Branding through Logos

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BRANDING THROUGH LOGOS

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1 INTRODUCTION TO BRANDING

Learning outcomes

1. To examine the history of branding and its evolution over the years
2. To identify the relevance of branding in influencing consumer behavior
3. To review the salient aspects of an effective branding strategy
4. To understand the role of logos in branding a product or service

History of Branding

The history of branding can be traced to 350 A.D. Branding is derived from the word "Brandr" which means "to burn" in Ancient Norse language. By 1500s, branding had come to mean the mark that ranchers burned on cattle to indicate ownership. These symbols were simple and could be easily identified.

Today branding is more than a logo. It represents the emotional reaction an organisation can elicit from customers. In the digital world that is characterized by information overload, branding has become the key distinguishing feature of a product or service.

What is Branding?

Products and services are becoming more and more commoditized. The competition for a share of customer's wallet is becoming fiercer by the day. To influence consumers to buy a product or service and stay loyal, branding is vital.

Brand is the set of perceptions that consumers have about a company. It is a manifestation of value that consumers relate to. A brand is a collection of visual images, experiences, and emotional responses that define a consumer's opinion about a product or service.

"Branding is endowing products and services with the power of a brand" (Kotler & Keller, 2015). Branding is the set of actions taken by an organisation to cultivate the brand. Branding is all about aligning what customers think about a company with what the company wants them to think. When we think about Nike, we immediately connect Nike with the image of Michael Jordan. Thus, Nike aligns itself with star athletes so that customers buy the product due to emotional association with the athlete.

Branding is the process that creates a unique name and image for a product or service in the consumer's mind. It is the practice of creating a name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates a product from other products. An effective brand strategy enables a firm to achieve a competitive edge in the market.

Products have limited life cycles. Brand life cycles can last forever. Branding gives a tactical advantage to market a company's products and services.

How can we achieve branding?

A brand represents a promise to the customer. Brand informs audiences about what they can expect from a product or service. Strategic branding efforts of an organisation enable creation of a strong brand identity. Branding can be considered as communication that creates a lasting impression in the minds of customers. Branding is the foundation on which reputation is built and customer loyalty gained.

Branding can be achieved through:

- advertising and communications
- product and packaging design
- in-store experience
- pricing
- sponsoring and partnerships
- Visual identity of the brand (logo, website and colors, are some examples).

How can we create a strong brand?

1. Develop a brand personality.
   This is essential for creating a strong brand for the business. Organisations should strive to create the right kind of image or feeling that their brand should evoke when customers think of it. The personality chosen must be consistent with all the marketing communications.
2. Create a logo for your brand. Logos go a long way toward building brand recognition. The logo must match the brand personality.
3. Develop a brand voice. The voice must match the site image and should be used across all social media and online marketing channels.

Why is Branding important?

Branding promotes recognition of product or service. The popularity of Post-it labels, Coke and Google is a reflection of brand familiarity. The striking aspect is that these are global brands and are popular across geographies. Branding sets expectations allowing customers to know what to expect from the product or service. Branding is synonymous with trust.

1. Branding aids customer recognition. Consumers are far likely to choose a brand that they can recognize in comparison to an unknown brand.
2. Branding helps the organisation in achieving a competitive advantage in the market. It helps a firm stand out from the competition
3. A strong brand makes it easier and less expensive to introduce new products. Brand extensions leverage this aspect effectively.
4. A strong brand espouses values that consumers can easily connect with. Brand loyalty often lasts a lifetime.
5. Branding enables enhanced credibility with customers, industry and the market place as a whole. Credibility leads to brand recognition, loyalty and competitiveness. This eventually ends up boosting the sales.

Why is Apple the most successful brand in the world?

Branding is a culmination of design, language and experience of a brand that combine to trigger an emotional reaction from consumers. In the 90's, Steve Jobs rejuvenated the Apple brand through stylistic changes, aspirational messaging and streamlined advertising. The brand became symbolic of cohesiveness, consistency and clarity. Jobs famously said, "The chance to make a memory is the essence of brand marketing".
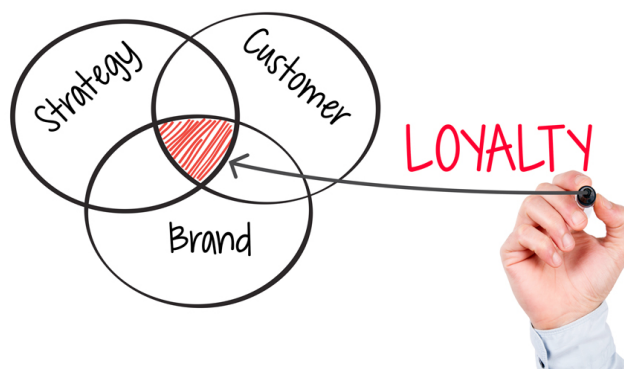
As a brand, Apple devoted much time to cultivate its image. When a consumer buys a Mac book, he believes that there is no other product that can match the former in terms of its utility or brand value. Apple's 'I am a Mac' campaign has managed to convince customers that it is the best choice when it comes to buying personal laptops.

When customers have several options, branding enables them to take a decision. Logos play a role by engendering an emotional connection with the buyers.

Apple as a brand is people driven. The organisation has maintained consistency across all consumer touch points. The iPhone was never a revolutionary smartphone but by integration of this product across all accompanying products, Apple ensured creation of a loyal customer base.

Apple doesn't spend much on paid advertising. It relies on product placement and media buzz. Innovative marketing has contributed to Apple's reign as the most precious brand. To engage with customers on an emotional level, Apple acquired the art of great storytelling. Innovative advertising campaigns and celebrity product placements have resonated with customers leading to greater customer loyalty for Apple products.

Source: https://www.business2community.com/branding/8-step-branding-strategy-for-your-small-businesses-02104895

Achieving an effective branding strategy

1. The company vision has to be defined and clearly articulated. The vision gives direction to the organisation so that actions can be taken.
2. The mission statement is a description of why the company exists. The mission supports the goals that are delineated in the brand's vision. The mission statement must clearly specify the actions that the firm intends to take.
3. The brand platform establishes the pattern in which a company communicates with customers, prospective customers, employees and consumers.

Today a company needs a brand strategy so that communication can be effective through all forms of digital media, website design and digital marketing plans. The story has to be told in the right manner to engage with the audience. Value propositions are the main selling points of the brand. So, as part of branding strategy, creation of an exciting value proposition that consumers can relate to is extremely important.

Brand creates a value for an organisation that is much more than the organisation's physical assets. A strong brand adds great business value. The best branding is about building a strong idea and holding onto it. Brand has to permeate across all levels of the organization. When a company delivers on its promise to consumers, it can reap the benefits because consumers become more loyal. The only way to build brand trust is through consistency.

Source: https://tinobusiness.com/how-to-build-a-brand-part-1-branding-and-design/

Role of logos in branding

Logos provide consumers with powerful brand recognition. Developing an effective brand strategy is a pre-requisite for creating a logo. Logo portrays the values and goals of the organisation. Brand and logo must have a strong association. Logos enable recognition of a company amidst all the clutter. A logo gives a company and its brand an identity. The image along with the font and colors provides valuable information to customers.

An image attracts a mind faster than words. The visual effect is powerful and all pervading. The logo should be such that it helps the brand's online presence to complement the offline presence.

To sum up

Branding is a marketing practice in which a company creates a name, symbol or design that can be easily identified with a company. Branding makes a memorable impression on consumers and sets the tone for customer expectations. Branding is critical to a business due to the overall impact it creates. Branding can change consumer perceptions and drive business growth through increased brand awareness. Logos play a crucial role in an organisation's branding efforts.

A good brand establishes emotional connection with consumers. Purchasing per se is an emotional experience and a good experience breeds consumer loyalty. A strong brand generates referrals because people love to tell others about the brands that they like. A strong brand website strategy is important to generate viral traffic.

A good brand doesn't just happen. It is the result of a well thought out strategic plan.

