

# The Policy on Free Pitching

## Recommended by BEDA

(based on ICOGRADA Best practice paper)

### Defining speculative practices / free pitching

'Speculative practices' for our purposes are defined as: design work (including documented consultation), created by professional designers and organisations, provided for free or at nominal fee, often in competition with peers and often as a means to solicit new business. In harmony with BEDA's *Model code of professional conduct for designers*, BEDA recommends that all professional designers avoid engaging in such practices.

We know that this position is in the best interest of both designers and their clients because neither designers nor their clients benefit from this practice. **Speculative Calls for Proposals are exploitive because they demand work without guarantee of compensation.** When work is done on a speculative basis, designers are unlikely to conduct the research and analysis needed to produce the best result because they have no guarantee of remuneration. This undermines the tenant that professional communication designers act as consultants, partners or members of a client's strategic communications team.

### Running Calls for Proposals that avoid speculative practices

The most effective and economical method of resolving a design problem is to engage the services of an appropriately qualified and experienced designer, design team or design company and to collaborate closely throughout the design process. A recommended approach to evaluate competing designers is to request samples of work from previous assignments that are similar in nature to the project for which you require design services. After this review, if initial concept work is necessary to make a final selection, full fees should be paid to each designer asked for submissions.

### Special considerations include:

**Limited Calls for Proposals** If you want to limit the *Call for Proposals* to a finite list of designers, the complete list of invitees should be disclosed to all those invited to submit proposals.

**Open Calls for Proposals** If you do not want to limit the *Call for Proposals* to a finite list of designers, the solicitation should nonetheless be limited to professional designers and design students.

***Calls for Proposals from students*** If you want to limit the *Call for Proposals* to students of communication design, you must define the learning outcome of the assignment. It is not appropriate to publish a *Call for Proposals* for communication design work that is limited to students simply for budget considerations.

***Public Calls for Proposals*** A public call (one in which you are also inviting people who are neither professional communication designers nor communication design students to respond) must be limited in scope to thematic ideas that might guide a design assignment.

***Requests for Creative Content*** If you are certain you require a presentation of creative ideas from those responding to a *Call for Proposals*, limit the Call to a predetermined list of firms and pay a fee to each competitor. The amount should be equivalent to what a reasonable design fee and expenses would be for a similar project under normal circumstances.