials) as you can from clients or people you've worked for. Marketing your work well through strategic search engine optimization and social network marketing will also increase your wages to a more desirable hourly rate. As you build up your portfolio, you'll build up customer confidence to such a degree that you'll have to raise your prices in order to handle the increased demand. So, yes, getting a more desirable higher income is very doable, but it takes a lot of work, planning, and proof!

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My personal experience with digital art when it comes to charity and compensation . . .

I personally love doing charitable project designs and have done this on many occasions over the years, so I certainly encourage you to help freely whenever you can. However, it's also important that you keep your priorities, your needs (or your family's needs), and even your morale in mind. In some cases, consider offering forms of trade or reduced rates when an opportunity arises. Trade is always encouraged as far as I'm concerned, as it boosts morale and gives all people involved dignity and value, including you, the artist.

When trade is not an option, then help where you can, but always consider your priorities and make sure you're not spreading yourself out too thin in your efforts to help others. Again, consider the ox grazing in the field as it works; the compensation gives the ox energy and inspiration to do more and to go farther.

Lesson Activity: Resize and Compress Images

When should you consider "muzzling the ox"? Answer: when posting images online for the sole purpose of earning an income! If you post your largest image sizes online, you'll certainly be giving the grain to some other ox and potentially kill your morale and earning potential dramatically. That is unless your intentions are to share your full-size photos and digital artwork freely in the public domain. So, let's practice reducing your image size and resolution. You can use the video as a guide or the pictures and information below to help walk you through.

[\(See Video Tutorial\)](#)

The following is a text and image walk-through (similar to the video tutorial):

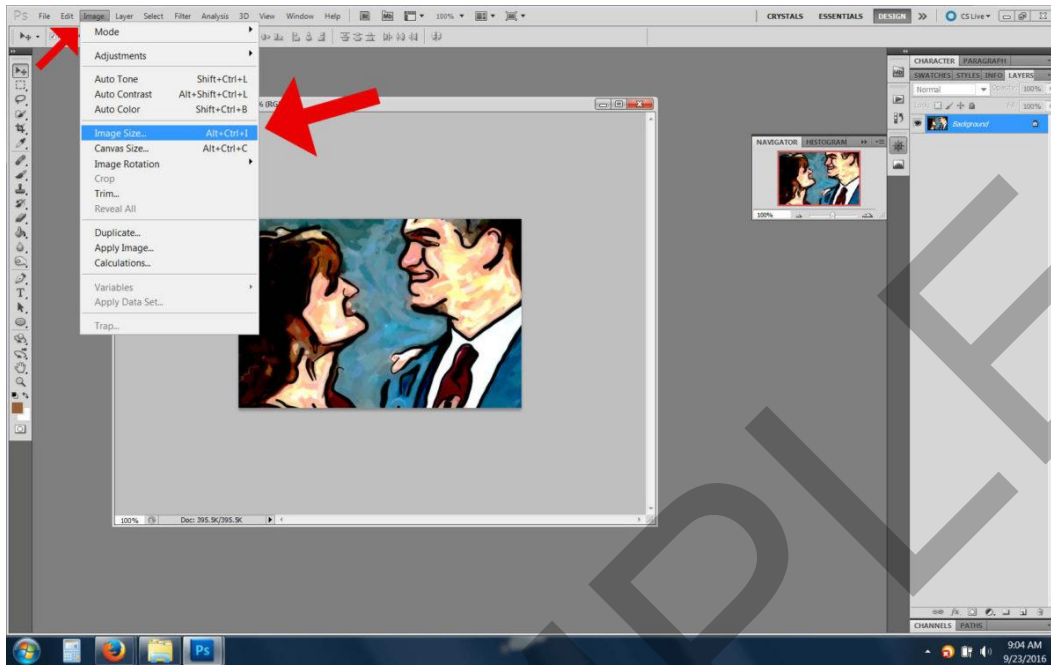
How to reduce your image size and compress it

Many photo-editing software tools have similar functions to Photoshop. Give it a try and see if you can reduce the image size easily with the photo-editing software you currently have on hand.

