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# PRINTtips

## How to Develop... ...A Great Logo



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**A**n organization or business logo, whether a graphic symbol or a distinctive typeface, is a visual way to instantly identify the entity. When used on signs, in advertising, and on marketing materials, it is a shorthand way for its customers and prospects to recognize the business or organization.

### Logos Come in Four Forms

- **font-based:** composed of type only. Examples are Coca-Cola, Google, Louis Vuitton.
- **symbol-based:** an icon commonly associated with the type of business, such as scissors for a beauty shop or a tree for a gardening service.
- **abstract graphics:** a symbol created for the purpose like the Nike swoosh, Twitter bird, and Olympic rings.
- **combination:** a mixture of type and either a symbol or abstract graphic. Examples are the Lacoste alligator + font and Chanel double C + font.

We cite these examples because they are well known, made so by their advertising budgets that use the logo in global ad campaigns. But it is good design that makes these logos memorable and identifiable.

### Logo Design Principles

In 2009, Smashing Magazine, a website and blog resource for web developers and designers, offered five principles for effective logo design:



- **Simple.** Milton Glaser, the designer who created the I (love) New York logo, touts simplicity as a guiding design principle. A simple design is quickly and easily recognized. Ideally, the viewer sees the logo and immediately understands what it represents.
- **Memorable.** Paul Rand, the designer of the IBM, UPS, Westinghouse, and ABC logos, observed that logo design must be distinctive, memorable, and clear; but does not have to illustrate what the business or organization does. (For example, the ABC television network logo does not include a television set or broadcast tower.)
- **Enduring and timeless.** To be enduring, a logo needs to remain current-looking for several decades, a quality called forward looking. Using colors and fonts that are the

## How to Develop a Great Logo (cont.)

latest trend is the opposite of forward looking. Milton Glaser's I (love) New York logo was created in 1975; its clean lines, simplicity, and neutrality have given it staying power.

- **Versatile.** The logo must work in a variety of sizes (ranging from business card to outdoor signs); in color and black and white; in print and on the web; and on signs, vehicles, clothing and advertising specialty items.
- **Appropriate.** The typeface, symbol and colors used for the logo must be appropriate for the type of business or organization. A law firm or technology company needs a more formal-looking logo than a children's clothing shop.

### Technical Considerations

Besides great design, a successful logo follows technical principles to achieve distinction. Understanding and honoring these technical aspects improves the chances of creating a great logo that is easy to work with in all situations.

#### Simple

A simple logo does not try to do too much. The logo does not have to represent the company's products or services (the Nike logo is a swoosh, not a shoe) or reflect its company history. It also does not have to be a visual representation of the company's tagline.

A good practice aimed at keeping a logo simple is to begin designing in black and white. Color can be added later, after the basic design is established. Another tip is to turn the logo upside down so its shape becomes more apparent and reveals possible flaws.

Over time, most logos are redesigned and made simpler. To keep an initial design as simple as possible, subtract anything that isn't essential. And if in doubt, leave it out.

#### Memorable

A memorable logo is one that is original and doesn't borrow from others, either by imitating or copying. Although it is possible to use clip art as a starting point, this is not recommended. Besides

the possibility that others may be using the image, the conditions of sale of some clip art companies forbid using their images in a logo.

A memorable logo is devoid of cliches (a globe to represent international or a light bulb for ideas) and may use only type without a symbol or graphic.

#### Enduring and Timeless

To create a logo that will last for 20 years without appearing dated or stale, choose a typeface that is simple and legible. This is especially important if the business name is unusual or unfamiliar. Use no more than two fonts in the logo design and avoid gimmicky, currently-fashionable, or trendy fonts.

If the logo features both an image and a tagline, construct each of these elements as a separate piece of art — in other words, don't overlap or entwine them. This will enable using the elements separately as well as together.

