



JAMES SCHRAMKO



SuperFastBusiness Presents

## Should You Change Your Logo?

The SuperFastBusiness podcast has a new logo. In this behind-the-scenes episode, James and designer Greg Merrilees talk about the process behind the change, some elements of good design, and why you might consider freshening up your own brand.

# Should You Change Your Logo?

*by SuperFastBusiness*



BEFORE

AFTER

## The SuperFastBusiness podcast logo

**James:** James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. Today, we're talking about design, so that means I've brought on a design expert. Welcome Greg Merrilees.

**Greg:** Good day James! How are you man?

**James:** I'm great. And you are my design expert. Thank you very much.

**Greg:** Thank you. It's good for me as well. I mean designing for market leaders gives us good exposure. So thanks for being an awesome client.

**James:** Well you've got a website called Studio1design.com. We're going to be talking about design and the process of design. In

particular, why did I change my iTunes logo? That's really the topic. If you've ever seen Zoolander, you're familiar with the blue steel look. Well, we ended up with the orange graphite look or the orange carbon fiber look. Greg, let's talk about the process of what happens between me deciding that I needed to change a logo to us ending up with a new logo. Are you up for that?

**Greg:** Yeah, sure man, yeah.

## The process of changing logos

**James:** So the first thing is when I was looking through the iTunes logos, I noticed that mine is nice and it kind of fits in with my brands. It's got the usual colors like blue, and a picture of me and the logo of the business. But it's not standing out. It really is not eye-catching. Originally when we did that logo, we were just making it consistent with our Facebook banner and our website, and just being uniform and consistent, but I had this urge to make it really stand out because I've noticed that a lot of the top shows have eye-grabbing podcast logos. And you only get a small bit of real estate and you're in the mix there with hundreds of other podcasts, probably thousands, but let's just limit it to the top 150.

My goal with the podcast is for people to notice my podcast first because I can't get them subscribed until they notice it. Once I get into it, then I want them to be able to easily recognize it when they're scrolling through their list of podcasts or on their Apple TVs, etc.

So the first driver for this was me, in this case, the customer, saying, "Greg, I need my podcast logo to stand out." Let's talk about what flips into your process here. Greg, as the professional designer, what do you do next?

**Greg:** Yeah. Normally, we would have a pretty in-depth questionnaire for these types of things especially with a new client, but because I know you and I know your audience and we've designed for you quite a few times in the past, your brief to me was literally that, "I need something to stand out, can you show me some radical ideas, I've got no reference, I just want an eye-grabber." Just based on that, what goes through my mind is, 'OK, I know James Schramko. He's straight to the point. I want to design him something that's really unique.' So therefore,

I came up with the idea of like a cool, hand-painted, movie poster type of look and then I showed you some reference images. You said, “Yup. Like the direction.”

**James:** Let’s talk about that a bit. Let’s stop there.

**Greg:** Yeah.

## Context and relevance

**James:** Firstly, context and relevance. You know about me, you’ve been in my community for a while, you’re a customer, you’re a supplier, you’ve done ongoing work for me and lots of referrals. So that’s the first thing. When you’re engaging a designer, it’s important that they get you and that they understand. So if there’s no survey or questionnaire, then you’d have to be concerned. If you’re just popping along to Fiverr and there’s no background checking or contextual checking, you don’t know what you’re going to get. That’s probably step one.

Step two is as the person issuing the design request, when I say, “Greg, I’ve got nothing in mind, I just want something eye-grabbing,” then I have to be careful as a customer not to then be hypercritical when you come back with whatever you come back with because I imagine that some people will give you an open slather brief because they really trust you. Sometimes they are like, “Oh no, not that, not that, not that, not that.”

I imagine as a professional designer that will be infuriating, when there’s like, “OK, well you come up with ideas but then I want to shut them all down.” So I guess the short version is would it be helpful for a designer if someone were able to say what they don’t want?

**Greg:** Yeah. 100%. That’s in our questionnaire as well. It’s equally as important as finding out what they do want. So we’ve got a lot of questions on our questionnaire. But yeah, in your case, it was a bit different because we’ve designed for you in the past.

