



Understanding Logo Design.

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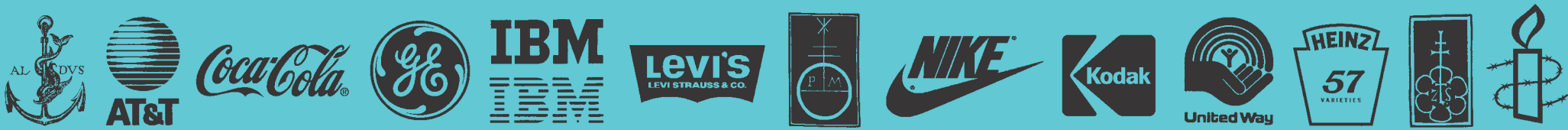
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What is a logo?

A logo is the visual representation of a company or organization, which forms the foundation of its corporate identity. It is a name, symbol, monogram, emblem, trademark, or other graphic device designed for easy and definitive recognition by the company's audience.



A short history of logo design.

Logo design has its roots in Ancient Greece with the use of symbols consisting of one or more letters. These typically represented the initial letters of a person or place for use on stationery and signs. Many early Greek and Roman coins bear the logos of rulers or towns. During the Middle Ages, similar logos were seen in abundance in ecclesiastical and commercial use.

By the thirteenth century, these simple letterforms had evolved into trademarks for merchants. These early examples of logo design include marks for masons, goldsmiths, paper makers, and nobility. By the 1700s, every trader and dealer had a trademark or stamp.

The industrial revolution caused a dramatic gain in the value and importance of trademarks. By the 1950s, with the emergence of national and multinational corporations, trademarks began to move beyond symbols, using larger design systems to unify all communications, to accomplish identifiable goals.

Today, company logos have become the faces of business and our economy. The general public has become very responsive to logos, their meanings, and their implementations. Because of the diversity of products and services available, the need for innovative and well thought-out logo and corporate identity design is central to a company's success.



Why are logos important?

Logos trigger people's memories of previous experiences with the company and other implementations of the logo, leaving a greater impact than words alone can do. This is the simplest and most direct way of promoting a business presence; a logo describes a company or organization without a lengthy explanation.

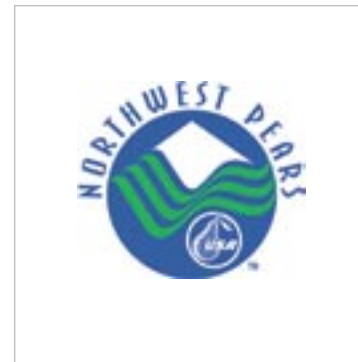


Try to think of such companies as Coca-Cola or FedEx without recalling their logos. These companies have established an identity with their logos, which greatly impacts their sales. If a logo appears amateurish or derivative, so will be the public's perception of the company it represents. A well-designed logo will help to increase visibility and, in turn, sales.

What makes a good logo?

“The trademark should embody in the simplest form the essential characteristics of the product or institution being advertised.” Paul Rand

Simple. Trying to include too much information can have a negative impact. Complex illustrations representing all aspects of your business and long taglines are fine in their place, but not as part of a logo. The type and imagery should be instantly recognizable, up close and at a distance. The number of colours used should be minimized to avoid high production costs and distraction from the logo’s central message.



The Northwest Pears logo uses conflicting stylistic treatments and incorporates too many visual elements, making the logo difficult to interpret.



Sponge’s uncomplicated and straight-forward design is key to its success as a highly recognizable and distinct logo.

Versatile. Logos which use several colours, photographs or detailed illustrations may be difficult to use in certain applications. A good logo should consider all potential implementations. (Often, several versions of a logo will be designed to use in different contexts.)



Very Important Planet's logo uses several colours and is quite detailed, which may pose problems when applied to different media.



Designed for a publishing group, the Solo logo's simple and iconographic design is very adaptable.

Distinctive. Logos should help to distinguish a company or organization from others. Using common or fashionable styles or typefaces defeats the purpose of having a logo, and can even have a negative backlash among your audience who might view your company as unimaginative. In addition, you don't want to violate copyrights or trademarks of other companies.



A recent popular trend is the use of a crescent shape to suggest progressive values. The sample above is virtually indistinguishable from thousands of logos like it.



This logo's unique imagery and playful stylistic treatment helps to distinguish Pathé as a unique, dynamic, and innovative production company.

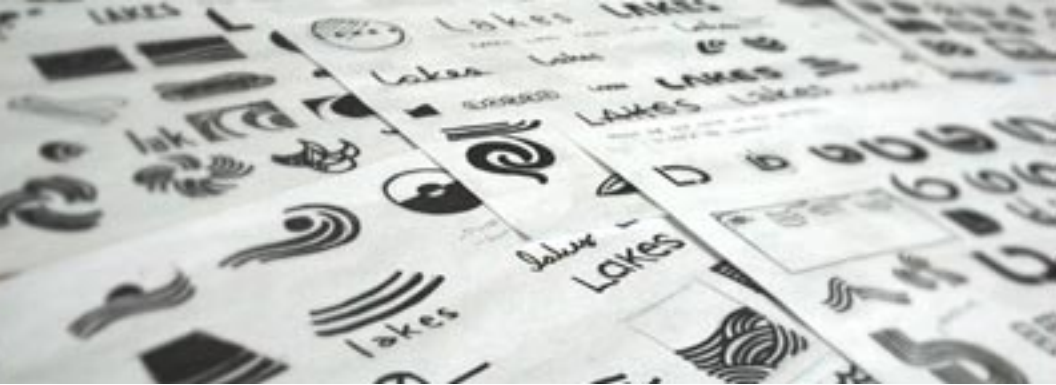
The logo design process.

“Each program begins with the formulation of a set of objectives and a verbal description of what the client logo should say. These are the design attributes we want to portray in the new logo. ... Intent has to be articulated before you begin, or you just get sucked into a process where everything you do is self-justifying.” Saul Bass



The creative brief

Typically, the designer and client will work together to outline the parameters and purposes of the company’s logo in the form of a creative brief. The primary function of any logo is to engage a particular segment of the public. Within this brief, the user’s demography should be analyzed, so that we can begin to understand the subtle differences that make audiences unique. This will establish a set of rules with which we can make design decisions to target particular groups. It is important not to project ones own aesthetic preferences on the design of a logo; a logo’s primary purpose should be to communicate with the company’s audience, not to satisfy the preferences of the designer or the client.



Concept development

The designer develops conceptual pathways for the logo, transforming ideas into simple sketches. Then, these sketches are presented to the client and one or two pathways are chosen for further exploration. This is where the logo begins to take shape.

In some cases, a unique text treatment and a distinctive colour palette is sufficient, as seen in the Coca-Cola and Greenpeace logos. On the other hand, Nike and Apple Computers use both text and image. A logo's simplicity and distinctiveness are the primary considerations in determining its form.

Refinement

Through a process of three or four revisions, based on an analytical dialogue between the designer and client, the logo is taken from a series of rough sketches to the final polished and cohesive logo design. At this stage, colour is often introduced. Colour specification decisions are based on an understanding of color psychology, color theory, the contrast between colors, and the limitations of available printing budgets.



Delivery

Once the client has approved the final logo design, the designer assembles a package containing an assortment of logo files for different applications and a manual outlining how the logo should be applied to different media. The strict and consistent adherence to the manual is crucial to the success of a logo.