

Outsourcing vs. Subscription

WHERE TO FIND THE GRAPHIC DESIGN
FOR YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS

manypixels



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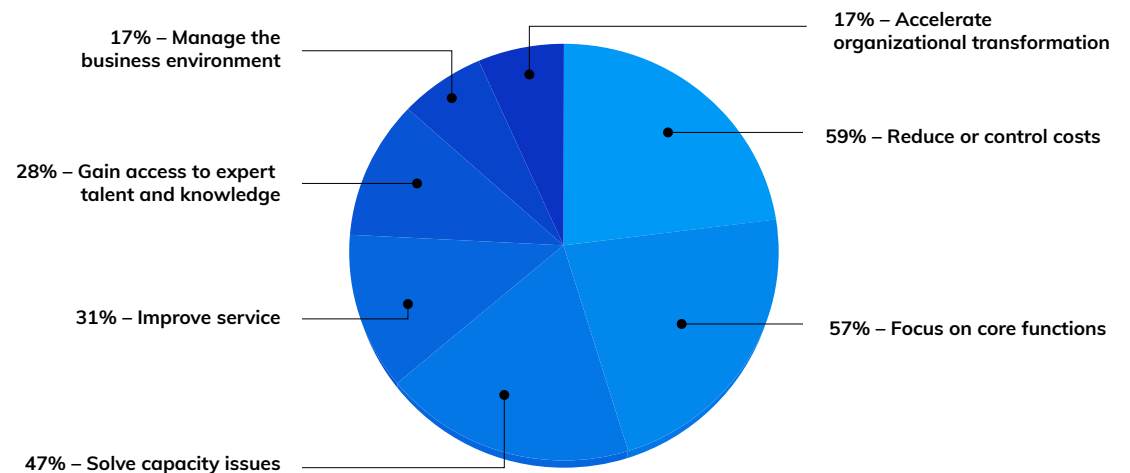
A brief overview of each platform's
characteristics



INTRODUCTION

Outsourcing graphic design is often met with unexpected complications and concerns. First of all, it may seem like an unnecessary expense if you already have a full-time designer; and communication immediately becomes more challenging if you don't have the right terminology knowledge, or aren't in the same time zone as your designer. But most importantly, it's the uncertainty regarding quality that can permanently put many businesses off the idea.

And yet, outsourcing is also one of the most effective ways to grow your business: a survey from 2004 suggested 90% of businesses cited outsourcing as crucial to their growth strategy.¹ As for the reasons why businesses outsource, Deloitte's 2016 Survey,² lists the following top reasons.



Today, we're looking at two ways to outsource your graphic design needs: over popular freelancing platforms Upwork and Fivver in one corner, and a subscription-based model offered by ManyPixels.

Chapter 1:

UPWORK

How to hire a freelancer on Upwork?



Upwork is probably the best known outsourcing platform that has been around since 2003 (when it was called oDesk). They boast a staggering 10,000 new applicants every day, so you can rest assured that whatever the job is, you're likely to have a vast talent pool to choose from.

