



Fall 12-16-2022

The Art of Branding

Allison Willrich
awillric@poets.whittier.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://poetcommons.whittier.edu/scholars>

 Part of the [Advertising and Promotion Management Commons](#), and the [Graphic Design Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Willrich, A. (2022). The Art of Branding. Retrieved from <https://poetcommons.whittier.edu/scholars/6>

This Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship & Research at Poet Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Whittier Scholars Program by an authorized administrator of Poet Commons. For more information, please contact library@whittier.edu.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Smirnov', with a stylized flourish at the end.

*(Signed by Kristen Smirnov, Advisor,
on Friday December 16th)*

The Art of Branding: Rebranding The Habit

Allison Willrich

Major: Advertising & Brand Design

Sponsor: Professor Kristen Smirnov

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Branding Overview.....	3
Definition.....	3
Elements of Branding.....	3
Logos	5
Consumer Behavior	6
The Habit	8
About The Brand	8
Marketing Considerations	8
My Designs and Survey	11
Survey.....	11
Considerations	11
Original & Redesigned Logos	12
Survey Results	15
Logo Perceptions	15
Purchase Intentions	16
Key Findings	16
Conclusion	17
Appendices.....	18
Bibliography	19

Introduction

My title of self-designed major is Advertising & Brand Design. Goals of my major include being able to think critically about the economic, social, technological, persuasive and ethical elements and factors that affect advertising and branding. With that awareness as the foundation, I aim to demonstrate not only understanding of the strategic tactics utilized by advertising and branding, but also the ability to apply them. On the basis of what I have learned through my major courses, I am examining the following claim: The world is more visual-oriented than ever before, making a company's logo a crucial factor in the success of branding as it serves as the first impression and visual indicator of what experience and value the brand will deliver.

The purpose of this project is to better understand how people respond to brand design, and more specifically make judgments about the company based on the first impression they get from a logo. Based on conversations with my sponsor, the company I chose to focus on is The Habit, an American restaurant chain. The Habit is recognized for their product quality, but has weaknesses in their overall brand. After analyzing what connotes strong branding and exploring the significance behind the major visual element of brand design, I designed two new, potential logos for The Habit. To test their effectiveness, I conducted a survey collecting consumer perceptions of the two redesigns as well as the original logo. The survey will provide insight into how consumers think, feel, and act towards brands.

Branding Overview

Definition

In a generalized sense, most people can easily conceptualize and understand what a brand is. However, today's brands are becoming more expansive and extensive, making it increasingly difficult to narrow down the concept to a single definition. One way of defining what a brand is as “a set of tangible and intangible attributes designed to create awareness and identity, and to build the reputation of a product, service, person, place, or organization” (Sammut-Bonnici).

Elements of branding

Brand design can be broken down into tangible and intangible attributes. Tangible attributes are the components making up the visual identity of a brand, like the logo, promotional materials, and even the product themselves. Intangible attributes are more concerned with the views and feelings of consumers toward the brand. With this, brand experience can be broken down into five categories: Brand Personality, Brand Positioning, Brand Love, Brand Community and Brand Loyalty.

Brand personality is defined as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker). These ideas are key when it comes to finding a consumer base and understanding how to better market to them. This involves creating a persona that consumers either identify with or aspire to identify with. Analyzing consumer psychology and consumer behavior reveals what consumers desire from a brand.

Brand Positioning is crucial for any brand to compete and draw attention from consumers. Positioning refers to where a brand stands compared to competitors in the eyes of the consumers (Bettman). This is important when trying to reach market segments and stand out from the other brands and products available on the market. The key is to be not only different from the competition, but better suited to the various niches and subtypes.

Brand Love occurs when consumers develop a strong sense of trust and respect for a brand. With this comes complete commitment and loyalty. This phenomenon is a result of strong brand health and consistent delivery. Consumers feel connected to the company and resonate with the personality, values, and enjoy the products, ultimately creating a community (Albert).

Brand Community is often a result or byproduct of Brand Love and Brand Positioning. Brand community focuses on the consumers as individuals within the market segment, as well as how the individuals make up a core group. There are often psychological and sociological aspects that make the community strong, such as shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility (Muniz).

Brand Loyalty describes the phenomenon where consumers develop a dedication or relationship with a brand as a result of their positive perception and experiences (Fournier). Obtaining a group of consumers that are completely committed to the brand is a true mark of good branding, marketing, and overall business. This is also key to

ensuring the longevity of the brand; maintaining a relationship with loyal customers while attracting new customers requires strategic planning and marketing.

