

Creating and Using a Logo in Your Video

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If you decide you need a little spice or eye-candy in your video presentation, then your company logo may be the first place to start. When you have a logo designed, you should ask for a CMYK version for print, an RGB version for video and a web safe color version for the Internet. You should also have your designer provide you with a gray scale version and a black and white version of your logo. All versions of your logo should have a transparent background or alpha channel. An alpha channel allows you to superimpose your logo over any source.

CMYK stands for cyan, magenta, yellow and black, the primary colors used in the printing process. RGB refers to red, blue and green, the primary colors used in video. The web has its own color palette. This article will focus on RGB for video. You may not understand all the terms used here; but, hopefully you'll know what to ask when you hire someone to help.

RGB color values are measured on a scale of 0 to 255 for each of the color channels. Each color used in your logo has an RGB value. By knowing the RGB values of each color, you can match the logo colors in any program. Files based on CMYK values may not translate colors properly in software programs that use RGB values.

In addition to the various color space requirements, you will need your logo in an appropriate file format that can be used in an animation and an editing program. These files should be high resolution and if possible in a vector format. Vector formats can be scaled up in size without losing resolution and quality. In addition, the files should be layered so that each logo component is on its own layer. Let's take a look at the logo of the Pacific Northwest law firm of Peick|Conniff.



In this example, there are six components that make up the logo:

1. gold sun,
2. purple mountain,
3. blue river,
4. vertical purple bar that separates the names,
5. law firm name, and
6. company slogan.

Each of these elements occupies their own layer. Separate layers make it possible to animate each component without affecting the other elements. For example, you could add a glow to the sun or reveal the river or apply animation to the text. Since logos by their very nature appear two dimensional, you could extrude the entire logo and add a drop shadow to give it a 3D look. Here is another example:



You can see how these graphic effects can add life to what was once a plain 2D composite. Here are a few details you need to keep in mind when you design your logo for video.

- The logo font may not be ideal for video, especially if it is a thin weight font with serifs. Serifs are those little shapes on the ends of the stroke of a character. Here is an example:

Sans Serif Font

Serif Font

Do you see the difference? You may have to make a substitution for the original font in order to get it to read properly in video. Also, there is a size limitation. 18 pt fonts are about as small as you should go if you are planning video for standard definition television.

- Some colors do not translate well across different media platforms. The above sample has a purple color in the logo. Certain shades of purple don't display properly on video. Sometimes purple appears as a shade of blue. So how do you fix that problem? Unfortunately you will have to experiment.
- Be aware that the color scheme of the background you place your logo on may compete with logo's color scheme. When in doubt, choose a neutral background.

Your company's logo is your image. It is often the first image that people see in their mind's eye when your company's name is mentioned. Therefore it is important that your logo is represented in any video presentation in a consistent and artful manner.