Colours, Designs, Shapes

Uncover the secrets of how strategic design choices

can elevate your marketing, branding,

and stage presence, transforming your professional speaking career.

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DESIGN Mojo

Brand identity

Your brand is the driving force behind your business, the embodiment of everything you do and what you stand for.

Your brand is the sum-total of everything your business is, what it stands for, the value you bring and how it is perceived by the world.

The secret behind the most successful brands is authenticity – these brands truly embody everything that they claim to stand for.

Your brand is multifaceted, made up of your: vision, mission, values, beliefs, promise, ideal customer, visual identity.

When you embody your personal brand, you become the living, breathing representation of what your brand stands for, creating a deep and meaningful connection with your target audience. Your audience can see and feel the authenticity in your words and actions, which leads to trust and loyalty.

Using colour psychology in branding effectively requires understanding the emotional impact of different colours and how they align with the brand's personality.

Aligning colours with brand personality and values

Choosing the right colours for a logo requires a deep understanding of a brand's personality and values. A technology company might opt for blue to convey trust and dependability, while an organic food brand might choose green to emphasize its commitment to nature and health.

A logo is a trademark that you use to visually represent your brand. Without a brand, a logo is meaningless.

The basics of colour psychology:

Colour psychology is the study of how colours affect human emotions and behaviour. Different colours have distinct psychological associations.

Using the right colour in your branding in key. It's the first impression you make in your potential customers.

This silent yet powerful language of colour, shapes perceptions, influences decisions.

At its core, colour psychology is based on the idea that colours have specific qualities and meanings that impact our psyche and behaviour. These effects are both universal and culturally specific, making colour psychology an intriguing blend of innate responses and learned associations.

<u>Here's a quick guide:</u>

■ red: passion, energy, urgency

■ orange: creativity, enthusiasm, fun

■ yellow: optimism, clarity, warmth

■ green: growth, health, balance, tranquillity

■ blue: trust, professionalism, calm

■ purple: luxury, royalty, imagination, sophistication

■ black: elegance, sophistication, formality

□ white: purity, simplicity.

■ teal: calmness, clarity.

■ pink: nurturing, romance.

■ Grey: neutrality, sophistication

Colour shade psychology

The psychology of colour extends beyond just the basic hues to include the nuances of shade, tint, and saturation, each playing a pivotal role in the psychological impact of colour.

- Lighter shades, or tints, often feel softer and more approachable.
- Whereas darker shades convey a sense of gravitas and depth.
- Saturation also affects emotional response; highly saturated colours are vibrant and energizing,
- While desaturated hues are perceived as more subdued and sophisticated.

Colour associations and cultural interpretations

Colours are not just seen; they are experienced and interpreted. These interpretations can vary across cultures. For example, white symbolizes purity and peace in many western cultures, but it can represent grief and mourning in some eastern cultures. Such cultural nuances are vital in designing logos for a global audience, where a colour's impact can differ significantly based on regional interpretations.

Practical applications of colour psychology

Applying colour psychology in logo design is both an art and a science. The right choice of colours can profoundly influence how a brand is perceived and remembered.

<u>Identify brand personality:</u> determine the core traits of the brand. Is it professional or playful? Innovative or traditional? Select colours that align with these characteristics.

<u>Understand emotional impact</u>: each colour triggers specific emotions. For instance, gold evokes elegance and luxury, while silver is seen as futuristic and calm. Choose colours that elicit the emotions you want associated with your brand.

Consider target demographics: reflect on the preferences of the target audience. What age group, gender, or cultural background are you designing for? These factors can influence colour perception.

Stay consistent with industry standards: certain colours are dominant in specific industries. For example, blue is common in the tech and finance sectors. However, using a distinct colour can help a brand stand out.

Consistency across branding: use your chosen colours consistently across all branding materials – from your logo and website to your packaging and marketing materials. This consistency helps build brand recognition and a stronger emotional connection.

Balance with design elements: combine colours with other design elements like typography and imagery to create a cohesive brand identity. The right combination can enhance the emotional impact of your branding.

Leverage colour trends: stay aware of current colour trends but use them judiciously. While being trendy can appeal to certain audiences, it's important that the colours still align with your brand identity.

Test and get feedback: before finalising your colour choices, test them with focus groups or surveys to see how they resonate with your audience. Feedback can provide invaluable insights into the emotional impact of your colours.

Common mistakes in colour choice:

Overcomplicating with too many colours: using too many colours can create a chaotic and confusing logo. It's often best to stick to a maximum of two or three colours to maintain clarity and impact.

