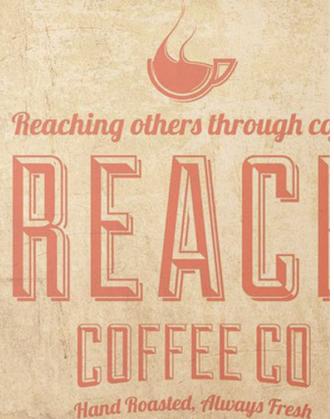


FOUR STEPS TO THE PERFECT LOGO

What to consider when choosing a logo design



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INTRODUCTION

What if you could learn about a company in just a few precious seconds? Well, you can. And you do, every time you see a logo for the first time.

A great logo reveals your industry, personality and point of difference—and looks incredible doing it. That might sound intimidating if you're in the market for a logo, but it doesn't have to be.

From pizza shacks to tech startups, 99designs has helped thousands of businesses around the world get logos that communicate their unique brands. Some clients have a clear vision of their ideal logo. Others come to us with just a name and a passion. We've seen it all, and learned a few things along the way.

We've created this guide to help you understand the fundamentals of a memorable logo. Use it to assist you in your logo design process, and remember that there's no limit to the ways our global community of designers can help you define your brand's visual keystone.

Creating a logo is an exciting process. Enjoy it, and the rewards it brings.

5 SIGNS YOU NEED A LOGO

How do you know when it is time to get a new logo design? Here are five clues.

1. You don't have one.

Every business, no matter how big or small, needs a professional logo. It's the visual keystone of your brand.

2. Your business has evolved, but your logo hasn't.

Be true to your brand. If a strategic shift warrants a logo refresh, try to evaluate what you should hold onto so you don't disrupt the brand equity you've already built.

3. Your logo isn't compatible with new technologies.

Logos that don't look good on Facebook, Twitter and other modern media are overdue for an update.

4. Your logo was a DIY project.

If your logo includes anything resembling clip art, or it looks dusty and dated, it's time to focus on what is working and evolve your design.

5. You're not proud of your logo.

When you look at your logo, does it give you an immediate sense of pride in the business you've built? It should.



BENEFITS OF A PROFESSIONAL LOGO

- Attract new customers
- Stand out from the competition
- Make a great first impression
- Help people remember you
- Communicate who you are
- Increase the value of your offering

STEP 1

DEFINE YOUR BRAND

Before you jump in and get started on your logo project, first consider the most important thing: your brand. You've probably heard that you need branding, or that you need to define your brand. If you need help with that, read on.

Branding 101

A brand is founded on the core truth of your company. Through branding, you leverage this truth into an emotion your customers can connect with. Branding is about shaping and nurturing a relationship with your customers.

A logo is one way you can create positive associations about your brand, but that requires a clear, consistent and honest vision of what your company represents. Your mission, target audience, values and personality should infuse all that you do. They'll guide your communications and help you build memorability and trust.

Once your brand vision is defined, a designer can translate its core concepts into a logo through an expert knowledge of symbols, marks, colors and words.

5 steps to discovering your brand

A worksheet to help guide your logo design contest

A strong logo can go a long way in generating positive associations about your brand. Before you begin a logo design project, set aside 20 minutes (or more, if you can find the time) to complete this exercise with any other stakeholders in your business.

Keep this info handy. If you launch a logo design contest with 99designs, you'll include some of these details when filling in the online design brief.

1. The big idea

In as few words as possible, define why your company exists and your vision for where you want your brand to go. You can help get the juices flowing by filling in the blanks, then modifying as needed.

Our company, _____,
exists to _____
_____.

In five years, we aim to _____
_____.

- ✓ **Why it's important:** Your logo should reflect where you are today and where you see yourself in the future.

2. Core values

What are the top five values in your brand belief system? Think of words like innovation, integrity, leadership, collaboration, passion, quality, diversity and creativity. These should be the values that guide your approach to all aspects of business and unify your team.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- ✓ **Why it's important:** Keep these values in mind as you evaluate logo design submissions.

3. Personality

Imagine for a minute that your brand is a person. What are the top five adjectives you would use to describe that individual's personality? Think of words like energetic, daring, hip, caring and witty. Your personality gives your brand a human tone that your audience can connect with.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- ✓ **Why it's important:** These traits help your designer make design decisions (like colors and fonts).

