Monograms, Lettermarks, Initial Marks, Wordmarks: a sketch checklist

☐ Draw all of your preconceived ideas/solutions right away to get them out
of your head.
Now, *let them go and continue to sketch*.

☐ Write the letters over and over and over again to begin to analyze the strokes
which make up the letterforms. What unique features of the letterforms could
you develop to make your lettermark memorable? Start drawing and redrawing
various shapes/lengths for those features.

☐ Experiment with all caps, all lowercase, combination of upper/lower case.

☐ Start looking at the negative space as you redraw the letters. See how the strokes
fit together, and how one letter might look like another letterform, create ligatures
or objects.

☐ Write the letters over and over and over again to begin to explore how letters
nest together:
　☐ Play with scale.
　☐ Play with stacking letters.
　☐ Play with overlapping letters.
　☐ Play with overlapping letters that cut out portions of other letters.
　☐ Play with connecting letters (using either positive — adding lines
　　or negative space — cutting away parts).
　☐ Create lots of ligatures to form compositional units.

☐ Continue to write the letters over and over and over again to begin to see the different
rhythm/styles/nuances of the letterforms. Begin recombining letters from the different
rhythm/styles/nuances to form new compositional units.

☐ Look for width rhythms to help balance your design e.g. looloolool.
Let the width rhythms create bookends around the other letters and carry the eye
through the design.

☐ Look for (multiple) ascenders, descenders to see how they can frame the lettermark.

☐ Experiment with flourishes.

☐ Experiment with ornaments.

☐ Experiment with illustrative features.

☐ Experiment with line widths/thickness.

☐ Experiment with contrasting letterforms (for example a bold and a thin or a
serif and a script, or a slab serif with a sans serif, a large with a small, etc).

☐ Experiment with textures.

☐ Experiment with opacities.

☐ Experiment with embedded imagery.

☐ Experiment with reversing out your letters in a color field/shape.

☐ Experiment with reversing out only part of your letters in a color field/shape.

☐ Experiment with placing your letters within a decorative or flamboyant enclosure. Or try reversing out your letters inside a decorative or flamboyant enclosure.

☐ Experiment with using basic shapes (circles, squares, dots, lines, rectangles, triangles) to construct your letters.

☐ Experiment with using modular units or repetitive shapes to construct your letters (would they stack differently if they were modular?).

☐ Experiment with using free form arcs, swirls, or quirky drawn lines to construct the letterforms.

☐ Experiment with creating depth.

☐ Fill the letters with textures or patterns.

☐ Use pictorial elements that can be inserted into, cut from, added to or placed behind the letterforms.

☐ Then, make a list of nouns, adjectives and verbs that connect to the client (product, service, mission, persona). Create pictorial monograms for each noun, adjective and verb. These pictorial monograms would be made up of an image or images or repeating images that form the letter(s).