Honors Project/Thesis

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Project: Metro Acoustics Identity Manual

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As a Design Technology major, I chose to complete an identity system as my honors project. My goals in completing this project were to enhance my design skills and gain real-world experience working with a client. In addition to my initial goals, I learned about the production process and preparing files through working with a service bureau. In the following paper, I will outline each step that was taken and explain the specific events that took place to complete each step.

ESTABLISHING A CLIENT

Seven years ago, my parents started their own business out of the basement of our house. From the beginning, they have been asking me to design a logo for them. When I enrolled in Bemidji State University's Product and Identity Design course, I knew I would pick Metro Acoustics as my client. My enrollment in the class coincided with their move from the basement of our house to a new building in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota so a logo change was logical.

VISUAL AUDIT

A visual audit is a compilation of all the materials that represent a company to their customer or the public. This includes items that feature a logo or are in need of an identifying mark. Business forms, company vehicles, promotional materials, etc., would all be collected for a visual audit. After everything is gathered, the designer will analyze the pieces separately and as a whole for strengths and weaknesses in portraying a consistent and strong identity (Napoles, 54). Often times, the company image is not the same as the company identity. In other words, the customers and public do not view the

company (company image) in the same way that the company wants to be perceived (company identity) (Napoles, 19). It is the designer's job to help alleviate any discrepancies.

I approached this step in the process by first making a list of all the items I knew I would need. Then my client reviewed the list and we added some more items. The complete list consisted of everything that featured the logo and everything that should feature the logo, but currently did not. I gave the list to my client and requested they gather all of the materials and send them to me.

The following items were received for the audit of Metro Acoustics: business cards, company shirt, envelope, fax sheet, letterhead, proposal, and images of the exterior of the building and the company vehicles. I mounted all of the pieces on black tag board and brought them to class where my teacher, classmates, and I analyzed the pieces.

Consensus was that the current logo, which was clipart, looked generic. The logo did not reflect the professional image that Metro Acoustics had with its customers. However, it was used consistently except on the company shirt. The logo depicted a block of buildings. My client chose the logo for one reason – the buildings represented a commercial ceiling business rather than a residential ceiling business. The logo on the company shirt was the company name (Metro Acoustics) enclosed by two ellipses. The logo gave no indication of the type of business Metro Acoustics conducted. Both logos lacked color, but for a logical reason. Most of the applications were printed on a black and white laser printer to save the cost of ordering pre-printed forms.

The layout of the business forms was one of the biggest strengths of the identity system. The flow was intuitive and locating information was easy. I decided that I would keep the new business forms very similar. On the contrary, the business card had a blocky layout that typographically could be better. The lack of exterior building and vehicle signage was also a major weakness of their current identity system. Since Metro Acoustics is a detail-oriented company, it did not make sense that these elements would be missing.

Analyzing the use/lack of use of the logo revealed to me that there was a discrepancy between the image of the company and its corporate identity. After I had an idea of all the elements I would need to redo and which ones I would keep, it was time to meet with my client once more.

ESTABLISHING PARAMETERS WITH CLIENT

In establishing parameters with a client, the designer should become familiar with the company's philosophy and the image they are trying to portray to their customers. This is done through interviews, questionnaires, briefing sessions, and research (Napoles, 51).

In attempts to learn more about Metro Acoustics, I interviewed the owners. I asked them about the work in which they specialize, their competitors, and the types of customers that they have. I learned that it was important to them that their logo portray the commercial nature of their business. Most of their work is done through contractors,

therefore, they never advertise and they have very limited contact with the public.

However, given worldly events, security downtown had become tighter and it was more important that their workers be identifiable as Metro Acoustics employees.

The logo that they were currently using was generic and the owners were aware of it. I felt that its use made them appear less professional than a company with a custom logo. I asked them what kind of image they would like to portray as a company. Both owners stated they are known for their quality work and reliability. They wanted a logo to reflect these qualities.

During my visit to their office, I noticed the contemporary nature of the interior architecture and decoration. I wanted to take this into consideration when I designed their logo so that the logo would not clash with their style. Since the ceiling business moves with trends in new materials, I felt that their sense of style was an important element that should be carried through the design of a logo. However, a designer must be careful not to create a "trendy" logo that might become quickly outdated (Murphy, 14). One specific note on style that was mentioned by the president was the use of a skyline. She had always pictured their logo with a skyline and had planned to decorate the office with various pictures of the Minneapolis skyline.

