

KNOW LOGO

DESIGN ACTION
COLLECTIVE
will design for change.

Design Action Collective. 2011. 1st edition.

All logos in this book were designed by Design Action Collective with the exception of the logos for HRC, the Black Panthers, the United Farm Workers, and Greenpeace.

KNOW LOGO

DESIGNING LOGOS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

WHAT IS A LOGO?

The term “logo” is often defined differently and used to describe different things, even within the field of graphic design. Design Action works primarily with social change organizations (grassroots groups, nonprofits, unions and sustainable businesses) so we use the term to describe:

A signature image and text combination that identifies an organization, campaign or project.

Logos are usually some combination of three elements:
the symbol, the wordmark and the tagline.



Some may be made up of just the wordmark:



Some logos may have the symbol and wordmark:



Or some may integrate the symbol and wordmark:



OTHER JARGON

When you start talking logo, you will soon start hearing a bunch of other terms that sound cool and professional. Most are thrown around loosely by people trying to sound cool and professional, and may not really help you understand the process. But when used properly, some of these terms can be useful shorthand, so here are a few common ones . . .

Identity System:

All the elements that your group uses in concert to communicate a cohesive and recognizable presence. This system includes visual elements such as your logo, your color palette and other print and web communications pieces, as well as writing style, tone, and key messaging elements.

Example: *IRN redid their identity with us in 2008. Their new identity system included shortening the name to International Rivers (and ditching the acronym), a new logo and tagline, a new color palette, and a style guide describing logo usage, color palette and fonts, and templates for their most common publications.*

Old Logo



New Logo



Brand:

How the world perceives your organization, based on how it has been presented through the use of the logo, identity, press coverage, interactions, etc. We can design your logo and identity system, but how your constituency perceives you (your “brand”) will depend on that, *and* everything else you do.

Example: *Think Greenpeace*—their logo is just their name in a funky font. But their brand is one of the strongest in the environmental activist world.*



Signature:

Used synonymously with “logo.”

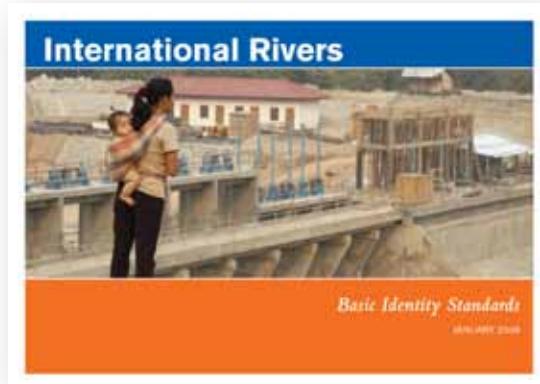
Mark:

Used to describe the “symbol” part of the logo. Also referred to as the “logo mark.”

*Design Action did not design the Greenpeace logo

Style Guide:

A document describing such things as logo usage, color palette, fonts, images, etc., that have been approved for your organization. This Guide will allow future designers and people producing materials in-house the know-how to make your materials look consistent. Helping everyone adhere to a consistent presentation of your “identity” is part of the strategy for developing your “brand.” Depending on how extensive the Guide is, you will see this document titled “Logo Usage,” or “Organizational Identity,” or “Brand Guidelines.” Or sometimes you’ll see “Logo Identity Brand Guidelines.” As we said, there’s a lot of jargon in this business.



Print Collateral:

All communications and outreach materials that your logo goes on, like brochures, factsheets, stationery, etc.

Business Suite:

Specifically, letterhead, business cards and envelopes.





"WE NOT ONLY INHERIT THE EARTH FROM OUR ANCESTORS, WE BORROW IT FROM OUR CHILDREN."

ESLI YOUTH TO COPENHAGEN FOR CLIMATE TALKS!

This December, leaders of the world will be meeting at the UN International Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen, Denmark. As a critical year of negotiations, this year's outcome may be one of the most important international meetings of our time! As co-chairs of the Environmental Service Learning Initiative's Youth Advisory Board (Gret Hennicke and Lopez Thomas) we are giving the opportunity of a lifetime to attend one week of this conference as delegates of a leading human rights environmental organization and one of ESLI's lead sponsors, Global Exchange.