2   INTRODUCTION TO LOGOS

Learning outcomes

- To review the definitions of logos
- To study the role played by logos in establishing brand identity
- To examine the characteristic traits of a great logo
- To identify the challenges in designing logos

WHAT IS A LOGO?

A logo is an essential component of brand identity. It is an integral element in corporate and brand communications and provides immediate recognition to the brand (Schechter 1993; Henderson and Cote 1998). The word "logo" refers to the graphical element that a company uses to identify itself or its products. Logos play a crucial role in brand building as they visually represent the brand. (Machado et al, 2013).

A logo is the face of the brand and serves the purpose of emoting the character of the brand. The color, font, symbol and shape helps a consumer identify, disassociate or aspire for the brand. A successful logo is a concoction of creative potential complemented by psychological verve.

Logos represent a brand's meaning and play an important role in communicating the characteristics of the brand. Logos are visual elements in communication tools ranging from packaging and promotional materials to business cards and letterheads. Marketing managers and brand managers can immensely benefit from understanding the role logos play in branding efforts.

DEFINITIONS OF LOGO

A logo represents the personality of the organisation and the values that the organization represents to its stakeholders (Bernstein, 1986) (Balmer, 2008) (Cian et al, 2014). Logo influences the company reputation (Bernstein, 1986) (Foroudi & Montes, 2017) (Girard et al, 2013). Corporate logo is at the root of corporate identity as well as the main element of corporate visual identity (Balmer, 2001) (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010).

Schecter (1993) defines logos as the official visual representation of a corporate or brand name and the essential component of all corporate and brand identity programs. Balmer (2008) defined the corporate logo as a distinctive way in which an organisation's name is rendered.

A logo is a visual signature for the brand, is responsible for conveying the brand's personality (Cian, Krishna & Elder, 2014) and a sign of promises to the customer (Kay, 2006). Corporate logo comprises a set of elements (color, typeface, name and design) that lend visibility to a company's products and services. A logo can enable customers to clearly distinguish a brand or a company (Alessandri, 2001) (Girard et al, 2013) from its competitors.

A logo can be described as the way in which an organisation maintains communication links with the public (Balmer, 1998) and with both external and internal stakeholders (Van den Bosch et al, 2006) through its corporate visual identity. A brand identity has three components – name, logo and slogan (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

A logo draws emotional reaction from consumers (Alessandri, 2001) to establish meaningful relations with them (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Consumer's buying decisions can often be influenced by logos and brand; this makes logos influential tools to succeed and sustain in the market. This is the reason why logos must be chosen and designed to attain specific marketing objectives (Kohli, 2002).

Thus, the operational definition of logos can be arrived as:

A logo is defined as a corporate visual identity of an organisation, representing its personality, values, image and reputation and something that enables the organisation to distinguish itself from other market players by influencing and shaping consumers' attitudes and aligning buying behaviors.

Role played by logos in establishing brand identity

Design is powerful and can be used to transform brands as well as organisations. Creating a brand identity is an iterative process integrating art and science, logic and magic. Intuition or gut feel provides the magic behind the logic. Research plays an important role in recreating a brand identity through logos that truly stand the test of time.
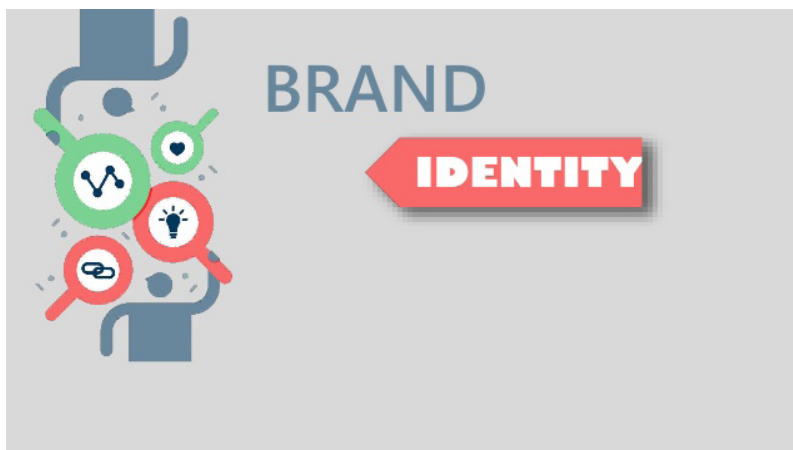
Brand building or revitalizing the brand or any rebranding exercise starts with the logo. Logo represents the visual identity of the brand. In retail marketing, logo is an integral part of store atmospherics. A logo is an endorsement of quality. Without a logo, a product is just a commodity. With a logo, a product becomes a brand. Thus, a logo is an important element of product brand architecture.

Popular brands like Amul, Vijaya Bank, LIC can attribute their popularity to their logos. Designing of logos need global thinking with a local approach. A logo can engender differentiation in an intensively competitive market place creating a unique proposition for the brand.

More than market share what is important now is mind share. A brand establishes an emotional connection with the customer and logos act as the conduit.

Logos breathe life into a brand. They are the preferred language for most brands. Logos communicate more than words. The Chinese proverb – 'A picture is worth a thousand words' aptly communicates the significance of logos. A brand has truly arrived when the logos are successful.

Consumers look up to the logo with awe and respect. If the company fails to live up to the expectations, the logo and the color are put behind the scanner. UK based energy giant BP (British Petroleum) had a Helios brand colored green and yellow. After a number of environmental disasters involving BP, skeptics portrayed the logo with black fumes coming out of the green logo. BP as an organisation drew lot of flak for its "hire and fire" policy and recurring disasters like the Texas fire tragedy in its plant. Its safety policy – "No accidents, no harm to people and no damage to environment" fell flat on its face after the disasters put a question mark on its so-called green agenda.

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Challenges in designing logos as a result of globalization

Companies change logos and colors to be in sync with the times. A change in logo has to be supported by a change in brand experience to lead to brand-led business growth.

In the era of globalization, multinational corporations will do well to realise that different colors appeal to the sensibilities of different countries. For example, India is a nation of diversities with consumers in urban, semi urban and rural areas. Finding common ground across all this diversity and regional disparities is a real challenge.

Compared to their western counterparts, Indian businesses are more circumspect about taking risks. Market research cannot elicit inputs from customers about products or services that they have not used before. It is virtually impossible to map the color preferences of a consumer population that is as diverse and complex as it can get. Color psychology as a market lever needs a periodic review especially when businesses wish to expand their global footprint.

The 6-point test for a great logo

1. Relevance: Does the logo do justice to brand positioning?
2. Differentiation: Is the logo sufficiently differentiated from competition?
3. Memorability: Does the logo make an impression and prompt recall?
4. Integration: Does the logo lend itself to a compelling brand identity?
5. Endurance: Will it stand the test of time? Can it be easily implemented?
6. Emotional connect: Does the logo have an emotional connect with consumers?

Logos have to be simple without any flashy effects. A great logo has to work in print, on the web, embroidered on a hat or it may need to be represented as a small icon on a social media account. Designers have to consider how the logo will work in horizontal and vertical lock ups or as a standalone icon. Logo must be designed keeping the target audience in mind. The logo should remind a customer about the product or service being offered. Logo has to be good as well as effective.

Logos must also appeal to our subconscious minds. Instagram, Google, Starbucks, Tesco, McDonalds, Burger King and Apple are logos that have been successful by following the basic tenets of designing a logo. These logos became popular because of visual saliency. Trends may change over a period of time. But a great logo will stand the test of time. Behind a great logo is lots of hard work. A logo should also have a high propositional density. The design of the logo must convey a lot of meaning with as little detail as possible. Images with high propositional density must appeal to the sub conscious mind.

To sum up

Logos have to be simple, clever and have their own eureka moment. Logo is not a building block but it is something that helps in creating a brand identity. The world is becoming flatter now. Products are made around the world. The three D's in the Western world are – Digital, Data and Design. A brand is a sum of consumer's experiences with a product or service. Design of those experiences is paramount. Logos play a crucial role in shaping these experiences.

