



PUTTING AI TO WORK · RESOURCES

Logo and Design Prompts *That Work*

Prompt patterns for exploration — and the two warnings that come with them.

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Image models are a sketchbook, not a designer. They are very good at showing you forty directions before lunch, and not good at finishing one. Used that way — exploration first, human finish second — they are one of the fastest ways to figure out what you actually want your brand to look like.

The difference between mush and useful output is the shape of the prompt. The pattern below is the whole method.

The pattern: subject, style, constraint, negative

Subject is the thing itself, stated plainly. **Style** is the world it lives in — name materials, eras, moods, other disciplines. **Constraint** is what production will demand of it. **Negative** is the list of things the model will otherwise do by default. All four, every time:

COPY THIS PATTERN — A WORKED EXAMPLE

Subject: a monogram of the letter D for a consulting firm.

Style: flat vector mark, single ink color on a cream background, editorial, generous whitespace, the confidence of an old publishing house.

Constraint: geometry simple enough to embroider; still readable at favicon size; works in one color.

Negative: no gradients, no 3D, no metallic effects, no photorealism, no shadows, no text other than the letter.

The negatives matter more than they look. A model's defaults — gradients, glow, ornament — are everyone's defaults, which is exactly what a mark cannot afford to be. Say what you will not accept — and the survivors get distinctive fast.

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Iterating on a direction

When something promising appears, do not start over and do not change everything. Vary one axis at a time:

COPY THIS PROMPT

Keep the composition and geometry of the previous image exactly. Change only the line weight. Show me four variations: hairline, light, medium, heavy.

Swap the axis each round — weight, then proportion, then the single detail that bothers you. And keep a kill list: a running note of what you have ruled out and why. Paste it into every new session so the model stops re-offering what you already rejected. The kill list is also the brief you will eventually hand a designer, and it is worth more than the images.

From concept to something you can use

Ask for flat, high-contrast, geometrically simple output — it survives redrawing. Because redrawing is the plan: when a direction wins, a human designer rebuilds it as clean vector artwork, fixes the spacing the model fudged, and delivers files that scale. The model's output is the brief. The designer's output is the logo.

Two caveats, stated plainly

Check trademarks before you use anything. These models have seen every logo on the internet, and they can hand you something confusingly similar to a mark that is already taken — without telling you, because they do not know. Before anything goes on a sign, a site, or a filing: search the USPTO trademark database, run a plain image search, and if the mark matters to the business, have a trademark attorney look at it. An afternoon of checking is cheap. A rebrand under protest is not.

Purely AI-generated art may not qualify for copyright protection. Protection attaches to human authorship. A mark you generated and used as-is may be a mark you cannot stop others from using. This is the second reason the human designer is not optional when it matters: their finished, human-authored artwork is what you can own. Treat everything out of the model as a concept draft, and put a person's hand on anything you intend to defend.

The model is the sketchbook. The designer is the signature.