SILENT SIGNALS

What does your Wordmark Whisper to your Audience?

TRUST

LOGODEK

A LOGODEK REPORT
SILENT SIGNALS

Every wordmark sends **silent signals**, subtle, often subconscious cues that influence how a brand is perceived. From the choice of typeface and font weight to letter spacing and color, these design elements communicate messages about trustworthiness, quality, price point, and a raft of other attributes without uttering a word. Operating on an almost instinctive level, these **silent signals** shape audience perceptions in ways many do not realize. Crafting an effective wordmark requires an understanding of these subtle cues to ensure that your brand communicates the right message at a glance.

Drawing on insights from more than one hundred members of the design community and three hundred and fifty members of the general public, this study explores the fundamental qualities of wordmarks and offers valuable insights for designers, marketers and business owners.

Specifically, this study delves into the properties most closely associated with **trust**. The results reveal a surprising gap between the preferences of professional designers and those of the general public. While designers may prioritize legibility and structure, the broader audience gravitates toward familiarity and precedent.

Read on to uncover the practical insights that will help elevate the design of your logo and look out for the next report in the **Silent Signals** series.

LOGODEK

LogoDek is an AI-driven logo generator that harnesses machine learning techniques, to create professional wordmarks. By analyzing extensive datasets of real-world logos and a curated library of premium typefaces, LogoDek identifies subtle visual attributes and integrates them into its predictive model. This deep-learning enables the creation of highly tailored, impactful wordmarks that are not only visually striking but are aligned with proven design principles, effectively communicating trust, authority, and professionalism.

Understanding the **slient signals** conveyed by wordmarks helps us refine the design algorithms that underpin our predictive model. Analyzing how these signals differ between the design commnity and the general public means we can develop features that balance both perspectives, ensuring our wordmarks resonate with target audiences while maintaining professional appeal.

Try for yourself at **www.logodek.com**

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This report distills insights from a survey that explores the specific properties of wordmarks that communicate trust. By understanding these nuances, businesses can refine their logos, increasing the likelihood of a lasting, positive impression.

SILENT SIGNALS
INTRODUCTION

Drawing on insights from more than one hundred members of the design community and three hundred and fifty members of the general public, this study by LogoDek explores the fundamental qualities of wordmarks and offers valuable insights for designers, marketers and business owners.

Specifically, this study delves into the properties most closely associated with trust. The results reveal a surprising gap between the preferences of professional designers and those of the general public. While designers prioritize aesthetics, the broader audience gravitates toward familiarity.

By delving into these attributes, this report provides the recipes that can can elevate your wordmarks from functional placeholder to a first impression that can profoundly change the trajectory of a business.

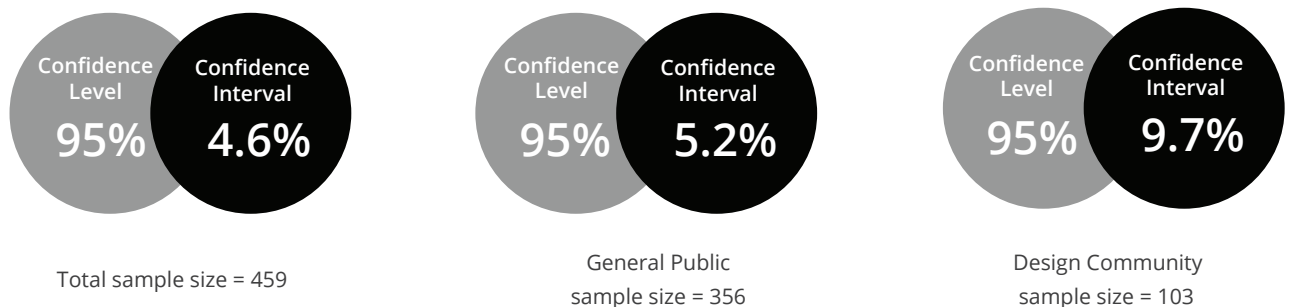Read on to uncover the practical insights that will help elevate the design of your logo.

Are we just talking about typefaces?

The typeface is the visual foundation of any wordmark,. however, an impactful logo is more than a nice font. Different cases and subtle adjustments to font weight and spacing hugely influence how a wordmark is perceived by its audience.

Beyond the typeface, other fundamental design choices inlcuding backplates, keylines, and color choices all add further nuance.

SAMPLE SIZE

Total sample size = 459 (103 people from LogoDek's LinkedIn network and 356 readers of The South African).