**James:** When I commit to that giving an open slather, I’ve got to be flexible with what comes back because I’m saying, you’re the professional designer. You’ve got the taste. You understand design palettes and what the market is asking for. With all the jobs you do, I’m not going to tell you how to do your job and end up designing myself

something egocentric to my own opinion. I'm going to end up with something that is relevant from a design perspective.

**Greg:** Yeah absolutely. It can be quite difficult from a designer's perspective if you don't get any type of reference points but at the same time, having heard that and knowing you, it can be quite beneficial to not give any reference and trust your designer. Another thing that we didn't even discuss about the whole process was the price. So price wasn't a considering factor either. Just knowing that, I just wanted to give you the best result possible. So I employed my best illustrator that I knew could do a hand painting of you that just looks fantastic. The results are just incredible in my opinion.



**James:** Something like a design can be so leveraged. I mean look, a wild example would be just talk about an iPhone, right? A simple device where Steve Jobs forbode the engineers to use a stylus. He wanted one button on it, like one button. Can you believe it? He wanted it to look amazing. I'm sure he put a lot of effort into it. However, the amount of revenue that can be generated from good design is phenomenal. I know that a great iTunes design can generate me a lot of subscribers. I also suspect strongly that the algorithm for ranking podcasts has a lot to do with how many new subscribers join a podcast rather than how many people are already listening to it. That's why some podcasts can leapfrog into the marketplace, when they have a lot of new people coming to it each week. That's what I believe is one of the algorithms and that's definitely one of the goals. I want more subscribers to my podcast on an ongoing basis. That is why I needed something eye-

catching.

I just want to talk about you came back to me with some ideas. How did you formulate those ideas and what sort of process are we looking at? I know what I received but what's going on in your side of it?

## Formulating ideas

**Greg:** Yeah absolutely. I guess it comes down to the designer where they would start. I like to use Pinterest as a starting point. If I'm just trying to think of something fresh and I don't have anything immediately comes to mind, I just research on Pinterest because it's a really good resource for ideas. Then after probably a good half an hour, I couldn't really find anything that I thought would suit what you're after here, then I actually took a break. I think I went for a walk that day.

On the walk, I just came up with what I like and I always come back to, 'Would I wear that on a t-shirt?' for instance, and I probably wouldn't wear this because it's you.

**James:** Come on! I wore your t-shirt.

**Greg:** [laughs] You did, but it didn't have a picture of me on it. The point is, though, that you want it to be cool. I like to design things that I think look quite cool. So I just thought of movie posters and Pulp Fiction. You think of the old movie posters for Pulp Fiction. They just look really cool. They're all done by an illustrator, or an artist, a painter. And they're not photos. It's a piece of artwork. So I figured that's the only way I'm going to be able to provide something that's completely unique is to hire one of my really talented illustrators to come up with a piece of artwork as opposed to a photo.

**James:** So within your design business, you have different suppliers who can come on contract and supply things as you need them because you're looking for that particular style or look. So if you like, you're kind of a design aggregator and curator. You know what's around, you know who supplies it, and you save someone like me having to try and go and find, firstly think about what look I want and secondly, where would I find someone to supply that. You're just like an inhouse, like a travel agent I suppose. Just deal with one person who gets it and then you do all the legwork between the different suppliers and

contractors, and you manage all of that yourself.

**Greg:** Yup, pretty much, absolutely. We do have some talent in our team. I hire based on talent and for various reasons, majority of what we do is website design, but yeah, there's a huge need for illustration and this style of digital painting. So yeah, I've got a variety of people that can help.

## Getting feedback

**James:** You presented me with a few options. I gave you some feedback based on those. What did I say? I can't really remember.

**Greg:** Well, you said, "My t-shirt's on sideways and I look Chinese."  
[laughs]

**James:** Oh, that was kind of like the first draft of the actual end product, wasn't it?"

**Greg:** Yeah exactly.

**James:** The first one you gave me, 'I like where you're going with this. Sounds great. Go for it.' You signaled to me that there'll be some sort of specialist involved that might make it more expensive than a different type of design. I said, "That's fine." You presented me with the first version. Yeah, I only had some limited feedback.