Ignoring cultural sensitivities: colours have different meanings in different cultures. For instance, red symbolizes bad luck in west Africa, and good luck in China. While in western culture white is a colour of purity and weddings in China the traditional bridal colour is red.

Inconsistency with brand message: colours that don't align with the brand's values and message can create a disconnect. A technology company using pastel colours might not convey the sense of innovation and professionalism typically associated with the tech industry.

Neglecting contrast and visibility: poor contrast between colours can lead to legibility issues, especially in smaller formats or digital applications.

Negative connotations:

- Red: while it can denote energy and passion, red can also signal danger or aggression. It's essential to balance it with other colours or design elements to soften its impact.
- Yellow: although associated with happiness and creativity, yellow can be overwhelming if overused and may signify caution or cowardice.
- Black: known for sophistication, black can also come across as heavy or morose. Pairing black with brighter colours can mitigate this.

How to make practical decisions about colour in your marketing and branding

The bottom line is that there are no clear-cut guidelines for choosing colours for your brand. While it would be nice to be able to simply look at an infographic and make the right decision, the reality is that the answer to "what colours are right for my brand?" Is always "it depends."
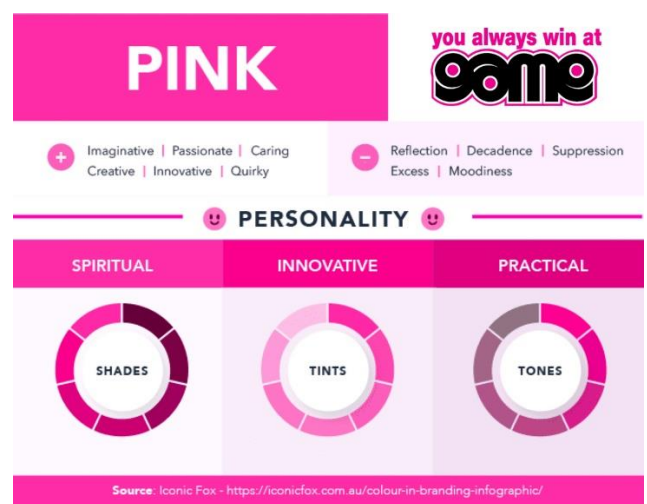
PURPLE — Cadbury, Hollard insurance | life

+ Wisdom | Wealth | Spirituality | Imagination | Sophistication
− Reflection | Decadence | Suppression | Excess | Moodiness

😊 PERSONALITY 😊

SENSITIVE	DIGNIFIED	UNDERSTANDING
SHADES	TINTS	TONES

Source: Iconic Fox - https://iconicfox.com.au/colour-in-branding-infographic/
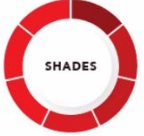
RED — vodacom, WIMPY

+ Power | Passion | Energy | Fearlessness | Excitement
− Anger | Danger | Warning | Defiance | Aggression | Pain

😊 PERSONALITY 😊

BOLD	ADVENTUROUS	ENERGETIC
SHADES	TINTS	TONES

Source: Iconic Fox - https://iconicfox.com.au/colour-in-branding-infographic/

YELLOW — AA, MTN

+ Optimism | Warmth | Happiness | Innovation | Intellect | Extroversion
− Irrationality | Fear | Caution | Anxiety | Frustration | Cowardice

😊 PERSONALITY 😊

INDEPENDENT	STRATEGIC	IMPULSIVE
SHADES	TINTS	TONES

Source: Iconic Fox - https://iconicfox.com.au/colour-in-branding-infographic/

BLACK — WOOLWORTHS

+ Sophistication | Security | Power | Elegance | Authority | Substance
− Oppression | Coldness | Menace | Heaviness | Evil | Mourning

😊 PERSONALITY 😊

DECISIVE	CONFIDENT	SERIOUS
SHADES	TINTS	GRADIENT

Source: Iconic Fox - https://iconicfox.com.au/colour-in-branding-infographic/

WHITE — MUGG & BEAN

+ Innocence | Purity | Cleanliness | Simplistic | Pristineness
− Sterile | Empty | Plain | Cautious | Distant

😊 PERSONALITY 😊

DECISIVE	CONFIDENT	SERIOUS
SHADES	TINTS	GRADIENT

Source: Iconic Fox - https://iconicfox.com.au/colour-in-branding-infographic/

These are the colour basics:

- <u>Primary colours</u>
  Red, blue, and yellow are the basis of everything. These colours can't be created by mixing other colours.
- <u>Secondary colours</u>
  By mixing the primary colours, we obtain the secondary colours: orange (red + yellow), green (blue + yellow), and violet (red + blue).
- <u>Tertiary colours</u>
  These colour combinations exist because the primary colours are mixed with the secondary colours adjacent. That is, green with blue gives a green–blue tone.

