



Design & Development

Brand Identity | Logo Design | Webdesign

Why do I need a good design for my website?

There are probably dozens on dozens of reasons people supply about why they do (or, gasp! do not) need their website redesigned. I just love designing and redesigning sites, so I'm usually redoing this site at least once a year (but then, when you're a web designer, you can afford to / can't afford not to).

Here are a few of the most likely issues confronting your website, though:

1. Your current Website's design is out-dated. This is the most common reason, and users know in an instant if a website is up to date or not, simply by the way that it looks. Websites with fuzzy or broken images, hard to read text and out-dated layout are often skipped right over as web surfers often automatically assume that the website is years old and will have nothing valuable to offer. Think about it in real-life terms. If you see a dilapidated building on the street, with its sign barely hanging on and boarded up windows, are you likely to even give it a second glance, let alone attempt to go inside?

Solution: We can work together to assess your current promotional material, stationary and ideas to redesign your site so that it's an asset, not a burden.

2. People aren't sticking around. While a design can be up to date aesthetically, it may be lacking in functionality, and so users are getting confused when they first get to the site and subsequently are turned away. Your site needs to immediately demonstrate its purpose. Internet users are impatient and don't like to search around on pages for what they're looking for, they want it presented clearly and concisely the moment they arrive.

Solution: We'll assess how people are coming to your site, what they think they'll find when they get there, and how best to present it to them. The good news is, people are coming to your site, now let's just keep them there.

3. Not enough traffic. Of course, you may find yourself with a nice looking site, and it may even be functional, but you're just not seeing any traffic. If your site has been around for a while, a lack of traffic indicates that you're not doing well with the search engines. This could be caused by the fact that your site wasn't built correctly, or that you need to work on the content presented therein.

Solution: We can review your current site to see how it has been structured, discover any points of contention, and develop a plan to correct them. Additionally, we can review your site's content, which is perhaps the most important aspect to good search placement.

4. Your company has grown. This is one of the better reasons to redesign. Your company is growing, whether in your physical store locations or online, and you need to expand to accommodate this growth.

Solution: This is a crucial moment in your company's future, you need to decide how much larger you think you'll grow in a particular time period, and commit to that amount of addition. We can study your recent growth patterns, your projected needs, and decide how to best go about it.



What is Brand Identity?

Branding is certainly not a light topic – whole publications & hundreds of books have been written on the topic, however to put it in a nutshell you could describe a ‘brand’ as an organisation, service or product with a ‘personality’ that is shaped by the perceptions of the audience. On that note, it should also be stated that a designer cannot “make” a brand – only the audience can do this. A designer forms the foundation of the brand.

Many people believe a brand only consists of a few elements – some colours, some fonts, a logo, a slogan and maybe some music added in too. In reality, it is much more complicated than that. You might say that a brand is a ‘corporate image’.

The fundamental idea and core concept behind having a ‘corporate image’ is that everything a company does, everything it owns and everything it produces should reflect the values and aims of the business as a whole.

It is the consistency of this core idea that makes up the company, driving it, showing what it stands for, what it believes in and why they exist. It is not purely some colours, some typefaces, a logo and a slogan.



What is identity design?

One major role in the 'brand' or 'corporate image' of a company is its identity.

In most cases, identity design is based around the visual devices used within a company, usually assembled within a set of guidelines. These guidelines that make up an identity usually administer how the identity is applied throughout a variety of mediums, using approved colour palettes, fonts, layouts, measurements and so forth. These guidelines ensure that the identity of the company is kept coherent, which in turn, allows the brand as a whole, to be recognisable.

The identity or 'image' of a company is made up of many visual devices:

- » A Logo (The symbol of the entire identity & brand)
- » Stationery (Letterhead + business card + envelopes, etc.)
- » Marketing Collateral (Flyers, brochures, books, websites, etc.)
- » Products & Packaging (Products sold and the packaging in which they come in)
- » Apparel Design (Tangible clothing items that are worn by employees)
- » Signage (Interior & exterior design)
- » Messages & Actions (Messages conveyed via indirect or direct modes of communication)
- » Other Communication (Audio, smell, touch, etc.)
- » Anything visual that represents the business.

