

Choosing Brand Elements to Build Brand Equity

4

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to

1. Identify the different types of brand elements.
2. List the general criteria for choosing brand elements.
3. Describe key tactics in choosing different brand elements.
4. Explain the rationale for “mixing and matching” brand elements.
5. Highlight some of the legal issues surrounding brand elements.



A brand symbol like the Energizer Bunny can reinforce key brand associations and be used in a variety of different communication applications.

Source: Paul Martinka/
Polaris/Newscom

Preview

Brand elements, sometimes called brand identities, are those trademarkable devices that serve to identify and differentiate the brand. The main ones are brand names, URLs, logos, symbols, characters, spokespeople, slogans, jingles, packages, and signage. The customer-based brand equity model suggests that marketers should choose brand elements to enhance brand awareness; facilitate the formation of strong, favorable, and unique brand associations; or elicit positive brand judgments and feelings. The test of the brand-building ability of a brand element is what consumers would think or feel about the product *if they knew only that particular brand element* and not anything else about the product and how else it would be branded or marketed. A brand element that provides a positive contribution to brand equity conveys or implies certain valued associations or responses.

This chapter considers how marketers choose brand elements to build brand equity. After describing the general criteria for choosing brand elements, we consider specific tactical issues for each of the different types of brand elements and finish by discussing how to choose the best brand elements to build brand equity. Brand Focus 4.0 at the end of the chapter highlights some legal issues for branding.

CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING BRAND ELEMENTS

In general, there are six criteria for brand elements (with more specific subchoices for each, as shown in Figure 4-1):

1. Memorable
2. Meaningful
3. Likable
4. Transferable
5. Adaptable
6. Protectable

- 1. Memorable**
Easily recognized
Easily recalled
- 2. Meaningful**
Descriptive
Persuasive
- 3. Likable**
Fun and interesting
Rich visual and verbal imagery
Aesthetically pleasing
- 4. Transferable**
Within and across product categories
Across geographic boundaries and cultures
- 5. Adaptable**
Flexible
Updatable
- 6. Protectable**
Legally
Competitively

FIGURE 4-1
Criteria for Choosing
Brand Elements

The first three criteria—memorability, meaningfulness, and likability—are the marketer’s offensive strategy and build brand equity. The latter three, however, play a defensive role for leveraging and maintaining brand equity in the face of different opportunities and constraints. Let’s consider each of these general criteria.

Memorability

A necessary condition for building brand equity is achieving a high level of brand awareness. Brand elements that promote that goal are inherently memorable and attention-getting and therefore facilitate recall or recognition in purchase or consumption settings. For example, a brand of propane gas cylinders named Blue Rhino featuring a powder-blue animal mascot with a distinctive yellow flame is likely to stick in the minds of consumers.

Meaningfulness

Brand elements may take on all kinds of meaning, with either descriptive or persuasive content. We saw in Chapter 1 that brand names can be based on people, places, animals or birds, or other things or objects. Two particularly important criteria are how well the brand element conveys the following:

- *General information about the function of the product or service:* Does the brand element have descriptive meaning and suggest something about the product category, the needs satisfied or benefits supplied? How likely is it that a consumer could correctly identify the product category for the brand based on any one brand element? Does the brand element seem credible in the product category?
- *Specific information about particular attributes and benefits of the brand:* Does the brand element have persuasive meaning and suggest something about the particular kind of product, or its key points-of-difference attributes or benefits? Does it suggest something about some aspect of the product performance or the type of person who might use the brand?

The first dimension is an important determinant of brand awareness and salience; the second, of brand image and positioning.

