

LOGO DESIGN

CHECKLIST

YOUR LOGO HAS A JOB TO DO:
IS IT UP TO THE TASK?

Great logos have a clear concept and polished execution. Use this checklist to make sure your logo has all the hallmarks of an effective logo.

1 — START WITH RESEARCH

Even though there's nothing to see at this stage, it's actually the most important part. Research informs everything that comes after.

Start with your company: what are your core values? What do you pride yourselves on? Who are your customers and what do they love about your company?

Next, see what other companies in your field are doing and what their brands look like. Same thing with companies that target the same customers you do. The purpose of this research is not necessarily to follow suit (though you may decide to). But your logo doesn't exist in a vacuum. It's important to understand how similar companies present themselves in order to develop an effective strategy.

Banks logos are often blue: the color is said to signify trust. But there are also reasons you might not want to look like the competition.



2 — DEVELOP A CLEAR STRATEGY

You make strategic decisions for every aspect of your business: your priorities, which customers to target, how to attract them. Your logo can help you achieve your goals if you have a coherent visual strategy that complements your business.

Take my client, *Swift Kick*, for example. Based on my research, I developed a visual strategy that highlighted their different approach and ethos. *Swift Kick* positions their trainings as an investment in their clients' employees—they create value by making clients' employees more valuable. By comparison, most of their competition just lists their software proficiencies. Having a clear strategy, clearly communicated, helps potential clients understand *Swift Kick*'s value.

3 — DISCOVER A STRONG CONCEPT: BRAINSTORMING

With the groundwork laid, the visual work begins. It's a good idea to try as many different ideas as possible by doing quick sketches and brainstorming. Nothing is off-limits at this point.

My early sketches of this logo are clustered around my early snap judgements about what it would look like. It took a lot of sketching to free myself from those ideas and come up with other ideas, including the one that the client ultimately chose.



4 — COLOR AND TYPEFACE

Because color and type can do a lot of the heavy lifting in conveying meaning, this is one of the most important parts of the design process. And because there are almost endless choices, it is also one of the trickiest. Good decisions here are rooted in research and strategy.

I am very deliberate about bringing in color and type *after* the brainstorming process, for a couple of reasons. First, having a strong concept helps inform these choices, but it doesn't necessarily work the

other way around. Second, color and type start to make the design feel “finished,” and you might get attached to an idea too soon. It becomes harder to let go of an idea that’s not working.

5 — CHOOSE A DIRECTION AND REFINES IT

Your designer will probably present you with a few possible directions and share their different advantages, and together you’ll pick one direction to move forward and refine further.

A bit of advice for getting the best possible logo: root your feedback in the goals for your logo. If something isn’t working, focus your feedback on the goals of the project. An example of great feedback: “I know that a lot of businesses in this space use conservative colors, so I’m concerned about using pink. Can you explain why you chose that?”

Good designers really appreciate thoughtful feedback like this because it is actionable. They can explain their thinking, and if something needs to be changed, they understand *how* to fix it.

6 — WHERE WILL YOUR LOGO BE USED?

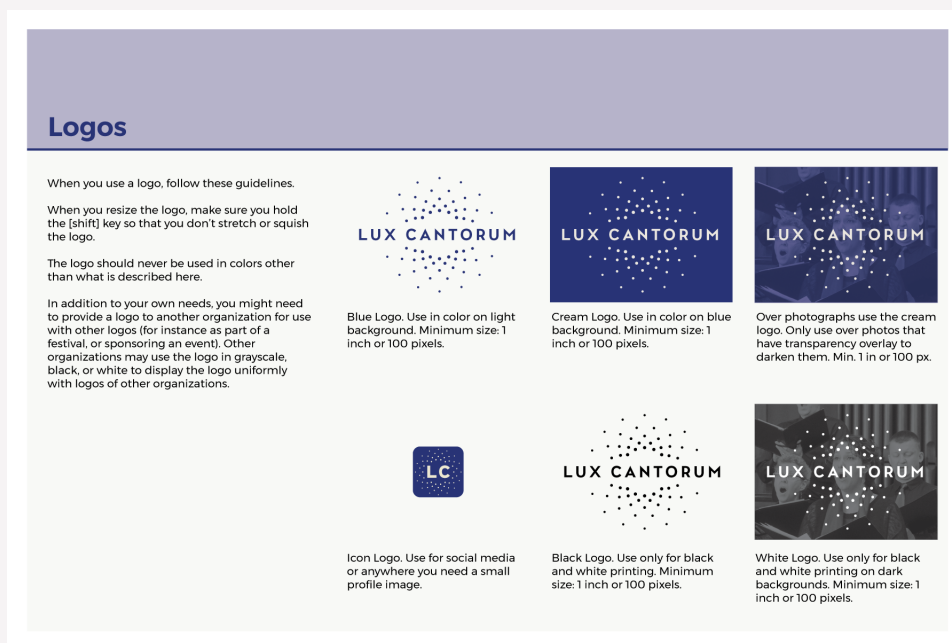
Your logo will probably be used in a wide variety of places, and each has different demands and constraints: website? Social media? Business cards? Sign for a brick and mortar shop? Invoices? Advertisements? You either need a logo that works in a wide variety of contexts, or you need multiple versions of the logo.

The Target logo can be used pretty much anywhere. The primary Coca-Cola logo doesn't work well at small sizes, but they also have a wavy line and the Coke bottle to use at smaller sizes and to brand their other products.



7 — STYLE GUIDE

This isn't strictly speaking part of the logo, but it's something I always include. I view a style guide as a way to protect my clients' investment in the work I'm delivering. A style guide is simply a document that details how and where to use various versions of the logo and other visual identity elements you've created. This ensures that you're using your visual assets (the "stuff" you've had designed) the right way so that everything looks just as great in real life as it did in the designer's visualizations.



THE KEY TO A GREAT LOGO IN A NUTSHELL?
STRONG CONCEPT, CONSISTENT APPLICATION,
AND AUTHENTIC TO THE BUSINESS.

**I help businesses connect with
customers through thoughtful design.**

**Want to work together?
Tell me a bit about your project:**

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