

Awaken Your Target Audience

Learn how to open their eyes

by Dave Gilman



One of the best ways to achieve recognition in the crowded marketplace is to present an eye-opening logo to your target audience.

An effective logo will wake customers out of their daydreams and make them take notice of your company. For example, think of Nike, Apple and Target.

While designing a logo may seem easy, there are seven key characteristics that make up a successful and effective logo. Open your eyes and take a look.

1. Identifiable

Just as every fingerprint is unique, your logo too should be one of a kind. It should be a unique visual expression of your organization, expressing your company's personality and its mission. It should convey your intended meaning instantaneously while simultaneously attracting your target audience.

2. Simplicity

All too often logos are overdone, over-complicated and do not reflect the objectives of the organization. Successful logos are very simple. When done right, it can tell a profound story. By keeping it simple, it will be remembered.

3. Memorable

A logo design must be interesting enough to make a strong and immediate impression and yet simple enough to deliver a clear message...one that can be easily recalled. If it is not simple, chances are it will not be retained.

This can be done with a distinct shape, color, or font. You want them to remember it. Most people remember more of what they have seen rather than what they have read or hear.

4. Differentiated

Many companies are drowning in a sea of similarity and are often overlooked in a crowded marketplace. One can gain a significant advantage over the competition by visually distinguishing oneself. Assess what the competition is doing and design something altogether different.

5. Sustainable

A properly designed logo will stand the test of time and not fall victim to trends. In 2000 hundreds of companies had some type of swoosh in their logo... now they are mostly gone. Ask yourself if your logo will be relevant 10 years from now. If the answer is no, it's time to go back to the drawing board.

6. Emotional or Engaging

Emotion is one characteristic that separates the real logo designers from the wannabes. Successful logos are able to evoke both feelings and thoughts in the mind of the prospective client. Colors, fonts, and symbols are a visual language that—when successfully blended together—can speak to your audience in ways that words alone cannot.

7. Flexibility

This concept is often overlooked. A logo must be adaptable so it can accommodate any medium. This includes print, the web, and multimedia. It must be able to be both dramatically reduced and enlarged while still maintaining legibility. It has to fit on promotional products... from minute to massive. And now a logo has to fit in a favicon... the tiny icon seen in a web browser. A logo should be faxable. It should work in black and white as it does in color.

By applying the above characteristics, you can ensure that your organization will stand out and achieve recognition. Your logo will be able to survive—and thrive—in print, the web, and multimedia platforms.

By ignoring these guidelines, you may find yourself incognito... which is defined as having one's identity concealed. Wake up and get recognized!

Dave Gilman is the founder and President of Cognito. He is dedicated to helping companies achieve the utmost recognition through eye-opening visual communications. In his 12 years in graphic design he has been published worldwide in numerous publications on brand identity and logo design. For more information, please visit www.cognitocreative.com.