<u>Colour combinations and their impact:</u> the interaction of colours in a logo can create varied psychological impacts.

These are the colour variations you can choose for your brand:
- **Monochromatic**: various shades of the same colour. This is a very conservative choice.
- **Analogous**: these are different hues that are just sided by side on the colour wheel.
- **Complementary:** opposites on the colour wheel that are high contrast.
- **Split complementary**: are two analogous colours plus one complimentary.
- **Triadic:** three complementary colours.
- **Tetradic:** two pairs of complementary colours.

Complementary, analogous, or triadic colour schemes each tell a different story and set a different tone for the brand.
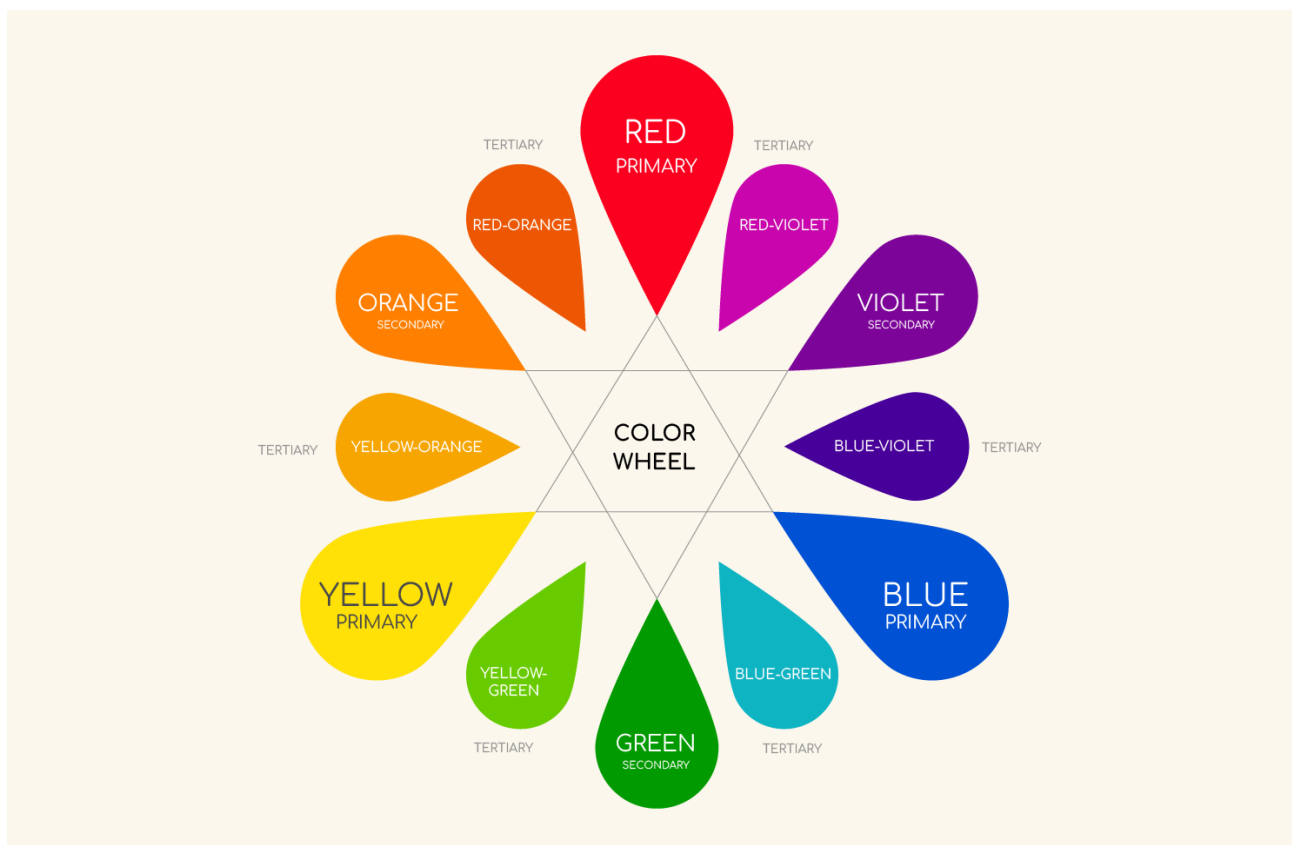
COLOR THEORY

COLOR MIXING

CMYK
Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black
Print Process Model

RGB
Red, Green, Blue
Light Generated Model

GREY SCALE
Black and white only

HSB
Hue (color), Saturation (how much
color), Black (tint and shade)

MEANINGS

LOVE, BLOOD, FIRE, ENERGY, STRONG, INTENSE.

