

# LOGO PRESENT



A guide to presenting logo designs to clients.

By Ian Paget

If you're anything like me, when it comes to presenting your work, despite knowing you've done your best, you feel anxious and insecure before presenting your work...

I can't help but expect instant rejection from the client... even after 10 years of experience.

Thankfully that never happens in reality. Phew!

I'm always prepared and have a process that ensures that the presentation part of my process goes as well as possible.

In most cases, my designs are agreed the first time, or I come away with constructive feedback that makes the designs better.

I want to help you achieve the same result.

**I've learned through experience that how you present your design work is as important, if not more, than the physical design phase.**

## Firstly: How NOT to present

The best way to get better at something is to screw up. I've done this many times, and (try to) learn from my mistakes.

I've had clients treat me like a puppet and I watch as they use me to ruin my beautiful designs! Now, however, I know it was actually my fault as I was presenting in the wrong way.

To help explain where I went wrong, I'm going to present a stapler to you in two different ways...

## Presentation approach one...

I place the stapler down in front of the client. I then proudly say “I’ve designed a stapler. What do you think?”



The clients will start looking at the stapler. Whilst there might be features they do like, they’re very likely seeking features they don’t like. They will have their own thoughts and ideas based on personal preference... “I don’t like blue and I think we should hide the mechanism”

**This happened because we asked them what THEY think, and they provided their thoughts and ideas.**

Asking ‘what do you think?’ is a question that can cause big problems for designers, and is sadly the first question most people ask when presenting designs to anyone. Remove it from your vocabulary – asking this question will cause a slippery slide where you will lose all control of the designs.

## Let’s present the stapler again...

This time I talk through the features based on goals. I’ll explain that it’s easy to hold in one hand, that it’s effortless to staple 20 sheets of paper, it’s easy to reload and that it’s designed to be easily manufactured at a low cost per unit.

I then ask “do you agree that this meets the goals we agreed upon?”.

This often results in a very clear YES.

This approach also sets a tone for feedback – if for whatever reason it fails in any way to meet goals, you will receive constructive feedback that will help you to find an alternative (often better) solution.

The two approaches have a drastically different outcome. The first approach means you come away with a list of changes, yet with the second you come away with an agreed logo design, or constructive feedback.

Let’s talk now about how we can apply this approach to a real world logo design project.

## **Start with a clear design brief**

Always start with a detailed design brief. If the client doesn’t provide you with one, create your own by asking the right questions. Once you have created a brief, get the client to approve this before starting anything.

As part of my logo design process I create a tick-list of objectives by asking questions. I then ask the client to check and approve this list.

This approach ensures that we’re both on the same page from the outset, and that I have goals to refer back to when presenting my work.

## **Design with the goals in mind**

It’s easy to design a logo that looks good, but to present well and get approval you need to be meeting strategic goals.

In the case of logo design you need to be targeting the correct audience, representing the company and its brand correctly and differentiating from direct competitors.

By having goals you can perform focused research, and make informed design decisions.

Review your work against the goals, and ensure you're able to have a reason for every design decision.

## Present with real life examples

When was the last time you've seen a company logo printed on a plain white piece of paper? Hardly ever I imagine.

People are most likely to only ever see a logo used in real life situations: on a shop exterior, on a product, pen, bag, literature etc. So this is how you should present the identity you have designed.

This doesn't mean that you need to spend money on printing your logo on real items to test it (although that would be cool if the budget was there!). Instead, you can emulate this using tools available to you.

You can make your own mock-up layouts from scratch using your own photos, however, there are some good pre-built solutions out there that will speed things up. Let's take a look at the options I've used myself...

### LiveSurface

To present my designs I typically use a plugin for Adobe Illustrator called [LiveSurface](#).

LiveSurface is a Mac application that integrates directly into Illustrator, enabling you to visualise your design ideas in the real world without leaving the illustrator interface.

There is a small monthly fee, but the method is so quick and easy I've made it my go-to application for this purpose.

## Placeit

Another quick and easy branding mock-up tool is [Placeit](#), which allows you to simply upload an image with your design, then display it on a wide range of items including clothing, books, mugs, bags, business cards and more.

One feature that blew me away was the videos. Within minutes you can instantly see how your designs will look on a real life moving t-shirt... Imagine your clients reaction to that?!

## Use PSD Branding Mock-ups

There are a number of companies and designers out there that create Photoshop mock-ups of branding material that you can easily buy to apply your design work too.

Most of these templates use smart objects, meaning you can easily swap out the content of the object and have it automatically applied in place with all the required effects.

Here's a list of places where you can find such mock-ups:

- [Creative Market](#)
- [Pixeden](#)
- [Design Cuts](#)

- [Graphic Burger](#)
- [Graphic River](#)
- [Freebiesbug](#)
- [Pixel Buddha](#)
- [PSDDD](#)
- [Freepik](#)
- [Yellow Images](#)
- [MockupFree](#)

Alternatively, search Google for “PSD branding mock-ups” and you’ll find loads of examples.

## Use Royalty Free images

Royalty free image websites like iStock Photo have a nice range of blank branding images perfect for applying your design to. You’ll need to use Photoshop to manually insert your artwork, so can be a bit more time consuming than the above options, but the results can be just as impressive.

## Prepare slides with notes

For the presentation and unveil of the logos I create a document that I can use to structure the discussion.

