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How to achieve a right graphic representation for a logo

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Abstract

The graphic world of logos is interesting and creative. In this paper, we have pleaded about 'the graphic technique' to design good logos using a few essential principles to do it. To draw a graphic representation, as a logo, somebody has to know a peculiar language made of symbols, signs, colours, geometric shapes and words. Because the typology of logos is interesting and allows to create icons, logotype and complex graphic representations. Our study has analysed a lot of logos to identify the main principles 'to build' them. It was a hard work of observation and explanation about logos using many examples. We think we have shown the power of graphics in our study.

Keywords: Special graphic language, logo, principles, typology, creative work.

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1. Introduction

This is a study about logos. To understand, create, draw, to achieve them, and of course, to use them. Symbols and signs, colours and shapes, words and images work to do the best in a graphic representation called a logo. Also, logos make an identity. It is not an easy job to create logos. It is about the skills of creativity, imagination and drawing to achieve a harmonious composition and very well structured. We have managed this study using tools as observation, sketching and computer graphics to certify the principles about we have worked.

2. About the tasks of the study

In accordance with this research study, to achieve the main principles, we have to pay attention first to: the domain of activity; the representational or abstract symbols; the colours and shapes; the typology of logos.

2.1. The domain of activity

We think it is almost impossible to see any kind of domain of human activity without a graphic representation or without words to explain something about. Logo, as a piece of identity, is met in social, financial, economic, political activities, etc. In our research, we have created a database concerning the domain of activity.

A few of these are presented in this paper as follows (Houplain, 2013): legacy, law and justice (attorney at law, insurance, justice, association, foundation, political party etc.); education, culture (college, school, university, library, book shop, museum, theatre etc.); medical care (hospital, MD, medical clinics, dentistry, health and care medical equipment etc.); sport and sportswear (sportive club, sportive events, sportswear articles etc.); transportation (driving school, transport companies, automotive parts shop, airline companies etc.); beauty body/facelift (spa and beauty salon, barber shop, fitness club, health and skin care companies etc.); food activity (restaurant, cafeteria, coffee bar, tea shop, catering, supermarket etc.); media, advertising and entertainment (advertising company, TV company, radio company, newspapers, magazines etc.); finance and banking activities (financial consultancy, banking, exchange bureau etc.); travel and tourism (travel agencies); other activities (car service, car wash, car garage, pet shop, real estate, building companies etc.); IT activities (communication, mobile phone product companies, computers etc.).

2.2. Representational and abstract symbols

To design logos, it is necessary to use signs/symbols or other graphic representations to assure the special identity of the company. There are representational or abstract symbols in the graphic definition of a logo (Evamy, 2007).

It is known that it is not necessary to use a symbol which exactly represents what the company is doing. But in many cases, the designers involved in graphics create some representations which express the area of activity of the company. In our study, we have seen special symbols used in logos for legacy (e.g., the balance of justice, the book of constitution, the Goddess of Justice), transportation (cars, trucks, wheels, driving wheel, automotive parts and stylised birds for airline companies), pet shops (wild and domesticated animals, specially dog, cat, rabbit, parrot etc.). And we may continue to exemplify this. In other cases, there are created special graphic representations to express the identity. As abstract forms, there are circles, squares, rectangles, ovals, ovoids, triangles, polygons, rhombi, rings, dots, crosses, arrows, curves, loops, knots, radiating, concentric or rotary representation, ribbons etc. As representational symbols we have seen: water, waves, snowflakes, flames, flowers, plants, leaves, trees, vegetables, fruits, domesticated and wild animals, birds, fish,

insects, stars, Sun, planets, globes, Moon, landscapes, faces, eyes, hearts, tools, everyday objects, books, paper, crowns, heraldry etc.

2.3. Colours and shapes

In our study, we have understood the importance of the geometric shape and the colours to create a graphic representation of a logo. Because we have seen logos using geometric shapes to write the name of the company. At the same time, the colour was the balancing element into the composition to make an expressive and artistic representation. The designer has to think very well when he chooses colour/colours for a logo in accordance to the acceptance or resignation from the public. Also, the chosen colours have not disturbed the black and white variant for a logo. There are two essential aspects: the first is tied to emotional communication and the second, the colour if it is an owner colour for the company. It is impossible to give solutions to choose colours for all the logos. It is about the chromatic vision of the designer to create a coloured logo. In our study, we have seen a lot of logos in one or two colours. They are very used as is written in many logo design books. There are examples of five coloured logos which express very good something important (e.g., the XVI Women’s World Handball Championships in Croatia, 2003; Sydney 2000 Olympic Games) (Drew & Meyer, 2008). A good designer knows the semnification of shapes as follows: circle (perfection and balance), square (power and stability), rectangle (progress), ellipse (continuous searching), triangle (safety and harmony), spiral (promotion, progress and detaching), sphere (perfection and finality), pyramid (integration and convergence) and cube (stability and safety).

In Table 1, there are few examples of logos concerning the shape (representational or abstract) and colours.

Table 1. Examples of logos concerning the shape and colours

Shape	Company	Colours
Square	Orange	Orange
Rectangle	Makita	Red, white
Circle& oval	Esso	Red, white, blue
Swoosh	Nike	Black
Leaf	Air Canada	Red
Rays	BP	Green, yellow
Horizontal lines	IBM	Blue
Globe	Sony Ericsson	Green, silver
Arrow	Citroen	Silver
Insect	British Bee Society	Black, yellow
Bird	Lufthansa	Black, yellow
Wildlife	Qantas	Red, white
Flame	British Gas	Blue, green
Cross	Bayer	Black, white, blue, green
Mythology	Goodyear	Blue, yellow
Shield	BMW	Blue, white, black
Ribbon	British Airways	Red, blue
Crown	Husqvarna	Blue

2.4. Typology of logos

There is such a typology concerning the logo design. That means ‘a special way to achieve a logo’. There are three types of logos (Heiken, 2007): (a) using only symbols (called iconic logos); (b) words (called logotypes); (c) a combination of symbols and words to design a logo (called complex or mixed logos). We have told about representational or abstract symbols used only them in the logo design.

