

# NeXT Logo Presentation

— Paul Rand

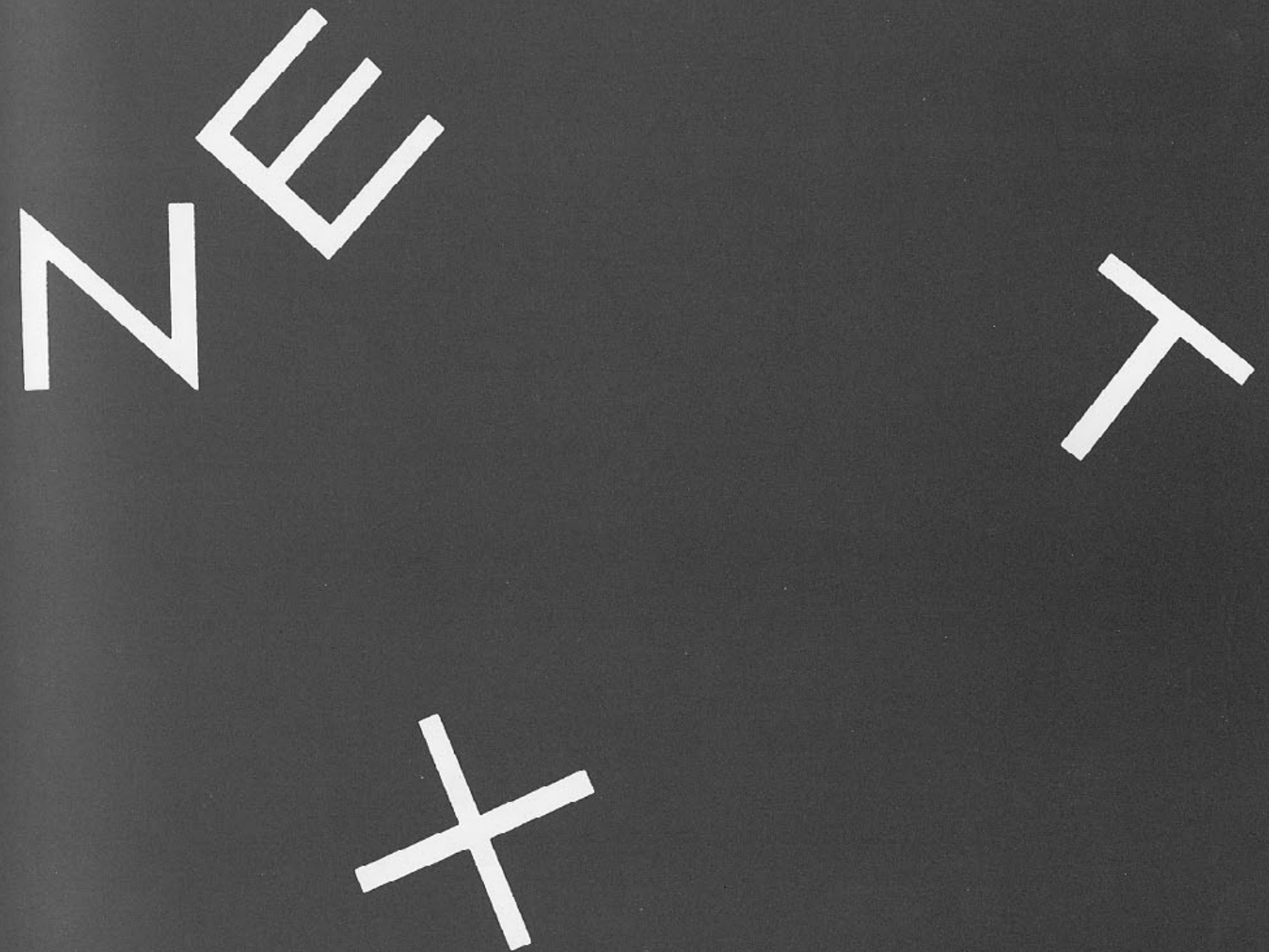
from *Design Form and Chaos*

Canned presentations have the ring of emptiness. The meaningful presentation is custom designed — for a particular purpose, for a particular person. How to present a new idea is, perhaps, one of the designer's most difficult tasks. This *how* is not only a design problem, it also pleads for something novel. Everything a designer does involves presentation of some kind — not only how to explain (present) a particular design to an interested listener (client, reader, spectator), but how the design may explain itself in the marketplace. Not all assignments are equally interesting. The designer is expected to be inspired by the most mundane subject matter, no less by a dead fish than by a beautiful race horse. But subject matter in itself is not always inspirational. The relevant idea and its formal interpretation become the decisive factors.

A presentation is the musical accompaniment of design. A presentation that lacks an idea cannot hide behind glamorous photos, pizzazz, or ballyhoo. If it is full of gibberish, it may fall on deaf ears; if too laid back, it may land a prospect in the arms of Morpheus.

The following pages, with some exceptions, are replicas of brochures designed for the purpose of presentation. They follow a simple pattern, with generous use of white space and color to establish certain rhythms and to leave room for necessary pauses and logical transitions. White space is used as a functional not as an arbitrary device. It indicates timing and pacing and may be a determining factor in a given presentation. Its purpose is to help dramatize — a kind of backdrop separating one scene from another. To encourage reading, text is kept as brief and as readable as possible, with no attempt to confuse the reader with picturesque, typographic trickery. If type is shown in color, it is for reasons of emphasis, not theatrics. Caslon 540, Bodoni, and Univers are used exclusively.

- |                |      |
|----------------|------|
| 1. Next        | 1986 |
| 2. The Limited | 1988 |
| 3. IBM         | 1960 |
| 4. AdStar      | 1991 |
| 5. IDEO        | 1991 |
| 6. Morningstar | 1991 |



What should a logo for Next look like?

