

The basics of designing a logo

BUSINESS GUIDE

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A well-designed logo that represents your business effectively is a critical marketing aid. As well as setting you apart from competitors, a good logo will effectively communicate the overall quality of your brand. It will help people identify with your business and make your products or services more memorable. Designing a logo is, therefore, an important first step when it comes to company branding.

Logo design need not be complicated if you follow a few simple rules. In this guide, you will discover the 'Do's and Don'ts' of designing a logo.

As there are legal ramifications for getting things wrong, your top priority should be to create a logo that is completely original reflecting your business and what you do.

Before you start

Logos and trademark/copyright infringement

Never be tempted to model your logo on that of a competitor or well-known brand. As well as almost certainly putting you at risk of legal action, think of all the money you will have wasted on unusable branded materials – not to mention the likely financial impact of litigation.

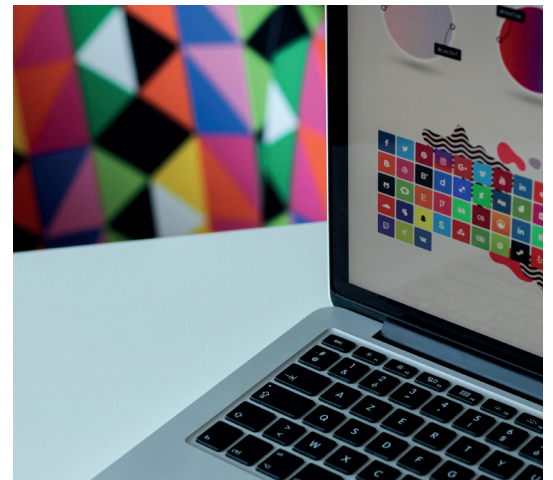
There are some good recent examples of businesses that have made this costly mistake. PayPal sued a little-known music streaming service over its logo, asking for damages as well as an assurance the copycat logo would be scrapped. [Click here](#) to read more and find out how subtle similarities can land you in hot water.

In the rural business sector, you must be extra careful. This is because many farm-based or countryside products and services tend to choose similar themes for their logos, including colours and slogans. Before making a final decision on a logo, carry out research to ensure it is unique.

Another common pitfall is the unauthorised use of copyrighted fonts. If you plan to design your own logo, check that you have the necessary permission to use your chosen typefaces. [Click here](#) to find out more.

Know what message you want your logo to convey

Before designing a logo, decide who you want it to appeal to. Who is your ideal customer? How old are they? What do they like? Think about the products or services your business offers. How can they be represented in a logo? Can you use a play on words or a specific picture or motif to make it stand out?



Free, online design tools:

- [Canva](#)
- [Fee Logo Service \(small fee to download your logo once you are happy with it\)](#)
- [Tailor Brand](#)
- [Graphics Springs](#)
- [Logomakr](#)
- [Logo Joy](#)



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Talk to colleagues, customers and friends. Share your ideas and take their feedback onboard before moving forward. Consider colour themes, images and fonts. Look at competitor's logos for inspiration, but remember not to copy them and to ensure your ideas are unique. Be careful to avoid colour clashes. If you plan to incorporate a slogan, keep it brief but engaging. Don't be afraid to use short, broken sentences for impact.

DIY or outsource?

Do it yourself logo design

If you have got a clear idea of what your logo should look like, you may want to design it yourself. In fact, there are many free design tools you can use to create an eye-catching and memorable logo. If you plan to use images, try to use your own to make your logo completely unique.

The pros of designing your own logo include:

- You know your business better than a graphic designer
- It's cheaper than outsourcing
- It is usually quicker to do it yourself
- Changes can be carried out quickly, if necessary

The cons of designing your own logo include:

- The quality may be poor
- You may produce something that closely resembles a logo trademarked by another business
- The logo may look good but not reflect the business you are in or appeal to your target market
- It's another thing for you to have to do

Outsourcing logo design

If you need some creative inspiration or simply want the professional touch, outsourcing makes sense. However, it pays to be choosy. Many small to medium-sized businesses have been left red-faced after buying logo design services from the gig economy. Be aware that many 'designers' selling logo services on low cost, budget platforms use the same design templates over and over again.

"A good logo will effectively communicate the overall quality of your brand."

TOP TIP:

Make sure your logo is available in different formats (i.e. jpg, png etc) and has a transparent background so that it can be used on everything from letterheads to company vehicles and, where necessary, packaging.

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Numerous so-called designers selling logos from as little as five pounds – or even less - often produce blatantly copied designs. Sometimes, they simply just replace the name of the company, keeping all other artwork intact. This is a potential legal disaster for a new business. Unless you really have no other choice, use a local graphic designer with checkable references.

A good designer will discuss your ideas and ask you about your business. They won't mind making changes and they will work with you until the design is exactly right. If you work with a local graphic designer, you will avoid problems associated with the gig economy and will know exactly who you are dealing with.

If you really want to invest in your logo, why not have several draft designs drawn up? You can even hire different graphic designers to ensure you get a real mix of ideas. Once the draft designs are complete, you can compare the options and decide which one is the best fit for your business.

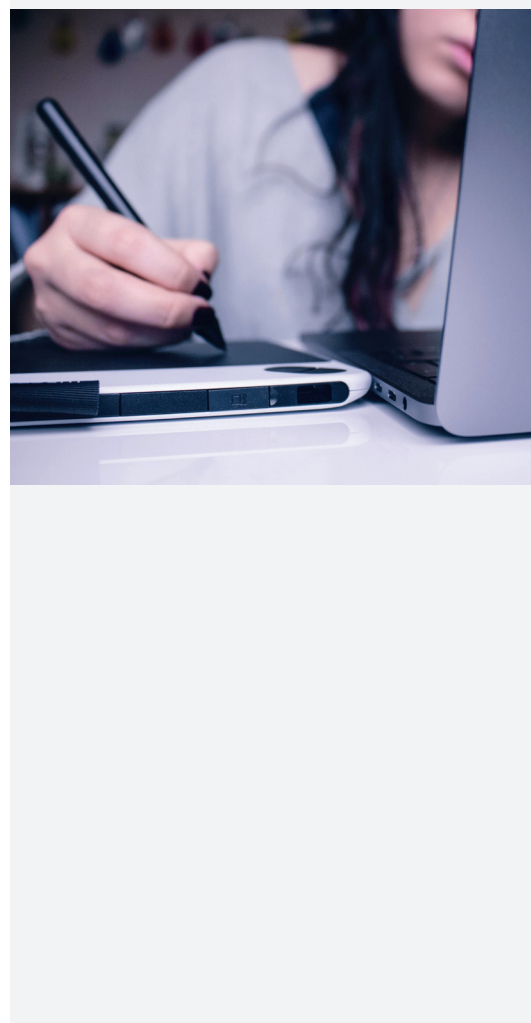
After your logo has been designed

Once you have created a logo that is perfect for your brand you can use it to promote your business and make a better connection with your target market. Make sure the logo is featured on all company correspondence, appears on your website, marketing material, vehicles, packaging and on corporate clothing. Also use it on roller banners, flags and physical signs.

To ensure your logo remains relevant, it pays to review it every couple of years. While major changes are not recommended, subtle alterations can keep your brand current and in step with ever-changing consumer trends. Your logo sums up what you do. Get that right and your marketing won't go wrong.



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