



principles of **logo design**

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communication technology

# principles of logo design

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- Have you ever noticed how certain logo designs stand out from the crowd?
- Take, for example, the logos for companies like **Coca-Cola**, **Microsoft**, **Toyota**, **Sears**, **Kelloggs** and **Nike**.
- These corporate logos also have certain innate qualities that make them more memorable and easier to distinguish from other corporate symbols.
- These qualities are based in the designs themselves and in the techniques and research used in developing them.
- Here is a list of these qualities and short descriptions as to how they work together to create a logo design that's both original and unforgettable:

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## **simplicity**

- Simplicity is one element all effective logo designs have in common.
- People are drawn to clean, uncluttered logo designs because they can easily absorb and recognize the symbol at a glance.
- Busy, crowded logos, such as designs featuring many intricate details, elaborate images or pictures are distracting to the viewer and tend not to be as well recognized as cleaner designs.

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## **proportionality**

- Ideally, a logo should function as a discrete unit with a width not much greater than its height (think of shapes that can fit in a square or circle).
- Remember that a logo design should work well on anything from a business card to a billboard, and logos that are too long or too tall become difficult to read when they are reduced or enlarged.

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## **small colour palette**

- It is no coincidence that 80% of the world's most widely recognized logos use either one or two colours.
- Few good logo designs use more than three colours; this is because using more than three colours usually turns a logo to mud.
- A basic colour palette of one to three colours (which may or may not include black) keeps things simple and allows the selected colours to clearly convey a mood or emotion.
- Use **CONTRASTING COLOURS** for visual impact.

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## **easy-to-read fonts**

- Creating a logo design in elaborate script fonts may look classy, but what good is a logo if nobody can read it?
- Your best bet is to choose a font that is distinctive but still easy to read.
- FYI – **2/3** of most logos are designed with **sans serif fonts**, such as Arial and Helvetica, with the other **1/3** designed in **serif fonts** such as Times New Roman and Garamond.

**A** sans serif vs. **A** serif

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## **practical & adaptable**

- What this means is that a logo design should be practically designed so it can be affordably and easily used in a variety of mediums. For example, a logo:
- Shouldn't be designed with so many colours that it costs you a mint every time you want to print business cards or letterhead.
- Shouldn't be designed with a gradient (such as a picture), which is difficult to reproduce.
- Should be created so it can be easily converted to black-&-white.
- Should be created using Web-safe colours so your online logo looks the same as your printed logo.

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## **originality**

- A primary task of a logo design is to clearly distinguish a company from its competitors, which means a logo design should be unique, one-of-a-kind and “ownable” - meaning the company should be able to trademark the logo within Canada.
- This means it cannot “borrow” too heavily from existing logo designs. This is copyright infringement.



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## **works within industry conventions**

- Often there are consistencies among logos in certain industries, and following these conventions can help customers more easily identify what you do or what you sell (such as many car companies using circular shapes for their logos – name a few!).
- This doesn't mean you should sacrifice originality, but it does mean you (or the firm creating your logo design) should be aware of patterns among logos in your industry and somehow incorporate these consistencies into your design.

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## 1. **Start Without the Computer:**

- The computer can be a wonderful tool for designing. You can work up ten variations of a design in a matter of minutes, often designs that might not have even occurred to you without the flexibility of a computer.
- Whether or not you can draw, I encourage you to start designing without your computer.
- Designing without the computer really forces you to focus on the job at hand. Instead of just grabbing the rectangle or ellipse tool, you begin to really think about what that rectangle or circle says about the company.

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## the process

### 1. **Start Without the Computer (contd.):**

- It doesn't matter that you're not DaVinci.
- You don't have to show anyone your initial sketches. It only matters that they have meaning to you. Sketches, or thumbnails, are the visual equivalent of brainstorming.
- Be sure to make some notes on your scribbles so you remember where you were going with that idea.
- Make as many sketches as possible, then look them over and pick the best to develop further on the computer.