Choosing a typeface as the basis for the design of a logo is a convenient starting point. Here are two examples: Caslon and Bifur. Caslon is an alphabet designed as far back as 1725 by William Caslon. It appears to be a good choice because it is both elegant and bookish, qualities well suited for educational purposes.

# NEXT

Bifur, a novelty face by A. M. Cassandre, was designed in 1929. An unconventional but ingenious design, it has the advantage, to some, of visually implying advanced technology. (*Attributing certain magical qualities to particular typefaces is, however, largely a subjective matter.*)



One reason for looking at a number of possible typefaces is to satisfy one's curiosity. Another, and perhaps more meaningful one, is to study the relationship of different letter combinations, to look for visual analogies, and to try to elicit ideas that the design of a letter or group of letters might inspire.

Here are some further choices, but no matter how one may look at these different examples — sans serifs, hairline and slab serifs, condensed, expanded, bold, light, outline — they still say *next* ... like *next time*, *what's next?* *next in line*, or even *next of kin*. The word is in such common usage that it is simply taken for granted.

Personal preferences, prejudices, and stereotypes often dictate what a logo looks like, but it is *needs* not wants, *ideas* not type styles that determine what its form should be. To defamiliarize it, to make it look different, to let it evoke more than the mere adjective or adverb it happens to be is, it seems, the nub of the problem.

NEXT

NEXT

NEXT

NEXT

NEXT



Set in all capitals, the word NEXT is sometimes confused with EXIT, possibly because the EXT group is so dominant. A combination of capitals and lowercase letters helps to circumvent this problem.

Here are some possibilities that explore the use of lowercase letters. The *e* is differentiated so as to provide a focal point and visual contrast amidst the straight and stalwart capital letters.

Happily, the *e* also could stand for:

- education
- excellence
- expertise
- exceptional
- excitement
- $e = mc^2$
- etc.

# NEXT

next

Next

NeXt

NeXT

NeXT

Note the difference that the lowercase *e* makes when compared with the capital *E*. By means of contrast, both interest and readability are achieved. This is particularly noticeable in the illustration at the bottom.

These simple, geometric letters make it easier to exploit and manipulate possible visual ideas than do more complex, serified letters.

