

Signatures are personal representations. Some people sign their names with a breezy flourish, others with studied precision. However they write them, people's signatures become their legal marks on contracts, checks and the like.

Signatures are corporate representations, too, as much a statement of identity as a person's autograph. A corporate signature is a trademark, a brand name. It can lose its value if used improperly.

When AT&T introduced its new globe symbol and logotype at the time of divestiture, there were 24 versions and a complex set of rules to ensure correct usage. Despite the rules and intense monitoring of the system, confusion led to frequent and costly misuse of the corporate signature.

"At the time they were approved," says Renee Burton, manager of corporate identity and specialty advertising, "we didn't know how confusing they would be. Now we know."

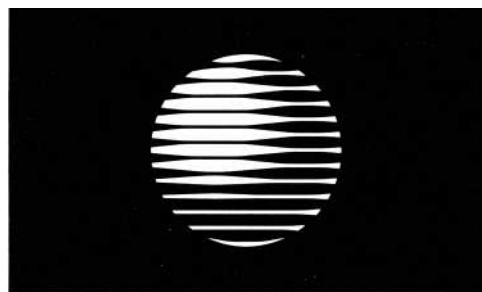
So, to end the confusion and protect its good name and signature, the company launched an effort to simplify and unify its corporate identity program. Starting this month there will be only eight allowable versions of the AT&T signature. Changes like this should make it easier to use the signature properly and should cut the costs of improper usage. The ten-line globe symbol has been eliminated completely.

Does the change mean you should toss away anything that doesn't meet the new guidelines?

"Absolutely not," says Burton. "Current materials should be used up to avoid extra costs and waste. But new materials should be ordered using the new guidelines. We've already informed vendors about the appropriate designs, so most of the work is done for employees."

If using the corporate signature is part of your job, look for the new "Product Marking Guideline" and "Graphic Standards Guideline," which will be distributed soon.

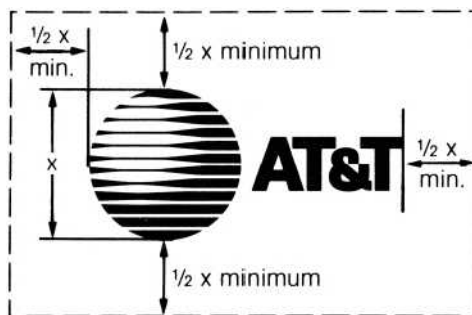
*Wes Dvorak*



The 12-line symbol, in both positive and reverse versions, is correct for all applications larger than, but not including, 1/2 inch.



The alternate 8-line symbol, in both positive and reverse versions, is for special purposes only—primarily in print reproduction less than 1/4 inch in diameter, and for product marking at 3/8 inch and smaller.



As shown here, the minimum distance from any element of the signature should be 1/2 of the diameter of the globe symbol. The visual impact of the symbol is crucial, so it should not be crowded or squeezed.



Both of these logos are unacceptable because the highlight areas in the upper left quarters are dark.