A logo is designed in such a way that it conveys a meaning. The same logo can mean different things to different people. The challenge for advertisers is how to integrate these thought processes to their advantage.

Emerging economies like China and India are facing the threat of global competition now despite experiencing sporadic growth spurts. New delivery technologies and growth of social media have made all brands available to all consumers. This has made the design of the brand experience even more pertinent. Logos will continue to be an important influence on brand equity.

Logos have played an important role in brand building efforts. Factors crucial in designing a logo need an understanding considering that firms often make massive investments to develop a logo. Changing a logo is a sensitive issue and firms have to approach attempts to change the logo with abundant tact and caution.

3   IMPORTANCE OF LOGOS IN MARKETING

Learning outcomes

- To judge the relevance of logos in the digital world
- To understand how logos impact brand value
- To review the importance of logos as communication tools
- To examine the role of logos in breeding customer loyalty

Relevance of logos in the digital world

The digital world is full of clutter and a good logo design can make a firm stand out from the competition. Globalization has led to standardization and so logos now play a critical role in creating a readily identifiable, distinctive image for differentiating the product, service or firm that employs effective visual stimuli (Henderson et al, 2003). A logo can help a brand maintain a distinctive edge among competition.

Organisations like Apple, Microsoft, Coca Cola, IBM, Google, Nike, Intel, Mc Donalds, GE, BMW, Cisco, Oracle, Samsung, Disney, Toyota, HP, Mercedes Benz, Louis Vuitton, Gillette, Honda and Nescafe have invested resources to create a brand and a logo that has a lasting impact on consumers.

All logos contain some degree of pictorial representation. Logos can be used in place of the name when there is a space or time constraint. A logo that readily cues the product is a big advantage (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

Logos enhance brand value. On an average, consumers spend less than 15 seconds to take a purchase decision and logos can play a role in this process (Govers, 2013) (Kohli & Suri, 2002) (Wallace, 2001). Effective advertising is persuasive advertising and logos support such efforts. The visual cues can enhance firm reputation and serve as a competitive advantage (Baker & Balmer, 1997).

Logos are considered graphic designs (with or without words or taglines) and are used by companies to identify the firm and/or products that they create (Bennett, 1995). Graphic design of a brand logo gives a firm its corporate visual identity, which reflects the firm's unique value and prestige when communicated to the audience (Melewar, 2003).

Guidelines are essential while selecting or modifying logos so that desired corporate image can be achieved (Henderson and Cote, 1998). People attribute different associations to each logo (van Riel and van den Ban, 2001).

Influence of logos on brand value

Understanding the role of brand logos in customers' perception of brand image is a key issue in marketing research (Keller, 2011). Brands need personalization to connect with consumers better. Logos make this process easier.

A logo has to be recognized and it should have a recall value. Gyambrah & Hammond (2017) examined the significance of logos in enhancing the brand image of banking institutions. They found that logos enabled communication of brand image to consumers. In some cases, logos evoked a sense of security in customers. Thus, customer's feelings, behaviors and choices were clearly influenced by logos.

Logos help in building corporate identity and encourage brand loyalty. Logo is an important attribute of the brand as it signals brand character through a stylized treatment of the company or brand name. The logo ensures that the brand remains at the forefront of the audience's thoughts (Tulay et al, 2013) and thus projects a favorable corporate image and reputation (Foroudi, Melewar & Gupta, 2014).

Corporate branding strategies link the positive fictional figures that consumers are attached to, in order to maximize the brand equity. A brand logo associated with lucky charms or superstitious rituals may increase the brand equity to a great extent (Zeng, 2005).

The logos of companies like Coke, Nike and Mc Donald are very popular. Brands provide much needed differentiation and influence the choice of customers and help create preference for a product. As a key component of brand identity, logos provide instant recognition, especially when literacy rates are low. A brand name goes a long way but it can be limited because of differences in language. Logos help transcend country boundaries and language barriers due to their visual character (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

A logo acts as a badge of identification, as a mark of quality and as a way to improve a company's image (Hagtvedt, 2011). In a study conducted in Turkey, it was found that logos give a feeling of assurance to smart phone buyers. The Apple logo was found to have a greater brand recall. The logo shows apple that is bitten on one side; brand name and logo are the same; therefore more consumers are aware about Apple smart phone (Akkucuk & Esmaeili, 2016).

In case of tourism, logos can help marketing activities to establish brand image and identity. A well designed logo can galvanize support for vision and mission in tourism. Logos can differentiate the destination to provide a unique selling proposition. Pretesting logo design is essential to align consumer perceptions (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

Logos play an important role in brand building. They are visual representations of brand's meaning. Logos act as a visual tool in varied communication media like packaging, promotional materials, advertising, business cards and letter heads (Mac innis et al, 1999) (Henderson & Cote, 1998) (Machado et al, 2012).

Logos as communication tools

A logo is the most important vehicle of communication and often the company uses its logo to manage its image through the company's brand elements. A logo is most outspoken non verbal cues of business. It has the role of creating awareness; triggering recognition of an organisation and activating a stored image of the organisation (Dowling, 2001).

An organisation's logo has a positive impact on brand modernity, loyalty and responses. The way stakeholders react to corporate e-communication is determined by corporate logo impression and also the firm's reputation. An organisation image and reputation are generated by interaction of its corporate name, type face and corporate logo with its corporate e-communication (Muller et al, 2013).

The more positive attitude consumers have towards a company's visual identity system, the more favorable brand image consumers have toward the company and its offerings. In today's market environment, brand image can be portrayed by the brand logos used by product manufacturers or service providers (Jian Wang et al, 2012). Organizations can favorably communicate essential traits of a company's corporate identity with internal and external stakeholders (Foroudi, Melewar & Gupta, 2014).

Logos work as a visual display of the original meaning of the brand and public image. Logos can affect the economic value of a company. Brands have ability to provide cognitive explanations and logos are important tools for communication between the brand and the people. Logos represent trademarks and connections for customers through strengthening of brand's core values (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

A logo is an essential tool for communication between brands and people. They create a sense of belonging in the customers. In the Red Bull logo, two opposing striker bulls with the sun shining in front of brand ensures that this product gives life to the mind and body. BP's Helios symbol represented energy and this was in tune with BP's positioning as an energy company. The friendly man who is the mascot for Vijaya Bank says – Vijaya Bank – a friend you can bank upon. Logos can thus foster emotional bond with customers.

Logos enable an organisation to communicate its corporate image, increase brand recognition and increase customer loyalty. The reaction of stakeholders to corporate communication is significantly influenced by the logo and firm reputation. If logo is attractive, consumer engagement on social media is assured. (Pham et al, 2012) (Muller et al, 2012).

Corporate e-communication is the digital interaction that an organisation has with its stakeholders. Digital platforms are playing a crucial role in corporate communication. Corporate image and favorable reputation can be considered sub constructs of a logo (Foroudi & Montes, 2017).

Consumers engage easily on the corporate e communication channels [Face book and Twitter] when the corporate logo is attractive to them. The way the corporate logo is displayed on corporate e communication channels, such as Facebook and Twitter, has a strong relationship with consumer perception toward corporate logo (Muller et al, 2013).

Logos are a key part of a company's communication efforts. Instant recognition resulting from packaging and logos is a good investment to make. Logos provide an assurance to customers about product/ service quality (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

How do logos breed customer loyalty?

A logo reveals identity of the brand. Logo can tell potential customers about your image, the type of product or service and the value proposition.

Logos contribute to the brand recognition process (Van Riel & Van den Ban, 2001) (Pham et al, 2012) (Govers, 2013) (Machado et al, 2012) (Berry, 1998) (Henderson & Cote, 1998) (Kohli & Suri, 2002) by communicating to customers about the corporate image and achieve increased consumer loyalty. Logos play a role in breeding customer loyalty (Mira et al, 2015), implying information and meanings about the brand reminding customers about performance benefits of the brand.