Logo

A major component of brand design is the logo. A logo is a graphic symbol that serves as the identifier of a brand. It's the primary visual representative consumers encounter, affecting their idea of the company as a whole. While logos are largely important for their functionality, such as their role as the distinguishing element of a brand, the logo is valuable due to their aesthetic/emotional connotations (Whan Park). The aesthetic of a logo and the wider brand design is important to the identity of the individual consumers, impacting consumer loyalty over time (Dagalp).

In the context of corporate branding, there are several components involved in qualifying what an effective logo is. "A good logo has to be: simple, relevant, distinctive, memorable, adaptable, reproducible, legible and coherent" (Adir 2013). Further explaining what each of these qualities means in design

- "Simple - easy to be recognized, it means a simple and attractive design
- Relevant - appropriate to identify the company
- Distinctive - special design in front of others logos to be recognized from the competition
- Memorable - easy to be remember
- Adaptable - to be set on different supports

- Reproducible - to be realized in different sizes (from small to huge) without loss of details
- Legible - to be understood
- Coherent - a very clear message” (Adîr 2013).

Consumer Behavior

The success of common methods of advertising and branding is dependent on several complex factors related to the behavior and context of consumers. Analyzing consumer mindsets reveal the motivations and patterns of their consumption, thus allowing brands to mitigate risk. Consumerism is largely rooted in fulfilling a fantasy - and the elements of branding mentioned can be viewed as strategies to deliver the consumer’s desires.

“Most marketing and branding activities are essentially concerned with enchantment—the rendering of the ordinary into something special” (Hartmann 2019). This idea of viewing branding as enchantment highlights the degree to which emotional appeal plays in consumer decisions. Brands seek to sell and provide a unique experience or an image, and strong brands are transcendent, omnipresent influences on daily life.

The way consumers engage with brands differs based on the individual's desires. While most business strategies are geared towards fulfilling functional needs of consumers, brands also satisfy social needs. As a result of the pandemic, Branding Agency *Seigel and Gale* argues most consumers are seeking brands that deliver more simple experiences to balance the added complexity of daily life. This has led to a shift from consumers looking

for brands to create and add meaning to their lives to choosing ones that can be a source of reliability and relief.

Regardless of the specific consumer desires, it's clear that consumers care greatly about what experience a brand promises, not just the product or service itself. With this, brands should be concerned with communicating what experiences they provide through various indicators, the crucial one being the logo.

The Habit Overview

About the company

The Habit Burger Grill is an American fast casual restaurant chain that specializes in charbroiled hamburgers, known as their famous “Charburgers.” Inspired by Santa Barbara, the original restaurant location, The Habit’s aesthetic strives to reflect the coastal town’s laid-back vibrancy and passion for culinary exploration.

Surveys done by non-profit organization Consumer Reports in 2014 ranked The Habit as the #1 Best Burger in America. Since then, the chain has expanded to over 330 restaurants in fourteen U.S. states and 13 international locations. While The Habit isn’t a household name, their excellence in product quality has created a cult following surrounding the brand.

Marketing Considerations

Marketing Mix

Products: Hamburgers, sandwiches, salads, sides, beverages, and shakes/desserts.

Price: A common pricing strategy used among restaurants is the “cost-plus strategy,” where the menu price is the cost to produce the dish in addition to a set mark-up charge. They also employ the “bundle pricing strategy” through offering “combo” meals at a discounted rate.

Place: As of 2022, majority of the restaurant's 330 locations are in the United States, with 223 restaurants being in California. Other states include Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia, and Washington. Outside of the U.S. there are six locations in Cambodia and seven in China. Beyond the physical locations, sales can also be conducted online through the official app and website.

Promotion: The Habit experienced rapid growth as a result of positive press around 2014 when Consumer Reports named it "The Best Burger in America." In recent years, there have been an increased number of online advertisements for the company. The Habit's first major brand campaign, "There You Hab It" premiered October 13 2022, so it was not taken into consideration for this project.

Visuals

The logo is the primary visual, shown on the packaging, social media, website, signage, online advertisements etc. Photography of the food is also a prominent visual, but the promotional product images are always accompanied by the logo, highlighting that the logo is the visual component consumers will encounter most.