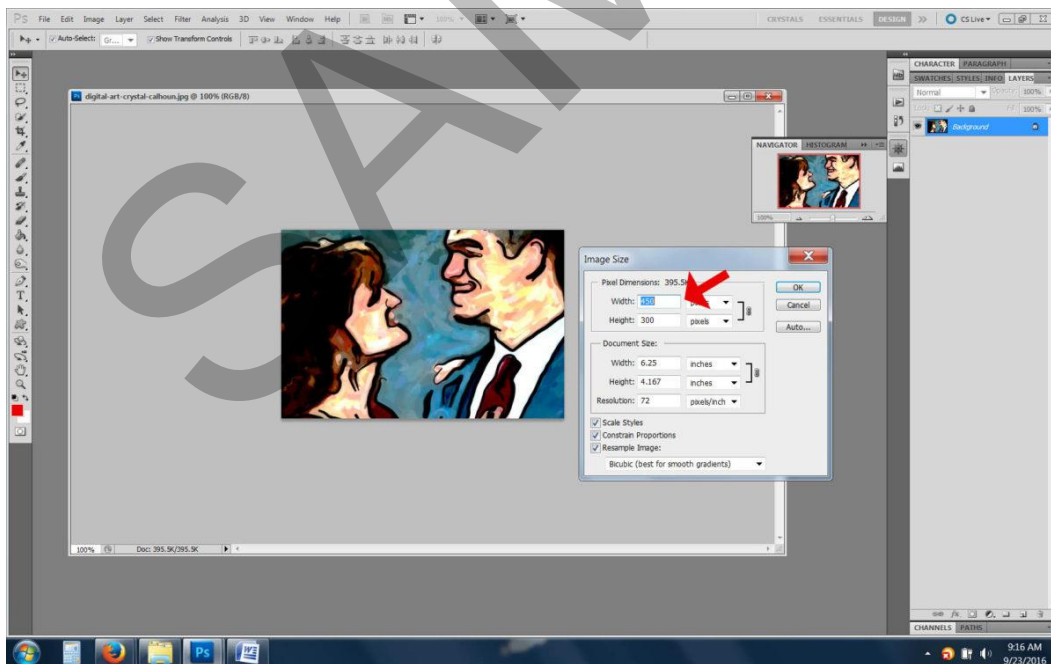
First click **Image** (because you're going to edit the whole image)
Then select **Image Size**

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Now you can change the height and width at the same time. Notice I have 450 pixels. I'll just type in 100 pixels and then click "Okay," and it will resize the picture for me, adjusting both height and width equally.



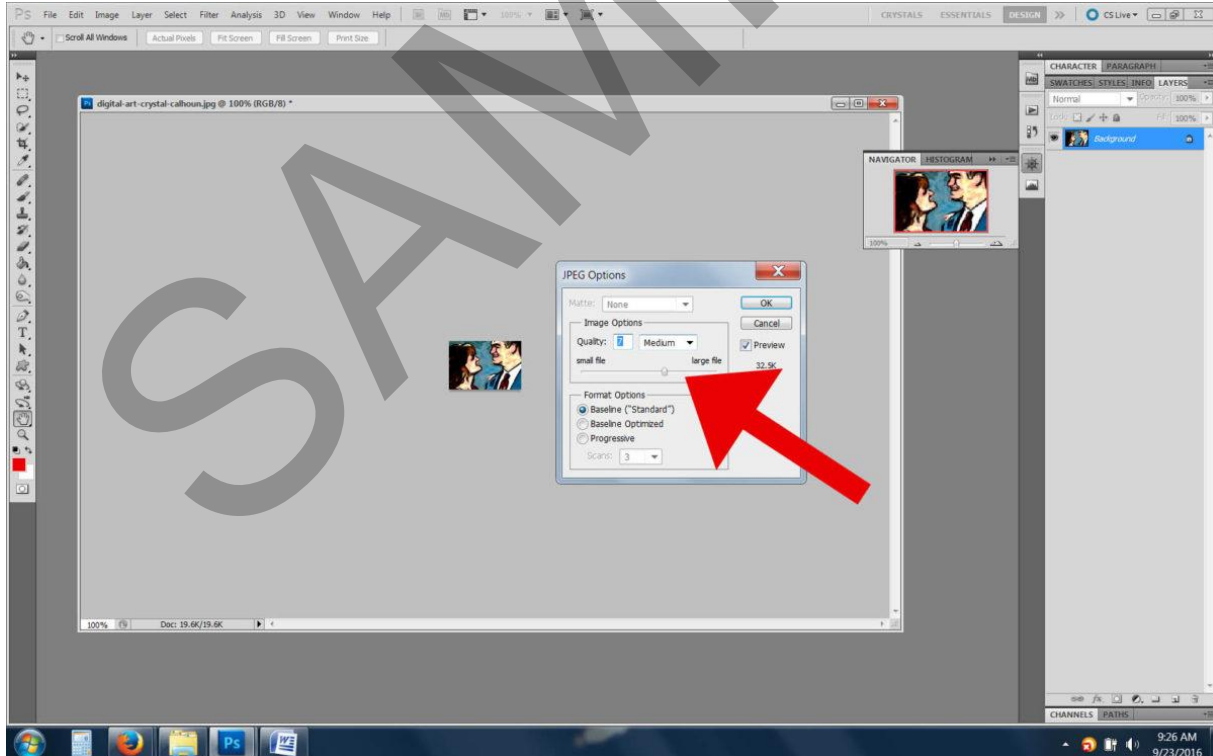
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Strongly consider giving it another name when you save your work so you do not lose the awesome freedom that having a large photo brings. Large uncropped and unedited photos are the best to keep on file in case you have a future plan or use for them . . . whether in print or for online use.

