SMART BRAND BUILDER

BrandsThatPunch™

Punch Branding

HOW TO APPROVE A LOGO

A CLIENTS 10-QUESTION CHECKLIST

PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding.ca
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

Logo

Approving a logo is one of the most important decisions you'll make for your brand. It's also one of the hardest because what you're approving isn't just a design.

You're approving a direction for how the world will recognize and remember you.

PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding.ca
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

Paul Rand

the mind behind timeless marks like IBM, UPS, and ABC, left us more than great logos. He left a philosophy:

Design is the silent ambassador of your brand.

Here’s how to use his principles as a simple, client-friendly checklist.

If you can confidently answer “Yes” to most of these, your logo is ready to lead.

PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding.ca
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

01

Meaning

PRINCIPLE:
A logo derives meaning from the quality of the thing it symbolizes.

Ask:

Does this logo stand for something real a belief, purpose, or promise?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

A logo without meaning is like a signature without a story. Take the Nike Swoosh: Carolyn Davidson designed it in 1971 as a stylized wing of Nike, the Greek goddess of victory, so speed and triumph were baked in from day one.

Over time, relentless performance and consistent storytelling compounded that symbol into ambition and athletic energy.

Your mark should encode a real belief, promise, or difference; if it only looks nice and doesn't connect to your business truth, it's decoration.

PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding.ca
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

02

Simple

PRINCIPLE:
Simplicity is not the goal.
It’s the by-product of a good idea.

Ask:
Can someone sketch it from memory after seeing it once?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

Simplicity isn’t about removing detail; it’s about focusing on what matters most. The world’s best logos, Apple, McDonald’s, Mercedes, are simple because the ideas behind them are clear. But beware of “lazy simplicity.” Minimal doesn’t mean meaningful.

A mark should feel distilled, not diluted. If your designer presents something “clean,” make sure it’s also conceptually strong. A simple design without substance is just empty space.

PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding.ca
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

03

Distinctive

PRINCIPLE:
Don’t try to be different. Be good.
Different will follow.

Ask:

Can it be confused with another brand in your industry? Could it belong to anyone else?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

Being unique isn’t about being loud — it’s about being true. When IBM launched its striped logo, there were hundreds of tech companies using boxes and symbols. But Rand’s design felt different because it captured IBM’s values — stability, precision, and clarity.

A distinctive logo doesn’t shout. It stands out quietly because it couldn’t belong to anyone else. If you swapped your logo with a competitor’s and no one noticed, it’s not distinctive enough.

PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding.ca
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

04

Appropriate

PRINCIPLE:
Design should reflect
the business it represents.

Ask:

Does it match your audience’s expectations? Would it feel at home on your product, website, or building?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

Your logo doesn’t need to show what you do — Apple’s doesn’t sell fruit, but it should feel right for who you are and what you promise. A logo for a children’s brand might feel playful. A financial institution’s mark should feel stable and confident.

Appropriateness builds trust. The question isn’t “Do I like it?” but “Does it fit?” Because when a logo feels right, your audience won’t question it, they’ll just remember it.

PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding.ca
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

05

Functional

PRINCIPLE:
A logo must be simple enough to work everywhere.

Ask:

Does it work in black and white? Is it readable at small sizes or embroidered on fabric?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

A great logo behaves like a strong system: adaptable, not fragile. If your logo breaks when resized, loses meaning when printed small, or disappears on darker backgrounds, it’s not functional.

The test is simple: print it tiny, invert the colours, and check if it’s still recognizable. If it only looks good in one format or color combination, it won’t survive real-world use.

PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding.ca
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

06

Legacy

PRINCIPLE:
A good logo
never goes out of style.

Ask:
Could this mark still feel relevant ten years from now? Is it built on meaning, not trends?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

Timeless design doesn’t chase what’s fashionable; it anchors what’s fundamental. When Coca-Cola launched its script logo in 1886, it was already timeless because it captured authenticity and joy, not a style, but a feeling.

Today, it still feels fresh because meaning doesn’t age. If your logo relies on the latest gradient, shadow, or 3D trend, it’ll look old the moment the next style wave hits. Build your brand for endurance, not applause.

PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding.ca
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

07

Context

PRINCIPLE:
A logo is only as good as its application.

Ask:

Have you seen it mocked up on real materials packaging, ads, screens? Does it hold up next to your competitors' logos?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

Approving a logo without context is like buying a suit without trying it on. Designers often show logos in perfect isolation, but brands never live in isolation.

Ask your designer for mockups in multiple settings. It should work whether printed in one colour or used in motion. A good logo looks great in presentation. A great one looks right in the world.

PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding.ca
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

08

Consistent

PRINCIPLE:
The logo is part of a system.

Ask:
Does it connect naturally with your colors, typography, and tone of voice? Does it feel like one brand when paired with other elements?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

Your logo isn’t a standalone masterpiece, it’s a building block. It must work alongside your colour palette, fonts, and design tone to form a recognizable system. If it feels out of sync, too loud, too quiet, or stylistically disconnected, your brand will feel fragmented.

Ask your designer to show how the logo fits within a system: how it behaves in layouts, interacts with photography, and complements messaging. Consistency isn’t repetition, it’s coherence.

PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding.ca
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

09

Feeling

PRINCIPLE:
Design is the method of
putting form and content together.

Ask:
When you look at it, do you feel pride, confidence, curiosity, or joy? Can your team or customers describe how it makes them feel?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

People don’t remember logos because of how they look. They remember how those logos make them feel. The WWF panda evokes compassion. The Nike Swoosh inspires motivation. The Apple bite signals creativity and simplicity.