Confidence Level	Confidence Interval
95%	4.6%

Total sample size = 459

Confidence Level	Confidence Interval
95%	5.2%

General Public
sample size = 356

Confidence Level	Confidence Interval
95%	9.7%

Design Community
sample size = 103

WORDMARKS &
TRUST

A positive first impression conveys professionalism, reliability, and authenticity, laying the foundation for trust. By optimising early interactions, a business can create an immediate sense of confidence and trustworthiness. Our survey examines how the design of your wordmark can help foster these essential qualities.

> **Trust is established in the first moments of interaction. Whether it's a handshake or a logo, the initial perception sets the tone for the relationship that follows.**

TYPE STYLE

The first attribute examined was font classification. Wordmarks rendered in Serif, Sans-Serif, Display, Script, and Slab font styles, presented in both uppercase and lowercase, were shown to our sample audience. Participants were asked to select one or two wordmarks they found most trustworthy.

General Public
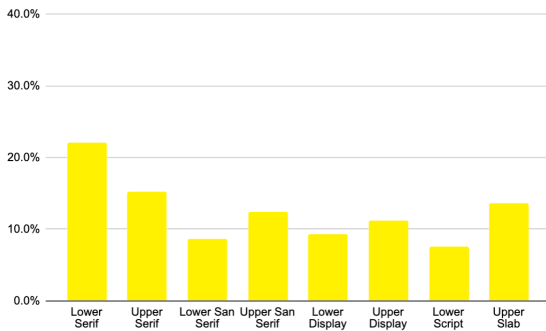
Design Community

The general public found a lower case serif font the most trustworthy, suggesting familiarity and tradition communicate trust, rather than minimalism.
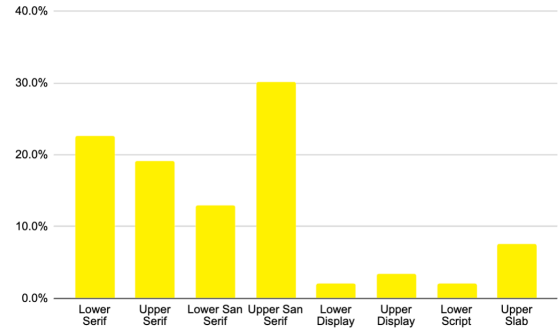
Members of the design community consider modern, clean, upper case san serif font the most trustworthy. It seems simplicity and authority suggests trust to an informed audience.

Most trusted:

Horizon
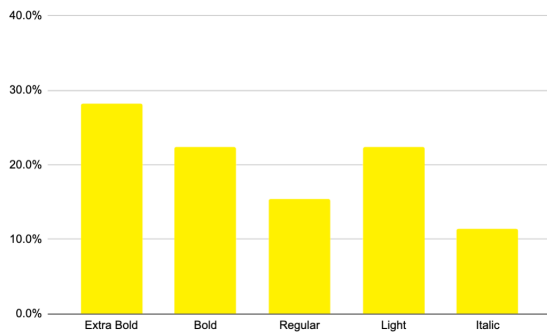
Most trusted:

HORIZON

Least trusted:

Horizon

Least trusted:

Horizon

FONT WEIGHT

Fonts carry weight, literally and figuratively, and this was the next property we examined, with italic wordmarks thrown in for good measure.

General Public

Design Community

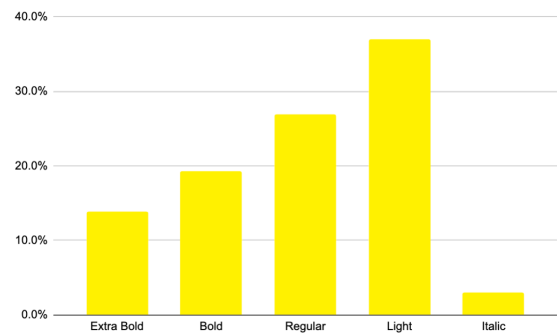The general public consider the gravitas of wordmarks rendered in an extra bold font the most trustworthy.

Most trusted:

HORIZON

Least trusted:

HORIZON

For the design community, less is more, finding wordmarks rendered with light fonts the most trustworthy.
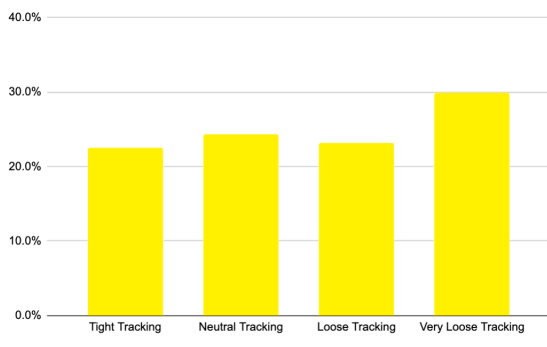
Most trusted.

