

Logo

Appendix 6

source: <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/how-to-design-a-logo/>

It is important to consider the question as to whether a logo can make sense for a musician or ensemble or not. Authenticity is one of the most important things when branding an artist: does a logo do any good for a solo artist? In the classical music industry we do, of course, know the logos of orchestras, festivals, initiatives and collectives and sometimes also chamber music groups. Bottom line: particularly if you want to brand an orchestra, ensemble, project, concert cycle, festival etc. with a logo, the following chapter will give you a lot of good input. The more “corporate” a project or an organisation, ensemble, etc. is, the more sense a logo makes. As it gets more individual (e.g. solo artist or freelance artist), a logo is very often obsolete and not the best idea.

A logo is a symbol or design used to identify a company or organisation, as well as its products, services, employees.

In its simplest definition, a logo identifies. It's how your project is recognized and distinguished from others. It also functions as the face of your business.

A logo **isn't**:

- **Your brand**
This is a common conflation, but your logo isn't your brand. And your brand isn't your logo. Your brand is intangible; it's your reputation – what people think of when they hear your name, what they tell others about you and how you make them feel. Your brand is built from a thousand touchpoints with your customers – not from a logo.
- **Your visual identity**
When new companies or organisations request a logo, a good designer will say, “You don't just need a logo, you need a brand identity.” Logos are part of the picture, but they're not the entire thing. They're just one image within a larger visual system that includes your colors, typography, photography, visuals, layout, etc.
- **An indicator of success**
Your logo isn't going to make or break your business. The best logo in the world can't save a bad business, nor can the worst logo hold back good one.

How to design a logo?

Phase One: Ask questions

Before you start thinking about a logo, try to answer these questions:

- Why do you want and/or need a (new) logo?
- What is the meaning/story behind your project name?
- Who are your target audiences?
- Who are your main competitors?

- What are your goals for this new logo? How will “success” be measured?
- Who are your 3-5 top brand “role models?” Whose look and feel do you admire?
- What do you want people to feel when they see your logo?
- What are the values you wish your brand to express?
- What are the unique characteristics of your brand’s personality? For example: Is your brand refined, curious, nostalgic, vibrant, etc.?
- What will be the main use cases of the logo/visual system? Social? Website? T-shirts?

For you, this will be more of a self-discovery phase. Your goal is to have a solid understanding of what your project is, what you believe in, what you want to accomplish and how you want to get there. Remember, you’re not just designing a logo. You’re shaping your brand identity.

After you’ve answered these questions, you’ll summarize the answers in a **creative strategy document** that provides a general overview of your project. You might include: your objective for the design process, the “tone” of your brand, visual considerations and an early vision for the design system and logo, including any themes that surfaced in this phase.

Not only will you use this strategy document to guide your next phase, you’ll also use it to judge your success throughout the process. At the end of each phase, evaluate your deliverables by how well they fulfil the vision established in the creative strategy. When personal opinions and preferences inevitably arise, refer back to this document to stay objective.

Phase Two: Explore

This is your research phase, but “exploration” sounds more exciting. The exploration phase might just be the most fun and – as someone who’s embarking on this design process solo, and possibly for the first time – the most helpful.

Essentially, you’ll be turning your focus outward to encounter and explore design out in the world. Your goal here is twofold: Get educated and get inspired.

Start simple by googling basic design principles. Read up on the fundamentals like style, color and typography.

Certain principles of color theory can be especially helpful for logo design. Different colors evoke different emotions and behaviors, helping you create the desired emotional response from your audience. It’s fascinating stuff, really.



Logo: <https://sproutsocial.com/>

For example, blue inspires trust, dependability and authority. It’s no coincidence that blue is a popular choice for banks, credit cards and software. Green evokes feelings of peace, growth and health. Companies like Whole Foods and BP use green in their branding to strategically communicate a level of care for the planet.

Discover which color will elicit the feelings you want from your audience.

Once you’ve got a handle on the basics, start gathering intel. Look first to your immediate competitors, then to your broader industry. Don’t just look at logos. Experience the entire visual system by observing brands across multiple channels, i.e. websites, different social media networks, etc. Take notes. What elements stand out to you, both good and bad?

Next, look outside your industry. Explore what’s trending among the design community. Look to websites like [Dribbble](#), [Behance](#) and [Brand New](#) for recent creative work from the world’s leading designers. Search

#logodesign or other related hashtags on Instagram. The website 99designs also has a [discover page](#) for design inspiration you might find useful.

Create a **mood board** to collect all the images, designs, color combinations, photos, illustrations and yes, logos, you felt drawn to, and represent the look and feel that you want for your brand identity.