If your logo doesn’t move you, it won’t move your audience either. Approving a logo should feel like recognizing yourself, not being surprised by something clever.

PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding.ca
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

10

Believable

PRINCIPLE:
Clarity trumps cleverness.

Ask:

Does the design feel honest to who you are and what you deliver? Would you still stand by it if no one else approved it?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

Your logo is your silent promise. If it feels exaggerated, too luxurious, or disconnected from your actual experience, customers will sense the mismatch instantly. Paul Rand believed that honesty was the foundation of good design.

A logo shouldn’t pretend, it should project. It should project confidence, truth, and trust. Ask yourself: if you saw this logo on a competitor’s brand, would you believe it? If not, it’s not believable for you either.

PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding.ca
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

Together

Your logo approval Checklist

When you review final logo options:

1. Print each option and view it from a distance.

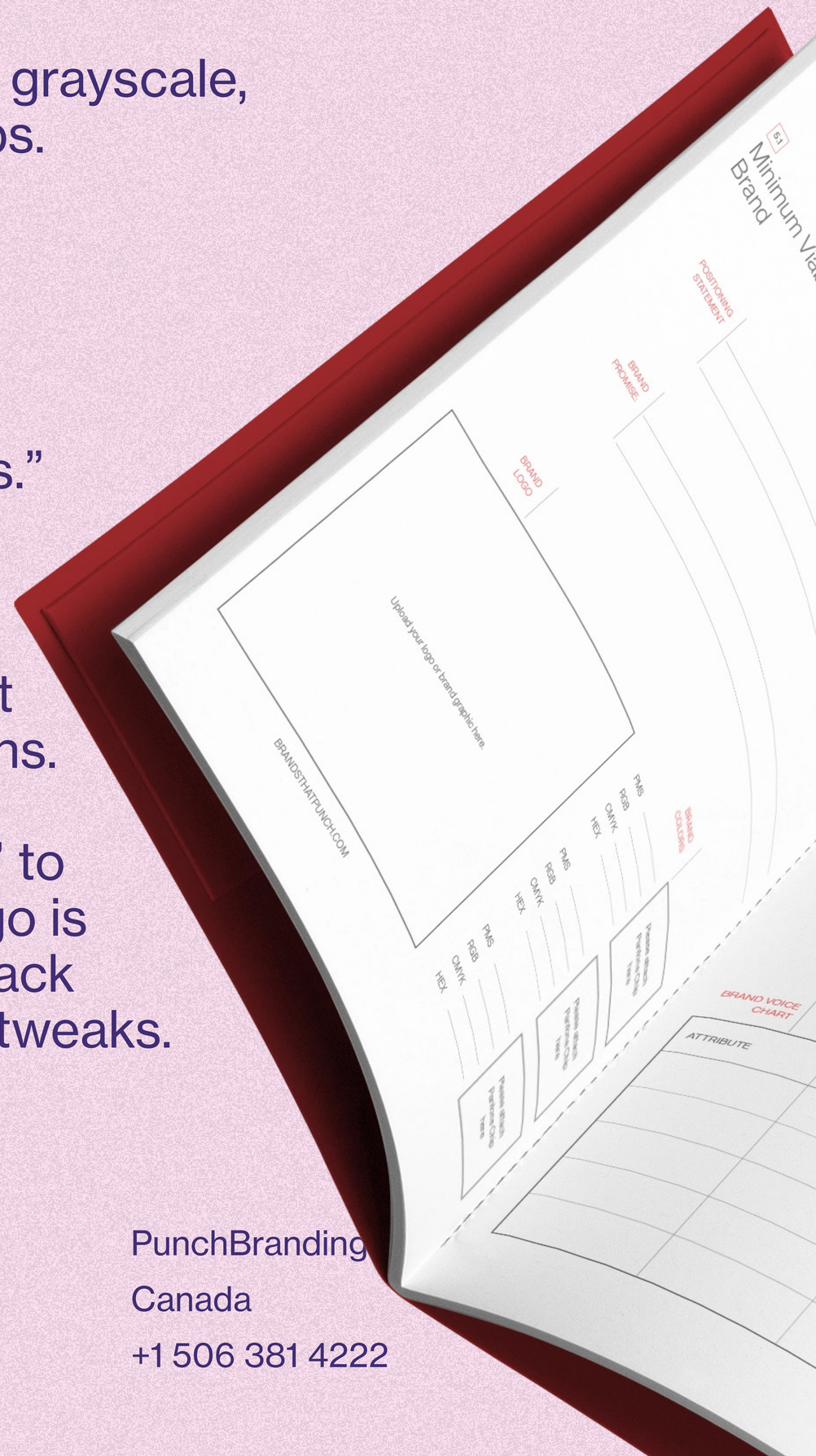
2. Test it small, large, in grayscale, and on real-life mockups.

3. Run through these ten questions honestly.

4. Score each design one point for every “yes.”

5. The logo with the most meaningful yeses, not just the most stylish presentation, wins.

If you can answer “yes” to seven or more, your logo is likely ready. If not, go back to strategy, not design tweaks.



PunchBranding.ae
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 321 4114

PunchBranding
Canada
+1 506 381 4222

Approve with belief, not just taste

You don’t have to love your logo right away. You just have to believe in it. Even the world’s most iconic logos weren’t loved at first sight.

The Nike Swoosh was dismissed by its founders as too simple. Apple’s logo was once called “childish.”

Yet over time,
belief made them iconic.

Download Workbook

brandsthatpunch.com/sbb

PunchBranding.ca

Canada

+1 506 381 4222