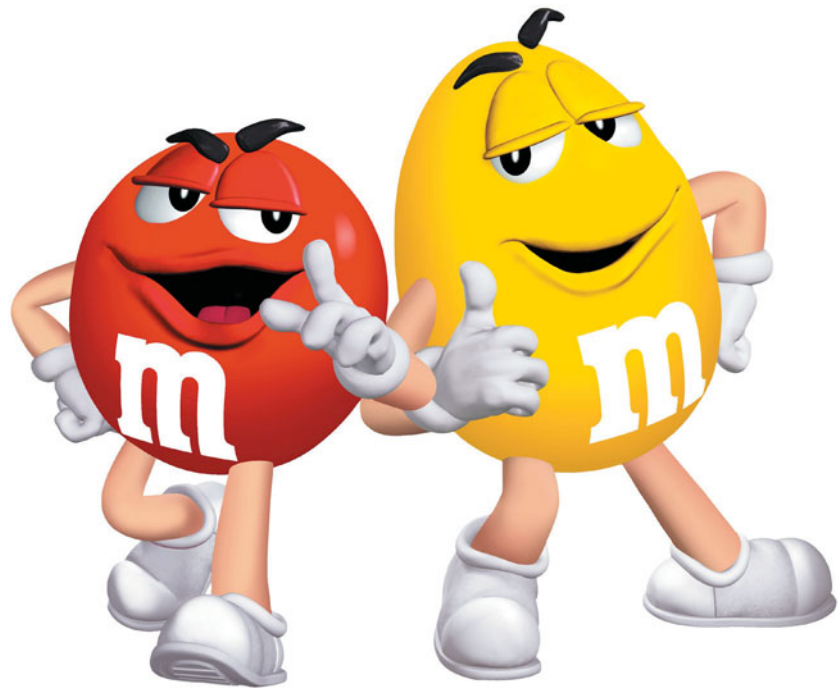
Likability

Independent of its memorability and meaningfulness, do customers find the brand element aesthetically appealing?¹ Is it likable visually, verbally, and in other ways? Brand elements can be rich in imagery and inherently fun and interesting, even if not always directly related to the product.

A memorable, meaningful, and likable set of brand elements offers many advantages because consumers often do not examine much information in making product decisions. Descriptive and persuasive elements reduce the burden on marketing communications to build awareness and link brand associations and equity, especially when few other product-related associations exist. Often, the less concrete the possible product benefits are, the more important is the creative potential of the brand name and other brand elements to capture intangible characteristics of a brand.

M&M’S® BRAND CHOCOLATE CANDIES

A classic example of developing a powerful set of brand elements is Hershey’s candy-colored chocolate, M&M’S®. One of the most famous slogans of all time—“Melts in Your Mouth, Not in Your Hand”—reveals the key product benefit. Mars introduced its first “spokes-character,” Red, in 1954, 13 years after the candy-coated chocolates debuted, followed by Yellow, a nut-filled mascot, when the company launched M&M’S® Peanut Candies later that year. Over the last 50-plus years, M&M’S® has introduced three more spokes-candies to represent new flavors, colors, and themes, each with a distinct personality. Green, introduced in 1997, is the company’s first female spokes-candy. Recognizing that MM means 2000 in Roman numerals, in early 1998, the M&M’S® characters proclaimed themselves the “Official Spokescandies of the New Millennium.” In late 1997, Mars opened “M&M’S® World”—the brand’s own colorful retail store on the Las Vegas strip, featuring one-of-a-kind branded merchandise ranging from T-shirts and designer jackets to designer dresses, jewelry, and furniture.²



The hugely popular M&M[®] “spokes-characters” have given the brand valuable personality and imagery.

Source: M&M'S[®] and the M&M'S[®] Characters are registered trademarks of Mars, Incorporated and its affiliates. This trademarks are used with permission. Mars, Incorporated is not associated with Pearson Education, Inc. The M&M'S[®] advertisement is printed with permission of Mars, Incorporated.

Transferability

Transferability measures the extent to which the brand element adds to the brand equity for new products or in new markets for the brand. There are several aspects to this criterion.

