

Your Company Logo[®]

by Kathy Ellis, The Business Lab Marketing Coach

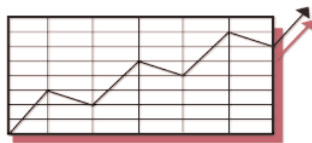
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What should every business communication begin and end with? Your company logo. It's your company's signature and seal. A great logo conveys the energy and purpose that sets your company apart. This means, your business identity starts with your logo. Plus, when a logo is designed correctly, it delivers both a sensory experience and aesthetic gratification to everyone involved with your company—your prospects, your clients, your employees, your investors, and the general public.

Your logo is the main part of your company identity. Identity is defined as the collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a thing is definitively recognizable or known. In design and marketing, these characteristics are items such as: your logo, your stationery systems (business cards, letterhead, envelopes, etc.), your brochures, any/all of your marketing collateral, your web site, the signage to your office, advertisements, invoices, promotional items, etc. Corporate identities are highly successful in improving business when they represent your company correctly and when they are used consistently. In this month's article we will take you through the development of a company logo and offer tools that you can use to create and/or enhance your corporate identity.

Start With The Basics: Your identity starts with your logo. Your logo should be recognizable (i.e., matches what your business does), give the viewer a "familiar" feeling and evoke a positive impact. Your company logo then becomes part of your identity. Your logo and your identity should reflect your values and corporate spirit. When developing your logo, ask key questions such as: What tone/attitude/feeling do we want to portray to our clients/prospects? What do our customers *really* buy from us? What is the one word or phrase that describes what we do?

Case Study: Interactive Network Connection: Interactive Network Connection (INC) is a Houston-based networking group. They wanted to re-evaluate their look and message. With regard to the questions above, the President answered: Tone/attitude/feeling — "We are about people. Our philosophy is to give them get business through referrals and relationships. We want a professional look but need to incorporate the 'people' factor." What are their customers are really buying from them— "Our customers are our members and they are *really* buying the training we provide and the commitment to and from their team." The one word or phrase that describes what they do— "Results."



Interactive Network Connection

Our starting point. INC's old logo portrayed growth, but didn't capture the relationship concept.

Involve Your Team: Let's face it, you will not get the thumbs-up from every person you show your logo to. However, by involving your team from the beginning and then sharing with them the process you are using to select the final look, most of those on your team will see the logic and support your decision.

Tip From The Business Lab: Create a Vision Statement (the statement that tells everyone what your company believes in). All graphics begin with words. Articulating in words what your company wants to achieve visually is an invaluable step towards creating an identity. With this in hand, ask yourself and your team what colors and words best describe this vision. Some words to select from might be: sophisticated, friendly, casual, wild.



These ideas were part of the original presentation to INC. The business card below contains the logo that was selected. In addition to the logo, we also developed a new tag line, "Results through relationships...expect it!"

Colors: in addition to actual color choices—lot of color, white space, complex design, simple design. Are we high tech or more mature?

Case Study: Interactive Network Connection: After we had a full understanding of who INC was, who their target audience was, and a general idea of the colors and words they used to describe the look/feel they wanted, we brought back the concepts shown. (NOTE: To see an expanded analysis in color, please go to www.thebusinesslab.com and click the "Logo Development Process" button.



Author's Note: Kathy Ellis is a Marketing Coach and the owner of The Business Lab, a full service marketing and graphic design company. We specialize in relationship marketing programs including database marketing, web sites, interactive CD brochures, company brochures, client newsletters and promotional marketing materials for our clients. We share with you our FREE newsletter to showcase powerful marketing tips, techniques and ideas to help you improve your business. The Business Lab is based in Houston, TX at 281-517-0998 or by E-mail at kathy@thebusinesslab.com