

THE LURE OF THE LOGO

Local Designers Weigh in on Using This Simple But Effective Marketing Tool **BY DYLAN KLEMPNER**

Last September, Players by the Sea Community Theatre launched a new logo that executive director Joe Schwarz says brought energy, life and professionalism to the organization's marketing efforts. The apostrophe-like icon, which also calls to mind classic drama masks, now appears on the theater's advertisements, playbills, posters- even its building's façade. It provides a consistent message reflecting the inventive, cutting-edge performances that continue to entertain and educate theatergoers on the First Coast.

Logos, though often quite simple in design, play a significant role in delivering an organization's unique message. They are a prominent part of the modern landscape, found on everything from clothing to billboards, computers to buildings. According to local art directors and designers, logos are a crucial element to a successful marketing plan and deserve careful consideration.

"Any organization or individual that is looking to establish an identity needs a logo," explains Robert Orndorff, creative director of First Coast Creative. Meanwhile, Mary Fisher, owner of Jacksonville's Mary Fisher Design says the images are "the most important piece of branding a business can have." Arien Kloske of Brunet-Garcia Advertising Inc., who designed Players by the Sea's new logo, said the icons give a company a chance to make "a great first impression."

Businesses and nonprofits also recognize the importance of logos. "Behind every successful business, there's an equally successful logo," says Eddie Orzechowski, creative director of the Automotive Broadcasting Network in Jacksonville, who used Orndorff's First Coast Creative to design his company's logo.

Orndorff said a good logo works as a communication tool that conveys important information about a company visually. It translates information about the company's products or services to a specific audience with hopes of attracting interest. They work on both a practical and emotional level, he said, providing details about the company's brand, products and services, while also suggesting its "feel" or emotional message.

Companies can use specific design elements to position their products and differentiate themselves from competitors. Orndorff says that logos answer questions such as, "Is the company a Fortune 500 or a Mom 'n Pop? Is the company focused on Boutique or Mass Appeal?"

A successful logo also delivers its message quickly and addresses customer's needs, said Reyna Collura, an illustrator and graphic artist based in Gainesville. It must be simple enough to be read instantly by consumers, but stand out from other commonly seen images, she said.

So how can companies effectively make use of the logo? First, suggests Orndorff, the image "must be perfectly in tune with the marketing strategy." The choice of visual components- graphics, color and style- must reflect back on a company's core message.

Many popular logos on the First Coast effectively demonstrate this. The Jacksonville Jaguars' logo is perhaps the city's most prominent, says Fisher. It reflects the team's aggressive attitude and corresponds with other symbols from NFL teams. The other important logos are found along downtown Jacksonville's skyline. They include companies such as CSX, Bank of America, Wachovia, AT&T and the Florida Times-Union. According to Fisher, these images influence the community because people see them every day while driving in and out of the city.

If it is successful, a logo can last for decades, said Fisher, although "it may need a facelift every ten years or so."

According to Orndorff, when choosing their logos, Jacksonville's small business owners often



choose imagery that suggests local landscape features that consumers and patrons can identify with, including the sun, beaches and the ocean. Colors in Jacksonville are typically cool. Says Orndorff: "Blue is a popular color."

For those considering a logo makeover, Fisher says current design trends show a shift from two-color to full-color logos and the creation of hidden images and messages. Orndorff sees a lot of sans-serif fonts and simple styles found on the internet exemplified by companies like Facebook, Skype and Flickr. Kloske emphasized handwritten designs like the icon for the Tour De France bicycle race.

As logos continue to influence consumers in Jacksonville, local design firms have the talent necessary to serve the community, says the Automotive Broadcasting Network's Orzechowski. "Great designers and artists are not found only on Madison Avenue."

Schwarz of Player's by the Sea chose to work with Jacksonville-based Brunet-Garcia Advertising Inc., in part, because of his commitment to work with local talent since much of his organization's funding comes through the city's cultural council and private donors. "I feel it's important that I give back to the community that supports me," he says. Even if he didn't feel beholden to the community, Schwarz believes there was really no reason to look beyond Jacksonville. "We have incredibly talented agencies right here in town," says Schwarz. At a time when people can do business around the world, Schwarz found that staff from Brunet-Garcia spent time getting to know his organization. They went to shows, interviewed staff, inspected the building. "They could really understand who we were and what we're trying to do." The new logo has given his organization a cohesive visual message: "And that is just so important, that your message be consistent, that your story be told consistently, and that it reflects who you are."



One of Brunet-Garcia Advertising's designs will be featured in the January/February 2011 issue of Communication Arts in the premiere issue of its Typography Annual. Jefferson Rall, creative director, designed the silk-screened poster for the Players by the Sea production of *The Full Monty*, which was part of its re-branding.

Communication Arts is the largest international trade journal of visual communications. The first issue debuted in August 1959 as the Journal of Commercial Art. CA began an annual juried competition in 1960. All the CA competitions are juried by respected creative professionals who help to establish the annual competitions as benchmarks for excellence.