Now rather than go to my market, which I see a lot of people do, but I really think that this is just a marketing ploy. When people go, "What do you think of my new logo?" You're going to get a thousand people saying this or that, or I could recommend you a different designer. You'll never make a great design by committee. Really often the last people that I'm going to be asking with the greatest amount of respect, are...

People on Facebook, they're not really scored in any particular way. I might ask my very best 10 customers because whatever they feel might be important. Probably not going to ask family and friends because they're not really in the market. The ultimate thing I want to ask is the iTunes marketplace chart. I want to put something there and see if people vote for it by subscribing. That's the ultimate thing. It's like a sales offer. The ultimate vote is when the customer opens their wallet.

**Greg:** Yeah, exactly.

**James:** I don't really listen to too much feedback in the process. I did post it to my team because like you, they know me, they know what we do and what we don't do, and they know our customers back to front. And also, I don't bias them with my thoughts. I just post it and say, "What do you think about this?" They were the ones that said, "The t-shirt looks crooked, and you look a bit Chinese." They said, "Hey, look, from a Game of Thrones's perspective, you're a white walker standing behind the Mother of Dragon's fires." Game of Thrones is so popular, why wouldn't you tap into that?

They talked about the artistic perspective, "There's light coming from the back, and there's light coming from the right side, and blue light to the left side. Your skin is glowing. The shadows seem a bit unusual." "Hmm, I like the background color. Can I have copy of that in 1080p please?"

**Greg:** Ha ha. We can arrange that.

**James:** From an advertising perspective, they said, "The fiery background is eye-catching, and the strange shadows are precisely what makes me look more at it."

**Greg:** What I tried to create there was a bit of intrigue. Because if you do look in iTunes and you see these tiny, little squares with graphics or images on there for each podcast that's out there, with yours, it's quite symbolic and quite simple in its approach where it's literally an orange background with a silhouette of a person, but you can't really tell who that person is until you really zoom in. So I wanted to create a little bit of intrigue and that's what we've done.

**James:** Someone said the squint doesn't translate well. It makes you look sort of evil. I think it was copied from a picture of the beach where you were squinting.

**Greg:** It was.

**James:** They have requested a more natural thing. So in any case, I only went back to you and I think I just said, "Hey, the t-shirt is crooked, and I look a bit Chinese." No offense to anyone who's Chinese, but I'm not

Chinese. I'm 100% Caucasian. I just want to look like me. If that makes sense. We made those slight adjustments and just put it out there. No survey from the clients, nothing. And then we put it to the customers on Facebook and what sort of feedback did we get there, Greg?

**Greg:** Oh they were awesome. I loved hearing that feedback. Things like, "You look like a super hero, bad boy, that Zoolander is so hot right now." I think that was Ryan Levesque. Ezra said terrifying and awesome at the same time. And there's been a heap of new comments since.

**James:** Yeah. A lot of super heroes, and Avengers, and Instagrammy, and when is the super suit going to come? That's great. I mean we got SuperFastBusiness. I guess I could be a superhero of my brand. But still the logo is very prominent the way it stands out on the black colored t-shirt. My name is there because I'm still driving this show. It's been well received. Now what I need to do is measure what change we get in ranking and how many new subscribers we attract to the show. It doesn't mean that it's going to be permanent. It just means that my starting theory is that it's better than the old logo, and I posted it inside my own community and shared the before and after with them so that I can garner feedback from my very best customers, the ones who actually pay and turn up every day. So that was important to get feedback there. I haven't really had much reaction. So there's nothing negative there or whatever.

Now what we're doing is make a podcast about it and we'll put the before and after on this post, which will be called "Should You Change Your Logo?" We'll take comments and feedback on there too. We'll see if we get any new things about it there.

**Greg:** Yeah. That will be cool man.

**James:** So from the design perspective, what happens when I push it out there into the market? Do you get nervous or are you intrigued as to what happens or you're on to the next job?

**Greg:** Yeah, just onto the next job. But I'm quite proud of this one because it is a piece of artwork as opposed to just a graphic. It's quite unique. Yeah, very proud of it. A bit nervous about the comments. But so far, so good.

**James:** Now as a designer, if we're listening to this and we think, 'Hmm, our logo is a bit sh\*\*. Might need to freshen it up.'" What sort of things should someone think about that they're going to have to talk to you or their designer about to get a feel for what they actually want? How do they start tuning their brief so to speak? What are couple of the key questions?