NEXT

Next

Next

Ideally, a logo should explain or suggest the business it symbolizes, but this is rarely possible or even necessary. There is nothing about the IBM symbol, for example, that suggests computers, except what the viewer reads into it. Stripes are now associated with computers because the initials of a great computer company happen to be striped. This is equally true of the ABC symbol, which does not suggest TV. The mnemonic factors in both logos are graphic devices.

In this example the *e* is the mnemonic element.

# Next

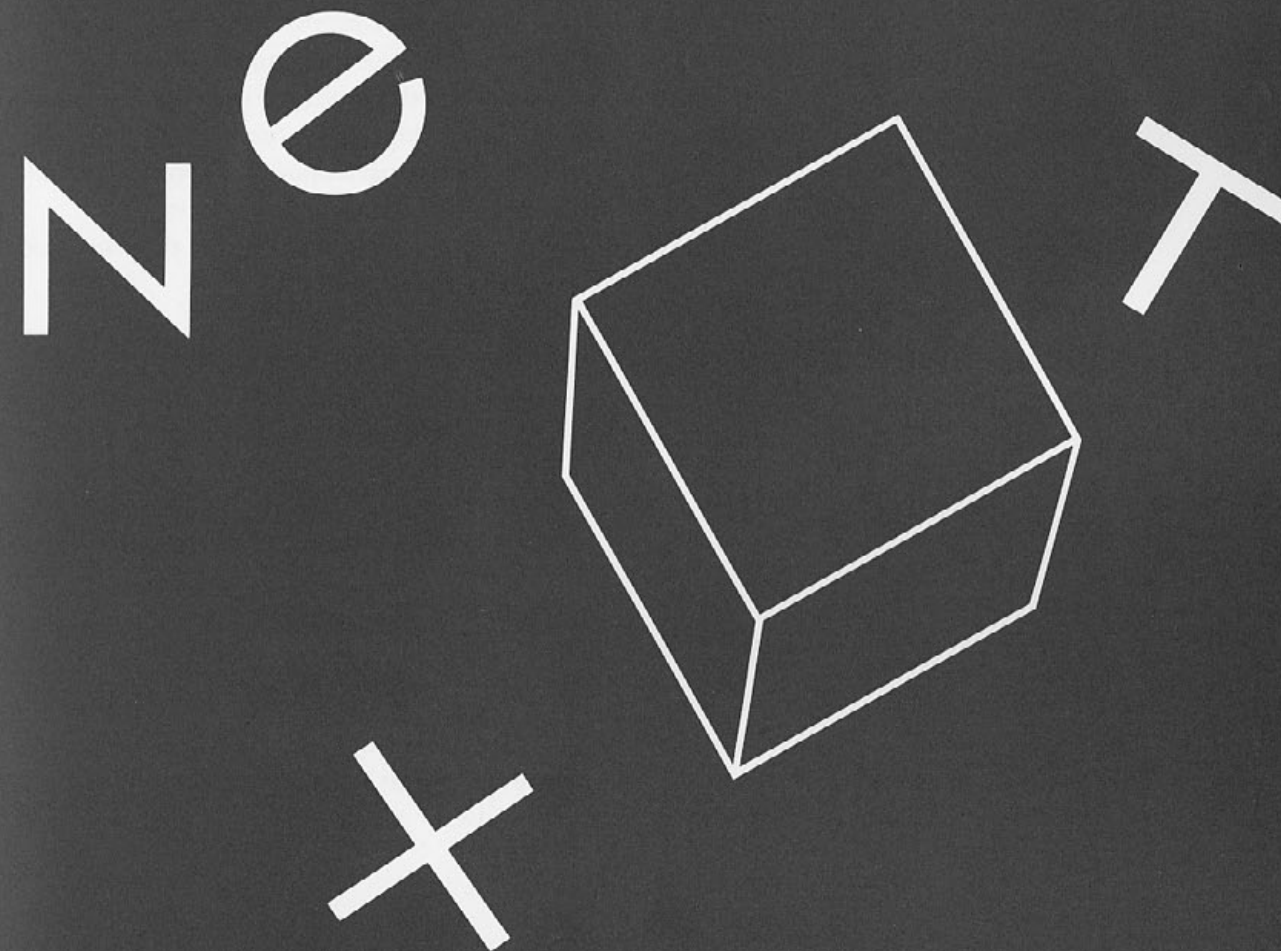
Next



A logo takes on meaning only if over a period of time it is linked to some product or service of a given organization. What is needed is a meaningful device, some idea that reinforces the memorability of the company name. A black cube, in which the product happens to be housed, can be such a device because it has a certain visual presence and is easy to remember. Unlike the word *next*, it is depictable and possesses the "promise of meaning, and the pleasure of recognition."<sup>1</sup>

