

Competitor Snapshot: Design-Subscription Services

Prepared for: Harborline Creative (a fictional 7-person brand and web studio, used for this sample)

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The client's question: "We're thinking about launching a flat-monthly 'design subscription' for our small-business clients. What do the best-known subscription services offer and charge, and where's the gap?"

1-page summary

The five competitors at a glance

Competitor	Entry price (monthly billing)	Capacity unit	Stated turnaround	Positioning	Risk reversal
Designjoy	\$4,995/mo , shown as a "Lifetime Discount - Limited Time" from \$5,995 [1]	1 request at a time	Avg. 48 hours [1]	Premium, founder-run; Webflow development included [1][2]	Pause anytime; 75% back if cancelled in the first week [1]
ManyPixels	\$699/mo (Advanced); \$1,199 / \$1,399 / \$2,599 tiers [3]	"Daily outputs" or part-time dedicated designer [3][4]	Next day; same day on designer tiers [4]	High-volume, low price, published rates for every billing cycle [4]	Cancel anytime; pause for \$10/mo [3][4]
Kimp	\$1,397/mo (Graphics or Video); \$1,697 for both [5]	3 active requests (Graphics) [6]	24 hours on standard requests; 2–4 days for complex ones [6][7]	Dedicated team + project manager, "tier-free" [5]	7-day free trial; 50% off first 4 months (promo) [7][8]
Penji	\$995/mo (Essentials); \$1,995 Agency Partner; \$4,500 Dedicated Team [9]	"Active workstreams" (2 / 3 / 4), stated as equal to 2–4 / 5–7 / 10–14 hrs daily [9]	1 business day; same day on Agency Partner [9]	Explicitly courts agencies with an "Agency Partner" tier [9]	30-day money-back guarantee on eligible monthly plans [9]
Design Pickle	Custom quote after a consultation [10]. Its own 2025 example: \$1,918/mo monthly, \$1,279/mo annual for 2 creative hrs/day [11]	Reserved creative hours per business day (from 2) [12]	First drafts next business day [10]	Consultative, "creative systems" for marketing teams [10]	No refunds for unused time [12]

3 takeaways

1. **The market has a "volume" tier and a "premium" tier, with a gap between them.** Four of the five have entry plans at **\$699–\$1,918/mo** on monthly billing (Design Pickle's figure is its 2025 example) [3][5][9][11]. Designjoy sits alone at **\$4,995** [1]. No competitor's *entry* plan falls in **\$2,000–\$3,500/mo**; only upper tiers land there (e.g., ManyPixels Design Team at \$2,599 [3]).
2. **Every competitor measures capacity differently** (requests, workstreams, daily outputs, hours), which makes them hard to compare. A plain-English capacity promise is a real differentiator.

3. **Risk reversal is common.** A trial or refund promise appears in 3 of 5 offers (Designjoy 75% back in week one, Kimp 7-day free trial, Penji 30-day money-back) [1][7][9], and paid or free pause options in 3 of 5 (Designjoy, ManyPixels, Kimp) [1][4][7]. Design Pickle offers no refunds for unused time [12].

3 recommended moves (analysis)

1. **Price the pilot at \$2,500–\$3,000/mo** for 1 active request plus a monthly strategy call. That positions it as "senior studio quality, below Designjoy," not as a cheaper ManyPixels.
2. **State capacity in business-day terms** ("1 request at a time, most delivered in 2 business days"), and publish it.
3. **Offer it to 5 existing clients first**, with a pause option and a 30-day satisfaction guarantee (in line with Penji's 30-day money-back offer [9]).

1. Scope and method

- **Competitors:** the five best-known US-facing flat-rate design subscriptions, chosen with the client.
- **Sources:** each competitor's own pricing pages, help-center articles, and blog posts, read Oct 7, 2026. Third-party reviews are used only to cross-check prices. Independently fact-checked against live sources on Oct 7, 2026 (PT).
- **Limitations:** prices change often and promos come and go. Design Pickle doesn't publish a price list. Review ratings couldn't be verified directly (see §4).