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## the process

### 1. **Start Without the Computer (contd.):**

- The thumbnail process serves another function: it saturates your brain with the logo you're working on, and visual images are often more powerful than words.
- Your brain will continue to work on the logo subconsciously, and you may very well have one of those "aha!" moments when you sit down at your computer: suddenly the logo just comes together.
- That's because your brain has been working on it subconsciously from the time you started making sketches to the time you sat in front of your computer.

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## the **process**

### 2. **Start Designing in Black & White:**

- It's easy to change a black and white logo into colour, but the reverse is not necessarily true.
- In addition, most companies need a black and white version of their logo for fax or copying purposes.
- Do yourself a favour, begin designing in black and white.

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## the process

### 2. Start Designing in Black & White:

- Black and white means exactly that: black, white; no shades of gray, no gradients.
- Gray and gradients do not fax or copy well. That doesn't mean that you can't use shades or gradients in the final version - a drop shadow, for instance, can often add a little "pop" to a logo.
- Just stick to black and white for the first design. If it works in black and white, it will work with gradients. But a logo with gradients won't always work in black and white.

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## the process

### 3. Design at Business Card Size:

- This is similar to step number - it's relatively easy to size a logo up, but a large logo sometimes becomes too busy when it's reduced in size.
- This means you shouldn't use really small or thin elements as they will tend to disappear when reduced.
- A business card is normally the company's first priority. Design the logo to fit on a business card, and you *and* your customer should be in business!

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## the **process**

### 4. **K.I.S.S.**

- KISS stands for **keep it simple, stupid**.
- The best logos tend to be simple logos.
- Think IBM, AT&T, Apple. If you've used two graphics in the logo, can you get the same impact with one graphic?
- Do you need graphics at all, or will a simple text treatment be eye-catching?
- Will one typeface be better than two?



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## the **process**

### 5. **Use Appropriate Colours, Fonts & Shapes:**

- Serif fonts tend to be traditional: you'd use a serif font for a lawyer or a doctor, for instance.
- Sans serif fonts tend to be modern: computer and tech companies often use sans serif fonts.
- Handwriting fonts tend to be used for companies that cater to kids, such as daycare or children's software. Script fonts can be viewed as feminine, and sometimes traditional, too.
- The important point to remember is that the font you choose should convey the image of the company you're designing for.

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## the **process**

### 5. **Use Appropriate Colours, Fonts & Shapes (contd.):**

- Colour can play an important role in logo design.
- Your customer doesn't want to hear that you chose that blue because it looks cool; they want to know what psychological connotations it has.
- The next slide discusses some common colour associations...

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## the **process**

### 5. **Use Appropriate Colours, Fonts & Shapes (contd.):**

- **Blue:** trust, loyalty, water, relaxing, power, dignity
- **Yellow:** energy, joy, light, hope
- **Pink:** calming, feminine
- **Green:** life, growth, money, jealousy, nature, fertility

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## the **process**

### 5. **Use Appropriate Colours, Fonts & Shapes (contd.):**

- **Purple:** richness, power, love, sophistication
- **Brown:** credibility, stability
- **White:** purity, cleanliness, innocence
- **Red:** heat, passion, danger, power

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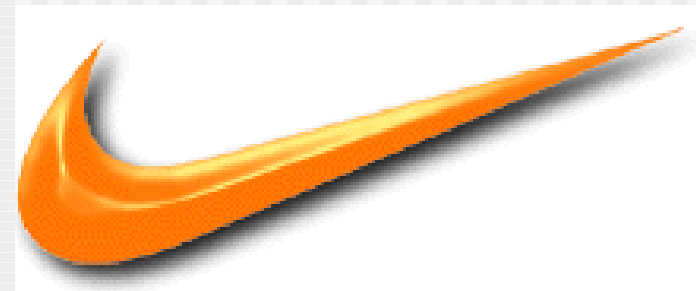
## the **process**

### 5. **Use Appropriate Colours, Fonts & Shapes (contd.):**

- The shape of the logo can also effect the company's image. Below are some of the associations we make with common shapes:
- **Circle:** connection, community, movement, safety
- **Rectangle:** solid, security
- **Triangle:** exciting, powerful, aggression