Logo helps a customer easily identify and select a brand. Ancient Chinese used symbol of the dragon to express imperial power. Logo helps to convey meanings and information about the product or service. Good logos can result in a good reputation and form positive customers' attitudes influencing their purchase behavior and loyalty (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

Understanding the role of brand logos in customers' perception of brand image is a key issue in marketing research (Keller, 2011). How consumers interpret a brand logo by linking various psychographic factors to the logo is an important area worthy of further investigation. In the 1990s, Chinese tried to sell their razor brand "Rhino" to Western countries. Consumers associated the brand logo of a rhino with 'blunt' and 'dull' and refuse to try the razors despite its price advantage (Zeng, 2005).

Brands play a role in customer relationship management. Logos act as an effective conduit for the same. Logos indicate functional benefits, cognitive descriptive benefits and also indicate aesthetic tendencies (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

Foroudi et al (2017) conducted a qualitative, exploratory study. Face to face interviews and in-depth interviews were arranged on Skype with graphic designers, communication and marketing consultants in Mexico and Persia. The intent was to study the impact of corporate logos on corporate image and reputation in creating competitive advantage. The study posits that the more favorable the name, color, type face and design of company and color, the more favorable the attitude Mexican consumers have towards the corporate logo, corporate image and reputation.

When audiences are familiar with the logo like the logo and products, it is the moment that helps sales. Companies thus improve their sales and profit. Logo can be a key tool to attract audience through their advertising, social media, even business card. Audience has to be delivered a consistent message. Corporate logo is an important cue to communicate a company's personality to its customers and employees.

To sum up

Logos can lead to competitive edge for an organisation by creating a distinctive image. Brand reputation is influenced by the visual clues that logos provide. A simple logo has a higher recall value and leads to instant recognition of the brand by customers. Logos play a crucial role in boosting customer loyalty and cement the emotional association between the brand and its audience.

Brand logo serves as visual clues and delivers subtle messages to consumers about a firm's commitment and engagement. Corporate brand managers have to carefully assess their brand logos before they launch any products to consumer groups. Customer's perception towards brand logos is essential to frame corporate branding strategies in order to maximize brand equity. Brand logos in the form of positive fictional figures may inspire consumers to believe that the services or products for which the brand logos represent are virtuous and trustworthy.

Logo can tell potential customers about your image, the type of product or service and the value proposition. A well designed logo with attractive colors triggers curiosity in customers. Logos create the first impression about the brand. So any change in the logo has to be planned and executed carefully.

4   DESIGN OF A LOGO

Learning outcomes

- To identify the various factors that are crucial while arriving at the design of a logo
- To review the guidelines to be followed while designing a logo
- To examine the characteristics of a well designed logo
- To understand the factors that lead to favorability of a logo

People may have different associations regarding a logo and therefore regarding the organization it represents (Grunwald, 2016). Logos are part of an organization's corporate visual identity. Logo facilitates the identification with the organization or the brand behind it.

Corporate logo is what differentiates an organisation from another. It is a fundamental element in the organisation's communication and also in the company's image. Today's managers invest large sums of money in creation and maintenance of their firm's logos as they are aware of how corporate logos can affect consumer perception and consequently the firm's reputation (Girard et al, 2013). Corporate logo influences brand values and endorses brand identity and impacts company reputation (Bernstein, 1986).

Designing a logo is a good way to create an image that consumers can then associate with a product. Crafting a logo that stands out from the crowd is just as important as crafting one that holds up to the competition (Krishna, 2013). Logos should be chosen and designed with an eye toward relevant and specific marketing objectives (Kohli, 2002). Logos are specially designed symbols that help consumers identify goods, services and organizations by using different types of characters, graphs, signals and colors (Li, Chen, Su et al, 2014).

Designing a logo can be a difficult task for organisations. The challenge can be in terms of creating a strong sense of familiarity among consumers when they are initially exposed to the brand. There is a risk that a logo may not be liked by consumers or it may evoke a negative emotion or it may simply fail to connect with the consumers (Jabbar, 2014). Both color and design of logo are major aspects of a logo's characteristics.

Designing of the logo needs investment of time and effort. Contrary to perception, designing a logo need not be an expensive proposition. Twitter paid only $15 for its iconic logo. Nike paid $35 for the swoosh logo. The relationship between the brand's characteristics and the dynamism evoked by the logo should be a key point of focus in logo design (Cian, Krishna & Elder, 2014).

Static visuals can create a perception of movement. This is called as dynamic imagery and can affect consumer engagement and attitudes. The movement-engagement-attitude effect is moderated by the congruence between perceived moment and brand characteristics (Cian, Krishna & Elder, 2014).

Designing a logo is a complex process. A logo should create a distinct image from competitors (Singla& Aggarwal, 2016). Henderson and Cote (1998) argued that there are four aspects that make a logo appear good – recognizability, familiarity, meaning and affect. Shape of logos also provides customers information about characteristics of the company.

Henderson and Cote (1998) made the first comprehensive study of logos – they identified shape, specifically roundness, as one of several logo design dimensions that affect consumer response to logos. Dimensions like elaborateness, naturalness and harmony impacted consumers' affective responses.

There are two facets of logo design – content & style. Content represents elements contained in the logo, including text and graphic representation. Style refers to how these elements are presented. People look for meaning in logos (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE LOGO

The image for the logo has to be chosen carefully because it has a profound effect. It takes a long time to build a strong image. All elements of brand identity have to be consistent so that brand image is strengthened. Let us take the example of oil company Exxon (that was earlier called as Standard Oil Company). The company introduced tiger as a symbol to send a strong message that the brand symbolized power.

The initial slogan was – "Put a tiger in your tank". In 1962, a friendly cartoon version of the logo was created. In 1972, the company's name was changed to Exxon. The tiger logo helped ensure continuity and consistency during this transition and the slogan read – "We have changed our name, but not our stripes". In the 1990s, the slogan became – "Rely on the tiger". The logo gave a suggestion about how Exxon had enriched the lives of customers. Logo and slogan complemented the brand name.

While changing the logo, the firm has to be careful about the aspects that need change. In case there is a change in the brand strategy, content needs to be revised. Some companies try to copy other brands but this is not a good strategy. Copying a competitor will land the company into a trademark infringement problem.

Tweaks to the main logo should be such that each sub brand has its own logo that varies in dynamism from others. Adidas has three sub brands – Originals, Performance and Neo. These are characterized by logos that seem to differ progressively in perceived dynamism. Brands that aim to maximize the benefits of evoked dynamism within logos can adjust their strategy to match each specific sub brand (Cian, Krishna & Elder, 2014).

Adidas Neo

Adidas Performance

Adidas originals

Every component of the design influences the efficacy of the logos. Logos should be created keeping in mind specific marketing communication objectives. Marketers often test slogans as part of advertising campaigns. But the testing of logos is seldom given the importance that it deserves. Consumer inputs can add value to the efforts of designers who design a logo.

FACTORS INFLUENCING FAVORABILITY OF A CORPORATE LOGO

Companies use their logos as an essential element to communicate with their customers and persuade them to buy their products and services. Logos give company a unique identity.

The factors that influence the favorability of a corporate logo and the impact of this favorability on corporate reputation were studied by Foroudi et al (2014). The favorability of a corporate logo indicates consumers' positive feelings towards a logo. Corporate name, design and typeface are antecedents for a favorable corporate logo. Logo enhances the corporate image, consumer's attitude towards advertisements, familiarity and brand reputation.

Foroudi et al (2017) conducted a qualitative, exploratory study. They arranged for face to face interviews and in-depth interviews on Skype with graphic designers, communication and marketing consultants in Mexico and Persia. Their intent was to study the impact of corporate logos on corporate image and reputation in creating competitive advantage in the context of Persia and Mexico as emerging markets. The study posits that the more favorable the name, color, type face and design of company and color, the more favorable the attitude Mexican consumers have towards the corporate logo, corporate image and reputation.