2. Competitor profiles

Designjoy

- **Offer:** a single "Monthly Club" plan. One request at a time, average 48-hour delivery, unlimited brands, Webflow development, unlimited stock photos, up to 2 users, pause or cancel anytime [1][2]. Refund policy: 75% back if you're not happy after the first week, no refunds after that [1].
- **Pricing:** \$4,995/mo, shown against \$5,995 as a "Lifetime Discount - Limited Time" [1][2].
- **Positioning:** a one-person premium brand; the site says Designjoy "is run entirely by Brett" and doesn't hire other designers or outsource [1]. The founder wrote in a March 2022 Indie Hackers post that he doubled prices because he couldn't manage a waitlist (as quoted by a third-party pricing analysis [13]).
- **What it means for the client:** proof that buyers will pay about \$5k/mo for perceived senior quality and speed. That premium depends on reputation, which a new offer won't have yet.

ManyPixels

- **Offer:** four tiers. Advanced (\$699) and Business (\$1,199) run on a shared team measured in "daily outputs." Assigned Designer (\$1,399) and Design Team (\$2,599) give part-time dedicated designers [3][4].
- **Discounts:** quarterly and yearly billing lower the entry plan to \$629 and \$559/mo [4]. Pausing costs \$10/mo [3].
- **Capacity disclosure:** ManyPixels' own blog equates Advanced to about 2 hours of work per day, and Assigned Designer to about 4 hours [14].
- **What it means for the client:** this is the price anchor buyers will find first. Competing on volume against it is a losing game.

Kimp

- **Offer:** Graphics (\$1,397), Video (\$1,397), or Graphics + Video (\$1,697), month-to-month. Graphics includes 3 active requests, a dedicated team, and a project manager [5][6].
- **Capacity disclosure:** about 2–2.5 hours per business day on your queue [6]. (Kimp's own pricing-page FAQ describes "2 tasks in progress" while its plan list says 3 active requests [6][7]; confirm before quoting.)
- **Acquisition tactics:** a 7-day free trial [7] and 50% off the first 4 months for new subscribers [8]. Pausing costs \$19.95/mo [7].
- **What it means for the client:** the "dedicated team + PM" message is crowded. Differentiate on strategy and brand ownership, not on headcount.

Penji

- **Offer:** Essentials (\$995, 2 workstreams "equal to 2–4 hrs daily," 1-day turnaround), Agency Partner (\$1,995, 3 workstreams "equal to 5–7 hrs daily," same-day, video/motion, web design, white-label platform), and Dedicated Team (\$4,500, 4 workstreams "equal to 10–14 hrs daily") [9].
- **Billing:** quarterly saves 15% and yearly 20% [15]. Eligible monthly plans have a 30-day money-back guarantee [9].
- **Note:** an earlier draft cited a separate Penji "creative services" page with different tiers (\$499 / \$995 / \$1,497). That page now returns "not found" (checked Oct 7, 2026), so we've dropped the claim. The current pricing page shows only the three tiers above [9][15].
- **What it means for the client:** Penji targets agencies directly. That's a *potential white-label supplier* for the client's own production, not just a competitor.

Design Pickle

- **Offer:** a platform subscription (Base or Pro) plus reserved creative hours, starting at 2 hours per business day and scaling to 12+. A production coordinator is included from 4 hrs/day and an art director from 8 [12].
- **Pricing:** quoted after a 30-minute consultation [10]. A 2025 company blog post gave the Base plan with 2 creative hours at \$1,918/mo monthly, \$1,600 quarterly, and \$1,279 annual (previously \$2,049) [11].
- **Billing:** its help center lists quarterly and annual billing [16], while the 2025 blog mentions monthly too [11]. Confirm before quoting.
- **What it means for the client:** the consultative, quote-based model is the closest to how an agency sells. Clear published pricing could be an advantage against it.

3. Comparison matrix

	Designjoy	ManyPixels	Kimp	Penji	Design Pickle
Published price	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (quote)
Entry \$/mo (monthly)	\$4,995	\$699	\$1,397	\$995	~\$1,918*
Lowest effective \$/mo	\$4,995	\$559 (yearly)	promo 50% off 4 mo	~\$796 (yearly, -20%)	\$1,279* (annual)
Stated hours/day	Not stated	~2 (Advanced)	~2–2.5	"Equal to 2–4" (Essentials; Penji says it doesn't bill by the hour)	2 (minimum)