# principles of logo design

a few samples for



evolution-of-the-logo



1 9 6 4



1 9 7 1



1 9 7 8



1 9 8 5



1 9 9 5

# principles of logo design

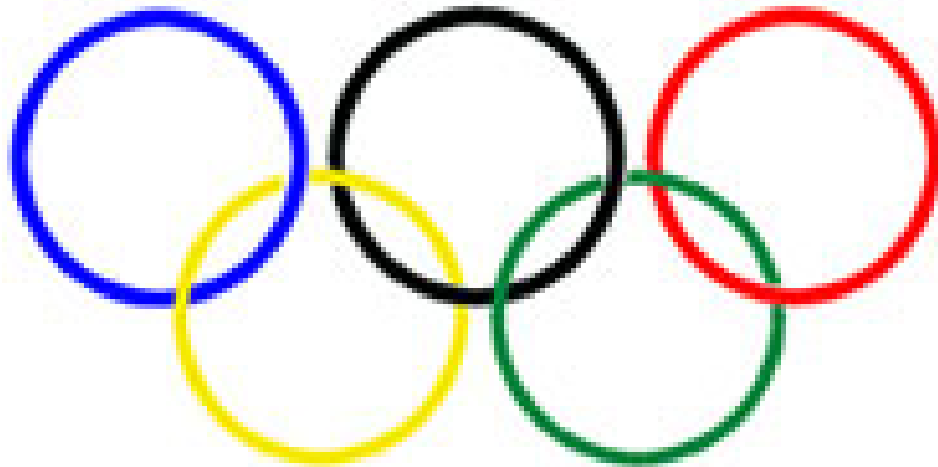
a few samples for **inspiration**



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a few samples for **inspiration**

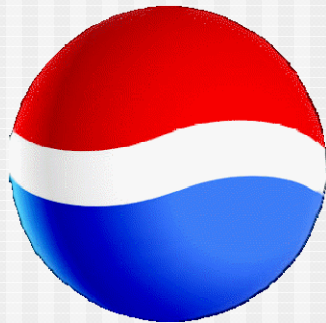




# principles of **logo design**

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a few samples for **inspiration**



# principles of **logo design**

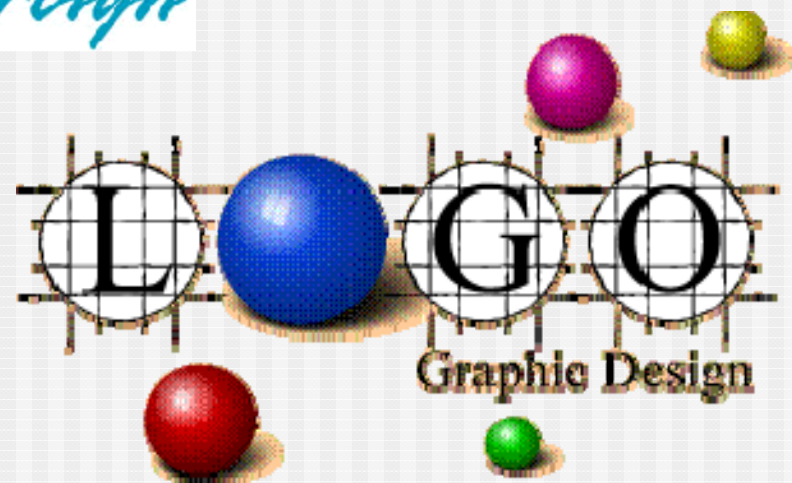
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a few samples for **inspiration**



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a few samples for **inspiration**



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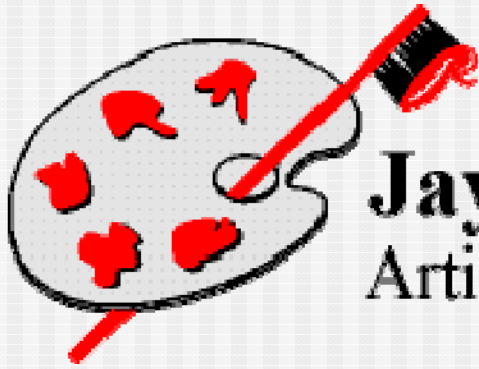
a few samples for **inspiration**



