

## Logo Design – The Starting Point

A typical scenario:

*"Here are the concepts we want to express in logo design for [insert company name here]:*

- *Innovative*
- *Emotional*
- *Genuine*
- *Connected*
- *Provocative*
- *Now*

This type of list is common, but unfortunately it misses the point of what a logo can do, and should be.

Many new companies feel that their logo should somehow reflect whom they are, as if the logo should somehow almost be a graphical caricature of the people in the company. We see words like "connected, now, provocative" used to describe what this should look like. Instead, that can really only be expressed by the nature of what the company offers as goods or services (in new-economy speak, the "content"):

Content will provide these attributes:	Logo can suggest what you are:
Innovative	Entertainment
Emotional	A Network
Genuine	Multiple choices
Connected	Programs
Provocative	Interactive
Now	Internet Company

The effort should be to describe what you are, not who you are. The field is so crowded with hip, young, companies, who feel they all want to be Innovative, Emotional, etc.

The point is that you and the other 25,000 companies who started today all want to possess these attributes.

What is helpful is to be able to indicate in your identity, a hint of WHAT you are: A gift company, an entertainment company, etc.

The difficult part of building identity isn't creating a great logo, it's creating the great product, and service, and support system that creates satisfied and loyal customers.

Wanting the logo to do all the work is like wanting to be thin, but not having the discipline to diet and exercise. To further this analogy, there are a lot of graphic design "tricks" that can be employed to suggest who a company is, just as there are a lot of fad diets. The internet is (was) littered with thousands of companies who worried more about how hip their logo looked in a Flash<sup>®</sup> animation than they did about the quality of their products. Recent history has demonstrated the results of such an approach. A logo should strive to draw attention to the company, not just to itself.

The above discussion certainly isn't meant to belittle or minimize the graphic design process. A good designer will have the ability to use his/her skills to craft a visual representation of a company that acts as a "starting point" for a company's identity. Think of the American flag – as a visual symbol it's universally recognizable and evokes strong emotions in most people. But does it, by itself, define the United States? Would this country be different if the layout or colors of the flag were different? Probably not.

