

# The **ENTREPRENEUR'S** Guidebook Series™

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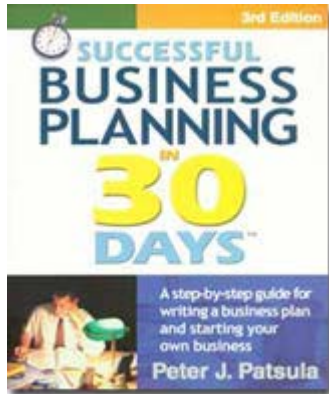
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# PERSONAL PLANNING

## Guidebook #20:

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*"It's very unique darling, but perhaps  
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## ***DESIGNING LOGOS, BUSINESS CARDS & BUSINESS STATIONARY***

**DESIGNING & PRINTING** business cards and business stationary can be the one of the most rewarding initial steps in setting up a business. It doesn't cost much, gives you a great sense of accomplishment, consolidates your company image, and in some cases is all you need to get started.

**It all starts with a company logo.**

**However, remember that although most people like to think they're experts at sizing up strangers, unfortunately their impressions can often be wrong, and once made, nearly impossible to change. Therefore, always strive to put your best foot forward when dealing with new contacts, potential customers and even regular customers. Your image on paper is the most inexpensive yet most important investment you can make.**

## DESIGNING A LOGO

HOW IMPORTANT is a logo? Imagine MGM without its lion, KFC without Colonel Sanders, or MacDonaldis without its golden arches. A **LOGO** is an identifying symbol used by companies to build customer recognition. It can be of a person, place or thing associated with the company but most often is a graphical representation of the companies name – its full name or initials.

*A company without a logo is like a country without a flag.*  
**FUNQUOTE**

### Why Every Company Needs a Logo?

A LOGO is more than just a decorative graphic design. There are at least five important reasons every company needs one:

**1. A logo helps give all your promo-**

**tions continuity.** Using a logo, exclusive to your firm, on all printed material including company stationery, Yellow Page ads, brochures and product packaging, as well as on the side of your company truck or car, bags or boxes and anything else your customers or prospects may see, helps unify your marketing efforts. It also gives the impression that not only do you know who you are, but that perhaps you are bigger than you really are.

**2. A logo helps give your company an identity.** Developing an easily recognized logo, gives you an identification advantage over your competition. Just think of how easy it is to visualize the corporate logos for such firms as Mercedes, Playboy and

Nutrisweet.

3. **A logo is a tangible asset with a cash value.** Consumer trust is a hard thing to come by and thus when gained is of extreme value to a company. This trust is often attached to a company's logo (or trademark) because people like symbols: they wear rings on their fingers; they drive cars more expensive than they can afford.

In fact, if ever your company earns the reputation of selling high quality value-packed products and services, people will more likely buy new products and services from you, just because they bear your signature. They will seek you out amongst all the muck and mire of competition, because

PRO  
Page

your logo has become a symbol of excellence to them.

And remember, long after you're dead and buried, and you're company has folded or been merged with some monolithic corporation, some impressionable young lad will be hanging on to a T-shirt bearing your logo because it makes him feel good, because someone once told him it was the best there ever was, because emanating from its very fibers is a profound sense of contribution and identity that makes him feel as invincible as the Lone Ranger.

4. **A logo is visible evidence that you have made an investment in your organization.** A well-designed



logo shows that management has a strong self-image, a definite direction for the future, and a commitment to the highest standards of quality and professionalism. A carelessly designed logo or no logo at all, is often associated with organizations that are undercapitalized, poorly organized, and of uncertain longevity.

5. **A logo makes your ads, letterheads, and envelopes stand out from the crowd.** Peo-

ple do judge books by their covers, and billions of dollars are spent every year to prove this. Your logo must provide a good first impression because almost invariably, your first contact with your customer will be through some kind of

**JOHNSON  
DESIGNS.**

visual representation. A well-conceived logo means your company name won't easily be forgotten, and in the long run will generate better returns for your advertising dollars.

