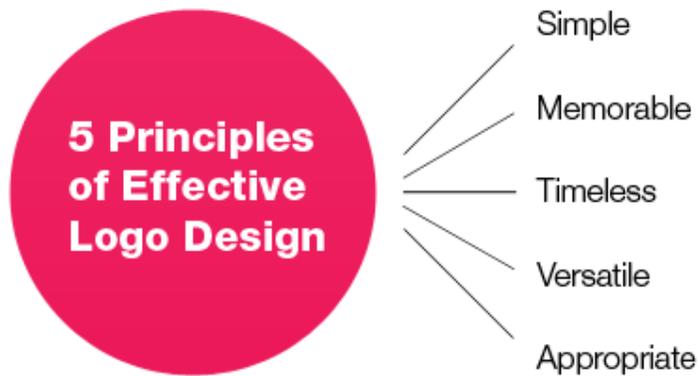


What makes a good logo?

Principles of Effective Logo Design

What makes a good logo? A good logo is distinctive, appropriate, practical, graphic, simple in form and conveys an intended message.

There are five principles that you should follow to ensure that this is so...
An effective logo is (in no particular order):



1. Simple

London Underground Logo



A simple logo design allows for easy recognition and allows the logo to be versatile & memorable. Good logos feature something unique without being overdrawn.

The K.I.S.S. Principle of design; which translates to: Keep It Simple, Stupid conveys a very important design consideration. Simple logos are often easily recognized, incredibly memorable and the most effective in conveying the requirements of the client. A refined and distilled identity will also catch the attention of a viewer zipping by signage at 70 miles per hour, on packaging on the crowded shelves of a store, or in any other vehicle used for advertising, marketing and promotion. Remember, the basis of the hugely effective international branding for the world's largest shoe manufacturer is a very simple graphic swoosh.

— Jeff Fisher

2. Memorable

McDonalds Logo Design



Following closely behind the principle of simplicity, is that of memorability. An effective logo design should be memorable and this is achieved by having a simple, yet, appropriate logo.

You may be interested to see some examples of bad logo designs.

Surprising to many, the subject matter of a logo is of relatively little importance, and even appropriateness of content does not always play a significant role.

This does not imply that appropriateness is undesirable. It merely indicates that a one-to-one relationship between a symbol and what it symbolized is very often impossible to achieve and, under certain conditions, objectionable. Ultimately, the only mandate in the design of logos, it seems, is that they be distinctive, memorable, and clear.

— Paul Rand, renown graphic designer

3. Timeless

Coca-Cola logo



An effective logo should be timeless – that is, it will endure the ages. Will the logo still be effective in 10, 20, 50 years?

Leave trends to the fashion industry – Trends come and go, and when you're talking about changing a pair of jeans, or buying a new dress, that's fine, but where your brand identity is concerned, longevity is key. Don't follow the pack. Stand out.

— David Airey, renown graphic designer

Probably the best example of a timeless logo is the Coca-Cola logo. if you compare it to the Pepsi logo below, you can see just how effective creating a timeless logo can be. Notice how the Coca-Cola logo has barely changed since 1885? That is timeless design.



4. Versatile

WWF Logo



An effective logo should be able to work across a variety of mediums and applications. The logo should be functional. For this reason a logo should be designed in vector format, to ensure that it can be scaled to any size. The logo should be able to work both in horizontal and vertical formats.

Ask yourself; is a logo still effective if:

- Printed in one color?
- Printed on the something the size of a postage stamp?
- Printed on something as large as a billboard?
- Printed in reverse (i.e. light logo on dark background)

One way around creating a versatile logo is to begin designing in black and white only. This allows one to focus on the concept and shape, rather than the subjective nature of color. One must also remember printing costs – the more colors used, the more expensive it will be for the business over the long term.

I like to work first in black and white to ensure that the logo will look good in its simplest form. Color is very subjective and emotional. This can distract from the overall design – say if you saw your logo in all red, that color may be the first thing that you respond to and not the composition of the design elements. I will not even consider submitting color suggestions to a client for review until they have signed off on a final black and white logo.

— Patrick Winfield, renown graphic designer

One should also familiarise them self with the commercial printing process so as not to come into printing problems further down the track. Learn to know the difference between the CMYK, Pantone and RGB color systems. When designing logos, the Pantone color system is recommended.

5. Appropriate

ToysRUs Logo



How you position the logo should be appropriate for its intended purpose. For example, if you are designing a logo for children's toys store, it would be appropriate to use a childish font & color scheme. This would not be so appropriate for a law firm.

It is also important to state that a logo doesn't need to show what a business sells or offers as a service. i.e. Car logos don't need to show cars, computer logos don't need to show computers. The Harley Davidson logo isn't a motorcycle, nor is the Nokia logo a mobile phone. A logo is purely for identification.

For further evidence of this, take the top 50 brands of the world – 94% of the logos do not describe what the company does.

Should a logo be self-explanatory? It is only by association with a product, a service, a business, or a corporation that a logo takes on any real meaning. A logo derives its meaning and usefulness from the quality of that which it symbolizes. If a company is second rate, the logo will eventually be perceived as second rate. It is foolhardy to believe that a logo will do its job immediately, before an audience has been properly conditioned.

— Paul Rand, renowned graphic designer