While in Copenhagen the ESLI YAB delegates will represent the youth voice and perspective while attending side events and meetings and networking with other peers from around the world! This groundbreaking trip will enable our students to not only meet and learn from other leaders – young and old – from around the world, but likewise to represent the amazing work in environmental education in San Francisco! From Copenhagen the youth delegates will be actively lobbying their organizations on the ESLI Youth Advocacy Board at [13](http://www.usatf.org>Youth Day. Stay tuned for a community report back in early 2010!</p>
<p>THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD IS HERE!</p>
<p>The ESLI Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is composed of students from all seven partner public schools. In partnership with ESLI staff, the YAB Advisory Board plans community events throughout the school year, while gaining leadership and valuable service skills. In addition to the youth (youth Challenge at the SF Green Festival, the 2008-2009 Youth Advisor Board will plan ESLI's annual Teacher Conference, the summer Teacher Trip and our regional event, the 2010 SF Eco-Fest! The SF Eco-Fest is a city-wide youth festival of music, art, project showcases and workshops – highlighting and promoting green issues in areas that actually relate to our youth generation. Additionally, the YAB will be hosting a community report back highlighting the youth experience of issues surrounding the Copenhagen climate negotiations.</p>
<p>The 2008-2010 ESLI Youth Advisory Board includes:</p>
<p>Mingyan Lee and Courtney Lee of Lowell High School, Nonnae Coonan of Ingalls High School, Diana Ochoa and Christina Calaf of Westmoor High School, Shelly Jones of Mission High School, Lopez Thomas, Griselda Auci, Paul Pera and Nestor Tep of Lincoln High School, Gisele Hernandez of Burton High School and Isobel Wong of Galileo Academy</p>
<p>IN THIS ISSUE:</p>
<p>ESLI at SF Green Festival (page 2), School Updates (pages 3-7)</p>
<p>ESLI is a collaborative project of Community Environmental Services and Global Exchange in partnership with the City and County of San Francisco, the Mayor's Office of Environment and led by the Department of Education Youth and Their Families.</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

**WHY DO YOU
NEED A LOGO?**

This is a “What, Why, and How” guide to logo design. But as a movement-servicing organization, we have to first suggest you ask “Why Not.” With organizational resources being so thinly distributed, and true revolutionary change coming through action, not just image, it is worth considering if spending time, money and energy on a logo process is appropriate for your organization.

For some organizations the answer will be obviously, yes.

But for others, particularly start-ups with limited funding, perhaps the logo is not the first thing that is needed. Perhaps building a strong reputation for successful campaigns or services is more important to your organization than the logo. Perhaps something simple and clean (or even homemade!) is what will give you “street-cred.” Perhaps an iconic image will emerge through your organizing efforts that will later be the basis for a logo, but right now what you need is some well-designed brochures and a website.

That being said, in this era of visual overload, investing some time and thought into developing a good logo can have tangible benefits . . .

Recognition

You do great work. People need to know it's you doing it.

Differentiation

There are others doing similar work. But they ain't you.

Visual Shorthand

"What type of organization is this? Ah, I can tell from the logo."

Credibility

"Is this a real organization or just someone with a website?"

Organizational Pride

You know who you are as a collection of people. This is who you are under one banner.

Personal Relationship

In a visual society, you need a face.

HOW TO DESIGN A GOOD LOGO

*Your logo is not a hieroglyphic
version of your mission statement.*

There are no hard and fast rules in the ever-changing world of design. But here are some enduring concepts to think about when going into a logo design process.

1. Think “essence,” not “literal.” Avoid thinking of the logo as a montage of all your work or your vision. A more literal illustration that paints a full picture of what your organization does may be appropriate for a poster or a t-shirt or the cover of a report. But a good logo needs to be a visual metaphor – something symbolic that captures the essence of who you are, without spelling it out (unless the essence of who you are is literal and didactic and that’s what you want to communicate).



*Design Action did not design these logos

2. Think about things like “Tone,” “Mood” and

“Association.” A good logo engages emotions. People will shape their perceptions from the overall subtle combination of each aspect, and not just from the individual elements.