### Eight Steps to Designing a Logo

USE THE following eight steps as guidelines to help you design your own company logo:

**STEP 1 – Gather all kinds of information and materials that will help inspire your design.** This includes:

- a directory of trademarks and logos
- a list of your company goals and philosophies
- as many competitive company logos as

you can get your hands on (these can be found in the yellow pages or magazine related to your specialty)

- graphics, photos, and physical objects that you feel help symbolize your name
- your company's mission statement, action plan, marketing plan and expansion plan

### STEP 2 – Determine how your logo

**will be used.** Logos are meant to be versatile and therefore their design should lend themselves to any use imaginable. However, any specific understanding of how your logo will be used as a final product, will help you zero-in on a design focus. Imagine your logo being used in each of the following mediums and select those that seem appropriate:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> actual products themselves                | <input type="checkbox"/> discount coupons                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> badges or buttons                         | <input type="checkbox"/> giant 3-D sculptures outside your building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ball-point pens or pencils                | <input type="checkbox"/> greeting cards, postcards                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> billboards                                | <input type="checkbox"/> letterhead                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> brochures                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> magazine and newspaper advertising         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> calendars or date books                   | <input type="checkbox"/> patches or decals                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> contests and other specialized promotions | <input type="checkbox"/> TV spots                                   |

*“My logo will be used for . . .”*

**STEP 3 – Decide what purpose or function your logo will have.** Ask yourself: What kind of image do you want to create? Do you want your logo to be, formal or informal? Will it be targeted towards consumers or business people? Do you want it to symbolize a company that stands for one thing or many things? Do you want it to jump out at people, or slowly slip into their subconscious?

**STEP 4 – Write the name of your company in the center of a blank sheet of paper.** Keep in mind that logo design is an attempt to complement your company name not overpower it. Words and meaning always come first, graphics second.

*“The purpose of my logo will be to . . .”*

*If you find yourself having difficulty coming up with unique designs, then copy competitors and other company logo designs with your company name substituted for theirs.*

**SUPERTIP**

**STEP 5 – Sketch about ten unique logo designs.** Experiment with: length of company name, abbreviations, initials, size of letters, lettering style, intertwined images and figures, circular shapes, square shapes, triangular shapes, irregular shapes, shaded areas, different colored areas, upside down views, sideways views, 3d-effects, heavy borders, light borders, and good old fashioned doodles.

**WARNING** Make your copied design distinct enough from the originals.

**STEP 6 – Scrap or modify your sketched designs based on the following logo design strategies:**

**gies:**

*Scrap or modify all logo designs that don't*

*have presence.* Logos that have presence hold their own no matter what context you place them in. You can place a well-designed logo anywhere on a letterhead and it will look good regardless.

*Scrap or modify all logo designs that are cluttered with detail.* Not only will detail get lost in reproduction, (it is essential that your logo be easy to reproduce), but it detracts from your logo's message.

*Scrap or modify all logo designs that do not seem versatile.* A well-designed logo will easily adapt itself to different situations, with the addition or subtraction of a few lines, shapes and even letters, without destroying its basic appeal. Imagine for example, how each of your logo designs would look if you removed all

**B, d, f, h, k, l, t,**  
*have ascenders  
that look good  
on paper.*

lettering, or removed all detail, or removed all fill and shaded areas and left only lines? Also make sure that selected designs can be easily coordinated with different advertising mediums ranging from letterheads to space advertising to billboards.

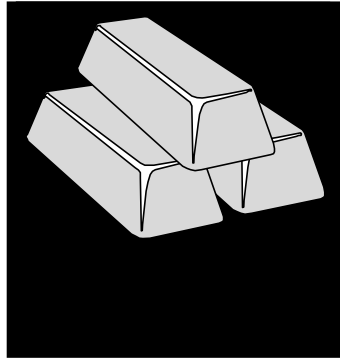
**NOTE** Keep in mind that a logo on a letterhead and a logo on a can be slightly different. A logo on a letterhead may have extra lines added to it to make it fit better on an 8.5 by 11-inch page.