POWER, WEALTH, AMBITION, NOBLE, ROYALITY.

SEA, TRUST, SKY, STABILITY, TRANQUIL, DEPTH.

FRESHNESS, NATURE, MONEY, GROWTH, SAFETY.

ENERGY, SUNSHINE, BRIGHT, CHEERFUL, JOY.

WARM, HAPPINESS, SUCCESS, AUTUMN, CREATIVE.

COLOR PROPERTIES

COOL   WARM   BRIGHT   DARK   SATURATED   DESATURATED

COLOR RELATIONSHIPS

PRIMARY   SQUARE   COMPLEMENTARY   TRIAD   ANALOGOUS   TETRADIC

Colour print and onscreen

PMS, CMYK, RGB and HEX

There are two basic categories of colour types: print and onscreen. Colour on the printed page is subtractive, while colour onscreen is additive.

The RGB colour model

A light source within a device, like your computer screen, smartphone, and digital camera, creates any colour you need by mixing red, green, and blue and varying their intensity. This is known as additive mixing. All colours begin as black darkness and then red, green, and blue light is added on top of each other to brighten it and create the perfect colour. When red, green, and blue light is mixed at equal intensity, they create pure white.

The RGB colour mode is best for digital work. With RGB, how specific colours are displayed, and the number of colours displayed in a picture depends on the quality of your monitor and the resolution the file was saved in.

RGB model allows for 16.7 million colour possibilities.

CMYK / full-colour print / 4-colour process

CMYK: cyan, magenta, yellow, and key (better known as black). Stands for the four ink colours that are used during the printing process.

CMYK colour model uses pigment to define colour and uses layering to create new colours.

A printing machine creates images by combining CMYK colours to varying degrees with physical ink. This is known as subtractive mixing. All colours start as white, and each layer of ink reduces the initial brightness to create the preferred colour. When all colours are mixed, they create pure black.

CMYK-colours are the most used printing method for flyers, business cards and magazines. All commercial printers and printers you have at home use the 4-colour printing process.

CMYK model allows for 16,000 colour possibilities.

PMS (pantone® matching system)

Pantone colour is a standardized system that revolutionized print marketing colours. The pantone colour matching system ensures that manufacturers all around the world can refer to the exact same colour and feel confident in their matching ability, despite never coming into direct contact with one another.

Each pantone colour is labelled via a unique number. For example, coke red is PMS 484. Pantone numbers may be followed by letters such as M, C or U. These stand for matte, coated, or uncoated.

HEX (hexadecimal colour)

Designers and developers use HEX colours in web design. A HEX colour is expressed as a six-digit combination of numbers and letters defined by its mix of red, green, and blue (RGB). Basically, a HEX colour code is shorthand for its RGB values.

Graphic design principles

Graphic design principles are fundamental guidelines that serve as the foundation for creating visually appealing and effective designs. These principles help designers make intentional decisions about layout, composition, colour, typography, and other elements to communicate a clear and impactful message to the audience. Here are some of the critical graphic design principles:

1. Balance
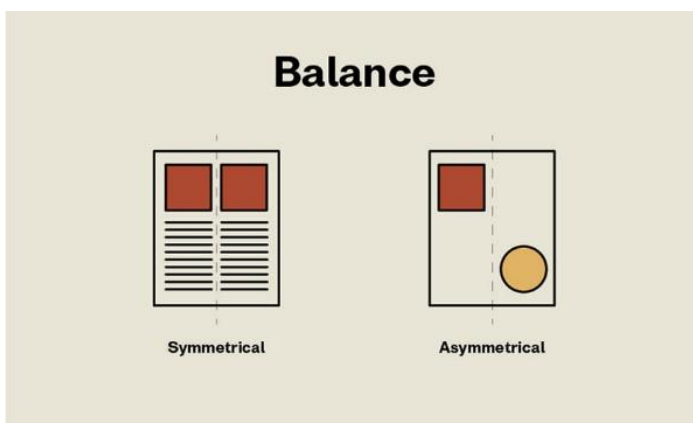
Balance refers to the distribution of visual weight in a design. A well-balanced design creates a sense of stability and harmony. There are two types of balance: symmetrical (formal) and asymmetrical (informal).
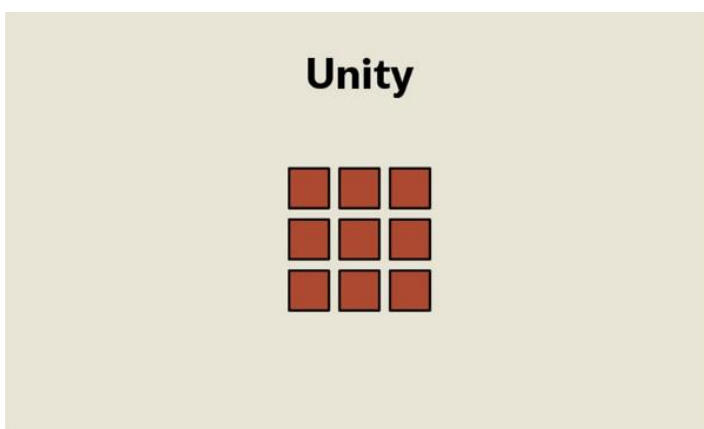
2. Unity/harmony