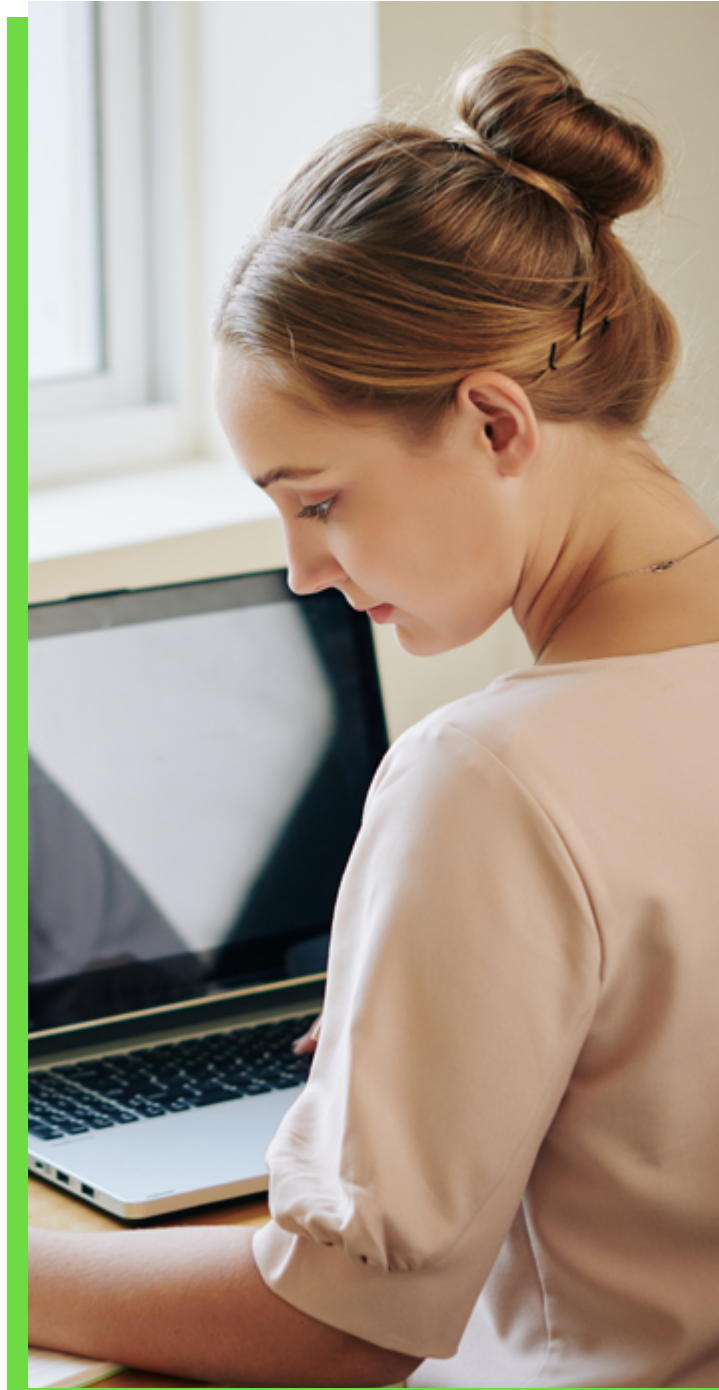
Hiring on Upwork is pretty simple: you make a post in which you describe the job and what skill set is needed from the freelancer. You'll then get matched to the top freelancers that suit your job description best. You can either review the profiles and send invites to profiles that you feel are good for the job, or wait for bids from freelancers.

Of course, it's important to check out the designer's portfolio, but another way which

Upwork helps you hire the best freelancers is the Job Success Score (JSS) rating. Individuals with a very high job success rate have a badge on their profile. They get the badge by having a job success rate of over 90%, and annual earnings of at least \$1000.

Another badge that helps you seek the right freelancers is called Rising Talent. Upwork assigns it to a freelancer that it deems to have excellent potential based on the information on their profile, including any work they've done in the past outside Upwork. Freelancers also complete skills tests that prove their proficiency in certain areas.

In addition to that, you might consider these 6 tips on how to hire the best freelancers:





Tips for Hiring Freelancers on Upwork



Give them a test task

You get proof of what their resume and cover letter say



Write detailed job descriptions

Higher chances of finding a freelancer whose skills are a perfect match + include a code in the JD to make sure applicants have read them thoroughly



Do a quick interview

Discuss the project in detail and see if their personality matches your needs and expectations



Read the cover letter thoroughly

Additional proof of experience, professionalism and attention to detail



Take a look at the Job Success Score

Remember that it's measured by more than the customers' feedback; it reflects long-term relationships, public and private feedback and high-value jobs



Weed out those who apply for every job

Either they don't have the experience, are scammers or are just looking to move up the ranks quickly

Tracking work on Upwork

Upwork has an external software called Work Diary, which the freelancer downloads and runs every time they're working. It can track how many hours of work are done effectively, through monitoring the total number of mouse clicks, scroll actions, and keystrokes per segment. It also takes a screenshot of the freelancer's screen every 10 minutes.

This way you have a detailed overview of how much has been done and pay the individual for the exact number of effective work hours. This is a good way to avoid disputes and it's mostly used for transparency reasons, but both sides must agree to it during the contract negotiations.

Some jobs encapsulate offline work or Manual Time, and you can agree to add it to the work

with the freelancer. That is why the Work Diary also has different types of billing segments connected to this. They are color-coded inside the Work Diary and can be:

- **Green** – Time that is tracked automatically
- **Yellow** – Manual Time
- **Red** – Time that is over the weekly limit

If the freelancer goes over the weekly limit, they should discuss the proper course of action with the client.

