

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND (USM)

BRAND IDENTITY

Design / Branding



ABOUT

The University System of Maryland (USM) is the state's public higher education system. USM's 12 institutions, two higher education centers, and system office work to improve quality of life in Maryland.

CHALLENGE

USM sought a new brand identity, including:

- **Logo & Style Guide:** A professional, adaptable logo that better communicates its strategic goals and key messages while positioning it as an innovative, forward-thinking leader in higher education. USM was also looking for a style guide to ensure consistent and correct use of the logo.
- **Graphic Identity for Print Publications:** A new graphic identity for USM's key communications pieces that incorporates the new logo and reflects a fresh, new brand.

SOLUTION

- **Logo & Style Guide:** Novak Birch designed a logo that aligns with USM's strategic priorities and highlights its deep connection to—and pride in—the state of Maryland. The stained glass shield is reminiscent of the shape used in the previous USM logo, offering a sense of continuity and ensuring brand recognition. We removed the border from the shield to convey USM's forward-looking, “unbounded” approach to fulfilling its mission of education, research, and service. To link USM to the state of Maryland, we used the colors and club shape from the state flag. We also wrote and designed a user-friendly style guide to help ensure that the logo is correctly and consistently used.
- **Graphic Identity for Print Publications:** After designing the logo, Novak Birch created a new graphic identity for USM's print publications and designed the following key communications pieces:
 - 2016–17 and 2017–18 USM Profile (20 pages)
 - 2016 and 2017 USM Scorecard (14 pages)
 - 2017 and 2018 USM Quick Points of Excellence brochures
 - FY2017 USM Annual Report (22 pages)
 - Branded communications package: Letterhead, #10 envelope, and PowerPoint templates

RESULTS

- USM is pleased with the logo and has received positive feedback. In a press release, USM's Vice Chancellor for Communications Anne Moultrie (retired, 2017) stated, “The new logo is a functional, forward-looking graphic that represents what USM is and what its strategic priorities are today. It makes clear that we are deeply connected to the state of Maryland, and that we are a system on the move.”
- Novak Birch continues to work with USM on their communications collateral each year.