

In Tough Economy, New Survey Shows Design Professionals Use More Stock Photography to Cut Costs

June 9, 2009 5:32 AM ET

Over 40 percent say they are using more stock photos this year compared to last year, according the survey by International Communications Research, sponsored by Shutterstock

New York, June 9, 2009 –

In an economic climate where graphic designers are often asked to produce more with fewer resources, a new survey by International Communications Research (ICR) shows that over 40 percent of designers are using more stock photography to lower costs in 2009 compared to last year.

Designers today have responded to the economic downturn in a myriad of ways, according to Ami Brophy, CEO of The Art Directors Club in New York, a top organization for art directors and designers in the U.S.

“Increasingly, designers report taking on more concurrent projects while expanding their organizational and project management skills with greater awareness for the bottom line,” Brophy said.

The ICR survey showed that many designers found using stock photos an effective way to save money in the face of greater economic pressure. Further, when considering stock photo vendors, most looked for the best deal due to tighter budgets.

Shutterstock, the world’s largest subscription-based online stock image agency, ranked highly in many key areas. Approximately 60 percent rated Shutterstock highly for quality and selection of images, and three-fourths said they are likely to use Shutterstock in the future.

“It has always been our goal to provide the best images at the best value,” said Jon Oringer, founder and CEO of Shutterstock. “The advertising and design community can rely on us for their image needs to maintain the high level of design their clients expect.”

Adam Riggs, Shutterstock president and CFO, points out that Shutterstock’s image library continues to grow despite the economic downturn, adding an average of 70,000 images per week.

“Thanks to Shutterstock’s extensive library of over 7 million premium images, our subscribers always know that they’ll be able to find the perfect photo, vector or illustration for their creative projects,” Riggs said.

Key Survey Statistics at a Glance:

- Two in five art directors (40 percent) cite budget decreases compared to a year ago.
- More than one in five art directors and graphic designers (22 percent) are working on more projects for less profit compared to a year ago.
- Two-thirds (67 percent) of graphic designers/art directors are doing more in-house production as a cost-saving measure. Other cost-saving measures include using online royalty-free stock photography agencies (51 percent) and using traditional stock photography agencies (18 percent).
- 21 percent of graphic artists said they plan to use subscription-based agencies as the primary source of their future stock photo needs. Those more likely to use subscription-based agencies include heavier users of images (27 percent) and those who work at companies with 10 or more employees (31 percent).
- When asked what most influences their decision to use online subscription-based royalty-free stock photography, most respondents answered limited budget (80 percent). Other top reasons included:
 - To combine elements into a new design (41 percent)
 - Using images for an indefinite period of time (40 percent)
 - Using images in a combination of communications mediums (37 percent)
- At least nine in ten respondents gave a top rating for quality of images (95 percent) and large selection of images (90 percent) when asked to rate the importance of various attributes in selecting a stock photo company on a seven-point scale.
- Three-fourths of those likely to use subscription-based agencies are likely to use Shutterstock in the future. One-fourth of those surveyed (26 percent) are extremely/very likely and half (51 percent) are somewhat likely to use Shutterstock.

Survey Methodology:

International Communications Research (ICR) surveyed 300 professionals (120 Art Directors and 180 Graphic Designers) by using a targeted web panel of 300 respondents. In order to qualify for the survey, respondents had to be employed either part or full-time in the United States and be at least aware of stock photography. Awareness of stock photography was 93% and the survey ran 10 minutes on average.

Because this is a sample, and not an actual population, an associated margin of error applies. At the 95% confidence level, the margin of error for the total sample of 300 is +/-5.7 percentage points.

About Shutterstock

Shutterstock is a leading global provider of high-quality licensed photographs, vectors, illustrations and videos to businesses, marketing agencies and media organizations around the world.

Shutterstock works closely with its growing contributor community of photographers, videographers, illustrators and designers to curate a global marketplace for royalty-free imagery. Shutterstock adds tens of thousands of rights-cleared images each week, and with more than 19 million images currently available, the company recently celebrated its 200-millionth image download.

Headquartered in New York City, Shutterstock also owns Bigstock, a value-oriented stock agency that offers both credit and simple Pay As You Go purchase options.

For more information, please visit <http://www.shutterstock.com/>, and follow Shutterstock on [Twitter](#) or on [Facebook](#).

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