About using words, we have presented some representative examples of writing a logotype. In Figure 1, there are a few examples included in our work.



Figure 1. Examples of logos

3. The main principles to design logos

As a result of the hard work of analysing and interpretation of thousands of graphic representations, we have defined 15 principles to design logos. We think that more principles will be discovered in the next research studies because we think these are not all. We have tried to present new logos concerning the principles and to explain for each logos the way to design it (Adir, Pascu & Adir, 2017).

3.1. The substitution principle

To change a letter/letters with a symbol (Figure 2).

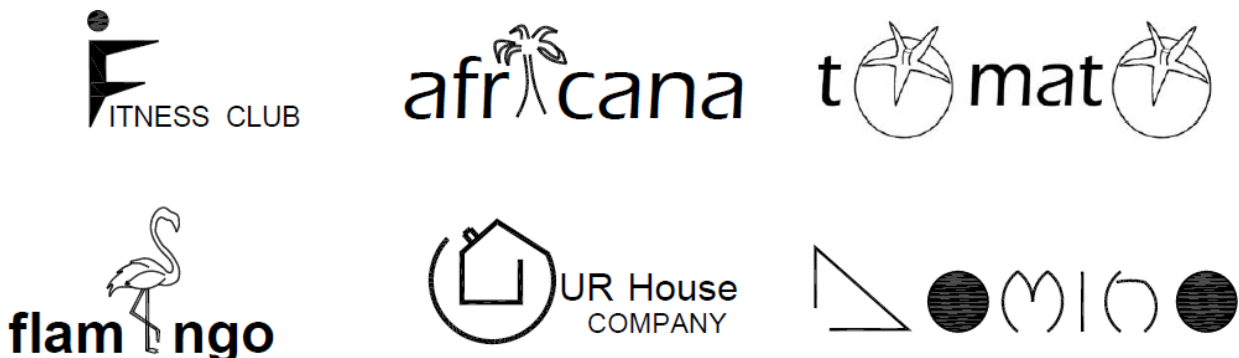


Figure 2. Examples concerning this principle

3.2. The graphic reproduction principle

To design different sizes for a logo, without losing the clarity of the representation (Figure 3).

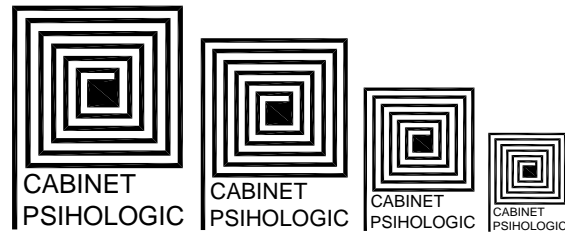


Figure 3. Explanation of the principle

3.3. The juxtaposition principle

To use two graphic elements: a static one and a dynamic one (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Examples for the principle

3.4. The repetition principle

To repeat a letter or a symbol in the graphic structure of a logo (Figure 5).

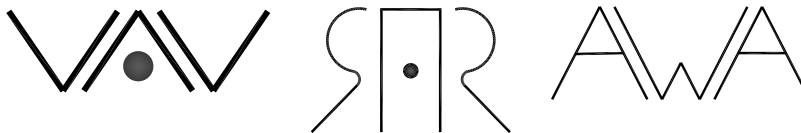


Figure 5. Examples for the principle

3.5. The stylisation principle

To make stylised graphic representation, without losing what is represented (Figure 6).

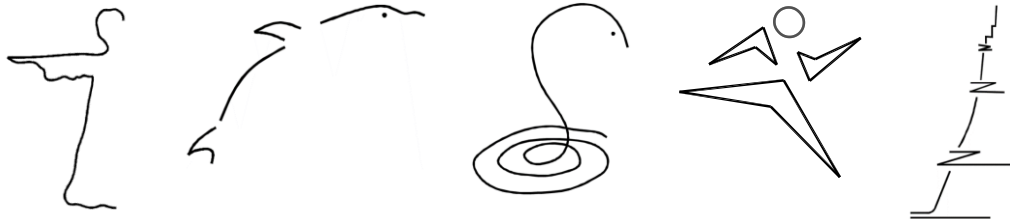


Figure 6. Examples for the principle

3.6. The graphic opening/closing principle

To involve a symbol or a logotype into a geometric shape (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Examples for the principle

3.7. The 3D optical illusion principle

To make a 3D graphic illusion (Figure 8).

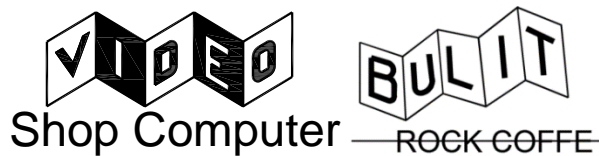


Figure 8. Examples for the principle

3.8. The 3D graphic representation principle

To create a 3D logo (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Examples for the principle

3.9. The association of different fonts principle

To combine fonts to an interesting visualisation (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Examples for the principle

3.10. The real graphic representation principle

To use a picture of the real object not stylised.

4. Conclusions

This research study was a challenge for us. Because we have analysed thousands of logos to realise only 15 principles to design them. Of course, we are sure there are more principles to use concerning logo design. We hope our paper is an interesting way to get into action for a designer. And these principles are like a guidebook in this field. In a future paper, we shall develop new directions to design logos because there are 'chapters' which are not studied.

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