



LOGO DESIGN LOVE

**A guide to creating
iconic brand identities**

Second edition

David Airey

LOGODESIGNLOVE

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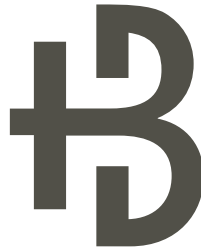
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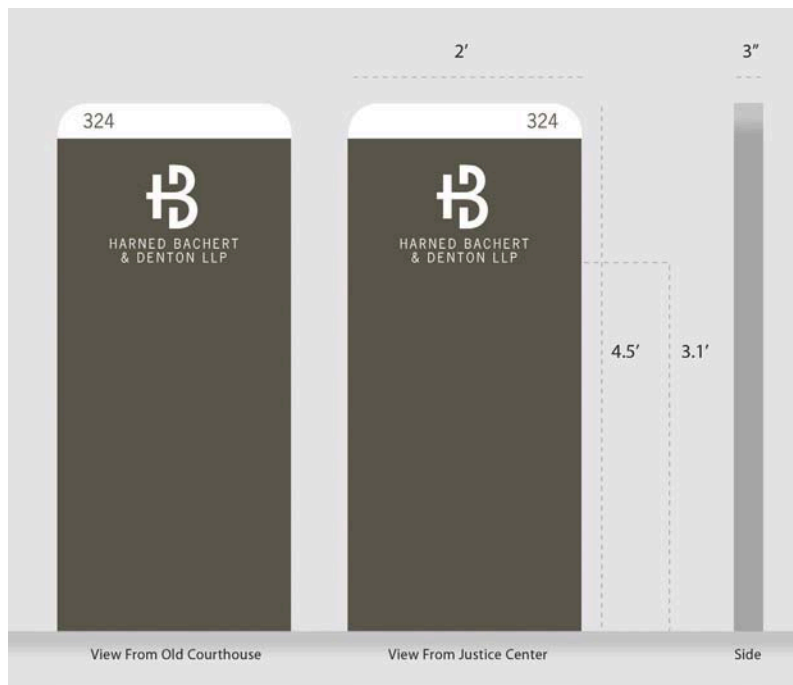
The rationale behind the icon was that the simple, bold shape would come to symbolize a unified firm. All of the firm's partners bought into the idea.

**Harned, Bachert,
& Denton**

By Stephen Lee
Ogden, during
employment at
Earnhart+Friends
of Bowling Green,
Kentucky, 2007



HARNED BACHERT
& DENTON LLP



When you take the time up front to really get to know your client and the related industry, you not only stand a much greater chance of delivering a design you respect and they love, but you also put yourself in a strong position for advising them about designs at some point down the road. Once clients see what you're made of, they'll happily send more work your way.



Skirting the hazards of a redesign

When clients approach designers for brand identity projects, the work will generally fall into one of two categories. They represent either a newly established company in need of a new identity or an already established company that needs its identity redesigned or refined.

If your project falls into the first category—designing from scratch—the process is more straightforward, because there’s no brand equity for the designer and client to consider. But if you’ve been asked to complete a redesign, the stakes are much higher, for both you and your client. Think about it. Which scenario is potentially more damaging: Nike ditching its internationally recognized “swoosh” logo in favor of, say, the outline of a shoe, or a new business named “Pete’s” commissioning a visual identity to help sell its custom t-shirts? Because of Nike’s stature, stock, and visibility in the marketplace, the potential for damage to the company’s identity is much greater.

That said, a redesign project tends to be much more lucrative for the designer than creating a design from scratch. Because established companies need to be protective of the equity they have already built around their identity, a lengthier, more stringent design process is required. Every decision needs more thought, more discussion, more time.

What are the reasons for rebranding?

While the lure of a high-paying redesign might initially seem like a win-win, it’s critical that you understand from the outset why your client wants to rebrand. It’s not unusual to find that a company hopes the buzz associated with the new identity will increase its sales in the short term. But rebranding simply for the sake of it or to follow the latest trends can result in disaster. It’s up to you to talk with your clients about the specific reasons for their projects, and advise them about which course of action makes the most sense. Without this type of guidance, market leaders can end up throwing away millions, and your reputation with it.

Let's take a look at an instance where designing a new identity to replace a well-established one had unintended and punishing consequences.

Squeezing too hard

In 2009, PepsiCo attempted to stimulate sales of its premium fruit juice brand Tropicana by hiring the Arnell Group to redesign its packaging. PepsiCo and the Arnell Group thought it would be a good idea to give Tropicana's brand identity some new energy and make it more relevant to the times.

"We had always depicted the outside of an orange. What was fascinating was that we had never actually shown the product—the juice itself," said Peter Arnell, founder and CEO of the Arnell Group.

Tropicana's former and current identity (left) and unsuccessful rebranded identity (right)

Photo by Brian Alexander Gray



Those who are familiar with the Tropicana brand know that PepsiCo for years had used the idea of a “straw stuck in an orange” to promote the premium juice product. Consumers were used to it—those who were loyal customers of the brand could easily spot the packaging when they went grocery shopping.

Hindsight's a wonderful thing, but was it really necessary to visually remind Tropicana's customers what this "product called the juice" looked like?

In comparing the two identities, it's obvious that the redesign is more diluted, with an almost generic look to it. The full brand name is Tropicana Pure Premium, so perhaps this dilution of brand equity was a conscious decision on the part of the company and designer. According to the Private Label Manufacturers Association, one of every five items sold in the United States is what's considered a "generic" store brand.¹

Despite the fact that Tropicana is considered a premium juice, maybe the company wanted to align its product with the more generic juice packaging of store labels?

Whatever the case, the rebranding didn't work. After the new packaging was put on supermarket shelves, sales of the Tropicana Pure Premium line plummeted 20 percent in less than two months,² costing PepsiCo \$33 million in lost sales.³ Within two months of unveiling the new identity in early 2009, the company bowed to consumer demand by reverting to the old packaging.

Today the Tropicana product line continues to grow following the 2012 launch of Tropicana Farmstand in the U.S. and the 2013 launch of Trop50 in the U.K.

Answers often lie in focus groups

The Tropicana project is likely a case in which conducting some focus groups would have given valuable clues about the risks of change.

When you're working on a project in which a client with a well-established identity is seeking a redesign, ask at the outset whether any focus groups established the need. If they haven't, suggest that quizzing existing and potential customers about their perceptions of the brand should be the first order of business.

1 Private Label Manufacturers' Association. "Store Brands Achieving New Heights of Consumer Popularity and Growth," <http://plma.com/storeBrands/sbt09.html>

2 AdAge.com. "Tropicana Line's Sales Plunge 20% Post-Rebranding," April 2, 2009.

3 BrandingStrategyInsider.com. "Tropicana's Costly Listening Lesson," April 15, 2009, www.brandingstrategyinsider.com/2009/04/tropicanas-costly-lesson-in-listening-.html

Some studios and agencies offer to set up focus groups as part of their services. If you feel that your schedule can't accommodate doing likewise, or focus group research just isn't your thing, consider bringing a specialist onboard to get the job done.

Let's take a look at a more justified redesign project.

From corporate to familial

Rupp is a traditional Austrian cheese factory employing 350 people, with sales of around 105 million euros per year. Established in 1908, the third-generation cheesemaker has been family owned throughout its long history. CEO Josef Rupp III knew he needed an identity that was more in keeping with the familial nature of the brand, rather than the cold and corporate logo that was in place and the disparate packaging designs used for the company's product range.

Rupp's old logo



At the end of 2013, I was hired to give Rupp a fresh, more appropriate visual appearance.

Rupp's new logo