The likeability of logos results from certain factors. A logo must be contemporary, have aesthetic value and a unique style. So, while designing a logo, these factors play an important role (Zhu, Cao & Li, 2017).

Loyal customers can consider the logo redesign as a threat to their long nurtured relation with the brand (Walsh et al, 2010). A logo can have both intrinsic and extrinsic properties. Intrinsic properties express degree of representativeness of the logo. This reflects a perception of graphical representation of the logo. Extrinsic factors originate from associations with the company or brand. Perceptions about past actions of the brand and the intensity of communication of values of the brand to internal and external audiences define brand associations.

When consumers encounter a brand logo without actually experiencing the company's offerings, superstition may be deployed to fill the void of the unknown to evaluate the brand logo and judge the benefits from the offerings represented by the brand. Consumers' belief in fate has a negative effect on brand logo sensitivity and consumers' belief in fortune tellers, belief in magic and fictional figures, belief in lucky charms, belief in superstitious rituals have positive effects on brand logo sensitivity. The more positive attitude consumers have towards a company's visual identity system, the more favorable brand image consumers have toward the company and its offerings. In today's market environment, brand image can be portrayed by the brand logos used by product manufacturers or service providers (Wang et al, 2012).

If a corporate logo is not memorable or meaningful, the company cannot reach its goals (Dubberly, 1995).

CHARACTERISTICS OF A WELL DESIGNED LOGO

There are two facets of logo design – content & style. Content represents elements contained in the logo, including text and graphic representation. Style refers to how these elements are presented. People look for meaning in logos (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

Logos that incorporate a hint of the product category would be more effective. The style of the logo wasn't found to be critical for recall. In the case of multi product companies, it is difficult to have a logo with high content. Citi Bank, AT&T and Fujitsu had abstract logos. To the extent that style makes a difference, companies should pay attention to it (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

1. A logo must serve an instant connection to the audience
2. A good logo should be memorable and recognizable
3. It should build familiarity
4. It should increase trust and credibility in the market, as compared to competitors
5. It must strengthen the brand image and support the product-brand architecture

When Castrol PLC was acquired by BP PLC, then a change in logo became inevitable. However, realization dawned later that both Castrol and BP had distinct brand identities and so it was decided that it was prudent to keep the identities separate.

Touch, taste, smell, sound and appearance affect how customers relate to products on a sensory level and how small sensory changes can make a huge impact. Managers can use sensory knowledge to improve packaging, branding and advertising to captivate the consumer's sense. The potential consequences of a sensory make over should be weighed carefully. The US postal service's eagle symbolizes strength and speed. The colors red, white and blue might be patriotic in the US but in another country, the same colors may have different meanings (Krishna, 2013).

Companies may wish to continuously update their logo for the sake of novelty e.g. GE. To determine whether a logo should be updated, organisations must focus on how logos are evaluated over time. Firms also need to focus on how individuals of varying levels of expertise evaluate the logo (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

Viewers process information differently – both at perceptual and experiential levels. The general public is subjective – it prefers simplicity. Their responses are more affective than cognitive. Logos are created by designers who are aesthetic, objective and cognitive. How the market responds to logos will determine the importance of effectiveness of change in logo. Designers must keep the general public in mind while redesigning the logos. Sometimes people get bored seeing the same logo (Kohli & Suri, 2002**)**.

To sum up

Logos can influence brand reputation and act as identity for the brand. Therefore, the design of the logo must be properly planned keeping in mind the various factors that can appeal to the audience – be it the text or the graphic. When the time is ripe, logos may need redesigning. The logo should be memorable and recognizable. Logo must act as a credible tool to ensure that customer's trust in the brand is never compromised.

5 SELECTION OF THE RIGHT COLOR FOR A LOGO

Learning outcomes

- To understand the significance of colors used in a logo
- To review the process of selecting the right color
- To identify the meanings associated with different colors
- To examine the impact of colors on consumer emotions towards a product or service

In recent years, researchers have attempted to establish the importance of color in influencing consumer behavior. Marketers are using color in innovative ways as brand can establish an effective visual identity and help the product achieve a unique competitive position in the market. Marketing managers can use knowledge about colors to choose an appropriate color scheme for logos, packaging, advertisements etc. to reinforce a specific brand personality.

Designers have to understand the meaning behind the colors and use the right one. Red is an intense color. Green symbolizes life and renewal. In manufacturing, green represent eco friendly companies. Blue, the most popular color, represents confidence, dignity and trustworthiness. Image is mainly the combination of cognitive, logical and emotional.

Color creates a match between brand logo and the personality dimensions (excitement and red, competence & blue, sophistication & black). Combination of color and shape of the logo drives likability and familiarity though.

Colors can help create a distinct brand identity. For example – Pepsi changed the color in its logo from red to blue. Dell offers an assortment of colorful laptops. Apple ipods are available in different colors. Nike customers can choose a color for their shoes. Even the shape of the logo influences consumer behavior (Henderson & Cote, 1998). In India, Asian Paints, a manufacturing company gives the option to mix colors and discover new shades of paints. Multi color logos aid brand recognition.

Colors chosen depend on the purpose of the logo and the type of product that is going to be marketed. Youth oriented products have colors that reflect exuberance, enthusiasm, energy and responsible carelessness.

Colors like yellow, orange, red and green represent food brands. Green indicates energy, environment and freshness. So green is a popular color. Logos of feminine products are colored pink. Red represents boldness. Orange is supposed to be appealing to kids – but these kinds of opinions are more subjective and less based on market research. Even market research may not include a truly representative sample and so generalizing based on the opinions of a few respondents is not fair.

Role played by color

Color induces moods and emotions, influences consumers' perceptions and behavior and helps companies position or differentiate from the competition (Aslam, 2006). Selection of color in a corporate logo is dependent on its cultural values, desired customer relationship levels with the firm, marketing objectives and corporate communications. Color preferences require high involvement decisions (Foroudi et al, 2014) (Grossman & Wisenblit, 1999).

Colors have a physiological effect. Different colors have different impact on people (Hynes, 2009). Colors make the logo alive, offer an instantaneous method for conveying meaning and message to the logo – it is the most influential non verbal form of communication. Color has played an important role in influencing buyer behavior in retail industry (Singla & Aggarwal, 2016).

Colors and emotions

Colors in logos lead to emotional attachment of the consumer with the brand (Singla & Aggarwal, 2016). Emotional traits associated with different colors of a logo can influence consumer perceptions which can change when a logo is changed. Logos have a strategic association with the company as they represent the values and beliefs of the firm. Companies like Airtel, Hero Moto Corp, Microsoft and Google have carefully used colors in their brand communication strategy.

Colour	Meaning
Blue	Protective, stability, prestigious, secure, reliable.
Purple	Passionate, playful, visionary, truth, justice, exciting
Orange	Fun, playful, Happiness
Red	Passionate, Exciting, Dynamic
Yellow	Fun, Energetic, Cheerful, Imaginative
Green	Stability, Contemplative, Healthy
Pink	Truth, Justice, Homely, Protective
Brown	Earthly, Nature, Warm, Dependable

Source: Hynes (2009); Clarke & Costall (2008)

Examples: Successful use of colours in logos

Colors play an important role in logos. Mc Donalds logo is yellow because yellow is a color that stimulates appetite. IBM's blue logo is representative of authority, success and security. Colors, flowers, fragrances, music – all these have therapeutic powers. Markets have used these attributes to their advantage.

Walmart also chose blue color for its logo as blue evoked a sense of modernity and trustworthiness. Walmart used an asterisk like symbol that looked like a bulb. This was a hint that Walmart customers were smart and intelligent and took advantage of affordable, quality products.

To sum up

While designing a logo, the designer has to pay particular attention to color. Colors appeal to the emotions of consumers. Choosing the right color for a logo is a delicate decision that needs to be arrived carefully. As businesses expand their footprint globally, they have to demonstrate cultural sensitivity while choosing colors. Colors chosen must espouse the values that the organization wishes to demonstrate to customers.

