

LOGO DESIGN

Because of their apparent simplicity and ability to distill identity and purpose into a strong, unified graphic element, logos are deceptively hard to do well. Also, because logos are used in everything from calling cards to billboards to websites, the designer must come up with a practical multi-purpose graphic. But logo design is always great practice to sharpen creative design skills at any level of experience. Drawing (vector) software apps (e.g. Adobe Illustrator, Macromedia Freehand, Corel Draw) are often best used for logo graphics, because:

- logo images can be easily scaled-up (or down) without loss of detail
- they can be printed at any resolution (that means you don't have to pre-think output resolution or size!!).
- because they are individual vector objects, graphic elements are easy to combine, manipulate and edit (especially typographic components)
- file sizes are often kept small (compared to hi-res pixel-based files)
- colors are easy to keep clear, constant and calibrated
- image graphics are sharp and clean and high-contrast in look and impact (good for letterheads, advertisements, brochures, etc). Type is always razor-sharp.

Assignment: There are **2** parts to this project. Using Adobe Illustrator:

1) Design a logo for yourself based only on the initials of your name. Letters can be different styles, sizes, colors, rotated, transformed, etc. You can create a color-filled background to lay the letters over, but the letters themselves are the most important feature of this design. Make it interesting, but keep it simple!

2) Design a "soft" logo for a non-techno, "warm and cozy" commerce -- like a small café, flower or pet shop, bookstore, grief counselor, etc. **and/or** design a "hard" logo for a game, sports, or high-tech company. You can use either imaginary or real concepts or businesses, including your own business. If you can actually do both "soft" and "hard" logos, all the better in terms of use of design concepts and creative flexibility of your mind. Again, make it interesting, but keep it simple! Most importantly, make sure the content (information) is communicated effectively and clearly via the design components.

Note: You can probably create all designs on the same page, but make each one large enough to view easily on your monitors.

For this assignment:

- **do not** use gradients or textures. In logos, gradients can "break-down" or "band" and are very sensitive to sizing and printing conditions. Same goes for textures. We will use gradients and textures a lot in the next assignment.
- **do not** use drop shadows, feathering, embedded pixel-based images, or any pre-built patterns, symbols, or styles that come with Illustrator (we'll use them and make our own in the next project).

Some things to keep in mind:

- "**Less is more!!**" (more-or-less). Simplify your design concept down to the essential elements. Simplicity is your goal, but also capturing identity, interest, and unique appeal (simple should not equal boring). This is not so easy to achieve!!!!
- Think about what identity and idea you're trying to capture in your logo; your design form should be appropriate for your function ("**form follows function**"). [example: logo colors and basic contours/shapes for a Victorian-style English teashop would probably not be appropriate for a skateboard company advertised in "Wired"].
- It's important to be aware that logo designs contain both objective (e.g. shapes, curves, spaces, colors) and subjective (what the shapes, colors, etc. "mean" or trigger emotionally or in your memory). Often, the subjective information beneath the surface can be more powerful than the actual visual appearance of the objects themselves.
- Use multiple thumbnail sketches to distill design down to simplest elements without losing the concept. Avoid un-needed backgrounds and complexities. Use blank, empty space (negative space) efficiently and don't clutter your graphic.
- Use color wisely. Imagine the logo in black and white, for instance on a letterhead, as well as in color. Keep use of color to the minimum necessary for your purpose. Use contrasting or complementary colors when possible. You can use muted or pastel colors, but make sure the elements of the graphic maintain their distinct boundaries. Of course, colors should be appropriate for the identity and purpose of your objective. Also, you should consider that different cultures often associate different general "meaning" to various colors.
- Do not include any pixel-based art in the logo. Resolution-based images are of course resolution-dependent and will pixelate upon enlargement and you will lose a major advantage of using vector objects for your design.
- For similar reasons, avoid using gradients, complex textures, etc. They may look nice and smooth at one size, but may rapidly degrade when the image is blown-up or reduced. Their clarity is also very printer-dependent, and can make an image too "busy".
- Consider how your logo would hold-up scaled-down and/or in grayscale (e.g. on a letterhead)
- Keep words to absolute minimum and use only when necessary. The ideal logo graphic should communicate identity and function graphically with few words.
- Make sure to remove stray marks and anything unnecessary. Check spelling and grammar carefully! All type should be easy to read. Logo should be clean and error-free. In reality, a logo should be "perfect", since it will symbolically represent an identity and purpose, and will communicate a set of concepts/values everywhere it is displayed. Think about how the look of symbols/logos affects your view of products, corporations, concepts etc.