Next, I asked about functional aspects of the logo. My client expressed the need to have a logo that looked good in black and white. All of their paperwork would be printed from

a black and white laser printer to cut down on costs. Therefore, most of the applications of the logo would be in black and white.

With my new understanding of Metro Acoustics, I was ready to move on to the next step in the identity system process. It was time for me to come up with some ideas.

CREATE NEW IDENTITY SYSTEM

Creating a logo is a process in itself. It is important for the designer and the client to make decisions about the logo collaboratively. There is not an exact science to choosing a successful logo, but it should convey the company's objectives to its target market (Napoles, 49). The designer starts this process by researching and making thumbnail sketches. Many stages of refinement and approval take place before the final logo is chosen (Napoles, 63).

I started by researching their competition and other companies like theirs throughout the United States. I had some materials that featured the logos of Metro Acoustic's competitors and examples of logos my client liked. The bulk of my research was done on the Internet since it is very easy to view many related logos at once. I found some ideas and made a list of words that I associated with the company specifically, ceilings in general, and with the logos I had just seen. Then I started sketching small thumbnails of logo possibilities. After about an hour, I had two pages of ideas.

I presented my ideas in class and received feedback from my teacher and peers. I chose about five of my sketches and scanned them into my computer to create refined vector files in Adobe Illustrator. I experimented with fonts and arrangements. The result of my experimentation was again presented in class for feedback. This time, I also presented my ideas to my client. Both my client and the class opted toward the same three designs. Two of the three were very similar and the third idea was very different, but mainly typographic and not very descriptive. I talked my client out of the typographic option since it did not differentiate them from their competition and it would be difficult to use in a layout. They agreed and one final revision was done. This resulted in 5 different logos with slight differences. With some discussion, the client chose the final logo to use. The value of the specific elements of the chosen logo is described in full detail in the manual.

There were two logo variations that were added in case the use of color was desired. One had a silver accent – something that would look very classy on a sign or vehicle. The other was a blue metallic version. This blue color arose out of the color used on the main grid work in their office.

Specifying the use of the logo is another part of the process of creating a new identity system. Section A in the manual details all the specific usages of the logo. There are pages of "do's" and "don'ts" that I decided upon based on looking at other identity systems. The clear space around the logo was created from the letter "E" found in the logo. It was important to choose something in the logo to be used as an indicator of the clear space. This way, no matter the logo size, the clear space will be proportionate.

CREATE VARIOUS APPLICATIONS

This part of the process can be very time consuming depending on how many applications are needed. For class, we were given a list of applications that were required, but my client needed more than the items on the list. I made another visit to the office of Metro Acoustics and created a more complete list of applications based on what I saw. I took pictures from many different angles of all the objects I needed with my digital camera. Precise measurements were also taken at this time.

Using my pictures as templates, I created line drawings in Adobe Illustrator and thought of various ways to apply the logo and its elements to each item. The business forms were all initially created in Adobe Illustrator as well. These files would then be used later to recreate forms in Microsoft Word. After I completed my illustrations, the client gave approval on all of the designs.

CREATE IDENTITY MANUAL

The manual is a compilation of a company philosophy statement, specifications for the use of the logo, examples of applications, and a copy of the master artwork. The goal of the manual is to provide guidelines for the visual consistency of the corporate identity (Napoles, 91).

The identity manual can be a work of art. I wanted the manual to be very simple and easy to navigate through, yet unique. Sketching thumbnails of layouts for the pages brought about some interesting ideas for the construction of the manual. My idea was to create a book that mimicked the shape of the logo. The book would be almost square, but the dividers would be reminiscent of a skyline. Columns of text would align with the buildings on the dividers to reinforce the idea. White space was key in this design.

Without it, the columns of text would not have served their aesthetic purpose. I chose a very simple light gray lettering system for the illustrations so the viewer could see the

overall designs of an application without clutter and distraction.

Bright white 90 lb index paper was used to create contrast between the background and the elements on the page. This contrast created a sense of simplicity. To contrast the simplicity of the layout, I chose to do a die cut for the section letters. All of the pages were created in QuarkXPress using master pages for each section.

