The **Practical** Guide to Logo Design

Resource by Lindsay Marsh

How do we create a logo that exudes meaning, truth, values and ideas that are important to the underlying company?

That answer is complex and involves lots of rich research and exploration. Let's get started...

Index

Logo DNA

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Logos are the visual representation of the essence of an entity.

Nike motivates, Cola-Cola gives you nostalgic vibes and Amazon makes your life easier. These are all examples of how we define the essence of a company. A successful logo will capture these summaries and turn them into visible icons and typography.

Branding iron from Swedish stallion depot.

Claiming
ownership.

Branding comes from a tradition of burning the skin of livestock so it can be identified and returned back to the caretaker.

It usually included a series of numbers or the name of the farm or company. Fortunately, this practice has been swapped out for more humane methods, but the same basic principle defines modern branding for companies.

We need logos to help audiences identify a company's ownership of a product, advertisement, video, social media post or event. The logo also needs to distinguish the company's product and service from others in similar industries. Answering the question "what makes your company different?" is the first step in developing a unique identity that can last not just years but decades.
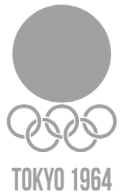

logo files found on www.brandsoftheworld.com

The symbol for peace *forever tarnished.*

Symbols and icons are just a vast combination of different shapes and letterforms without context or meaning, except what is given to them.

The swastika used by Nazi Germany in World War II actually has innocent origins as a symbol of well-being in the Asian world for thousands of years, especially in India. It was even used by large corporations before WWII as simple icons of good luck and fortune. After Nazis used it as their main "logo" of the Third Reich, it was mostly associated with fascism and represented a desperate time in human history.


Top: Wood Buddha in meditation position, with gamadian (reverse swastika), on lotus flower,motifs

Bottom: Voussoir Fragment with Floral Motif and Swastika

Humans give context to what seems to be a meaningless array of shapes. If we do not put meaning behind our logos they will only remain a useless collection of objects.

British Museum cinerary urn with swastika motifs

The Pepsi logo has evolved to adapt to younger generations to remain relevant.
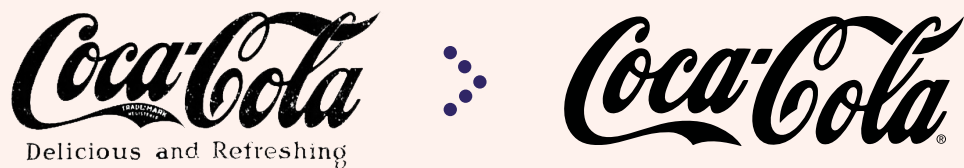
Meanwhile, the Coca-cola logo has remained largely unchanged to have a more nostalgic appeal.

Evolve styles or preserve tradition?

Every logo should be unique, as is every company.

Coca-Cola and Pepsi both started out selling carbonated soda drinks but with only slight changes in appearance and taste. Today, their logos are anything but similar. The Coca-Cola logo has intricate typography details like long extended tales with curves and unified script lettering. It is exactly the kind of treatment that represents tradition and nostalgia.

The Pepsi logo appears postmodern with its geometric circle icon and graphics. The lettering has a thin stroke, is all lowercase and has curves that echo the circular symbol. In the 1980's Pepsi started to differentiate itself from Coca-Cola as the "Choice of a New Generation".

It hired pop icons to peddle its product and tried to remain relevant to younger and younger generations, while Coca-Cola focused on the good times of the past.
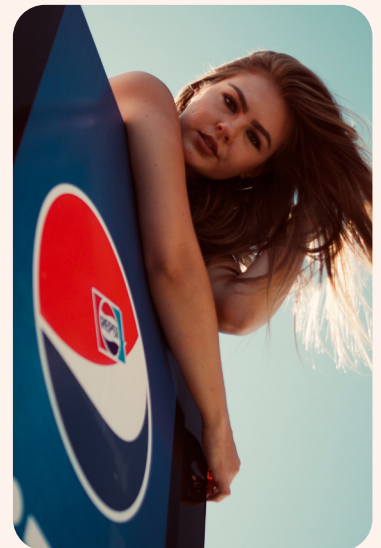
With two totally different company strategies but very similar products, how could one style of logo address both? These companies knew their audience, they knew what resonated with them and continued to foster a connection with their brands and logos.

THE **VALUE** OF A LOGO DESIGN

They Add Professionalism

Have you ever determined the quality of a company or product based on its logo or package design? A high-quality polished logo design can build a huge amount of trust with a customer.

They Add Brand Recognition

We know a Nike shoe when we see the classic Nike swoosh. Establishing a consistent typeface, symbol or style for a company can help a company in future marketing efforts.

They Are the Starting Point for Visual Branding

After establishing a company's voice, target market and positioning in the market, one of the first visible design elements created is the logo. This is the core style in which most future branded design elements will originate.

They Add Character

Small nuances in the type treatment like a slanted T or a soft script lettering can add unique characteristics to a company. If created carefully, logos can instantly be associated with its target demographic.

COMPANY

They Add Connection

Think of one of your favorite brand logos. Is it one of those logos you are so happy to put on your car as a bumper sticker? This is called brand loyalty. Some logos can be used by companies to extend a connection with their audience. They can also symbolize a common goal, life mission or status among consumers.
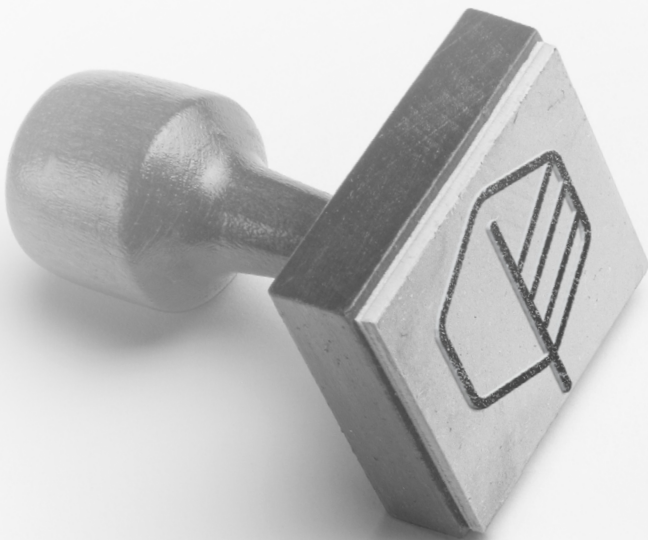
2

section two // BASIC TERMS

Think of this first section as a quick crash course in basic logo terms and theory.

After reviewing this section you will be able to recognize and understand the language used to describe logo design examples, history and usage. You can review this section at anytime to remind yourself of specific terminology.

Same thing, many names.

You may notice throughout the next few sections lots of alternative names for terms. That is because several names have alternative titles that are all industry acceptable uses.

Logo Basics

Logomark
(AKA: Brandmarks, Symbols)
The graphic or visual icon in the logo

Logotype
(AKA: Lettermarks)
The Typography portion of a logo

Marsh Museum *of* Modern Art

Watermark
Low contrast use of the logomark or logotype. Usually used as a subtle background element.

Combination Mark
(AKA: Logo Lockup)
The appearance of both a logomark and a logotype together as one unit.

Marsh Museum *of* Modern Art — Helvetica — Baskerville

Type Choices
Some logos use only one typeface, while others use more than one. Some companies develop a custom font to further the unique qualities of their logo.
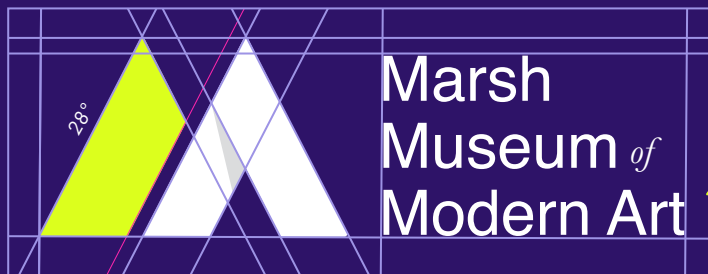
Marsh Museum *of* Modern Art

SPARK YOUR IMAGINATION

Tagline
Supportive company slogan

Typography Only Presentation
Most logos should be able to exist without any accompanying symbol if needed.

Signature Mark
The lockup of a tagline, logomark and logotype together as one.

28°

Marsh Museum *of* Modern Art

White space
(Aka Clearspace)
The logo design actually expands outward with an invisible space called clearspace that surrounds the logo. This ensures those who use the logo will make sure there is enough space around the logo that is clear of any other design elements to keep it clean and consistent.

Construction Grids
AKA: Logo Grid or Grid Systems)
This assures proper margins around the logo, establishes angles, spacing and shows grid consistency. Logos do not have to be adapted or created using grids but can be helpful when creating logo usage guides.

Logo variations

Full Color

Keep logos to as few colors as possible while still having maximum impact. High amounts of colors used in certain print mediums, like screen printing t-shirts, can dramatically increase print costs.

Single Color

You must have a single color version of your logo for reproduction purposes. Preferably in both a solid single color and one using just white or black.

Logo Orientations

Logos must be able present themselves in a vertical, horizontal or square format if possible for maximum flexibility.

Marsh Museum *of* Modern Art

Logos that have a seal or circular shape must also have a version of the logo that can fit in small horizontal spaces, like a website or mobile app header.

Mobile Friendly Versions

All logos must pass a visibility test. This means that ALL elements can be understood and visible when seen as an inch square or 100x100 pixel image. Static logos remain the same size at all times while dynamic logos scale like icons in digital applications.

100 Pixels

100 Pixels

App Icon & Favicons

These will be the smallest versions of your logo.

STANDARD ICON SIZES
in Pixels

Base Size 32x32 Pixels

16x16 32x32 64x64 128x128 256x256 512x512

Alternate Colors

Not every logo will require different color combinations but those that do increase their ability to be seen in different design mediums.

Lindsay Marsh
HEAD CURATOR
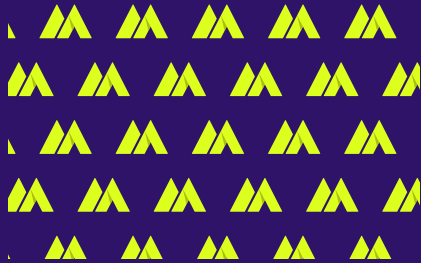
Marsh
Museum *of*
Modern Art

Identity Design

The complete visual brand which normally includes a logo, brand assets and design examples that show how to extend the established brand style outside of the logo.

Marsh
Museum *of*
Modern Art

Brand Assets

Supporting graphic elements that compliment the logo and brand style.

SPARK YOUR IMAGINATION

Logo Application

Applying a logo to various print and digital applications allows you to test the logo visibility and to help visualize the logo appearance beyond a blank sheet of paper. This can include the use of mockups like the example here.

Marsh
Museum *of*
Modern Art

Marsh
Museum *of*
Modern Art

Marsh
Museum *of*
Modern Art

Vivid Light Green
Hex #662D91
R: 102 C: 75
G: 45 M: 98
B: 145 Y: 0
      K: 0

Vivid Yellow
Hex #662D91
R: 102 C: 75
G: 45 M: 98
B: 145 Y: 0
      K: 0

Light Gray
Hex #662D91
R: 102 C: 75
G: 45 M: 98
B: 145 Y: 0
      K: 0

Vivid Green
Hex #662D91
R: 102 C: 75
G: 45 M: 98
B: 145 Y: 0
      K: 0

Vivid Orange
Hex #662D91
R: 102 C: 75
G: 45 M: 98
B: 145 Y: 0
      K: 0

Gray
Hex #662D91
R: 102 C: 75
G: 45 M: 98
B: 145 Y: 0
      K: 0

Vivid Purple
Hex #662D91
R: 102 C: 75
G: 45 M: 98
B: 145 Y: 0
      K: 0

Vivid Red
Hex #662D91
R: 102 C: 75
G: 45 M: 98
B: 145 Y: 0
      K: 0

Black
Hex #662D91
R: 102 C: 75
G: 45 M: 98
B: 145 Y: 0
      K: 0

Vivid Dark Purple
Hex #662D91
R: 102 C: 75
G: 45 M: 98
B: 145 Y: 0
      K: 0

Vivid Pink
Hex #662D91
R: 102 C: 75
G: 45 M: 98
B: 145 Y: 0
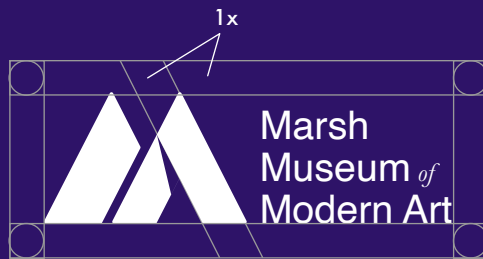   K: 0

Logo Usage Guide

(AKA: Logo or Brand Standards Manual)
A multiple page manual that sets rules and guidelines for how to use the logo and accompanying assets such as minimum recommended size, color options and logo presentation recommendations.

Proper Usage

✔ Do

1x

Do give the logo at margin that is at least 1x as defined by the grid example above.

Do use which logo orientation fits the space best.

Vivid Purple

Vivid Orange

Vivid Purple

Vivid Orange

Vivid Purple

Vivid Orange

Vivid Purple

Vivid Orange

Use the logo in the approved color combinations only.

✗ Don't
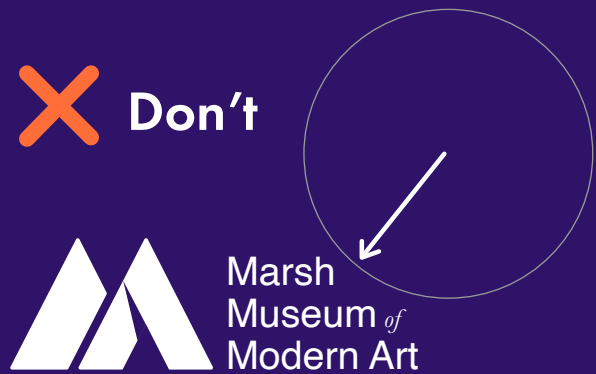
Place the logo too close to prominent objects.

Do not tweak the logomark and logotype ratio or proportion to each other.

Do not use the logomark without its accompanying logotype non-apparel items.

finding the right
logo category.

Logo categories are specific logo structures that establish a standard arrangement of the logomark (symbol) and the logotype (the typography).

Studying each logo category and, most importantly learning **WHEN** to use them, can not only speed up your logo design process but help you create more effective logos.

This section will review **six main logo categories** that you can have in your arsenal when it comes time to create your first logo design concepts.

Your goal before you even start the concept development process for your logo (which we will get into later), is to select a small handful of logo categories and layouts that you think fit your company's profile and needs.

A mascot logo might not be very useful for a hospital, unless perhaps it was for a children's wing. An emblem logo may fit perfectly with a university, which may need to include additional symbols and information to further communicate its mission.

Figuring this out early and knowing your options can help you save much time when it comes to jotting down logo shapes, arrangements and layouts.

Logo Categories

MONOGRAM LOGOS

Other Terms: Abbreviation Logos

IBM

:: WHEN TO USE

Company has a long name.

Company wants to be known by an abbreviated shorter name.

ABSTRACT LOGO MARKS

HINODE

bearcroft

:: WHEN TO USE

When you need to communicate complex ideas, emotions or emotions with simplified imagery.

WORDMARKS

Other Terms: Logotypes, Typography Only Logos

InkTober

CREM HELADO

:: WHEN TO USE

For companies with shorter names

When the company name is more recognized than visuals or symbols or when symbols distract rather than support the company name.

COMBINATION MARKS

Fanta

Glenfiddich

:: WHEN TO USE

For a company that is looking for maximum flexibility with their brand assets.

For companies that need a supporting visual aid to describe there product or industry.

MASCOT

RAVENS

:: WHEN TO USE

For companies looking for a brand representative that can further tell the brand story via a high personality character.

EMBLEMS OR CRESTS

Other Terms: Seals, Badges

SOURCEPOINT

THE COFFEE GUILD EST. 2019

A est. 2018

:: WHEN TO USE

For a company wanting to focus on tradition, history or highlight prestige.

When multiple visuals are required.

Gives logos maximum flexible for placement on various backgrounds.

Monogram
Logos

AKA: ABBREVIATION LOGOS
OR LETTERMARKS

Monograms seek to simplify a company name.

A company may have a long complex name, such as IBM (International Business Machines). Imagine if every time we talked about an IBM computer in the past we mentioned its full name? It would have been less memorable but also would have made it harder to create commercials, ads and other media with such a long, laborious name.
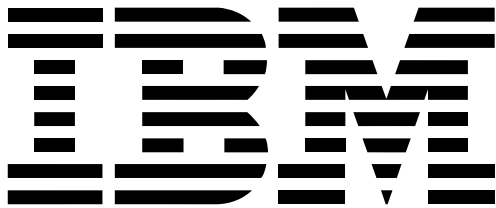
IBM no longer goes by it's full name but only by it's abbreviation IBM. This is a classic example of a monogram logo.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES

A logo using the full company name would be very difficult to use and look busy.

General Electric has a similar monogram logo that can serve as a company identifier without typography or the full name nearby. GE needed to have a logo that could be placed on appliances and machines that did not take up a large amount of room. Having to spell out General Electric and have the monogram mark would take up valuable space on product labeling.

Some business, like insurance companies, lawyers, consulting firms and even IT companies can have names so long it would make it impossible to ever reduce the logo down in size when needed. This is where monograms can be useful.

In this example of an insurance business, Marsh, McKinley and Crowley Insurance Collective, it looks awfully hard to identify the words when used in an app icon, e-mail signature and a mobile website header. When there is a monogram complement that can be used in isolation from the full name, it becomes easier to adapt the logo. The MMC can be easily identified by those who are already familiar with the company name or have seen it in another place on a design.
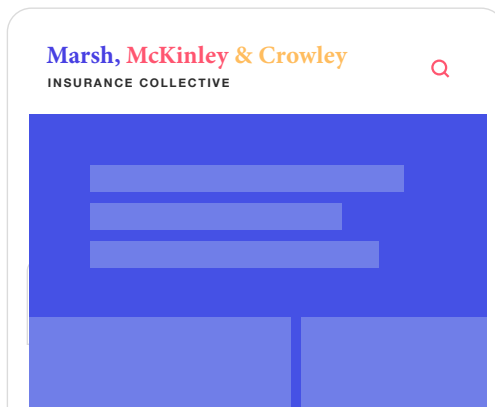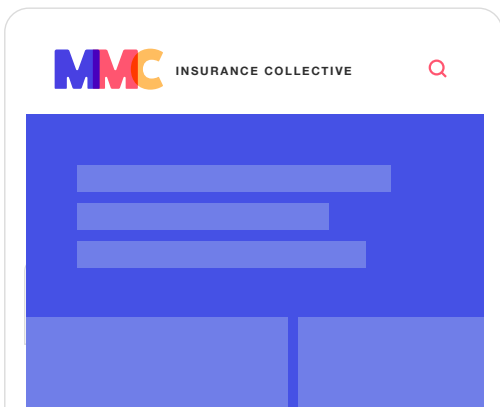
Marsh, McKinley & Crowley

INSURANCE COLLECTIVE

Company names that are long and involve multiple names could benefit from a shorter monogram logo complement.

MMC

INSURANCE COLLECTIVE

There might be some cases where you can use "MMC" as the main company identifier and some cases where the names need to be listed nearby or as a smaller part of the logo. The longer the company uses an abbreviation, the easier it becomes recognized by its abbreviation versus the full company name.

And other times the abbreviation can appear as the only text on a logo without the inclusion of a the full company name. 3M is a solid example of this. 3M's full name is The Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company (whew!). Now just imagine having to include the full name below the abbreviation 3M? It would look clunky, outdated and just useless in helping people identify the company as it is now known as 3M alone.

Sometimes the abbreviation of a company's full name can come to so dominate in the minds of consumers that people may even forget the company's actual full name. I cannot think of a finer example than BMW cars or Bayerische Motoren Werke, or Bavarian Motor Works. We just use the term BMW without much thought to what the B,M and W stand for. It has become an entirely new word in itself. Rarely have I ever quoted the entire company name when referring the company.

MMC INSURANCE COLLECTIVE

Marsh, McKinley & Crowley
INSURANCE COLLECTIVE

For this mobile website layout, having a monogram logo gives more space.

Monograms as artwork

LV

LOUIS VUITTON

Monograms do not always have to be simple letter presentations they can become entirely new symbols that represent a companies brand. Louis Vuitton's logo overlaps the L and V letterforms to become a unified design icon. This has been used successfully as a pattern on their handbags and other accessories for decades.

PlayStation is another company that has a logo that fuses both the P and S to make a stand alone symbol. As a game console that needs to have its logo appear small, this was necessary to have a logo mark option along with a logo type option and a combination mark.
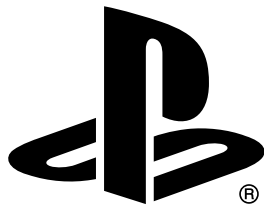
A popular new style of logo design takes this basic idea of monogramed letterforms and combines entire words into one element. Since they are not abbreviating a word they cannot really be considered monogram logos. But they can be an interesting idea for shorter words, names or phrases, if you are interested in using a monogram "like" styling.
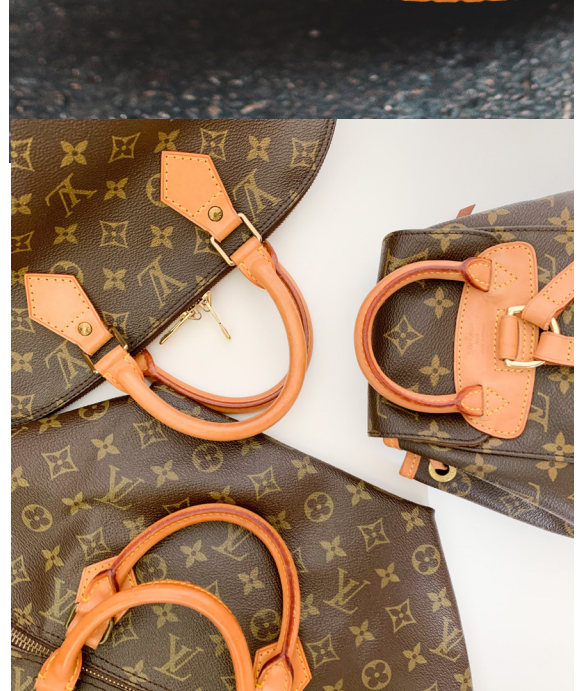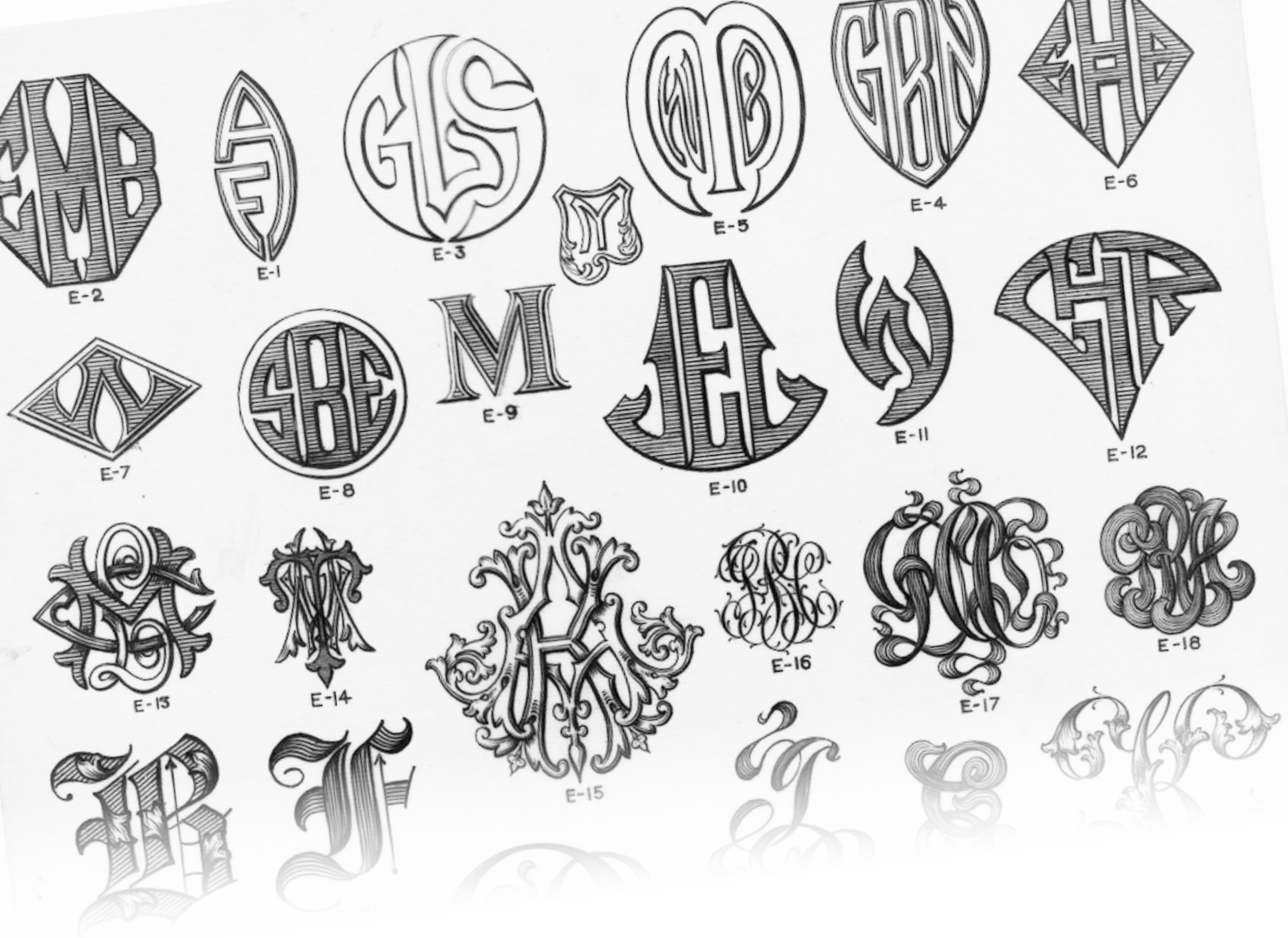
When to use
Monograms

Deciding to use an abbreviated version of a company name or monogram is a **huge strategic company decision.** As a designer your task is to ask or prompt a client if this is needed or is even a possibility.

