

# MODULE 02 - 001: Logo Design (i)

## Understanding Logo Design and Branding

### Introduction to Branding

Branding is a crucial aspect of user interface and design. It is about creating a **strong identity** that communicates a message and evokes emotions. A well-designed logo plays a significant role in branding, ensuring a company is **recognizable and memorable**.

**Key Takeaway:** Branding is both an **art** and a **science**, requiring a balance between creativity and strategic decision-making.

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## 1 The Science and Art Behind Logo Design

**Jordan Hudgens:** “Logo design has always felt like *black magic* to me. Despite multiple attempts, I struggled to create logos that looked professional. However, after understanding the structured approach Jesse Cook follows, I realized that logo design isn’t just about creativity—it follows a scientific process too.”

**Jesse Cook:** “Branding isn’t just about a logo; it’s about the entire user experience. It’s about making the user the **hero of their own story within the brand**. Whether it’s through logos, colors, or brand messaging, branding helps convey a company’s personality and values.”

**Best Practice:** Think beyond the logo—consider how branding affects **user perception, emotions, and storytelling**.

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## 2 Types of Logos: Descriptive vs. Distinctive

A logo can be **descriptive** or **distinctive**:

Logo Type	Example	Purpose
<b>Descriptive</b>	Dunkin’ Donuts, Burger King	Clearly shows what the brand does.
<b>Distinctive</b>	Nike, Apple	Represents the <i>idea</i> of the brand rather than its literal function.

**Example:** The Nike swoosh doesn’t depict a shoe but conveys *motion and energy*, aligning with the brand’s mission.

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## 3 Understanding Design Elements in Logos

A strong logo is built using:

- **Shape:** Sharp edges convey strength, while soft curves suggest friendliness.
- **Negative Space:** Clever use of space makes a logo memorable.
- **Typography:** Fonts communicate **authority, playfulness, or elegance**.

**Best Practice:** Analyze successful logos to understand **why** they work, not just *how* they look.

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## 4 Case Study: The “Triset” Logo

**Scenario:** A client wanted a brand for protein supplements sold in stick packets. Their initial name idea was “**Meat Sticks**”, which didn’t quite fit the brand’s image.

**Solution:**

- Through a structured brainstorming process, the team developed the name “**Triset**”, inspired by a gym term for a **set of three exercises**.
- The **T** at the beginning and end formed a **column**, symbolizing strength and stability.

## Triset Logo

Figure 1: Triset Logo

- The final design featured both a **logo mark** (symbol) and a **logotype** (full name), ensuring versatility.

### Final Logo:

**Takeaway:** A successful logo is **strategic, intentional, and aligns with the brand's story and audience.**

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## Summary: Key Takeaways

Concept	Explanation
<b>Branding</b>	Creates identity, perception, and storytelling for a business.
<b>Descriptive Logos</b>	Clearly illustrate what a company does (e.g., Dunkin' Donuts).
<b>Distinctive Logos</b>	Represent an abstract idea rather than a specific product (e.g., Nike).
<b>Design Principles</b>	Shape, typography, and negative space influence perception.
<b>Case Study: Triset</b>	Shows how a well-designed logo connects with the brand's mission.

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## Branding Resources & Further Reading

**The Science Behind Logos**

**Logo Psychology: Colors & Shapes**

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In this section of the course we're going to get into one of the main fundamental concepts that a lot of people think about when they think of user interface and design and that is: branding.

**Jordan Hudgens:** This is a very special topic for me and it's one where I've specifically asked for this one to be included because, to me, this gets as close to the design "black magic" as anything that I've ever worked with because I've been on a number of projects where the client asked me to design them a logo and... we're not going to show any of those.

**Jesse Cook:** Hahaha.

**JH:** They are not very good. And it always bothered me that, no matter how hard I tried, it seemed like I was not building something that looked professional.

A little bit of it definitely comes down to the inspiration side, because I always was trying to create something completely unique, which is hard to do, period.

But it's *really* hard to do with things like logos and those kinds of things.

But then on top of it, I was missing a very important component.