6 WHAT MAKES A TRULY GREAT LOGO?

Learning objectives

- To identify the characteristic traits of a great logo
- To examine the different types of logo designs
- To review the pre-requisites before designing a logo
- To understand the differences between branding and logo design

Logo is the face of a company. A logo has to be recognizable by consumers. Logos need to have a long life. Discussions about logo designs fail to understand the drivers of a sustainable design.

Logos are marks of identity that are designed for easy recognition. Logos represent an organisation or a brand in a graphic form. Designer Michael Evamy says that humans are attracted to symbols based on their own experience. The challenge in designing a logo is to capture maximum meaning with minimum means. A logo should be distinctive, memorable and clear. It should do these things better than the rest.

According to graphic designer Michael Bierut, there are three types of logo designs

1. Word marks – FedEx, Google are examples of clean and modern type of design.
2. Pictorial logos – Apple and Target are examples of direct pictorial associations.
3. Abstract iconography – Pepsi, Nike.

Logo system is a graphical framework that can have many permutations. Google has used the framework effectively through the use of doodles. MTV too has deployed a similar framework.

A logo is something where designer begins from nothing and keeps adding value to achieve the design objective. Deciding on the right design is not simple because it involves dealing with ambiguous things like intuition and taste that are subjective.

A logo design is preceded by intense research about what the competition is doing and looking at minute details. Discover character traits of the brand, the values, the positioning, and the tone that the brand wishes to convey. Logo must be as unique as possible.

The best way to arrive at a great logo design is to keep iterating… creating, changing and tweaking the logo until you arrive at the right design.

As business keeps growing, brand becomes an integral part of the business. Therefore, the marketer has to be adept in creating a story that can sustain itself. Making a logo memorable is most important. The design of the logo must be such that it should deliver on the brand promise. The logo must make the promise believable. A great logo is clear, concise and less complicated.

The best logos are those that are simple but powerful and are recognizable even on a tiny scale. The days of intricate logos with lots of text are no longer relevant in the digital world. Logos have to be both social media and web friendly. Subtract unnecessary elements from the logo so that logo is as simple as possible. A simpler design will be more memorable.

The best branding connects to the most specific target market possible. A visual that is highly focused and directed at the target will connect the brand to the audience. Color is an important component of a visual identity and can be used in a logo so that the company's products can stand out from the crowd. A great logo should be capable of representing the values of the company, product, or service. The logo must act as a conduit for delivering the brand qualities to the public.

Before designing a logo, the designer has to understand the requirements of the client and examine the branding strategies of the competitor. Some of the relevant questions are:

1. How can the logos be made distinctive?
2. Who are the audience? Where do they encounter the brand?
3. What are the cultural factors that need consideration?

Legendary American designer Paul Rand was hired by Steve Jobs to design an identity for his new company "NeXT". Rand has always stressed that graphic designs should be aesthetic, beautiful and functionally relevant. Rand was behind IBM's logo and his skill for marrying art and commerce was widely appreciated.

How are branding and logo design different?

Logo is the shape that companies use to represent themselves – examples are Nike's swoosh, Mc Donald's golden arches and Starbucks green mermaid. Branding is a holistic perspective how customers define their experiences with an organisation. A brand includes every single customer touch-point.

If we take the example of Nike, then swoosh is its logo. This is a simple shape indicative of motion and speed. Nike is the name derived from the Greek goddess of victory. Nike's branding includes its commercials, endorsements by celebrities from the sports field, product packaging, store design, product placement on television, sponsorships, in-store graphics, music in its videos, the design of its website, print ads etc. Here we are talking about every consumer touch-point with Nike.

Source: **https://gomedia.com/zine/insights/difference-between-logo-design-and-branding/**
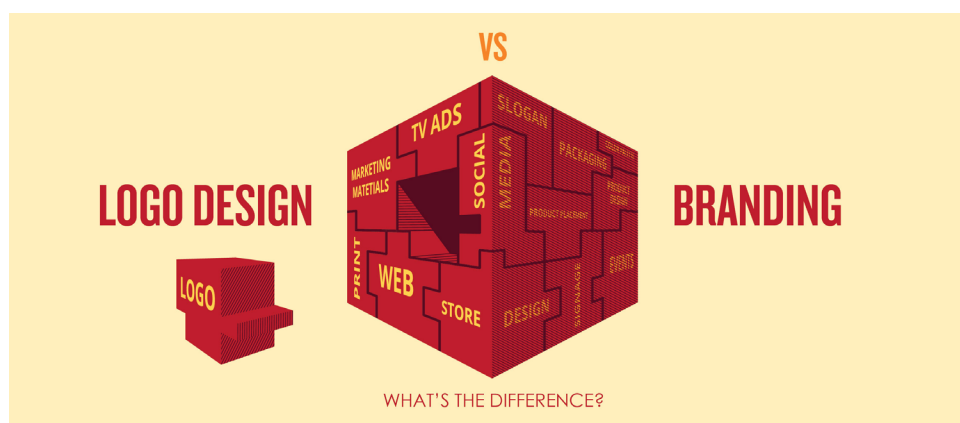
When a potential customer sees the logo and if the logo is familiar, then it will make the customer recollect all the past experiences with the brand! These memories trigger the emotional and intellectual response in the customer which eventually leads to a decision to buy Nike shoes. The logo thus acts a visual cue to the brain so that customer can recall the experiences interacting with the brand.

To sum up

Arriving at a great logo design can be both an enriching as well as a stressful experience. Research is important prior to arriving at a logo design. The designer has to decipher something that is not so clear. He has to deal with subjective elements and the complexities associated with them. Certain cues may lead to ambivalence. No design can be complete without understanding the various audience touch points. Designs must be aesthetic as well as functionally relevant. Simplicity is the essence of a great logo. Branding is distinct from logo design. While logos are symbols or marks, they are only one component of branding. Branding refers to the holistic experience of the customer across all touch-points with the organisation.

7 REDESIGNING LOGOS

Learning objectives

- To understand the intricacies involved while redesigning logos.
- To identify the reasons why a logo redesign may be needed.

A company's logo is the complete embodiment of everything the company stands for. The best logos are easily recognizable and memorable. Sometimes a logo needs change. A brand needs reinvigoration. Companies evolve. Marketing approaches change. Having the right strategy, the right culture and the right story to tell consumers is important. This is the main reason why a company should change its logo.

Logos will need a change in the following cases

- Brand becoming stale over the years
- Customer needs changing
- Change in profile of targeted customer
- Structural changes such as mergers and acquisitions or in the face of intense competition

To revitalize brands, logos need redesigning. As brands age, brand knowledge structures get eroded and this impacts consumer awareness about the brand. So, in such cases, a change in logo can project a modern image of the brand, which in turn, influences consumers' attitude and hence brand loyalty (Cian et al, 2014) (Foroudi & Montes, 2017).

A change in logo may be necessitated by a major change in the organization's strategy. Walmart, eBay and Google redesigned their logos when there were structural reforms within the organization. As brand equity improves, logos can also evolve over a period of time to reflect changing market trends. Once a product is already associated with a logo, switching logos can be a risky proposition (Krishna, 2013).

before after

Logos make recognition and information retrieval quicker and more efficient. Logos can cue a brand more efficiently. Companies do not wish to change a logo due to the benefits of instant recognition that logos offer. Sometimes logos need to be changed due to changes in company name (Federal Express to FedEx), HLL to HUL, a strategy change (United Airlines becoming employee owned) or a desire to update to a more modern image (Kohli & Suri, 2002).


Once people have adapted to a stimulus (a logo), a slightly altered version of it might create a novelty effect and they would prefer the new image over the former. If the stimulus is changed too much, they perceive it as a new image and prefer the former. Incremental changes in logos are sure to receive a better response than a drastic change in the logos (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

BEFORE   AFTER

Consumer responses to logo redesign (say from angular to rounded) rely on brand commitment. Brand commitment negatively influences evaluation of inconsistent information (i.e. rounded logos) and this negative logo evaluation mediates the impact on brand attitude. Inconsistent information leads to negative thoughts about the logo. Logo redesign has to be managed carefully (Walsh et al, 2011).

