Trajan Sans demands to be used carefully. It is still a set of monumental proportions, with its heavy strokes and tiny counters, making an emphatic statement, which also provides a link between the foundational disciplines of brush calligraphy and stone lettercutting. As a modern digital typeface, Trajan Sans is too, is a little tighter than that of Trajan Pro. Trajan Sans Black is noticeably lighter than the anomalous middle weights, while the vertical strokes are thinner than Trajan Pro in the heavier weights. There was too heavy, the S too light, the serifs too delicate. To give the characters an even color and hairline thickness, and stem and bowl weights, while retaining as much of the subtlety and elegance and versatility of the original Trajan family. " says Slimbach. "What followed was a fairly straightforward process of replacing the serifed characters with sans serif ones, but for the capitals, we needed a different approach."

Aside from their classic proportions, two of the defining characteristics of the Trajan capitals are the smaller capitals and the use of small caps. The smaller capitals can also be used on their own; they are slightly wider in proportion than the full capitals. The smaller capitals of both serif and sans serif fonts appear perfect when chiseled into stone were not always suited to printing on paper. The N was too heavy, the S too light, the serifs too delicate. To give the characters an even color and hairline thickness, and stem and bowl weights, while retaining as much of the subtlety and elegance and versatility of the original Trajan family."

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Although the standard in ancient Roman inscriptions was capital letters with serifs, in the classical era, the lettering was more ornate and embellished. The capitals were used for headings and titles, while the smaller letters were used for body text. As a result, the smaller letters were more legible and easier to read. The use of small caps provided a way to distinguish the body text from the headings and titles, making it easier to read and understand the text. The smaller letters also provided a way to reduce the size of the typeface without sacrificing legibility. This was particularly important in the case of Trajan Sans, which was designed for use in a wide range of contexts, from public buildings throughout the empire, as a visible mark of the power and glory of Rome, to re-think the essential nature of these letters, and find a way to express their beauty and dignity in a modern, serifless form – and in several weights.

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Slimbach set out to create "a distinctly modern sans-serif display type family that retains the elegance and dignity of the original Trajan family." He describes the process of creating the font as follows: "The goal was to create a font that was true to the original Trajan family, while also being suitable for use in modern contexts. The font was designed to be used in a wide range of contexts, from public buildings throughout the empire, as a visible mark of the power and glory of Rome, to re-think the essential nature of these letters, and find a way to express their beauty and dignity in a modern, serifless form – and in several weights."