So, let's save the image and reduce the file size so it's a smaller and compressed image.

- Under the File tab click "Save As."
- Give your newly sized image a new name. You can have the same name and just add the image size to the end of it if you like. For example, here I might call my image "digital-art-crystal-calhoun-100.jpg" (these strong keywords will help me find my images later on when I need them).
- Next, reduce the image size as you see in the picture below. You have the option in Photoshop to change the quality by low, medium, high, maximum. Or you can move the bar below and get the desired file size there instead. I usually use the bar and look at the image size to the right (see the file size under the Preview check box? That's what I keep my eye on. It's good to have the image as low as possible without messing up the quality. Sometimes it doesn't really matter how fuzzy an image is, so a much lower quality is just fine. Other times like in a website homepage image, you want to have a higher quality image AND have it somewhat compressed. What I do in that case is usually use about a high-quality #8.



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Play around with the file size and quality until you get the desired results. Once you become familiar with the process of editing image sizes, you'll find it a *really* fast process.

Activity Challenge: Find a large photo you would like to share with others and reduce it first. Follow the instructions above. Keep in mind the finished, resized photo needs to be a clear picture, large enough for people to see and understand *but* at the same time not too big. Personally, I think anything over 1MB is getting too large to share in an email to your friends and family. After you've resized and compressed your image, send your photo off, share it with a friend or family by email or on your website if you have one. And then ask them if they liked the size you made the image to be. Ask if they thought the file was too large, making it a long download or too large to view in the monitor window. Many companies will use a width of **750 pixels wide x 600 pixels high** in their **newsletters**. So, it's a size worth trying out.

The best way to get better at anything, including photo editing, is by simply trying, sharing, and getting feedback from others on how you're doing. Be willing to take constructive criticism from others without getting your feelings hurt. This can be hard sometimes, but it will ensure you become the best in whatever you do.

Daily Activity Challenge: Every day for the following week, choose a new image and resize it to the following three different sizes. These sizes are widely used in online marketing, so it's good for you to become familiar with their sizes now while you're learning this new skill.

1000 x 1000 pixels
750 x 600 pixels
300 x 250 pixels

Be sure to change the name of the file for each size. For example, if your image name is: "boy-hugs-dog.jpg," then consider giving it the following file names:

banner-boy-hugs-dog-1000x1000.jpg
banner-boy-hugs-dog-750x600.jpg
banner-boy-hugs-dog-300x250.jpg

Feel free to join our new Made To Be Unique [Facebook group](#) and consider sharing some of your work and progress with others there.

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Please email me if you have any questions, or if you enjoy my class. It helps me produce more classes like this and even help me perfect them as I chug along putting them together for you.



Stay tuned for future courses on marketing, SEO and web design, helpful for aspiring entrepreneurs and those learning to be professional digital artists and graphic designers.

Blessings!

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