



DESIGNING A LOGO FOR YOUR BUSINESS

PIXIE DOODLE – GRAPHICS, WEB DESIGN & ILLUSTRATION

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WHATS IN A NAME?

The words in your logo tell people what you do.

Before you start wondering what your logo will look like you need to decide what to call your business. This is a topic in itself but here are some pointers.

Don't rush into this as once you have it will be with you for the lifetime of your business.

As your business name will be the biggest text on your business card and promotional material and

most probably the domain name of your website, then its needs to say what your business is or have at least have a word in the name that reflects what you do.

You can add a strap line to your logo to further clarify what your business is and this should be short and simple.

Once you have a name ask yourself a couple of very important questions:

- Does someone already use this name within my location or field?
- Is the domain name for this or its abbreviation available?

If someone within your field or within your local area (if operating locally) has the same business name you have chosen then you are very unwise to use it. At best this can cause confusion to your clients trying to locate your business and at worse you can get into trouble for copying an existing business name.

If you are investing in getting a logo created for your business then you want to make sure you can actually use the logo, so it is very important to get the name right before you start.

Once you have decided on your unique name and you have made sure that the domain name is available for a potential website (and secured it if possible) you now you need a logo.





WHAT IS IN A LOGO?

A logo is more than just a business name in a fancy font!

Your logo is your business brand- it should represent the image and convey the message and values you want your business to project ie:

- Is it formal or friendly
- Is it expensive or economical
- Is it design led or conservative
- Is it holistic or environmental
- Is it a hobby or a serious business

Your logo will answer all these questions for any potential customers just by its colours, shapes, style and fonts. When using the phrase “a picture tells a 1000 words” this is particularly true when it comes to a business logo.

Both the name and the design of your logo will tell your customers who you are but also dictate who your business is going to appeal to. Therefore before embarking on a logo design you should ask yourself the following questions:

- What does my business do?
- Who is my customer?
- What type of business is it (business to business or business to consumer)?
- What message do I want my business to give out?
- What are my brand values
- Who is my target audience?
- What will appeal to this audience?
- Are there certain colours, shapes, icons or fonts that are associated with my business or discipline?

A good designer should ask you all of these questions before embarking on a logo design, but it is really useful to do your own research and have this information prior to a design meeting.

Only when you have answered the above questions can you then ask yourself the final question:

- What do I like?

Your logo has to do the right job for your business, but you also have to like it. If you don't like it you won't be proud of it and you will shy away from promoting it. Equally, using colours and styles you really like should not dominate your logo if they are not the right look for your business.



Once you have all the information you need you are then ready to find a designer to help you create your brand.

IS IT WORTH INVESTING IN DESIGN WHEN STARTING OUT?

Yes, if you are taking your business seriously so will your clients.

There are a lot of cheap logo options out there these days, either stock images or printer firms who supply a design as part of the printing service. However, these designs will not belong to you and you cannot therefore use these designs on anything unless it is printed or produced by them. More importantly they are selling the same designs to everyone so you will often find your design appears on some else's business card.

You may be thinking you can design a logo yourself. If you are in a creative field then yes you possibly can. However, you need to think how professional will a design you create look and do you have the software to produce it. The investment in a professionally design logo will show your clients you are taking your business seriously. If you are taking your business seriously your clients will take you seriously. This also transcends into how a client will perceive the value of your product or service.

As soon as you start to promote your business you and your brand will start to be recognised. If you start out using a logo which will need to be replaced, it will mean that at some point you will need to start that brand recognition process again and replace all your printed material.

CHOOSING A DESIGNER

Get it right first time!

If you choose a good designer when you start your business you can rely on them to produce all your promotional material with the same brand consistency throughout the lifetime of your business.

Choosing a designer is a relatively simple process. Firstly, do they have the skill, the creativity and professionalism to do the job? Looking through their portfolio should answers this question for you. Do ask the designer questions, don't assume everything in a portfolio is that designers work. If a designer has put together a business card, flyer or a website design, they may be using a logo supplied by the client from another designer so always check. If the designs are under a heading "logo and branding" then you can be pretty certain they are the work of that designer.



Secondly, are they nice to deal with, are they reliable, do they work well to deadlines and are they good value for money. You can get a really good insight into all these answers by asking for recommendations. Often a designer will have testimonials on their website or sites like LinkedIn. Don't be afraid to check these references too if you are unsure.

DESIGNING THE LOGO

This is the fun bit

Once you have chosen a designer give them as much information as you can to help them get your logo right. Do some research into other logos and branding that you like and send them links to give them a better vision of what you might be after. They will only be able to create the right look and feel for your business if they have all the right information to make those key decisions. It's always exciting when you first see the designs and see your logo brought to life. However, don't be afraid to say if you don't like it or any element of it. Designers are used getting feedback and will be keen to get the design right for you which they can only do if you give them feedback.

I HAVE MY LOGO SO WHATS NEXT . . .

Get your logo out there and start promoting!

Your logo should now be used when creating business cards, flyers, price lists and adverts, as well as your website when you want to take that step.

If you have chosen your logo designer well then they will be able to help you with all your design and promotional requirements as your business develops. If you use the same creative each time you can be sure that you're your logo is being treated correctly and looks great each time its used, but it also ensures brand consistency throughout all that you do.

A good designer who has been working within their field for a number of years will also be able to provide you with great business links to get your promotional material printed. They can also offer independent advice on website builders and hosting when you take the step to market your business on line – but that's another topic!