

ART 418 — Project #1

SMB Rebrand Case Study (Logo + Rationale)

Professional Context

You are a design consultant hired by a small-to-mid-sized business (SMB) whose brand no longer matches their market, quality, or audience expectations.

The Challenge

Identify an existing SMB with a weak or dated brand system. Propose a rebrand direction and redesign the logo and core brand elements with a business-centered rationale.

Learning Outcomes (students will be able to...)

- Conduct a rapid brand audit and competitor scan
- Define positioning and a clear brand problem statement
- Develop and justify a logo solution aligned to strategy
- Present design decisions in business language

Required Inputs (what you're given / what you must gather)

- An SMB website and publicly visible brand touchpoints
- Minimum competitor references (local/regional peers)
- Clear audience assumptions (stated explicitly)

Deliverables (what you must submit)

- Brand audit (what's not working + why it matters commercially)
- Competitive audit (visual landscape + opportunities)
- Brand strategy snapshot (positioning statement, audience, tone)
- Logo explorations (multiple concept directions + iteration)
- Final logo system (primary/secondary/mark as appropriate)
- 1–2 application mockups (where the brand “lives”)
- One-page “before/after” justification (why this performs better)
- Submission packaged as a single PDF case study + exported logo assets

Constraints (non-negotiables)

- The SMB must be real and currently operating
- Justification must be tied to audience + business goals (not taste)
- Ensure accessibility basics (contrast and legibility)
- No fabricated research, competitors, metrics, or claims

Workflow (recommended steps)

- 1) Select SMB + capture baseline evidence
- 2) Audit current touchpoints + define the brand problem
- 3) Competitive scan + positioning opportunity
- 4) Ideate, test, and refine logo concepts
- 5) Create applications + finalize rationale
- 6) Package deliverables as a client-ready case study

AI & Tool Use Policy

AI Status: Yellow (Limited)

Allowed:

- Brainstorming directions and naming exploration
- Drafting research questions and checklists
- Proofreading and clarity edits
- Summarizing your own notes

Not allowed:

- Generating the final logo/mark
- Replacing your written rationale with AI-generated text
- Fabricating research, data, or competitor facts

Disclosure required: Yes (include an AI Use Note with tools, purpose, representative prompts/inputs, and what you changed)

Evaluation Criteria (high-level)

- Strategy and framing
- Logo craft and functionality
- System coherence and application realism
- Business rationale and communication quality
- Process evidence and professional standards