Round logos (compared with angular logos) were considered more harmonious and natural. Companies are shifting towards more rounded logo designs. Committed consumers may react negatively to inconsistent information but the firm can mitigate such effects by ensuring that the inconsistent information is congruent with activated consumer identities (Walsh et al, 2011).

BEFORE   AFTER
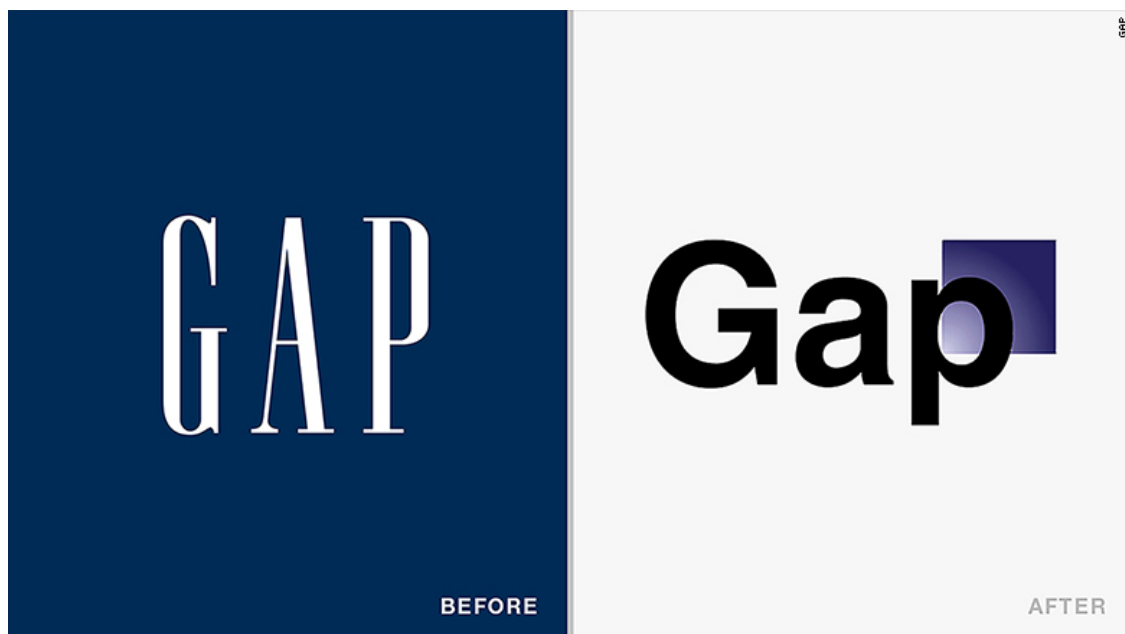
As logos represent the brand personality, redesigns are risky and can hurt the brand. So, before redesigning the logo, it is essential to understand the impact the logo change will have on the loyal customer base (Walsh et al, 2010). Pre-testing and trials may be needed before a decision is taken to change the logo. Gap had to pull out its new logo within two weeks of its debut. There was an online backlash from consumers on Facebook and Twitter who protested about the change in the logo.

To sum up

Redesigning a logo is a process that has to be adequately planned. All the implications of the redesigning process need to be introspected. If redesign is not done in a structured manner, it can lead to a backlash from consumers. Logo redesign can influence the commitment of consumer to the brand. Pre-testing a logo change is extremely crucial.

8   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Learning objectives

- To review the various theories that have been used to study the effectiveness of logos
- To understand the implications of the theories in the study of logo design and development

Attribution theory

Attribution theory recommends that when individuals succeed or fail in dynamic interactions, it affects the inferences that they make about the particular behaviors. So, when individuals perceive a favorable corporate logo there is an immediate mental model that they hold of the organisation and a greater sense of association with the organization which is likely to impact behavior (Karaosmanoglu et al, 2011). This theory explains the visual impact of the logo in strengthening the brand image which in turn impacts attitudes and behaviors (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). Attribution theory enables understanding perceptions of communication managers and designers (Graham, 1991) and consumer's decision making process (Weiner, 1996). Attribution method determines consumers' likelihood of satisfaction, cognitive, emotional and behavioral traits (Weiner, 2000). Let us also talk about the Gestalt theory in the design of a logo.

Gestalt Effect

A group of German psychologists proposed theories of visual perception in the 1920s. They analysed how humans group together different objects into a single whole. This study was called as Gestalt Effect. The brain's innate organizing tendencies allow us to perceive things as organized wholes rather than individual elements.

When we look at something the mind organizes all of the visual information available into a single whole to provide meaning to elements. The gestalt effect is the ability of the brain to generate whole forms from groupings of lines, shapes, curves and points.

Gestalt refers to basic principles that help us in visual perception. These principles are useful in designing a logo because they enable proper understanding of how design is interpreted and perceived. Some logos use the principle to present a figure using minimal visual information. The hidden arrow in the FedEx logo is one of the most popular examples of the utilization of negative spaces.

In case of the logo of Sun Microsystems, the SUN logo only constitutes a U and an upside down U, arranged in a loop. However, when seen together, the reverted "U"s look like they are forming the word "SUN". The psychology of sight is important for a visceral field like logo design.

Thus, understanding these theories enables us to relate to the salient aspects that need attention while designing a logo.

Logos essentially have two components – the textual content (i.e. the brand name it displays) and graphic design (visual aspect).

Academic approaches have attempted to understand how the logo variables can be manipulated to communicate specific messages to customers. Example – how variables like color & typeface independently impact brand perception.

A logo's design has to be in sync with the brand name. The meaning of the logo's visual attribute can change as per the textual content. The green color in a logo for a perfume called Poison can have a different meaning when the green color is used for a NGO called Greenpeace.

SEMIOTIC THEORY

Semiotics is the science of signs. It tells us how a sign produces meaning.

Semiotic theory has been used to explain the interactions between the logo's textual content and its graphic design.

A logo is a combination of textual content, colors, typography and imagery that communicate specific meanings to the brand's audience. The meanings are closely related to the brand's identity namely its values and promise.

A logo can produce two levels of meanings – the first level of meaning is associated with the textual content, whereas the second level is related to the visual aspect.

Textual content of logo can be used to guide the interpretation of visual aspect and vice versa. This is called as the double anchorage effect.

While designing a logo, we have to take into account the denoted and connoted meanings of a brand's name. It is vital to analyze what meanings a logo is likely to generate. The graphic design of the logo must be relevant to the brand identity.

Semiotic approach can help the marketing managers to anticipate the associations of ideas generated by a graphic design in the minds of consumers. This helps in optimization of communication media.

FLUENCY THEORY

Reber et al (2004) proposed the fluency theory. The theory postulates that familiar or simple stimuli are processed more fluently than complex stimuli. If we apply this theory for designing a logo, then this would mean that overall simple logos are recognized faster than complex logos. Effects of logo complexity have to be considered taking into account the construct of exposure.

People learn over time. As exposure increases it leads to increased recognition. Once a stimulus is stored in the consumer's brain, it is easier to retrieve that stimulus from memory. Exposure affects the relation between logo complexity and processing of information.

TWO-FACTOR MODEL

In 1970, Berlyne proposed the two-factor model. There are two psychological processes that determine whether a logo is positively or negatively evaluated – habituation and tedium. This process is like an inverted U relation. At first there is an increasing positive relationship between exposure and liking. After a certain tipping point, consumers get satiated leading to decrease in the liking. This tipping point is influenced by habituation and tedium.

So, what exactly does habituation denote? Every exposure to a certain stimulus leads to a possibility to learn about the stimulus. Learning about something is itself stimulating and it generates a positive feeling. Tedium results when people reach certain levels of learning and then this leads to satiation. These principles can be extended to logo design – especially when a company wants to redesign its logo.

