CORPORATE IDENTITY DESIGN

Many people think that a company's Corporate Identity starts and finishes with the company's logo. This is not the case.

A full Corporate Identity is the "persona" of a company. It is a philosophy that should be implemented throughout the entire business, and ensures that the way the business and the public world perceive your company is consistent and professional at all levels of its dealings, thus helping to achieve your business objectives.

Corporate Identity is often viewed as being composed of three parts:

Corporate Design (logos, stationery, signage etc.).
Corporate Communication (advertising, literature, public relations, information etc.).
Corporate Behaviour (internal values etc.).

Before any design work is started you will need to answer the fundamental questions:

"What are our company's overall goals; What is our strategy to achieve those goals; How do we want to be perceived by our target audience; How are we different from our competitors?"

Many companies have a mission statement which sets out in a short concise statement what they are striving to achieve. This can be a good starting point.

Once these basics have been established I can get to work on the design.

CORPORATE LOGO

A good corporate logo is one of the most important branding elements for your company. It is the core element in a company's Corporate Identity and should successfully convey the company's character and fundamental ethos, and create, in existing and prospective clients, a positive, strong and enduring impression.

A good corporate logo should be instantly recognizable, simple, clear and concise and capable of being produced:

1. **In different media –**

   Print (Ink onto paper): Stationery, brochures, newspapers, magazines, in-house documents

   Electronic (Computer screens): Websites, presentations, electronic documents.

   Signage (Cut vinyl/screen-print/large format digital print): Shop-fronts, vehicles, billboards.

2. **In different colour formats -**

   RGB (Red, Green and Blue) Computer Monitors.

   CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black): Full colour printing.

   Pantone (Individual colour inks): Spot colour printing.

   Monochrome (Black and white): Single colour black printing and reversed: white on black.

3. **At different sizes and proportions -**

   From a small advert in a newspaper to an advertising hoarding on the side of a building the logo needs to be clear and recognizable. It may be necessary to have different versions of the logo for use in different situations i.e. a portrait and a landscape version.

The Design Process
Stage 1 – Research and Rough Sketching
Stage 1 relies on a clear and concise design brief from the client.
The key information that needs to be provided by the brief is:

- How the company wishes to be perceived e.g.: corporate and professional, warm and homely etc?

- Who is the company's target audience and what geographical area do they cover?
- Does the company have any preferred corporate colours?
- Any other relevant preferences?
- On what media and in what sizes does the company envisage the logo being used?
- Any relevant information unique to the sector the company works in that may affect the design? e.g.: for many years green was associated with mould in the food industry.

Following the brief, I will research your competitors in your area and generally in your sector. Then, using this information and the brief, I will prepare five or six rough pencil sketch ideas and proof them to you. At this stage we are more concerned with the perceived impression of the logo and the image it portrays.

It is advisable for you to get as much reaction as possible to the initial ideas as different people will read them in different ways.

If none of the ideas are suitable, I will produce additional sketches based on your feedback.

If none of these additional sketches are suitable, we will need to revisit the brief and adjust the estimate.

Stage 2 – Initial Artwork Stage
Two ideas are then selected that convey the correct message and I will then work up these ideas to initial artwork stage choosing suitable fonts and colours. These are then proofed to you.

Once again, it is advisable for you to get as much reaction as possible to these.

If minor amendments are required the designs will be amended and reproofed to you.

If major amendments are required we will need to revisit the brief and adjust the estimate.

Stage 3 – Final Logo and Corporate Identity Guide Document
We will then need to choose the final logo. I will prepare the logo as final artwork and produce a **Corporate Identity Guide Document** detailing how and where it can be used, colour specifications and typefaces. At this stage we will also choose a suitable bodytext and headline typeface to be used with the logo when producing corporate documents. This will be proofed to you.

I would then suggest that you live with this final document for a week and get as many people to comment on it as possible. You will be using the final design for many years and it is essential that you are 100% confident in the design and the message it conveys.

Now is the time to make any last minute amendments.

