

Maya QNA_81	First published in 3DWorld Magazine September
Question:	<i>How do I add some spice to a 3D Logo? - talldreams, via the forums.</i>

Logos. IKEA, GAP, DKNY, Woolworth's, they've all got them and they're all different. However, despite their variety there are fundamental similarities in their designs, similarities that turn a piece of text into a dynamic and interesting flying logo.

In CG production you hardly ever get a chance to design a logo, someone else is paid to do that, so if you are doing this for yourself the first rule is to come up with a simple, legible design. Use a pencil and paper, it's a far more fluid design medium and you can do it in a Starbucks. Done that? Right, now scan in the design, put it in your front camera's imagePlane and then model your logo out of curves before lofting or extruding it to polygons or nurbs.

Oddly a flat-faced extruded polygon logo in 3d looks really two-dimensional. You're using a 3D medium so add some dimensional definition. Beveling a logo's edges adds something for lighting to interact with, giving striking lowlights and highlights. Either select the front edges and **edit Polygons > bevel** keeping a sharp edge rather than a rounded edge, or just select the front face and extrude it adding an offset.

With colour, to paraphrase "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade," *use it wisely*. Avoid using fancy textures and expecting them to look incredible, as they won't. Think of what you want to express and colour code your logo accordingly. For example, red logos show fire and spirit, blue logos show confidence. You can find information on colour meaning and symbolism on the web at sites like www.paintcafe.com.

Avoid complicated shadows or sitting logos on floors, especially shiny ones. By all means put a reflection map on your logo, as long as it is muted and preferably monochromatic, but if you must border your logo, do it with simple shapes such as an ellipse or box.

The cardinal rule with logos is K.I.S.S. - "Keep It Simple, Stupid!" If your logo works in black and white with very little else added to it, you're onto a winner.



Spot the odd one out? Bottom right? You think? Oh, you betcha. A veritable trash-fest of reflections and textures. Ouch, my eyes are hurting.



Oh, look at that. Cool, confident blue, the high quality render and the sharp bevels giving edge definition. It must be a high quality magazine.



I've created a monster! No bevel, nasty reflections, crap lighting and horrific use of a bump map for no apparent reason. Stick me in CGI prison.

6.Quick tip

Lofted bevels between curves and their offsets are often nasty. Instead, template the offset, duplicate the original and move it's CVs to match the offset.