

**Research Findings Report***Industry: Web Design***2009***Geographic Region: Western United States*

Goldline Research recently completed its annual evaluation of web designers in the Western United States. Our research study was conducted from May 2009 through June 2009.

As one might expect, the economy is front and center in the minds of many web design firms right now. It seems that no region and no industry are immune to the economic slowdown, and the web design industry is certainly no exception. Anecdotally, though, many firms in the Western U.S. indicated that business is more stable than they expected it to be given the economic difficulties. The primary reason for the relative stability is due to maintenance and upgrades from existing clients rather than new client projects, which is a positive sign for the on-going viability of the industry. In addition, a number of firms in the region reported an uptick in client interest in web marketing around social networks/media such as Facebook and Twitter, which may also represent a future growth driver.

During our research process, we identified more than 2,900 web design firms throughout the Western United States. This figure represents web design firms that have between \$500,000 and \$50 million in annual revenues. Of the 2,900 firms in the region, nearly 95% of the firms in the region were less than \$5 million in annual revenues. Our research indicates that the typical web design firm in the region has more than 10 years of industry experience, has 7 staff members and has serviced approximately 200 clients over its lifetime. The typical firm in the region designs approximately 40 websites each year, slightly more than the national median of approximately 30 websites per year. Equally important, the typical firm has a client: designer ratio of approximately 61:1 and a client: staff ratio of 20:1. Perhaps more revealing, though, each designer completes nearly 14 websites per year, or slightly more than 1 site every month, which is approximately double the national median of just under 7 websites per year per designer. We believe that this can be explained in one of several ways: 1) the scope of projects in the region is substantially smaller than in other parts of the country allowing designers in the region to produce more sites each year; 2) the designers in the West are simply more efficient and more productive than their counterparts in other regions of the country; 3) the designers in other parts of the country are underutilized; or 4) some combination of the above.

Of all of the regions that we evaluate in the web design industry, firms in the West seem to be weathering the economic difficulty better than most. Firms in the region are more productive, have a leaner staff (which helps them control costs during difficult times) and have more active clients than their peers in other regions. This bodes well for firms in the region as they are well positioned to emerge stronger than their peers in other parts of the county once the economic difficulties have finally passed.

For more information about Goldline Research or this research findings report, please visit our website at [www.goldlinersearch.com](http://www.goldlinersearch.com).

**Key Research Findings<sup>1</sup>**Median Years of Experience: **10.0 years**Median # of Designers: **5**Median # of Total Staff: **7**Median # of Clients: **200**Median # of Sites Built/Year: **40**Median Client/Designer Ratio: **61:1**Median Client/Staff Ratio: **20:1**Median Sites Built/Year/Designer: **13.5**<sup>1</sup>Source: Goldline Research