Upwork Pricing

Upwork offers a few packages, out of which only one (Upwork Basic Plan) is free.

With the Upwork Basic Plan, you only pay the rate you agree upon with a freelancer you hire and a processing fee of 3% per project.

The second, costlier plan is Upwork Plus, which costs \$49.99 a month. You get the same services as the Basic Plan, as well as assistance in talent sourcing, premium customer support and a dedicated Account Manager.

This is the perfect option if you're a small-to-medium company.

The most expensive plan is Upwork Business, with quite a higher price of \$849 a month. This option is perfect for companies that almost completely rely on hiring through the platform. With this plan, you get help with

HR and Payroll needs, administration and legal matters, plus all of the benefits of the Upwork Plus plan. It charges a 10% service fee on all payments you process to freelancers.

For companies who need a different approach than the one-size-fits-all, there is Upwork Enterprise. It's essentially a completely customizable plan with costs varying in line with the plan itself. It is fairly popular with companies like Airbnb and Microsoft.

The fees a freelancer charges on Upwork are a minimum of \$3 an hour, or \$5 per project. Still, most freelancers have an hourly rate, and for graphic design they vary between \$20 and \$120, with an average of \$45 per hour.³

3 TYPES OF FREELANCERS TO AVOID ON UPWORK



- ♦ **Fake accounts using stock photos or identity theft**
- ♦ **Freelancers that demand an alternative payment method.**
- ♦ **Star rating is high but Job Success score is low**

Upwork scams

When it comes to scammers, Upwork does have a rather rigorous vetting process as well as a dispute resolution system which can work well to compensate you in case you've been scammed. However, this doesn't mean it's scam-free.

While Upwork has moved to a rather efficient system of vetting freelancers, it's important to remember that it has been around for over 15 years, which means some scammer profiles might still be active from a while ago.

Here are 3 ways to spot a profile that might belong to a scammer:

1. Profiles without a photo or one that looks like stock photography; some of these might be a result of identity theft so always do a quick Google search of the person and look up LinkedIn or other social media profiles.
2. If a freelancer asks for alternative payment methods due to issues with Upwork's system, kindly suggest they contact customer support; never send money directly or upfront.
3. Job Success Score depends on a majority of factors including feedback that isn't visible (e.g. when a client cancels a job they cannot leave feedback); read through to see if the feedback looks genuine.

Chapter 2:

FIVERR

How to hire a freelancer on Fiverr



As opposed to Upwork, Fiverr doesn't let people apply for your freelancing job, but rather allows employers (or buyers as they are called on this platform) to hire freelancers for the job they need. As a buyer, this puts you in the driver's seat and you can be in absolute control over who you hire.

Your job posting will be visible to the sellers, who also have short and precise descriptions of their gig (e.g., I will create captivating social media graphic design for you). You can see how much each freelancer will cost you, and decide on criteria such as their star rating or tier.

But before you can hire freelancers, you have to choose which one fits you best. Fiverr has great filters, which you can narrow down to find exactly what you need. Apart from searching by category, you can also filter by language, price, delivery time, location, age, and more. There are 12 categories of jobs, and each of them has subcategories.

Another important feature to help you choose the right freelancer is the Fiverr level system. Each freelancer (or seller) on Fiverr fits into one of the levels, and each shows the level of experience a seller has on the platform. Here's an overview of what each Fiverr level means and which one might be the best choice for you.





Tips for Hiring Freelancers on Fiverr

NEW SELLER

Requirements	Good for
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New on the platform • Probably has a smaller fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing Fiverr • Testing with small and inexpensive tasks

LEVEL ONE

Requirements	Good for
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active on Fiverr for at least 2 months • Minimum 4.7 star rating • Responsive & timely delivery • No warnings or disputes in the 2 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less expensive, but proven good workers • Budget-friendly option for longer projects (video editing, social media designs etc.)

