

The Value of a Logo

Written by Steve Marr
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When most businesses begin, one of the first goals is to create a logo for letterhead, vehicles and advertising material. Many may disagree with me, but my perspective is most logos are over rated. Ask the simple question, how many times does one buy your product because of the logo? In my view, rarely. We buy a product because solid marketing has created brand awareness that helps us recognize a logo. Coca-Cola, Apple and McDonald's are examples. Almost everyone knows what the logo stands for, but we buy the product because we like it; not because of the logo.

I say this after spending time working on business logos for a number of companies I've owned and ministries I've worked with. The logo becomes valuable when the average person on the street sees it and instantly understands what it represents. Not many products reach this stature. However, since most of us do logos anyway, we should keep several guidelines in mind to make them effective.

1. An effective logo faithfully represents the business.

An effective logo needs to match the company. An old traditional business needs a logo that communicates trust, substance and long-term viability while a new upstart technology company needs a logo that screams cutting edge. The logo should have something to do with the product or service. A tree may look pretty on letterhead but is not appropriate for a plumbing business.

2. An effective logo can be scaled to different sizes.

If you're going to use a logo on a service van as well as on letterhead or a giveaway pen, the size must be appropriate in each circumstance. Also, you want the logo to look good in color, black and white or gray shades.

3. An effective logo is simple to read.

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Logos with as few words as possible using simple, clear words are best. I've seen work vehicles around town with logos that tell me nothing about what they do. They wasted advertising space on their truck.

If you are trying to create a logo, look at logos from different companies. Save the ones you like and ask yourself what about the logo struck you. Make notes and use successful designs from other companies as inspiration to create your own logo. Just don't copy someone else's logo without permission.

You can also hire a professional. Rather than asking the professional to come up with ideas, start with your own inspiration. Show your collection of ideas to communicate your desire for simplicity, style and design. Your logo will be more personal and you will receive a better result. At the end of the day the logo product must be yours, not a designer's.

While I don't think God told Habakkuk to create a logo, still these words help clarify our purpose when using logos: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it." (Habakkuk 2:2, NIV) Logos should be plain and simple so that they become heralds to help your business grow.

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