# THE LOGOTYPE, FUNDAMENTAL UNIT FOR A BRAND'S VISUAL IDENTITY

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## ABSTRACT

*The paper presents some variants in making a logotype necessary in the building of an efficient visual identity. Logotypes are used to present commercial brands destined for the market and not only. On the other hand, the paper presents a widespread conclusion about makind a logo seen as a visualisation methods and reception of the graphic message by the consumer.*

**Keywords**: logotype, visual identity, brand, ad, logo.

### 1. Introduction

It is rightfully said, especially by web designers and marketing specialists that any successful business starts with its brand, a logotype under which the product is launched on the market for the consumer to acknowledge. In the opinion of David Airey, [1] "For thousands of years, human have needed and desired social identifications. Think of the farmer who brands his cattle to mark his ownership, or the stonemason who proudly chisels his trademark". According to Lora Starling [2], "Brands help to form our memories, stimulate them at will, and can even ensure that we pass them down to our children". Indeed, as a product sells better and better, its image will be associated to the producer, which is intrinsically linked to the brand's visual image. Quality plays an important role also, as a situation where one buys a bad product for the brand is of course unimaginable. Cases are known when the quality of products identified by visual elements lead to the fame of these products. Public image is a simple graphic sign. We immediately recognize the producer by the graphic logo: the circles of AUDI, the three rays of Mercedes, or the famous Nike logo originating in the image of the wings of the Goddess of Victory in Greek mythology, the two C's of Chanel and the rabbit with a bow tie for Playboy.



Figure 1. Graphic images of famous brands
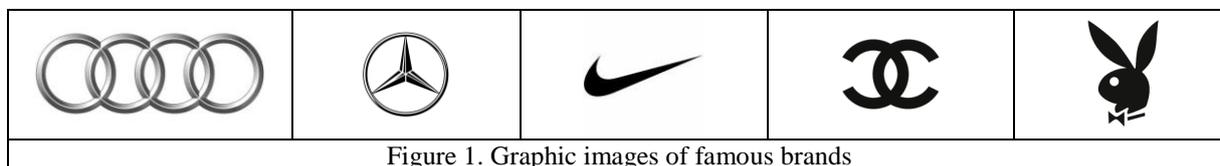
Every producer dreams that his brand will be recognized by a graphic sign, as does a logo designer. In the opinion of Gareth Hardy [3], "An enterprise without a logo has no chance of making an impact on its target". What would a logotype look like so that it is immediately identified with the product? What graphic solutions should be used? These are questions we attempt to find an answer for.

### 2. Possibilities of making a logotype

In order to be easily recognizable the name of a brand follows some rules and must:
- Be distinctive and unique so that it can benefit from legal protection;
- Communicate information about the quality and reliability of a product;

- Have identity and specificity;
- Be easy to pronounce, memorize and recall;
- Be short, simple and suggest action or pleasant surroundings;
- Be suggestive of the advantages offered;
- Have a warm, friendly, familiar name;
- Not be disgraceful, offensive or obscene;
- Be pronounceable in only one way;
- Be easily spoken in other languages.

Usually the brand of a company is made up of specific elements that consist in: name of brand, a graphic element which many times substitutes the brand and stands as its recognition element – the fastest and most efficient – and a slogan.
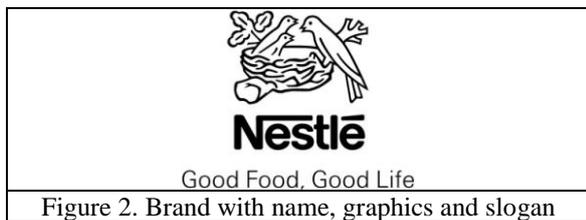
These three elements usually make up most logotypes associated to brands.

From case to case, the slogan, which is a concise formula that is easy to repeat and is meant to connect mentally the brand itself to the advertising of the promoted product can be omitted from the logotype. According to Sean Adams, [4] "Our task, as designers, is to take the commonplace - letterforms, geometric shapes, and images - and make them distinctive and meaningful". Charlotte Rivers [5] thinks that "There are five basic types of logo: text only, image only, text and image, abbreviation only and abbreviation and image".

On the other hand, many logotypes are created without any concern for graphics, made solely out of capital letters and using simple fonts.


Figure 2. Brand with name, graphics and slogan


Figure 3. Brands that contain only capital letters

Naturally, beside these brands, certain others use small letters and combinations of small and capital letters. The most demanding seem to create logotypes using elaborate letters with shapes that are easily remembered. Sometimes, capital letters that are especially designed for the brand are used.


Figure 4. Brands containing elaborate fonts

In order to highlight even more the name of the brand compact fonts are used in contours that gives them consistency. To be easily perceived, shading is sometimes used.

Figure 5. Compact fonts

To highlight the name of the brand, text boxes are used. Many times the background color is in contrast to the color of the letters, which gives the assembly enhanced visibility. The shape of the box varies but it appears that simple rectangular shapes that have rounded corners are the most pleasant to the eye.



Figure 6. Brands inside a text box

Another solution to make a successful logotype is applying some letter contrasts – size or type of letter. Sometimes white and black contrasts are applied on a coloured background. Such logotypes are very easily seen especially when they are placed in the vicinity of less elaborate logotypes with simple fonts.



Figure 7. Contrasting letters

As the first letter of a brand name is the most visible, in many cases this first letter is graphically treated with priority, although one can treat other letters of the brand too. When the name is made of two or more word and the situation allows, the letters that form the word beginning are overlapped, as we can see in Figure 8 (see DRYJOYS, Imperial Tobacco, First Brands, Inside Out). These marked letters are in bold or by extension they become easily recognizable graphic elements that sometimes constitute themselves in representative logos of the brands in question.



Figure 8. Highlighting the first letter

Using graphics associated to the brand name is a common practice with graphic designers. Graphic elements give the brand a special look showing that special attention is given to details by the company that uses it. The nicest to look at seem to be graphics that use lines and styled dynamic shapes that suggest a well shaped plastic rhythm. Natural elements are also frequently used.



Figure 9. Including a graphic element

Perhaps the most sought after effects are those that suggest a company's field of activity. This element is frequently styled, reduced to its essence so that a layperson can hardly deduce the original element. There are many cases where graphic logotypes are naturalistic representations of the product associated to the brand. Suggesting the field of activity of the company using the brand by inclusion of a graphic element is a desirable solution by managers of these firms and is commonly used in practice.



Figure 10. Suggesting the field of activity

There are of course other combinations of solutions and the final goal is to make the brand a distinctive symbolic visibility. Beside the external shape, colors are very important. But this is dealt with in another discussion.

### 3. Conclusions

To ensure that a company expresses itself visually through the logotype associated to its brand, using graphics seems the most frequent solution in practice. One of the best definitions of the importance of logo was write by Kevin Budel Mann [7]:"An exploration of identities without including logos would be like a tour of France without a stop in Paris". Usually brand owners are tempted to ask for inclusion in the logotype of graphic elements that suggest the company's object of activity. According to Alina Wheeler, [6] "Identity expresses itself in every touch point of the brand and becomes intrinsic to a company's culture - a constant symbol of its core values ant its heritage".

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