If you're feeling arty-crafty, you can create an actual board by cutting and pasting printed images. But most designers keep it digital. The easiest way to collect is Pinterest, but if you need to share/review easily, just copy and paste your images into a document.

If you're drawn to several design directions, create separate mood boards for each. Be sure to include short descriptions about how each board's visual choices express the brand attributes detailed in your creative strategy. Ideally, you'd present these boards to other members of your team or to a decision-maker, and they'd help you narrow down to one direction.

Phase Three: Design

Finally! The goal here is pretty straightforward: take all the considerations and inputs from the first two phases and start generating some logo designs.

There's a lot to consider when approaching how to design a logo:

Tools

Before you start, make sure you have what you'll need to design:

Pencil and paper

Sketching some preliminary ideas is a great place. Don't over-complicate this. Design is an iterative process. Even if you think you can't draw, create rough sketches of the ideas in your head. Your brain will be forced to think creatively – which is exactly the mindset you need.

Vector graphic design software

The industry standard for vector graphics editing software is [Adobe Illustrator](#)—but it doesn't come cheap and isn't necessarily novice-friendly. You could try out similar free tools like [Inkscape](#) and [Vectr](#). *Why vector?* All logos are vector images, meaning that instead of pixels, they're made up of lines defined by mathematical formulas. Vectors are easier to modify and scale.

Fonts

If you go the above route, you may want to look into downloading some additional fonts. Free font resources include the [Google Fonts](#) library and [Font Squirrel](#). You can also purchase fonts at sites like [MyFonts](#) and [FontShop](#).

Free logo design tools

If you're short on time, money and design skills, there are plenty of online tools that will get the job done. Most of these sites offer customizable templates, which would be the fastest way to create a logo that looks professional. Just keep in mind that you run the risk of sacrificing originality.

One last consideration is that while the following tools are free, you may have to purchase the final, scalable vector file to download.

Top 4 online logo design tools:

[Hatchful](#)

[LogoMakr](#)

[DesignEvo Free Logo Maker](#)

[Canva Logo Maker](#)

Types of logos

Whether you decide to design your logo from scratch or use a template, a good starting point is to familiarize yourself with the seven types of logos:

Word mark

Some brands have no graphic symbol and decide instead to place their company or organisation name front and center. In this case, typography is everything. Whatever your font choice, it has to be legible.

Brand mark

Also known as “pictorial marks,” brand marks are the graphic symbol in a logo. These symbols are usually recognizable and create an immediate connection in the minds of your audience. For example, a tooth for a dentist, mountains for an outdoor company, etc.

You’ll need to pair a brand mark with your company or organisation name in the beginning. But after time, the symbol alone could serve as a powerful, visual shorthand for a well-known brand.

Combination mark

This type of logo combines both a symbol and a wordmark, creating the more traditional logo “lock-up” we’re all familiar with. Play around with the placement of each element until you find a layout you like.

Abstract logo mark

As their name suggests, abstract logo marks are less recognizable and usually more geometric. They’re great if you want something completely unique to your brand. Again, we strongly advise pairing these symbols with your company or organisation name until you’ve built up enough brand recognition to let your symbol go solo.

Letter mark

A letter mark, also called a “monogram” logo, is great if your name is long or clunky. You can choose to either abbreviate your name or just use your initials. Typography is just as important in a letter mark as it is in a word mark. Luckily, with fewer letters and less worry about legibility, you can use more creative styling.

Mascot

Depending on your brand personality, a mascot could be fun. Plus, they’re more flexible than your standard symbol because their expressions and contexts can change. Just be sure to use a style that aligns with the message and emotion you want to communicate. If you’re going for a more serious vibe, mascots aren’t a great choice.

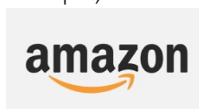
Emblems

Emblem logos include text inside a symbol. Emblems, also known as ‘crests’, have been around for a long time and can communicate tradition and prestige.

Symbols

If you decide you want a symbol in your logo – whether traditional or abstract – you might need to do some brainstorming.

1. **Make connections.** Consider your project or organization’s name, and write down as many related words you can think of. Using “Sprout” as an example, we’d write words like grow, garden, tree, forest, leaves, branches, greenhouse, etc. These words conjure up their own set of images that could all be viable choices for a brand mark.
2. **Think figuratively.** This is where the questions in the “Discover” phase come into play. Amazon, for example, uses the smile to represent how happy and satisfied Amazon shoppers are.



