



# Does your company *look* professional?

3 critical steps you must take  
to create a professional brand  
image for your company.

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AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED COMPANIES.

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## Which card gives an impression of a professional company?



Infinity HVAC Spares and Tools Pvt. Ltd., after twenty years of supplying world class HVAC products, decided to look professional. The company is now called Infinity HVAC Tools(as seen above). Short. Crisp. Professional.

*So, which side are you on right now?*

*“The shape of your sign, your logo, the type style used  
on your business cards will have significant impact on sales  
whether you care to think about it or not!”*

**Michael E Gerber**  
From *The E-Myth Revisited*

# “Make my company look professional!”

Each time I’m in conversation with a new client, I hear the following words:

*“Make my company look professional!”*

Now they don’t necessarily say this directly, but whatever the reason they give me to work on their company’s brand image has this deep-seated *need*. So they’ll talk about a new competitor in the market, or new designs they’ve seen somewhere, or the work that I have done for other clients. But I know what they are trying to say.

*“Make my company look professional!”*

Now how do I know that’s what they are looking for? Because after they state their reasons, I tell them - *“basically, you want your company to look professional and be taken seriously, right?”* And they go - *“YES! That’s exactly what I want!”*

Now don’t misunderstand, looking professional is NOT the only reason a new brand identity is needed. But it is the most important reason why you will want to redesign your logo and other visual elements of your brand.

This guide will put forth the steps that you need to take to ensure that your company looks a professional.

Let’s look at the 3 steps of transformation.

**Let’s just put it this way,  
looking professional is  
good for business.**

# The 3-step transformation!

If you look at the steps below, you'll notice that the first and the only step that most entrepreneurs want to dive into is *Step#2 - Execution*.

The steps shared here are not revolutionary they are simple yet going from step 1 and 2 and then 3 can dramatically impact your company/product/service's image and your business.

Following this process itself will help you think like a professional.

**1 Identify**

**2 Execute**

**3 Standardize**



# 1 Identify

To change the image of your company you must first identify what are the elements that make your brand image. Let's call them *touchpoints*.

A touchpoint is any *element of your business that comes in contact with your customer or prospect*. A touchpoint could be your office signage, your staff uniform, your stationery, product packaging etc. anything and everything that *interacts* with the world outside.

Why do we need to do this?

Doing this exercise brings an awareness of where, when and how a brand interacts with the world, an eye opener for many. You will now understand that merely changing a logo doesn't mean the identity has changed.

Once you have identified the all the touch-

points, you will get a sense of the scope of changes to be made in your brand identity.

**To change the image of your company you must identify your business's *touchpoints*.**

*The next page has a list of touchpoints. Use it as a guide there may be a lot more elements in your business beyond what is given here, so do put in some thought in to this.*

Once you've identified all the touchpoints go to the next step.

# Checklist of elements that make your identity.

## Products:

- Product design
- Product identification

## Packaging:

- Inners
- Outer cartons
- Labelling
- Delivery instructions
- Installation instructions

## Environments (interiors/exterior):

- Buildings
- Reception area
- Offices
- Factories
- Shops
- Showrooms

## Signs

- Way-finding
- Sign system

## Exhibitions

- Stands, panels
- Handouts
- Passes

## Clothing

- Badges
- Safety hats, overalls, lab coats
- Uniforms

## Communication materials

- Stationery - letterheads, business cards
- Meeting notes and agendas
- Envelopes
- Address labels
- Visitor passes
- All marketing communication materials

## Digital

- Websites
- Intranets
- Blogs
- Screensavers

## Promotions

- Promotional and point-of-sale materials

## Forms

- Accounting
- Purchasing
- Sales
- Production
- Personnel

## Publications

- Corporate
- Personnel/training
- Industry Packages
- Product

## Vehicles

- Road Transport
- Factory Transport

## Advertising

- Corporate
- Recruitment
- Product/services

EXECUTION CHAMBER  
PLEASE MIND YOUR HEAD  
ONE VILLAIN AT A TIME

## 2 Execute

Once you have identified all your touchpoints you'll get a picture of how deep and wide a transformation your company will go through.

Also, looking at all the touchpoints it will seem like there is a lot to do, and you may decide to focus on just one thing like maybe for now you only want to design a new logo, however, I would advise you against it purely because your logo is a mark of identification of your company it is not your identity. Your company cannot look professional with a great logo in a poorly designed context.

Your identity is a sum of all parts, and not just about your logo, so you need to be wise about your decision.

Think long term about your identity, the life of your brand identity can be a decade. Even a century.

**Think long term about your identity, the life of your brand identity can be a decade. Even a century.**

Let's look at the 4 ways you can get your identity designed.