3. Identify your primary audience. Yes, the logo needs to work

for everyone. Yes, your constituents are different from your staff and board, who, in turn, are different from your funders (and you have one department running a youth campaign). So you don't want to alienate any of your key audiences. But you may need to identify who your primary audience is.

4. It's not about you. Sorry, that may seem a bit harsh, but remember your logo is about how your organization is to be perceived by your target audience – which is presumably not you. If it's people very much like you, then great – you're in the focus group. But often that's not the case, and it's important to step back a bit from what you personally like, and consider what will best communicate your message and further your organizational goals.

5. Identify your decision-making group. Make sure all “stakeholders” are involved from the start. What you DON'T want is to go through a three-month logo design process that everyone is happy with, and then show it to your board chair, who could have reasons to hate it.

6. No Frankenstein logos! When reviewing logo concepts, remember the designers have developed them through a holistic process. There may be cases where swapping elements between logo options can work. But for the most part, mixing and matching design elements rarely works.



CASE STUDIES

ROAD MAP

Road Map provides capacity-building and strategic-planning support to activist and nonprofit organizations. The obvious concept behind the name is that they help organizations navigate their way to success. We played with lots of different navigation metaphors (maps, sextons, etc). Also footsteps, pathways, and roads. And some other off-the-wall ideas. Some were good ideas, but just not elegant. Some were overused (like the compass). We finally started honing in on the road, paring it down to its simplest and most elegant form. This works, not because the concept is so unusual (a road for an organization called Road Map), but because it captures the essence and tone of the organization. The calm, thoughtful process they offer to help organizations find a smooth and clear path through the bumps, is what Road Map is all about. >

CONCEPTS





HOPE COLLABORATIVE

Hope Collaborative, which addresses food and fitness disparities in Oakland neighborhoods, started out being attracted to literal representations. The cranes and the two towers are Oakland landmarks. The grains, eggplants and tomatoes are healthy foods.

But even though the rendering was nice, they ultimately made a better choice in going for a simpler and more clever logo. The tree is the City of Oakland logo. Traditionally an oak tree, this one has sprouted fruit! Get it? >

DESIGN DIRECTIONS





TEEN SOURCE

Teen Source provides sexual health information to young people, through frank and respectful communication. We started out working with their original tagline, and developed the logo based on the idea of the words “Teen” and “Source” speaking to each other about love issues. The logo needed to be hip, and appeal to younger people, so the use of very contemporary visual language and fresh typography and colors were appropriate. But then the idea of substituting an even “fresher” tagline and incorporating it into the logo emerged. And voila! it all came together. >

DESIGN DIRECTIONS

TeenSource
sex + health + you

 TEENSOURCE.ORG





CAUSA JUSTA :: JUST CAUSE

When Just Cause and St. Peters Housing Association merged, they needed a logo that would speak to their two constituencies. Just Cause had a primarily African-American constituency, based in Oakland. St. Peters had a primarily Latino constituency based in San Francisco.



After selecting a new name that was in both English and Spanish, the logo process could start. Traditional black/brown unity images were strong. Urban, Oakland, San Francisco juxtapositions were also an option. But we kept working on paring the logo down to the most important elements. The Bay Bridge represents, literally, the bridge between the two cities. The name and tagline fill in the rest of the story. Bam. >

CONCEPTS AND DESIGN DIRECTIONS





ASIAN PACIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

APEN is one of the pioneering organizations in the Environmental Justice movement. The challenge here was to develop a new logo that clearly identified them as an Asian-focused organization which works in an urban environment with diverse Asian communities.



ORIGINAL LOGO

The Mother/Child says APEN's work is about people (not whales). The city skyline says urban. Paring down from versions that tried to show everything, we decided we could say "environment" through the color, and say "Asian" through the name and subtle details of the rendering style and font. Less is more, is almost always true when it comes to logos. >

CONCEPTS



DESIGN DIRECTIONS





APEN
ASIAN PACIFIC
ENVIRONMENTAL
NETWORK

COLORADO IMMIGRANT RIGHTS COALITION (CIRC)

CIRC is a state-wide coalition working to improve lives of immigrants and refugees in Colorado by advocating for workable, fair and humane immigration policies. As a cross-sector membership-based organization, they needed a logo that would show unity, yet also reflect the place they are working in – Colorado.