There are huge implications for deciding to use this type of logo structure because you have to establish familiarity with the abbreviations as a brand mark. As a designer this can be done through repetition in various design assets across multiple channels (digital and print). This makes sure the viewer is educated and made aware of the connection with the letters and the company full name or purpose of the company. That means a company like 3M can become synonymous with manufacturing of supplies or AT&T with telephone communication.

This is another reason why choosing a logo category after careful deliberation and research is helpful. You can easily eliminate the need to pursue categories that would not fit well with the company ethos or its goals.

Monograms

A B	C D	E F	G H	I J	K L
M N	O P	Q R	S T	U V	W X
					YZ
MISS	MARY	TOM	JOHN	HENRY	WILLIAM
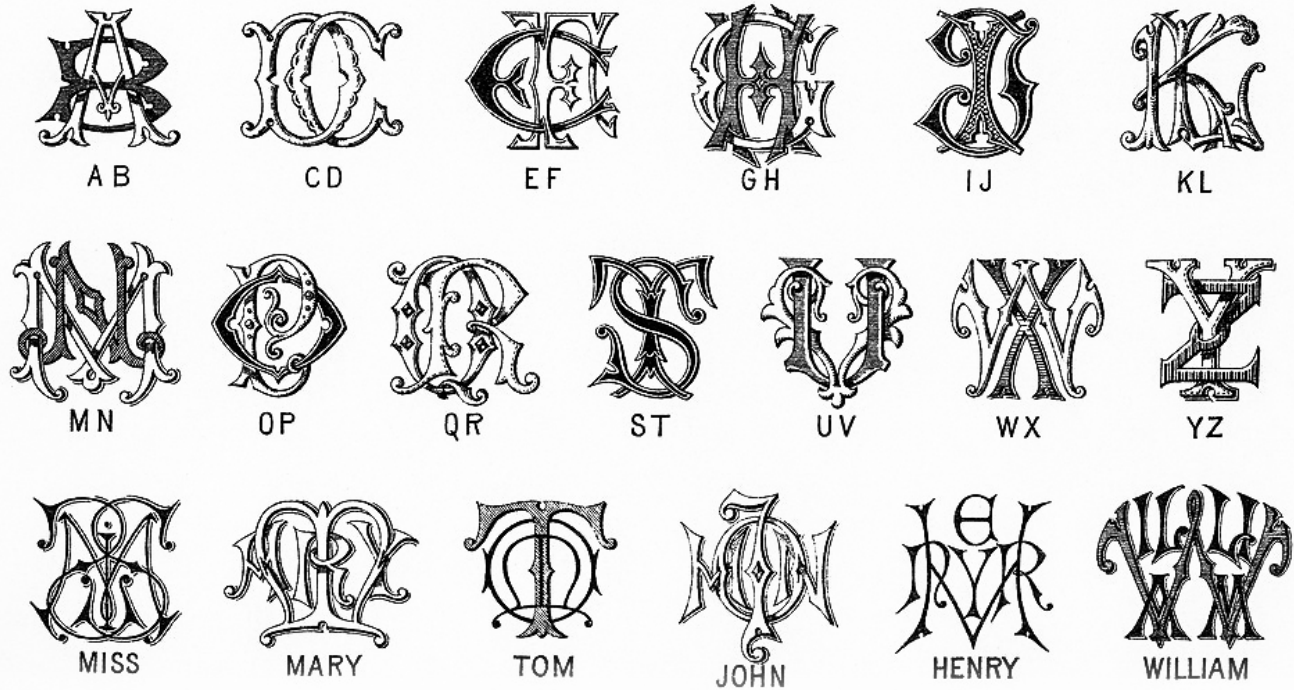
Monograms are nothing new and are some of the oldest forms of logo design. Monograms from Draughtsman's Alphabets by Hermann Esser (1845-1908).

A company like NETFLIX may not want to be known as NF or NFLIX because their name is already established, well known and loved. That name is also short enough to stand alone. The same reason why YouTube does not want their logo to be seen as YT. Not all logos need a monogram. Each case is unique and competitor and industry research helps us to decide what might be best.

Larger corporations perform user studies which help them evaluate the reactions to new company brand refreshes where they might introduce a company abbreviation or monogram mark.

If it is received poorly, they may have to go in another direction. Only through research with your company's audience will you truly be able to gain authentic and honest reactions that can steer the direction of your logo design.
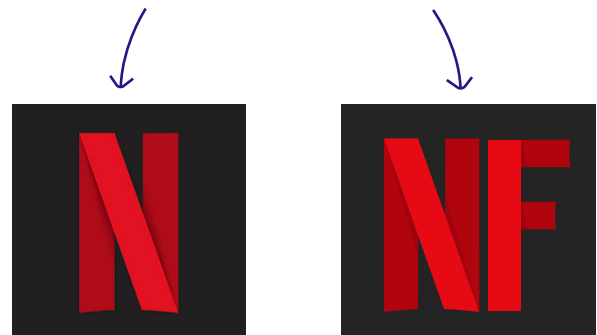
The app icon to the left is the official Google Store icon. What if Netflix decided to go by NF instead? It does not have the same simple quality that the one on the left has.

Abstract Logos

Abstract logos usually contain rough outlines, shapes, curves and lines to try to depict the ideals and meaning of a company name or product.

What makes them abstract, and not illustrations, is the over simplification of an idea.

How do you create a symbol that would depict large expressive words like **innovation, passion** or **perseverance?**

After doing lots of initial research, companies may establish a short list of words that describe the very essence of their business.

Some of these words feel almost impossible to visualize. Abstract logos help to communicate complex words or phrases with a visual representation, usually in the form of geometric shapes, outlines, mosaics or splotches. This allows the designer to be creative and push boundaries of typical design patterns. Instead of drawing an exact object we are creating feelings and emotions.

strong
independent
powerful
determined
unique
glass-breaker
proud

The above example are words developed during the word mapping process in which words are created that help to describe the core of the business ethos, attitudes and company personality. Trying to express these words visually can be a challenge for even the most experienced designer.

This is where the study of shapes comes in handy.

Let's say we have a logo that we would like to have a soft approachable feel. A circle works well in this case because there are no sharp edges or anything impeding its direction. It is continuous, curved and if you follow its outline, it never ends. Circular shapes are great for showing an **infinite amount of possibilities** and it is great for representing a flexible company or product.

Let's use a square shape. Now, everything feels contained and orderly. The right angles are sharp and steady with little movement. This could easily show a company that is stable and professional that holds true to its values.

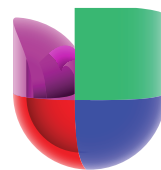**Just a simple change in shape can cause huge shifts in our perception of the company.**

What if we used a combination of different geometric shapes. This could allow viewers to see the company as inclusive and open to change. It can represent diversity in its music of shapes, colors and angles.

CIRCLE
APPROACHABLE, FRIENDLY

STARBUCKS

Lululemon Athletica logo

Microsoft Edge

HAWAIIAN AIRLINES

SQUARE
STRONG, STABLE, HONEST

Microsoft

UNI QLO

LEGO

MIX
COMPLEX, OPEN, FLEXIBLE

VANCOUVER 2030
REIGNITE THE PASSION

MetLife

UNIVISION
COMMUNICATIONS INC

bp

Adobe uses a rigid square shape in its logo to present stability, strength and honesty. Even the Adobe software icons maintain a square like shape, although recently in 2019 an 2020 they shifted their app icons to a rounded edge look to appear soft, modern and more relevant.
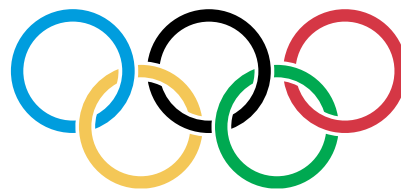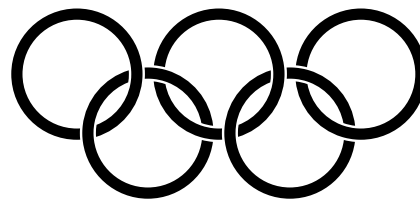
I think a successful abstract logo has more **complexity** and **intention** than first realized.
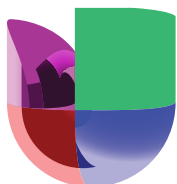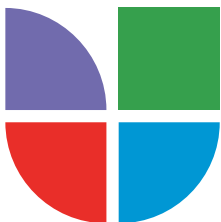
Representing Complex Ideas with symbols & shapes

This example of the official Olympic logo has a series of random rings overlapping.

Without any context this would seem redundant and too complex. An artist named Coubertin created the logo in 1913. The 5 rings represented the 5 main continents that participated in the Olympics and the 5 colors used represented every color in all the countries flags who participated in 1913. **The rings symbolized the human being and continuity with its interlocking feeling of unity.**

Univision adopted a new logo, which it still uses today, that was created by famed designer Tom Geismar in 1989.

"The mark is derived from the initial letter U in the company name and is broken up into four colorful panes. The top left pane, which is identical to the lower forms but flipped on its side, gives the mark its unique character. While overall the form is clearly a U, the flipped pane also makes it into a colorful abstract bird or flower."
Quote from univsion.com

Just like a fine wine this logo has complex rich notes. It represents a tulip, the letter U as the first letter of the company but also the unification of the company as it slowly acquired more stations to become the number one leading Spanish language network in the world.

They recently unveiled a new 3D version of the logo that further defines a 360 degree approach to media which includes Internet, social media and more.

I think this examples proves that complexity can exist in the simplicity of geometric abstract logos.

Bottom: The most recently updated "3D" version of the original tulip icon.

CHASE ⬡

More than meets the eye…

Another example is Chase Bank, created by Chermayeff & Geismar Associates. One of the challenges in the banking industry is the likelihood of a possible merger with another bank and sometimes that can mean a name change. Using a monogrammed logo using the companies name may prove difficult and expensive if this where to occur. They needed to drum up a symbol that could represent a modern growing bank institution but was also able to shift and flex in an unknown future environment. **An abstract logo was the perfect pick.**

"The four parts of the octagon—originally black, brown, green, and blue—represent forward motion, while the white square in the middle suggests progress originates from the center. 'Like the bank itself, the symbol is a single unit made up of separate parts,' the designers noted."
chase.com

This was radical at the time of release in 1961. Rarely did you see large financial institutions use abstract style symbols; they were mostly monogram logos at the time.

The main symbol can be seen as a vault with the white inside being the safe contents inside secured by the Chinese coin inspired octagon shape.

Rarely should geometric shapes be used without purpose and meaning behind them. How shapes interact, intersect, repeat and even what colors are used can show human emotions, intentions and ideals.
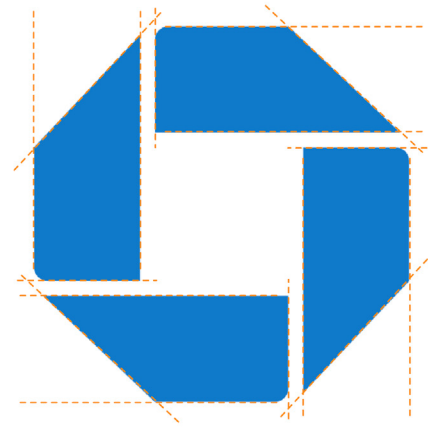
Ancient Chinese Coin

This proves there is way more to an abstract logo than something that looks pretty and unique. Stories help to write how you construct abstract logos.

The Spotify logo has a similar origin in which it was inspired by its service and product.

"The Spotify logo consists of a green circle with three frequency waves inside which has the meaning of sound and movement. Also this design is a display of creativity, determination and excitement."
Spotify.com

Using Symmetry

Abstract logos can also be symmetric and orderly. Take for instance Huawei logo design. Draw a line down the center and both the left and right sides are equal. Huawei in Chinese means "flower" and it is beautifully represented in a symmetrical mark.

abstract
popularity

Hugely popular in the early 2000s, abstract logos popularity have been waning as of late due to the fact that complex abstract symbols are harder to adapt to smaller mobile screens and devices.

The Nike logo is super simple and can exist outside of the company name and still be recognizable. It can also scale down to smaller sizes without any loss of visual acuity.

This has encouraged companies to have a logo type or typography only version of their logo that equally represents the company. Also, this has forced the simplification of abstract logos to their most basic forms.

Nike was an unintentional pioneer in super simplistic abstract logos with its super famous Nike "Swoosh".

AirBnb released an initially unloved abstract logo design in 2014 that created a monogram A that has a continuous line that also formed map location icon as the inside of the letter. Some people originally viewed the logo as something phallic that looked like human genitalia and the world came up with many memes based on the new logo design.

Super clever and still used today, the brand overcame the initial public reaction and created an easily identifiable abstract symbol that properly represents the company's ethos as indicated on the left.

The logo design created by famed DesignStudio Group stands the test of time by symbolizing more than just the company's service.

PEOPLE + PLACES + LOVE + AIRBNB =

Image sourced from https://design.studio/work/airbnb
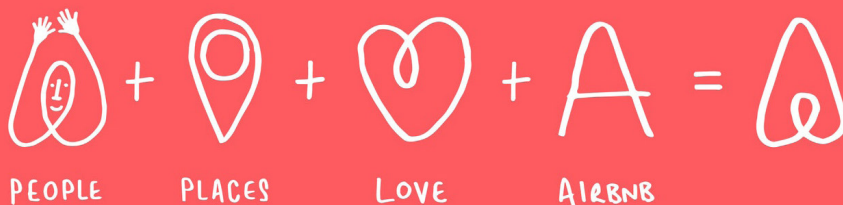
Pictorial Logos

Pictorial logomarks are a larger category of logos that use graphic elements to represent a company.

An abstract logo could be considered a pictorial logomark.

What makes the pictorial logomark a larger defined category is that the graphic element used is usually more accurate, defined and exact. Graphics in pictorial logomarks can have a large amount of detail and be more literal, allowing for more character and charm.

The Starbucks logo is a great example of a pictorial logo. The Starbucks Mermaid graphic is detailed, including the "two tails woman" and her flowing hair. An abstract version of this logo could look very different, with less detail and more of a symbolic graphical representation.

DETAIL ————

STARBUCKS®

Companies that have part of their names easily represented by a picture can benefit from a pictorial logomark. For example Puma, which sells athletic wear, has a literal puma as a part of their logo. It is a nice logical symbol to use when your name is Puma. Sometimes the path to least resistance is going with the flow of a company name.

Apple did not resist when revamping their logo decades ago with a very simple apple icon. It is defined and exact but still simple enough to be placed just about anywhere. There is no doubt that this is an Apple. Abstract logos on the other hand take a few moments to fully appreciate.

Now imagine the original apple logo from 1976 that features Sir Issac Newton sitting under an apple tree on the back of your laptop? Apple had to evolve its pictorial logo to be used effectively on products.

The Puma logo has become so recognizable over the years that many times it exists as just the logomark without the logotype.
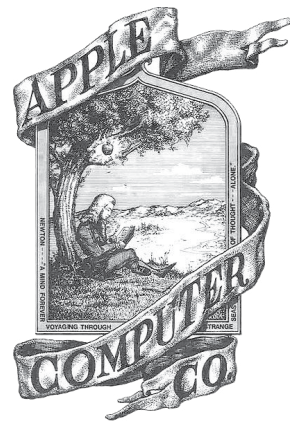
Apple's absolute first logo, pre-1976. Drawn by then co-founder Ronald Wayne.

In 1977 Apple adopted the familiar apple silhouette we see today. It first appeared in rainbow form but not as a single solid color.

Through the process of simplification you can see how it goes from a literal interpretation of "fire" and "Fox" and it slowly evolves into a more abstract version of the original logo.

The Firefox browser logo has seen many changes over the years. Like most modern logos it has seen a dramatic simplification. It is easily identifiable as a Fox but with an almost fire like appearance to the tail. The great thing about pictorial logomarks is the ability for a symbol to be quickly associated with the company name.

Wordmarks

Wordmarks refer to logos that only use letterforms in their logo.

They are void of any graphics, symbols or icons that are not in the shape of a character (or lettermark).

Even though they consist of only letters wordmarks can still be very stylistic and iconic, like the Coca-Cola logo with its custom script lettering and long distinct tails.

Wordmarks are nothing new. These various workmarks from the 1930s -1960s contained very expressive typography elements.

Letters can express a lot in the minute details of their letterforms. Barbie's logo has a hand written script typography that is both feminine and fun which matches its clientele.

Barbie

2016

2018

UBER

Uber

The Uber logo on the left was part of a 2016 rebrand. It recently switched back to the softer lowercase letters in 2018.

UBER uses a simple sans-serif with uppercase letters to look uniform and consistent. The new Yahoo logo has a slanted exclamation point to indicate movement and playfulness.

yahoo!

Netflix decided to have the letters follow a lower arch to give it a reminiscent feel to old movie theater posters and productions.

A lot of companies develop custom typefaces to use in their logos and other design assets so that each character can be carefully crafted to reflect the company's personality. It can also save the company a ton of money in font licensing fees that would typically be paid to font foundries based on how many times it is used (impressions).

You can see the shift from the older Netflix Logo with dramatic drop shadows that uses the font graphic. A 2014 logo refresh allowed Netflix to develop its own typeface called Netflix Sans (with the help of the type foundry Dalton Maag) which featured chunkier, easier to read characters and was optimized for the web.

The uppercase letters were designed to appear more "cinematic" and the lowercase letters to appear more "compact and efficient". You can even notice a similar arched flow in the lower case T in the Netflix Sans typeface. Subtle details like this allows the Netflix Logo to remain unique.

OLDER VERSION


NETFLIX

UPDATED LOGO

NETFLIX
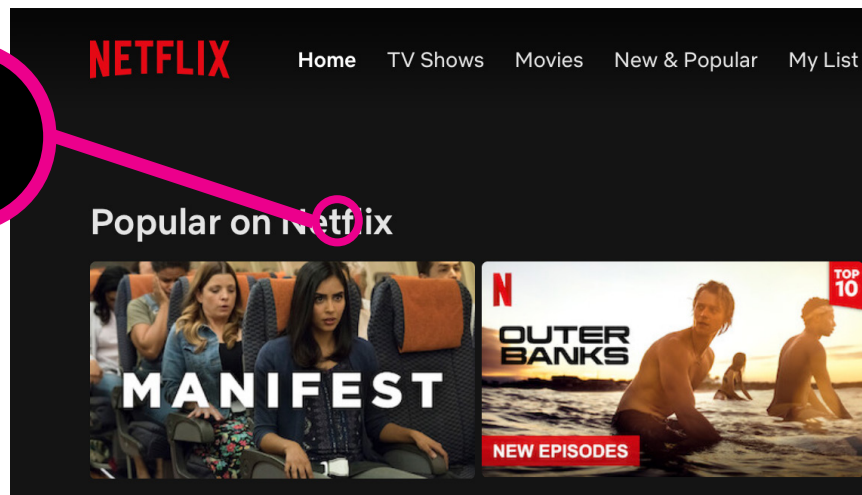
allbirds

Some companies create a custom logo that does not have any relation or similarities to any other typeface out there.

Allbirds, a European shoe company that sells sustainable shoes, is a great example of this in action. It uses softer lowercase letters throughout giving it a softer feel. It also has this custom lowercase "s" that seems to dip below the baseline that forms the shape of a bird.

You can zoom in and look at further minute details like the increasing height of the two "L"s that allow for a more gradual step up so that the word has a nice shape. It could also indicate the flight of a bird moving upwards. It also uses a monoline stroke which continues the soft approachable look as there is almost no contrast with how thick the stroke line is in various parts.
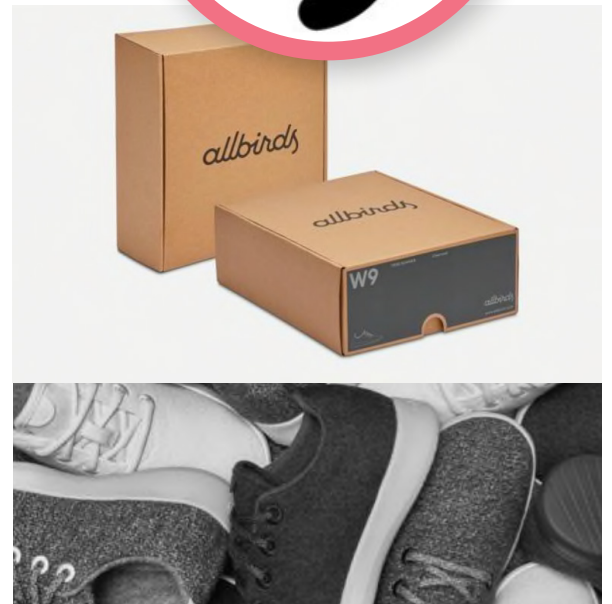
The space between.

The FedEx logo at first glance looks like a simple capital "E" and a lowercase "x" put together to form the word "Ex". Upon second glance you can make out an arrow that forms between the two characters. This arrow indicates forward movement of your packages.

This is negative space that is used to create an object without having to use extra graphics or symbols outside of the typography.

Just another sans-serif logo refresh.

Hugely popular in the early 2000s, abstract logos popularity has been waning as of late due to the fact that complex abstract symbols are harder to adapt to smaller mobile screens and devices.

In the graphic design community there has been an outcry and critique over the monotonous and predictable logo designs coming from larger companies. As mentioned before with the Netflix logo, the thickening of all characters in word marks is becoming almost essential as well as the overall simplification of logos. This assures the logos readability at smaller and smaller screen-sizes. We can criticize this gradual shift to simplicity and monotony but companies are adapting to future needs and it may be necessary to prevent companies from remaining stagnant.

This does not mean companies need to remove all personality from their original logos. They can use subtle touches to keep originality in mind. Durex, a latex company, did a recent logo refresh in 2020 that modernized the logo without loosing its original identity.

It got rid of the solid shape and made it into a single border. It also disconnected the top of the "d" from the outline so it can be more readable as a "d". They also rounded the top of the "d" to keep consistent with the slightly rounded ends of the characters in the other letters. It simplified one of the legs of the "x" making it soothly transition into the stroke. The border now has the same stroke thickness as the characters, giving it uniformity. It redesigned the logo yet kept some original details so it can keep brand recognition for prior customers.