I design the document using InDesign and export as a PDF as it’s easy to send via email and I can ensure the design looks good on all computers (PowerPoint in comparison can be a little unpredictable).

I have seen others do their presentation as web pages which has the same desired result, with the advantage that you can make quick changes and can control the access too.

During the presentation stage, I will present between 3 and 5 logo designs. Each logo design is then featured on its own page in full colour. At the bottom right, I include a small single colour version to demonstrate how the design works effectively at small sizes and in a single colour. I also include a few pages with images showing the logo in real life use to help the client visualise how the logo can be used.

With every design I include notes that explain how the design decisions meet the agreed upon goals. Whilst I will explain these during the presentation I include these within the document should the client wish to discuss the designs with anyone else following the call.

At the back of this document I include a page showing all designs in a single view. Doing this allows me to end the presentation with a discussion about the option which is most suitable.

## **The Big Presentation!**

In an ideal world, I would have a face-to-face meeting with the client. In most cases my clients are miles away so this isn't always possible. In these cases I arrange a telephone, Skype or Zoom call, asking for the decision maker to be on the call.

It's natural to think it's ok to email over the presentation in advance, however, I've found this to be problematic. People are naturally curious, so will look through the designs, share them with friends and family, and before



you've had a chance to discuss anything they will come back with a list of feedback – you've essentially lost control.

I recommend you send the presentation whilst on the call, or a few minutes before the call is scheduled (I use [WeTransfer](#) for this)

Whilst the file is being downloaded I like to set the scene. I remind the client of the objectives we agreed upon and explain that I will use this as a reference during the presentation. In person, I would give the client a printed copy to refer to.

At this stage, I also explain how I expect feedback. The reality is that nobody is ever taught how to give feedback, so if you don't do this you can expect feedback to be given in a variety of ways. By doing this you remain in control and have done all you can to ensure feedback is structured and constructive.

Here's how the conversation might go:

*"All designs presented today have been created to fulfil the goals we agreed upon, so I will refer to these during the presentation. Can I ask that feedback is left until all designs have been presented – that way we can discuss them all together. I'd also like to encourage that feedback given is based on the goals. Don't worry about working out the solution, instead, let me know what's not right so I can find an alternative solution."*

It's fair to expect some feedback during the presentation, especially if the client is impressed. Keep an eye on this and keep a mental note. Also keep an eye on non-verbal communication as you can get a lot from that. If they get carried away, remind them that you will have a more detailed discussion at the end of the presentation.

At the end of the presentation, we will be left with the single screen showcasing all designs discussed up to that point. At this stage you can discuss the options, referring to the goals discussed, encouraging the client to seek the most appropriate solution. I usually suggest at this point which one I believe is the most appropriate and why, but explain that all options are viable directions.

From time to time, the client may agree to a design at this point, and you can simply prepare the design files accordingly. Sometimes they may have constructive criticism meaning you can improve the design accordingly and schedule a second presentation call/meeting as required.

From time to time, the client may be difficult with feedback. Stay calm. Listen to what they have to say, as they know their business and audience better than you ever will. A valuable question I've found is to use 'why?' – try to understand the route of the problem so you can find a solution.

Design is a challenge, but taking this approach keeps you in charge of the design phase, and keeps the client focussed on goals rather than subjective personal opinions.

# Want to learn more?

This series of free eBooks has grown into a full, 322-page guide called ***Make a Living Designing Logos***.

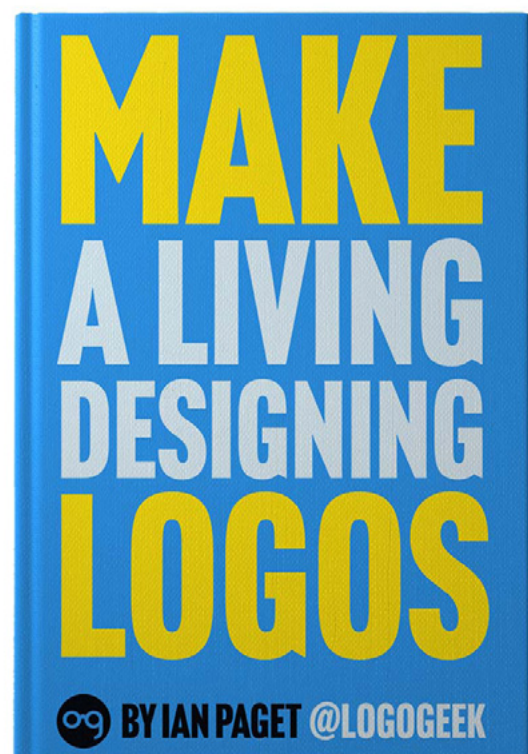
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Across 322 pages, I walk you through everything... from mastering the logo design process, to finding clients, to building a strong reputation in the industry.

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**Make a Living Designing Logos is available worldwide through Amazon** as a print-on-demand book, [in full colour](#) or a more budget-friendly [black and white version](#). And if you prefer to listen, there's also an [audiobook version on Audible](#) and other popular platforms.



# About The Author

Ian Paget is a graphic designer with over 20 years experience working across designs for web and print.



Logo Geek started as a fun side project, which sparked the beginning of a passion that has now become his main source of income. Through Logo Geek Ian designs brand identities for clients, hosts a popular podcast, and runs a thriving community for those who love logo design.

Connect with Ian here and be sure to listen to the podcast:



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