

The Five Most Common Identity Pitfalls

You don't have to be a design specialist to know when a logo is not working. If you can't read it easily, have trouble figuring out what it means or are just terrible unimpressed, you can tell something went amiss.

The development of a successful identity is hard work. It is a complex endeavor—one that requires careful consideration of all the possible applications. Inventing a corporate identity is part creativity and part science. In addition to obeying rigorous rules of style, a logo needs to trigger an appropriate emotional response. A seasoned design team will help you avoid five costly mistakes that can sink your image.

1 » LEGIBILITY—OR LACK OF IT

Lots of logos suffer from Acute Illegibility Syndrome—the result of someone choosing to be overly elaborate with the typography. Understanding how people will read your logo is the first step toward avoiding confusion. For instance, if you link two words together, you may end up with an unfortunate collision of syllables.

2 » TOO MUCH DETAIL

Simplicity is hard to achieve, but you should strive for it. Too much detail makes a logo difficult for reproduction and retention. Be careful when using illustrations. They can be interesting, but how will it translate to very small applications?

3 » INAPPROPRIATE PRIMARY COLOR

Color affects us emotionally. Finding a color that feels right sends a compelling message, one that ties who we are to what we do. We instinctively know that we shouldn't use a palette of pastels for a hard rock band or greens for a company that processes red meat. Not many law firms or financial institutions would be comfortable using bright reds, neon oranges or yellows.

4 » SECONDARY COLOR DOESN'T STAND OUT FROM THE PRIMARY COLOR

Another classic mistake is the selection of colors that are too close together, which significantly dulls the impact of your identity. Don't be afraid of contrast, even between different chromas. Also, technology has made sticking to a single "standard color" a thing of the past. You can be bolder and differentiate your graphic identity through the creative use of multiple colors.



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5 » UNDERESTIMATING THE POWER OF A GOOD FONT

Fonts are often overlooked as a powerful communication element. There are dramatic and obvious reasons not to use a “rodeo style” font for a hospital, or a “digital style” font for a manufacturer of textiles. Using unique fonts is often critical to establishing a unique identity that is specific and appropriate for the message you are trying to communicate.

Your identity will be with you a long time. It is imperative that your first impression with your prospects, customers, employees and suppliers be positive and memorable. It is the small things that count and beauty—not to mention results—is in the details.

