

Purpose

Design plays a powerful role in business and organizations.

It gives life and meaning to your mission and drives perceptions of your value. Because perceptions are tied to emotion, they strongly influence purchasing decisions. So it is important to actively manage perceptions because they impact your success. Brands must create positive feelings about an organization's value and mission.

Your logo is the visual key to accomplishing this.

Fundamentally, a logo is a tool.

It represents your organization in many settings, and helps drive favorable market buy-in. It is the cornerstone of all of your organization's marketing and communications.

The Difference between Logos, Identities and Brands

These terms are often used interchangeably, causing confusion about their place in marketing. They have different purposes and are related to each other in this hierarchy:

1. A **logo** is an icon, a wordmark or a combination that represents an entity's brand visually. It should be used as consistently as possible to reinforce immediate recognition (think McDonald's Arches).
2. An **identity** is how the logo is deployed on an organization's materials to create continuity among all the marketing and communications of the organization. Consistent application reinforces familiarity with the organization's brand and builds trust.
3. A **brand** is the set of promises that your organization makes to its audience. It is conveyed anywhere the public has contact with your organization. All the impressions that accrue from those interactions add up to your brand. It exists in the minds of your audience and functions as your reputation.

Process

The logo design process starts with establishing a direction to guide design development. At the beginning, you will be asked for two "homework" assignments:

1. Gather examples of marketing and communications materials from entities similar to yours in both print and digital media. We'll need to understand the visual environment in which your organization's logo will compete.
2. Gather print and web examples of graphic design that you like, as well as examples of designs that you **dislike**. Understanding your design preferences will establish the aesthetic boundaries within which the design should develop.

Development Phases:

1. **Research** — After we both review the above materials and research, we will review the mission and purpose of your organization, its goals and audience, any obstacles to its mission, how your audience should be engaged, how to position the organization, how the logo will be used, and any other questions with a bearing on the logo's design.
2. **Creative Brief** — When the research phase is complete, the results will be distilled into a Creative Brief. This summarizes findings from Step 1 and guides design development. It must be approved by you to proceed to the next step.

- 3. Design Concepts** — After the Creative Brief has been approved, several preliminary concepts of possible logo designs will be created and presented at a meeting.
- 4. Concepts Review** — The concepts will be reviewed and discussed, and up to three will be selected for further development.
- 5. Design Comps** — These concepts will be produced as fully developed comps (designs that have a high degree of finish) and presented at the following meeting.
- 6. Comps Review** — The comps will be reviewed, and at this point you will either select a design, select one with alterations, or ask for more design development. Usually clients are able to make a productive choice at this point, having been involved in all phases of development.
- 7. Final Selection** — After design selection, the last adjustments are made, and a library of files is produced in color and in black and white, in a number of different file formats. At this point, creating a style guide for best practices and how to deploy the logo onto identity materials should be considered as the next project.

Notes

- *The extent of each step is subject to the scope of individual projects. Project complexity/simplicity is a spectrum, and this is defined during the proposal process.*
- *When the client is a group or a board, we recommend that the group create a smaller sub-committee authorized to develop the project, go to meetings, evaluate the design concepts, render approvals and report back to the larger group.*

Getting Started

These questions should be considered before embarking on a logo project. Thoughtful answers will help ensure that the resulting logo is successful. Please be as clear as possible. ("I don't know" is a valid answer.) The answers to these questions will help develop the proposal and form the basis of the Creative Brief.

1. What is the purpose or mission of your business or organization?
2. What do you offer to your clients or audience?
3. Who and where is your market? What are the general demographics?
4. Who are your competitors and/or colleagues?
5. What makes you unique? What sets you apart from your competition?
6. Why should your market go to you and not to your competition?
7. What is your market positioning? (How you would like your market/audience to perceive you.)
8. What sort of image do you want to have?
9. What are your key messages?
10. What is your budget for this project?
11. How and on what will this logo be used? (Example: business cards, annual reports, signage, etc.)