It's one thing that, when you and I sat down and talked about this and you showed me what your process was, I actually got really excited, because what Jesse's going to walk through is showing that designing logos and these kinds of branding components definitely has an art to it but there is also a very heavy science component.

**JC:** Branding is a big word, right?

Whether we're talking specifically about logos or if we're talking about the overall feeling and whether that's being put into an app with the use of color and different branding elements.

Or if we're just talking about the name and how this brand is supposed to be perceived. I mean, this could be a three-hour-long guide just talking about this.

It's definitely heavy on the design side. We're talking about very specific things of designing logos, and as you said, a lot of times, especially when you're freelancing, *you're* the tech guy and they want you to come up with a logo.

So knowing a little bit about it is really important.

My favorite thing I've ever heard about good branding is to be good storytellers, right?

A lot of times if you're doing the branding for a company you think, "I need to make the company look as awesome as possible" when really, and this is what I love so much: You're not making the brand be the hero of the user's story.

You're making the users the hero of *their own story inside of* this brand. It's really cool.

I mean, you look at car commercials and it's not about just making the car the coolest thing ever, it's that *you're* really cool *inside* the car.

Like *you're* the hero, when *you're* using this car, right? So that's a really cool concept of what branding can convey, but you can get very granular into what is the actual specific scientific method and artistic method of establishing a good brand, telling that story, designing logos, and using color.

So with logos, they are... pretty frustrating, and also *really* gratifying when you get it right and it looks good. It's just awesome.

You can go and look at other people's logos and you're just like "*oh, well, duh like that's so easy.*"

No. Not easy. Take something like the Nike logo, right? And you're like, I can make that in 2 seconds. It's like "Sure. You *could*. After you *looked* at it."

And Nike is actually a really good case study at looking at the differences between a descriptive logo and a distinctive logo.

A descriptive logo is going to be a lot better at saying exactly what it is that this brand does.

Think Dunkin' Donuts right?

Dunkin' Donuts has coffee on it.

Burger King has "Burger King" like, inside of the buns, right?

**JH:** Right.

**JC:** But Nike's logo isn't a shoe. It's this swoosh.

Now, what's the swoosh doing? It's conveying motion.

It's conveying the *idea* of what Nike is, but not necessarily *what* it is.

And that's the difference between a descriptive and a distinctive logo.

Sometimes you use one and sometimes you use the other.

If you really look at a lot of popular logos you'll start to identify where it's just like

*"I can't imagine this brand being anything different, but now that I'm looking at this logo... why did they decide to do this?"*

Because a lot of times that logo is just being used to establish strength or it's being used to establish wisdom.

And you can do that based on how sharp the edges are, or how soft they are, or how thick it is, or how much negative space is inside of it.

There's a couple of really good examples that I can give from my own personal experience.

One of them included not only doing the logo but actually doing the name as well. He came to us and he wanted to create these protein supplements that came in these pixie stick style packets for your pre-, intra- and post-workout.

So he told us what the product was going to be, and he had an idea for a name and he wanted to call them "Meat Sticks".

And we were like... can we try to think of something different?

**JH:** Haha!

**JC:** He said, "Sure if you think of anything better."

To him, it was like "meatheads" and like, pixie stick things, and it's just like, that's not feeling right.

So we went through a long process of asking questions like:

*"What are the words associated with this? What are things we want this brand to be associated with?"*

And that helped drive, not only what we named it, but the logo that we designed.

We ended up with a name that used vernacular that people in a gym would commonly use.

IMG

Figure 2: IMG

IMG

Figure 3: IMG

Instead of “Meat Sticks”, the name that we came up with was “Triset.”

It’s this process of using these three different individual packets.

And you’re doing a set of three of them, right?

So Triset is actually a really good example of how you can communicate what it’s doing, but in a distinctive way where you wouldn’t necessarily know right off the bat.

And then the logo is really cool.

So the T at the beginning and the end come together and they form the logo, which is a column—establishing that strength that we wanted to communicate.

And the logo mark, which would be that column, can be used, and then the logotype, which would be the entire Triset spelled out, can be used as well.

So, a really good example of taking the idea that a customer wanted and then really conveying the power of that distinction.