

Make a Great Impression in 600 Pixels

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By Jessica Albon

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If your newsletter's in HTML or print, you need a nameplate (the banner that displays the name of your newsletter).

Designing a nameplate is similar to creating a company logo. Typically, you'll want a design that's memorable, compact (size-wise), and classic enough to last two or more years.

We'd like to share the five steps we've found ideal for creating great nameplates. They'll save you time and help you produce the nameplate just right for your company newsletter.

Make Time

1. Set aside enough time. Never designed a nameplate before? Then schedule at least seven hours for the project spaced out over at least one full week. Whatever you do, don't wait until the night before your first issue is supposed to be published to start the design! Remember, nameplates work best when they're consistent over a span of many, many issues.

Inspire Creativity

2. Gather a creativity kit. Our head designer swears glitter's a necessary component of any creativity kit, but I'm not convinced. You will need blank paper, scissors, colored pencils or marking pens, and some music (if you work best with background noise). Most people find being outdoors inspiring (especially if you can be near running water), so don't think you have to create your nameplates at your desk.

Sketch

3. Sketch at least six nameplate designs. You can do them each full size, or you can fold a sheet of

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paper into smaller boxes (eight is usually a good number). You don't need to be an artist for this step—you're mostly concerned with generating placement ideas and general concepts on paper. (You should see the messes I used to make in my design classes!)

Choose

4. Choose the two or three you like best to create rough versions on your computer. Use a graphics program that allows you to use plenty of layers to keep each element separate (like Paint Shop Pro, Corel Draw, or Adobe Illustrator) and save a new copy every time you develop something you think you might like. If you're not a designer, try to keep it simple—lots of effects and stylized fills can detract from the rest of your newsletter.

Finalize

5. Choose your nameplate and finalize the design. Smooth any rough edges (literally or figuratively). Save the file to the appropriate size, resolution and number of colors for your newsletter (all depend on your needs and medium).

The right nameplate for your newsletter will serve you and your readers well for many years to come. Even better, the repeated exposure to the same nameplate over many issues will build your company's credibility and trust, so make sure your nameplate is something you really like that suits your newsletter well.

Not much of a designer? The Write Exposure has just what you need. From free advice to a great free ezine, straight through to full-service newsletter options. We'd be delighted to be your newsletter company. Send us an email describing your needs (<mailto:info@designdoodles.com>) or visit our site for more information: <http://www.designdoodles.com>

HDTV - HDTV Explained

By Lucy Bartlett

You have probably heard of HDTV but you may be confused by all of the new terminology. The maximum resolution on a standard analog TV is 720 X 480 pixels, which is about 337,000 total pixels. HDTV is part of the Digital TV specifications which has many different video resolutions. The two main resolutions to be concerned about are 720p and 1080i. The "p" means progressive and "i" mean interlaced, in both resolutions every second has 60 frames of video.

Progressive resolution puts 60 full frames on the screen every second. Interlaced resolution puts 30 frames of only odd lines and then 30 frames of only even lines up every second. Some people find that the interlaced video causes flickering.

The 720p video resolution is 1280 X 720 pixels, which gives 921,600 total pixels and the 1080i video resolution is 1920 X 1080, which gives a huge 2,073,000 pixels.

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It is personal choice as to which resolution you prefer, the best way of finding out is to go down to your local retailer and look for yourself.

The sound on HDTV will sound better than it did on your analog tv, some HDTV programs include Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound, but you will need the relevant speakers to be able to take advantage of this.

You will have to buy a new HDTV. Some HDTVs come with built-in tuners, while others do not. The tuner converts the signal into something that your TV can recognize. HDTVs that do not come with a tuner are commonly called "HDTV Ready." An HDTV without a tuner is worthless.

It is possible to view HDTV on your pc, you can do this with ATi HDTV Wonder, it comes with its own antenna to pick up airborne HDTV signals, it also has inputs for cable and satellite signals. A benefit of this is that you can play and record any show you want on your computer.

Find more information at

Lucy Bartlett is a proud contributing author. Find more articles at

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