- 💡 **Tip:** When you fill in your design brief, you'll see sliders with some common traits. If you don't see the words you listed above, you can add them to the "Other" box.

4. Target audience

Who is your primary audience, and how are you meeting their needs? You may have more than one audience, but for this exercise, list just the most important one. Identifying your target audience makes it easier to capture their attention by putting their needs front and center.

Our primary target audience is _____
_____.

We are solving their needs by _____
_____.

- ✓ **Why it's important:** Your designer will create a logo that is more appealing and relevant to your audience.

5. Positioning

Who are your top 5 competitors?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What makes you different? What do you do better than any of them?

_____.

- ✓ **Why it's important:** Your logo should set you apart from competitors and highlight what makes you unique.

STEP 2

GET FAMILIAR WITH BEST PRACTICES

Sure, there's an element of subjectivity in logo design, but great logos share certain fundamental characteristics. Becoming familiar with these best practices will help you evaluate design concepts.

The 5 attributes of great logo design

Simple

Keep it simple. That's pretty solid advice for a lot of things, including logo design. If you're looking to capture the attention of potential customers, ditch the clutter. Pare down and look for a design that delivers a simple visual message that is aligned with your company's personal attributes.



Simplicity leads to identifiable and evocative logos.

Original

The last thing you want from a company logo is to have it mistaken for that of a competitor. So when considering logo design, look at what's out there and encourage your designer to find an opening for something new. Opt for distinctive colors, shapes and symbolism that stay true to your core personality—not to mention avoid copyright issues!



Irreverent, traditional and luxurious: these car logos stand out by elevating their brand's unique attributes.

Relevant

Think about what's appropriate for your industry and audience. Will customers be attracted to a logo that emphasizes strength and speed? Friendliness and approachability? Evoke a mood that connects them to your company's core personality.



The famous Nike swoosh emphasizes speed while Tasty Blowfish's focus is on friendliness.

Timeless

For a logo to do its duty and provide long-term brand recognition, you need it to stick around as your business grows. That means avoiding hot trends. A logo can last for decades, so choose one that tells the story of your company honestly.



Two timeless logos, one designed in 1941 and the other in 2013.

Versatile

An effective logo is easily recognizable on any medium that bears your brand — whether it's a fleet of trucks, your Twitter avatar, packaging or web ads. Make sure it works in both full color and black, at any size. Consider what elements you'll lose if you scale down.



Target's bullseye demonstrates brandability in any form.

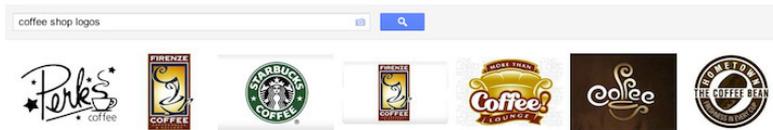
How to ensure a unique design

You might not know exactly what you're looking for when you launch a logo contest, but you can make sure that you know what not to look for: clichés. Some logo design elements have been used so many times that they can no longer be claimed as original creations, so you may also run into trademark issues.



These outdated-looking symbols are awfully generic.
For differentiation, keep your distance.

To get a feel for industry-specific clichés, do a Google Images search for logos in your industry (i.e. “coffee shop logos.”)



As you scope out other designs in your industry, take note of what you think works, what you definitely don't think works, and why. Do the elements of your favorite designs align with what you're trying to communicate with your brand?

Tip: It's okay to tell your designers upfront what you don't think is reflective of your brand—the design brief is a great place to mention things to avoid.

STEP 3

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Green or blue? Wordmark, icon or both? Garamond or Helvetica? Your designer will make a number of design decisions while creating your logo. Knowing the basics of what each component stands for will help you provide meaningful feedback.

1. Style

Word mark, symbol or both?

When you fill in your design brief at 99designs, you can select three types of logos that you'd like designers to explore. Here we'll review the basic styles to help you make the most effective choice for your brand.

Word mark

A word mark relies on typographic treatment to illustrate your distinctive brand position.

This is a great choice if you have:

- A fun, unique, short or catchy name
- A clear and self-explanatory name
- A desire to build name recognition

The Google logo, featuring the word "Google" in its signature multi-colored font.The COMMOTION logo, featuring the word "COMMOTION" in a bold, black, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol (®) above it. Below the word is "EST. 2014".

