

BRANDING

Part 4: Mood Board and Logo

Mood boards are a great way to bring your brand to life. Work with a professional if you like, or simply do it yourself. You can create these boards via the dozens of mood board apps available, on Pinterest, on your wall at home. Personally, I like to see it in front of me so I can reflect on how it is shaping up. I ask myself: What is it telling me about my brand, my interests and my sources of inspiration from outside world? Before you can create a logo, it's important to remember that fonts and colors alone can suggest a certain mood or create a dialog with the person looking at it. For chefs, I suggest collecting pictures of food that inspire you, styles of restaurants, and photography you like. It could also be a quote or your peers that you admire, or maybe it is an aspect of a building design. Some people may feel more inspired when looking at modern architecture, while others love the look of a winery. Whatever it is, it helps tell your story about what your brand will say to the world.

Creating a mood board helps get your creative juices flowing because it gets you to examine the world around you. Creating a mood board is a great way to really reflect on what inspires you and your team, and it gives you a chance to create clarity for the vision of your brand before too much work is done. Let's say you are creating a pastry chef mood board. Are you drawn more toward pictures of super-refined, über high-end wedding cakes with relentless attention to details? Maybe you prefer the pictures of dripping fudge brownies and decadent oversized cupcakes. Your preference matters because there should be continuity with everything in your ecosystem, all stemming from the kind of mood your brand projects on the world. You can even put down words that you think describe your brand—"nimble, organized, organic, local, premium, expert, artisan, craft, certified"—you see, all these words also are relevant to your story.

After you create your mood board, I suggest interviewing branding and design studios. If you don't have a big budget when getting started, that is fine. But keep in mind that the logo you select will end up being a symbol of everything related to the brand. It, in essence, is the seed from which all else collateral branding material will stem, so I suggest working with someone you trust. It is best to not work with too many different people for branding and design, as there tends to eventually be a disconnect. It is one thing to work with different people for different brands, but it's best to keep the same team for a consistent look in all you do, from business cards or print material to building a website. We will also provide you with some recommendations for different agencies. But it is up to you to decide what feels right.

When it comes to logos, choose something that is going to be timeless; something that in five years won't feel like an out-of-date font or a bygone trendy look. Always make sure your logo looks good in black and white print, as people often get logos that don't translate well through different mediums.

Be sure to communicate with people that once your brand logo has been created, under no circumstances should it be modified from its original design. Sometimes people stretch it, change the color or use a filter on it to make it more suitable for their ad or usage, but this should never happen. It distorts your image and your voice, which is something you always want to maintain.