*Scrap or modify all logo designs that use letters that are difficult to work with.* *B, d, f, h, k, l, t,* have ascenders that look good on paper. Words that have descenders like *g, j, p, q* and *y* take up more space and can cause problems graphically. They should be avoided unless you have specific

reasons for using them.

*Scrap or modify all logo designs that do not have unity between graphics and lettering.* When lettering and graphics are placed together there is considerably room for disharmonious interaction. For example, a highly stylized letter will almost always end up competing with the symbol instead of complementing it. Your design will then look distracting and disorganized, implying your business is the same.

*Scrap or modify all logo designs that cannot be easily rendered in three dimensions.* When embossed on letterhead, a logo should make people want to run their fingers over it. If turned into a



charm or pin, it should make people want to fiddle with it. If turned into a giant sculpture, it should make people want to give it a big hug.

*Scrap or modify all logo designs with lettering style that does not complement your desired image.* There are three basic typestyles: Contemporary (sans serif) – Classic (serif) and Decorative. It's surprising how completely different people will have the same reaction to these and other typestyles. Some styles appear feminine others masculine (for a more complete description on how typestyle affects people, see Guidebook #60 "Mastering Design & Layout Techniques").

*Scrap or modify all logo designs that do not look good in black and white.* If your logo only looks good in full color, and bordered with gold embossing, than fundamentally you have a serious design problem.

*Scrap or modify all logo designs with lines, shapes, patterns and letter that do not significantly add to its meaning.* In logo design LESS is MORE.

*Scrap or modify all logo designs that do not run letters into each other.* Letters that touch become graphic symbols and can be granted better protection under trademark laws.

*Scrap or modify all logo designs that are too complex.* If you only had one rule of

thumb to help design your logo, that rule would be, keep your logo simple. The best logos are ones that leave a strong visual impression after being seen ONCE. Complex logos have to be seen several times, if not many, before they become recognizable.

**STEP 7 – Select three promising logo designs and prepare finished copies using good old-fashioned transfer letter sheets and graphic artist techniques or by using a computer drawing program.** *Transfer Letter Sheets* can be found at stores that handle artists materials, and also at most office supply stores. Transfer letter sheets come in various tpestyles and sizes which can be browsed through and selected us-

ing a master catalog. One such product is *RubOnLetters* by Geotype. *RubOnLetters* comes in sizes ranging from 8pt to 96pt and typeface styles ranging from *Brush Script* to **Impact**. Small sheets cost Cdn\$1.29 while larger 8.5 by 11 sheets cost Cdn\$3.79.

Using transfer sheets, your chosen letters or graphics are applied to a poster board (or piece of high quality paper). To do this, remove the protective backing sheet, position the graphic or letter where you want it, then using smooth even strokes rub the back of the transfer sheet with a dull soft lead pencil. After the carrier sheet is removed, your work is covered with a protective backing sheet and burnished with your fingernail or a burnishing

tool. Other details can then be added in with special black graphic markers and pens.

It should be noted, that to get the best, cleanest reproduction of your logo, draw it much larger than it will eventually appear on your stationery or other printed matter. This is critical for minor imperfections will disappear once it is reduced in size. A photographic negative can then be made of the final product (or you can use a photocopy machine to shrink it and then cut and paste it to your medium of choice).

Computer drawing programs like CorelDRAW or Adobe Illustrator can also be used to create stunning professional de-



signs (full-color) that can be printed directly to photographic negatives by an imagesetter.

**NOTE** While transfer sheets are adequate for creating black and white logos for letter head, forms, flyers and envelopes, they cannot compete with the quality of computer created designs.

