The 5 Cs of Logo Design That Will Always Stand the Test of Time

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How do you solve a problem like a boring logo? Let me tell you, uninspired logos are just the worst for a business that's trying to grow. They don't represent. They don't carry their weight. They're easy to forget, or they're memorable for the wrong reasons.

Ultimately, they're the exact opposite of what we want our logos to do for our brands.

On the other hand, each time that I begin the process of brainstorming logos for my ventures, I'm reminded of the vital elements that go into designing a logo that will stand the test of time. To make it as easy as possible to apply these points, we'll call them the 5 Cs of logo design.

1. Character

Character comes to mind first in designing a great logo because of the importance of representing not just the brand, but the personality behind it.

I like to approach logos in the same basic way that I approach the construction of my companies. True, each venture that I launch can be traced back to me, so they embody some of the same qualities. But the purpose, goal, audience, and

individual values of each venture differ.

It’s the same with logos. Whether you’re creating logos for multiple companies using an umbrella theme, or you’re launching your very first venture, go back to the character behind the company. I think of it as trying to describe my brand as if it were a person. Likes and dislikes, quirks and unique traits, little details that add up. I’ve found this enormously helpful for deciding between individual elements in logo iterations. Is my brand the type of “person” who would have a mascot logo? Is it the type that would use a serif or a sans-serif?

It’s vital to know the character of the brand in order to correctly frame the character of the logo.

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2. Clarity

Nobody wants a logo that makes the viewer scratch their head and go, “Huh?” Unfortunately, that happens — poor choice of typeface or bad kerning can make the wordmark difficult to read. An oddball graphic choice could totally conflict with the personality of the brand. A logo that looks like it belongs to a children’s brand could completely lose the intended grown-up audience.

Clarity covers all of those, from the sheer function of the design to how easy it is to understand.

I always double-check the typeface that’s been chosen for my logos, ensuring that the font shows up well at different sizes and against different backgrounds. And it’s helpful to get feedback from others on the style and design of the graphic, just to make sure that it doesn’t look like something it shouldn’t.

3. Communication

Along with clarity, communication and accuracy of messaging are vital to make your logo a worthy representation of your brand. And it's the design choices you make that will "talk" to your intended audience.

What's interesting about the communication between logo and consumer is that every single aspect of the logo design contributes to the overall message. It isn't just a question of the color you choose or the style of graphic – it's also the shape of the logo, the use of negative space in logo design, what it references, whether it looks like the competition's logo. Everything.

Color is one of the easiest ways to demonstrate this. Different demographics are typically drawn to different colors, so choosing colors that appeal directly to your target audience communicates that your brand is for *them*. Choosing a color that your target demographic tends *not* to like could muddy the waters.

As I'm working through a new design, I take the time to double-check how each new element might change the overall feeling of the logo. It's worth it to make sure that the logo is sending the right message and appealing to your target audience.

Related: The Secret to a Strong Branding Message? Focus.

4. Customization

If you're a serial entrepreneur, you may not have a bespoke logo design for every new venture that comes your way. And that's okay because it's never been easier to find easy design tools that let you customize an existing design. Of course sites like Logodesign.net and crowdsourcing sites are my go-to for quick logos that still carry their weight. You may have

other preferences but the idea is the same.

Just don’t forget about customizing them to the company. Customizable logos let you include your brand name, and most of them let you switch out color palettes, too. It’s easy to fall into the trap of just using whatever you find, thinking that it’s just a stopgap until the real logo is designed. But I would always stress that it’s important to make sure that even a stopgap fits the brand.

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5. Creativity

Finally, I want to talk about the aspect that really drives the uniqueness of logo design: creativity.

It’s so tempting to jump on the bandwagon when it comes to logos, just following along with the current trends that predominate in the market. But I’ve seen logos that prioritize trendiness over uniqueness, and I would definitely advise anyone to focus on the creative aspect of their logo design.

Working with designers to craft logos for my brands, I like to think about what motivated me to create the venture, what the brand name is based on, what is evoked by the brand personality, maybe even what my brand’s spirit animal would be – anything deeply personal to the venture can be a trigger for a creative logo design.

It isn’t just that uncreative design won’t help your brand to stand out. It’s the fact that creative design is actually a marketing technique in its own right. Visual appeal is a huge motivator, and with a unique, funny, clever, or unexpected center of focus, your logo can help turn a casual viewer into a new customer.

Logos Old And New

Regardless of whether we are developing a logo for a brand new venture or just jumping on a rebranding opportunity, it’s always a good idea to look to the long-term.

For logo design, that means elements and styles that represent the brand we are now and the brand we hope to become. And it means designing based on principles that won’t change over time. Color, clarity, customization, communication, and creativity – it’s hard to go wrong when there’s so much that can go right with the 5 Cs of logo design.

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