

LOGO DESIGN

THE GOLDEN RULES OF LOGO DESIGN

Simplicity, relevance, versatility — plus the one-inch, black-and-white and favicon tests.



Simplicity, relevance, versatility

Almost every logo that fails in the wild fails one of these three. Work through them in order — a mark that passes all three will survive being shrunk, printed in one colour and stitched onto a cap.

01

Simplicity

Remove detail that doesn't aid recognition. Thin lines and fine gaps vanish at small sizes — strip back until removing anything more breaks the mark.

02

Relevance

Suit the market and category — distinctive, not trend-chasing. Relevance isn't literalness: a cog for an engineering firm is relevant and also lazy.

03

Versatility

A system, not a file. Plan the primary lockup, a horizontal and stacked version, and a monogram — and check each in light and dark, in motion, and for accessibility.



Three quick tests before sign-off

Run these on any candidate. Each one isolates a different way a mark breaks in the real world. The diagrams are placeholder marks — swap in the logo you're checking.

01

One-inch test

Print at about 25mm across. If detail mushes together, simplify until it holds at that size.



25mm



12mm

02

Black-and-white test

Strip to solid black. If it stops reading, colour was doing the work the shape should do.



colour

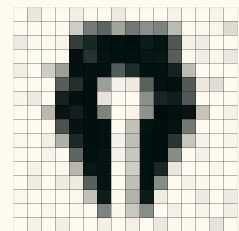


black

03

Favicon test

Render at 16×16px. If it blobs, build a simplified micro mark for tiny placements.



16 × 16

BONUS PASSES

Squint at it on a phone from arm's length — the shape should still hold. Invert it for dark mode. And if the logo sits on coloured type, check the contrast holds up.



The sign-off checklist

Print this page and tick each box before you approve. If any stays empty, the mark isn't ready.

THE TESTS

- ☐ Print at 25mm and 12mm to confirm legibility at true small sizes.
- ☐ Export a solid black variant and review it beside the full-colour mark.
- ☐ Drop the marque into 16×16 and 32×32 canvases to verify pixel clarity.
- ☐ Check contrast ratios for coloured wordmarks on light and dark backgrounds.

THE SYSTEM

- ☐ Clear logic for light, dark and motion contexts.
- ☐ Responsive lockups for narrow headers and square avatars.
- ☐ Distinct in your market.
- ☐ Files and guidance in place to keep it consistent.

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