	Designjoy	ManyPixels	Kimp	Penji	Design Pickle
Implied \$/hour at entry**	n/a	~\$16	~\$26–\$32	~\$11–\$23	~\$29–\$44
Agency-specific tier	No	No	No	Yes	No
Guarantee / trial	75% back in week 1	Not stated	7-day free trial	30-day money-back (eligible monthly plans)	No refunds for unused time
Pause	Yes (unused days kept)	\$10/mo	\$19.95/mo	Not stated	Not stated

* From Design Pickle's 2025 blog example [11]; current quotes may differ. ** **Our calculation (analysis, not a vendor claim):** monthly price ÷ (stated hours/day × 21.7 business days). ManyPixels: $\$699 \div (2 \times 21.7) \approx \16 . Kimp: $\$1,397 \div (2-2.5 \times 21.7) \approx \$26\text{--}\$32$. Penji: $\$995 \div (2-4 \times 21.7) \approx \$11\text{--}\$23$ (uses Penji's stated workstream equivalence). Design Pickle: $\$1,279\text{--}\$1,918 \div (2 \times 21.7) \approx \$29\text{--}\$44$.

4. Review signals (UNVERIFIED)

Search-engine snippets on Oct 7, 2026 showed Trustpilot scores of roughly **4.8** for ManyPixels, Penji, and Kimp, and **3.9** for Design Pickle. **Trustpilot blocked our direct checks again during QA (Oct 7, 2026), so these remain unverified.** Partial cross-checks: a third-party review (written by a competitor) reports ManyPixels at 4.8 from 149 Trustpilot reviews [4], and Penji's homepage claims a "4.8/5 avg. across Clutch, G2 & TP" [9]. Nothing independently confirms the Kimp or Design Pickle figures. Following our fact-check policy, they aren't used in the takeaways above.

5. What it means for Harborline (analysis and opinion)

- **Positioning:** "Your senior brand team, on subscription." Sell continuity with the studio that built the brand. None of the five can claim that relationship.
- **Price:** \$2,500–\$3,000/mo is roughly 2–4× the volume players' entry plans and a little over half of Designjoy. Test it with 5 existing clients before publishing.
- **Production model:** if demand outgrows the team, an agency tier like Penji's Agency Partner (\$1,995/mo [9]) could serve as overflow capacity, keeping your margin at a ~\$2,750 price point.
- **What to avoid:** promising "unlimited" without a clear active-request limit, and competing on turnaround against 24-hour and next-day promises [4][7][10].

Sources (accessed Oct 7, 2026)

1. Designjoy homepage and pricing: <https://www.designjoy.co/>
2. Hatchwise, "Designjoy review 2026" (cross-check of price): <https://www.hatchwise.com/resources/an-honest-review-of-designjoy-design-agency>
3. ManyPixels pricing: <https://www.manypixels.co/pricing>
4. Moonb, "ManyPixels Pricing 2026" (all billing cycles; written by a competitor): <https://www.moonb.io/blog/manypixels-pricing>
5. Kimp, "How Kimp Works": <https://www.kimp.io/how-kimp-works/>
6. Kimp, "Kimp Pricing Explained": <https://www.kimp.io/kimp-pricing-explained/>
7. Kimp pricing page: <https://www.kimp.io/pricing/>
8. Kimp, "Graphic Design Pricing 2026" (promo): <https://www.kimp.io/graphic-design-pricing/>

9. Penji homepage and pricing: <https://penji.co/>
10. Design Pickle pricing page: <https://designpickle.com/pricing>
11. Design Pickle blog, pricing update: <https://designpickle.com/blog/design-pickle-pricing-update>
12. Design Pickle Help Center, "Which plan should I subscribe to?": <https://help.designpickle.com/en/articles/3809732-which-plan-should-i-subscribe-to>
13. StudioSift, "What design subscriptions charge" (Sep 2026; quotes the founder's Mar 2022 Indie Hackers post): <https://studiosift.com/guides/service-design-pricing/what-design-subscriptions-charge/>
14. ManyPixels blog, Assigned Designer: <https://www.manypixels.co/blog/get-a-designer/manypixels-designated-designer-plan>
15. Penji pricing page (billing-cycle discounts): <https://penji.co/pricing/> (the previously cited penji.co/creativeservices/ page returned 404 on Oct 7, 2026)
16. Design Pickle Help Center, billing cycles: <https://help.designpickle.com/en/articles/6559811-subscription-renewals-billing-cycles>

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