After many revisions of copy and adjustments in layout, I printed out the final version of the identity manual and cut all of the squares for the section lettering with an X-Acto knife. Next, some decisions had to be made about how the manual would be bound. Initially, I wanted the dividers to be the black vinyl that was used for the cover, but I could not find black vinyl anywhere. I finally settled on black plastic needlepoint material that I found in the craft section of a local store. At 33 cents each, this proved to be an economical solution. It was also a fitting design solution. The grid created by the

lines of plastic reminded me of ceiling grid. I was unsure of how easily it could be bound with the rest of the manual, but I was willing to give it a try.

I took the manual to Office Max and they trimmed and bound the pages for me. It was a difficult task with the strange divider material, but they were able to do it. I had always intended on the manual to be spiral bound for its ease of use.

When the binding was complete, I added the CD case in the back and cut the dividers into building shapes. It was not easy to determine three sets of building shapes that were complementary, but after making many patterns and carefully trimming, the manual was complete. I put a dummy CD in the back for show with the intention to create useable files as they were needed based upon the printer's specifications.

PRESENTING IDENTITY MANUAL TO CLIENT

My client was ecstatic when the manual was complete. I explained to them the importance of following the manual. A strong identity system increases moral within the company, thus having an impact on profit. It gives the employees a sense of belonging and confidence (Napoles, 33). A logo not only serves as an identification mark, but it represents a valuable asset – the company (Murphy, 18). My client agreed with this philosophy so we began the production of the applications right away. The exterior sign was most important to them.

I contacted the place of my internship to have all the possible applications created in vinyl. I prepared a single Illustrator file and had it burned on a CD. With the CD, I included specifications for each piece. My client was pleased with the product and service they received from the printing company. The exterior sign, vehicle applications, mailbox, and door signage were all done in vinyl.

The business forms in Microsoft Word were tricky. At first, this was a huge challenge, but as I became more familiar with the layout tools, the challenge diminished. I completed the forms to a point where the Controller could finish them for use. Our next goal is to print business cards. The other applications (shirts, stickers for equipment, etc.) will be phased in as they are needed.

The experience of creating an identity manual was useful for me. I feel that I accomplished all of the goals that I set forth in the beginning. I would have liked to learn more about copyright as it pertains to logos. Overall, I enjoyed working with a client and fulfilling their needs through my design work. It was very rewarding to see my sketches turn into a strong final product.

SOURCES

Murphy, John and Michael Rowe. *How to Design Trade Marks and Logos*. Cincinnati: North Light Books, 1988.

Napoles, Veronica. *Corporate Identity Design*. New York: Can Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1988.



Logo Applications

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Master Artwork

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Table of Contents

new contract. Our goal is to run an efficient and organized business in efforts to Metro Acoustics has built its reputation as the best commercial acoustical ceiling company in the Twin Cities area. Through dedication, experience, and quality work, we have created a standard for ourselves that we try to exceed with every provide the best service and workmanship to our customers.

The effectiveness of our corporate identity is dependent upon the consistency of its usage. With your cooperation, we hope to further establish the spirit of our In keeping with our reputation, we feel that a strong visual identity would reinforce our professional appeal. The following manual details guidelines for the use of our corporate logo. It is of utmost importance that these guidelines be followed. quality company to our customers and the general public.

Thank you,

METRO ACOUSTICS, INC.

Denise Meyer President In combination, the various elements of the logo present an image of Metro Acoustics to its clients and the general public.

The skyline indicates that Metro Acoustics only does commercial ceilings; not residential.

The sound pattern within the "O" reinforces the acoustical nature of Metro Acoustics' work. The pattern within the "O" depicts the sound absorption properties that acoustical ceilings have.

The font and the style of buildings give the logo a modern look. Metro Acoustics uses progressive materials to construct quality ceilings and the logo reflects this progressive modern feel.

The type enclosed in the space between the buildings and the bottom line represents sound in a room. The text is confined within this space. Overall, it has a highly structural feel that reflects the solid work of the company.



Black

Pantone Process Black
CMYK 0-0-0-100
RGB 0-0-0
Web Safe #000000
Can be used on any part of the logo,
except for the windows.

Metallic Blue

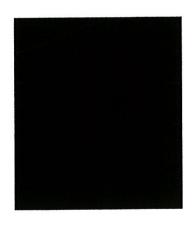
Pantone 8221 CV
CMYK 55-22-14-6
RGB 128-162-188
Web Safe #6699CC
May be applied to the entire logo only,
except for the windows.