This device in no way restricts its application to any one product or concept. The three-dimensional effect functions as an underscore and helps to attract the viewer's attention.

1. E. H. Gombrich, "Image and Code," *The Image and the Eye* (London, 1982), 287





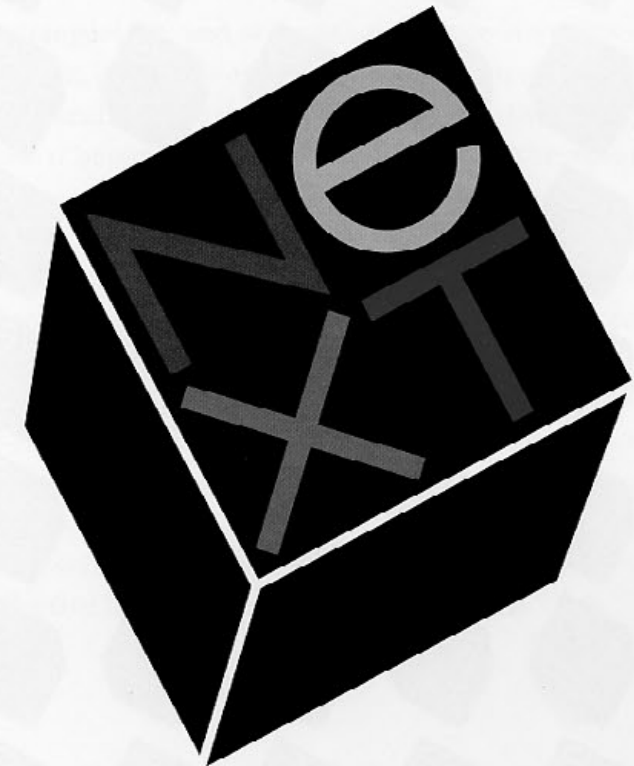
It is desirable to keep the letter style simple, unmannered, and untrendy so as not to distract from the cube concept. Furthermore, the use of a single identification device and a simple sans serif letter, designed to harmonize with almost any accompanying typeface, is essential for practical application. Whenever possible, double identification (name plus symbol) is best avoided. The brevity of the word NeXT and its containment within the framework of the cube obviates the need for such awkward devices.