Competition

In 2016, *Business Insider* referred to The Habit as an "obscure" burger chain, addressing its lack of market recognition. Well-known burger chains most similar

to The Habit are In-N-Out and Five Guys, which ranked as second and third place in the same *Consumer Reports* survey. These two competitors have greater brand recognition, despite a lower ranking in the evaluation of the burgers.

The Habit has proved strong in their business when it comes to their products, yet have weaknesses in their marketing, notably their brand design.

My Designs & Survey

Survey

To determine the way each logo affected the perception of the company, I fielded an online survey to gather perspectives (See Appendix 1). Using Prolific, 150 American respondents were asked to interpret each logo. Respondents were presented each logo one at a time and were asked to pick words from a list of 20 adjectives (See Appendix 2) they think would describe the company well. Of the 20 descriptors, 13 were positive, 6 negative, and 1 neutral but informative. After viewing the three logos, they were asked to choose which company they would most likely visit as well as which logo they would least likely visit. Finally, respondents provided their demographic information including age, gender, and income level.

Considerations

In efforts to accurately reflect The Habit's persona and fairly measure consumer perceptions, both redesigns have consistencies with the original logo. To avoid swaying the consumers on the basis of their personal color preferences, the established red and yellow color scheme is present in all three logos. Similarly, both redesigns are "word marks" like the original logo rather than "picture marks." Comparing a pictorial based graphic to a typography based graphic could create an unfair bias, likely in favor of the pictorial option. Considering this, I focused on communicating The Habit's persona through pursuing stylistic differences while maintaining the mentioned parallels.

Original Logo



The original logo for the brand is quite dated with an unclear personality.

Compositionally, the logo has some weak points: the various elements of the logo are unaligned, the difference in size proportions of the words are unproportional, and the placement creates visual tension.

Stylistically, there is some ambiguity. The slanted b could hint at a quirkiness or possibly a rebelliousness, but it is likely reflecting a laid-back California vibe. The typography is dated, but friendly and approachable. One strength is the red and yellow color scheme, because it is typical/standard for modern fast food chains in the U.S.

New Design #1 - Retro California Logo



This logo capitalizes on nostalgia, harkening back to a time that's very idealized and romanticized. The design points to a laid-back personality associated with summer and an overall vintage California aesthetic. It still has the red and yellow fast food color palette, but it's less bright to feel more sunwashed and vintage in contrast to the bright, saturated tones we see in fast food brands today.

Hartmann & Brunk explain how brands with a retro aesthetic possess “mythical, experiential appeal.” Other positive aspects of nostalgia marketing include the ability to build on an emotional appeal, thus there is potential for a large customer base since retro-themed brands “engage consumers in a playful relationship with the past,” providing a unique experience.

New Design #2 - Red Logo

Clean and simple designs are often correlated with innovativeness and freshness in a wide variety of industries (Siegel Gale). This logo suggests personality but it's minimal enough to where someone can project their own idea of what they want it to be. The colors are the same as the original logo because it serves as a signifier of what sector the logo belongs to, but with an emphasis of red to really stand out. Similarly, the choice in typography is typical of the contemporary market.

Survey Results

Perceptions of Original Logo

When it comes to identifying the price range, the original logo was easiest for respondents to identify, with 91 people reporting it as seeming affordable. Respondents had the widest degree of differentiation in determining the personality of the brand. 127 people said it seemed casual, 84 people said relaxed. It had the most negative connotations selected out of the three, being described as plain (35), outdated (21), tacky (17), and weird (11).

Perceptions of Redesign #1 - Retro Logo

This logo had the clearest perception of personality, with most respondents describing the branding as classic (114), retro (102), casual (81) and cool (70). There was not as unified of a response regarding the perceived price point, other than the causal association.

Perceptions of Redesign #2 - Red Logo

The logo was said to come off as modern (81) and good quality (52), but also expensive (53), uninviting, and plain (61). It being perceived as more expensive could be the reason why respondents said they were more likely to try the other brands, which were reported as seeming more affordable, casual and welcoming.

Purchase Intentions

When asked which logo they would most likely visit, 52% of respondents selected the Retro Logo, 35% of people picked the Original Logo, and 13% of the respondents chose the Red Logo. For least likely to visit, 56% of the respondents chose the red logo, 32% selected the original logo, and 13% chose the original logo.

