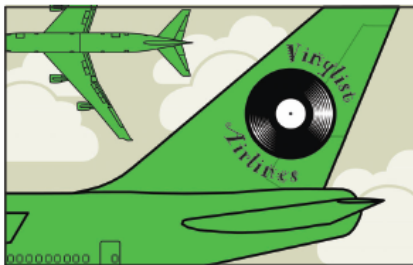


There are many reasons why logos should be kept simple. Here are a few of them...



1 The message: A logo represents a company's values and characteristics – it projects an image and tells a story. Try to think about the tone of your designs and what message they will send to people. Do you need to project an image of quality, strength or maturity? Or should the logo look cheap and cheerful or cheeky?

3 Shelf life: Most logos are used for years, so be careful not to use 'of the moment' typefaces or styles that may date quickly. Don't be too literal either – a company selling records today might be flying people to space in 25 years.



2 Market: Consider a company's industry and audience and what their expectations are. Are there any market trends that predict the way they should look? Should you conform to those preconceptions or break the rules? You would expect a logo for a funky TV station to look very different to that of a solicitor.

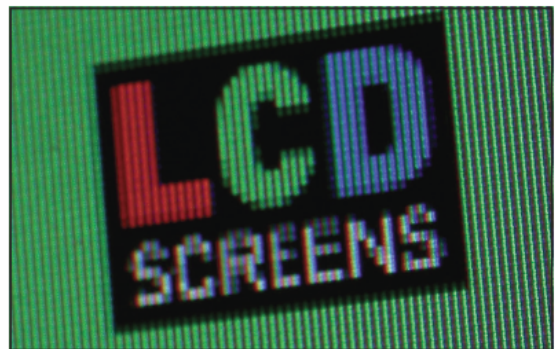


4 Colours: Be careful not to rely on colours in your design, especially if items touch or overlap. One way to make sure that your logo works in a single colour is to create it in black and white and apply colour to it later on.



5 Sizes: Experiment with your designs at different sizes. If you've already got them on your computer, zoom in and out to see if they work as tiny icons or when they're full screen. Try printing them out at various sizes – we normally start at 16px square and work our way up.

6 Screens: If you are designing a logo for screen-based media, be particularly careful of thin lines or very light typefaces. Also consider different types of screens. You shouldn't have any problems with CRT monitors, but beware the LCD. They can make text and graphics appear pixelated or rough.

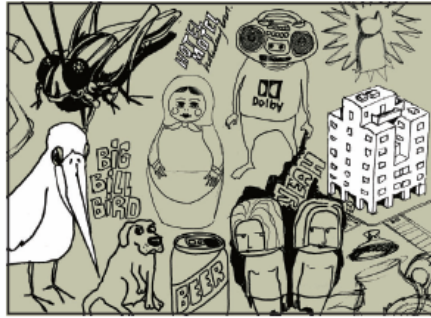


Part 3: Choosing a concept

Come up with a number of ideas and get them down on paper...



1 The best place to start when designing a logo is on paper. Sketch as many ideas as you can and write down any words that spring to mind. This is a free-association exercise and some ideas may be too obvious, so it's best to get them out of your mind and move on.



2 If you're struggling for ideas, try looking up key words in a dictionary or thesaurus or searching Google images for inspiration. If you keep a sketch book then look at previous drawings – you're bound to have unused ideas from previous projects, so you may already be sitting on the perfect solution.



3 We've found the best way to present logos is by showing one or two ideas per page. This gives each design space to breathe and is less distracting than a whole page of ideas. Neatly mount your designs and, if you're not presenting them in person, include notes to explain your concepts.

Sketch first

Even if you don't want to present sketches to your client, it's much quicker to get your ideas down on paper first. You can see which ones work before you spend time producing them properly and you'll be less precious about your work. If an idea is a bad one or doesn't work then ditch it, and get it out of your head.