Source: https://www.desimartini.com/news/martini-shots/archive/8-bollywood-celebs-their-endorsement-fee-article37160.htm

Repeated exposure causes fatigue – it is like overkill. In India, Amitabh Bachchan is a well known and legendary superstar. In the last five years (2014-2019) Bachchan has appeared in several advertisements on television and print media endorsing several products from hair oil, pens, diapers, pain relieving balms etc. This has led to consumer ennui. Advertising agencies seldom realize this aspect as they believe that they can continuously milk a celebrity's brand reputation.

The amazing growth of Patanjali brand products in India stunned the entire nation. A spiritual guru and a yoga teacher, Baba Ramdev was the brain behind Patanjali's success story. The guru himself endorsed the products and new products were launched in quick succession. Baba Ramdev attacked multi nationals in India like Colgate and Hindustan Unilever and exhorted Indians to support domestic companies like Patanjali. Quality products that are affordable was the claim made by Patanjali. Multinational companies launched an aggressive attack in the market in response to Patanjali's claims. Now the excitement around Patanjali's products seems to have gradually petered out – more so in the last year or so. The two-factor model can be easily used to explain the decline in the popularity of Patanjali's products.

To sum up

Academic research has often used a theoretical framework to help understand answers to the research questions. Existing theories are used to explain a phenomenon (deductive research) and sometimes a new theory is proposed to explain the phenomenon (inductive research). In this chapter, we reviewed some of the theories that have been used in academic studies on logos.

The study about the effectiveness of logos is an exciting topic. There is an acute need for in-depth research in this area. Research should enable companies to understand the various factors influencing the design of a logo in the digital era. The meanings from the logo design can be used to better interpret consumer reaction so that logos can empower the brand. As new theories emerge from academic research, profound insights can be gained about the impact of logos in branding.

9 ARE LOGOS REALLY POWERFUL?

Learning outcome

- Explore if logos are really powerful and examine the contrarian views about the efficacy of logos.

A CONTRARIAN VIEW ABOUT THE EFFICACY OF LOGOS

Let us examine the reasons for gradual decline in the power of logos. In reality, a logo cannot be considered the be-all of a brand. Brand power gets reinforced through good quality products, great customer service and relevant communications that appeal to customers.

On the practical side it has often been found that businesses either give too much importance to logos or too less importance to logos. If logos have too many symbols, letters or colors, it can lead to clutter and clogging the minds of consumers.

Contribution of logos and slogans to the management of places as brands is limited. Logos and slogans are ascribed with powers that they do not possess, diverting focus, resources and effort from what is actually important in place branding (Govers, 2013).

Branding is synonymous with reputation management. Branding is closely related to managing brand equity. Logo enables identification and recognition of a brand; but the core of branding is to ensure that consumers attach distinctive associations to this entity (building reputation). More than the management of logos, management of reputation is more important (Govers, 2013).

Branding needs leadership – it has to be centered on a core vision and strategy. Brand communication should be such as to facilitate connection with the audience. Brand experts often opine that brand has to live up to its promise.

Business leaders tend to cram everything into the logo and expect the audience to relate to it. Some experts feel that a lot of time is wasted on innumerable iterations of design of a logo which adds little value to the bottom line of an organisation. Complicated designs end up alienating the customer. Logos are simply labels and if audiences attached meaning to these labels, it was the contextual effect of branding.

LOGO RECALL

Logo recall is very difficult. Companies are way too focused on so many other things – they are missing the woods for the trees – Logo can play a crucial role in establishing a relationship of trust between a company and its customers.

Decision makers and graphic designers must understand the relation between a corporate logo and its antecedents (ie corporate name, typeface, design and color) and how a positive impression of a logo can engender a favorable corporate image and corporate reputation. Designing a logo is a corporate complex phenomenon.

Four elements of the corporate logo (corporate name, typeface, design and color) and three dimensions that impact on the relationship between corporate logo to corporate image (attitude towards advertisement, familiarity and recognizability) and reputation have been studied.

A favorable corporate logo influences consumer perceptions of the company. Design has readability and public taste. Main problem is that logos are not sufficiently readable or do not have a great memory recall. Logo must be memorable, unique and it can be easily differentiated among competitors – especially on the shelves of the supermarket or shops or even websites. A well designed logo should easily recall and retain.

Context is more crucial to the viewer who can connect with the organisation through various offline and online channels. The messages and communications are what will endear to a customer; a logo is only a medium and cannot be considered the be-all and end-all. In the obsession with logos, meaningful branding questions tend to be ignored.

Late American writer Tom Wolfe was a harsh critic of businesses tending to focus undeserved attention on logos.

Wolfe remarked that the logo was a fraud that the American graphic arts perpetrated on American businesses. He was of the firm opinion that logos make little impact on customers or the general public except that they end up creating chaos. He also attacked business leaders who ended up spending huge amounts on designing logos in an attempt to project a modern image. He added that logos were strictly a vanity industry.

Not everyone may accept Wolfe's bohemian views. But a few design experts do agree that logos are given more importance than what they deserve. William Drenttel is the president of a New York City design agency. He has a strong worded advice for budding entrepreneurs, "Do not waste too much time or money in creating a symbol". He adds that as big corporations spend resources to recreate their logos, the logos of small enterprises are bound to get lost in the clutter. A small company can just focus on a simple image and a clean type face.

EPILOGUE

This book is the outcome of extensive research that was conducted over a period of two years. The benefits of logos have been very well articulated in literature. A few branding experts have cautioned against investing too much time and money in developing / redeveloping logos. Some experts have expressed their opinion that logos are often overrated with regards to their importance.

Notwithstanding such contrarian views, the truth is that the contribution of logos in branding efforts cannot be easily wiped away. A unanimous opinion by all academic researchers is that simpler the design of the logo, the better is the recall value of the logo. Logo can be considered as one of the several components that influence buyer behavior; however, logos have played their part in making people aware about a brand.

Logos appear on letterhead, business cards, annual reports, package and product designs, print and television advertisements, websites and smart phone applications. A logo is considered as a brand's visual expression. Logos are important to capture brand awareness and build brand image.

Some of the popular logos have endured for years and the designs were quite simple. In fact, years ago, Nike had used the services of a student to design their logo and now the wheel is turning full circle. Marketers are contemplating the use of the crowd sourcing mode for designing logos. Logos strengthen the brand image and act as a conduit between the brand and its audience.

As a researcher, my main interest was in exploring if logos are still remembered by audiences in the digital era where consumers often get bombarded with more information which often they do not need. The challenge for marketers is to design and nurture a logo that offers global appeal. Color plays an important part in logo design and choice of the right color is becoming important too. It is also essential to understand when the logo design may reach a tipping point so that efforts for redesigning the logo may be undertaken.

It is also prudent to remember that a logo can functionally complement all other attributes of a product brand. A logo does add value to branding efforts – however if the product quality is bad or if there has been a product failure that has gone viral, none of the branding efforts can sustain. In the Internet era, bad news has a tendency to spread faster than good news. So, a logo will work if all other attributes of the branding are in order.

Once the brand equity gets dented, resurrecting the image is an onerous process. As consumer preferences keep changing and consumers increasingly demonstrate their fickleness, periodic assessment of an organisation's brand values is an absolute necessity. Managing customer expectations through attractive value propositions has become essential today. Value propositions are never static – they need to be constantly aligned with consumer expectations. When customer values are mapped with brand values, the purchasing decision gets positively influenced. Trust becomes the byproduct of this process. Let us not forget that today consumers are knowledgeable, empowered and have decision making capabilities.

Brand can be considered as the emotional meaning people attach with a product or service. Contrary to popular notion, a logo design is only a part of branding. Branding is about managing the image that consumers have about the organisation and its products. Branding is all about telling the right story to the right people in the right manner. In a crowded market space, establishing an emotional connection with the audience across all touch points has become essential. Logos make this happen.

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