Unity is the feeling that all the elements in a design belong together. Unity ensures that all elements in the design work together cohesively to create a unified and harmonious composition. Consistency in colours, fonts, and styles helps achieve this, allowing the design to convey a clear message and evoke a specific emotional response.

3. Contrast
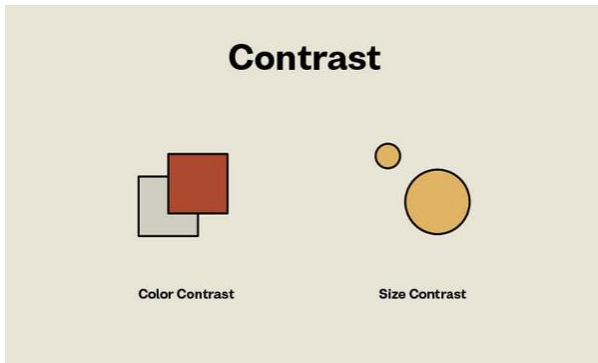
Contrast uses opposite elements, such as light and dark, big, and small, or warm and cool colours, to create visual interest.

4. Hierarchy

Hierarchy organizes the elements in a design to guide the viewer's eye through the content logically and meaningfully. By establishing a clear visual hierarchy, designers can prioritize information and ensure that the most essential elements stand out.

5. Emphasis
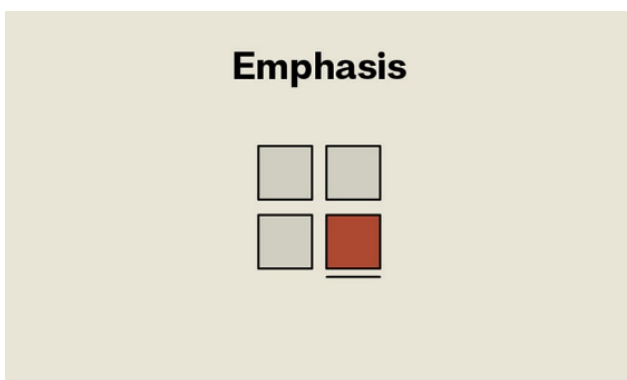
Emphasis highlights the most important part of the design, drawing the viewer's attention to a specific element or message. This can be achieved through contrasting colours, sizes, placement, or typography.

6. Repetition
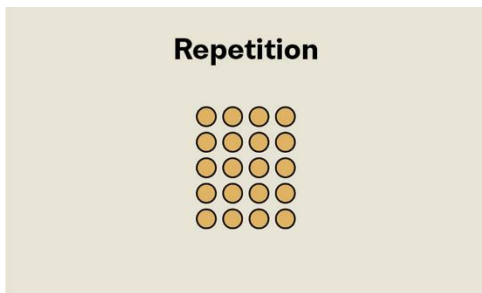
Repetition is the use of the same element multiple times in a design. Repetition can be used to create a sense of unity or to emphasize a crucial element.

7. Proximity

Proximity refers to the arrangement of elements in a design to show their relationship to one another. Grouping related elements together create a clear visual organization and improve the overall readability of the design.

8. White/negative space

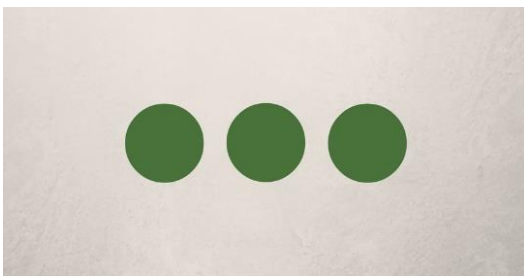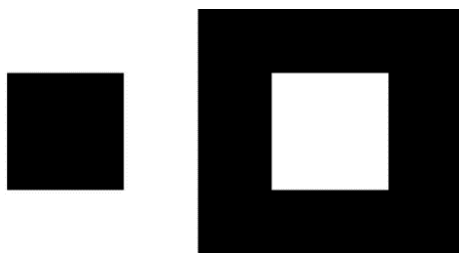White or negative space is the area between and around elements in a design. It provides breathing room, enhances legibility, and makes essential elements stand out.