OLD

NEW

OLD

NEW

OLD

NEW

OLDER VERSION

UPDATED LOGO

Mascot Logos

Mascot logos contain special characters created by the company to **represent them** and their **company values**.


WOOKIE

Pringles

KFC®

You will see mascot logos mostly used for both sports teams, fast food and convenience food companies.

mailchimp

Wendy's

BRUINS

BOB JONES UNIVERSITY

FLORIDA TARPONS

A word of caution when creating a mascot logo: make sure you continue to foster and support the mascot in future brand communication and marketing.

Rarely can you get away with including a mascot and not creating a backstory or personally for that mascot. This is a big brand decision and creating a mascot is like caring for a dog. It is an extra responsibility that should be carried out with enough time for that mascot to become a familiar character and lovable icon that your audience will enjoy.

Mascots are great for companies that need a representative to show off their personality, quirks and uniqueness. Food brands love to use mascots because having a punch of personality is hard when the only visible brand element most consumers see is on the product packaging. I tend to think of Pringles cans and the Kool-Aid man that almost seemed to leap off the packaging and into our imaginations as kids. A face can communicate so much more than symbols ever can. Squinty red eyes are mischievous, a toothy grin is approachable and ripped muscles can evoke strength and power.
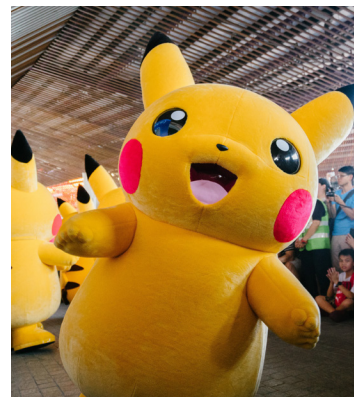
Mr. Clean products takes their mascot very seriously – it appears front and center on all of their cleaning products.

Not only that, their mascot represents the company on all commercial TV spots and digital ads. Most of these mascots come with entire life stories and bios written by ad agencies to make sure they stay consistent with brand messaging. Mr. Clean has had to update his look over the years. In 1957, Harry Barnhart created the idea of Mr. Clean while Ernest C. Allen, an art director, gave him his look. He even has taken on a new more attractive look to appeal to a younger audience, as the next generation purchases homes and begins to find their cleaning products of choice.

OLD

NEW
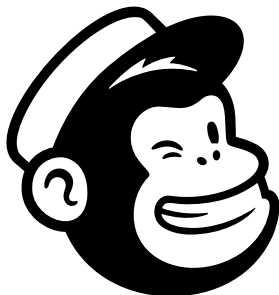
MailChimp, an e-mail creation service, has presented a monkey named Freddie as its spearhead for many years.

At its start, the logo featured a really detailed script typeface which was popular in the mid 2010s. Because the script typeface was complex, rarely did you see the mascot and the logotype together as one, which made it hard for a brand user to connect both the mascot and the script typeface. During a large re-brand in 2018 they continued to simplify the mascot to just one simple flat color. This allowed the company to use both the mascot and company name together for further brand recognition.

Combination Marks

Combination marks are the simple unification of both a **wordmark** and a **logomark**.

The Apple logo is the perfect example of a logomark that can exist alone without the need for a company name.

The Apple logomark is so well known there is no a need for a logomark to be added. **For companies who do not have this huge amount of prior brand recognition a logotype and a logomark may be required.**

Dropbox has an isometric logomark in the shape of a box that complements the wordmark. Because the icon is so simple, you rarely see it without the logotype, as one helps to identify the other.

Most companies will not be able to accomplish what Apple has done with their logomark. Rarely can companies pull off using just the logomark without a company name nearby and still be recognized. This takes decades of brand awareness.

COMBINATION MARKS ALWAYS INCLUDE BOTH ELEMENTS

LOGOMARK   LOGOTYPE

LACOSTE

Lacoste, a high-end clothing brand, has a mascot alligator logomark in combination with its Lacoste sans-serif typeface.

Just like Apple, the logomark can exist alone and is identifiable on clothing. When used outside of its main product it would not be as easily identifiable, such as store signage, advertising and digital ads. There are times it needs to use its combination mark and times when it can exist as separate elements.
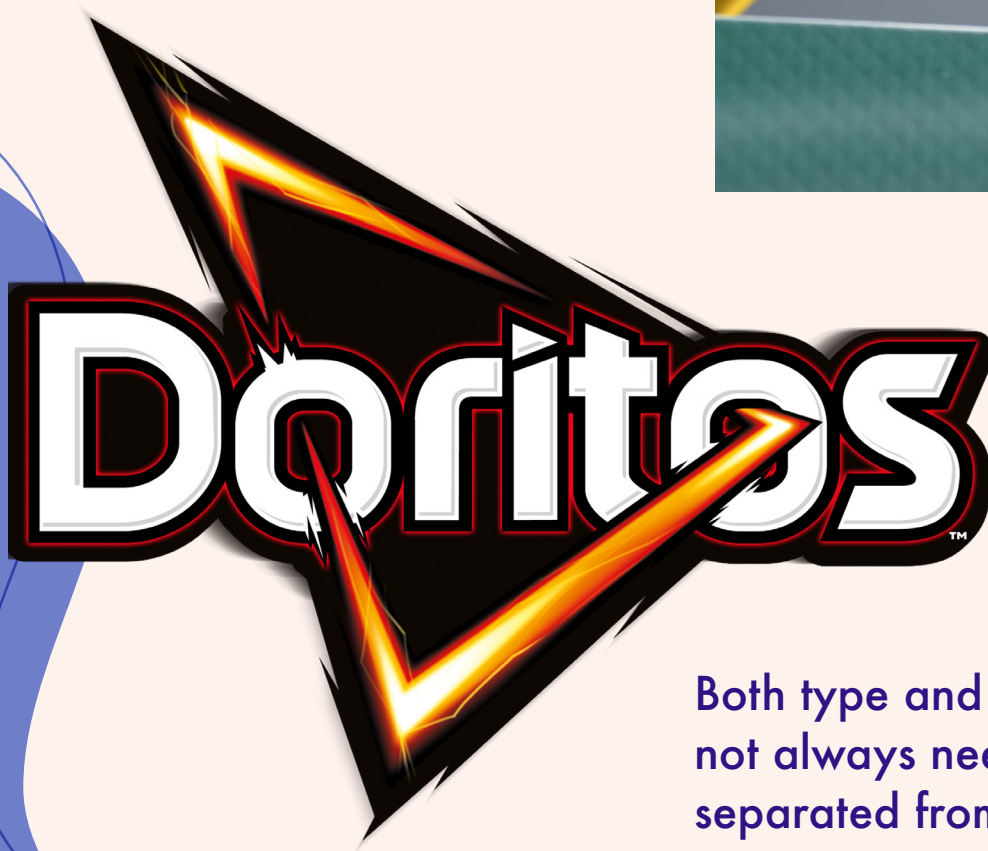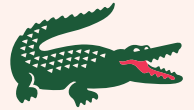
Both type and symbols do not always need to be totally separated from each other.

The Doritos logo seems to effortlessly fuse the two together as one main logo. This is especially useful on store shelves where that added graphic of the Doritos shape focuses the viewer's eyes into the brand name Doritos.

Emblems

Emblem logos take the fusing of logomarks and logotypes more seriously by taking on a seal or stamp like appearance.
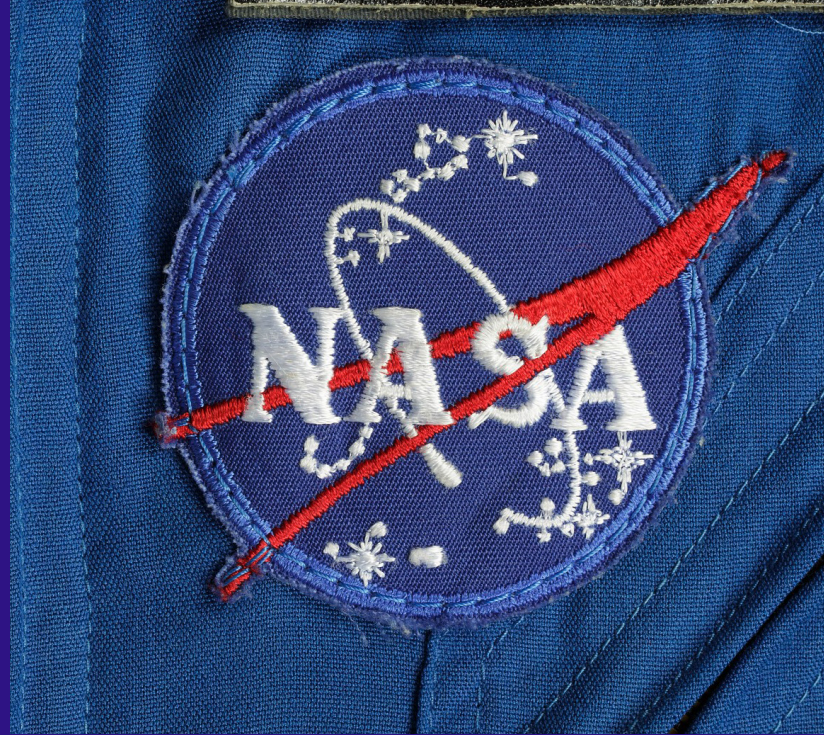
Emblem logos can be powerful as they can easily exist on any background, simple or super busy. They derived from family crests (heraldic crests) or business signs (which was the earliest form of company branding) which indicated their family tradition or craft. For example, the blacksmith may have a hammer and an anvil.

Crests for families who achieved knighthood would be indicated in the crest by a piece of head armor. This was a symbol of pride and would be hung up in the main house for all to see.
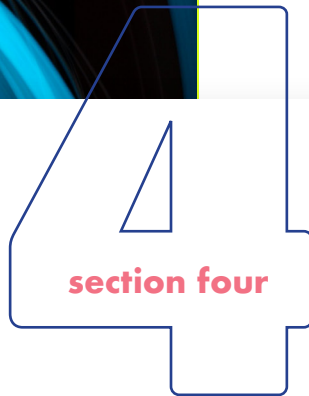
HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
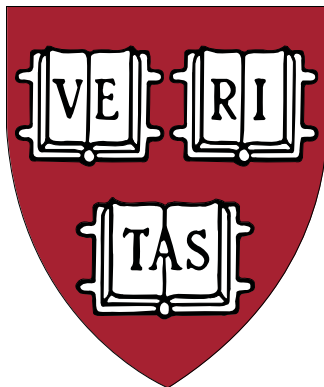
Companies that have a lot of history could benefit form an emblem. Also those which are in a distinguished field like a college or university. Harvard, for example, uses crest as their logo along with the word VERITAS (Latin for "truth") on three books. The books indicate that this is a place of study as well as establishing their values. The crest contains a huge a history for the university and it would be hard to accomplish this with other logo categories like a simple wordmark.

Modern examples of emblems include breweries. Southern Tier Brewing Co., located in Lakewood, NY, has a circular logo which includes the company's full name, embellishments like laurels to give it a traditional feel and ultimately symbols inside which clearly indicate that this is a brewery. This logo adapts beautifully to online websites, social media and more. Because emblem elements are tightly packed together they take up minimal space. They can easily be used for packaging and cans that have narrow sight range.

4

a brief history of art & style movements.

Logo categories usually do not change very often. A combination mark is a combination mark, a emblem is an emblem and so forth. But logo styles change with the passing years.

Some trends like art deco, which was popular in the 1920s and 1930s, are still relevant with logos today. Meanwhile, other trends like gloss 2.0, popular circa 2004-2008 are seeing a drastic reduction in popularity.

This section will review common long lasting trends that are both essential to know as a budding logo designer.

Design **today** builds on all of the style movements of **yesterday.**

The Future

Post Modern
More expression and countering austerity

Pop Art
Excitement in everyday things

Swiss Design
Simplify when possible

Art Deco
Opulence and detail

Bauhaus
Form follows function

Art Nouveau
Dynamism and movement
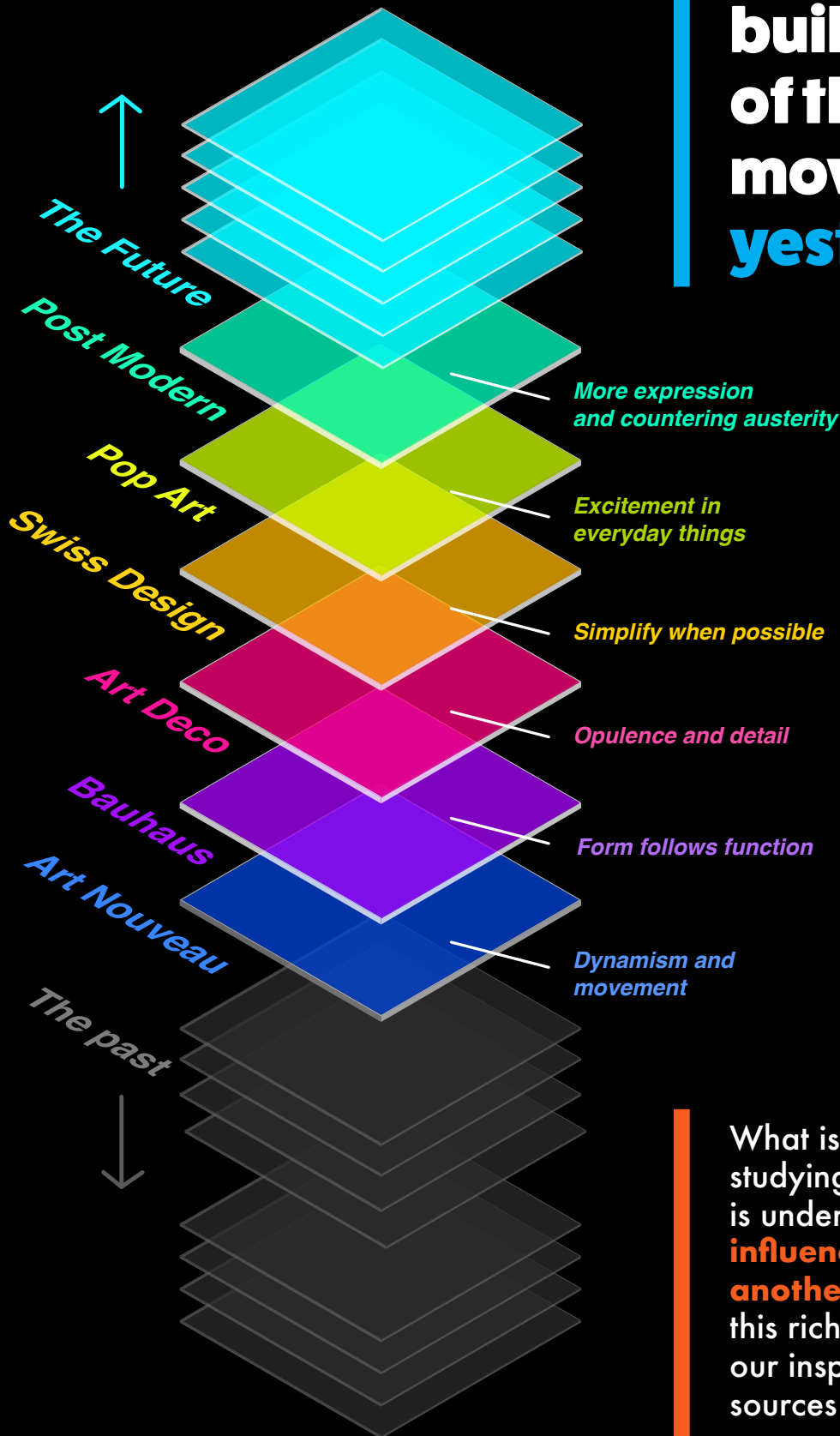
The past

What is great about studying styles of the past is understanding **how one influenced and inspired another.** Because we have this rich history we can draw our inspiration from many sources and styles.

We are very lucky to be in our position and to be able to draw on such a wonderful rich design history.

I like to compare art and design movements to a multiple floored building with the level underneath being required to build the next level.

You will notice in this section how some art movements were started to counter the previously dominant art or design movement of that time. For example, the latest postmodern movement was a counter to the austere, simplistic, purposeful and calculated Swiss design style that absolutely dominated the design space for decades in the mid-20th century.

This is also true for the Bauhaus movement, which was a response to the Art Nouveau movement. Art Nouveau was very ornamental with lots of details as well as Art Deco which also encouraged lots of fine lines, details and flourishes. The German Bauhaus movement, as you will study further in this section, tried to reduce all unnecessary components for the sake of giving a design a single driving purpose to be clear and on point, with the Swiss design style taking that even further with the use of grids.

It is safe to say that even today these back and forth style movements are evident in current design trends. For example the web 2.0 micro style that was popular with logo design in the first decade of the 21st century had glossy realistic effects. This design style overtook most new logos that came out at the time to the point where designers wanted to challenge the over acceptance of that trend. As a response there was a movement back toward flat simplistic logo designs, void of unnecessary details, gloss and effects like gradients and drop shadows.

Once again, as of late we are seeing a movement away from flat design and toward more expressive typography like the hand-written typography movement that we are currently in.

Trends, change and evolve but they also have a history they build upon and understanding that history is important.
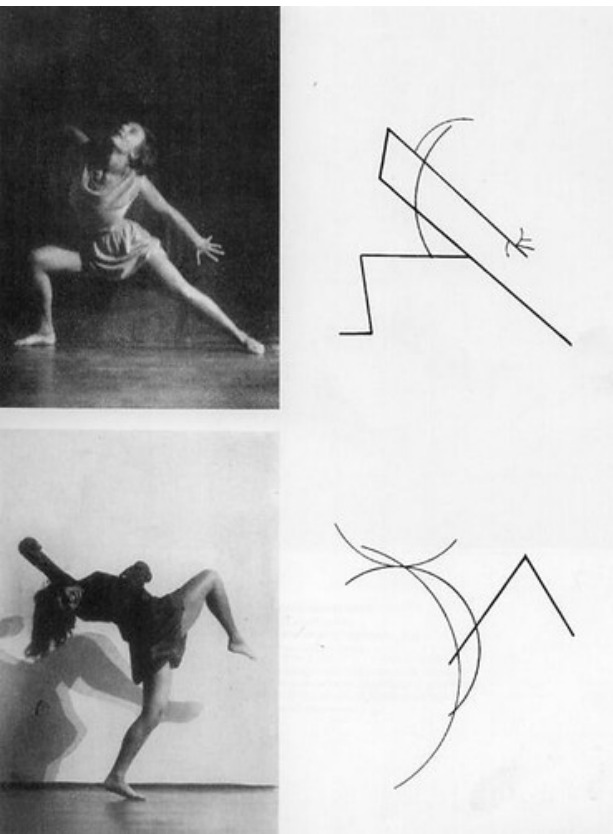
Bauhaus

50 Jahre
bauhaus
Ausstellung
5. Mai - 28. Juli
1968

Württembergischer
Kunstverein
Stuttgart
Kunstgebäude
am Schlossplatz

Unifying the arts to create aesthetically pleasing, practical design.

Bauhaus was a German school that was open from 1919 to 1933. The word Bauhaus in German translates to **"building house".** This school, and eventually an influential movement in art and design, sought to make everyday objects effective and maintain a sense of simplicity and beauty.

It was born in the era of modernism in Germany where artists wanted to create new expressions and forms of art and style and leave the traditional era of design behind. It focused on producing well designed products that could easily be mass produced for a larger portion of society instead of just the wealthy elite. There is a industrialized influence on Bauhaus as it introduces technology and new materials into its product designs.

The Bauhaus school of thought eventually impacted the future of architectural design, product design and even typography.

Geometric typography was influenced by the precise but rounded characteristics of the Bauhaus style. It has a holistic approach to design and the arts without distinct borders between different design and art fields.

There is a heavy desire with Bauhaus style to focus on a more scientific approach to solving design problems. This paved the way for grids, the golden ratio and other more mathematical interpretations of design.

The Bauhaus style consists of basic geometric shapes which serves as its main form of inspiration. There is a distinct use of rounded edges combined with sharp rectangular edges. It sought to break free from past artistic expressions and focused more on the simplistic nature of clean lines and less on emotions. It wanted to provide order to a disordered world.
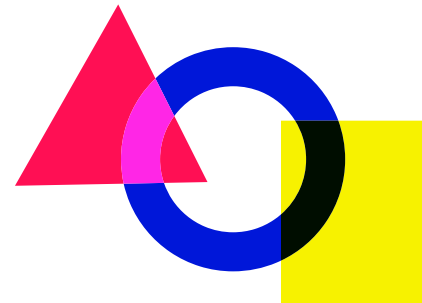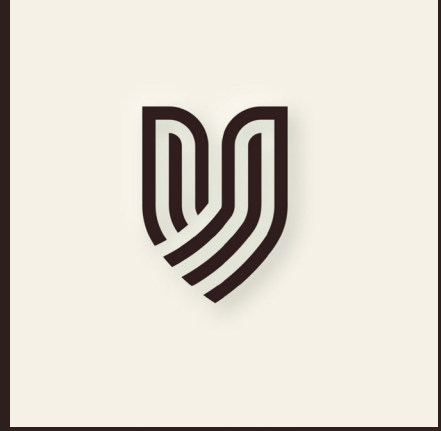
It also overlaps geometric shapes and makes sure to follow the basic theories of color, layout and hierarchy to achieve a basic balance and flow. Bauhaus design is seeks to make things as simple as possible, without the use of anything unnecessary. You can see this in logos designs that are influenced by this style.

form follows function

G7
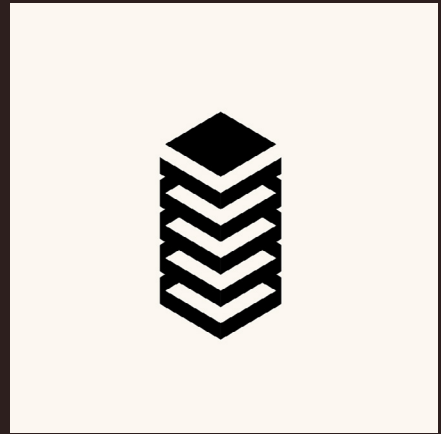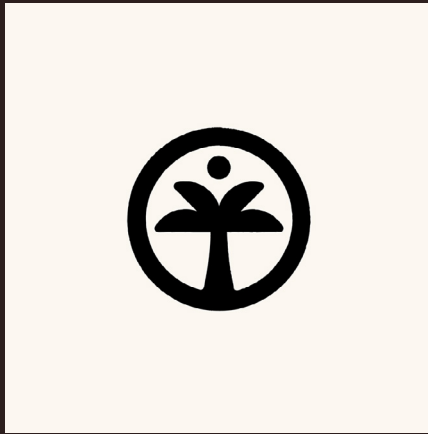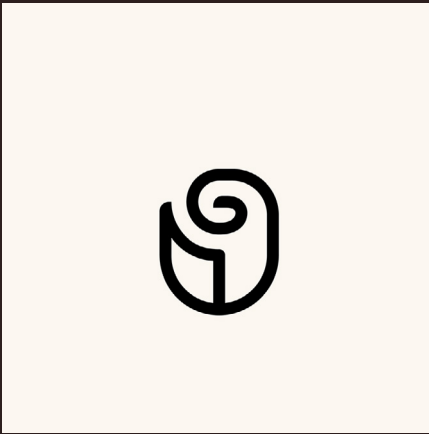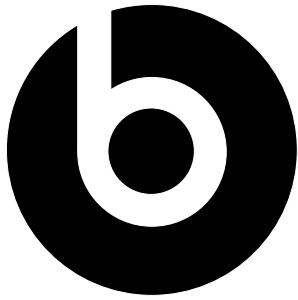
Bauhaus today

It is easy to see the influence the Bauhaus style had on current logo design.

Most of these examples continue to use basic geometric forms to construct their logomarks. The Beats logo by Dr. Dre is a great representation of the Bauhaus rounded letterform and surrounding circle.

Bauhaus can have sharp angles but with it come the softer rounded edges. All of these marks are at their most simplest form without any unnecessary design elements. This style of logo works well for the modern digital world because of this simplicity and "back to basics" look. This style has been around for almost 100 years, yet, it is not a style that will be going away anytime soon and encapsulates clean classic design.

