



Own Your Brand

By Kristen Luke
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Without a doubt, the most important image is your logo. It is your company's most identifiable mark, and it is found on every marketing piece from your website to your letterhead.

Surprisingly, many advisors don't have the appropriate logo files they need. Many only have low-resolution versions and rely on their graphic designer when a high-resolution version of the logo is needed.

This is a sure path to problems in the future.

Your company's brand is too important to not have total control of your logo. Your designer may have created your logo, but you should have full control over these files. This means having appropriate versions for different applications and owning the rights to your logo.

Get scalable versions

Your logo can end up on small items like pens and business cards, and it can be enlarged into larger-than-life proportions. If you need your logo for a tradeshow exhibit, on a billboard, or just a poster or banner, you need a version that scales up well.

The best solution is to get a "vector image" of your logo from your designer. Vector images can scale up or down without any loss of quality. Using one vector graphic file, you can make a one-inch square image for a business card, or a 30-by-30 foot image for a billboard. Usually a vector-image file will end with an .ai or .eps extension. Don't be surprised if you can't open these files, since it requires special software such as Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Illustrator to open. You might not need it immediately, but having a vector file of your logo will save you from headaches in the future.

Get different versions

As mentioned previously, your logo might end up on several different media. This requires you to have different versions of your logo on file. Aside from the full-color version of your logo, you will need a black and white version for materials printed in only one color such as newspapers. You also need both color and black and white versions on a white background, a black background, transparent background, and perhaps other colors that match or complement your logo.



You may also need different file types for the different applications of your logo. For the web, the file types that work best are JPEG (.jpeg, .jpg), GIF (.gif), and portable networks graphics (.png). For larger applications, the same files work, as well as TIFF (.tiff, .tif) and Photoshop (.psd). If you have a vector version of your logo, it will most likely be in Postscript (.eps) or Adobe Illustrator (.ai) format. Different vendors may ask for different file types and you need to have at least some of these files on hand.

Get a style guide

Your logo is your brand's most prominent symbol, and every aspect of it has to be exact. Aside from the logo itself, your designer needs to address a few other things. These specifications make up your identity guidelines, and are often called a style guide. They specify how your logo can and should be used. These include:

- The minimum sizes of the logo in different applications
- The different elements of the logo, as well as their proportions
- The exact colors used in the logo, as well as the background
- The fonts used
- The amount of empty space surrounding the logo

Get ownership

When you commission a design, many designers will attempt to maintain ownership of their work, and only sell usage rights to their clients. To avoid any future problems, make sure that you own the rights to all logos designed for you by carefully reviewing the contract. You don't want just exclusive rights to use your logo – you want to own your logo. This is, after all, your company's identity. Fortunately, many designers will make an exception, handing over ownership while maintaining rights to display your logo in their portfolio.

Own your brand

Your logo is the most prominent symbol of your brand and it is too important not to have total control. Make sure you "own your brand" by obtaining the various files and rights you need to use your logo in all situations in perpetuity.



Kristen Luke is the President of Wealth Management Marketing, Inc., a firm dedicated to providing marketing support for investment advisory, wealth management and financial planning firms. Her firm enables independent advisors the ability to market with the same quality and consistency as their larger competitors by providing the resources of an entire marketing department at a fraction of the cost of a single employee. For more information, visit www.wealthmanagementmarketing.net.

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