HORIZON

Least trusted:

HORIZON

While designers and the public differ in their opinions on the most trustworthy typefaces and weights, there is unanimous agreement on the least trustworthy. Script and italic fonts were consistently judged as the least reliable across all wordmarks.

LETTER SPACING

The next font attribute we considered was letter spacing, specifically tracking. Tracking refers to the space between characters, increasing or decreasing the spacing between the characters affects the overall density and appearance of the text.

General Public

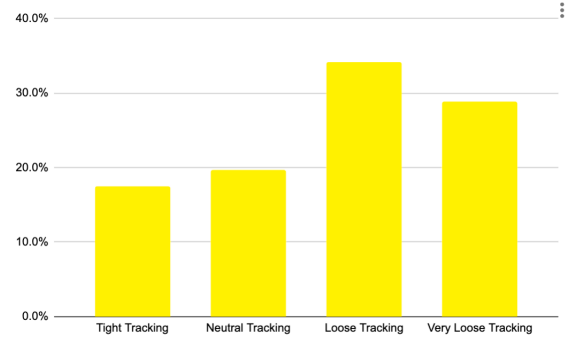The general public found very generously spaced wordmarks most trustworthy.

Most trusted:

H O R I Z O N

Least trusted:

HORIZON

Design Community

The design community found generously spaced wordmarks most trustworthy.
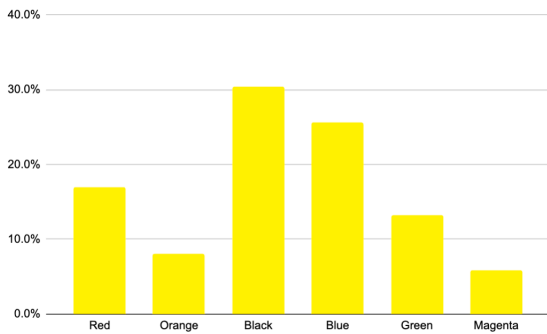
Most trusted:

H O R I Z O N

Least trusted:

HORIZON

Both designers and the general public perceive generously spaced lettering in wordmarks as more trustworthy than tightly packed letters. The open and clear design of well-spaced lettering perhaps conveys transparency, while cramped letters are less open, resulting in more opaque wordmarks.

COLOUR

Of course, colour plays a significant role in shaping perceptions of trustworthiness. Although extensive research has been conducted in this area, it would be remiss not to include colour as a factor in this study, given its powerful influence on how brands are perceived.

General Public

The general public found black and blue wordmarks most trustworthy.

Design Community
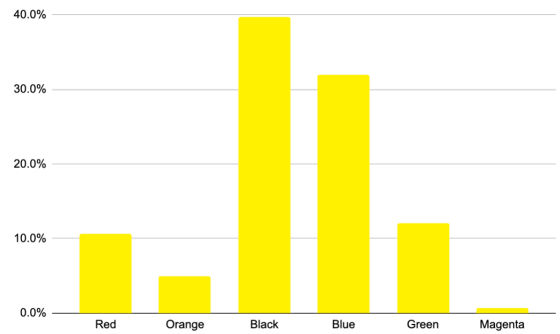
The design community also found black and blue wordmarks the most trustworthy.

Our survey aligns with previous studies on color perception, finding that both the general public and the design community consider black and blue the most trustworthy colors. However, cultural context can significantly influence color perceptions. For instance, respondents from East Asia consistently rated the color red more positively.

Most trusted:

HORIZON

Least trusted:
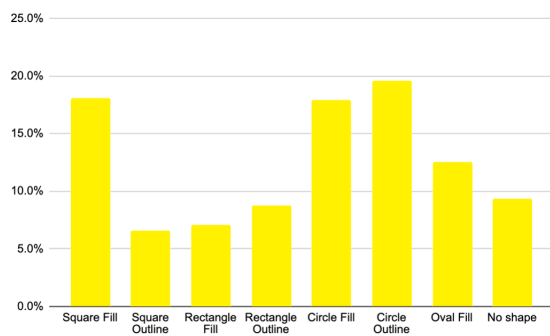
HORIZON

Most trusted:

HORIZON

Least trusted:

HORIZON

SHAPE

The final attribute examined in this study is the use of common shapes and backgrounds in logos, specifically squares, rectangles, circles, and ovals, both as solid shapes and outlines.