Dumino™

kiwismedia school.®

art deco
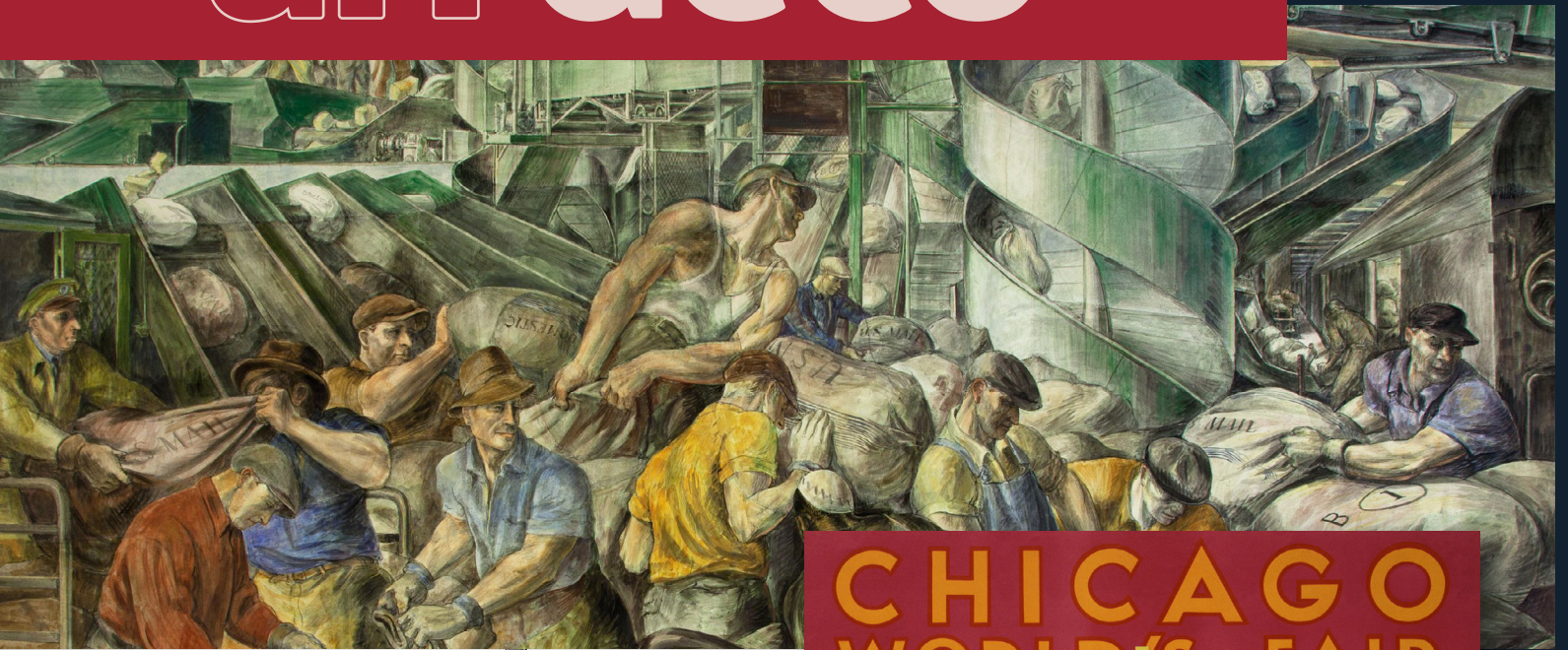
Workers sorting the mail, a mural in the U.S. Customs House, New York City, by Reginald Marsh (1936)

CHICAGO WORLD'S FAIR
MAY 27TH — NOV. 1ST

1833 A CENTURY OF PROGRESS 1933

Chicago World's Fair, A Century of Progress, Expo poster, 1933

The Chrysler building in NYC.

Lady with Panther by George Barbier for Louis Cartier, 1914. Display card commissioned by Cartier shows a woman in a Paul Poiret gown (1914).
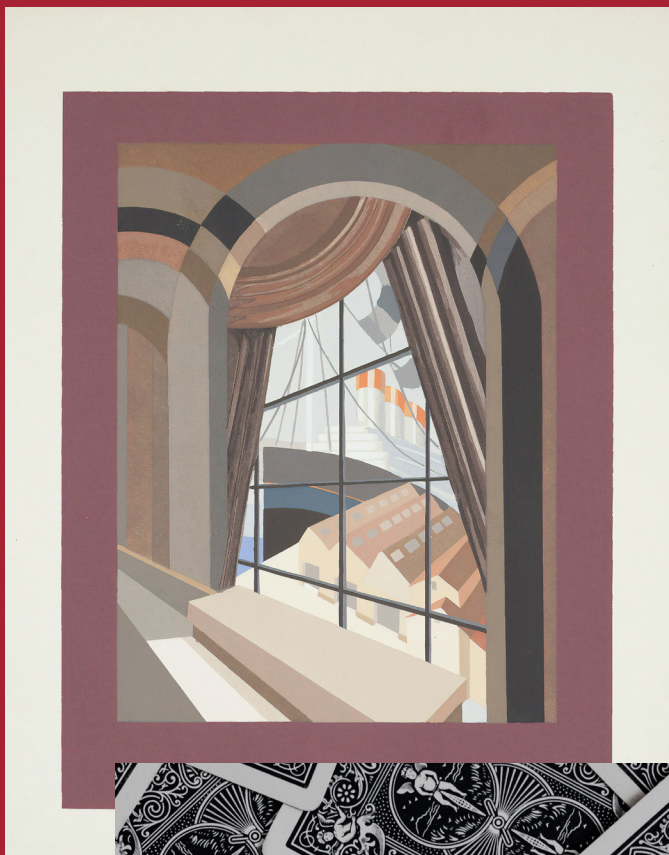
Dramatic, opulent detailed and luxurious.

The Art Deco movement was inspired by cubism, a style of painting pioneered by Pablo Picasso. Cubism was also heavily influenced by basic 3D geometric shapes like the cone, cylinder and the sphere.

Art Deco is less of a specific art style but a collection of styles of that era. It developed in the early 20th century around the period of WW1. It developed through a desire to show excitement for the rapidly developing technology and industries of its time and the successes that followed. It is defined by extravagant opulence with lots of details, sharp angles and modern day materials like smooth rounded plastic and glass.

The style of the Art Deco movement inspired buildings like the empire state building and the Chrysler building.

You can see the details and ornaments in this classic design for a deck of cards.

Pablo Picasso, 1910, Girl with a Mandolin (Fanny Tellier), oil on canvas.

SNOB

PARIS HÔTEL

∴
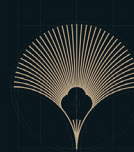
It heavily influenced the development of varying typography characteristics like long stretched dramatic letterforms with both pointed ends but geometric inspired curves.

The current influence of Art Deco can be seen in logo design in a lot of different ways. You can see it through the use of typography, as the ultra stretched letterforms you see used often today where originally inspired by Art Deco.

You can also see it in detailed line art, super popular in logos for coaching, personal development and hospitality.
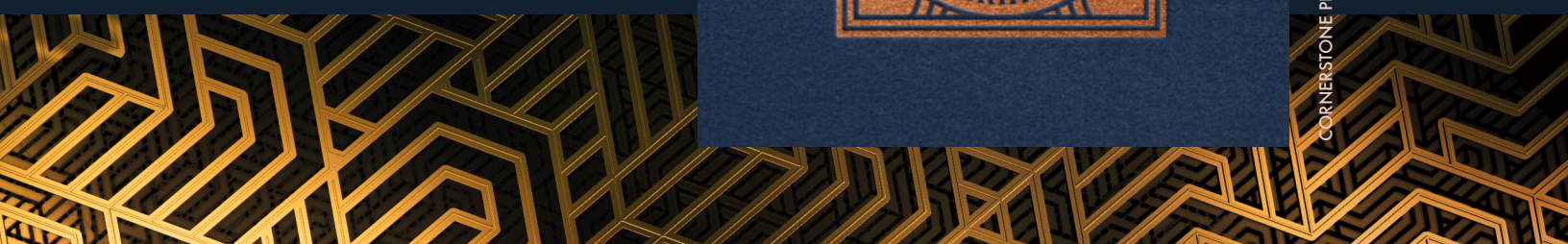
HOTEL METRO - BRANDING BROOKE BURGE | BEHANCE.COM

SIMPLE ELEGANT TYPEFACE RIO STORE | BEHANCE.COM

Because Art Deco is not just one single defined style and is a collection of styles of that era, you can see different representations of Art Deco typography based logos.

You have the classic stretched letters with the center arm of the "E" being placed lower on the letterform as well as underlined characters like the "O" in the Metro example.

You also see more stylized ligatures.

You will noticed in this modern typeface interpretation the two "L"s with the second one nested in the first one. This is very commonly seen in Art Deco.

ADELIOS FONT (FREE WEIGHT) ILHAM HERRY | BEHANCE.COM

CENTRO ITALIA - SUPERMERCATO & BISTRO NICHOLAS CHRISTOWITZ
BEHANCE.COM

Swiss international Design aka International Typographic Style

Think small.

Our little car isn't so much of a novelty any more.
A couple of dozen college kids don't try to squeeze inside it.
The guy at the gas station doesn't ask where the gas goes.
Nobody even stares at our shape.
In fact, some people who drive our little flivver don't even think 32 miles to the gallon is going any great guns.
Or using five pints of oil instead of five quarts.
Or never needing anti-freeze.
Or racking up 40,000 miles on a set of tires.
That's because once you get used to some of our economies, you don't even think about them any more.
Except when you squeeze into a small parking spot. Or renew your small insurance. Or pay a small repair bill.
Or trade in your old VW for a new one.
Think it over.

Max Gubler
Irène Zurkinden
Kunst halle Basel
24.Okt. -22. Nov.

Volkswagen applied Swiss design to its advertising to create wide open whitespace. Before this time, using too much whitespace was considered wasteful of the given space. Swiss design accentuates whitespace and it even becomes a design element itself.

Grids, white space and sans-serif typefaces rule.

The "form follows function" ethos of the Bauhaus movement can be clearly seen in the Swiss design style that became popular in the 1950s by designers in Switzerland and has heavily influenced modern day design. You can almost see this as a continued evolution of Bauhaus with its use of super simple geometric shapes.

Grids are a mainstay of the Swiss style as it helps to logically maintain order but also present information in easily digestible ways. What really makes this style stand out among other styles is its generous use of heavy whitespace between elements. This ensures the design maintains readability and has a simple direct goal.

Typography plays a larger role and even starts to become the design itself. It features mostly sans-serif typefaces void of any details or serifs. Typography is usually left aligned with ragged right edges.

This is also the style that bore the typeface Helvetica, the most popular sans-serif typefaces today and is even used for the NYC subway any many other government institutions.

5. Sept. bis
11. Okt.
Gewerbemuseum
Basel

Alte und
neue Formen
in Japan

This is Helvetica, used on all of the wayfinding signs in the New York City Subway. Helvetica was developed in 1957 by Swiss typeface designer Max Miedinger

helvetica is awesome.

Helvetica Neue 25 Ultra Lig
Helvetica Neue 35 Thin
Helvetica Neue 45 Light
Helvetica Neue 55 Rom
Helvetica Neue 65 Med

The Golden Ratio, (which is covered in more detail later) was important to Swiss design.

Any grid created with a structured math equation was now in a Swiss designers tool belt. We can see a resurgence in grids being used in all facets of logo design, from overall layout to the construction of a logomark, as seen in these examples.

Just like Bauhaus, there is a general focus on simple geometric shapes and simplification. Rarely does one design movement exist independently without being influenced by prior design movements.

Marsh Museum *of* Modern Art
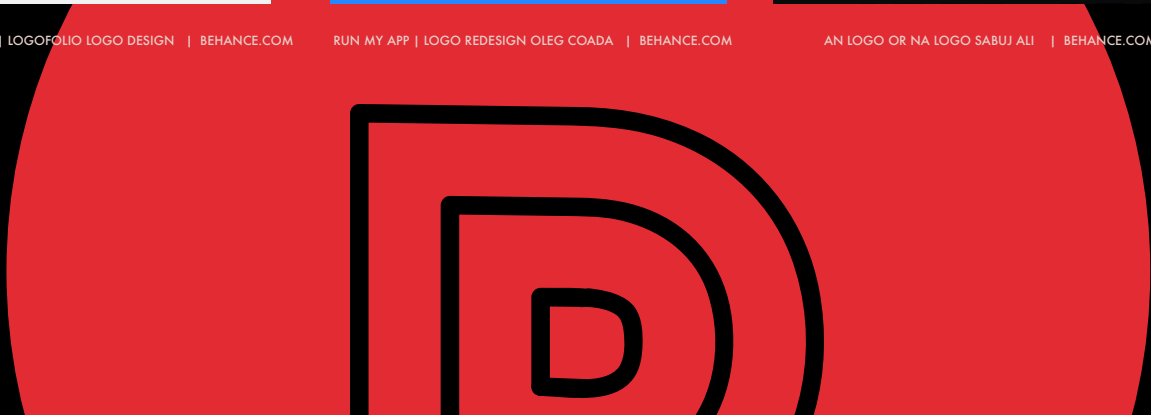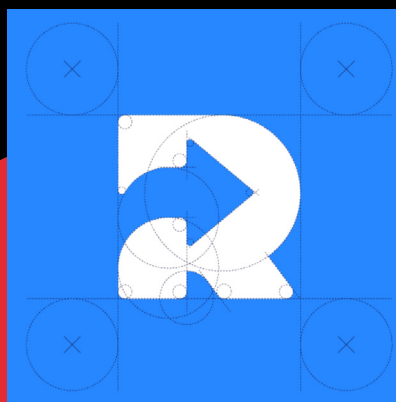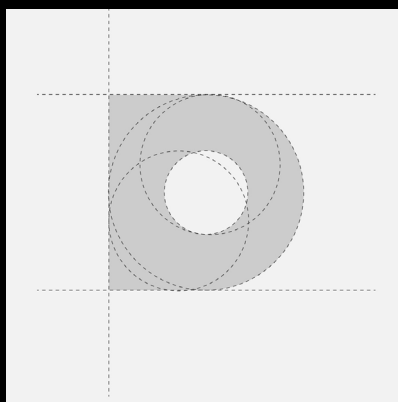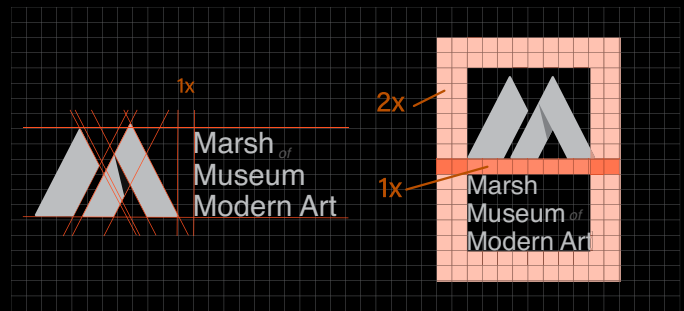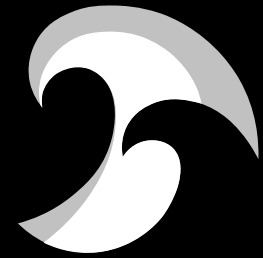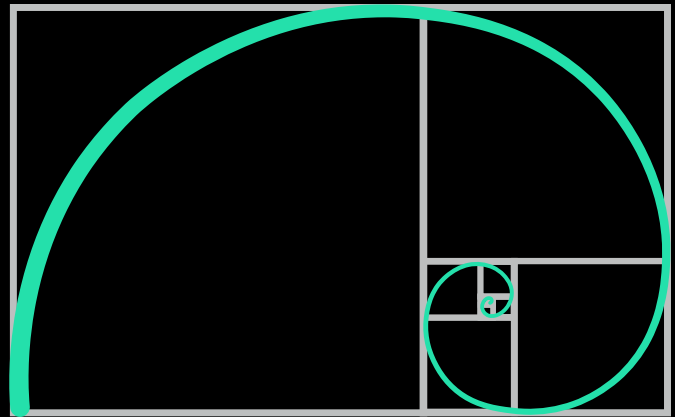
Pop art

Roy Lichtenstein, Drowning Girl, 1963, on display at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Marilyn Monroe (Marilyn) by Andy Warhol, 1967.

The everyday becomes exciting.

Originating in the United States and the United Kingdom was the colorful bold style of Pop Art. We often times think of the famous artist Andy Warhol when we think of this over-the-top style.

Pop Art challenged the traditional forms of fine art by using everyday, mundane objects as its subject matter, usually in a comic book like style. A famous example by Andy Warhol is his painting of a simple can of Campbell's Soup. These normal everyday objects became interesting and resonated with viewers because Pop Art was very relatable – a far cry from the delicate picture of perfection from the Renaissance era.

What defines Pop Art is a haphazard, rough style that focuses on the subject, less on grids and less on being precise. Rough sketched lines, torn newspaper and collages where common elements used in Pop Art.

Pop Art defined the 1960s advertising style with colorful sometimes sarcastic sense of humor. It brought a down-to-earth style mainstream to sell products. There was a huge resurgence of the Pop Art style in the 1990s.

Halftone pattern, popular with this movement.

Half Dollar (1962 - Robert Dowd)
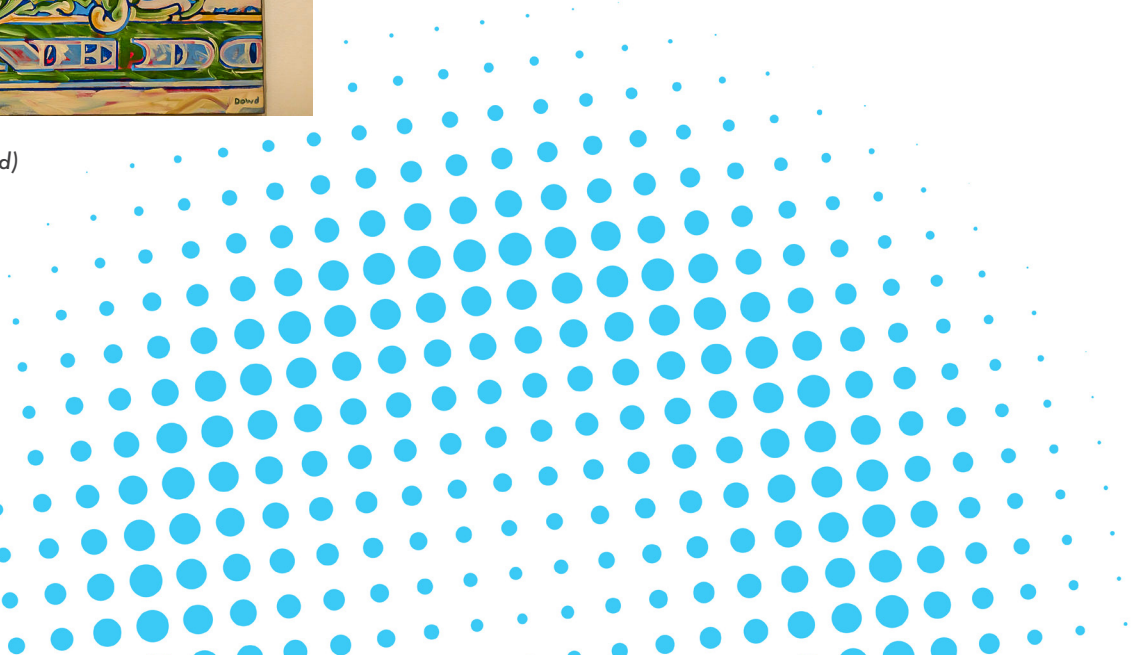
DO NOT LET RULES LIMIT YOUR STYLE!

One of the most well known logo designs of our time is the famous red lips for the band The Rolling Stones. It makes a big statement with a comical undertone and a slight defiance of social norms.

Most logos that adapt a Pop Art style have very expressive typography like in the Pizza Head logo by designer Wintrygrey. It usually consists of custom hand-written typography where text characters, rather than follow a straight line, caress each other and fit together like a puzzle piece.

BOLD PIZZA LOGO BY DESIGNER BY WINTRYGREY
99DESIGNS.COM

CREATED IN 1970 BY DESIGNER JOHN PASCHE FOR THE BAND "THE ROLLING STONES"

LOGO FOR MISTER COOPER ICE CREAM BY DESIGNER ROB CLARKE FOR THE JOHNSON BANKS DESIGN FIRM

SUGARDOUGH BAKEHOUSE | BRANDING DEEP FRIED STUDIO
BEHANCE.COM

POST modern

2005 - 'Moving Cube in Wire' an abstract copper wire sculpture, painter-artist, Fons Heijnsbroek
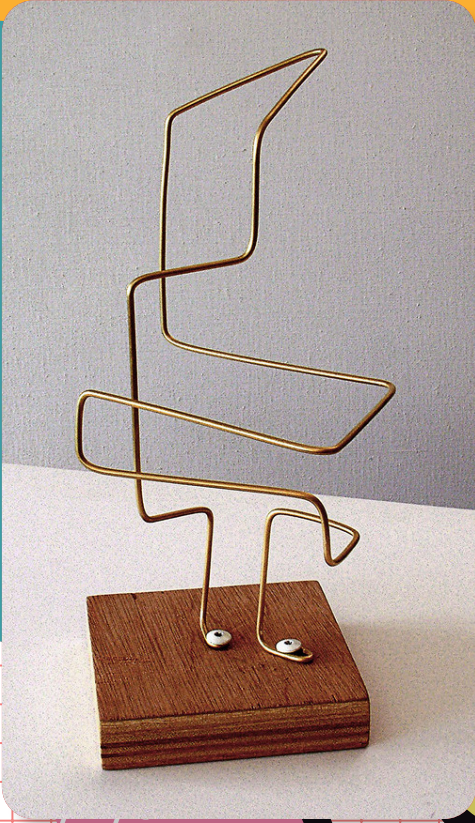
The Memphis style was popular in the 1990s.

BRIGHT AND EXPERIMENTAL. LET'S BREAK SOME RULES.

If you like being odd, fun, quirky, bold and if you break past design rules established by the likes of the Swiss Typographic style, you might find yourself in the movement of postmodern design.

It developed in the late 1960s but really became a popular interior design style in the 1970s and 1980s. Deconstructionism was a movement within postmodern design which gave buildings a fragmented look. It uses non-rectangular shapes and distorted exteriors. This was all to challenge and push further the rigid classical architecture of the past.

There is a lot of perception of movement in postmodern art with rounded corners and objects that tend to look in motion with nonlinear lines.

The Walt Disney Concert Hall, home to the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

ARXIVIO

Abstract logos where born out of this movement of breaking the grid but also providing this fluid movement with rounded edges and overlapping elements.

Logo Marks #3 Ted Kulakevich | Dribbble.com
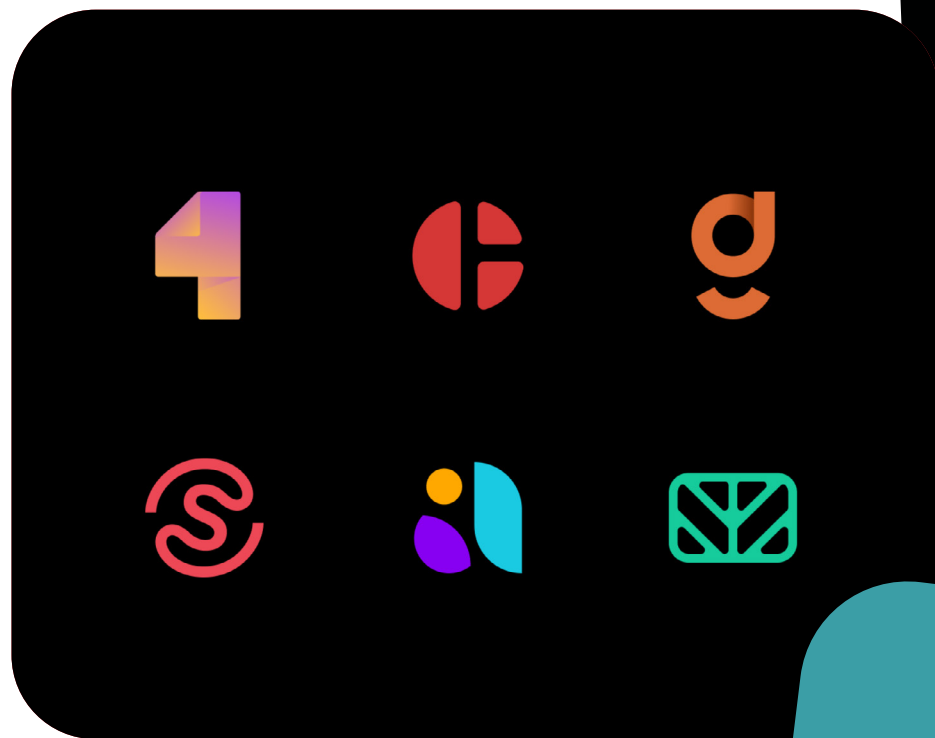
THE NEW SCHOOL

PARSONS

ABCD
ABCD

Variable width open type font was developed specifically for Parsons. You can see the random widths applied in the bottom row compared to a standard even width spacing above.