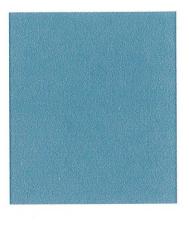
Silver

Pantone 877 CV

CMYK 0-0-0-20
RGB 204-204-204
Web Safe #CCCCCC
May be applied as an accent to the black
and white version of the logo. Can only be
used on the sound pattern within the "O."

In cases where a metallic luster cannot be achieved, the above color mixes are acceptable. If there is any uncertainty, contact the design team.





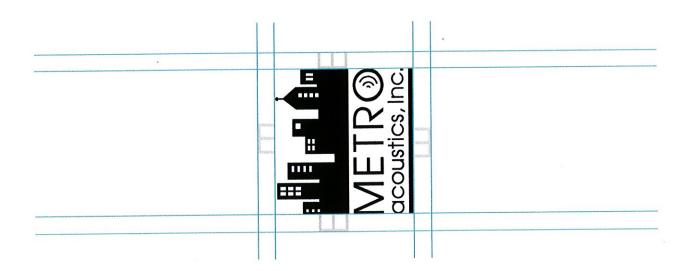




On a dark background, the logo may appear in only white, as shown in the example. Metallic blue and/or silver applications are not acceptable. A dark background is considered any color/shade that is greater in value than 40%.



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The "E" in "Metro" can be used as a guide for measurement. Nothing should come closer than an "E"s width to the logo, as depicted in the illustration on the left.

abcdefg hijkImn opgrstu vwxyz

The Avant Garde type-style family has been chosen for primary use. The recommended variations are presented on this page.

Primary Typography 6 🖪

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family has been selected for secondary usage because it is complimentary to the logo and primary typeface.

The Times New Roman type-style

Secondary Typography 7 🖪

Never substitute fonts.



Never change spacing.



Never rearrange elements.

The images on this page exemplify how the logo should not be portrayed. Please check with the design team if there is uncertainty of an application.



Never rotate.



Never scale horizontally.



Never scale vertically.

The images on this page exemplify how the logo should not be portrayed. Please check with the design team if there is uncertainty of an application.

Incorrect Usage 9 🖪

Never delete elements.



Never use unspecified colors.



Never add elements.

The images on this page exemplify how the logo should not be portrayed. Please check with the design team if there is uncertainty of an application.

Incorrect Usage 10 **E**



Never put elements over logo.



Never enclose in a box.

The images on this page exemplify how the logo should not be portrayed. Please check with the design team if there is uncertainty of an application.

Primary black and white logo.



Logo with silver accent.



Blue metallic alternative.

The images on this page exemplify acceptable variations of the logo. Please refer to the "Master Art" section for the digital files and/or camera-ready artwork.

Correct Usage 12 🖸

Typographic black and white loao.

METRO acoustics, Inc.

Typographic logo with silver accent.

The images on this page exemplify acceptable variations of the logo. Please refer to the "Master Art" section for the digital files and/or camera-ready artwork.



Blue metallic alternative.

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Primary logo in reverse.

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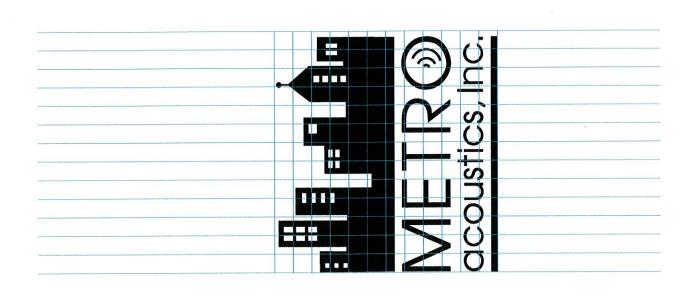
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Typographic logo in reverse.

The images on this page exemplify acceptable variations of the logo. Please refer to the "Master Art" section for the digital files and/or camera-ready artwork.



To the left is a grid system to aid in the reproduction of the logo where electronic means are not possible. Please note that the grid should never be placed over the logo in any application.

