

— INDUSTRY REPORT · AUGUST 2026

What branding actually costs in 2026.

A pricing transparency audit of 20 branding studios across the US, Western Europe and Poland. Every figure here is traceable to where we found it. Where that source is second-hand, we say so.

3/20

studios publish prices

1/20

publishes a price for a branding
project

4

figures with no primary source, all
flagged

Four layers of evidence. Each one labelled.

Pricing figures in this industry circulate without attribution. We applied the opposite rule: a figure enters this report only if you can click through to its source. So we split the data into layers of differing evidential weight and labelled each one.

Layer 1 · hard

Published studio prices

Figures taken straight from studio websites on 12 August 2026. Verifiable: open the link. These are the only numbers we call prices.

Layer 2 · hard

Audit of price disclosure

We mapped the structure of 20 websites and checked whether any page carries prices, packages or rates. The result is binary, and you can check it yourself.

Layer 3 · secondary

Widely cited contract fees

Fees for famous rebrands, repeated across many publications but with no primary source. We give them as a sense of scale, never as a price list, and we say what each one actually covered.

Layer 4 · self-reported

Amounts buyers stated publicly

Comments from founders and business owners in public forums. Unverified and unrepresentative, so we calculate no averages or medians from them. We treat them only as a signal of what a smaller buyer really pays.

What this report does not contain

We ran no survey of our own, so we quote no "average cost of branding". Every such figure in circulation is an average of an undisclosed sample and cannot be verified. We would rather publish a range with sources attached than one convenient number with nothing behind it.

Seventeen of twenty studios publish **no price at all**.

We searched the sites of twenty branding studios across three markets, looking for anything at all: a price list, packages, a range, an hourly rate, even a single "from". Three studios publish something. The other seventeen send you to a contact form.

STUDIO	MARKET	PRICES PUBLISHED	AUDITED 12 AUG 2026
DesignJoy	USA	yes	designjoy.co
Superside	USA / global	yes	superside.com/pricing
Ramotion	USA	yes	ramotion.com/startup-packages
Pentagram	USA / UK	no	pentagram.com
&Walsh	USA	no	andwalsh.com
Athletics	USA	no	athleticsnyc.com
Gretel	USA	no	gretelny.com
Focus Lab	USA	no	focuslab.agency
Koto	UK	no	koto.studio
Manual	UK / USA	no	manualcreative.com
Bond	Finland	no	bond-agency.com
Edenspiekermann	Germany / NL	no	edenspiekermann.com
Studio Dumbar	Netherlands	no	studiodumbar.com
Build in Amsterdam	Netherlands	no	buildinamsterdam.com
Mucho	Spain / global	no	wearemucho.com
Bolder	Europe	no	bolder.co
Mamastudio	Poland	no	mamastudio.pl
PODPUNKT	Poland	no	podpunkt.pl
Uniforma	Poland	no	uniforma.pl
10Clouds	Poland	no	10clouds.com

What this means for the buyer

A missing price is not an oversight. It is a negotiating position: the buyer names a budget first, the seller prices against it. The consequence is that two companies with similar needs can pay the same studio wildly different amounts. Without a reference point, you cannot tell whether a quote is fair.

Every row was audited on 12 August 2026 at the address shown. A "no" means only that no pricing page was findable then. Full limitations: appendix.

"Branding" costs anywhere from \$1,000 a month to \$1.5 million.

These are not prices for the same thing. That is exactly why the spread is so wide, and why comparing quotes without understanding scope leads nowhere. Below are only the figures we could verify.

SOURCE	AMOUNT	WHAT IT ACTUALLY COVERS
DesignJoy	\$4,995/mo	A subscription to a single designer's time. One task at a time, unlimited requests in the queue. This is not a branding project; it is access to production capacity.
Superside	from \$1,000/mo	A team subscription, tiers up to \$30,000/mo. Higher tiers include strategy and campaigns.
Ramotion	\$25,000-\$60,000	Branding plus a one- to five-page website. A project, not a subscription.
Ramotion	\$45,000	Design for a site of roughly seven pages. Development quoted separately.
Ramotion	\$70,000	Design only, no build.
Ramotion	from \$9,500/mo	Part-time engagement. Full-time: \$16,800/mo.
Citibank Pentagram	-\$1,500,000	The fee for the identity system created after the Citicorp and Travelers merger, not for the mark alone. Widely cited, with no primary source.

One myth worth killing

Figures around £136 million attached to the BP logo have circulated for years. That is the cost of rolling out the whole rebrand: station signage, fleet, uniforms, collateral, campaign. The design fee was a fraction of it. Confusing rollout cost with design cost inflates what people expect to pay by orders of magnitude.

Why a subscription is not a project

\$4,995 a month at DesignJoy and \$45,000 for a project at Ramotion are two different products. The first buys execution, the second buys decisions: positioning, brand architecture, a system. The subscription stays cheaper only as long as you know exactly what to order.

Sources: designjoy.co, superside.com/pricing, ramotion.com/startup-packages (accessed 12 August 2026). The Citibank fee is a figure repeated across trade publications and is marked as layer 3.