Stage 4 – Final Logo files and Corporate Identity Guide Document
On final approval of the logo I will produce the logo in various master formats:
- EPS vector format in CMYK and Pantone colours, as appropriate, in colour and monochrome for print.
- EPS vector outline format for vinyl cutting.
- TIFF format in CMYK and RGB in colour and monochrome for print and in-house print.
- JPEG and GIF format, as appropriate, in colour and monochrome for in-house print and web use.

These will be supplied to you on disc along with the **Corporate Identity Guide Document** and I will also hold artwork masters at my office.

CORPORATE STATIONERY

Once the logo has been established and finalised, it can be applied to the company's stationery: letterheads, compliments slips, business cards etc.

Again, a clear set of guidelines needs to be established to ensure that all stationery is consistent in its style and quality.

The Design Process
Stage 1 – Rough Ideas

Following the original brief, and on receipt of company information details, I will apply the company logo and produce three layout schemes for letterheads, compliments slips and business cards and proof them to you.

If none of the ideas are suitable, I will produce additional sketches based on the feedback.

If none of these additional sketches are suitable, we will need to revisit the brief and adjust the estimate.

Stage 2 – Initial Artwork Stage
On selection of the preferred layout scheme, or combination of elements, I will work up these ideas to initial artwork stage with final fonts and colours. These are then proofed to you.

If minor amendments are required, the designs will be amended and reproofed to you.

If major amendments are required, we will need to revisit the brief and adjust the estimate.

Stage 3 – Final Artwork and Corporate Identity Guide Document
On approval, I will prepare final artwork for the letterhead, compliments slip and business card(s) in a suitable format for the selected print company. These can also be supplied to you in electronic format for in-house printing if required. I will then add the layouts and styles to the **Corporate Identity Guide Document** detailing the layouts colour specifications and typefaces. This will be presented to you. Print files to be supplied to the selected printing company and I will hold the artwork masters at my office, but they are available to you at any time.

CORPORATE DOCUMENTS, LITERATURE, SIGNAGE ETC. AND ONGOING CONTROL

Once the logo and stationery have been established, these now provide the bedrock for the visual aspect of the corporate identity.

I use the same design approach to any new documents, literature, signage etc. that are added. Each new item will present their own challenges in terms of design and layout and must be styled to fit in with the overall identity so that the all aspects of the company's communications with the outside world present a co-ordinated and professional image, thus enhancing client confidence.

I like to build long-lasting and trusting relationships with my clients and provide a service where I can be the central point of contact for all aspects of your company's Corporate Identity. This helps to control the identity, avoid deviations from it and ensures that any new items are styled to fit in.

Any new item is added to the **Corporate Identity Guide Document** giving a central reference point for the way the Corporate Identity is applied.

APPLYING THE CORPORATE PERSONALITY TO THE COMPANY

At the same time as implementing the Corporate Identity for the company's printed and electronic design and communications materials, it should be implemented throughout the entire business. If half the company is applying the principles of the Corporate Identity and the other half isn't, the overall impression the company creates can very easily be damaged.

Routines and systems need to be established that are consistent with the company's personality and message. It is no good having a Corporate Identity that is "warm and welcoming" if staff do not treat clients in a "warm and welcoming" manner. If offices are cold and impersonal for staff to work in and they are not treated in a "warm and welcoming" manner by their company, this will be passed on to clients, public and suppliers that they deal with.

Examine all levels of the company's operations and review the premises and how staff deal with clients, the public and suppliers. Ensure that staff are aware of the reasons for implementing the Corporate Identity and of the benefits that it will provide the company. Provide training on how the Corporate Identity is to be implemented in the company's day to day dealings and also for any changes that need to be made.

This document only gives a brief introduction to the in-depth subject of Corporate Identity. Managing your Corporate Identity is a continuing commitment that will present new problems and challenges all the time.

Your Corporate Identity is not a fixed entity and will need to adapt and evolve whilst maintaining a consistent and professional image of your company – no small task!

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