3. Consider how you want your audience to feel, or what message you want to convey. Are there any symbols that come to mind?
4. **Go literal.** You can consider a literal interpretation of your brand message. Just don’t be afraid to play around with it. Put a unique spin on it. Try combining a literal symbol with something more figurative.
5. **Get weird.** At this stage, there are no rules. Think as far outside the box as you want. As the saying goes, that’s often where the magic happens. Don’t question if something makes sense. It could be the key that unlocks the winning idea.
6. **Generate, evaluate, repeat.** Do this as many times as you need to narrow down your options. Most designers go through multiple rounds before they get to the good stuff. Iteration is the name of the game. And don’t forget to tap a friend for help. Sometimes you just need fresh eyes to get you unstuck.

Fonts

If you decide to go with a word mark or letter mark, remember how important typography is. Similar to colors, different fonts elicit different interpretations of your brand personality.

There are countless font types, but they all fall into one of three families (also called typefaces): **serifs, sans serifs and script.**

Serif fonts

Serif fonts have small lines or strokes attached to the end of the larger strokes in a letter or symbol. These fonts are classic and can be a good choice when you want to communicate trust, tradition and sophistication.

Sans serif fonts

These are fonts that have no serifs attached to the letters. The result is a crisp, clean line that looks sleek and modern. Sans serif fonts are the preferred font family for digital because they're easier to read. If you're going for a minimalist design, sans serif fonts are the way to go.

Script

Script fonts mimic cursive handwriting, creating the effect of a signature. They often feel more authentic and original.

You should end up with at **least one logo design** to evaluate. It's also common at this stage to have two or three logos to choose between.

Phase Four: Refine

If you ended the last phase with several different options, now's the time to narrow them down. Already have a final choice? Let's put it to the test.

Evaluate your designs by asking yourself these questions:

What makes a great logo?

A great logo is:

- Simple
- Memorable
- Evocative

Where will you use this logo?

Consider both your primary use cases – like your website or social media profiles – as well as your secondary use cases, like printed marketing materials, recruitment and event banners, etc.

Don't stop at considerations. Try it out on the various backgrounds to make sure the image, words and overall message translate across every medium. Any logo mark should be effective at many sizes, but small, digital applications are critical.

Does the logo have legs?

Aesthetics change. Trends come and go. But the value of your logo will only get stronger as time goes on. Consider whether or not you see your logo lasting you 5, 10, 15, even 20 years from now.

Also, consider the logo in the context of your entire visual identity. This might need to be an additional exercise. Take the various elements of your logo design, like colors, fonts and styles, and see how you might be able to incorporate them elsewhere in your use cases.

Finally – and one of our designers was quite emphatic about this – **make a monochrome black and white version of your logo and make sure it can be reversed on dark colors.** If you don't, you could be letting yourself in for trouble in the future.

By now, you should have **a final logo design** you love. And most likely, it took you a decent amount of time to get every element just right. Our fifth and final phase will help you ensure it stays that way.

Phase Five: Define

When it comes to maintaining the integrity of your brand identity, quality and consistency are key. Given the number of places your logo will live – and the number of people who may need to use it – it’s important to define a set of rules and guidelines for how to treat your logo. And how not to.

To start, consider any guidelines you may have about your logo’s **size, color, layout, treatment, positioning, orientation**, etc.

Some questions to ask yourself:

- *Are there only certain color backgrounds that your logo should be placed against?*
- *Can your logo be used on top of photographs? If so, can you change the color to help it stand out?*
- *If you have a combination logo mark, can the elements be separated in certain contexts?*

To ensure your logo maintains a strong impact, don’t be afraid to include some “never” rules to discourage any modifications or distortions to your logo. Otherwise, you’ll wind up with a holiday-colored logo on an email that went out to all 10k of your customers.

This is often referred to as a **style guide**. A style guide can be as simple or comprehensive as you need. Recently, Sprout’s Design Systems team built an entire website devoted to our style guide. It’s called [Seeds](#), and it houses all of our brand, writing and visual guidelines, as well as all the patterns and components our product designers need to build our app.

But you don’t have to build a brand-new website to house your brand standards. Just make sure they’re properly communicated to your teams and are easily accessible to everyone. Most designers create a pdf and share it on their company or organization’s internal resource library.

Conclusion

After all of that, you might be saying, “Wow, that’s a lot.” Designers typically take weeks to work through all the phases. So don’t rush. Take the time to go through the exercises outlined here in each phase. Your final design will reflect the level of effort you put toward it.

And remember, at the end of the day, your logo doesn’t build your brand—your people do.

Online logo websites compared

<https://themeisle.com/blog/best-logo-maker/>

Easy-to-use free logo / graphics website (works with vectors)

<https://vectr.com/>

Easy-to-use site to create online and print content

<https://www.canva.com/>