



## What Your Mother Never Told You About The Graphic Standards Policy

(This is so important we'll be glad to send you a sample of a good policy to review.)<sup>1</sup>

### What It Is

A **graphic standards policy** is the imprint recipe for reproduction of a specific logo or branding element. It states the organization's requirements in printer-speak and designer-speak. Thus - it controls the way your organization's images are reproduced on all surfaces. Printers, designers and suppliers should regard your Graphic Standards Policy as THE LAW!

### What It Does

- It declares your organization's imprint requirements for such things as color, font, spacing, proportion, location and placement.
- It mandates the size and location of appendages required by the organization's lawyers - trademark (™), copyright (©), service mark (SM), registered (®) - and similar legal indicators.
- It sets forth printing requirements derived from political considerations, the most common of which is whether and under what conditions the branding elements of your organization may be used with those of another organization.
- A fully mature policy also specifies acceptable design adjustments needed to accommodate different printing methods and different imprint surfaces.

### Why Your Organization Needs It

Brand Equity is the market's response to an organization's name and images and reputation and slogans and implied promise. It is an enormously valuable asset and always fragile. Brand Equity is also intangible, cumulative and derivative. It's a dynamic force that resides *out there* in the hearts and minds of the people – a force you strengthen through repetitive and consistent presentation of the organization's branding elements.

***If forced to choose, rather than give up company graphics that have earned worldwide recognition, it is said the Coca Cola company would give away its secret recipe for the beverage COKE - the protection of which reportedly involves tunnels, vaults and uniformed guards, secret passwords, trained dogs, piranha-filled moats, scimitar-wielding gatekeepers and other security hoopla.***

OK – maybe we exaggerate about the protection given to COKE'S Secret Recipe. Maybe the anecdote is even apocryphal. Nevertheless, this tale is repeated in MBA classrooms throughout the country. Why? Because it underscores one of the most important principles taught in business schools - the economic value of brand equity.

Naturally, wise marketing types protect this asset – *and their jobs* – by thoughtfully controlling use of their organization's name, logo, supplemental graphics, marketing phrases and other branding elements. A major tool in that protective endeavor is the Graphics Standards Policy.

## Why You (Personally) Need It

This is a matter of job security! Your employment can depend on the way you handle your organization's branding elements. Don't treat them lightly unless your resume is up to date and your bridges are already burning.

## Where to Learn More

A good place to start is our Cyber-Essay [\*Graphic Standards – Heaven & Hell\*](#).

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<sup>1</sup> - WHY?Y, combined public radio and public TV service for Philadelphia, developed a simple and effective new graphic standards policy in 2004. Management gave us a number of copies along with permission to share them with VisABILITY clients who might benefit from using the WHY?Y Graphic Standards Policy as an example. If you'd like a copy, let us know by phone or email.