The concepts we worked with were landmarks of Colorado including the mountains, cityscape of Denver and the shape of the state. Unity. Diversity. Equality. CIRC as an umbrella organization. They were able to narrow it down to an abstract concept of the mountains and people, and make it a versatile, bilingual logo for print and their website. >

CONCEPTS



DESIGN DIRECTIONS





Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition

PEACE ACTION: NO SOLDIER LEFT BEHIND

No Soldier Left Behind was a California Peace Action campaign that needed a recognizable identity. Time was short, so a concept was selected from a “moodboard” to keep rendering rounds to a minimum. This was an effective way to get to the symbolic image that best represented the campaign, as well as what the overall tone of the logo needed to be. >

MOODBOARD



DESIGN DIRECTIONS



TYPOGRAPHY



COLOR



no soldier
Rebuild Iraq.



left behind
Rebuild America.

UMASS AMHERST WOMEN GENDER SEXUALITY STUDIES

The UMass Amherst Womens Studies Department is rooted in the feminist movement of the 1970s and their original logo reflected that legacy of militant, womens' rights-focused work. Their new logo needed to reflect the complexity and intersections of issues in the study of women, gender, and sexuality. The faculty decided early on that an abstract logo was the best way to go. It is impossible to be inclusive of the diversity of gender and representative of their intersectional analysis in a literal graphic. We explored ways to illustrate this approach to women, gender and sexuality studies through interlocking shapes and letters. We also created shapes representing the interruption of patterns of oppression. Their final logo achieved their goal of an updated look that would be relevant to students today and celebrates the department's work through intersecting lines and bold color. >

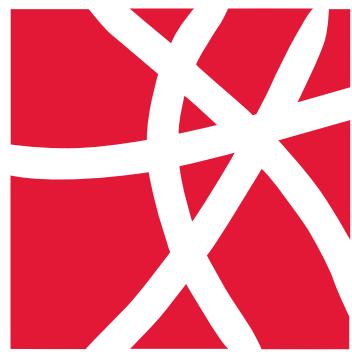


CONCEPTS



**WOMEN
GENDER
SEXUALITY
STUDIES**





WOMEN,
GENDER,
SEXUALITY
STUDIES
UMASS AMHERST

ABOUT DESIGN ACTION

Design Action provides graphic design and visual communications services to nonprofit and social justice organizations. Through these services, we participate in building a broad progressive movement, and support ongoing struggles for social change.

Design Action Collective is an independent design and communications spin-off of Inkworks Press Collective. After more than a decade of offering graphic design services to nonprofit, grassroots, and activist organizations under the same roof as its print shop, Inkworks decided that both its print and design services would benefit from the creation of a new collective. Since then, Design Action has been providing web and “new media” services, and is expanding to include strategic communications and messaging.

Since the founding of Design Action, we have grown to be a multilingual, diverse nine-person shop. Our members have come to Design Action as activists and organizers within the social justice movement, and with the desire to offer our skills as designers to the progressive movement.

Design Action is a union shop, affiliated with Communication Workers of America, AFL-CIO. We are also active members of the Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives, and the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives.

www.designaction.org
510.452.1912

ABOUT INKWORKS PRESS

Inkworks is a collectively-owned union and certified-green printshop which provides high-quality, reasonably-priced printing for the progressive community committed to economic, social, and environmental justice.

Inkworks handles everything from design (with Design Action) to printing, finishing and mailing. We produce booklets, brochures, posters, postcards, flyers, letterheads, envelopes, business cards, short-run books (like this one), and more – in quantities from 50 to 50,000.

We are committed to high-quality, green practices, and thorough customer service. We are happy to answer any questions you may have. We are flexible and ready to work with you to keep your printing costs affordable.

contact us:

www.inkworkspress.org • (510) 845-7111

ESTIMATING REQUESTS: estimating@inkworkspress.org

FILES TO: inkworks@inkworkspress.org

Online orders are welcome at www.inkworksdirect.org



DESIGNACTION
COLLECTIVE

will design for change.