LEVEL TWO

Requirements	Good for
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active on Fiverr for at least 4 months • More than 50 completed orders • Minimum 4.7 star rating • Responsive & timely delivery • No warnings or disputes in the 2 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More complex projects where you can't afford mistakes (mobile app design, large print designs)

TOP RATED SELLER

Requirements	Good for
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active on Fiverr for at least 6 months • More than 100 completed orders • Minimum 4.7 star rating • Responsive & timely delivery • No warnings or disputes in the 2 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-off big projects (logo design, branding, website design...)

Tracking work on Fiverr

Fiverr doesn't have its own equivalent of Work Diary, so tracking work can be a bit difficult. You can opt to use an external work tracking platform, but you'll have to agree on this with your freelancer of choice.

Like Upwork, Fiverr advises its users to keep all information on the platform (in case of dispute management), however this can be difficult when the work is tracked somewhere else. Whether you use daily reports on a software like Slack or ask for daily email updates, over a long project this might turn out to be an administrative nightmare that's hard to comb through even without a potential dispute arising.

Fiverr pricing

Comparing the two freelancing platforms, it's clear to see that Fiverr is the cheaper option in terms of administrative costs, which is why it's a favorite for small and cheap jobs. There are no different plans or prices; a gig that is up to \$20 only has a \$1 processing fee. If the price exceeds the \$20 mark, Fiverr will only charge you 5% of the total amount.

There is also a special category: Fiverr Pro Seller. If a freelancer on Fiverr has an exceptional offer that he'd like to put as a separate, highly sought out gig, they are part of Fiverr Pro. It's a category of handpicked and vetted freelancers, and not everyone can join this specialized program.

During the vetting, Fiverr is checking the sellers' professional background, higher education, portfolio of previous work, examples of notable projects, etc. while a regular Fiverr gig starts at \$5, the minimum for Fiverr Pro sellers is \$100.

In general, you can expect to pay between \$100 and \$3000 for a graphic design gig on Fiverr.⁴

3 TYPES OF GIGS TO AVOID ON FIVERR



- ◆ Sounds too good to be true
- ◆ Generic photos or gig description
- ◆ Delivery time and results aren't what you expected

Fiverr scams

Fiverr is a great platform for small, inexpensive gigs and you might not think much about splurging \$5 which you may not get back. But, if you have a bigger job to be done that's both a bigger financial investment of more value for your business, getting scammed can become a real challenge.

So, apart from obvious ones like wiring money upfront and negative reviews, here are a few more tips on how to spot scams:

1. Too good to be true: because the vetting process isn't as rigorous as Upwork, you might come across a gig that either promises results which are hardly attainable, or realis-

tic results at an extremely low price. Either of these could signal a potential scam.

2. Generic gigs: if the description of a gig sounds like a copy/paste or is riddled with spelling mistakes it might not be a real gig at all.
3. Delivery time and results aren't what you expected; this is common with gigs related to boosting SEO traffic or social media followers (often you get a boost in numbers but thanks to bots not real people). The best way to avoid is to figure out if you might do this more efficiently yourself.

Chapter 3:

ON-DEMAND GRAPHIC DESIGN WITH MANYPIXELS

How to get graphic design on ManyPixels

manypixels

ManyPixels' subscription based model means that you spend no time at all on HR hours and searching for the perfect freelancer. Signing up for our on-demand service means getting the best graphic design talent for every type of job you have.

Another useful feature of our model is that everything happens

in one place: our custom platform. You use it to register your account and sign up, manage your subscription and make design requests. The design process and communication with your designer is also done exclusively through the ManyPixels platform, which means you can track the work and access it anytime.



How to get graphic design with ManyPixels



Sign up, fill in your company and billing details



Make your first design request and we assign a designer with the best skill set



Communicate directly with your designated designer and make as many revisions as you want



Download the finished design and source files directly from the platform

ManyPixels pricing

We operate through a flat-rate model which means that you are paying the same price every month, regardless of the number of tasks or revisions you make for each individual project. This means that you can create a long-term financial plan and always know exactly what you're paying for graphic design. These plans are available with ManyPixels:

- **Basic:** \$499 per month
- **Premium:** \$549 per month
- **Business:** \$899 per month

The difference between the three plans lies in what type of design is offered. You can check the run-down on the next page.

Another good thing about our model is that it's very flexible: you can always scale up or down as you go. Switch to a more expensive package for a month if you need it for a specific project, and then scale down and save up in the next month!