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October 17, 2001

Kyle F Monahan

1913 Dupont Ave S #4 Minneapolis MN 55403

Dear Mr. Monahan:

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Welcome to Metro Acoustics, Inc. This is just a quick note to fill you in on payroll procedures. Enclosed are a timecard and a Joblist. Please put the Job name, Job number and hours worked at each job on your timecard and mail or bring in to the office, or if you have access to a fax machine you can just fax it over (763-971-5271).

Weekly paychecks are mailed out on Wednesday morning. If you would like to pick up your check, please call me before 9:00 am on Wed morning. Please get your timecard in by Monday afternoon. With each check you will get a new timecard and an updated joblist.

Enclosed is a current 1-9 form. Please sign and return in the envelope

provided.

If you are ever injured on the jobsite, please call the office immediately to receive instructions about what to do. If the injury is life threatening, call 911.

anywhere. Health insurance is effective once you have 300 hours (which you already have). If you have any questions about payroll or the union benefits package, please give me a call. The carpenters union provides one of the best benefits package available

METRO ACOUSTICS, INC.

Denise Meyer President

3415 48th Ave. N. Brooklyn Center, MN 55429 • Phone: 763-971-5271 • Fax: 763-971-5272

text is set in 12 point Times New Roman. Page margins are .5" and body copy should align with the The letterhead on the left is picright edge of the logo and fall tured at 50% of actual size. All ragged right.

- 1.125" wide. The bottom line of a. The logo should measure the logo extends across the page.
- line and the first line of text is .5." b. The space between the header
- Two line spaces after address. ပ
- d. One line space after greeting.
- e. One line space follows each paragraph of body copy.
- statement, one line space, compa- The closure consists of closure ny name in caps, three line spaces, individual name, title.
- g. The header line is repeated at the bottom of the page.
- h. The address is set in 10 point Avant Garde, offset .0625" from the footer line and centered.
- the header and is aligned with the bottom edge of the type on the The date lines flush right with



Acoustical Ceiling Proposal

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b Name: Location:

ione:

We propose to furnish the following moterials for the above job in accordance with terms and conditions on this proposal, Labor and equipment for installation is included unless specifically stated to the contrary.

Addenda:

Certified State of MN SIC#150000(1742000 Targeted Vendor - SNVBE Certified - CERT Program This proposal is subject to acceptance within 30 days.

ACCEPTED BY:

Celt:

Date:

Customer Order ₹.

3415 48th Ave. N. Bookyn Center. MN 55429 • Prone: 783-971-5271 • Fax: 763-971-5272

The proposal on the left is pictured at 50% of actual size. All text not specified below should be set in 12 point Times New Roman. Page margins are .5" and body copy should align with the right edge of the logo and fall ragged right.

- a. The logo should measure 1.125" wide. The bottom line of the logo extends across the page.
- b. Field titles are set in 14 point Avant Garde and are flush right. They are offset .125" from the bottom and top lines. There is 3" of white space between the columns.
- c. The shown text is set in 10 point Avant Garde and is flush left. It is offset .0625" from the line.
- d. Contract block is set in 12 point Avant Garde, offset from both lines .0625." The company name is 16.5 point and the top line of text is 10 point.

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- e. The header line is repeated at the bottom of the page.
- f. The address is set in 10 point Avant Garde, offset .0625" from the footer line and centered.
- g. The header is flush right, 33 point Avant Garde. It aligns with the bottom edge of the type on the logo.

Fax Memo		Original will be mailed Original will not be mailed			• Prone: 765-971-5271 • Fox: 765-971-5272
METR® acoustics, Inc. Date:	10:	Subject:Comments:			3415 48th Ave. N. Brookim Center, MN 55429

The proposal on the left is pictured at 50% of actual size. All text not specified below should be set in 12 point Times New Roman. Page margins are .5" and body copy should align with the right edge of the logo and fall ragged right.

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- a. The logo should measure 1.125" wide. The bottom line of the logo extends across the page.
- b. Field titles are set in 14 point Avant Garde and are flush right. The squares measure .125" and the accompanying text is 9 point. Text is offset .125" from the bottom and top lines.
- c. The shown text is set in 14 point Avant Garde and is flush left. It is offset .0625" from the line.
- d. The header line is repeated at the bottom of the page.
- e. The address is set in 10 point Avant Garde, offset .0625" from the footer line and centered.
- f. The header is flush right, 33 point Avant Garde font. It aligns with the bottom edge of the type on the logo.