Key Findings

There were no significant patterns between the respondents' choices and demographics. Instead, the major differences in response were tied to the degree of familiarity respondents had with The Habit. Out of 150 people, only 40 identified as being familiar with The Habit to some extent. The 110 Respondents who were unfamiliar with the brand tended to favor the two redesigns. The 23 respondents who identified as more familiar with the brand selected the original and retro logo only. This pattern could be an indication that in the eyes of the consumer, those logos better communicate the brand values and personality of The Habit.

Conclusion

The success of a company's branding absolutely depends on its logo, as consumers form their opinions and market decisions using a brand's visual indicators. Despite knowing that each logo was for the same company, respondents still believed that the different designs signified extremely different experiences. In the case of The Habit, consumers believed that a brand represented by a retro-themed redesign would deliver the best possible experience. Based on the study, it can be concluded that logos and other brand visuals play a major role in consumer perceptions.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Survey Adjective List

1. Affordable
2. Bad Quality
3. Casual
4. Classic
5. Cool
6. Expensive
7. Fancy
8. Fresh
9. Good Quality
10. Lively
11. Modern
12. Outdated
13. Plain
14. Relaxed
15. Retro
16. Tacky
17. Uninviting
18. Unique
19. Weird
20. Welcoming

Appendix 2 - The Habit Survey

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7075431/Brand-Logo-Research>

Bibliography

Aaker, Jennifer L. "Dimensions of Brand Personality." *Journal of Marketing Research*. Vol. XXXIV (August 1997), 347-356.

Adîr, Victor, Adîr, George, Elisabeta Pascu, Nicoleta, "How to Design a Logo," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Volume 122, 2014, Pages 140-144

Albert, Noel and Merunka, Dwight. "Role of Brand Love in Consumer Brand Relationships"

Amaldoss, Wilfred, and Sanjay Jain. "Branding Conspicuous Goods: An Analysis of the Effects of Social Influence and Competition." *Management Science*, vol. 61, no. 9, 2015, pp. 2064–79

Bettman, James R. and Sujan, Mita. "The Effects of Brand Positioning Strategies on Consumers' Brand and Category Perceptions: Some Insights From Schema Research." *Journal of Marketing Research*. Vol. XXVI (November 1989), 454-67

Dagalp, Ileyha & Hartmann, Benjamin J. (2021): From "aesthetic" to aestheticization: a multi-layered cultural approach, *Consumption Markets & Culture*, DOI: 10.1080/10253866.2021.1935900

“Fast Food Restaurants - the Best and Worst in America - Consumer Reports.” *Consumer Reports*, 2014,

<https://www.consumerreports.org/cro/magazine/2014/08/best-and-worst-fast-food-restaurants-in-america/index.htm>.

“Global Brand Simplicity Index.” *Siegel Gale*, 2021,

https://worldssimplestbrands.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/wsb_9th_edition.pdf.

a“Habit Locations - Charburgers - Salads - Sandwiches - Habit Burger Grill near Me.”

The Habit Burger Grill, 15 Oct. 2021, <https://www.habitburger.com/locations/>.

Hartmann, Benjamin J. & Brunk, Katja H., 2019. "Nostalgia marketing and (re-)enchantment," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Elsevier, vol. 36(4), pages 669-686.

John, Deborah Roedder, and Ji Kyung Park. “Mindsets Matter: Implications for Branding Research and Practice.” *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2016, pp. 153–60.

Muniz, Albert M. Jr. and O’Guinn, Thomas C. “Brand Community” *JOURNAL OF CONSUMER RESEARCH*, Vol. 27, March 2001

S. Fournier, J.L Yao J. “Reviving brand loyalty: A reconceptualization within the framework of consumer-brand relationships” *International Journal of Research in Marketing*. (1997) 451-472

Taylor, Kate. “Shares of the Restaurant Chain That Serves the Best Burger in America Are in a Tailspin.” *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 14 July 2016, <https://www.businessinsider.com/habit-burgers-year-long-stock-slump-2016-7>.

The Habit Burger Grill, 2022, <https://www.habitburger.com/>.

Whan Park, C., Eisingerich Andreas B., Pol Gratiana, Whan Park, Jason, “The role of brand logos in firm performance,” *Journal of Business Research*, Volume 66, 2013, 180-187, 30 August 2012

“Yum! Brands Completes Acquisition of the Habit Restaurants, Inc..” *Business Wire*, 18 Mar. 2020, <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200318005659/en/Yum%21-Brands-Completes-Acquisition-Habit-Restaurants>.