Additionally, all our plans are backed by a 14-days money back guarantee. Instead of coming up with a trial task, give our on-demand service a trial run for two weeks and then decide if this model is a good fit for your business.



Essentials

Create all your everyday designs. Best for small businesses & solo entrepreneurs

\$449/mo

- Unlimited Requests
- Unlimited Revisions
- Unlimited Brands
- Free Stock Assets
- Native Source Files
- 1 Daily Output



Advanced

Create more advanced designs. Best for startups & marketing teams.

\$549/mo

- Custom Illustration
- Web Designs
- 2-3 sec GIFs
- Logos & Branding
- PPT & Google Slides Deck



Business

Get double the output everyday. Best for agencies & medium to large businesses.

\$899/mo

- 2 Daily Output
- Prioritized Support

Tracking work on ManyPixels

We will always give you initial feedback in 24 hours, and the first results for most requests can be expected within 1-2 business days. You're free to contact your designer at any time and request revisions or ask about their progress.

An additional feature of our platform is the "Ask for help" button which connects you to a designated project manager. Let them know you're unsure about why a certain task is taking longer, or how to make the most out of your subscription.

Of course, there are several factors that might influence the timeframe in which you can expect a

completed project like complexity and quality of your design brief.

However, this is a rough estimate of what you can expect from one of our designers on a daily basis (within an 8-hour working day):

- 2-3 social media graphics
- or 1-2 custom illustrations (more if they are not too complex)
- or 2-3 display ads
- or 4-5 pages of a brochure, e-book, report or slide deck
- or 1 GIF (2-3 sec)
- or 1-2 flyers
- or 1 logo
- or the first draft of a landing page

Of course additional revisions will impact the quantity of the daily output, but the good thing about a subscription model is that you never have to pay extra for any revisions you want done. Whether it's a major change or a slight tweak on a project completed months ago, you can always change anything you're not 100% happy with.

What risks are there working with ManyPixels?

Well, the short answer is: **none!** Both of our plans are backed by a 14 days money-back guarantee, so you can always put us to a test and see if things work out.

In addition to that, it's important that we have our own internal system of vetting new designers that join the team. We get a lot of applicants for designer jobs, but only hire the top 1%. We choose designers based on their skills as well as specific expertise in a certain area of design.




This allows us to assign the top professional for each type of design you request, whether it's illustrations, web or logo design.

Chapter 4:

COMPARING THE RESULTS

Now that we've examined the main characteristics of three different options for outsourcing graphic design, let's compare the results.

For Fiverr and Upwork the annual cost is calculated as hourly rate x 60 hours per month (which is still considerably lower than having a dedicated designer every day).

			
PRICING (annually)	\$32,400	\$18,600	\$4800 - \$6600
EASE OF USE	You can post a job and also invite freelancers to apply. Check the Job Success Score and evidence of previous work.	It's up to you to find a freelancer that matches your needs. Filters and Level System helps you find more experienced sellers.	Easily manage your design requests through our custom platform. No need to search for freelancers: we match you with one that best fits your needs.
TRACKING WORK	Work diary, app for tracking work allows you to monitor daily output	No integrated platform for tracking work; you have to use third party software	We provide a list of daily output results that you can expect from our designers.
SECURITY AND VETTING PROCESS	Good vetting system, small risk of scams	Level system provides some guidance but generally not the most comprehensive vetting system	No risk; 14 days money-back guarantee.



CONCLUSION

You might be wondering that after the costs and time of hiring someone outside, it might just be easier to get an in-house designer for your business. Well, that's a good point.

But, the good news is that it's not an either-or situation. The great thing about outsourcing is that you can make it as much of a long- or short term solution as you like. If you opt for an outsourcing model with an hourly charge (or per project), it should be easy for you to assess what it might cost you.

So, if you're looking for a one-off project, an outsourcing platform like Upwork or Fiverr could be an inexpensive and amazing solution to get work done.

But remember that graphic

design is an intrinsic part of your business. Instead of thinking "What if I don't like the work done by an outsider?", it's even more important to consider the scenario where you love it. If you're looking for outsourcing as a long-term solution, working with a freelancer on a month-by-month basis can turn out to be a whole lot more expensive than hiring an in-house employee.

