



Creative Smarts At Work

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 people's decisions. So it is important to actively manage perceptions because of their impact on your success. Your brand must create positive feelings about your 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 create perceptions that drive favorable market buy-in. It should be 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 as to their purpose and place in marketing strategy. They are different tools with different purposes and are related to each other in this hierarchy:

1. A **logo** is either an icon or a wordmark or a combination, that represents an entity visually. It should be used as consistently as possible to create and 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. Consistency also builds trust.
3. A **brand** is the set of promises that your organization makes to its customers. It is conveyed at all points where the public has contact with your organization. All the impressions that accrue from those interactions and experiences 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 the stages of 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. It is important to understand the visual environment in which your organization's logo will function. The idea is to stand out without going outside the realm of audience expectations.
2. Gather print and web examples of graphic design that you like, as well as examples of design that you **dislike**. These will establish the aesthetic boundaries within which the design should develop. Be able to explain why you like or dislike a design.

These are the development phases:

1. **Research** — After reviewing the above material and research undertaken by LBD, 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.



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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 research phase is complete and the Creative Brief has been approved, rough sketches of possible logo concepts will be created and presented at the following meeting.
- 4. Concepts Review** — The concepts are reviewed and discussed, and up to three are selected for further development.
- 5. Design Comps** — These concepts are produced as fully developed comps (designs that are finished to the point of actual logos) and presented at the following meeting.
- 6. Comps Review** — The comps are 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.
- 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.

When the client is a group or a board, LBD recommends that a smaller sub-committee be designated and authorized to develop the project, go to meetings, evaluate the designs 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 return the answers by the first meeting. Please be as clear as possible.

("I don't know" is a valid answer, by the way.) The answers to these questions will 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?
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.)