The Parsons Logo

Parsons, the design school part of famed The New School in NYC, adapted a random variable typeface for its branding standards called Neue Random, created by Peter Bil'ak in conjunction with the design studio Pentagram. It would randomly set different character widths as the user typed, thus creating this totally rule-breaking look to its typography and its logo.

This was controversial at the time (and most things that are postmodern try to be), but it is decidedly intentional about being different. The design school has a philosophy of trying new things and developing the future of design.

Images retrieved from the Parsons' branding standards manual at newschool.edu.

THE NEW SCHOOL

EXPLORE PARSONS INFORMATION SESSIONS

Wednesday, March 4, 2015
4:00pm – 6:00pm
Room D1009, Albert and Vera List Academic Center
6 East 16th Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10011

THE NEW SCHOOL

PHILOSOPHY LECTURE: PATRICIA DAILEY

Wednesday, March 4, 2015
4:00pm – 6:00pm
Room D1009, Albert and Vera List Academic Center
6 East 16th Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10011

THE NEW SCHOOL

the future

What has made styles evolve in the last decade has been an increase in user experience design.

UX (as they call it), puts the user as the center focus making sure there are no roadblocks to accomplishing their goals, wishes and desires. If it is a food ordering app, then focusing on UX will allow the user to quickly get to the checkout and process the order while also enjoying the smooth, easy experience. Perhaps the app makes sure they did not forget a drink upon checkout with a notification or provides a very visual experience so you can flow through the app quickly.

The digital age has brought us into new territory. Now that digital devices are super small and mobile everything we create as designers must be adapt to this new world. Complicated detailed logos are still great for other brand assets but for the use as a main company identifier, you must think about the small spaces it must exist in.

"

The move to digital merged style with usability.

This is where the latest styles have developed in the digital age.

Before mobile devices were our main interaction with the world we browsed the Internet using desktop computers. The screens were generous and allowed the creation of more complicated logomarks with drop shadows, blurred highlights and layers. I tend to think of the original Yahoo! and Google logos when I think of this style in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

No artificial colors.

Think different.

web 2.0

This was a move to make brands look high tech and ready to move into the future with the latest technology. Other brands followed with this glossy look and adopted the name web 2.0, in reference to how much the web has evolved in the 2010s.

A lot of tech companies followed suite with these extra details. Popular effects included a reflection, like the logo was sitting on glass. Others used gradients, curved highlights, and anything that could emulate glass.

Google.com logo used from 1999 to 2010.

Yahoo.com logo used from 1996 to 2009

Apple then changed the world with their high gloss slick looking iMac computer with a transparent back and more individualized color choices. Their advertising changed, too with the added super glossy slick looking effect.

Apple Inc. "No artificial colors." Print advertisement for iMac G3, 1998.

Apple logo created in 1998.   *Logomark for wordpress.org.*

YouTube.com Logo from 2005.   *Logo for Skype created in 2005.*

Apple then released the iPhone and with it came these hyper realistic looking icon designs.

This is called skeuomorphic design, where layers and realism was favored. These icons almost have a tactile feeling to them with textures, patterns and highlights.

INSTAGRAM APP PRE 2015

SKEUOMORPHIC DESIGN EXAMPLE
Skeuomporphic icons had ample details, effects and layers.

The original iPhone home screen from 2007.

OLD LOGO

UPDATED LOGO

OLD LOGO (WEB 2.0 STYLE)

UPDATED LOGO (FLAT STYLE)

https://www.dropbox.com/branding

OLD LOGO

UPDATED LOGO

the era of flat design: 2008 - current

If it could be simplified, it was.

As we moved into the second decade of the century, we experienced a total counter movement to all of the detailed and effected driven design. The flat design era was upon us. This was a counter to the web 2.0 look that almost every company had employed. As we have talked about before, once one style or movement has gone too far, a counter movement ensues and the future is no different.

Flat design has zero effects, drop shadows and details. It also over-saturated the space of the 2010 decade. Just like the Swiss style of the mid 20th century, it favored an overall simplification of all design elements. If it was not necessary, design elements were removed.

Back and forth goes the styles.

Now the pendulum swings the other way. In the last few years more hand drawn elements are sneaking their way back into logos while also keeping it flat and clean, unlike the logos of the early 21st century. This is because companies are making sure logos remain expressive and unique but also can adapt to those smaller screen sizes and be practical for the sake of the user.

Logos & Marks 04
By Ahmed iliraqi
Project found on Behance.com

Miscellaneous
James Lafuente
Project found on Behance.com

LOGOFOLIO (Vol. 3)
Tristan Nuit
Project found on Behance.com

Logo Collection
Lex Revolter
Project found on Behance.com

Complexity

Expression, detail & favoritism toward individuality

Transitional periods

Many styles exist between the transition between the more extreme design approaches.

Simplicity

Effective, defined and functional. Mass appeal and marketability.

ART NOUVEAU (1890-1920)   ART DECO (1910-1930)   POP ART (1955-1980)   WEB 2.0 (1990's-2000's)   DIGITAL SKETCHING & ILLUSTRATION (2010's)

● VICTORIAN (1800s)
● SURREALISM (1900-1930)
● AMERICAN KITSCH (1950s)
● PSYCHEDELIC MOVEMENT (1958-1975)
● GRUNGE STYLE (1990's 2000's)
● PUNK (1970S - 1980S)
● AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION (2010-present)
● CUBISM (1900-1930)
● NEW YORK SCHOOL DESIGN (1940-1970)
● FUTURISM (1900-1930)
● EARLY MODERN
● LATE MODERN (1945-1960)
● RETROFUTURISM
  Other names: Steampunk Cyberpunk
● 3-DIMENSIONAL STYLE & SKEUOMORPHIC DESIGN (2007-present)
● INTERACTION DESIGN (2010's - present)
● MINIMALISM

BAUHAUS (1919-1933)   SWISS DESIGN (1950-1980)   ADVERTISING BOOM (1950s-1980s)   FLAT DESIGN (2000's)   THE FUTURE

1900   1920   1930   1940   1950   1960   1970   1980   1990   2000   2010   2020   2030

LARGER MOVEMENTS ⊢————— MODERN —————⊣ ⊢————— POST MODERN —————⊣ ⊢———— DIGITAL AGE ————⊣

Dominant Style Movements in Graphic Design

The swinging pendulum from one extreme to another.

For every major style and art/design movement there is a counter movement. No one style within a movement dominates for a long period of time.

Some movements continue to span decades, producing several different sub-styles and then evolve into the next movement. When a dominant style fades out

they can still be influential in the future as a foundation and inspiration for a future style and movement.
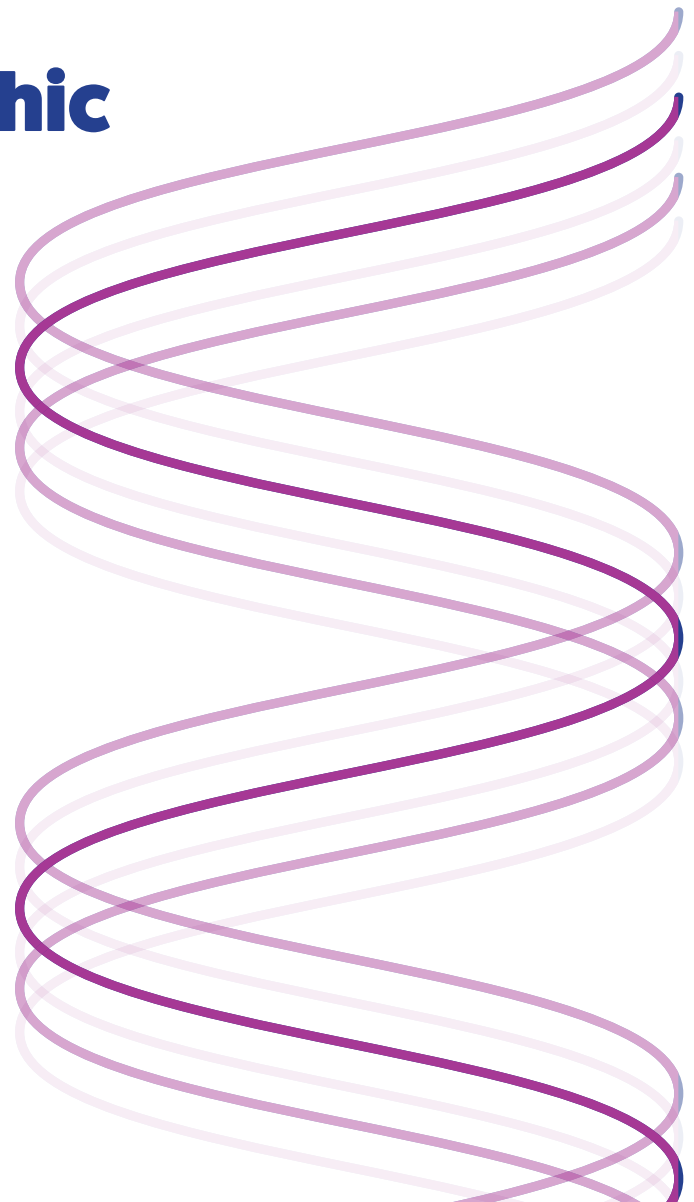
5 logo design & branding

We cannot start a logo design without first understanding the company's values, DNA, ethos, goals and mission.

Branding is a huge part of that process. The types of questions we ask our clients and the conversations we have can help dramatically shape our concepts and ideas.

Branding is multifaceted and includes company ideals, brand voice, visuals and even includes how to interact with its audience.

product differentiation

business strategy

pricing

marketing

brand story

brand voice

brand goals

brand strategy

brand au

brand message

brand values

brand identity

bill-boards

way-finding signs

events/ large display

brand extention

the logo

brand extention

large banners

sign & car wraps

brand extention

brand extention

print

letter-head

collateral

brand extention

social media

magazine ads

apparel

internal commun-ications

cover/ profile photos

organic posts/ video

paid posts

poster

business strategy

marketing

brand strategy

- customer managment
- placement/ distribution
- product differentiation
- culture
- mission/ vision/ goals
- pricing

brand story

brand voice

brand goals

the logo

brand audience

brand message

brand values

brand identity

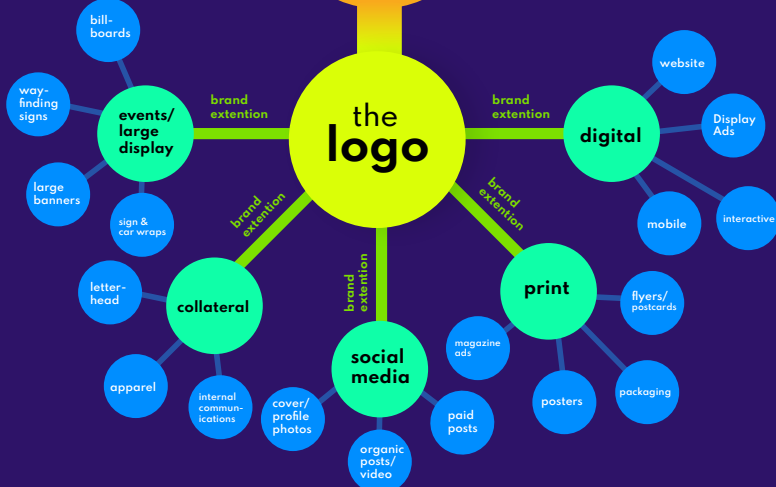# At the center of the galaxy.

The logo is the starting point of any visual representation of a brand.

Only once you establish the core values and mission of a company can you begin tackling the visuals of a brand. But once that develops, no other visual for a brand comes first. All brand assets, icons, visuals, backgrounds, photos, headlines, ads, banners or graphics only come after the development of the logomark or logotype.

Study popular company logos and see if you notice similar design elements that exist outside of the logo. You might notice that brands use unique properties of their logos to develop and expand their library of visual resources to use on all designs

to make sure the brand has continuity. You want to be able to look at an ad for a company and know it is them without having to look at the logo.
This is because we have recognized a similar visual pattern that reminds us of their special and unique "look". But that company visual DNA was not developed in isolation, it was derived from the logo design.

You can see why everything visually starts here and ends here. It is the reason why companies will pay ad agencies millions and millions of dollars just to develop a logo that looks like it took an hour to create. And just like human DNA, when you zoom in further with a microscope you can see beautiful details that makes it special and why it took so much time to craft.

WHERE DOES **LOGO DESIGN** FIT IN THE **OVERALL PROCESS** ?

broad →

specific →

business strategy

- mission/ vision/ goals
- customer management
- placement/ distribution
- culture
- pricing
- product differentiation

marketing

brand strategy

- brand story
- brand voice
- brand goals
- brand audience
- brand message
- brand values

brand identity

the **logo**

brand extention
- events/ large display
  - billboards
  - wayfinding signs
  - large banners
  - sign & car wraps

brand extention
- collateral
  - letterhead
  - apparel
  - internal communications
  - cover/ profile photos

brand extention
- social media
  - organic posts/video
  - paid posts

brand extention
- print
  - magazine ads
  - posters
  - flyers/ postcards
  - packaging

brand extention
- digital
  - website
  - Display Ads
  - mobile
  - interactive

The stuff that comes before the logo design.

EVERYTHING about the company can influence the logo design process.

Each company has a different story to tell and every company has a different set of values, goals and culture.

Let's say we have a high-end fashion start-up that wants to create a logo that connects with its audience. How on earth do we know where to start? So many questions should start to flood your mind like...

Who are you wanting to market to?

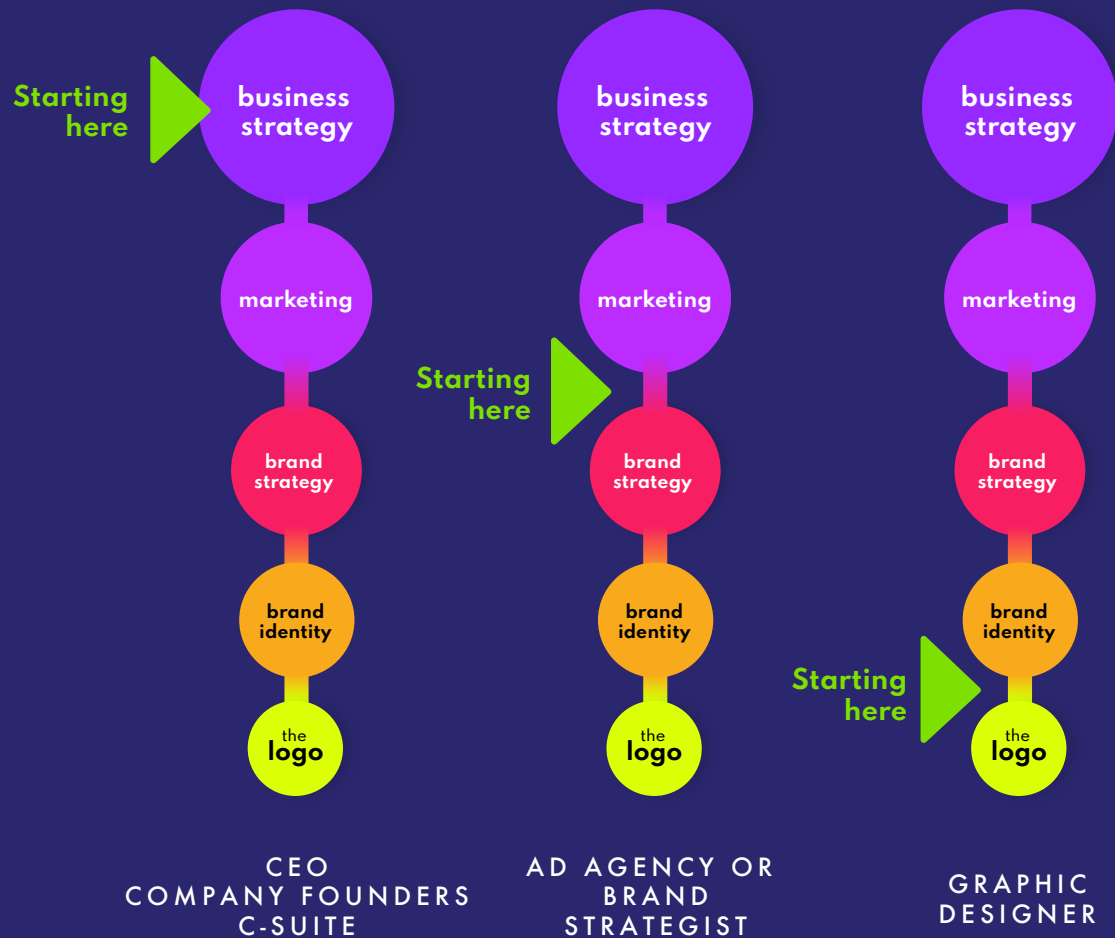**How are you priced compared to your competition? Who is your competition?**

What makes your stuff better than them? Why should I care about your products?

What do you care about as a company? What is your company culture like?

Where geographically are you going to market your product? Will it be North America? Africa? Totally different cultures, languages and market psychology.

What type of tone do you want to set? This goes along with brand voice: do you want to have a soft tone, strong tone, daring? Sweet? Nostalgic? What is your brands personality?

business strategy
- mission/vision/goals
- customer management
- placement/distribution
- culture
- pricing
- product differentiation

marketing

brand strategy
- brand story
- brand voice
- brand goals
- brand audience
- brand message
- brand values

brand identity

the logo
- brand extention: events/large display — bill-boards, way-finding signs, large banners, sign & car wraps
- brand extention: digital — website, Display Ads, mobile, interactive
- brand extention: collateral — letter-head, apparel, internal communications
- brand extention: print — flyers/postcards, magazine ads, posters, packaging, paid posts
- social media — cover/profile photos, organic posts/video

Starting here ▶ **business strategy**

marketing

brand strategy

brand identity

the logo

CEO COMPANY FOUNDERS C-SUITE

business strategy

marketing

Starting here ▶ **brand strategy**

brand identity

the logo

AD AGENCY OR BRAND STRATEGIST

business strategy

marketing

brand strategy

brand identity

Starting here ▶ **the logo**

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Where do I come in?

Do I have to come up with the business strategy?

If this is all a bit foreign to you, do not panic! We all have certain roles to play depending on where we fit in this process.

As a graphic designer, our roles are simple. We ask the right questions that will help us gather the information we need to start the logo design brainstorming process. This can be done through a simple concise custom client questionnaire or having a conversation directly with the client to discuss the companies brand or overall business strategy.

Those who may be involved earlier in the process may be ad agencies or a brand strategist who walks the company though developing their brand voice, tone, personality and inspiration.

This usually involves lots of intense meetings with the leadership of the company and the ad agency. They will develop a brand strategy together and start to move further down the line creating the brand identity and logo.

Further up the in the process is the company stakeholders themselves, usually a CEO or founder that will work with their team to determine the company's product line, price point and distribution of the products. This would be the business strategy portion of the process and rarely would include those without a varied background in marketing, leadership and business strategy.

The logo design process

Logo design is broken down into 6 main steps:

1 Research
Understanding the Company DNA
Competitor logos, Company Values, USP (Unique Selling Proposition)

2 Ideation
Creating a Main Idea
Word Mapping, Client Conversations

3 Concept Development
How Can We Show That Idea Visually?
Sketching, Iconography Study and Typography Testing, Picking a Logo Category and Style

4 Concept Refinement
Detailing Our Main Idea
Getting Client Feedback, Picking Our Direction, Revising Concepts and Finalizing Our Visuals

5 Concept Presentation:
Presenting Our Final Concept for Approval
Developing a Case Study Presentation

6 Execution
Logo Application and Usage Guidelines
Creating a Library of Various File Formats and Sizes
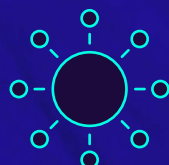
Beyond the logo

7 Logo Expansion
Thinking Beyond the Logo and Looking at The Larger Branding Picture

This is not an exact science but a unique method of approaching the process.

Some designers focus on the first step, the research phase. They may have a tried and true client questionnaire they send each client or require a phone or video call before proceeding to step 2. Some designers move right into researching on their own the company's competitors and industry, only asking the client a few brief questions before proceeding or depending heavily on a provided client brief.

I personally like to hang out in stage 1 (research) longer than most. Research takes the most time for me because, once you have a wonderful understanding about the company, service, industry and their target market, all the other stages seem to go by very quickly.

I think people get stuck on stage 2 (ideation) because they do not get enough information in stage 1. Some designers get stuck on stage 3 because they do not spend enough time developing "rough ideas" in stage 2.

Moving down the different stages, people can get so wrapped up in stage 3 (concept development) and stage 4 (concept refinement) that they easily forget about stage 6 (execution). They have this wonderful looking concept that ends up not being very practical. It does not look good in small mobile devices or, even worse, does not scale well and lacks readability.

I do not want these steps to put you in a limited box of rules: you have the freedom to add a stage or modify your process to make it your own.

This is just a starting point to help you put important steps in front of another to facilitate and engage the entire creative and marketing process.

Ask a different designer and they will have their own unique logo design process.

1 Research

2 Ideation

3 Concept Development

4 Concept Refinement

5 Concept Presentation:

6 Execution

7 Logo Expansion
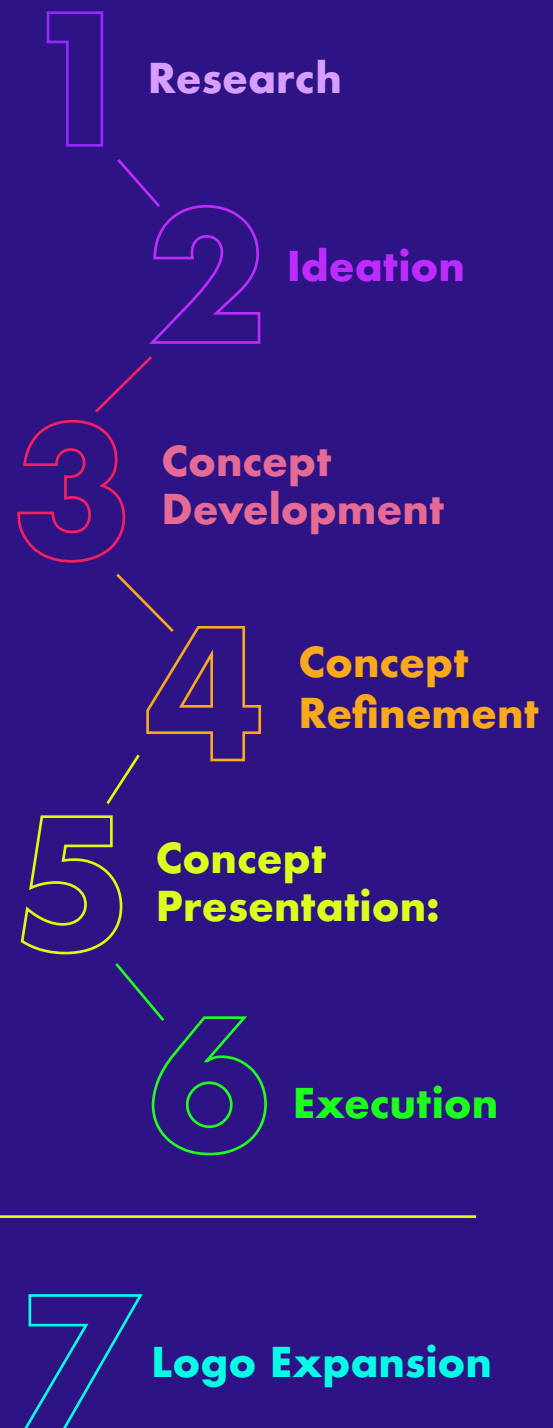
research

Step 1 // THE RESEARCH PHASE

If logos try to visually represent a company's DNA then the research phase is the first and most important step.