**STEP 8 – Get critical feedback and then select final logo.** Don't leave the image of your company up to the opinions of a few. You need to find out, from as many people as possible, how your target market will respond to your logo. Will they respond in the way you intended? Will the actual image they perceive be appealing? If after receiving criti-

cal feedback, you are not satisfied with your final result, make further modifications, go back to square one, or consider handing it over to the professionals (something perhaps you should have done in the first place). After all, considering the benefits of a well-designed logo, it is one of the best investments you can make.

WORLDWIDE  
SPORTS





## DESIGNING A BUSINESS CARD

YOUR BUSINESS card is a physical representation of your company. You need it so people you meet will have a convenient reference to consult if they wish to do business with you. Design of your business card should be coordinated with your letterhead. This builds company recognition. You should follow the standard of 2 by three and a half-inch (wallet size), otherwise your business card is more likely to be discarded or lost.

**NOTE** In general, business cards and business stationary should be conservative.

*When it comes to the design of your business cards, letterhead and other promo material, simplicity and elegance are better. You don't have to shout to be seen.*  
**SUPERTIP**

### Four Factors that Can Determine the Success of Your Business Card –

1. Does your card present an image your customer can relate to?
2. Is your name, phone number & address easily to read?
3. Does any additional information you have specifically target the needs of your customers?
4. Is your logo eye catching?

### Five Steps to Designing a Business Card

**STEP 1 – Brainstorm for content.** On a piece of paper, write down everything you

might want on your business card, including:

### Essential Information

- YOUR NAME
- title
- company name
- phone number (personal and/or business)
- toll free 800 number
- fax number
- beeper number
- e-mail address
- addresses (personal and/or busi-

### Optional Information

- education and/or other qualifications
- summary heading of products and/or services
- detailed product and/or services information
- special offers
- white space for handwritten product information
- eye catching graphics

sonal and/or business)

- URL address
- company logo and company slogan

- special effects like raised lettering or gold embossing

**STEP 2 – Separate optional and essential information.** Now that everything is on paper, determine what's absolutely necessary and what's not. Start cutting things out.

**STEP 3 – Experiment with design using essential information.** Using only information that is absolutely essential, experiment with layout, logo and lettering size and create your basic business card design.

**STEP 4 – Incorporate optional information into your basic design.** Using your optional information, determine whether its incorporation into your basic business card design compliments it enough to warrant consideration.

**NOTE** If you need more space than the standard business card size permits, experiment with different folding techniques (see chart on this). Having folds neatly designed and well thought out, can turn an ordinary business card into a great mini-brochure. And don't forget to make use of the back of your business card if you wish to summarize major

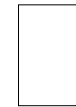
services & product or give other detailed information. However, don't get carried away. Print only what is necessary and

## Business Card Folding Designs

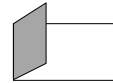
Horizontal



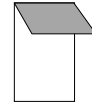
Vertical



Short Fold  
Horizontal



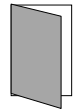
Short Fold  
Vertical



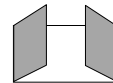
Tent Fold



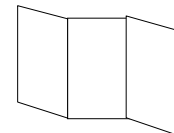
Book Fold



Gate Fold



Z Fold



useful to your client or customer.

**STEP 5 – Produce final design.** Printing shops can help you with your design or design your card for you. Often you can simply browse through cards they have made for other clients, pick one you like, and have them substitute your information.



## Making Your Business Card More Useful

**CONSIDER PUTTING** other information on your business card, not directly related to your business, like a calendar or a metric-imperial conversion chart. This way, your card has a better chance of becoming a permanent part of someone's wallet or purse. Better yet, consider putting in a special offer or detachable coupon. For example: 10% off, a two for one, or a reduced price on the latest service or product you are promoting.

## DESIGNING BUSINESS STATIONARY

IN NO OTHER form of communication, do you have as much control over what people will think of you and your company, as in the design of your letterhead. Your letterhead and envelope must be designed so that when prospective customers or client receive them, they will size them up in the manner you intended.