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a few samples for **inspiration**



**Jay A. Nelson, D.M.D.**  
Artistic and General Dentistry

The logo for 'Flag gym' features the word 'Flag' in a blue, sans-serif font, followed by a stylized orange figure of a person running, and the word 'gym' in a blue, sans-serif font.

Flag gym

# principles of logo design

a few samples for **inspiration**



KNOW

The logo features the word "KNOW" in a bold, black, serif font. The letter "O" is a large red circle. Inside the top half of the "O", the words "IN THE" are written in a smaller, black, serif font, stacked vertically.

In the Know Consulting



GO Battery

Stay in Charge

The logo features the word "GO" in a bold, green, sans-serif font. The word "Battery" is written in a black, cursive script font. A yellow lightning bolt graphic is positioned below the word "Battery". Below the lightning bolt, the tagline "Stay in Charge" is written in a green, cursive script font.

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a few samples for **inspiration**



# principles of **logo design**

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a few samples for **inspiration**

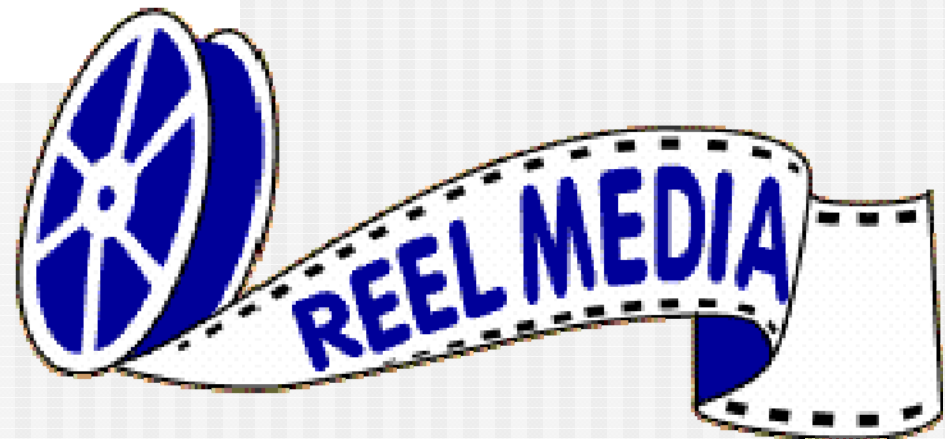




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a few samples for **inspiration**



# principles of logo design

a few samples for **inspiration**



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## the **assignment** -research

- Use an Internet search engine to look for at least 12 logo design samples. :
  - 4 Graphic Only (no text)
  - 4 Text Only (no shapes, lines, etc)
  - 4 Combination
- Copy these samples into a document. You should fit four logos to a page.
- For each logo, write a short explanation (3-4 sentences) explaining whether or not you think the logo is effective and why.

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## the **assignment** - design

- Create a well-designed logo that will be used as your “signature” on all projects throughout the course.
- Begin by producing a series of thumbnails that follow design principles outlined earlier – logo must represent YOU:
  - 5 Graphic Only (no text)
  - 5 Text Only (no shapes, lines, etc)
  - 5 Combination
- Choose one favourite thumbnail from each category and reproduce/rework in larger, more carefully drawn format (use drawing tools, etc).

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## the **assignment** - production

- From the final 3 “good” thumbnails, choose your top design and carefully reproduce it on the computer (choose the necessary software). **Roughs must be checked before starting computer work.**
- Final logo **MUST** be black and white only and should be formatted for multiple sizes/uses (from business card to billboard).
- Print out final design to fit ½ of 8.5x11 sheet (black and white).
- Provide a 1-2 paragraph explanation of your final design (elements used, how it represents you, why you chose this design).