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DESIGNING IDENTITY

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Your Logo—One Little Symbol with So Much Meaning

Your logo is the face of your business. The design, color and personality of your logo will immediately give the public an impression of your business. An impression that will influence their perception of your company from the minute they see it. And to use a cliché: *You never get a second chance at a first impression.* With logos, you're making a first, second, third and thirty-fifth impression.

Your logo is the cornerstone of your brand. It should reflect your company in a professional and credible manner. But, really, shouldn't it do more than that? In marketplaces crowded with competitors, design has become a principal tool for differentiation. All other things being equal, consumers reject the commonplace and react to the image that most impacts their emotions.

With all that pressure on it, how is a simple, little logo to keep its sanity?

The reality is that good logo design is challenging. Extremely challenging. And that's likely why you've called Braintree Marketing.



You've come to the right place

Over the next few pages we'll explain to you how we go about creating Corporate Identity materials: what it takes to accomplish your goals, what we need from you, what you can expect from us, and how we arrive at the finished product. Our goal is to create a symbol, a face, a personality that perfectly portrays your company and will stand the test of time. It's a lofty goal. But since we don't even really know what "lofty" means, we're not afraid to take on the challenge!

The First Step to a New You

The first step in creating a truly good corporate identity is understanding your business. How can we portray your image if we don't understand who you are, what you stand for, and just exactly what it is you aspire to be? Input is essential. Research is required. Questions will be asked and answered. Good input results in quality output. Bad input usually does, too. But it takes a lot longer and isn't nearly as much fun, so we try to avoid that.

Our initial meeting will be focused on asking you questions. Who is your customer? What motivates them? What type of personality do they have? What

type of personality do YOU have? Are you aggressive? Quirky? Trendy? Traditional? What's your focus? Your marketing strategy? Who are your competitors? What's their image like? How can you be different? How will your logo be used? What purposes will it serve?

We'll expect you to bring us samples of your current marketing materials, samples of corporate identity that you like and respond to, and examples of what your competition is doing. We know that nobody likes homework, but we will be grading you on your effort. Don't make us send you to the principal's office.

“Are you
aggressive?
Quirky?
Trendy?
Traditional?”



Concept Development

After our initial meetings with you, our creative team will sit down and begin drinking tequila. Ok, not really. But they will begin doing what they do best: being creative. Some people call it brainstorming. Since we're fond of the word "brain", we'll call it that, too!

Almost all the conversations in our brainstorming sessions start with the words, "What if...". Most of the conversations end with the words, "No, that's just stupid." The ones that don't end up that way actually make their way to the drawing board. We'll often sketch, draw, doodle or design as many as 50 concepts searching for the 6 to 10 designs we'll present to you.

The first round of concept development will feature a variety of distinct designs presented in black and white. At this point, color just confuses things. We'll meet with you to discuss these concepts, and each concept will be presented with an explanation of why we feel it deserves to be considered as the symbol of your business.

We'll note your initial reactions, but we also expect you to share the concepts with as many people as you can. Men, women, customers, employees, wives, husbands, sales managers, receptionists. The more input you get, the better you'll be able to decide which direction to take.



Concept Refinement

From all of that input, we'll refine your initial concepts. Sometimes we hit the nail on the head right from the start. Other times we'll combine the best elements of our initial concepts into one super-logo. Or we'll go back to the tequila and the drawing board if that's what's necessary. Your investment covers up to three rounds of revisions at this stage. In the end, we'll deliver one, final, black and white logo that will be the basis of your new corporate identity.



Color Development



Now that we know what the logo will look like, we can begin experimenting with color. The good news is that there are literally millions of color combinations that can be used. The bad news is that there are literally millions of color combinations that can be used.

Luckily, we should already know enough about your company to make educated, strategic recommendations about your logo colors. At this stage, we'll offer you 6 to 10 color options, along with explanations of why we selected those 6 in a million choices.

Again, we want to measure your initial reactions, and we also want to solicit the input of a variety of stakeholders in your decision. We'll offer our best advice, but in the end the decision is yours.

You are now the proud owner of a new logo.

Final Output



Even though you now have a quality, color logo, our job isn't finished. It doesn't do you much good to have a logo if you can't figure out how to use it. We design all corporate identity materials using the latest versions of professional software such as Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. We'll supply you with working files of those logos on CD so that down the road, if you need to make changes, or extract graphical elements or fonts, any graphic designer with the

correct software will be able to assist you. We'll also supply your logo in a variety of standard image formats. We'll create you a CD that has logos that can be used for traditional printing, in-house printing, websites, large format output and everything in between. And we don't stop there! We'll prep your logo for use in a variety of ways—including spot color printing, four color printing, one color printing, black and white, grayscale and even a reversed version.

Completing the Identity Package



Half the fun of having a new logo is finding cool ways to show it to people! Letterhead, envelopes, and business cards are some of the most important and frequent ways you convey your image to your client. And like your logo, they offer the opportunity to advance your corporate brand and image and make a positive impression.

The process for creating a stationery package is similar to that of the logo. We take a look at the input and research you provided, at the new logo we've created, and we apply our creativity to come up with a visual image that will elicit the appropriate response from the intended recipient. We offer an initial design concept and up to three rounds of concept refinement.