9. Movement
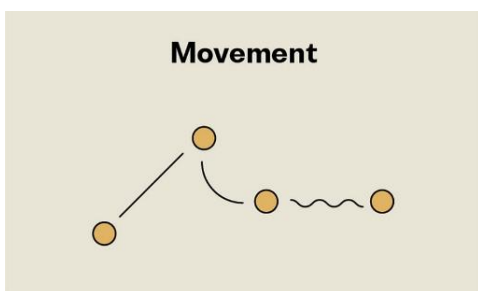
Movement in design refers to creating a sense of motion or flow through the strategic placement of elements. It guides viewers' eyes from one focal point to another, enhancing engagement and communication. Movement can be created using repeated shapes, lines, or colours.

10. Proportion
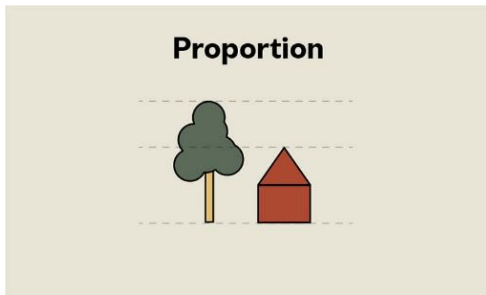
Proportion is the relationship between the size of different elements in a design. Proportion can be used to create a sense of harmony or rhythm.

By understanding and applying these graphic design principles, designers can create visually compelling, engaging, and impactful designs that effectively communicate with the audience and achieve the desired objectives. These principles, irrespective of your skillset – professional designer, amateur, or enthusiast – provide a framework for creating designs that resonate with viewers and leave a lasting impression.

What is typography?

Typography, the art of creating and arranging text to ensure content is readable and appealing. Typography represents the tone and values of your brand just like colour represents a feeling or visually represents a message for your customers.

Shows personality.

Personality is a big part of the design elements representing a brand's identity.

Choosing your brand fonts

Font psychology is not as widely popularised as colour psychology, but fonts can have an even greater impact on your brand than the colours you choose.

Fonts have their own powerful personalities that affect how your brand is perceived. They can be seen as happy, aggressive, strong, romantic, authoritative, or cheap.

Font choice, typography, is about reading between the lines. It's the difference between what the words are, what the words need to say and what story they need to communicate to the audience.

How to choose the correct font

Font categories: Serif, sans-serif, slab serif, decorative and handwritten fonts.

1. Serif fonts
   These are basic typefaces with serifs i.e. Extra detailing sometimes called tags or flags. They are the oldest known typeface and therefore more traditional, portraying characteristics such as reliability, being dependable and respectable.
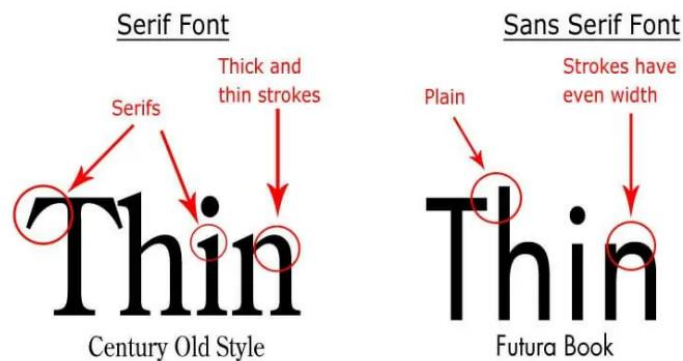
2. San serif fonts
   Sans literally means without, so the characters are without the tags. They are neutral and contemporary used to depict simplicity.
3. Script
   Script fonts often look handwritten used to express feeling and creativity. The curvier and more delicate the script font, the more it portrays femininity.

When choosing a font, it's easy to get caught up in how it looks, but readability and accessibility are equally important. Fonts like Arial and Helvetica are often praised for their readability, especially in long-form content. Generous letter spacing and distinct characters can improve the reading experience, making it easier for the audience to absorb the information.

