

## DBA 2009 Charge-Out Rates and Salary Level Report released to DBA members

The Design Business Association has released the results of its membership survey on charge-out rates and salary levels within the design industry, which was produced in conjunction with Kingston Smith W1.

This year the survey shows that DBA members have been affected by the economic climate and have decreased charge-out rates for senior staff at the same time as cutting staff benefits and limiting any pay increases.

Despite senior staff reducing their rates, the average rate at which direct staff are charged to clients has increased this year by 4% to £104 per hour. The packaging sector leads the way with the highest overall rates and salaries, while POS and exhibition designers are both the lowest paid and charge the lowest rates.

The average utilisation rate, measuring the percentage of staff time billed on to clients, has increased by 8% this year to 71%. This is a good performance given the current economic climate and possibly reflects reduced staff numbers, as well as increased pressure from clients for consultancies to deliver more value for money.

Deborah Dawton of the DBA said: "It is encouraging that our members are paying attention to their utilisation rates during such challenging times. Design businesses always have to keep an eye on how much time is spent on a job to ensure that it is profitable."

Dawton continued: "Design businesses have to be careful about reducing their rates too much for senior staff. It can be a useful strategy for getting work in, but you run the risk of annoying clients if you then try to recover revenue because of extra time spent by your junior team. And, of course, you have to look at ways to increase your rates again once the situation starts to improve."

### Key findings

- The average utilisation rate, measuring the percentage of staff time billed on to clients, has increased by 8% this year to 71%.
- The average rate at which direct staff are charged to clients has increased this year by 4% to £104 per hour.
- The packaging sector leads the way with the highest overall rates and salaries.
- We have noted a steep decline in the range of benefits on offer to staff. The average cost of benefits on offer has decreased significantly to £625 from £928.

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