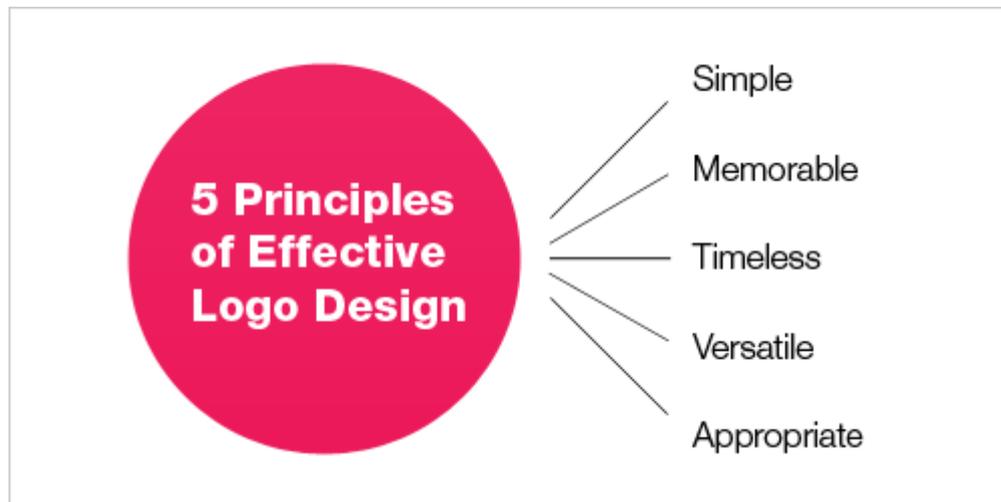
All of these things make up an identity and should support the brand as a whole. The logo however, is the corporate identity and brand all wrapped up into one identifiable mark. This mark is the avatar and symbol of the business as a whole.



What makes a good logo?

What makes a good logo? A good logo is distinctive, appropriate, practical, graphic, and 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):

Simple

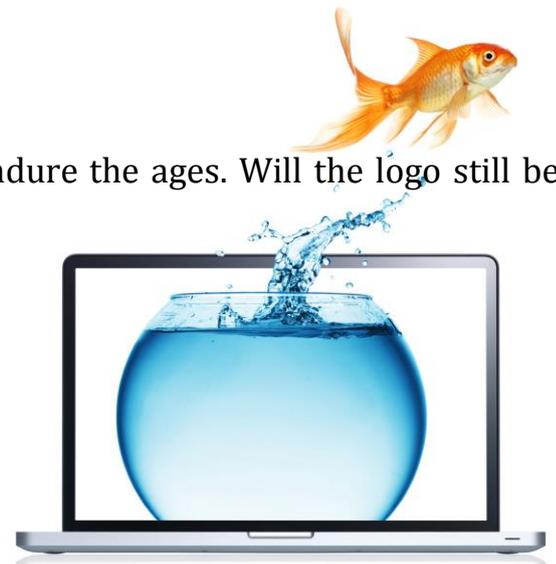
A simple logo design allows for easy recognition and allows the logo to be versatile & memorable. Good logos feature something unique without being overdrawn.

Memorable

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.

Timeless

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



Versatile

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 colour?
- » Printed on 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)

Appropriate

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 & colour scheme. This would not be so appropriate for a law firm.

It is also important to state that 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.



Design process of a professional logo!

The design process of a professional logo designer usually consists of:

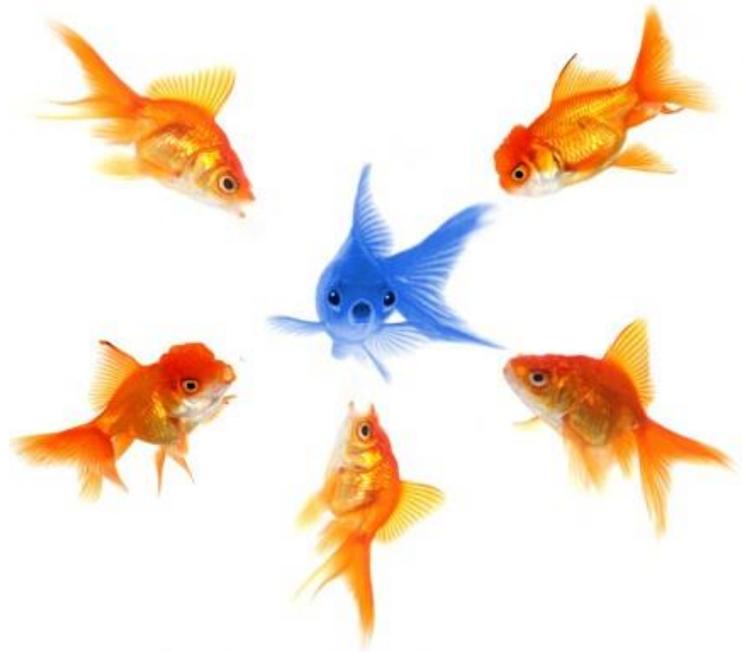
- 1. The Design Brief:** We conduct a questionnaire or interview with the client.
- 2. Research:** We research focused on the industry itself, on its history, and on its competitors.
- 3. Reference:** We conduct research into logo designs that have been successful and current styles and trends that are related to the design brief.
- 4. Sketching & Conceptualising:** We develop the logo design concept(s) around the brief and research. They use creativity and know how to design a logo.
- 5. Reflection:** We take breaks throughout their design process. This lets their ideas mature and lets them get renewed enthusiasm and receive feedback.
- 6. Presentation:** We then choose whether to present only a select few logos to the client or a whole collection.
- 7. Celebration:** We then drink beer or eat chocolate or sleep or start on next logo design. Or a combination



Why professional logo design does not cost \$5.00

To understand what a logo is meant to do, we first must know what a logo is. A logo's design is for immediate recognition, inspiring trust, admiration, loyalty and an implied superiority. The logo is one aspect of a company's commercial brand, or economic entity, and its shapes, colours, fonts, and images usually are different from others in a similar market. Logos are also used to identify organisations and other non-commercial entities.

It makes me wonder why people have no logo or why they would even bother with a cheap logo design if a logo is meant to do all of these things.



What is the purpose of your brochure?

Is your brochure an advertisement? Is it a detailed product description-marketing piece? Or to put it another way, what kind of customers will be getting your brochure?

The first type of brochure design is created to attract a new customer's attention. Just like an advertisement, it screams for attention, and plays on the emotions of the customer. It has a big headline, strong visuals, and a distinct call to action.

This brochure design works to build interest, and to create desire for your products or services. It instructs customers to follow through by returning a coupon, or calling, or coming in.

The second type of brochure design is created to follow through with customers who want more detailed information. These customers have contacted you with questions. Often they want to know everything about a product or service. The second brochure design is created to give them what they want.

Certainly a brochure can both get attention and give detailed information, but you may not want to do this.

What are you trying to accomplish? Do you want new customers to come into your store? Then create interest and excitement with an advertisement type brochure designed to bring them in.

Or are your customers looking for information? Then you want to create a brochure packed with information specifically for them.

It is better to create two different brochures to accomplish these two different goals. Detailed product information will not entice a new customer to call. A lightweight sales brochure will not satisfy a demand for more information. Define your objective clearly, and use your brochure design to accomplish your goal.

This rule should be followed each time you want to target a different type of audience. If they are important, then you want to tailor your message, and your brochure design, especially for them.

Think about this: If you are sending the wrong brochure, you are just wasting your money, and you are not impressing your customers.

Our guidelines in designing a well-designed brochure

The content of your brochure will change depending on the objectives you set, but there are some general guidelines you will want to follow with your brochure design.

Professional advertising means creating marketing materials that achieve the highest possible return on investment. The following guidelines are given with this intention. They are honest. And that's exactly what you want from your marketing people - honesty. If your company president writes a less than perfect brochure, somebody has to tell him or her. Contact a marketing professional for further assistance.

1. Who is the brochure for? THE CUSTOMER, What does the brochure do? IT SELLS. Make sure your brochure sells. It should be carefully, professionally written. Copywriters and marketing professionals get paid for a reason. A brochure is not a decoration for your company. It is a marketing investment that brings your business. Make sure it sells.
2. Does the brochure design on the front cover get the reader's attention with an emotional appeal, a provocative question, or a benefit statement?