This is when we ask the client for any prior company research that might prove useful in the development of a company identity. This could be asking for a mission statement, target market data, demographic studies or asking about their top competitors. Also, during this phase, you can discover the unique advantage of their product of service. Why should consumers be excited about what they offer? Is it better, faster, stronger, cheaper, higher quality than their competitors? Do they have a different perspective, goal, or company culture compared to what is currently out there in their industry?

1

The great thing about this stage is there are an endless amount of methods you can use to gather the research you need to move into the stage 2 ideation process.

This method requires equal participation by both you and the client. Asking for all of the marketing and research data can really overwhelm a client. This is why you send a custom client questionnaire for each project, so you can tailor the questions to their unique company profile and industry. This simple one or two page questionnaire should never feel intimidating and should ask open-ended questions that encourages the client to go into specific details that you need to move forward in the creative process.
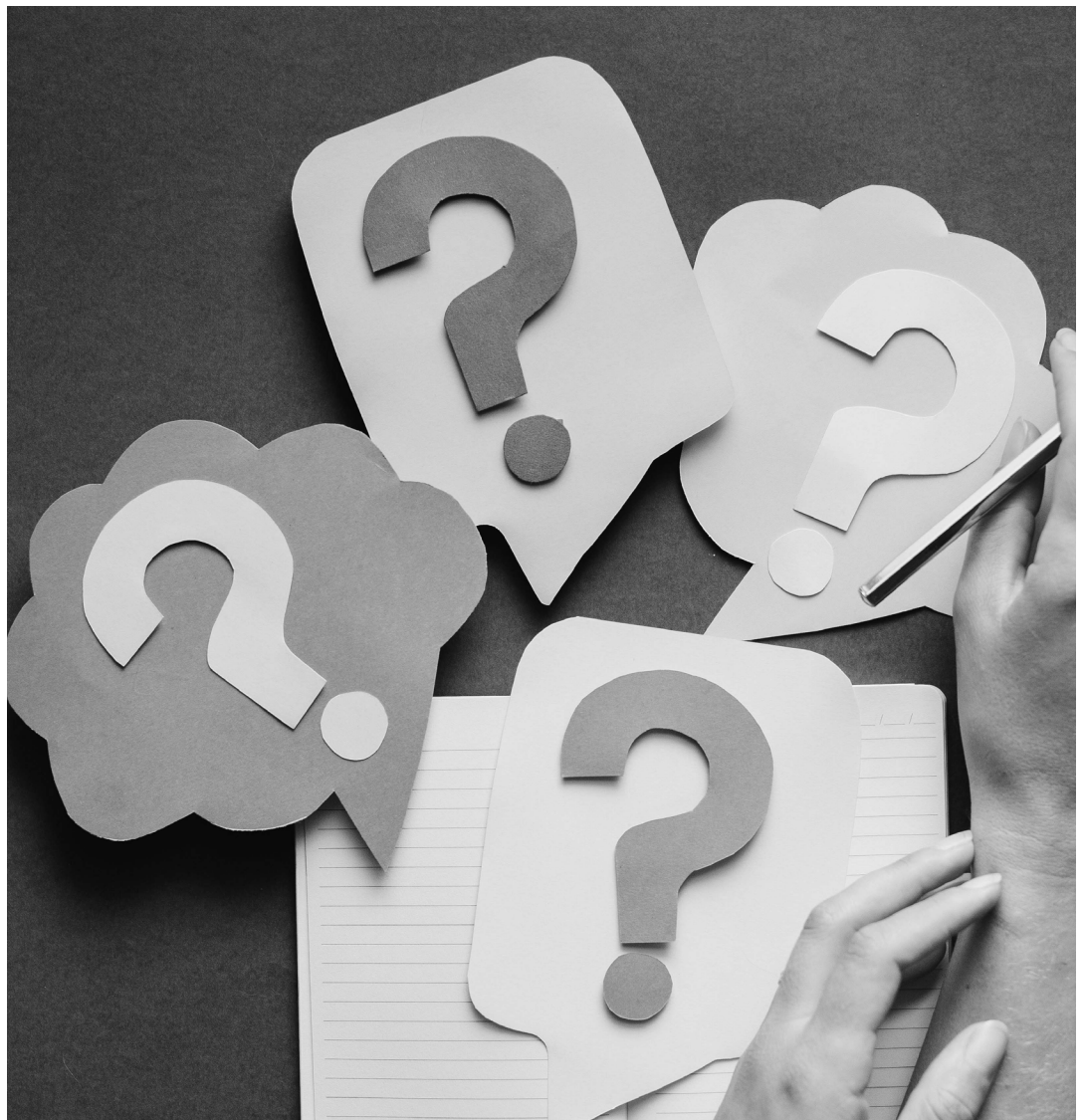
questionnaire

What Questions to ask?

Each question needs to maximize the client response quality so it has a high likelihood of generating fantastic answers you can use.

Some of the best questions **are the first ones that you ask yourself** when thinking about what type of logo might work best for this company.

For example, we have a new food ordering app that needs a logo for their brand new company. We do not have a current website to explore to generate ideas of what they currently offer, so all I have to go on is what the client gives me in the form of a client brief.

A client creative brief is usually a one or two page document that the client writes to provide you with the basic ideas of what they need. Some clients provide wonderful client briefs full of their thoughts and ideas about what they are looking for. **Some client briefs are very vague**, offering basic details like "we need a logo design to extend our reach visually to our audience," without any context to who their audience is. **Some clients do not know what a client brief is** and do not expect to have to create one.

You have a few different scenarios and each one is workable. With a great client brief we can take what they said and ask them follow up questions via our custom client questionnaire form.

If it mentioned they are a new food delivery app that aims to shorten the average delivery time compared to their competition, you can ask in your client questionnaire to explain how they make that time quicker. Maybe there is something priority that can somehow come out in the logo design.
If the client brief is vague or non-existent then your client questionnaire becomes the way you gather most

of your research, especially for a company that does not currently operate or have any prior searchable data online.
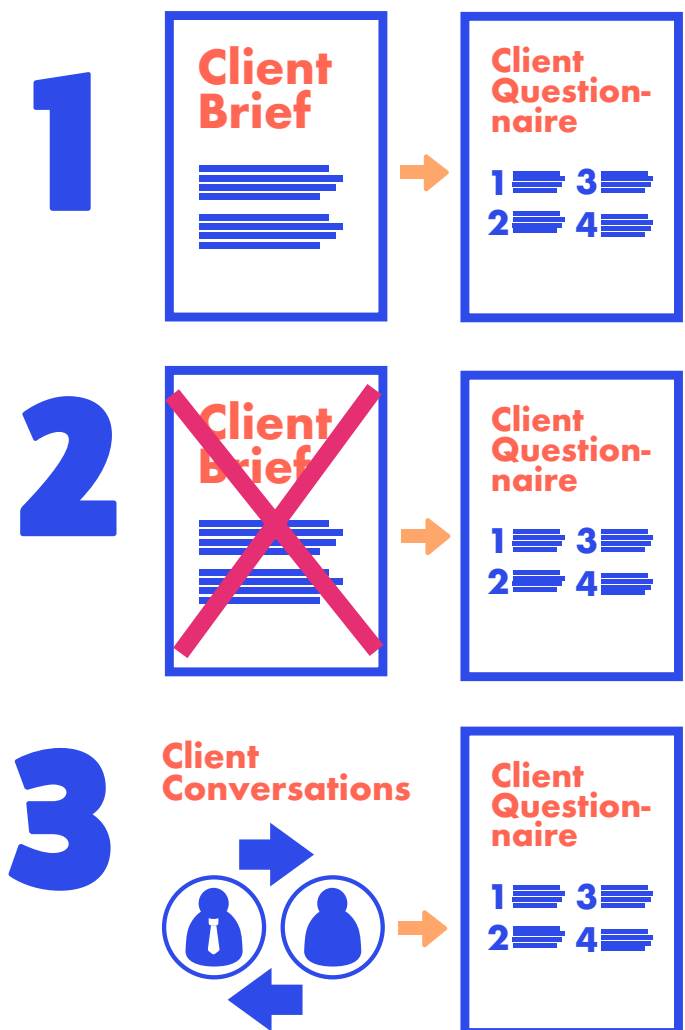
⋰ *You could find yourself in three different scenarios, each requiring a client questionnaire in the end. Some of your questions in your client questionnaire may develop based on a provided client brief document. Without a client brief it might be hard to formulate questions but not impossible. Sometimes having client conversations ahead of time can help you fine-tune your questions and eliminate unnecessary ones.*

Custom Questions

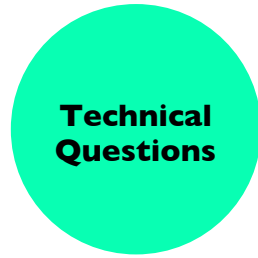Unique tailored questions only this client gets asked.

(example: questions that address specific issues, problems or values of the company and industry).

General Questions

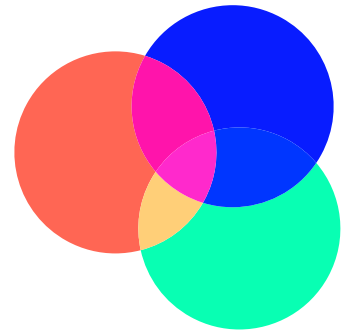These might be the same for all of your clients as they effect all companies and industries.

(example: main competitors).

Technical Questions

Questions that find out the clients basic needs for the logo.

(example: full name, registered trademarks, taglines).

When you break your questions down into three main categories, it makes it easier to formulate your client questionnaire.

All question types are useful and when combined gives you an amazing amount of varied client insight.
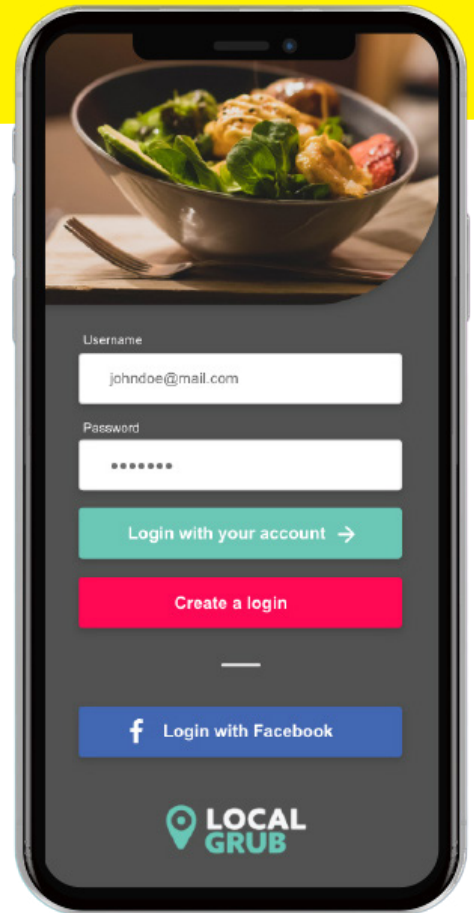
Question types

custom questions

For our example, here are a few questions that come to my mind when thinking about a new food delivery app that is supposed to be the fastest around.

What method or unique process do you use to make your app faster?

Is speed the most important aspect about your app?

Will the app feature other abilities that your competition will not have?

This is why each client questionnaire is unique. A different set of questions comes to mind when a new client approaches me.

Username
johndoe@mail.com

Password
••••••••

Login with your account →

Create a login

f Login with Facebook

LOCAL GRUB

general questions

There are still **general questions** that can be asked that can apply to a lot of clients. Some of those questions include:

What are your goals as we work through this process together?

What are your expectations for this logo design process and outcome?

How would you best describe your target audience (or those you wish to sell your product or service to)?

Who would you consider to be your main competitor?

Are there any examples you can provide of logos or logomarks you think might match your expectations or be a good fit style-wise for your company?

technical questions

There are also **technical questions** about how they see the logo identity presented. These questions address the visual side of logo design. These are questions like:

What is the exact company name that needs to be included in the logo design?

Do you have a tagline or secondary phrase that needs to displayed with the logo?

Please type the full company name you would like to display on your logo. Will there be any bylines that will need to be worked into the logo design?

Are there particular colors or combination of colors you would like to explore during this logo design process? Any colors to avoid?

We have a combination of general questions, unique custom questions and technical questions that all work together to give us all the information we need.
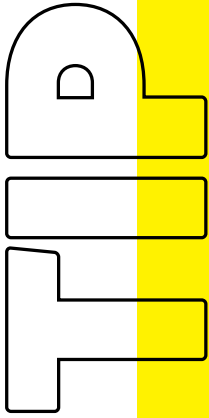
What format do I use to ask the client questionnaire questions? Well, it depends!

You can create your list of questions to be asked in person, at a face-to-face meeting or online during a video conference. Video conferences have a lot of benefits because they can be recorded but also you get some critical face time to build a relationship with the client. In a lot of cases e-mailing a Pdf file can be beneficial as it gives the client time to think about each question.
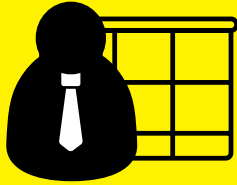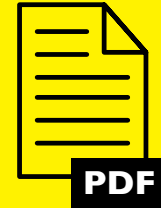
In Person

Benefits: *You build a rapport with the client. Able to change questions on the fly based on client interactions.*
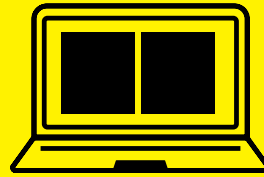
Video Conference

Benefits: *You can record your video to re-watch later. Questions can be answered quickly by the client and without as much time commitment as writing them down.*

Digital Document (Pdf)

Benefits: *This is the easiest for both parties as it gives everyone time to answer the questions on their own time. The downside is clients may take too much time to answer questions or not answer them in full.*

example

Let's do another example and create a finished client questionnaire that we can send to our mock client. Our mock client is now an established retirement community that has been around for 10 years. They are looking for a logo refresh and are open to exploring different ideas.

First of all, they are already established, meaning we can study their previous logo, website and marketing materials to gather some data to help us craft our questions. Since they are a retirement community and they have nearby retirement facilities we can research to see what makes them a bit different. After gathering just a little bit of background, let's ask the client some questions to help us get started in our creative journey.

First of all, there are the general questions like "who is your target audience?" that we can ask most clients as we just explored. Then there are the custom questions.

If I do not know much about retirement communities it might not be a bad idea to **read a few articles** about how to find great facilities for your aging parents. This will give me valuable insight to what the target market finds important when researching a community.

What I discovered is that most communities are just that, **unique communities. Each one has a different collective personality.** Some are very active with a full-time activities director that helps the community bond and build relationships with each other. Others focus more on the room and space, making sure it feels more like a "home" than a facility. They can do this by allowing the guests to paint their door and even put out house plants to make it feel like a front porch. So a few questions that are generated for them after this initial reach might be:

Describe the unique community feeing your facility has? Does it focus more on activities, community, meals, space or something else?

How would you describe your competitors? How are their facilities different?

What are ways in which you make this process as easy as possible for adult children with aging parents who are navigating what has traditionally been a declining stage in life?

I would limit your questions to the ones that you feel could help you in stage 2, the ideation phase. Which answers do you think will allow you to come up with visual and creative sketches and allow you to generate creative ideas?

TIP

Make sure clients are properly participating in this research phase.

Without their participation we will not be able to create a logo that would best represent their company DNA.

This can be hard when your prices are low. Expectations that you as a designer can magically generate something that works for them are very much present when you do not charge an appropriate amount of your time. It takes several hours of research to properly gather the data we need and this is before we get to the actual designs and concepts.

Client education is key. Make sure you sell them on the importance of a client questionnaire.

The paragraph below is an example for you. Use it when sending the questionnaire or pin it to the top of your pdf document.

Feel free to steal

The secret to a solid logo design is crafting a logo that best represents _not just_ your company but also your company's mission statement, goals, dreams, unique ideas and desires in a way that _touches your audience_ and compels them to enter into your _company's story._

The following questions will assist us in knowing more about your company and your expectations for the design process. You can choose _not_ to answer questions if they are not applicable. But the _more detail_ we have to work with the better chances your logo mark will match your target audience and represent your unique company DNA. We look forward to crafting a logo that can represent your business for _years to come._

Experiencing the product or service

A client can easily tell you what the customer experience might be like, but to go through it yourself is very insightful and can help you in your creative process.

Some clients, like the retirement facility, would be challenging to experience the full journey. You could always visit, but sometimes you may not live near the client and it makes it impossible.

Some clients, especially those with digital products, apps and websites, make the experience significantly more accessible. If it is a new app, ask to be able to log in and experience the entire process. If it is a physical product, then ask for a chance to use it, hold it, see a video of it being used.

You might have seen this in action on movies and shows where the ad agency is having a meeting and everyone is holding the client's product, asking questions about it, feeling it and experiencing it.

Understanding the
target audience

Who is this logo for?

I would hate to create a 90s Rock-n-Roll style grunge logo for an all-womens university that specializes in MBA's.

It might not be a match, but then again, if you are creating a Rock-n-Roll punk style logo for a small, digital women-only online class, that could actually work – if it is the right target demographic.

What if that online all-women digital class wants to have a more softer vibe? What if they are all under 20 years old? Over 50? All these facts can shape how we craft the logo visual experience. The psychology of logo design is very real. Some logos evoke trust and professionalism, while others make us feel rebellious and wild.

So, it is not really about finding out simple gender, age and geographic location but importantly the type of personality we want the brand to attract. In user experience design it is common to create user personas to help companies visualize their target audience and move beyond just basic demographic data.

Customer Persona Profile #1

Amber
The Professional Foodie

Goals

- A professional who wants to reduce time cooking and preparing food

- Desires high quality fresh food.

- Has a desire for sushi and visits a sushi place at least once a week.

Values

- Work and life balance

- Health and nutrition

- Food a s an experience and not just for sustenance.

Overview

Age: 36
Status: Single
Occupation: Professional: Banking
Income: Household $60,000+
Location: United States
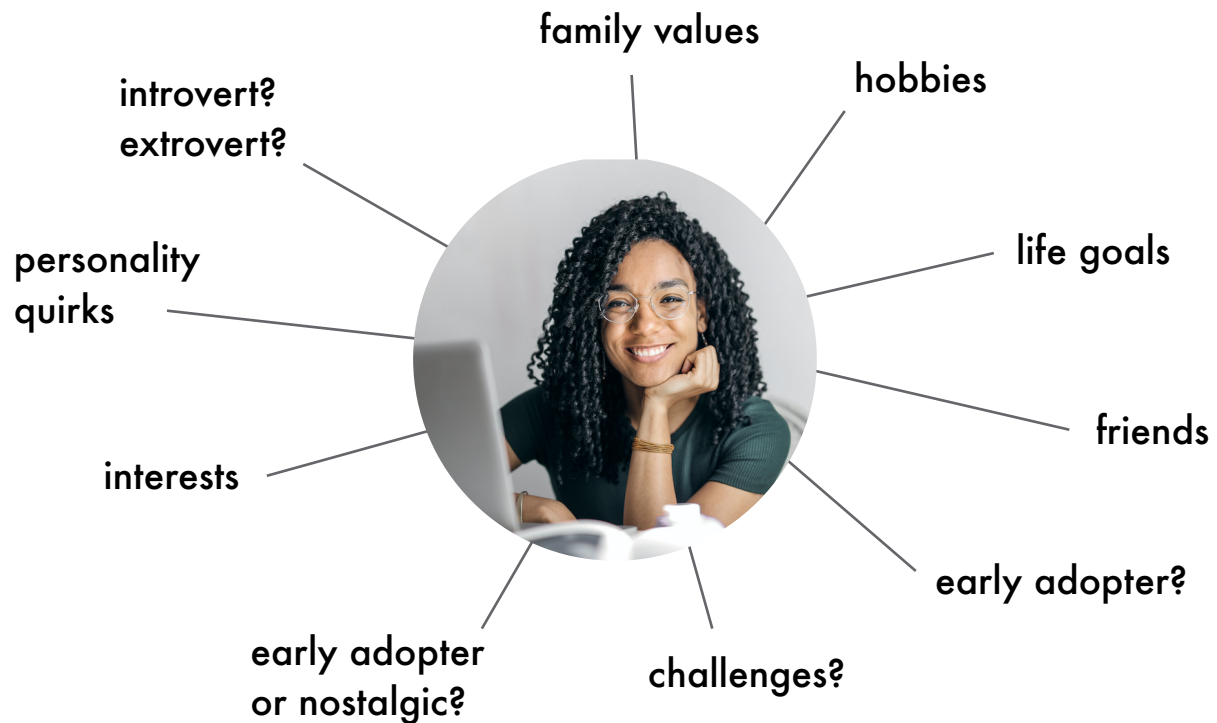**Education:** Bachelors or greater

Favorite Restaurants

This can change based on your project type. A website design project for a cafe may include favorite types of snacks or beverages.

Problem-Solving Opportunities

- She wishes she did not have to spend so much time preparing and cooking meals as she already only has few hours in the evenings to hang with friends and have some downtime.

- She loves sushi and visits two fantastic places in town she thinks has the best sushi. She feels like she is missing the quality component in the sushi she eats.

- She would love to have great quality fresh sushi delivered but is wary of trusting a local place to deliver it. There is the idea that delivery sushi is not going to taste as fresh as visiting the restaurant.

think beyond the data

family values

hobbies

introvert?
extrovert?

life goals

personality
quirks

friends

interests

early adopter?

early adopter
or nostalgic?

challenges?

We could find photos, make sketches of some of these personalities that portray what they might wear, who they hang out with, what they do every day and also explore some of their passions and dreams.

Looking at these personas can help us in future stages of the process to put a face to a name as we visualize what can seem like just facts and figures.

And it can rarely be done with just one persona. Sometimes multiple personas are required to truly capture a company's target.

Take Netflix for example. There are so many people who could or want to enjoy their service. They may have 7-8 different target demographics all with different behaviors and personalities. This helps to shape their marketing efforts and to help them figure out where to spend their ad dollars. If their average customer makes $56,000 USD per year, they may show ads on popular YouTube channels that also share the same demographic data for the user.
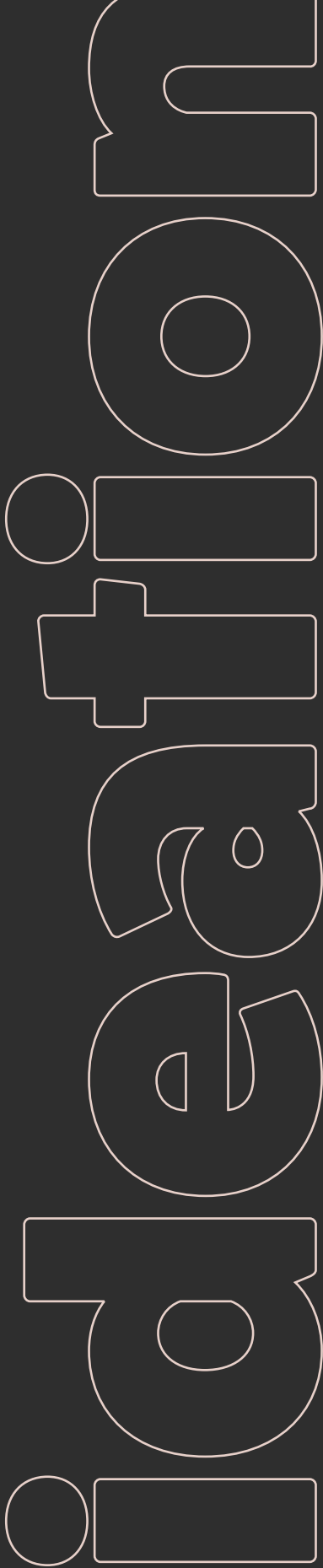
Ideation is the process of generating and forming ideas. Ideation is the noun form of the verb ideate, meaning to form ideas or to think.