### Four Factors that Can Determine the Success of Your Business Stationary

1. Does your stationary tie in with your business card?
2. Does your paper look and feel like it is from a business of solid character and

*Do not print 3,000 sheets of letterhead until you have a better idea where your business is going. Print only what you need for the immediate future.*

**SUPERTIP**

commitment?

3. Does your letterhead design not overpower the contents of your letter?
4. Have you used high quality stock from professional printers.

### Five Steps to Designing Business Stationary

#### STEP 1 – Determine what you want to put on your letterhead.

Successful letterhead incorporates the following elements into a well organized design: logo; motto or business philosophy; street address and mailing address; phone number, fax number and e-mail address; WWW address; a summary heading of your products and/or services; eye catching graphics; special effects like raised let-

tering; special symbols; and most importantly, your company name, personal name and title.

## **STEP 2 – Determine the weight, color, texture, coating and quality of paper you will use.**

Choosing your paper is almost as important as what you put on it. Considering the impact paper has on people, it seems unwise not to spend a considerable effort on choosing your paper.

*Weight*– Twenty pound paper should be the minimum choice.

However, twenty-four pound paper is generally preferred for letterhead. Avoid heavier papers like cover stock, as they will jam your printer.

**NOTE** Paperweight is determined by weighing 5,000 sheets of that paper. For

example: 80 lb. paper means that 5,000 sheets of that paper weigh 80 lbs.

*Color of Paper*– The variety of paper colors to choose for your letterhead are virtually unlimited. However, when choosing your paper consider the following:

- off-white is the conservative choice
- pastel colors can be suitable if selected for a good reason
- deep colored papers should be avoided
- brighter papers reproduce well on laser printers and are also good for reproduction masters
- brighter papers also have more contrast between light and dark

*Twenty-four pound paper is generally preferred for letterhead.*

- the paper chosen should be fairly opaque
- the paper color must be coordinated with the ink being used
- the paper color and texture should match that of your business card

**NOTE** Research has shown that business questionnaires printed in blue and green do not get answered.

*Paper Texture* – Heavily textured paper may impart a feeling of quality or a feeling of roughness. However, some may not take ink well; type will be broken. On the other hand, heavily textured paper is perfect for foil stamping or embossing.

*Research has shown that business questionnaires printed in blue and green do not get answered.*

*Paper Coating* – There are two basic types of paper coating: matte finish and coated finish. Matte finish ranges from a paper with a rather smooth but non-glossy surface to heavily texture paper. Coated stock refers to any paper that is slick or glossy. In general, photographs reproduce better on coated stock, on the other hand matte will soften the color and give the picture an entirely different look.

*Quality or Stock* – Writing a letter is easily worth ten or more dollars of your time, so why be cheap on the paper. Avoid common bond papers and ask for different laid finishes with watermarks and perhaps a linen texture. Durability is also important.

**NOTE** If you plan to print your letterhead

on a laser printer, make sure you test print a few copies first. In general, paper that goes through a laser printer must be heat and curl resistant or it will have a tendency to jam the printer.

**STEP 3 – Experiment with design.** Experiment with different design considerations and layout schemes as described below.

*Address, Phone Number and Slogan Design* – Addresses, phone numbers and company slogans should be set in a clean legible typestyle that does not compete with your logo. This may be the same typestyle as your logo if your logo is not in heavy or decorative type.

*Color of Ink* – Make sure the color of

ink contrasts nicely with the color of paper

## Using Pre-formatted Business Letters

BEING ABLE to communicate with other businesses and clients in a professional and consistent manner is important. Most businesses accomplish this using form letters. In fact, every business should keep a collection of form letters to be used when a particular and often occurring situation demands it. Not only does this save time, but it also creates a consistency of image. Standard form letters can be purchased in a book or computer disk ASCII format.

**NOTE** ASCII stands for Acronym for American Standard Code for Information Interchange. An ASCII file contains text characters that can be used by any word processing software.



chosen. If possible, try different inks on different paper.