## Things to think about

**Greg:** Yeah, a couple of key questions really. What is the purpose of the logo? Like is it for a business or a product brand or podcast for instance. Is it a sub brand under an umbrella brand? How is it going to be used? Like website, stationery signage, etc. But really, the designer should dig deeper and ask questions like, what does the brand represent? Like for instance, is it modern or classic? Is it cool or corporate? Playful or serious? If you're selling products or services, are they cheap or expensive products or services? Because the logo needs to reflect all those things. Even asking the client what kind of look and feel they like. Do they like simple or complex, or single-color or multi-color, photographic or illustrated for instance, and we also like to know if they have any images or any type of reference point and what they don't like, of course.

**James:** Nice. So look and feel. There's different choices there, right?

**Greg:** Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I mean yeah really. I mean there's a whole range of different looks even if you're just talking graphics and not painting or whatever. You can have a flat kind of look, which I think we discussed on our last podcast. It's more than just a flat color kind of look, which is quite a modern feel today. But you want to be careful that you don't design something that's too modern because it may date it, it might be stuck in this particular timeframe.



But you want to also think of your logo for maybe a three to five-year period and even beyond if you like. But you also think about what's important for your brand. It really needs to appeal to your target market. So to me, I don't like to do anything that's too cliché, like for instance, hairdressers use scissors in their logos or plumbers use pipes and dentists use teeth, etc. But what we try to do and say, which is pretty much what we've done with your SuperFastBusiness logo is to use an icon that's more symbolic of your business, like yours is an arrow that symbolizes upward growth, Nike, they use a swoosh icon, which is kind of like a tick, like an achievement, Mercedes use the three-pointed star, which I think from memory when they first designed that was to symbolize motorizing the air, the land and the sea. Is that right, James?

**James:** That's correct Greg.

**Greg:** There you go.

**James:** Well done. Good history knowledge.

**Greg:** [laughs] Excellent. So yeah, we just try to be a little bit more abstract if you like and not too cliché or obvious.

**James:** Yeah, that's very helpful. OK, so it's really making sure that you pick a style. I mean we used to use a lot of cartoons in our business but they may kind of grew up a bit, matured so that the current logo is more representative of what we do is like a photo realistic sketch type thing. So it fits in with what we do.

I guess you also got to make sure you're attracting the right type of

audience. It seems like I've attracted people who don't mind a sort of superhero or a bit of edgy, lurky, danger, fun, curiosity type image.

**Greg:** Yeah absolutely. You help businesses. But businesses are real people and they find things appealing that are cool and edgy. That's how they want to be represented as well.

**James:** And how did we end up with orange? I know there's a lot of color psychology with brands.

## Color psychology

**Greg:** Yeah. There is indeed. If you look at the bigger brands in the world, there are some colors that they choose because it reflects or represents their brand in a certain way. Like Cadbury and Hallmark choose purple, that's because it represents luxury and sophistication. Coke and Ferrari choose red because it symbolizes energy, courage and strength. Facebook, American Express choose blue because it's trustworthy. Greenpeace, BP, they use green because it's a natural, earthy, friendly kind of color. Apple, Mercedes, Rolex, they chose silver because it's neutral, it's calm, and it's really classy and upmarket.

**James:** SilverCircle.

**Greg:** There you go. Exactly.

**James:** Pop that one in there. Apple, Mercedes, Rolex, SilverCircle.

**Greg:** SilverCircle.

**James:** They're all using that silver thing.

**Greg:** Notice that they're all a limited color palette so it's more memorable if it's limited as opposed to being multi, multi colors in my opinion.

**James:** Right. So orange is kind of, very vibrant.

**Greg:** Yeah, orange is really fiery and also a sense of fun, like Fanta use orange and Nickelodeon use orange. But in a sea of iTunes images, orange tends to stand out until now that we've done this podcast, everyone will have orange so it won't stand out anymore.

**James:** Well look, in fairness, I think there are a couple of other podcasters who have orange logos. I don't think we're saying we're the first.

