

## There are 5 Rs in Logo. Part 1

The most basic and valuable tool in a marketing toolkit is a company's logo. But sometimes the most basic tool can also be the most complex. The checklist of things it has to accomplish seems endless and the process intimidating, and is it possible to tell if the logo is even working? This two-part article will systematically demystify what makes good logos good and what makes great logos gold.

Part I covers the "must haves." Just like an employee, there are things a logo must do or it should be fired. Part II will cover the "nice to have" list. If your logo has these traits, it becomes more than just a signature or a symbol. It's a business commodity that will bring long-term value to you and your company (Read: make you more money without you having to do anything extra!). But let's start with the basics.

### The Logo Musts

#### Reduce.

How small can you make your logo? 1" wide? 1/2" wide? 2" wide? If you printed it on a pen, would you be able to recognize it or read it? Or maybe the smallest application you will ever use it for will be a business card. That's ok. Just remember that a logo can go small, can also be easily read from far, far away. So, even if you want to see your company's logo in lights one day, start by visualizing it on a flash drive.

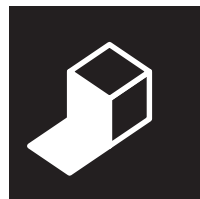
#### Reverse.

What if you have to put your logo on a black background or on top of a photograph? How does it look if it's reversed? In some instances, it works to just make the logo white instead of black. But if your logo has a face in it, the eyes will go white, and that's weird—it will disturb people and they won't know why.

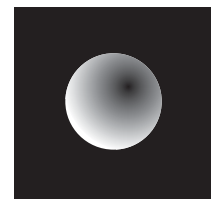


*When this vintage logo for Mercury is reversed out of black the eyes seem to disappear and much of the dimension brought out by the shadows is lost.*

Also, 3-dimensional objects with shadows will invert causing the shadows to be highlights. This is especially a problem with 3-d spheres. When reversed, they become craters. Not good.



*A shadow, turned white becomes a shape.*



*A sphere, turned white, becomes a hole.*

**Reproduce.**

How many times have you run an ad, or sponsored an event, or tried to take advantage of some free publicity and someone asks you for an electronic file of your logo? It's always good to have a vector-based .EPS version of the logo that can be scaled or reduced without distorting or pixelating. I've seen many a great logo turned to garbage because of bad reproduction.

**Read.**

I shouldn't have to explain this one. Yet the world is full of logos that are hard to read.



*Script on a curve, very hard to read.*



*Type obscured by 3D effects and shadows*



*Letterforms hard to recognize*



*???*

**Repeat.**

If you have a great logo but nobody sees it, is it really a great logo?! Get it out there. Put it on everything you have. Make sure people connect it with the positive experiences they have with your company. It doesn't need to be huge. It doesn't need to be front and center. It needs to be connected to your company and ingrained on their brains.

If your logo meets these minimum requirements, you should feel good. It will work as a signature on anything over which you want to claim ownership (e.g. This product or message brought to you by...). Your potential customers will be able to easily recognize the name of your company. Don't worry if your logo doesn't tell the whole story of your company. That's not its job. It's the experiences you give your customers that tell the story of your company. The logo is the flag that reminds them of how good they already feel about you.

Now that you know what a good logo must have, stay tuned for Part II: What makes great logos gold.