

Scoping and Statement of Work

About forty five minutes per statement of work, and it pays like nothing else in the agency: every unprofitable project was scoped into being before anyone opened a design file.

Client

Project

Fee

The statement of work is where margins are made. The demo numbers say why: a project scoped at 200 hours that burns 265 lands 16 points of margin lighter, and the difference was almost all scopeable.

1. The shape of the work about 10 minutes

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Deliverables counted, described and dated

How many pages, concepts, templates or sprints, defined tightly enough that DONE is a fact, not a negotiation.

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Assumptions written where estimates live

Content supplied by the client, two stakeholders, one brand, working access to systems. Every broken assumption is a priced change waiting to be claimed.

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What is OUT, in words

The exclusions paragraph does more margin protection per sentence than anything else in the document.

2. The hours and the price about 10 minutes

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Build the estimate from the rate card, bottom up

Hours by tier at card rates, checked against the blended cost so the planned margin is a number, not a hope. The Project Profitability Calculator holds the arithmetic.

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Price the risk where it lives

Vague brief, new client, committee sign-off: contingency belongs in the price, stated or silent, not in the hope.

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External costs listed at cost plus handling

Freelancers, media, print: visible, marked up honestly, never absorbed.

3. Change control that will actually be used about 10 minutes

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Rounds of amends counted in the deliverables

Two rounds included, further rounds at the card rate: the single most-used clause in a well-run agency.

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A change order form that takes five minutes

Scope changes die in bureaucracy. One paragraph, hours, price, signature, done.

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The overburn alarm agreed internally

At 80 per cent of budget hours the project lead flags it, while the remedy is still a conversation rather than a write-off.

THE CLAUSE THAT PAYS FOR THIS CHECKLIST

Amends beyond the included rounds are chargeable at the card rate. Written in the statement of work and repeated politely at round three, it converts over-servicing into either revenue or restraint, and both are wins.

4. The money terms about 10 minutes

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Deposit and stage payments tied to deliverables

A third up front on projects, stages on retainers of work. Cash follows the work, not the final sign-off meeting.

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Payment terms of 30 days or better, interest stated

Statutory interest runs at 8 per cent over base; saying so in the terms is what makes it never needed.



Kill fee for cancelled or paused work

Work done plus committed costs plus a stated share: campaigns get pulled, and the clause decides whose problem that is.

5. Sign-off about 5 minutes



Named approver, silence clause, and the SOW signed before work starts

One name approves; silence after five working days approves; and nothing starts on a promise. The three lines that end most disputes before they exist.

Zazen Tax

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General information, not advice for your circumstances. Rates and thresholds are 2026/27 for the UK and change from time to time. Contract terms are commercial choices; take advice on the disputes that matter.