

CREATING LOGOS FOR TELEVISION

LOGOS



▼ This logo is fine in print, but could not be used as a television logo without some work. Even on this page, with a limited resolution of 600dpi, the logo is much clearer than could be shown on television.



▼ As the logo has been reduced in size, much of the detail has been lost. The main letters have been added back in manually as there was almost nothing left, but "Communications Ltd" could not be salvaged. It all looks rather rough, the main letters would probably not be displayed on a television set (the lines are just 1 pixel wide) and the white text would flash as each field was displayed.



▼ The contrasty "Communications Ltd" has been removed, the letters have been given more body to cope with being scaled down to television resolution, and the whole logo sits in a neutral background to avoid unpleasant keying effects. The image still maintains the basic shape, and the whole process was achieved completely automatically taking considerably less time than the middle logo.

DESCRIPTION

Television logos present some unique problems for logo designers, and understanding the difference between print and the television screen will help you produce a satisfactory image quickly. **Designing for print offers a typical resolution of 2400dpi (dots per inch)**, which renders subtle effects very clearly; there is a choice of surface texture, embossing, glazes, foils and special inks; four and six-colour printing offer a gamut of many millions of colours; the available contrast range is very high.

By comparison, a television set has much lower resolution (a 26" set offers a resolution of less than 40dpi); the designer has no control of texture and finish; there is a much reduced colour range and much lower contrast. In addition, there are two specific issues: field interlacing and not knowing what the background will be when the logo is on air.

Things aren't all that bad for the television, as many effects can be achieved through motion and an entire animated logo sequence might convey much more than a static image. If you are using a logo generator such as the LGA-100 or the Kronoss, simple animations are easily created.

Clearly, unless thought is given to the design, a television logo will be a poor cousin to its paper counterpart. This application note sets out some of the issues and criteria for television logo design.

We can't design your logo for you, but we can help you get to the right result quickly.

CREATING LOGOS FOR TELEVISION

If the original logo is vector artwork, export it as a bitmap file and then reduce it to a resolution which maps it at the right size on the television screen (usually between 40 and 60 pixels high).

If the overall design and shapes are lost when the logo is reduced, it won't work. Text may become unreadable, but this will not be important if the logo still appears to say the same thing - it is, after all, an exercise in branding rather than providing information. If contrasting (colour or brightness) horizontal detail appears on one line and not the next, then the logo will flash distractingly as alternate fields are displayed, one with bright detail and one not. If necessary, consider redesigning the logo in a simpler form which retains the basic shapes and colours but loses detail in a controlled manner, rather than through the computer's averaging process.

Television offers a compressed range of colours and brightness, and subtle effects visible on a computer monitor will be lost on television. It is usually necessary to make these effects bolder and reduce the number of steps. Particularly, the first 20% of any colour is not usually visible at all, so 20% red + 20% green + 20% blue will still appear as black. Within the rectangle of your editing window, an irregular-shaped logo will have background areas which are not part of the logo itself and therefore should not be keyed. Most logo generators require these areas to be coloured true black (0% red, 0% green, 0% blue) as this colour is used to indicate a transparent area to the keyer. So, if there is any black in the logo design, colour it slightly off black.

Do not antialias (blend adjacent colours and brightness) the outline of the logo. This might create a nice effect on the computer screen, but there will be a dark fringe to the logo when shown against a light background (and possibly a light fringe against a dark background). Most paint programs will allow you to soften the image without softening the edge. Simply protect the edge area (or the black, whichever is easier), then double the size of the image, then halve it. The transition between different colours and brightness will be softened, while the border remains hard. In the example here, the left-hand image is not antialiased and shows coarse "stair-steps". The middle image shows the effect of antialiasing, the transition between cyan and magenta being noticeably smoother. The right-hand image shows what happens if the border of the logo is antialiased to the black background. When the black is removed in the keying process, an ugly fringe is left around the logo.



If the design incorporates white space, such as open lettering or outlined shapes, the white will appear over-emphasised if translated to the screen. If filled with black, to make the background show through, the detail will often be too fine to be rendered by the keyer or the television set. The best solution is to create a neutral rectangle on which the text or design can sit, as in the example overleaf. This provides a consistent background against which fine detail can be antialiased.

If the image is derived from scanned hard copy (letterhead or a business card are favourites!), it is often easier to reduce the image to black and white line art and then fill areas with solid colour, rather than processing the image created by the scanner. To start with, you'll have a lot of work removing the antialiasing from the edge of the logo, which will typically be on a white background. The colours may be wrong and are less easy to edit when dithered by the scanner. However, there will be occasions when a logo can be scanned, the edges tidied up and the output sent to the logo generator without a stitch of clothing by the designer. Such good fortune is rare!

Vortex Communications Ltd
75 The Grove, Ealing, London W5 5LJ, UK
Tel: (+44) 020 - 8579 2743 ▼ Fax: (+44) 020 - 8840 0018
E-mail: info@vtx.co.uk ▼ Web: www.vtx.co.uk

IN THE INTEREST OF PRODUCT IMPROVEMENT
SPECIFICATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
ALL TRADEMARKS ARE RECOGNISED