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The Identity Investment

Investing in your corporate identity is invaluable. When you think about the hundreds, thousands or even millions of impressions your logo will make, the cost of creating a good one is exceptionally affordable.

Logo Design

Logo design packages, as outlined in the previous pages, require an investment of \$2,499. The \$99 covers the tequila.

Stationery Package Design

Adding a stationery package to your logo design requires an additional investment of \$1500. This covers concept development, up to 3 rounds of refinement, paper stock recommendations and final digital files for letterhead, envelopes and business cards. It does not cover layout of individual business cards for your various employees or the actual printing costs of the stationery package. We will, however, happily create cost estimates for any quantity of printing you desire.



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LOGOS CAN MAKE YOU

“Of course, everyone recognizes successful identity design when they see it. Kodak’s famous yellow and black K, Nike’s swoosh, McDonald’s golden arches and IBM’s bold letterforms are among the logos we recognize immediately. No explanation is necessary. These are identities that have stood the test of time.”

by
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That’s a quote from Cheryl Cullen and Amy Schell in their book “Identity Solutions—How to Create Effective Brands With Letterheads, Logos and Business Cards.” Your logo is the face of your business. The design, color and personality of your logo will immediately give the public an impression of your business that will influence their perception of your product and company from the minute they see it.

But that’s not what I want to talk about. It is virtually impossible to give blanket advice on how to design logos for individual companies. Instead, what I want to discuss is logo USAGE.

IBM, one of the world’s most recognized names and symbols, once created what they referred to as the “wall of shame.” Across that wall they posted over a hundred different misuses of their simple, three letter logo. All across the world, one of the most recognizable brand symbols was undergoing an undesired evolution that would eventually lead to a lack of cohesive identifiability that is the hallmark of a true brand.



Whether you are creating a new corporate image, or simply trying to reap the benefits of brand equity you've already built, here are some tips for ensuring proper logo usage.

Design your logo in pms colors

Traditional printing uses a mix of Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black (CMYK) inks in various proportions to create every color in the spectrum. That means you can create an orange color through a wide mix of inks, in a limitless variety of shades. If you instead use the Pantone Matching System of colors for your logo, you can specify the EXACT color that you want and all printers can reproduce it. As they say on their website: "Whether you are creating a logo, a product, packaging, an ad, the latest fashion trend or a vision, we have the tools and solutions for keeping your colors accurate and consistent cross-media, around the world. The PANTONE Color language is the most universally understood standard available. The PANTONE MATCHING SYSTEM is the definitive international reference for selecting, specifying, matching and controlling ink colors." Once you have chosen your PMS colors, when possible, print your marketing materials using those

colors in addition to the CMYK process printing. The cost will be slightly more, but the consistency is often worth it.

Create A Black and White Logo for Black and White Usage

The logo you print in color is not necessarily the logo you want to use for black and white printing. Colors, when converted to black and white, are usually converted to a "grayscale." That means that the yellow in your logo will not print black, but instead will print in a shade of gray. A light yellow color might be such a light shade that it isn't even visible. Your graphic designer can and should create a specific black and white logo that uses grayscale only where appropriate. This is then the logo that should be used any time black and white output is intended.

Retain a Vector or Original Electronic File of Your Logo

It's a digital world. You absolutely must have electronic versions of your logo to supply to printers, web designers, business partners, etc. But beware. There are literally dozens of electronic formats for graphics, and they are not all equal. If your logo was created electronically (I.E. created on the computer instead of drawn on paper) it was likely created in a program that uses vector art (Adobe Illustrator, Corel Draw, etc). This original file is a necessity for consistent future usage of your logo. Having access to an original file will allow most graphic designers and printers to manipulate your logo on various backgrounds and for various media. Once your logo is saved as a TIFF, JPEG, WMF, BMP, or other non-original format, you lose the ability to manipulate it beyond basic sizing.

Create Your Logos for Print—Then Convert Them for Screen Usage


Standard print graphics quality is 300 dots per inch (DPI). Standard

screen/web graphics quality is 72 DPI. When someone sends me a logo from their website, it often looks terrible when used in a printed piece. It's a simple matter to take a high quality logo and make it work for lesser applications. The opposite is not true. It's also a good idea to maintain separate logos for print and web. Video screens are designed to display every color as a combination of red, green and blue (RGB) as opposed to the CMYK system for printing. Graphics in CMYK format won't appear in your browser window.

Never Allow Manipulation of Your Logo

Never allow anyone (including yourself) to change the proportions, colors, fonts or graphics in your logo. If your logo needs to be larger, it must be proportionately larger in both length and width—never stretch or distend your logo. If your printer can't match the colors of your logo then use a black and white version instead of substituting an alternate. Avoid "reversing" your logo so that it appears in white on a black background.

Maintain Your Own Files

Clients frequently suggest I obtain a copy of their logo from a printer, sign shop or web designer they've worked with before. However, the files I get are often re-creations of the original used for that vendor's specific needs. Before long, the logo your new printer or graphic designer is using is nothing like the one on your business card. If you maintain your own logo files you can ensure each of your marketing and print vendors are using the exact same piece of brand artwork. It may seem a hassle to demand proper usage of your logo, but as IBM proved, if you don't, no one else will, and in the long term your brand image will suffer. 

Chad Rueffert is president of Braintree Marketing, Inc.. Braintree has received numerous awards for creative logo and corporate identity design.