

PURPOSE

Design plays a powerful role in business and organizations.

It gives life to the creative ideas behind your mission and goals, and drives perceptions of its value. Because perceptions are tied to emotion, they strongly influence people's decisions and assumptions. When it comes to making your case, **perceptions about your image are everything**. So it is of utmost importance to actively manage what that image is. How you're perceived has everything to do with your success. You need to make sure your organization's value is conveyed accurately, consistently and positively.

People create and act on most of their impressions unconsciously, so you need to manage how these impressions occur to make sure they're formed to your benefit. An organization's image must create good feelings about its mission so that the community will support its goals. Its logo should reflect its vision and support its core values, ethics and goals.

At base, a logo is a tool. It represents the organization in a variety of settings, and helps create the perceptions that will drive community or market buy-in in its favor. It should be the cornerstone of all your organization's marketing and communications.

PROCESS

The process of creating a logo involves a series of steps that begins with establishing a direction to guide the stages of design development. At the beginning, I'll ask you to do two "homework" assignments:

1. Gather examples of marketing and communications materials from entities similar to yours, in both print and web media. It is important to understand the visual environment in which the organization's logo will function. The idea is to stand out, but not go outside the realm of audience expectations.
2. Gather examples of graphic design that you like, in both web and print. Examples of design that you dislike are also needed. This will provide an understanding of the aesthetic boundaries within which the design should develop.

The phases of logo development are as follows:

1. **Research** – In addition to the above information, a meeting with you begins the process by thoroughly discussing the mission and purpose of your organization, its goals, its audience, any obstacles to the execution of its mission, how the audience should be engaged, how to position the organization, how the logo will be used, and any other relevant questions that may have a bearing on the logo's design. Your preferences as to visual design also need to be defined.
2. **Design Concepts** – After the research phase is complete, 10-12 rough pencil sketches (thumbnails) are created of possible ideas and concepts for the logo, and presented to you at the following meeting.
3. **Concepts Review** -The concepts are reviewed and discussed, and up to three are selected for further development.
4. **Design Comps** – The chosen concepts are produced as fully developed comps (designs that are finished to the point of actual logos) and presented to you at the following meeting.
5. **Comps Review** - The comps are reviewed, and at this point, you will either select a design, select one with some alterations, or ask for more design development. Most of the time, however, clients are able to make a productive choice at this point, having been involved in all phases.

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6. **Final Selection** – When the final design is decided, the last adjustments are made, and a file set is produced with the logo in color and in black and white, in a number of different file formats.

When the client is a group or a board, it is recommended that a smaller sub-committee be designated that is authorized to develop the project, go to meetings, evaluate the designs and report back to the larger group.

GETTING STARTED

Below is a worksheet of preliminary questions that you should consider before embarking on a logo project. Thoughtful answers to these considerations will help ensure that the resulting logo will meet and exceed your needs. Please return the answers prior to the first meeting. It is important to be as clear as possible. (“I don’t know” is a valid answer, by the way.)

1. What is the purpose/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/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. How and on what will this logo be used? (Example: business cards, annual reports, signage, T-shirts, etc.)