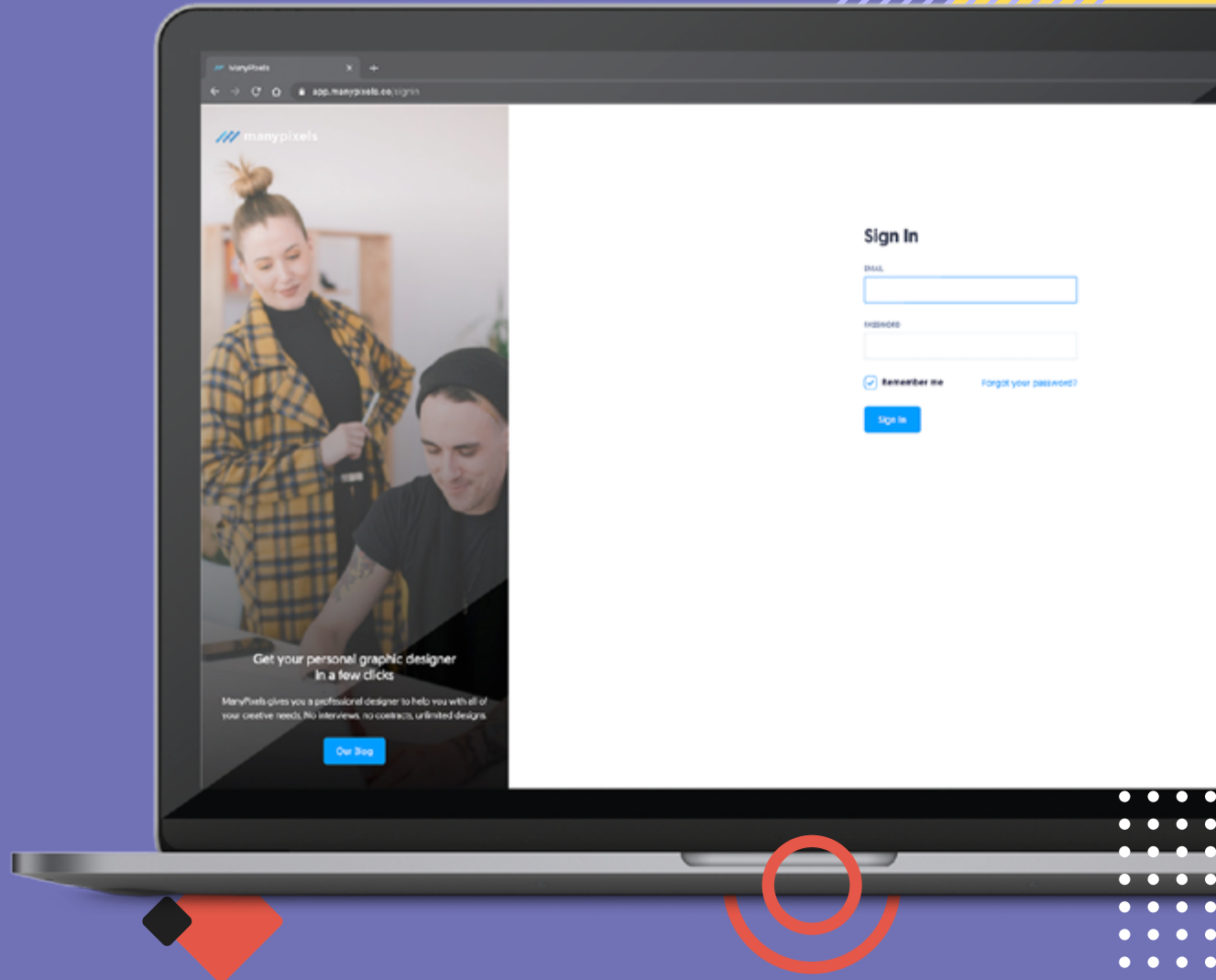
That's why a subscription model can offer the best of both worlds: the reliability and cost-friendliness of a full-time hire (actually, depending on your place of residence probably a lot cheaper than a full-time salary) and administrative ease and "no commitments" model of working with a freelancer.

LET'S DESIGN TOGETHER

If you think a subscription-based model is the right fit for your business' graphic design needs, feel free to try out our own on-demand design service.

Work with our team of high-quality designers to create an unlimited number of all sorts of graphics you need. Welcome to the ManyPixels family!

Schedule a Demo



END NOTES

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