

The Colorado Springs logo from the eyes of the Curator Team

The team

The Curator Team was created to ensure that the new Colorado Springs logo would be developed in collaboration with people familiar with the branding process, design considerations and challenges that go along with creating such an iconic mark. Pulling from a diverse group of experts in the local community, the team immediately felt a strong sense of pride and responsibility for the project.

Initial discussions centered around the importance of fostering a design that would create a sense of ownership and pride in Colorado Springs for all the audiences involved. The team agreed that no matter the outcome, we would not release a logo that didn't meet our standards, even if it meant delaying or completely re-thinking the entire approach.

The ultimate goal was to remain objective and make decisions based on the guiding brand truths and combined expertise of the team.

The process

The Curator Team felt strongly that the review and design process needed to be organic. Forcing pre-conceived structure into a creative process can often lead to design-by-committee and poor results. Everyone committed to letting each stage of the process define the next, not getting hung-up on the initial project outline.

An overwhelming response

After receiving 27 responses to the initial Request for Proposal put forth by the Community Branding Task Force, the team sat down to review the samples and written materials provided by the respondents. The submissions were judged on a variety of criteria including strength of logo examples, prior branding experience and overall thought-process. The work from each of the designers was presented randomly without company or personal information attached to ensure equal footing for all participants.

The team narrowed the field from 27 to 10, and from 10 to 4 with the goal of choosing three finalists. In what would be the first in many surprising turns, a member of the team stepped-up to offer funding to include all four designers in the final selection, easing pressure of determining the best fit. Each of the chosen parties were notified and invited to present their logo concepts to the Curator Team in-person.

The presentations

The designers all brought their best ideas to the table and the range of work was exciting and diverse. The Curator Team had the opportunity to ask presenters questions about concepts and strategy. The questions ranged from technical observations on design execution to hypothetical scenarios about how the logo would be used in on-going campaigns. Everyone had their own unique approach and the Curator Team appreciated all of the efforts put forth by the finalists.

When the presentations concluded, one group's work and strategy stood out from the others. Fixer Creative Co. had thoroughly considered the problem and presented options that took the designs into new territory. Fixer Creative also recommended that the tagline be separated from the logo and softened (by removing the exclamation point), and should only be used when context could be established. The Curator Team, Branding Task Force agreed and the CVB has already begun to adopt this new approach.

Following your instincts

In keeping with the spirit of an organic process that produces the best results, the Curator Team was continually aware of the public's desire to stay informed. Conscious decisions were made throughout the process to make sure that the community would see only the best options available. Everyone felt that Fixer Creative should be allowed to integrate curator feedback before presenting designs to a larger audience. It was also decided that their logos would be the only ones presented based on their strengths.

Fixer Creative worked with the Curator Team to establish a date to present revised designs and the team re-assembled with great anticipation to review the latest ideas. Sometimes designs take multiple revision cycles and exploration to hit the mark. Sometimes they change very little from an initial sketch on a napkin. And sometimes they take you in surprising directions you never expected. Such was the case with Fixers' new design – a single direction that combined the best elements from previous concepts into a strong and focused mark.

The result

The reaction from the Curator Team was unanimous – Fixer had created a logo that stuck to the brand truths and resonated with the entire team. The logo positions Colorado Springs as the quintessential Colorado city. More than a piece of art, the logo is something that people can rally behind and be proud of. We're excited to continue the dialog with the community and help facilitate the adoption of the new Colorado Springs logo.

About the Curator Team

This Curator Team was formed in response to mixed reviews of the original brand logo launched in mid November 2011. Members include John Pierce (U.S. Olympic Committee Managing Director of Marketing Services), Tom Hutton (University of Colorado at Colorado Springs Executive Director of Media Relations & Internal Communication), Christopher Schell (Design Rangers Vice President), Sherri Newell (Colorado Springs Utilities Chief Public Affairs Officer), Joseph Coleman (Blue Star & Nosh restaurants), Cheryl Farr (CSK Design Group Principal and Chief Strategy Officer), Amanda Mountain (Rocky Mountain PBS Regional Director and General Manager), Dermot Coll (United States Air Force Academy Associate Athletic Director) and Cari Davis (Memorial Health System Director of Communications and Marketing).

About the Community Branding Task Force

The Community Branding Task Force was created in March 2011 to move to the next phase of brand development for the destination that will position Colorado Springs and the region as a front-running community for economic vitality. The task force includes the City of Colorado Springs, Colorado Springs CVB, Colorado Springs Regional EDC, Greater Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce, Colorado Springs Sports Corporation, El Pomar Foundation and Housing & Building Association of Colorado Springs.