Brainstorming is one ideation technique that you have most likely heard of before. The goal of brainstorming is not to come up with "the" idea, but to generate a wide range of possibilities and viable outcomes. You are not necessarily interested in judging and eliminating ideas, but solely to get them down to review later.

Let's say I want to generate an idea for a coffee shop called The Community Bean. Based on my stage 1 research data, I know they roast all of their coffee beans in-house. They also want to foster a sense of community and giving back through charity support and hosting local community groups. There are several ways to start the ideation process. I can choose to explore and develop just one of these options or all of them depending on what is working best for generating multiple ideas. Remember, the key to the ideation process is generating options, not a final concept. That will be later in stage 3 and 4.

Word Mapping

A word-based approach to
brainstorming concepts and ideas

Not everyone can just start to sketch out great ideas right away. That is
OK. That is why there are other brainstorming methods like word mapping.

You can take some of the data you gathered in the research stage to
jot down important words associated with the company. These might be
commonly used words by the client in their feedback or it could be terms
you find when researching the company's target demographic or their
industry. In the case of our coffee house client there are two key words we
can start with and build upon, community and coffee.

How to turn words into concepts?

I got tons of great words that all relate to the company name, brand ethos
and client brief but now how do I translate words into shapes, symbols or
ideas for our logo and brand design?

Sometimes connecting several words together helps you form a concept.
For instance, if I came up with the words "community" and "compassion"
it might start to shape how I present the brand. It could have a more
approachable soft look, or incorporate symbols of hope, hearts or helping
hands. I can also explore how coffee and community can come together as
a united symbol when I move on to sketching.

Down the rabbit hole we go...

The brainstorming process is a series of jumps you make from one idea or thought to another.

You cannot get to the final concept without working through several steps first. Like jumping across stones on a pond, you cannot skip ahead to the final stepping stone, you must slowly work your way through many stones before that final idea becomes clear.

Think of word maps as pathways to concept ideas. For instance, we write "life coaching" here as a main word found frequently in the client brief for this life coaching company. What do we think of when we think of life coaching? Words begin to appear, and from that additional words can branch off from those ideas, and so forth.

TIP
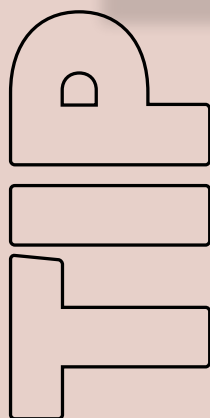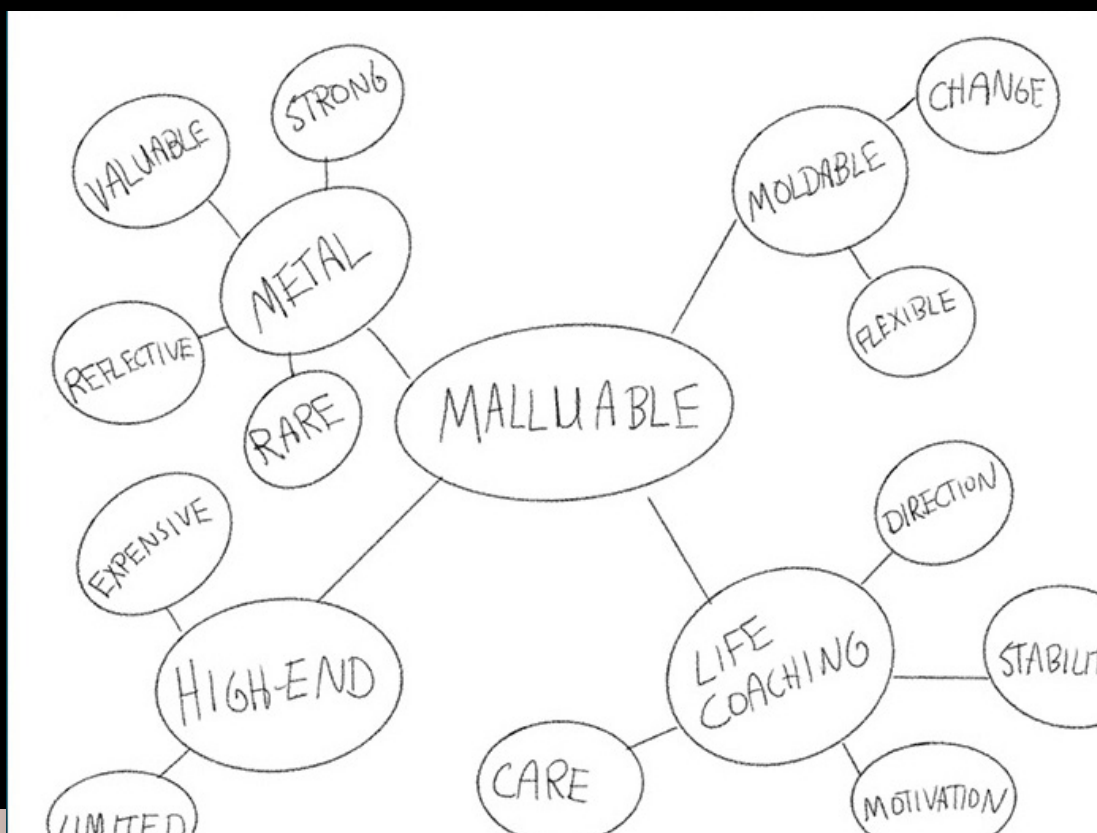
This is not an exact science when it comes to word mapping. I have seen it done many different ways. I do like to start off with main word bubbles that are best associated or commonly used when describing the company and have those be my first main words. From those words I can dig deeper and come up with additional words associated with those first few main words. You can continue to branch off as much as you would like or even come back and write another main word bubble as you think of it.

Style Boards Brands Boards & Mood Boards

After you have gathered sufficient background information and data, you need to establish an overall style direction for your logo.

Without a direction agreed upon before the design process, it can feel overwhelming. You can use a wide variety of methods to find an agreeable design style between you and the client, thereby reducing work for both parties when you move into developing our concepts.

You can put together a quick one page design inspiration board to present to the client to help discover which style they feel most connected to. It's not always required but I find it very helpful. Clients do not always know what they want until they see it and this is a great way to help them figure it out.

They have different names but they all have the same purpose.

They are an arrangement of graphics, photos, colors, phrases, quotes, textures and other company's logos that serve to inspire the style and direction of logo design.
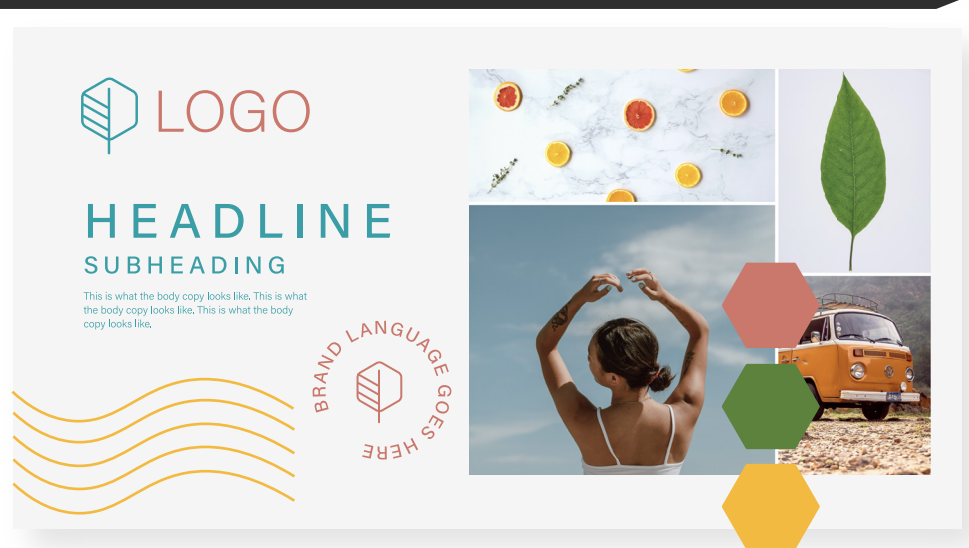
How many should I put together?

I recommend two or three in different styles to be most helpful. Offering more than that could confuse the client and bring up more questions. Offering just one will not give the client a chance to choose between different styles.

Based on your research you should already be able to pick two or three different design styles that you think the client might resonate with.

Since you are using other sources, if the client does not connect with any style you send, this can prompt them to bring up some suggestions to you. This gives you a chance to quickly present a different style. You should not spend too much time putting these together as it is still firmly in the brainstorming process and nothing final has been set. There is a bit more about this on the next page.

?

Do I have to do this with my client?

Outside of the client questionnaire, none of these activities are required to create a successful logo design. In some cases, these are used regularly in the much broader overall branding process of a company.

These can be a tool in fostering clear communication with client desires and your vision for style.

a convergence of styles
combining tradition and elegance with a bright fun undertone.

Think of style boards as an extension of your brand consumers persona.

We took the time to find out who our desired target audience is, so let's find ways to visualize that further in our style board. Let's find someone that can be our hero or heroine that can represent them. From there you build out images that show what they could like to wear, their likes and dislikes, etc. You might find certain textures, patterns or backgrounds that connect with your hero.
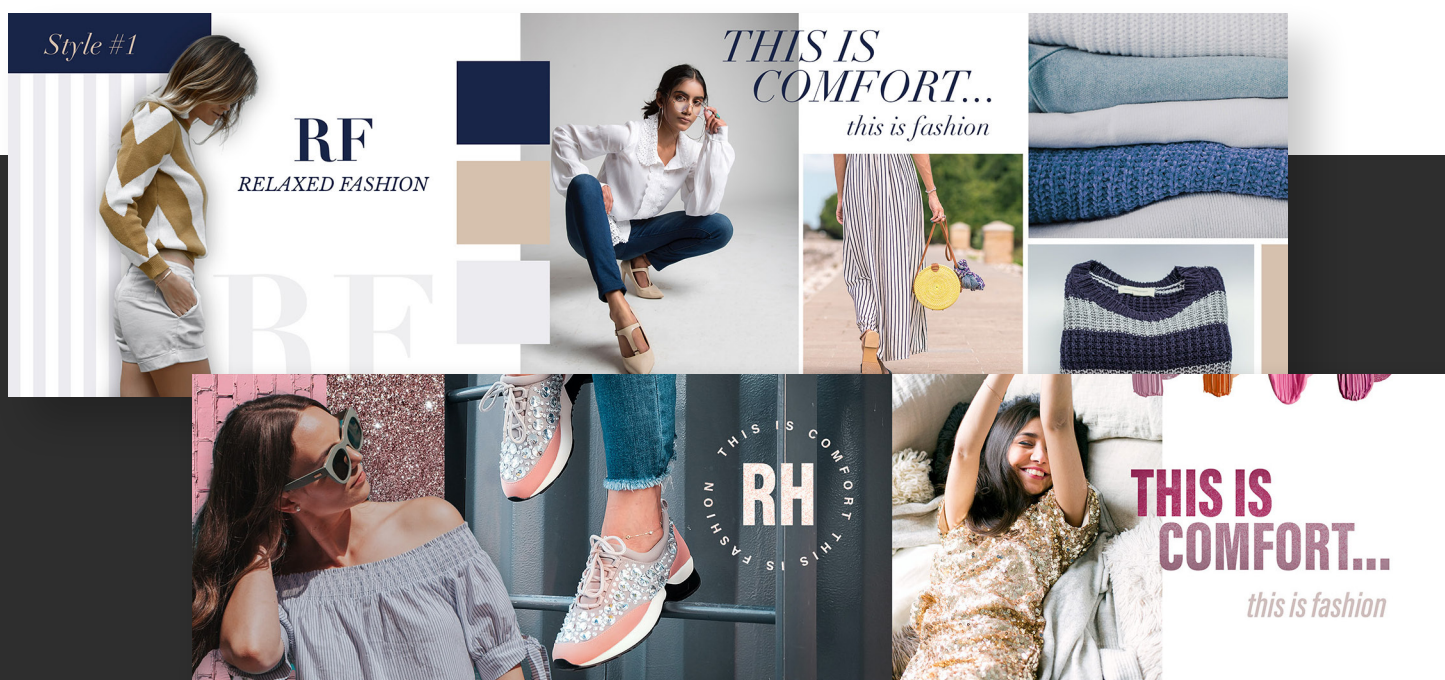
You can derive some color inspiration from some of these photos as well. You can find a typeface that continues to match well with some of the photos you've selected.

Let's look at two stylescapes I put together quickly for a casual fashion brand. They represent two totally different styles. One seems more simple, clean and sophisticated and the other is more casual, bright and fun.

If the client was struggling trying to find a style direction, presenting these two style options may allow them to give you valuable insight moving forward.

They may want to have a blend of both, they may want to see another style represented or they may fall in love with one. That gives you a huge head start in coming up with your logo, typography system and brand colors.

Finding inspiration from others

Feeling stuck? Don't worry, we all get stuck from time to time when we are starting at a blank page. One thing to remind yourself to do is to look at others work. NOT to copy or emulate, but to spark other ideas from seeing their ideas. A lot of great idea are amalgams of your own, others, clients and life experiences.

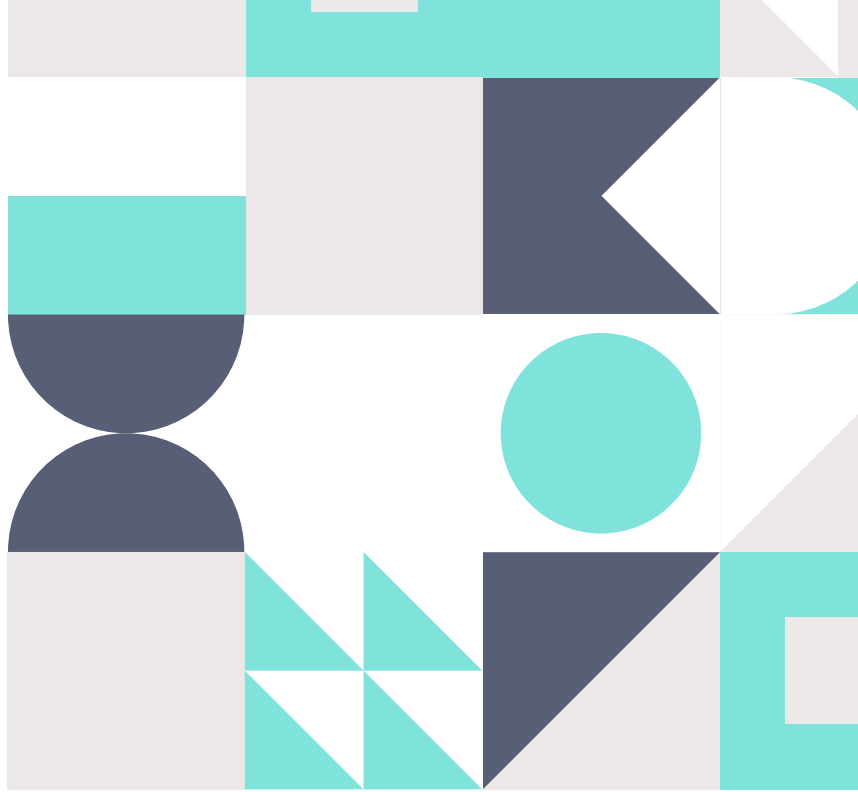Make sure to also look at what your client's competitor is doing. What type of logo do they have? How are they connecting to a similar audience than theirs?

Places to find a Logo brainstorming Inspiration

Behance.com
Logopond.com
Dribbble.com
logomoose.com
logooftheday.com

Why should I follow them?

Great Instagram Profiles to Follow:

Hand drawn logos	@made.by.james
Logo application on brand projects	@worldbranddesign
Logo application on package design	@inspirational.branding
Logo Inspiration	@logoprofessionals
Logo design business advice	@thejeremymura
Vector art inspiration	@vectordaily_
Typography inspiration	@typetopia
Showcases talented brand projects	@adobedesign
Logo design basics	@logo_lesson
Real world project showcase	@allanpeters
Logo case studies	@prio.hans
Logo design examples and articles	@dribbble
Talented logo designer, sketching	@george_bokhua
Advanced typography	@_hardal
Logo design challenges	@daf_designs
Logo presentation inspiration	@garagephicstudio
Lessons in combining letterforms	@baier.media
How to price your work and sell yourself	@ thechrisdo

Great ideas can sometimes be found *by accident* *and also can be found* *with time.* *Do not rush this creative process, some ideas come quicker than others.*

From a thought, to a reality.

The concept development phase could be the biggest struggle for most designers. I think mostly because we look at a blank page and ask, "how does this abstract idea and research get visually represented?" "How can the words I jotted down, the moodboards I created, the client input and industry research combine into this perfect unifying graphic or typography?"

Hopefully, this chapter will give you some weapons to help you defeat creator's block. You want your logo to truly be a unique representation of an entity, so coming up with a unique visual will require some experimentation on your part.

Student Sketches by
James Leddington
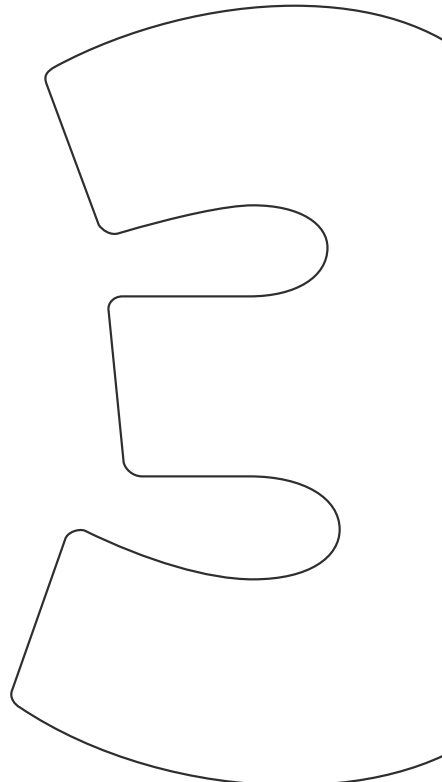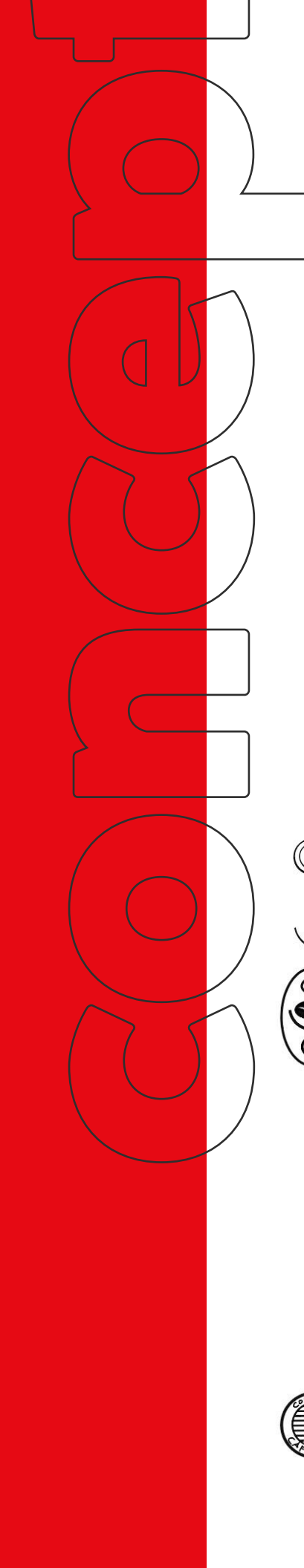
Sketching

The cornerstone of every logo design development, sketching is a powerful way to explore your concepts. Sketching allows you to save so much time before you hit your design software.

There is no such thing as a wasted drawing or idea when it comes to sketching. Anything goes and you have unlimited space to do it.

We have now moved through two stages of the process and each of those two stages will prove helpful here. Take all of the research, data and basic concept ideas and start to sketch some of those out.

In stage 4 of the logo design process we will be able to take some of these more loose sketches and really get down to the very fine details. Stage 3 is about getting the idea in basic form. Do not worry about shadows, effects and small nuances of the sketch. The main idea is still the focus.
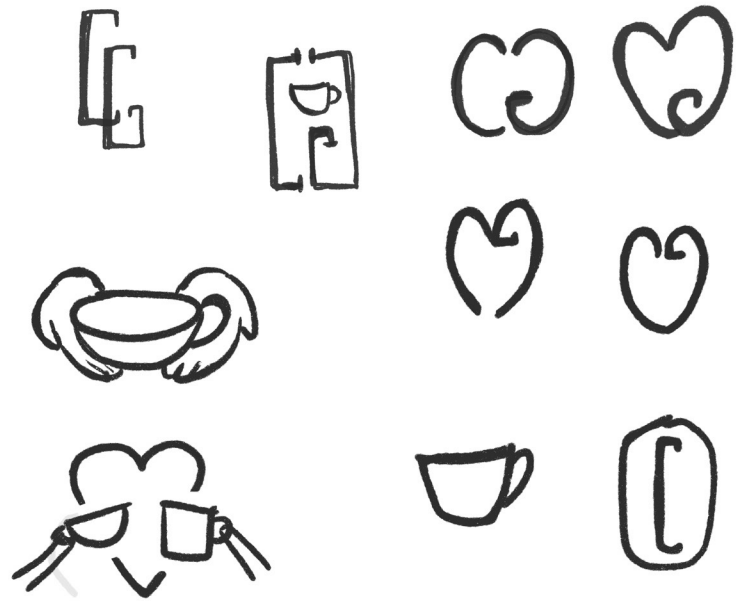
Start with very rough loose sketches, similar to what you might do on a napkin. These scribbles are trying to find the right graphic or symbol for your logo. A lot of times I will start with this loose concept sketch and I will duplicate it to the right and refine it just a little further. Maybe I like the first idea, but it is too clunky or the idea is not as obvious at first glance.

Digital Sketching Apps

Procreate / Adobe Fresco / ArtFlow

Pen and Paper

Pens, markers, pencils, paint

TIP

Use digital sketching apps to make exporting images into Adobe Illustrator much easier. No need to erase the background, just export your sketches as a .png with a transparent background.

You can also bring in sketches you do with traditional pen/pencil/markers and paper and take a top down photo of your sketches in bright lighting and bring it into Adobe Photoshop to brighten up the image further.

You can also sketch direclty into Adobe illustrator by using a Wacom tablet or sketching using the brush tool in your tool bar.

Sketching can be the **most powerful** way to explore logo design ideas.

Great accidents can happen during the sketching stage. I have had many interesting concepts develop when working on another one.

A few questions to ask yourself to help jump start your sketching process:

- **Did the client mention a mascot, a symbol, or an icon? Did they mention anything about custom typography?**

- **Should I explore a monogram or play around with the main letters of the company name?**

- **Are there commonly associated symbols, shapes or patterns with the company name and/or industry?**

- **Can I combine two shapes into one? Can I do something creative with the company name?**

- **Are there shapes and spaces that are created when I look at the company name? For instance negative space found between letters?**

- **Look at your word map words. Can I take a combination of those words and sketch out an idea from there?**

- **Can I explore different typography styles? Serifs, sans-serifs, script? Also, how does the typography fit with any type of shape, icon or symbol used?**
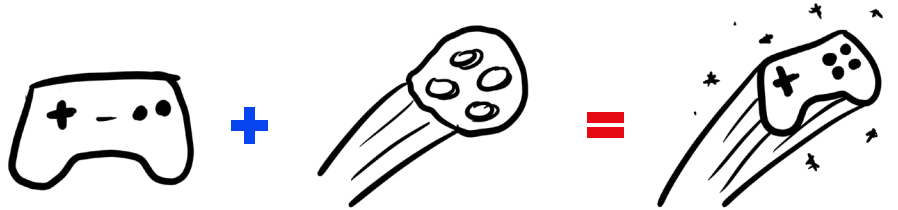
Combining Ideas

Part of the ideation process is seeing if there are ideas you can merge together to create a single graphic or logomark. This may not always be needed in every case. In the top graphic it is combining a controller and the idea of the galaxy to create a merged icon for a company Gaming Galaxy.

The **time saving** power of sketching.

The rough sketch on the left only took around 2 minutes to ideate and to sketch. The vector graphic on the right, created in Adobe Illustrator, took over 20 minutes to put together. It would be a shame if this concept was not one that moved forward in the process. Time can be saved by avoiding the temptation of perfection in the ideation process.