Every studio that publishes a price is **American**.

Split the table by market and the picture sharpens beyond the headline 3 in 20. All three studios that publish prices are American. In Western Europe, none of the eight we checked does. In Poland, none of the four. We expected Polish studios to be the open ones, since price is their main advantage over Western competitors. They behave exactly like the rest of Europe.

4/4

Polish studios with no prices

8/8

W. European studios with no prices

3/3

US studios publish prices

What the buyer is left with

A company comparing three quotes has to sit through three sales calls before learning even the order of magnitude. On a purchase worth tens of thousands, that is weeks of work before the first real number. It is why "how much does this cost" is the most-asked branding question in public forums.

Layer 4 · self-reported, unverified

What buyers say

The same gap keeps appearing in public discussions among small business owners: a few hundred for a freelance logo, tens of thousands for a studio project. These accounts are individual and unverifiable, so we have not averaged them. They do show something important: buyers do not separate the price of a logo from the price of a brand system, because no price list ever shows them the difference.

That is the real cost of opacity. The problem is not that a client overpays. The problem is that they do not know what they are paying for.

What the people who **already paid** say.

We searched the public archives of founder discussions for comments that name an actual figure and are still live at the URL we cite. There are few of them, and that is a finding in itself: people complain about prices readily, but rarely say what they actually paid.

Layer 4 · self-reported

"No branding agency bills at \$600/hr. I have triple bid projects to some of the biggest identity design firms in NYC. **The rates are more like \$250/hr.**"

Hacker News, November 2019 · news.ycombinator.com/item?id=21446857 · commenter states they collected bids from several studios

Layer 4 · self-reported

A logo for the Boost library cost **\$12,000** and and was never adopted.

Hacker News, February 2025 · news.ycombinator.com/item?id=43126016 · links to the project mailing list archive

Layer 3 · secondary

PepsiCo paid around **\$1 million** for a brand strategy that produced a logo the industry widely mocked.

A case covered in many trade publications · figure has no available primary source

Why we do not average them

Three comments spanning 2019 to 2025, covering three things that cannot be compared: an hour of work, a single logo, and the strategy of a global brand. An average of that set would be a meaningless number dressed up as method. We list them individually, with the date and a link, so you can judge them yourself.

What they actually tell us

A rate of \$250 an hour at a top New York studio explains the rest of the table. A \$45,000 branding project is roughly 180 hours of team time. That is not margin on a logo, it is the cost of the hours spent designing it and rolling it out.

If we criticise hidden prices, we publish our own.

It would be hard to take us seriously if we published a report on opacity and then hid behind a contact form. Below is the full dp.vision price list, the same list we publish on our site. All prices exclude VAT.

SERVICE	PRICE	DELIVERY
Brand audit	\$750	1-2 business days
Discovery Workshop	\$1,500	2-3 hours, credited against the project fee
Tone of Voice and strategy	\$2,500	7-12 business days
Logo design	\$3,700	10-14 business days
Full branding with website	\$17,500	8-10 weeks

Why we publish

A price stated up front filters out conversations that were never going to go anywhere. It saves both sides time and moves the discussion from "what does it cost?" to "is it worth it?". The second question is far more interesting.

Where we sit in the range

Full branding with a website costs about \$17,500 with us. That is below the bottom of Ramotion's range for comparable scope, and nearly ninety times below the fees of the largest studios. Not because we charge less, but because we work differently: AI in research and concept exploration, humans on decisions and execution.

Sources and limitations

Primary sources (layers 1 and 2)

- [designjoy.co](#) – subscription pricing, accessed 12 August 2026
- [superside.com/pricing](#) – pricing tiers, accessed 12 August 2026
- [ramotion.com/startup-packages](#) – project packages and monthly rates, accessed 12 August 2026
- Structural mapping of 20 studio websites for pricing pages, 12 August 2026

Secondary sources (layer 3)

- Pentagram's fee for the Citibank identity: the roughly \$1.5 million figure is repeated across trade publications with no available primary source. Marked as a sense of scale, not a price.
- BP rebrand costs: the figures in circulation cover the entire rollout, not the design fee. Cited only to correct a common misunderstanding.

Limitations

- The audit detects dedicated pricing pages. A studio stating a figure only within a service description may have been classified as non-transparent.
- A "no" in the table describes one thing only: no public pricing page was findable on 12 August 2026 at the address shown. It is not a judgement on a studio's quality, rates or integrity. If a studio does publish prices somewhere we missed, we will issue a correction.
- The sample of 20 studios is purposive, not random. It is not representative of the whole market and does not support market averages.
- We ran no survey of buyers. Layer 4 rests on public comments and is purely qualitative.
- Prices change. This report reflects prices as of 12 August 2026.

Editorial rule

This report follows the same rule we apply in client work: a figure goes into a deliverable only if a verifiable source stands behind it, or if the person accountable for it has confirmed it. Everything else is either cut or clearly marked as an estimate. If you find a figure here without a source, write to us and we will correct it.

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