General Public

The general public found circles, both filled and as outlines, the most trustworthy, closely followed by filled squares.

Most trusted:

Least trusted:

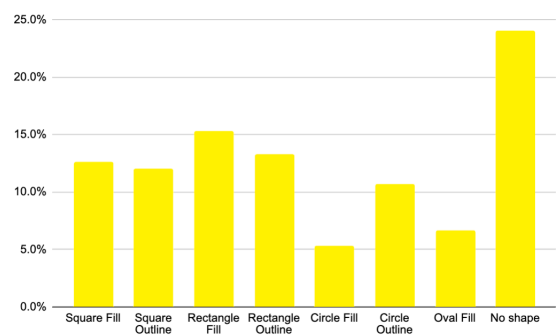## Design Community

The designer community preferred minimal wordmarks without a background shape or outline most trustworthy.

Most trusted:

Least trusted:

Our survey reveals no clear consensus regarding the communication of trust via backgound shapes in wordmarks. Similar to colour, this may be an area where cultural context and audience demographics significantly influence perceptions.

LOGODEK

WORDMARKS & TRUST
CONCLUSION

This study by [LogoDek](#) highlights a fundamental insight about how successfully wordmarks convey trust. While clarity and openness are universally valued, there is a striking gap between the preferences of designers and the general public.

UNIVERSAL TRUTHS

Generous letter spacing emerged as a clear point of agreement between both groups, with well-spaced wordmarks consistently perceived as the most trustworthy. This reflects a shared appreciation for transparency and openness, as opposed to the restrictive and opaque impression created by tightly packed lettering. Similarly, black and blue were universally identified as the most trustworthy colours.

There was also consensus regarding the least trustworthy elements in wordmarks. Italics, script fonts, tightly spaced lettering, and warm colors consistently ranked as the least trustworthy choices.

MIND THE GAP

Perhaps the most significant finding is the divide between how designers and the general public perceive trust in wordmarks. The general public favors lower-case, extra-bold serif fonts, associating a traditional and commanding appearance with authority and credibility.

In contrast, designers overwhelmingly prefer modern, clean, upper-case, sans-serif fonts, which they see as conveying simplicity and professionalism. Designers also gravitate toward light fonts, reflecting a "less is more" mindset that prioritizes refinement over boldness.

CONTEXT IS KEY

This gap illustrates the importance of understanding the audience's perspective when designing wordmarks. Designers must balance their expertise with an empathetic understanding of their audience if they are to create truly trustworthy designs.

Cultural context adds another layer of complexity. While black and blue wordmarks were trusted across all demographics, the study found significant regional differences in the perception of other colors.

Designing trusted wordmarks is an exercise in empathy and cultural awareness. By recognising the gap between professional expertise and public perception, designers can craft wordmarks that look good and inspire trust.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
JIM BOULTON

Jim's career in design began in 1997 when as a student, he sold an animation tool he developed to MTV. Over the past three decades. Jim has founded several design and technology companies and operated at C-Suite level at multiple award-winning branding agencies. His clients include Agent Provocateur, Bang & Olufsen, E*Trade, Guinness, Johnson & Johnson, Lego, Lexus and many more.

A published author and historian of technology, Jim has had the privilege of learning from some of the most influential figures in technology. These include Alan Emtage, inventor of the search engine; Alan Kay, whose work inspired Steve Jobs and the entire Apple suite; and most recently Lynn Conway, the visionary who conceived the foundry model the semiconductor industry is based on, and invented the microchip design metholody VLSI (Very Large Scale Integration).

Jim's Digital Archaeology exhibition has toured internationally with the Barbican, has won praise from The British Library and The Library of Congress, and sponsorship from Google and Raspberry Pi. His **Unsung Heroes of the Information Age** series of comics has recently been acquired by the V&A.

Since 2019, his work in design and technology has evolved into AI-driven branding software. He is the winner of two highly competitive Innovate UK grants to develop a pair of bleeeding-edge machine learning-based tools, NameDek and LogoDek. These projects combine generative AI models with deep design expertise to help organisations create professional brand identities quickly and effortlessly.

www.logodek.com
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www.instagram.com/logodek

SILENT SIGNALS
TRUST
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Profile	Jim is the founder of LogoDek, a quick and easy logo-generator that uses machine-learning to create powerful and professional wordmarks.

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