The 2 font rule

Never use more than two fonts in a single graphic. Including three or more fonts in a single logo, poster, billboard, or social media post will make your work look too busy and often lose the reader's attention, not to mention that it simply looks unpleasant. Sticking to one or two fonts keeps your graphics looking clean and doesn't detract from the overall goal of the graphic, which is to represent your brand and attract more potential clients.

Shapes and symbols: uncover the significance of shapes and symbols in design and understand how they contribute to conveying messages subtly yet powerfully. Learn to incorporate meaningful elements that resonate with your audience and reinforce your brand image.

Shapes in graphic design: what they mean and how to use them:

Like individual words, shapes also represent distinct ideas, and people interpret them without even knowing it. When we see circles, squares, triangles, etc., they elicit predictable reactions in our subconscious. While most people aren't consciously aware of what these images mean, they feel it all the same.

Circles, ovals, and ellipses

With no sharp edges or corners, circles convey unity, harmony, softness, flexibility, motion, and fluidity. They can evoke feelings of inclusivity, community, and even perfection. Brands often use circles to represent continuity and connection.

Spirals

A spiral logo is a design that uses the shape of a spiral to create an interesting and eye-catching visual effect. Spirals are often used in logos to represent growth, progress, and movement.

Squares and rectangles

Squares and rectangles are among the most common geometric shapes with which we are familiar.

Rectangles and squares indicate familiarity, comfort, security, and a sense of peace.

They are the go-to shape for order and organization, and are associated with logic, analysis, and efficiency.
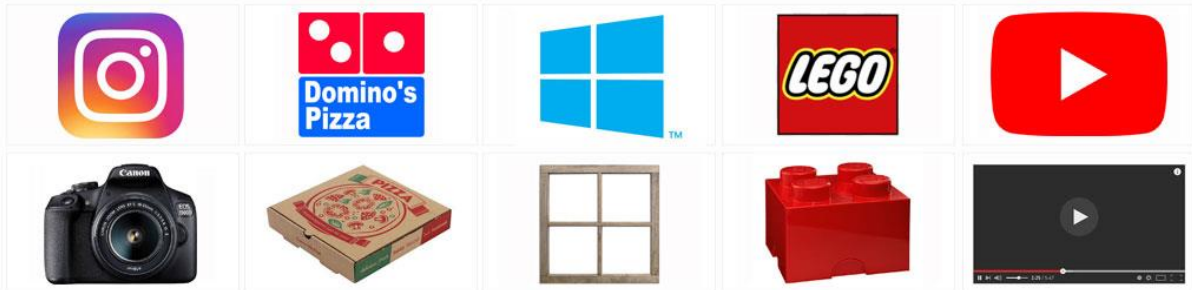
Triangles and arrows

Triangle shapes are dynamic in nature. In shape psychology, they are used to indicate adventure, intensity, or represent motion and direction. Depending on the position of the triangle it can have different meanings if the triangle is upright and pointing up it represents stability and balance, but if the position of the triangle is reversed it transmits risky feelings and instability.

Natural shapes meaning

Natural shapes or organic shapes represent elements from nature, and we can see them in the real-world as animals, flowers, trees, or leaves. Natural shapes have a clear meaning from the natural elements they represent, for example, a rose flower represents love or passion.

Symbols and icons

Symbols and icons are abstract shapes that represent real-life things and can have higher symbolism. In graphic design icons and symbols are used in an infographic to reduce the amount of text, to convey messages quickly in a visually interesting way.
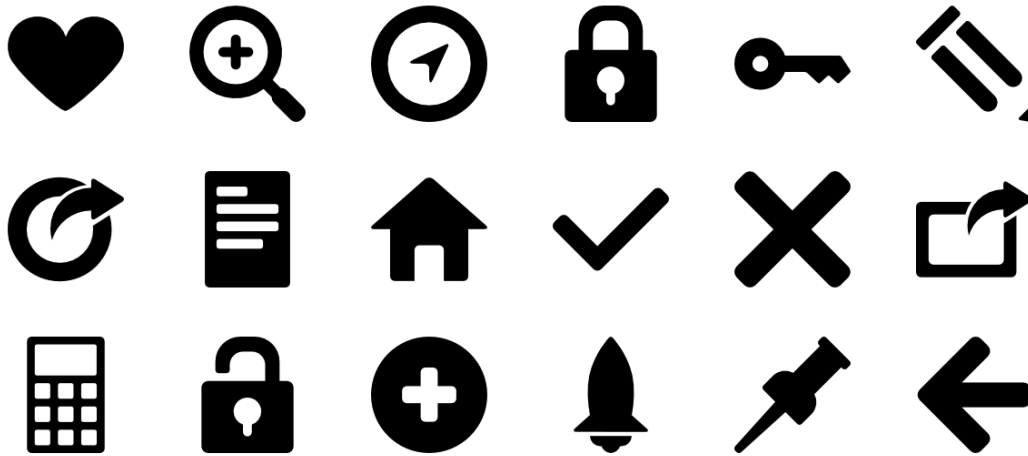
Basic UI | 50 icons — FLATICON

Some of the most popular symbols are:

Heart symbol: this represents love, compassion, and health.