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Letter mark

Letter mark logos are iconic designs featuring one or more stylized letters.

They're ideal when:

- You want a symbol that can stand alone
- The full name is long or cumbersome
- You're establishing a parent brand



Pictorial mark

Pictorial marks offer a visual metaphor of your company name or service.

They come in handy if you:

- Want to quickly communicate an industry
- Don't benefit from a lot of advertising and PR
- Trust designers to put a unique, creative spin on the subject



Abstract mark

These conceptual logos rely on the emotive qualities of color and form to convey your brand.

Abstract marks are a smart choice when:

- You have a complex or intangible offering
- You're concerned about international relevancy
- Your audience will get tons of exposure to your logo



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Emblem

Here, the organization name is enveloped by a pictorial element or shape to create an inseparable badge.

Consider an emblem logo if you're after a:

- Unified team look
- Perception of strength
- Sturdy, traditional feel



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Mascot

Mascot logos rely on a character—either an animal or human—to represent your business.

Consider a mascot if you:

- Want to strengthen attachment to your existing mascot branding
 - Believe your brand has a lighthearted touch
 - Have a company named after a specific person



Web 2.0

This style includes flat design, line art and other trends that are shaping the Internet.

Explore this style if you:

- Are in the technology sector
- Want a sleek and sophisticated style
- Do most (or all) of your business online



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2. Colors - See the Full Spectrum

There's an entire science dedicated to how people react to colors, but that doesn't mean you need to be a psychologist to understand how to react to the colors your designer chooses. When you tell designers about your company, they'll be able to choose colors that best communicate your brand.

Here's a quick look at some common color associations your designer will use to design your logo. It's worth taking a look—it may help you deliver the right kind of feedback.

Red

Passionate, confident and dynamic, ravishing red demands attention.



💡 **Tip:** Rely on red to excite the emotions.

Orange

Enthusiastic, adventurous and optimistic, juicy orange is aggressive but friendly.



💡 **Tip:** Energetic orange gets them raring to go.

Yellow

Cheerful, original and warm, yellow's sunny disposition is hard to resist.



banana**box**.ch

99designs

💡 **Tip: Draw customers in with a pop of yellow.**

Green

Healthy, balanced and refreshing, green is naturally is easy on the eyes.



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💡 **Tip: Go green to inspire new beginnings.**

Blue

Trustworthy, calm and intelligent, tried-and-true blue is deep with potential.

facebook.



99designs

💡 **Tip: Build loyalty with blue.**

Purple

Imaginative, luxurious and soothing, purple can be royally clever.

YAHOO!



99designs

💡 **Tip: Play up your artsy side with purple.**

Pink

Nurturing, feminine and sensual, pink can slip from sugary sweet to sultry and sexy.

Barbie™



99designs

💡 **Tip: For a feminine edge, think pink.**

Black

Secretive, elegant and powerful, sophisticated black carries an air of mystery.



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💡 **Tip: Be bold and beautiful with black.**

Try More Than One

Remember that you're not limited to one color.

If you want to emphasize your variety of products or appeal to kids, for example, you may want to go with a multicolor design.



💡 **Tip: Whatever colors you choose, make sure your logo looks good in black and white, too.**

3. Fonts - Just Your Type

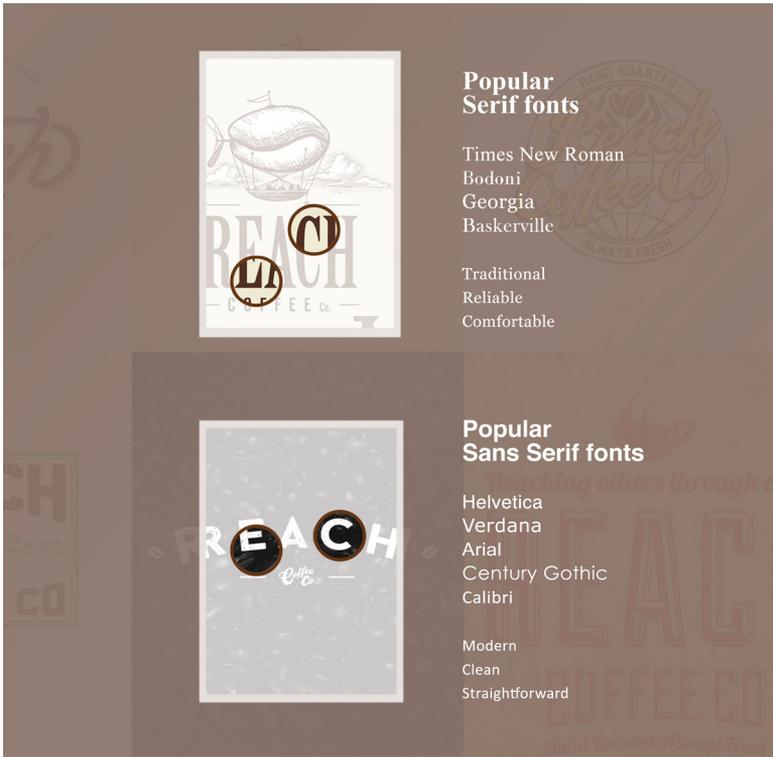
The right font can amplify the strengths of your logo (and your brand). Your designer will be able to find a font that fits your personality, but it may be helpful for you to know the two basic types.

