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FedEx Logo Evolution

Fred Smith is the founder of FedEx, he gave the company its name based on the clientele he was seeking. He originally named the company Federal Express because he wanted to have the Federal Reserve Bank as his customer. He also thought using the word "federal" would suggest interest from the national economy. The first FedEx logo was designed in 1971, which included the company's earliest name.

It included three colors, a dark orange, purple, and white. The color choices weren't picked at random. They wanted it to represent power and professionalism as well as express the fact that they hired both US government workers and common people. The company made its major change in 1994 when Lindon Leader at Landor Associates developed a new logo. The company was renamed to the famous label we all know today, FedEx. They decided to remove the word "federal" due to the negative connotation it carried. They also wanted to simplify the emblem and find a better balance for its colors. Leader made the purple and orange a brighter tone because people often confused the original colors for blue and red.

The goal for the logo was to create something simple yet effective. The most interesting part about the logo is the "Ex" at the end of the name that creates an almost hidden right arrow. The arrow was the perfect inclusion to the emblem, many believe it was the winning factor against the hundreds of other design ideas at the time. It stands for speed, precision, and moving forward. Leader, like many other major company designers, believe that logos with less complexity are more successful. Google and Apple are great examples of his theory. Apple's first ever logo was very complex containing many different variables. Their first modification changed the logo completely and from then on they were focused on a much simpler image like the one we see today. The FedEx logo is used in all media types including print material, websites, and products. The logo is also produced in different colors, each representing a different department within the company. The orange stands for FedEx Express, green is ground and home delivery, grey covers their supply chain services, and the blue stand for "custom critical".

The official logo typeface is Futura Bold, but the designer made some changes to the font to get his desired result. Below is an image of the FedEx original font before alterations compared to after.

As you can see, the arrow was no accident. The x was too tall so Leader compressed it to match the x-hieght of the rest of the letters. The letter d was also ascending beyond the cap-line so he cropped it to level out with the F and E. Leader also messed around with the kerning, you can see he slightly seperated all the letters but made the d and E connect like the rest of the letters do. Overall, I think Lindon Leader did an amazing job creating a simple yet effective logo. A good design goes much deeper than the surface and I think Leader executed it perfectly. It's no wonder why the design has not changed since 1994.

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