



## BOSTON LITERARY DISTRICT

### COMPONENTS:

Logo  
Branding Document  
Website  
Brochures

### SERVICES:

Design  
Art Direction  
Project management  
Print management

## Putting the Boston Literary District on the Map

### BACKGROUND

Like every great piece of literature, the Boston Literary District was born of just a few words. Eve Bridburg, the executive director of GrubStreet, was chatting it up with Anita Walker, the executive Director of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. She lamented that Boston really was in the midst of a literary renaissance but no one was aware of it. Walker suggested a district.

Bridburg wrangled together a troupe of city literary organizations including the Boston Public Library, the Boston Athenaeum, the Boston Book Festival, Emerson College, Suffolk University, and the audio literary magazine *The Drum* to start the process.

### PICKING THE RIGHT PARTNER

Months later after securing grants, gaining approval from the city, and forming a communications committee, the BLD was born.

But existence wasn't enough. The committee wanted to draw attention to the downtown district and give it a unique, authentic identity.

About 10 firms were asked to submit proposals. The team chose studiowink.

"We picked studiowink based on the clarity and comprehensiveness of the proposal they submitted to us. They were a small but powerful-seeming design company that could handle our print and web needs, and they were willing to work within our budget," said committee member Whitney Scharer.

### THE PROJECT

studiowink was tasked to shape the BLD's identity. The challenge the team expressed was that the logo needed to walk a very fine line. It should give a nod to Boston's storied literary tradition, but not look dated. Further, the logo needed to celebrate all the literary events occurring in and around the city. The team specifically said, 'we don't want any quills, scrolls, or parchment.'

studiowink prepared a series of options for the committee. Ultimately, the team selected a very modern execution with a visual surprise.



**Even though we're a non-profit organization, we operate like a business. We have goals we need to meet. studiowink understood this immediately. They got that this was business to us, that we wanted to create a buzz... I think it would be impossible to work with studiowink and not be happy.**

**LARRY LINDNER**

Coordinator  
Boston Literary District



**THE PROCESS**

studiowink's process involved building consensus within the team of what they wanted, researching various other cultural districts throughout the country, infinite sketching, and selected execution.

The client was encouraged to participate by providing samples of logos they loved and explaining what attracted them to the logo.

"I liked that as a client we got to have input all the way through," said Larry Lindner, district coordinator.

"One of studiowink's great strengths was the way they helped us iterate on our branding decision. We started with LOTS of designs — more than we had expected, which was great — and Nancy slowly helped us winnow down to a few choices to share with a larger committee. She was patient and guided us really well without trying to make the decision for us. I also loved how many designs she showed us and how different they all were — it was a really fun process," said Scharer.

The communication flowed throughout the project, Lindner added. "We always felt like we were able to have a frank, open discussion."

**THE SOLUTION**

The chosen logo is set in Gotham — a modern, sleek sans serif. It employs all caps to command attention and retain respect. A bright blue was chosen to highlight the literary aspect of the district and hint at pen ink. Lastly, we embedded a page within the logo and rendered the 'E' as lines of text. The symbol of the page is especially significant. Literature is read on a page, whether printed on paper or published electronically. Additionally the page rendered resembles the symbology seen on the web and on reader devices. This subtle cue suggests the interactive element of the district — both on social media and events.

The committee has been thrilled with the results. "We really felt studiowink understood the message we wanted to send and they worked their design around the message. I love that she came up with concepts, not just designs," said Lindner.

The logo appears throughout the city at various hotels and at the Information Center on the Common. More than 40 organizations use the website studiowink designed and developed in conjunction with the logo to help promote their literary events.