*Color Scheme* – Come up with a coordinated company color scheme. The same colors can then be used on other printed matter like brochures or mailers, as well as, signs, company vehicles, patches, uniforms or caps.

*Logo Placement* – Every logo seems to lend itself to a particular placement on your letterhead as dictated by its balance. Possible positions include: vertical flush left centered, bottom centered, upper right, lower left, top centered, upper left, horizontal flush left centered. Usually left weighted balance is the most common.

*Logo Size* – Make sure your firm's logo, address and phone number is in cor-

## Tips for Writing Business Letters

LETTERS SHOULD lean toward personal expression and away from stuffiness. They generally should include the following parts:

- heading (your address and date of letter)
- inside address (person's name and title, company name and address)
- greeting (Dear Mr. Jones,)
- body (brief business, stated clearly), closing (Very Truly Yours, or Sincerely,)
- signature (handwritten with typed name and title beneath)

A post script (P.S.) may also be added to summarize the main part of your business message or some very important point.

rect proportion to the message area of your letterhead. In general, compact logo designs can go just about anywhere, but large designs must be more carefully placed.

*Message Head Area* – The message area of your letterhead, should be clearly set apart from background information.

*Typestyle* – Depends on your image, target market etc. Your typestyle should cater to the likes and dislikes of your potential market.

*Use of Borders* – If a border or other artwork enhances the overall look of your letterhead and complements your image, and doesn't distract from your logo, it may be appropriate. If not, don't use it. Borders allow address tie-ins.

*Colored paper should be subdued. Inks should be rich.*  
**SUPERTIP**

**STEP 4 – Design your envelope.** When designing your envelope use the same paper and carry over the basic style of your letterhead. Also, consider making your envelope logo large. This results in free advertising as it journeys through the mail system.

#### **STEP 5 – Print your letterhead.**

It is usually best to get your letterhead printed by the professionals as they have the necessary equipment to make your letterhead stand out.

However, keep in mind that if you have a good laser printer (along with a computer and appropriate design software), you might be able to produce high enough quality letterhead on your own and avoid having to use a printer.



## ADDING SPECIAL EFFECTS TO BUSINESS CARDS & STATIONARY

The most common special effects added to business cards and business stationary are:

**Blind Embossing** – Gives artwork a raised feel like engraving or thermography, but without any application of ink. The process uses a metal die to impress a design into the paper. The raised impression invites being touched, which is a tactile way to draw attention to an image. However, use embossing only on logos or simple graphics. It doesn't work well on fine lettering.

*Make sure the overall design of your letterhead, envelopes and business cards accurately reflect your firm's philosophy and business.*

### **SUPERTIP**

**NOTE** Embossed paper might jam your laser printer.

**Engraving** – Applies ink with a special press that simultaneously raises or embosses the artwork. This method of embossing is ideal for letterheads that include extremely fine lines or very small type. An embossed surface projects a feeling of quality, elegance and dignity. Feels nice on the fingers.

**Foil Stamping** – Under heat and pressure, a special die applies a glossy foil to your letterhead. The reflective quality of the foil, usually gold or silver (also available in other colors as well), adds eye catching pizzazz to your letterhead like nothing else.

**Thermography** – A process that causes the ink to expand under heat. Achieves the same result as engraving at much less cost. However, fine details begin to fill in.

**Varnish** – Can be used as a sealer, and achieve a subtle effect similar to blind embossing. Rather than shadows defining the artwork, the eye sees the design as a slight difference in the finish and color of the paper. The effect is worth considering for very bold logos containing almost no detail, or for simulating a watermark on your letterhead.



## Getting Business Stationary Printed

IF YOU live in a large city, you will find a long list of printers offering a variety of services in your yellow pages under printing. Many of these printers will offer package deals. For example, the base price for 500 letterheads and 250 envelopes printed on standard white 20 lb. paper will be somewhere around \$100. Options like gold embossing, high quality paper, color pictures, and half-tones can quickly double that price.