METR® 3415 48th Ave. N

OCCUSTICS, Inc. Boodyn Center, MN 55429

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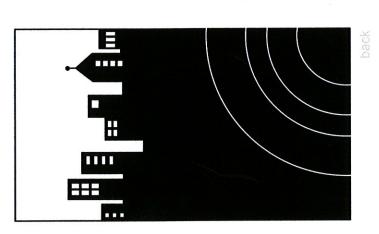
Minecpols, NN 55422

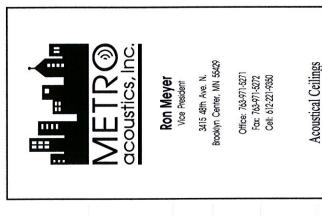
The envelope on the left is pictured at 50% of actual size. All text should be set in 14 point Avant Garde.

The logo should sit .25" from edges of the envelope. The logo is 1.125" in width.

The address block for Metro Acoustics should sit .25" from the logo.

The mailing address block should be set 4.375" inches in from the left edge of the envelope and 2" inches down from the top of the envelope.





The company card on the left is pictured at actual size - 2" wide by 3.5" high. Everything on the front is centered horizontally.

Front:

- a. The logo measures 1.25" and is set .25" from the top of the card.
- b. The name is set in 12 point Avant Garde, .25" from the logo. The title on the next line is set in 8 point Avant Garde. One line space follows the name block.
- c. The address block is set in 8 point Avant Garde. One line space follows the address block.
- d. The contact information is set in 8 point Avant Garde. Any contact information such as phone or fax numbers or email addresses shall appear in this section.
- e. "Acoustical Ceilings" is set in 12 point Times New Roman, .25" from the bottom of the card.

Back.

The top of the buildings is set .5" from the top of the card. The sound pattern is a series of 1 point circles at the following circumferences respectively: 3", 2", 1.5", 1." The circles are aligned vertically and horizontally on top of each other. The center is .125" in both directions from the bottom right corner of the card.

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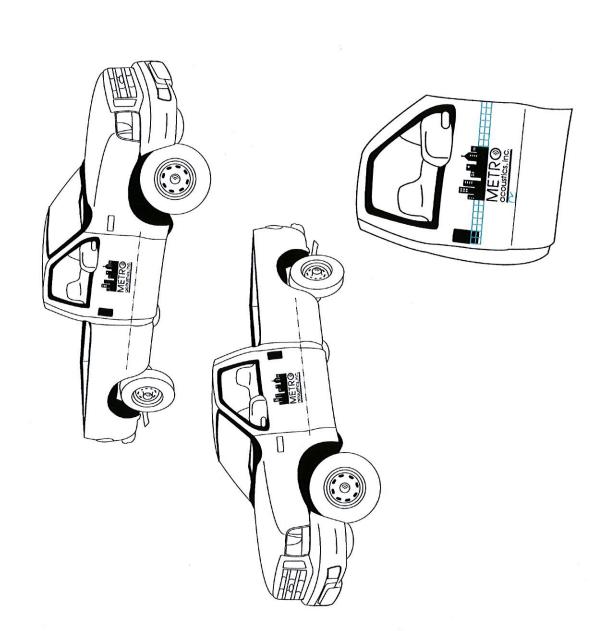




On the front of the shirt, the typographic logo shall appear in the pocket area. It should measure 3" wide by 1" high and be centered.

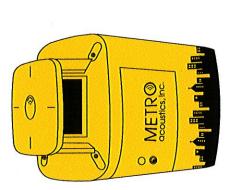
The back of the shirt will feature the complete logo in reverse (white on navy blue). The logo should be half the width of the shirt and positioned in the center of the back.

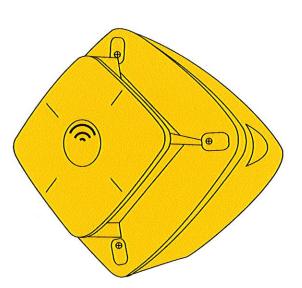
Suggested material would be a navy blue shirt with white silk screen print.



the door as shown in the the back of the door handle. The logo shall also be positioned one "R" width from the curve in The logo is placed in the visual center of the door. It shall sit seven "E" widths from the front seam of the door and seven "E" lengths in from illustration on the left. The sound pattern from the "O" in the logo will be placed in the flat extruded area of the hubcap; two line widths away from the

usage of the logo is acceptable, other than Suggested material is black vinyl. Any correct typographic versions.