# 4 ways to get your identity executed!

## 1. *Do-It-Yourself*

*D-I-Y* can be great way to go about designing your identity if you feel passionately about it. There are two problems I foresee in this option. One is putting too much of your precious time into something that someone else can do better than you and two, being too attached to your own business and thus not having the objectivity that is needed to design your identity.

In case you still wish to D-I-Y please read this guide I wrote - *3 simple steps to create your company logo\** - to give you the instructions to design your logo.

## 2. *Online design contests:*

There are many online sites<sup>+</sup> that have a platform where you can post your requirement and budget and designers from various countries will share their designs for you to choose from. There are also options to buy stock logos, logos that are created in advance that that you can select for your company. My advice is only go for this option if time is a constraint for you and so is money.

\* **Click the link below to view/download my FREE guide** *3 simple steps to create your company logo:*

<http://tinyurl.com/mxvkb3y>

<sup>+</sup> Try *99designs.com, stocklogos.com, logopond.com* etc

### ***3. Advertising agency:***

This is one of the quick fixes that client's implement, getting their advertising agency to design their identity. Now having worked in an advertising agency myself I will not doubt the talent of art directors as some of them are brilliant. But the idea of time and focus is highly skewed in an advertising agency, there is a lot more work and very short deadlines, with changes happening often and papers flying everywhere. In such an environment the single minded focus that identity design demands will always be, in some way, compromised.

### ***4. Design Studio/Freelance:***

The best way to get your identity designed is to seek professionals who focus on creating brand identities for clients.

Now there are big design studios who have a huge team where multiple projects could be happening at the same time, there are two man studios and then there are freelancers who will work on your identity on a freelance basis.

Big design studios do not always guarantee great designs and a freelance doesn't always mean that the design will be poor.

So look around, look at past work and make an informed decision. Be comfortable with whom you are working with, as the process of designing your identity takes time. And patience.

## 8 questions you must ask yourself!

Whatever way you decide to get your design executed, it is very important for you create a design map for your identity. In other words, a brief.

The purpose of a brief is to guide you or the designer in the process of designing your brand identity, so as not to go astray.

Answering the questions below will form the design brief:

- 1. What is your company's mission and vision?*
- 2. What are the challenges of your business?*
- 3. Who are your competitors?*
- 4. What does your customer care about?*
- 5. How do people learn about your product, organization, or service?*

*6. Why does your company/product/service need a new brand identity?*

*7. What words do you want people to associate with your company?*

*8. How many people are responsible for use of the brand identity?*

As you may have noticed, none of the questions above have anything to do with design really. And why is that? Because these questions lay the facts on the table about where you are and where you want to go, making the role of designing a new identity very clear.

This I must clarify is only the starting point, a good designer will drown you with questions. Which, by the way, is always a good thing.

# When do you need a new identity?

A logo is a mark of identification of a company/ product/ service.

Over time a mark (logo) forms an unconscious association with the customer. Which means that your logo could either form a positive association or negative one.

So when you change your logo your customers don't look at your brand the same way they did before, now they start to wonder what to expect from your brand.

Which is precisely why classic brands like Coca-cola, Kellogg's, Ford etc who have gathered a lot of brand equity over time will tread very delicately before changing their logo.

The way to handle a situation where changing your identity can harm your customer's loyalty, then you should look at refining your identity.

*So when do you need a new identity?*

If you are launching a new brand or relaunching a brand and want to totally create a new appeal for your brand then go

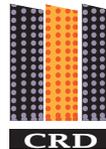
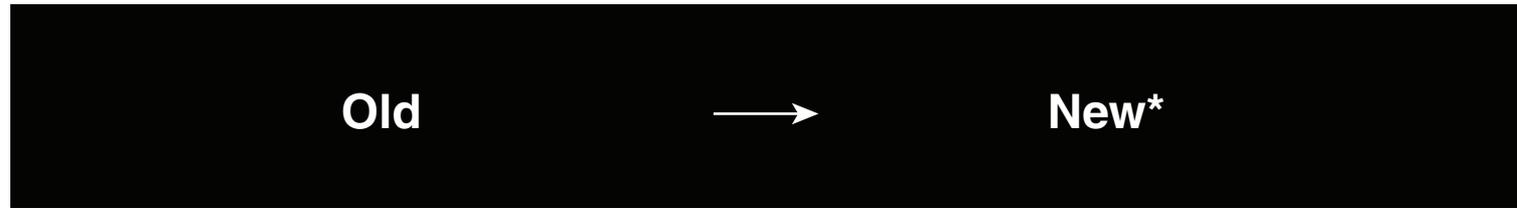
**When you change your logo your customers start to wonder what to expect from your brand now.**

for a new identity.

On the other hand if customers identify very intrinsically with your brand such that changing your logo can harm your business go for design refinement of your logo rather than changing it.