A Second Point of View



1 The first thing to do is think about what you want out of your logo. You must be confident that you understand what's required. Make clear notes, ask lots of questions and type them up to present to your creative team (if you have one) while it's all fresh in your mind.



2 Here's our list of must-haves: key words, brand values, brand history and knowledge, brand goals, target market demographic, social responsibility implications, longevity of brand image (that is, is this logo to last more, or less, than five years?).



3 Do your research. Although you have tight deadlines, allocating quality time for a well-informed and broad range of research is fundamental to the success of the new brand in its marketplace. It's important to know this market visually, to be able to approach the project tactfully.



4 The internet is the most convenient and obvious method of research now. Visit competitors' websites and use Google to search any subject around your brand. Find strong and sometimes unusual links that can equip you with powerful, unique tools when it comes to generating new ideas.



5 Collate brochures, folders, industry magazines; visit exhibitions, shops; take pictures of your target consumers to understand their values, habits and level of communication. Create a profile that will help design the right feel for the brand.



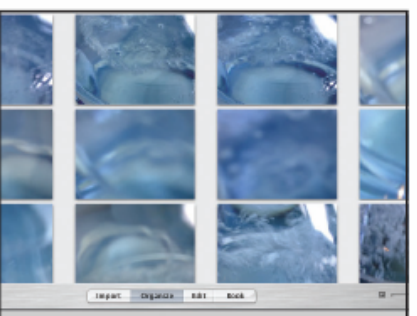
6 Take notes and sketch ideas, word plays, shapes, colours... any visual ideas that the research initially triggers. Collate textures, colours, objects, and any other visuals that could be shared with peers, seniors and the client. These are the beginnings of your brand profile.



7 Gather all of the material together for review. Create mood boards, stick your ideas up on the walls, constantly analysing new concepts. This stage should be active in order to generate creative, original successful solutions.



8 Review with your team. You should now have ideas of colours, textures, themes and word plays which start to create a 'feel'. How appropriate to the brand is that feel? Get early feedback from others. Listen and take action on their instincts. Collate and concentrate on the strongest ideas.



9 Experiment with some of the ideas you've had. Explore new methods – anything that creates unpredictable results. Look for inspiration everywhere and anywhere.

Expert profile: Mat Burhouse, Slingshot

Slingshot offers design, print and web solutions to a wide range of clients, including Fenchurch Clothing and *Graphotism* magazine...



Above: At 164 pages, *Graphotism* magazine is the world's biggest graffiti-art journal. As well as designing the last 11 issues of the mag, Slingshot has also built, and maintains, the magazine website.

BACKGROUND:

After studying general art and design at Stafford, Matt Burhouse went on to complete an HND in graphic design and advertising at Stockport College. He worked for design, advertising and marketing companies for about eight years before starting Slingshot in 2000. "I've always been interested in multimedia as well as design for print and now work on a wide variety of projects from logo design to web programming," says Mat.

YEARS AS A CREATIVE:

Fourteen.

FAVOURITE TOOLS:

Illustrator, Flash and a Rotring art pen.

CLIENTS:

Clients to date include Fenchurch Clothing, *Graphotism* magazine, Supergrass, Mint

Royale, A Third Foot Skateboards, Rick Myers and, more recently, several public sector organisations such as RegenWM, South East Excellence and West Midlands Regional Assembly.

MISSION STATEMENT:

"Slingshot is a graphic design and web development agency. We aim to provide an honest and professional service. We believe our approachable manner leads to great working relationships. We aim to respond quickly and maintain good communications. We're passionate about our work," says Burhouse.

WEBSITE:

www.slingshot.co.uk



Left: Slingshot's website. "We're just adding the finishing touches to our own website, where visitors can either enter the Flash animated 'Land of Slingshot' or view an HTML version that complies to W3C level AAA accessibility," says Mat Burhouse.



"We've always been into skateboarding so we love designing deck graphics. Here are two of our designs for the UK's only deck manufacturer, A Third Foot," says Burhouse.