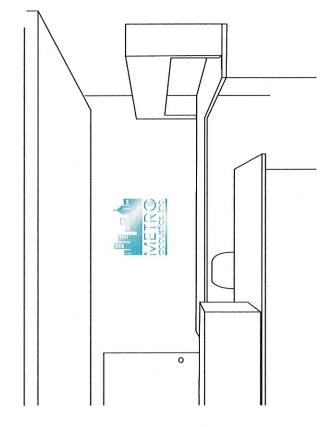


The bottom of the laser shall be decorated with a building motif whose height will be half that of the distance between the top of the black border and the bottom of the recessed middle area. The motif will extend around the full perimeter.

On each side, the Metro Acoustics typographic logo shall be centered horizontally and vertically between the top of the body of the laser and the top of the buildings. The logo will measure 3" wide by 1" high.

The sound pattern from the "O" in the logo will be placed in the recessed circle area on top of the laser; two line widths away from the edge.

Suggested material is black vinyl.

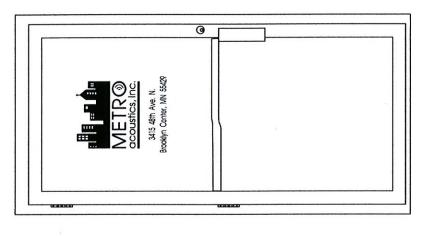


Inside the building, a sign should appear directly behind the receptionist desk on the back wall. The logo should appear centered in the wall between the desk cupboards and the door. It should measure 36" wide by 33.75" high. It should be made of blue metallic material (vinyl, plastic, or sheet metal) and hung on the wall. The logo's negative space should reveal the back wall.



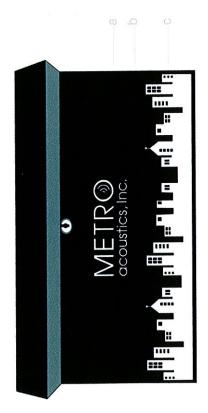
The exterior building sign measures 4' wide by 3' high and hangs flush with the top of the door. The logo is centered in this area and measures 24" wide by 22.5" high. There is a 1.5" black border around the outside edge of the sign. Suggested material for the sign is white sheet metal with vinyl.

The logo can take on any of the acceptable forms specified in the "correct usage" section of this manual. The only exception is the typographic logo variations.



The glass portion of the door is 2.5' wide by 6' high. The entire logo and address block should be centered in the door horizontally and vertically according to the position of the arm bar. The suggested material for the door label is either all white or all black vinyl.

- a. The logo measures 13.5" wide by 12.75" high.
- b. The space between the logo and address block is 3" high.
- c. The address block is set at 135 point in Avant Garde.



The mailbox measures 14.25" wide by 7.5" high and is black in color. The portion that is decorated (not the flap) measures 13" wide by 5.75" high. Below are specific measurements for decoration of the mailbox. The suggested material for mailbox decoration is white vinyl.

- a. The typographic logo is 4" wide and 1.5" high and centered in the middle of the mailbox.
- b. The space between the typographic logo and the decorative building motif is .75."
- c. The white strip of buildings at the bottom of the mailbox measures 12.75" wide by 2" high and is placed .125" away from the edges of the mailbox.

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reproduction purpos-











acoustics, Inc.











To the right are various sized versions of the typographic logo to be used for reproduction purposes in case of an emergency. Whenever possible, retrieve the logo from the CD provided for optimal quality.

METR® acoustics, Inc.

METR® acoustics, Inc.

METR@ acoustics, Inc.

METR® acoustics, Inc.

METR® acoustics, Inc.

METR® acoustics, Inc.

METR® acoustics, Inc.

METR@ acoustics, Inc.

METR® acoustics, Inc.

Typographic Logo 2 🔼

To the right are the separations for the silver accented version of the logo. Color specifications can be found in the color section of the manual.



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Master Logo Variations

Primary Black and White Metallic Blue Silver Accent

Master Typographic Logo Variations

Primary Black and White Metallic Blue Silver Accent

Logo Applications

Letterhead
Proposal
Fax Memo
Envelope
Company Card
T-Shirt
Vehicle
Laser
Interior Sign
Exterior Sign
Door
Mailbox