Subtlety of **emotions** for a Mascot logo.

Let's continue the gaming theme for this logo for a gaming company. They want a controller that takes a persona but they are unsure of what type of personality or emotion to give it. There is subtlety in small changes in the drawings and how it is perceived by the viewer. Upward slants indicate confidence and sometimes anger or upward looking eyes can indicate wonder or innocence.

Also, which shape of a controller to explore? Square for a more retro look or a more rounded shape? All of these decisions can shape the emotion of your final mark and figuring out these changes earlier on can help future steps become easier and more focused.
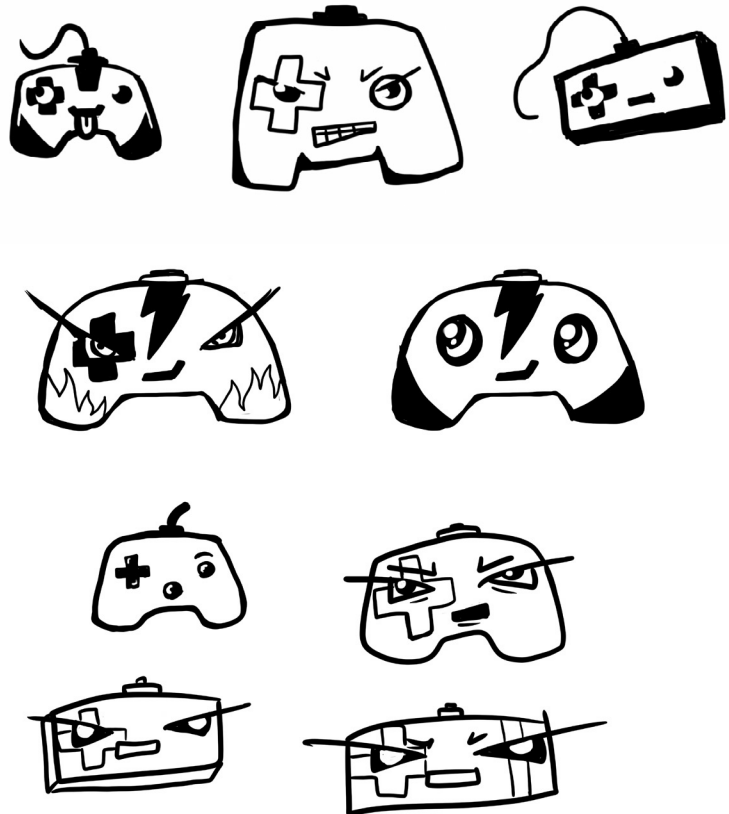
Determine your logo **category.**

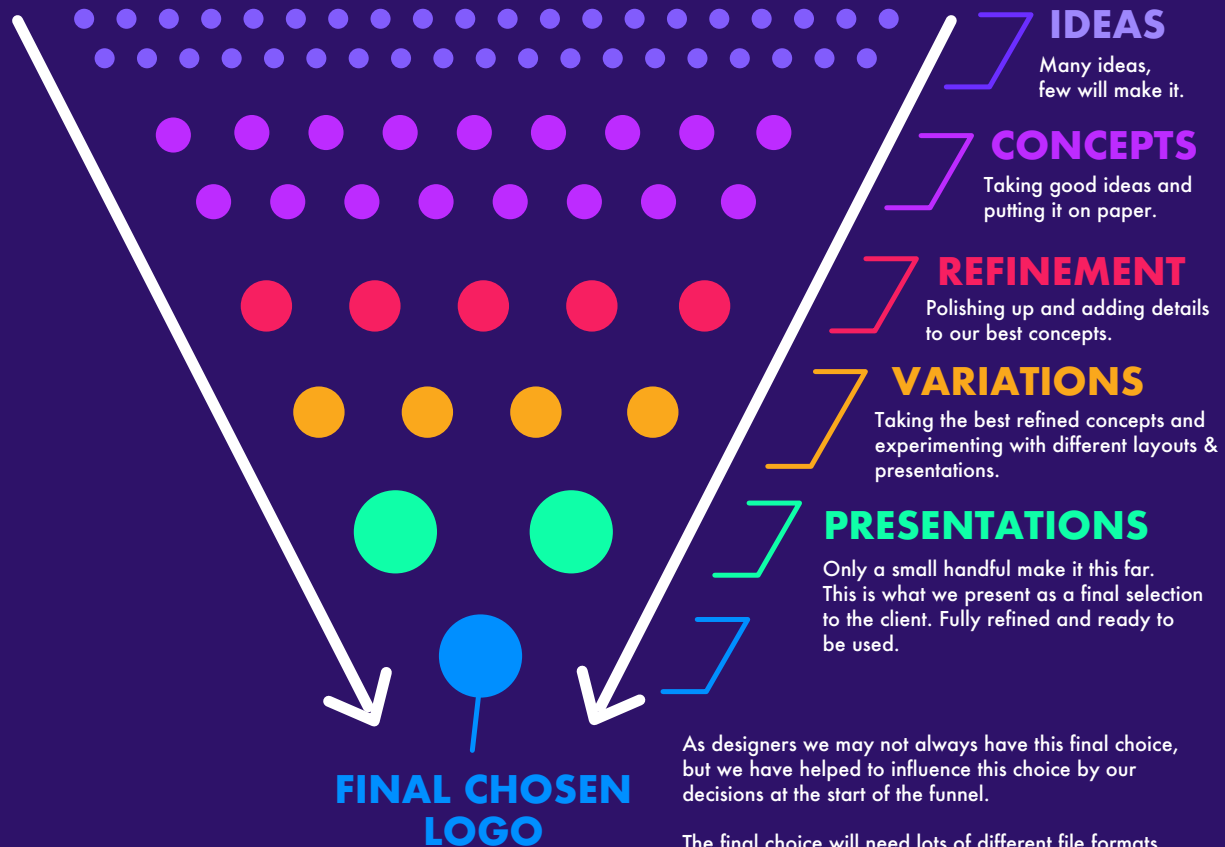*Do we need a mascot?*

Maybe a typography only logo?

Do we want to have it in a circular seal?

Can we use an abbreviation?

Should the logomark and logotype be totally separate elements or together?

All these are valuable questions we are tasked to explore. Choosing a small handful of possible logo categories will allow us to spend more time on our selected choices, instead of drowning in possibilities. It can be very easy to feel overwhelmed and ideation allows us to research best possible layouts and outcomes for our logo before getting down to details.

LOGO IDEATION FUNNEL

IDEAS
Many ideas,
few will make it.

CONCEPTS
Taking good ideas and
putting it on paper.

REFINEMENT
Polishing up and adding details
to our best concepts.

VARIATIONS
Taking the best refined concepts and
experimenting with different layouts &
presentations.

PRESENTATIONS
Only a small handful make it this far.
This is what we present as a final selection
to the client. Fully refined and ready to
be used.

FINAL CHOSEN LOGO

As designers we may not always have this final choice,
but we have helped to influence this choice by our
decisions at the start of the funnel.

The final choice will need lots of different file formats
and the client will need guidance to how, when and
where to properly use the logo. (logo usage guides)

How to narrow it down.

We do not always fall in love with every idea we have and neither does our client. That is why I wanted to illustrate this funnel as a graduated way to slowly narrow down choices to arrive at the final few logo designs.

As we write down our many ideas for the logo we may start to see a few rise to the top. That may happen because they can easily be visualized or sketched out. As we sketch some of our most promising ideas, some will continue to be the creme of the crop. Some ideas will fall flat as they are not easily visualized or the concept is hard to understand at first glance. It could be that it was too complicated or was too ambitious to be a practical logo design.

We continue to select a few to create variations of that visual. Variations are slight differences to the same sketch.

Of those favored variations we continue to refine and add polish and detail to those variations. That means any layered effects, typography selections or zooming in and fixing jagged edges and smoothing out curves.

Toward the end we select anywhere from 2-4 refined logo concepts to present to the client. These presentations are super professional may even be applied to mockups to show how it looks in real world applications.

refinement

Can your concept fly?

You have generated some fantastic ideas and even turned them into some quick visuals & sketches, but can that idea withstand the tests that lay before it? These are a few questions we will hopefully answer by the end of this stage:

1. Can my concept easily be understood at first glance?
2. Is my concept not too busy and is it void of any unecessary elements?
3. Can my logo look good small or large?
4. Can my logo be vectorized from sketch form?
5. Can my logo exist in many different formats and layouts and still retain its theme and style?
6. Does my logo have a chosen color theme and palette?

And finally:

7.) Am I ready to present my concepts to the client?

How do I know which concepts make the cut?

I would focus on selecting 3-5 strong ideas or concepts. Here are some good questions to ask to help narrow it down.

Is the logo adaptable to many different scenarios? Digital, small, large banners, as separated elements? Does it look good from a distance?

Can I start to see this as a part of a much larger brand design? Can I see patterns emerge from the logo? Are patterns, shapes, photos, brand language emerging and sparking further exploration and excitement?

Will the client like this concept based on any feedback they provided?

Will it connect to the company's target demographic? Is it too youthful, too strong, too one way or another?

Is it too complicated? Can the viewer understand the concept in the first 3 seconds? Simple can be better. Can it be simplified even more?

Does it depend on flashy effects to look good? Gradients, drop shadows and lens flares, oh my!

Is the company name clearly visible and one of the main focal points of the logo? Remember, company names are an important part of any logo. The extra stuff should support the company name and not compete against it. It is not until the brand has become well known among its target audience that it stand alone as a symbol (example: Apple, Nike).
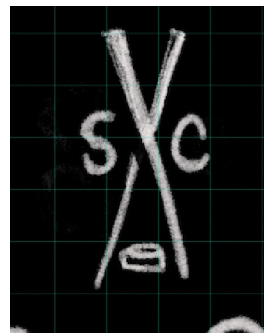
TIP

No need to worry about color...yet! It's not a requirement but working in B&W can help you focus more on the concept/idea of the logo/brand design and less on color. This helps you make a logo mark that is flexible and adaptable to all situations and is not dependent on color.
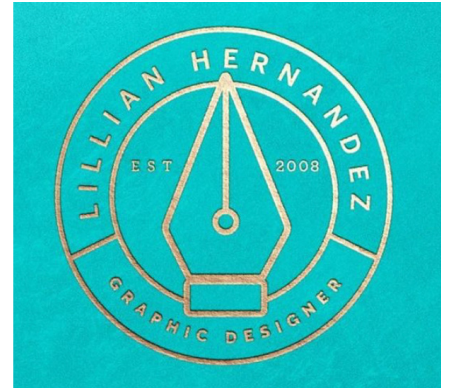
Vectorizing concepts

Every logo must exist in a vector format. Vector formats are created in vector programs like Adobe Illustrator and Affinity designer. They allow sketches to turn into equations that give a logo the ability to be scaled almost endlessly and remain crisp and high resolution. Vector formats also allow a logo to easily be applied to metal signs, apparel, books and different materials with ease.

When vectorizing a logo we have to make a lot of design decisions. First of all, we need to establish if we are going to kept a hand sketch style to our logo, or keep it smooth and clean. The example on the left has two distinct styles, both being vector. One maintains the rough sketched lines (top) and the other (bottom) has been traced in vector to be super clean and smooth. Both can work, depending on the company brand style.
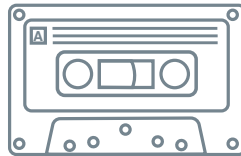
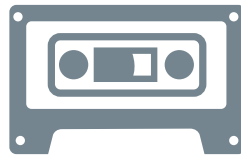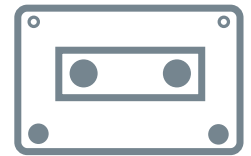| TRACED FROM PHOTO	USING NEGATIVE SPACE	OUTLINED	DETAILS REMOVED	GONE TOO FAR
Uses 3 different shades	*Uses 2 different shades.*	*Uses only one shade of gray*	*Leaving only the most recognizable elements*	*There is a limit to simplification. It is no longer easily recognizable*

THE RIGHT BALANCE

This one uses whitespace and simplification while retaining the most recognizable elements.

If you can make it more simple, then do.

I think the biggest mistake designers make is being overly ambitious with visualizing an idea.

Complexity can add some character to a logo but we also want to make sure our concepts are as simple as possible to be effective.

Are there any unnecessary elements or details in your concept? Is there a way to combine graphics to have one single focal point?

In the cassette tape vector graphic on the top of this page, I traced a photo and focused on the more prominent features of the tape, like the two reels, the label and the holes where the tape is held in by the tape player.

The first iteration feels more like an reproduction of the photo instead of the visualization of an idea. We can slowly start to remove elements and only keep the ones that help to define it as a cassette tape. I discovered that when I removed the reels in the inside rectangle in the last iteration, I realized it no longer looked like cassette tape. I made sure to include that into the final graphic and found that removing things like the label up top and some of the holes toward the bottom did not take away from portraying this as a cassette tape.

# Using reference photos to discover defining characteristics of objects.
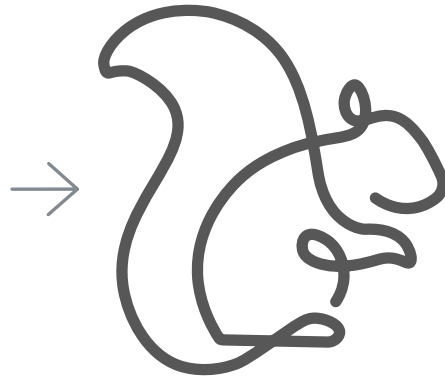
One of the best examples of this is taking a photo of an animal and doing a study of the main features that help to distinguish that animal over others.

In the case of this squirrel, the bushy rounded tail extends beyond the height of the head and the pointy ears. In this case I did a single continuous line that overlapped to create a really basic outline. This allowed the graphic to take on a unique form and prevented it from being a simple photo trace by adding a bit of character. I highly suggest finding various animal photos and doing this very exercise.

Take this avocado photo for example. There are many features in this photo we can choose to emphasize.

I am doing a reference photo study and trying different versions with different highlights and shadows and definitions of the avocado. Some allow the outside darker skin to show through, making it really stand out as an avocado. Some put harsher highlights on the inside seed and some one does not even have the seed at all. This allows me to see how important it is to show a little bit of that darker outside skin, to show it without it and to show the highlights in the seed. Otherwise it could be mistaken for an egg or other another object. Adding too many details like texture could hinder this graphic from being easily reproduced in print, signage and embroidery.

the airplane & pin test
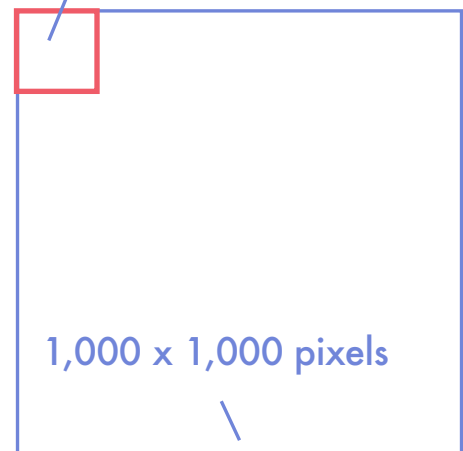
100 x 100 pixels

1,000 x 1,000 pixels
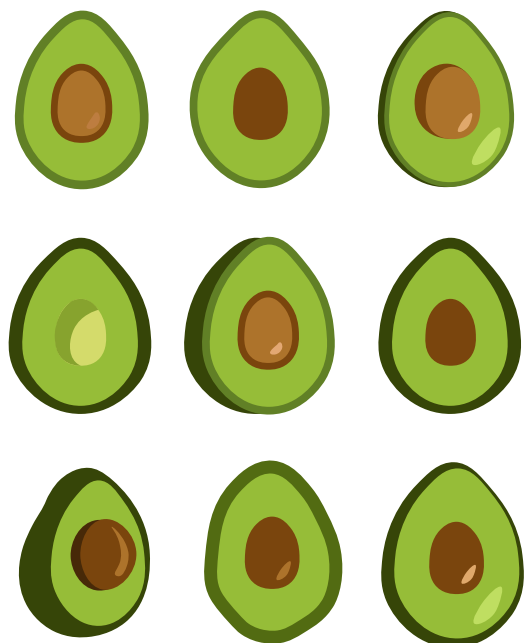
One way to find out if you have the right balance of simplicity and detail in your logo is to do this simple test.

Can your graphic fit on the side of an airplane and still be legible? Can it exist on the tail of an airplane and fully communicate what the visual represents? In contrast, can your graphic fit on a teeny tiny pin that goes on someone's t-shirt or bag? If so, is it just as legible, distinct and simple as the logo on the airplane?

This is a version of what they call a "visibility test". A visibility test is simple for most designers as we can zoom in to get an idea of what our graphic looks like when large and then zoom out so we can see how our graphic might look much smaller.
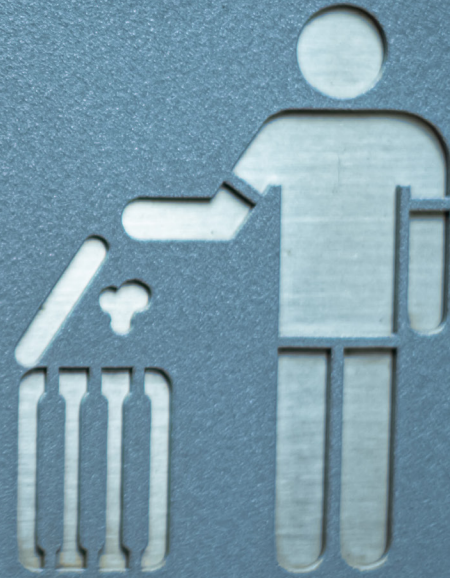
Many social media profile pictures can display as small as 100x100 pixels. Does your logo pass the visibility test at this size? How does it look on a billboard or something much larger?

When do you **scrap** an idea and start over?

Knowing when to quit can save you so much time.

Experience can help you get a feeling on whether or not a concept will end up being able to "fly" with the client or be a well suited logo.

A few pages ago, we went through a series of questions that can help us determine which concepts make the cut. Logically, these questions help, but sometimes designers fall into the trap of falling in love with a concept that may not work out in the end.

It could be overly ambitious, too detailed or just not the right fit for the company. Always do a gut check and figure out if your infatuation for a graphic is getting in the way of coming up with the "right fit" for the company logo.

The earlier you do this gut check and decide to start over, the more time you will save. If you just cannot seem to get your concept finalized, without being truly happy with its presentation, then it might be time to hit the drawing board again. It happens, not always, but it happens even to the best designers.

The great news is you still have fantastic data and research already developed. Perhaps there are earlier concepts and sketches you can start to take further along in the process.

GUT CHECK
CHECK
CHECK

Creating Variations

Variations are small tweaks of one concept.

At this point in the process a few concepts will start to take shape. Now is the time to take a small handful of concepts that are rising to the top and create a few variations to find the right layout, shape, typography usage and establish the fine details.

In this sushi restaurant logo example we start of with the basic concept of chopsticks intersecting to create areas where we can use descriptive icons to further explain our company.

The the overall concept stays the same but we explore additional layout options including integrating the text in a circular fashion creating a seal or badge type logo.

During a visibility test it was discovered that the smaller icons where harder to make out, so replacing those icons with a chopstick and a sushi knife where pursued.

In the end, you might notice your concept "evolved" into something a bit different than how it started. This is a more dramatic variation exploration.

For a second concept using just typography to display the logo we discover different stroke thickness, brushes and character sizes to find a concept variation that we are happy with.
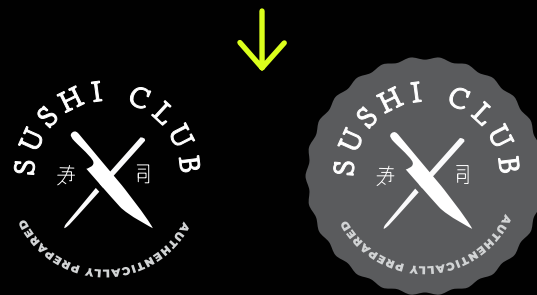
Typography Selection

Typography choices can express different moods, tones and induce emotions similar to those with color selection.

This logo design, for a gym and spa, choosing the right typeface choice to pair with the logomark will take some time. We work through our font choices until we find one that would best match the temperament of our logo.

For a high end spa we want to elicit calmness and confidence. I stuck with a simple sans-serif and tried to see how using all capital letters with and without spacing would look comparative to typography presentations using all lowercase. In the end, I created a variation that did include all capital letters but spaced apart to give it more the sense of breathing room and space. I also reduce the size of the word "calm" so the wordmark did not overpower the logomark or symbol.

As I continued to create variations with typography, I manually rounded all of the corners of the typography to soften it further. In the end, 40 different typography variations where created in hopes that I would find the right font fit for this logomark.

Pick 2 or 3 final concepts

Student work on The Coffee Guild student project is shown below.

Now that we have polished layouts for a few of our favored concepts, it is now time to select a color palette. Up until now we have mostly been working in black and white and for good reason. Color can sometimes get in the way of creating a solid concept as we never want a logo to depend on just color for the concept to be digestible. Selecting a color palette is delicate, time consuming work. What we want to do is select a maximum of 3, preferably 2, concepts to move forward to this last stage.

Student Work - *Riduan Ishak*

Student Work - *Melanie Watson*

Student Work - *Kyle Bennett*

Student Work - *Kayla Guilfoy*

Student Work - *Andrew Watkins*

Student Work - *David Upshall*

Student Work - *Iðunn Ásgeirsdóttir*

Student Work - *Luis Aviles*

Student Work - *Wyze Media House*

the practical guide to design theory

LINDSAY MARSH

Color palette selection example.

ANALOGOUS

Let's say we need to develop a color palette for a new company. Let's say we settle on the color blue.

We look toward **analogous colors** to find nice, closely related pairings to the color blue and we find a deep purple to a blue-green color.

Using pure hues can make creating designs from those pure hues difficult because they all have the same saturation and strength.

We can add white, gray or black to any of our analogous colors to gain a wider workable color palette.

PURE HUE
PURE HUE
ADDING WHITE
ADDING BLACK

COMPLEMENTARY

We have established some great cooler colors using an analogous color scheme. But, what if we wanted to add a punch of color to our palette?

We can take our analogous colors and find corresponding **complement colors** for each one. This creates a dynamic pop as it has higher contrast.

We can even find various shades, tints and tones of our colors to expand our complement color set.

This yields a great set of analogous colors but also complement colors in that set. This is a great example of how understanding different color harmonies can give you a huge head start in pairing colors together.

It can be one color harmony or a combination of several that helps form your color choices.

PURE HUE
PURE HUE
ADDING WHITE

Geometric

Just Google it.

As with its Serif cousins, Sans-Serif went through a similar transformation as it continued to evolve toward a specific direction.

In this case, it kept moving more toward perfection and grids with geometric typefaces.

Geometric typefaces adhere to elemental style of design in which basic shapes like triangles and circles become the core shapes of the characters.

These typefaces came out of the Bauhaus Movement; an early 20th century shift in how we view art and its importance on society. It focused on combining simple forms together that challenged traditional design.

The Google logo features a geometric typeface. It seems as though a lot of companies that switch from a traditional Serif typeface to a Sans-Serif typeface, to help modernize the brand, pick a geometric typeface.

Neo-Grotesque   Geometric

In geometric typefaces you can really see the basic element shape of the circle begin to be applied here. The capital G almost fully adheres to a perfect circle shape.

Avenir

In Avenir, another very popular geometric typeface, you can see almost zero contrast in the stroke width throughout the characters.

Avenir

This simplicity makes geometric typefaces great choices for logo design.

Futura

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890?!#$%&+-<>

If typefaces had personalities...

INTENSE happy
CONFIDENT relaxed
carefree unsure flirty CALCULATED Classy
SERIOUS oddball idealistic daydreamer
PLAYFUL perfectionist stable sassy
fancy pleasant youthful
ALARMIST rigid sensible
Reserved innocent PURPOSEFUL
ANXIOUS FORMAL REBEL

Want to know more about color and typography theory?

There is a lot that goes into color selection including color psychology and color harmonies. Typography has a rich history and knowing this and having a solid understanding of typography theory can give you the edge when crafting your logos. My first book, The Practical Guide to Design Theory, provides a basic overview of all essential design theory applications and makes for a great companion guide alongside this book!