Let's see some examples of that were made new vs. logos that were refined.

## Examples of logos re-designed.



The above logos were designed as the client's needed to totally redefine their brand image. Which is why they are drastically different. Let's take a look at some examples of logos that were refined.

## Examples of logos that have been refined.

Old



Refined

Instagram



Instagram

Continental 



Continental 



If you look at Instagram and Continental the changes are very subtle, and may go unnoticed to the untrained eye. But if you look closely there are changes. The changes are made with care so that the existing customer can still relate with his brand, whom he has consumed for years. If you look at HP's logo it has become simpler and further refined. As of now remember, if your brand has been etched in your customer's mind for years, make changes with care and consideration.



## 3 Standardize

The biggest challenge you will face now, or in due course of time, is how your company's identity will be treated by your stakeholders (employees, customers & suppliers). If you do not set a clear do's and don'ts with respect to your brand's identity, each of these stakeholders will use (and in most cases abuse) your logo to their individual liking and create such disparity of your identity across media and geography, that your brand won't really have an identity.

So, what do you do?

*Create a Brand Manual.*

A brand manual is a document that instructs the users of your brand identity on how to use and how not to use your logo, what exact colors and fonts that must be used and what

are complete no nos. It sets the standard for your identity.

**If you do not set guidelines for the usage of your logo, it will be abused with good intentions.**

A brand manual is what makes a Starbucks look like Starbucks anywhere you go, or an Apple store look like an Apple store anywhere you see it.

Let's look at the elements that make such a document.

# What makes a Brand Manual?

- Logo - size, spacing, the background upon which it can and cannot be used
- Color - primary and secondary color palettes
- Typefaces - the fonts that will be used for the brand
- Tone of voice - casual, friendly, formal etc
- Imagery - the type of visuals that create the brand's imagery
- Stationery - the business cards, letterheads, envelopes etc
- Power point templates
- Website and online application templates
- Office environment
- Signages - directions and information
- Proposals and other key documents

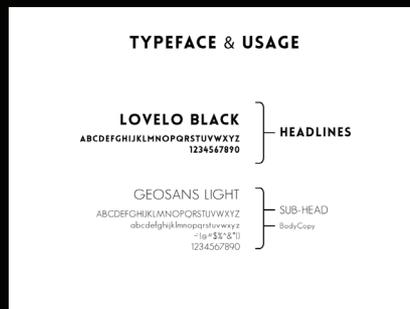
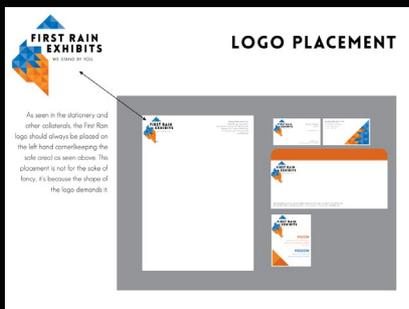
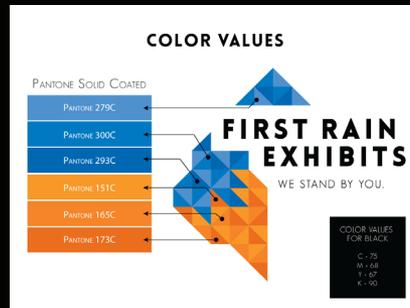


# Brand Manual Sample

The sample here is what was made for a client - First Rain Exhibits.

Most of clients don't want a brand manual because they feel it is too complicated and a needless requirement. This is exactly where professional brands differ from the unprofessional ones.

Frankly, more than anything else this step requires discipline



# Let's summarize:

- 1** First identify the things that make up your brand's identity, and only then execute.
- 2** No matter who executes, have clarity by asking yourself the 8 key questions.
- 3** Ask yourself, do we really need a new logo or should we refine it?
- 4** Standardize, standardize, standardize. A brand is built through consistency, do not cut corners there.

# Thank you!

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading this guide, I hope it has helped you.

I will admit that this guide does not cover each every element that this topic deserves because that would be too long (and boring), so I focussed on the *right approach*. Once the approach is set correctly, everything else follows.

If you are interested, do read my other guides(to the left), you can download them for *free* (click the link below the images).

If you have any queries or suggestions, please feel free to write to me at [nishchal@deepfriedcolors.com](mailto:nishchal@deepfriedcolors.com)

*Thank you once again!*

Cheers, Nishchal

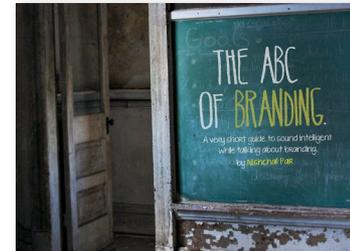


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