

more than “just a logo”

“It’s **just** a logo.”

The tragic irony of **logos** is that they are simultaneously everywhere and nowhere – visible and invisible at the same time. Logos fill each and every corner of our lives as consumers. They shape our **perceptions** and influence our decisions each day. Just take a quick look in your refrigerator, in your closet, in your medicine cabinet... its **Logo-palooza!** When assessed on its own and out of context a logo may seem like a small variable in the success of a company’s overall marketing equation – when in reality, the **opposite is true.**

Let’s be frank. To remain viable, companies must retain and grow a competitive ‘share’ in their product or service’s market – which requires consumers to preferentially select their product or service – over the competition. The core function of **marketing and advertising** is to do just that: differentiate a product from others by cultivating and reinforcing a certain perception or image in the mind of the consumer. How is this accomplished? **With branding.** When utilized effectively, brands act as filters in the marketplace, helping consumers **quickly identify** a product or service that aligns with their individual needs, desires or values. Over time, as a result of consistent reinforcement and **positive experiences,** these associations gradually solidify into a more substantial brand image – existing as an expectation or promise about what a product or service can/will do – in the mind of the consumer. Consumers form **emotional relationships** with products this way, and ultimately begin to (consciously or subconsciously) view brands as ‘extensions’ of their own self-image.



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a little birdie told me 

At this point, you may be wondering by what means exactly, is a **brand image** shaped and reinforced? How do companies and products project nebulous emotional concepts like values and ideals? It’s really quite simple, it’s through **visual communication.** In branding, the core vehicle for this is via the visual identity – of which the logo is an integral component. **The identity** is the tactile ‘surface’ of the brand, using language, color, typography and other sensory elements to communicate ideals, benefits, **promises and expectations** to the consumer (via advertising, packaging, retail displays, etc.) A logo is a concentrated ‘redux’ of this information, usually represented in the form of an icon, logotype or symbol – allowing the consumer to **instantaneously and efficiently identify** and/or differentiate a brand from others. Great logos are kind of like lighthouses, blinking brightly in the murky expanse of the market ocean,

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signaling consumers and guiding them to the proverbial shore of the [brand island](#).

With this in mind, the next time you are shopping or browsing through a magazine, take an extra minute to analyze the ads or products that [catch your eye](#) – what attracts your focus? Can you spot a personal preference for certain brands over others? Chances are these decisions occur before you are consciously aware of them, evidence of branding’s pervasive presence. I caught myself in the act, so to speak, a few weeks ago when I entered the drug store in need of toothpaste. Per my usual routine, I headed directly to the dental aisle, scanning the literal wall of toothpaste feeling simultaneously overwhelmed yet pleased by the selection. Before my mind had even formed the thought I found myself scanning for the iconic red ‘C’ of the ‘Crest’ logo, searching for that [familiar beacon](#) among the sea of choices.