Dove symbol: this represents peace, love, and calm.

Raven symbol: this represents death and doom.

Tree symbol: this represents growth, nature, stability, and eternal life.

Owl symbol: this represents wisdom and intelligence.

Dragon symbol: this represents power, wisdom, strength, and mysticism.

Butterfly symbol: this represents rebirth, beauty, and transformation.

Dog symbol: this represents loyalty, protection, and companionship.

Lion symbol: this represents courage, leadership, and royalty.

Fox symbol: this represents slyness and cleverness.

Branding for impact: gain insights into crafting a compelling personal brand that aligns with your speaking style and resonates with your audience. Understand how cohesive branding across various platforms enhances your professional image and fosters audience connection.

Establish brand identity: by creating an attractive logo, content, and visual identity on all your platforms and social media, you can drastically increase the possibilities of creating a strong customer loyalty bond and improve your brand awareness. Make sure that all the content you upload is related to your brand's personality. By incorporating specific colours, shapes, or textures that align with the brand's values, you can create a recognizable and memorable visual presence.

Tone of voice and messaging

Maintaining a consistent and clear tone of voice across all the communication channels you oversee is another crucial aspect that demands attention. The tone of voice employed by a brand or business embodies how a company engages with its audience. Key components of a company's tone of voice include its writing style, emotional resonance, and word selection.

Choose your platforms wisely!

Not every platform is suitable for every type of content or audience. You need to research and select the platforms that align with your goals, your audience's preferences, and your content format. For example, if you want to showcase your product features, you might use a platform like youtube or instagram that supports video and images. If you want to share your expertise and insights, you might use a platform like medium or linkedin that supports long-form articles and thought leadership. You also need to consider the frequency, timing, and length of your content for each platform.

You can use tools like canva, adobe express, or unsplash to help you create and edit your content for different platforms.

Know your platforms

Before one can rule the digital realm, one must first understand it.

Each platform has its unique strengths, audience, and style.

- **Twitter:** the realm of the concise. Great for updates, news, and real-time engagement.
- **Instagram:** a visual paradise. Ideal for brands with strong visual content.
- **Facebook:** the jack-of-all-trades. Engage, inform, entertain.
- **Linkedin:** the boardroom of social media. Professional, polished, and informative.

By understanding each platform's essence, you can tailor your content to resonate best with its audience.

Developing brand guidelines

Create brand guidelines: develop comprehensive brand guidelines that outline your visual standards, messaging style, and overall brand personality. This document serves as a reference for anyone involved in creating content for your brand.

A brand style guide is a document that outlines your brand's colours, fonts, and visual elements, as well as guidelines for tone and messaging. This way, anyone working on behalf of your brand, from employees to freelance designers, knows exactly how to represent your brand consistently.

Audit your current platforms

Now that you have your brand elements and style guide, you need to evaluate how well your current platforms match them. You should conduct a brand audit that assesses the quality, consistency, and relevance of your website, social media, blog, email, presentations, proposals, and any other materials that you use to communicate with your clients and prospects. You should identify the gaps, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement in each platform and prioritize the actions that you need to take to align them with your brand vision and elements.

Conduct regular audits of your channels to ensure consistency. Are all your social media profiles using the same profile picture and bio? Are your email campaigns using the same header and footer? These are all things to look out for when conducting an audit.

Why brand consistency is crucial:

Recognition and recall**:** a consistent brand image aids in instant recognition, making it easier for your audience to recall and associate your brand with specific values, products, or services.

Trust building: a cohesive brand image across platforms signal's reliability and competence, instilling confidence in your audience.

Professionalism and credibility: it's a visual representation of your commitment to quality, attention to detail, and the overall credibility of your brand.

Clarity of message: in a cluttered marketplace, a consistent brand voice and visual identity cut through the noise, ensuring that your core message is clear and resonates with your target audience.

To build a strong and recognizable brand, it's important to aim for brand consistency across different platforms. By maintaining it in visual branding and messaging, you can establish trust, differentiate yourself from competitors, and enhance the perception of your brand. With the right strategy and approach, you can easily ensure a cohesive brand identity that will forge a lasting connection with your audience.