Approximately 80% of people will not open a brochure that doesn't give a prime benefit or a compelling reason on the front cover. That means your company's name probably belongs down at the bottom of the front cover, not on top. And your logo may need to go on the back cover, not the front. Brochure design is very, very important.



3. Follow the rules of good sales copywriting. Yes, you want to introduce your company and your products. But you definitely want to grab the reader with benefits-benefits-benefits, and don't let go. Know your reader's desires, and demonstrate how you fill those needs. Benefits trigger emotions, and emotions will win out over logical persuasion every time.
4. Lead with the benefits - don't bury them. Feature key benefits in headlines, subheads, and captions. You must entice the reader simply to get them to read your brochure. And then you must motivate them to take action.
5. Feature or Benefit? Your new widget that saves the client an hour is a FEATURE. An extra hour to spend with your kids is a BENEFIT. List all of the features, and ask yourself, "what does the client get?" Now you have the benefits.
6. A company's brochure design should project a first class image. Are the graphics compelling? Is your writing active and enthusiastic? Is it pleasurable to look at? Stay away from crowded text, clichés, clip art, and low quality production. Professional quality brochure design makes you look professional.
7. Technical writing is hard to read, even for technical people. Think about it. What would you rather read – a technical document, or a lighter, but comprehensive document? Always write like your talking to a good customer or a friend.
8. Interconnect your marketing materials. Offer your newsletter or web page information in your brochure, and vice-versa. Reference your other published materials or any recognition you have received.
9. Don't be subtle. Tell the reader exactly what you want them to do, and tell them to do it now. This is not being pushy, and it will not be perceived this way. People just forget if they don't act right away. And you don't want them to forget. This is good, effective brochure design.
10. Try to eliminate as many decisions as possible. Always assume the customer will eventually buy the product or service. Don't use words like "if" and "maybe".
11. Please read our section on copywriting, and seriously consider having a professional write your brochure, or at least review your work. Try this exercise: Count up how many times you used the words "I", "we", or "our company" in your document. Now strike them all and replace them with "you" or "your". People care about how you can make their lives better, not about how great your company is. This is effective brochure design.
12. Don't ask open-ended questions. Only ask questions that will get "yes, that's me" for an answer. Always assume that the reader will contact you and buy your products or services.

13. Ultimately, it's your words that sell. Pictures are great, but words sell. Again, your brochure is not a decoration for your company. Don't let a designer make it one. And don't let anybody make it a literary masterpiece. Read the direct mail pieces that the credit card companies mail to you – these are well written sales copy.

14. Don't be embarrassed by sales copy. Customers know that they are reading a promotional brochure. They are consenting to read, and desire to read, sales information. That's why they are voluntarily reading your brochure.

15. One more very important note here. Your brochure will probably not close the sale for you. Your brochure will introduce and position your company. It will prepare the way for your salespeople. But you must close the sale. Make sure to follow up the brochure with a customer contact within a week.

16. Please review the checklist at the end of this chapter to make sure you don't forget any necessary information in your brochure design. And please be honest about how good your brochure is – your customers will be.

Things you might want to include in your brochure

Again, we start with “what is your brochure for”? A sales brochure is different from an organizational brochure – but both are selling something, and both should be written to sell.

Here are some additional items to consider including in your brochure:

- Pictures of your business and/or your employees. This may work when stability is a key issue for the client.
- Your Mission Statement.
- The benefactors of the organization's work.
- Previous clients.
- The company history.
- Biographies from owners or key members.
- A statement from the president.
- Any awards or press coverage.
- Annual report information – key numbers, new contracts, deals, opportunities, etc.
- Famous quotes.
- Third party endorsements or testimonials. [These really help to make your brochure design more effective.]
- Instructions. Clear, simple, diagramed instructions. Please have complete strangers follow your instructions while you silently watch or videotape them.
- National branded products, names, and logos. Associate your company with the winners.
- Helpful hints or suggestions.
- Give a guarantee. Nothing is more reassuring than a 100% guarantee.
- List associations you belong to, List groups that you coordinate with.