Serif

Serif fonts, like **Times New Roman**, have little “feet” on the edges of each letter. Serif fonts are a great choice for brands that want to look traditional and trustworthy.

Sans serif

Sans serif fonts, like **Helvetica**, are “sans” feet—the letters have smooth edges. Sans serif fonts are popular with brands that want a modern, clean look and feel.



Popular Serif fonts

Times New Roman
Bodoni
Georgia
Baskerville

Traditional
Reliable
Comfortable

Popular Sans Serif fonts

Helvetica
Verdana
Arial
Century Gothic
Calibri

Modern
Clean
Straightforward

Other font varieties include:

Slab serif

Large, square and bold serifs characterize this typeface.

Script

Script typefaces are based on the fluid movement of handwriting.

display

Decorative or ornamental fonts can evoke a specific mood or style.

STEP 4

PREP FOR YOUR DESIGN CONTEST

Now for the fun part: your own logo design! We've seen time and time again that investing energy at the outset will maximize your logo design's potential. Here are a few keys to success.

1. Write a detailed design brief

The design brief is a designer's jumping-off point. In this ebook we've covered elements that are critical to any brief, regardless of where you find your logo designer. If you choose to launch a design contest on 99designs, the online brief will be a cinch.

It's also helpful to share inspiration with your designers. You can browse design blogs and online publications to see what's out there. Even if they're not related to your industry, seeing designs you admire can also help you figure out (and communicate) what styles you like. Be sure to save your favorites to upload to your design brief.

2. Carve out time for feedback

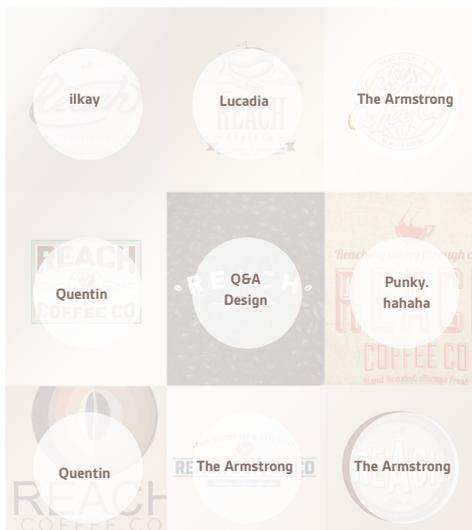
Running a design contest ought to be as enjoyable as it is productive. It is also, however, a fair amount of work, requiring strong vision and management. During the short window when your logo contest is running, plan to carve out time twice a day to provide comments and ratings. This will help refine the concepts, to give you a logo that successfully reflects your brand values.

3. Know what files you need

Tell your designer up front about any specific files you'll need. You'll always want to get an editable EPS or Adobe Illustrator file along with your JPEG and PDF files. For print, you'll want a CMYK file with a resolution of at least 300dpi. For the web, your JPG or GIF file (in RGB color mode) with a resolution of 72dpi is just fine.

4. Finally, have fun!

Getting a new logo is a significant and exciting process. You're bringing your brand to life, after all. With this ebook you're more than ready to get started today at <http://99designs.com/logo-design>. But if you need any guidance along the way, give us a call at 800-513-1678 or send an email to us at support@99designs.com. We'd be happy to help.



Logo designers from the cover