Extend the life of the logo by creating some elements that are enduring and others that can be subtly refreshed, modernized, or adapted for future visual formats. When the logo design is complete, consider protecting it by applying for a trademark or service mark from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

#### Versatile

For today's multi-media marketing requirements, a logo must be versatile so it will work in print, on the web, and on other items like apparel and advertising specialty items. This means it must reproduce accurately in all three color spaces: PMS Pantone Matching System for one- and two-color printing; CMYK cyan, magenta, yellow, and black, the four-color process colors for full color printing; and RGB red, green, blue for the web. The logo may also need a version to use on a dark background, over photographs and in gray scale or black and white.

The aspect ratio (the relationship between the height and width) determines the shape and orientation of the logo — square, horizontal, or

*“The logo must work in a variety of sizes...”*

*“A good practice aimed at keeping a logo simple is to begin designing in black and white.”*

*“A memorable logo is devoid of cliches...”*

## How to Develop a Great Logo (cont.)

vertical. A logo that is too tall and thin or too short and wide will present layout problems on artwork. Square and circle shapes are pleasing and adaptable to many design layouts.

Logos need to be prepared in two file formats: vector and bitmap. The image in a vector file consists of a set of points, lines, curves, and shapes based on mathematical expressions to represent images, making it very easy to alter the size. In addition, vector file formats can be output at the resolution required for the output device (such as 300 dots per inch or dpi), ensuring the best quality reproduction in print. Two vector file formats are EPS (Encapsulated PostScript) and AI (Adobe Illustrator).

For websites, blog layouts and social media, a bitmap file format is required. This format creates images using pixels. Low resolution bitmap files (such as 72 pixels per inch or ppi) are much smaller than EPS files and therefore faster to load on the web. JPEG, TIFF, GIF, PNG and PS (Photoshop) are bitmap file formats.

An EPS file can be converted to a bitmap file with relative ease. However, a bitmap file must be redrawn to convert to EPS. Because of this, it is generally better to create the logo as an EPS file first.

### Appropriate

Type, symbols and graphics have distinctive characteristics and should be matched to the brand image. For example, use big, powerful slab fonts to signify strength; serifs or script fonts to imply class, style and elegance; italics or slanted fonts to suggest movement and forward thinking.

Negative space can also be used to define a brand characteristic.

### Evaluate Your Logo

If you have never evaluated your logo using the design principles discussed in this issue of Printips, we suggest you do so now. If you find a few areas that need attention, give us a call. We can help with refreshing the logo or a redesign.

*“Negative space can also be used to define a brand characteristic.”*

## Branding and Style Sheets

Once created, a logo becomes part of the company's or organization's branding statement and should be used extensively. Besides including it on printed materials, exterior signage, the web site, and social media; use it as part of an e-mail signature, on company name tags, badges and apparel, on vehicles, and on advertising specialty items.

Create a set of rules (called a style sheet) defining all elements of logo use, typeface system, color palette, layout guidelines, and any restrictions on use of the logo. Style sheets are often issued as print and web-ready PDFs.

- Specify the logo colors using all three color systems: PMS (Pantone Matching System), CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow and black, the colors of four-color process printing) and RGB (red, green

and blue, the colors of digital imaging and web sites). Include a translation of PMS color to CMYK and HEX equivalents.

- Define whether alternate colors are allowed and if so, specify them.
- Define the allowable typefaces, including sizes and weights for various applications (body copy, headlines, subheads). Include web-friendly font alternatives as necessary.
- Specify the minimum white space surrounding the logo.
- Show allowable variations of the logo (horizontal and vertical formats, minimum sizes) and specify whether any of the elements (logotype, graphic element, or tagline) can appear alone.

*“Create a set of rules ... defining all elements of logo use...”*



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## Taglines

*“Consider a tagline  
to be separate  
element of brand  
identity...”*

**A**s part of its brand identity, a company or organization may develop a tagline — a few words or a simple phrase that describes the company’s product, service, or mission. Consider a tagline to be a separate element of brand identity and do not include it as part of a logo. When included as part of a logo, a tagline could produce visual clutter, interfere with the logo design, or require the use of very small type that becomes illegible or plugs when being printed.

If the tagline is included, it may be placed under the logo or placed around the outside if the logo’s shape is circular.