**Greg:** No, not at all.

**James:** However, I didn't come to you and say, "Greg, make me a copy of such and such," or "I want an orange logo." My brief was, "I want to stand out."

**Greg:** Exactly.

**James:** I think orange and bright yellow are the two most standing out colors to the eye spectrum, whereas the one that stands out the least is like blue, green and grey.

**Greg:** Absolutely.

**James:** Those colored cars have more accidents.

**Greg:** Yeah.

**James:** Because you don't notice them. They blend into the natural environment, the sky, the ground. Grey, grey cloud even.

## Is it time to change your logo?

**James:** How will we know when it's time to change it again?

**Greg:** I personally think it's good to change a logo when you're sick of looking at. Ha-ha. I wouldn't do it too soon, but I would say three to five years is a good timeframe.

**James:** Right. Well that's good to know. I was enjoying the last one but it's just too bland now. I think my whole brand is getting really clear. I've really reduced my business focus point to just SuperFastBusiness and SilverCircle. So I'm getting a lot more cut through on focusing on each component. iTunes is still a huge, long-term play. That's a great marketing channel for my business and I'm backing it. I'm going to be creating great content. I mean aside from this amazing show, there'll be more coming and I think it's important.

So let's just talk about what should we do? We've been listening to this

now, we've got an idea that we might want to change our logo, what's the next step?

## What to do next?

**Greg:** Yeah. So first, just review your brand's logo and ask yourself, is it a visual representation of everything that your brand stands for? Don't skimp on this identity piece. Remember that a good logo should last around three to five years in my opinion. If you think about over a five-year period, what the cost of that logo actually works out to be per year, it's not very much. I want to let people know, not to skimp and sort of select or choose the cheapest design that they can find. Invest in it because it's more of a long term investment.

**James:** Sweet. Greg, where can someone go and get a logo from you?

**Greg:** [laughs] You can go to [Studio1design.com](http://Studio1design.com).

**James:** Yeah. Let them know James sent you. Greg is the best. He's amazing. I highly recommend him. He's responsible for our top-level design stuff and the person who I refer to anyone saying, "Hey, I want a professional design."

**Greg:** Thanks man.

**James:** Design is such an important element to usability and being memorable. Great example actually, someone recently referred me to a friend of theirs who was interested in hooking up and they had a particular brand of a product. I went along to their site and looked at it, and it was kind of fairly bland and generic. I looked around for a while. It's in a topic that I'm really, absolutely fascinated with and have a deep knowledge of. And then like 15 minutes later, I couldn't even remember the name of the product. It was just nothing compelling, or attractive or interesting about the name of the brand or the way that it was presented that hooked me. I thought that's a great example of why it's time to step up and build a bigger brand around yourself.

The other thing that I've learned of course recently is you can actually sell a business that has a strong brand. For example, [SEOpartner.com](http://SEOpartner.com), it was such a great, strong brand for that service business that I ran for seven years, maybe eight years. It became saleable because it became

known as something substantial beyond just me.

**Greg:** I love that.

**James:** Yup. So build your brand. You know Greg, one of our first conversations when you came onboard for coaching, I was really fussy about your domain name?

**Greg:** You were indeed. We changed that real quick.

**James:** It made a difference?

**Greg:** It did indeed, yeah. We got rid of the hyphens, we went .com. It cost a fair bit but we negotiated down from a fair bit more. It's turned my brand from a local brand into a global brand. So it's been incredibly good for business.

**James:** And it's been years now. And that's the thing you emphasized. Design, it's not a pop-a-job on Fiverr this week or go along an istockphoto and grab a picture and stick some words over the top. It's not that level anymore. You've got to play a bigger game and a longer game. I think it's something you really should invest in because I've been the beneficiary of having a better brand. Greg, you've been instrumental and helped me. So thanks so much.

**Greg:** It's a pleasure. Finally, I just want to say, don't let design be the reason that people don't take you seriously. If you've got an awesome product or service, design needs to reflect that.

**James:** It really is, people buy the cover, not the book. It's how they sell books on Amazon predominantly. That front cover is so important. You can put a good front cover on your podcast or your website or t-shirts if you're making those. Greg can help you with all of that. Thanks so much Greg.

**Greg:** Thank you James. Appreciate it.



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