

WHAT MAKES A GOOD LOGO?

by Duncan McAdams

When we see the yellow letter "M" against a red background, we all instantly know what it stands for.

Such is the power of a logo. The main reason for having a logo is to create and reinforce your brand identity. It represents the 'face' of your business and is distinctive enough to separate you from your competition.

Clients and prospects must see it and recognize your business straight away say "Oh that's Marketstorm, or McDonalds, or Placemakers."

It can also convey - literally in an instant - what your business does, or what it is like. (E.g fast, modern, traditional, environmentally-friendly, technology-focussed).

But mostly it's your identity - so what makes a good logo?

1. A good logo is easy to read and comprehend. It looks good on everything from a business card to a humungous billboard.

Technically speaking most logos have a simple font, no more than two colours and are a rectangular in shape.

2. A good logo is well-coordinated. It uses a supporting mark and strap line to add to the logo, expanding its potential. Does your business have this?

The parts of a logo to consider are 1) a mark 2) a company name and 3) possibly a strapline.

Each part supports the other. For example McDonalds has the mark of the golden arches, the name McDonalds and the current strap line of "Its Mactime now". Effective, memorable, easy to read, and identifiable (in any country). The perfect logo? I think it's getting close.

3. A good logo can be adapted for use across all media effectively and remain distinct and recognizable.

Your logo will be applied in countless different ways - from letterhead to tee-shirts, truck livery to packaging, invoices or on-site signage, print ads to Powerpoint presentations.

A good logo is consistent across the whole company. Will it work everywhere? Or is it a tricky piece of artwork that is difficult to use, or is so bland it gets lost when used?

4. A good logo utilizes a simple font that is easy to read and duplicate. If it's distinctive enough, the public will associate the font with your company. (You could recognise the McDonald's "M" font, even without any colour).

5. As a general rule, two colours is enough for your logo. It all comes down to expense, especially when reproducing your logo on business cards, letterheads and other forms of printing. It's not a worthwhile business expense to spend money on more than two colours, as you will not see any return on your investment.

ASB bank - grey and yellow

All Blacks - black and white

Coke - red and white

Can you add to this list

6. Rectangular shapes work best, because our eyes find it easier to look at rectangles than squares. Rectangles also work better on the web and TV, so why not start from a winning position.

7. Don't go changin'! For some reason, companies often have a myriad of different versions of their logo that barely resemble each other.

This is poor marketing strategy; it confuses the consumer (who prefers consistency) and your logo loses impact. Unless your logo looks dreadfully outdated, or no longer reflects well on your business, avoid changing or updating it.

To ensure your logo will have enduring and 'timeless' appeal, employ a professional graphic designer. This initial investment will save you money in the long-term.