



It's not a cliché – a picture is certainly worth a thousand words

Although Smart Business English deals primarily with words, we are well aware that illustrations are an important part of communication. The human mind processes images 60,000 times faster than text. It responds to shapes, lines and colours much better than words. Images convey contexts and tell stories faster. They're also important for selfexpression. That's why art has a niche in medicine and therapy.

by Ming Wong

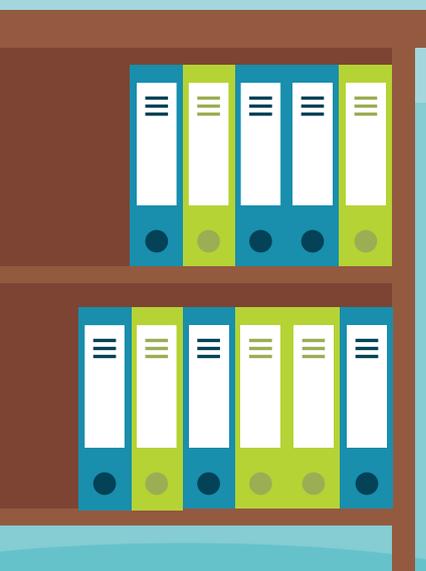
What does business need illustrations for?

Like most publications, Smart Business English uses a lot of photographs, cartoons, diagrams and maps to help us explain content. We know that readers can be encouraged to read or move on just by an image on the page.

All companies need images at some point – to explain organisational flow in a presentation, give instructions on how to use a product, advertise and market a product. Think of all the designs you see in a manual or on a calendar, postcard, poster, brochure, label, book cover, clothing or cups. Most ideas start with someone sketching an image on paper or a computer.

Where and how can you find illustrators?

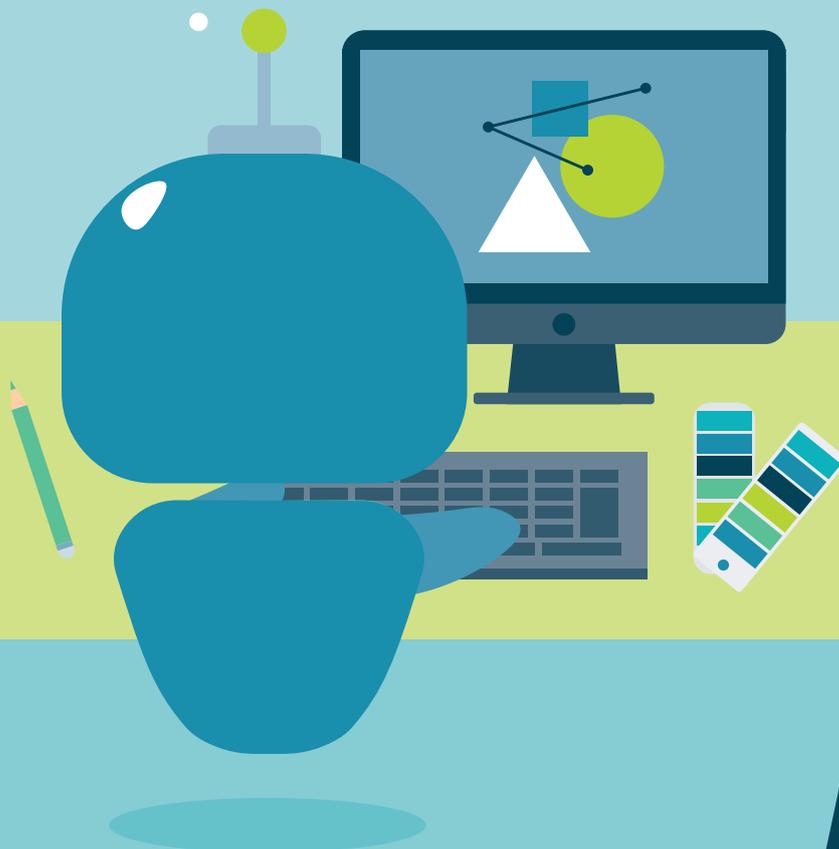
If you're a large design-oriented company, you might have an in-house staff. Many illustrators work independently or on a consultancy basis. This gives both the companies and the artists variety and flexibility. If you find an artist or illustrator that really 'gets' your product, you might want to ensure a more permanent liaison by offering a retainer fee. You can find illustrators through advertising, word of mouth or checking Illustrators Organisation (IO) in Germany. Check their past work, ask for portfolios or samples on assignment. You can also ask for permission to use existing illustrations. Some art agencies or companies keep an eye out on art or design school award winners. Because illustration work can now be done and transmitted online, a German company can work with an artist in the UK or a graphic designer in Japan.





