

How Fonts Impact Your Business

by David Gilman



It's hard to imagine, but worldwide, there are over 20,000 fonts, and each one expresses its own personality and expresses its own unique attributes.

Today, anyone with a computer has access to a wide selection of fonts, but not many have the ability to choose them or use them effectively. That's because most people have no real understanding of the true impression a specific font can deliver.

Each font has its own personality. Due to its distinct design, shape, and form each font conveys a meaning. A flowing, scripted font, for example, signifies something very different from a stout, aggressive font.

Fonts may be elegant, bold, or simple. They may be fanciful, imposing, or credible. They convey attributes like truth, leadership, or innovation. They symbolize the very essence and character of your firm. Chosen correctly, fonts have a profound impact on your company's visibility and identity in the market.

Many newspapers, for instance, use Times New Roman, a font that expresses authority and truthful information. In fact, the font was commissioned in 1931 by The Times of London to express strength and integrity. Those attributes have made it a perennial favorite of newspapers, magazines, and annual reports.

Another example is Apple Computer, known for its innovative products and their ease of use. To convey these attributes, Apple uses the font Myriad, known for its simplicity, precision, and clean, open shapes.

One of the biggest mistakes companies make when they are creating new marketing materials is to choose a font simply because they like it. While that may be a great way to select a flavor of ice cream, it is not the same with font selection: the fact that you prefer chocolate over strawberry says little about your personality, while the use of a specific font says a great deal about the personality of your company.

To make an intelligent, effective selection, you might consider these questions:

- Does the font express the essence of your company?
- Is it clear, legible, and easy on the eyes?
- Does it convey your firm's personality and character?

Smart companies choose a single dominant font that sends the right message and expresses its personality. Then they use it everywhere, in all marketing materials, from ads to signage to the Web. Select your corporate font carefully, and it will do its part in expressing your company in a consistent, unchanging, memorable way.

David Gilman is the founder and President of Cognito. He is dedicated to helping companies achieve the utmost recognition through eye-opening visual communications. In his 25 years in graphic design he has been published worldwide in numerous publications on brand identity and logo design. For more information, please visit www.cognitocreative.com.

