Streamline the Design Process ~

Creative thinking is exemplified by its tendency to be frivolous—liberated from structure, regulation and formality. Yet the term "low budget" is often associated with adjectives such as discounted, unattractive or inferior.

Moreover, common belief suggests that whichever product or service bears the highest asking price is de facto of superior aesthetic and functional quality. We view it as an unfortunate misconception. Therefore, limited funding is by no means a valid excuse to deliver efforts and results of lesser quality.

Although we're not suggesting you limit or neglect efforts put into the creative process, it is evident that we need to systematize adjacent issues in order to remain productive and profitable. This section looks at how we keep our design process streamlined, within budget and on time.

Setting Expectations

It is essential to have clients agree in writing to a simplified or limited design stage, specifically, one design, with a limited number of revisions and approval cycles. We are aware of the "golden rule of three", a widespread practice that offers clients three compositions to choose from; we use it ourselves on many projects. Nevertheless we have come to the conclusion that this method is unfortunately not a viable or efficient option in relation to low budget projects. Moreover, we have found that most clients are not opposed to these limitations, rather they trust our judgement, ability and experience and are conscious of some

Tip from the Trenches: Project Management

We use a project management tool that allows clients restricted access to their account and project information. In doing so we offer them the chance to get involved (through comments and discussion) and follow the project's progress more closely. This gives the project a more personalized feel for the client, while requiring minimum effort or customization on our part.

If you don't already use a system like this, take a look at options such as **Basecamp** by 37 Signals (web-based, hosted) or **Copper** by Element (web-based, stand-alone), which are both affordable and useful.

necessary trade-offs.

As mentioned earlier it is important to commu-