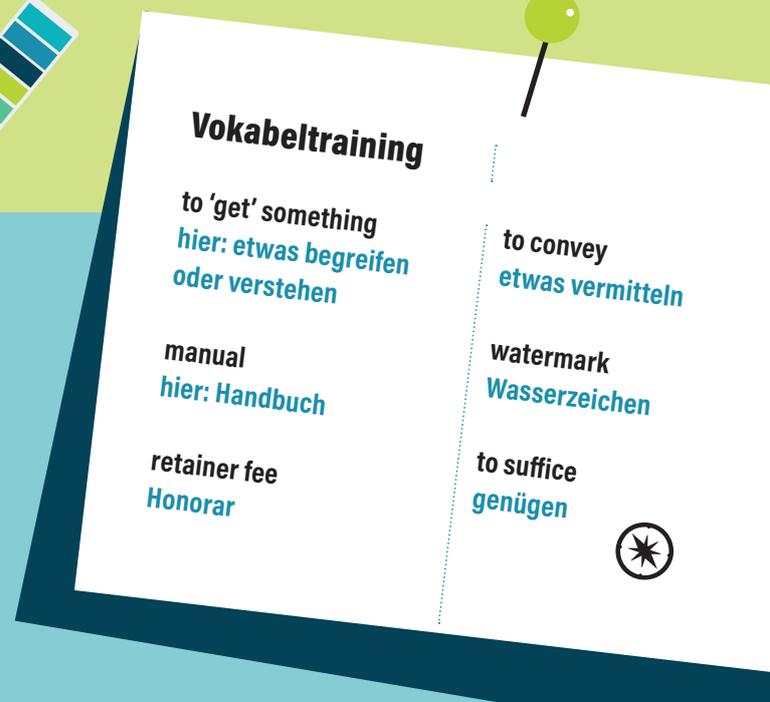
Do you always have to pay for illustrations?

Freebies are easily available on a lot of websites. Unsplash and Pixabay have thousands of photographs, drawings, 3D renderings and vectors you can download for free or for a very small fee. There are also Microsoft images you can use if you are already a subscriber to their many services. Even words can make amazing images if you choose the right font and size. On Canva, you can get ready-made diagrams and charts or templates for posters and flyers. These days, AI also helps you to generate your own pictures.



Does copyright matter?

Yes, it should, and it does. Acknowledging the source of a work when you can is a matter of ethics, even if it's free. The artist/photographer needs income to pay their bills and look after their families, just like the rest of us. People need to be compensated for their work. So, trace the origin, get in touch, ask for permission, pay if necessary. Many artists are just pleased to have their work used and acknowledged. Sometimes, copyright doesn't belong to the artists/creators/photographers as they may have created the piece of work for someone paying for it, so the holder of that contract can take legal action against you. Usually, you'll see a watermark on such works, so make the effort to ask for permission. Often, companies or organisations are pleased to give permission for the publicity. The difficulties often lie in tracing the copyright. Just because it's widely used, don't assume that because it's on the internet it's free. An infringement of copyright could mean a substantial fine. For permission, sometimes a simple inquiry suffices.



Vokabeltraining

to 'get' something
hier: etwas begreifen
oder verstehen

manual
hier: Handbuch

retainer fee
Honorar

to convey
etwas vermitteln

watermark
Wasserzeichen

to suffice
genügen