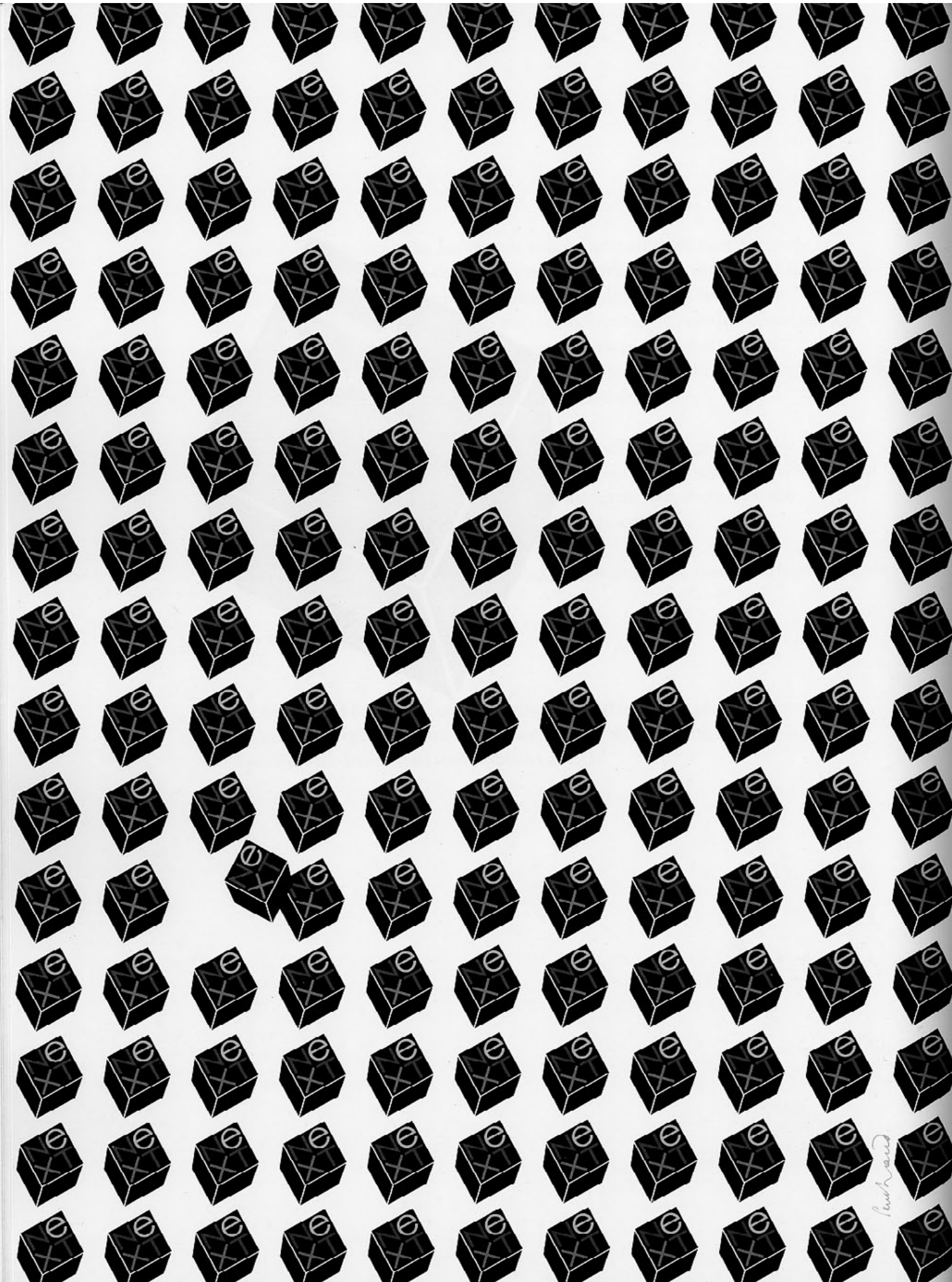
Splitting the logo into two lines accomplishes several things: it startles the viewer and gives the word a new look, making it easier to separate from common usage. Even more important, it increases the letter size, and hence the readability, twofold within the framework of the cube.

For small reproductions, a one-line logo would have been much less legible within this same framework.



Readability is hardly affected because the word is too simple to be misread. Moreover, people have become accustomed to this stacking format with such familiar four-letter word combinations as LO  
VE





In its design, color arrangement, and orientation the logo is a study in contrasts. Tipped at a jaunty angle, it brims with the informality, friendliness, and spontaneity of a Christmas seal and the authority of a rubber stamp. Together with its lively black silhouette it becomes a focal point difficult for the eyes to avoid.

The unconventional yet dignified array of colors — vermilion against cerise and green, and yellow against black (the most intense color contrast possible) — is designed to appeal to a youthful audience and to add a sparkling, jewel-like touch to paper, package, or machine. It is the sparing use of brilliant colors on a predominantly black ground that produces this effect, like stars in the sky. In itself a decorative and self-contained device, the logo does not depend on extraneous embellishment or fancy backgrounds for its many varied applications.

Poised at an angle of twenty-eight degrees, the black cube — even without color — is equally effective for black and white reproduction.