First, how useful is the brand element for line or category extensions? In general, the less specific the name, the more easily it can be transferred across categories. For example, Amazon connotes a massive South American river and therefore as a brand can be appropriate for a variety of different types of products. Books “R” Us obviously would not have afforded the same flexibility if Amazon had chosen that name to describe its original line of business.

Second, to what extent does the brand element add to brand equity across geographic boundaries and market segments? To a large extent this depends on the cultural content and linguistic qualities of the brand element. One of the main advantages of nonmeaningful, synthetic names like Exxon is that they transfer well into other languages.

The difficulties or mistakes that even top marketers have encountered in translating their brand names, slogans, and packages into other languages and cultures over the years have become legendary. As an example, Microsoft was challenged when launching its Vista operating system in Latvia, because the name means “chicken” or “frumpy woman” in the local language.³ Figure 4-2 includes some of the more notorious mishaps.⁴ To avoid such complications, companies must review all their brand elements for cultural meaning before introducing the brand into a new market.

Adaptability

The fifth consideration for brand elements is their adaptability over time. Because of changes in consumer values and opinions, or simply because of a need to remain contemporary, most brand elements must be updated. The more adaptable and flexible the brand element, the easier it is to update it. For example, logos and characters can be given a new look or a new design to make them appear more modern and relevant.

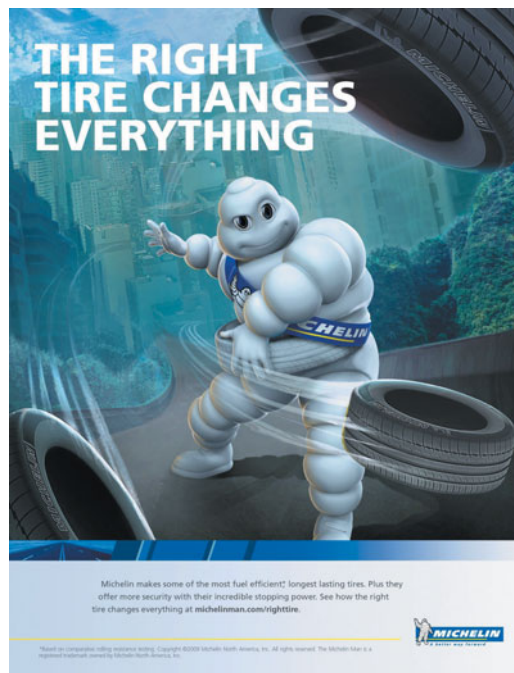
Although it can be difficult to judge the accuracy of some reports of past marketing failures, here are some of the more widely cited global branding failures reported over the years.

1. When Braniff translated a slogan touting its upholstery, “Fly in leather,” it came out in Spanish as “Fly naked.”
2. Coors put its slogan, “Turn it loose,” into Spanish, where it was read as “Suffer from diarrhea.”
3. Chicken magnate Frank Perdue’s line, “It takes a tough man to make a tender chicken,” sounds much more interesting in Spanish: “It takes a sexually stimulated man to make a chicken affectionate.”
4. When Pepsi started marketing its products in China, it translated the slogan “Pepsi Brings You Back to Life” pretty literally. In Chinese it really meant, “Pepsi Brings Your Ancestors Back from the Grave.”
5. Clairol introduced the “Mist Stick,” a curling iron, into Germany only to find out that mist is slang for manure in German.
6. Japan’s Mitsubishi Motors had to rename its Pajero model in Spanish-speaking countries because the term related to masturbation.
7. Toyota Motor’s MR2 model dropped the number in France because the combination sounded like a French swearword.

FIGURE 4-2
Global Branding
Mishaps

MICHELIN MAN

Michelin recently launched a newer, slimmer version of its famous tubby Michelin Man (whose real name is Bibendum) to mark his 100th year. A company press release notes, “Thinner and smiling, Bibendum will look like the leader he is, with an open and reassuring manner.” Michelin has used the character to promote its brand values of research, safety, and environmentalism through the years. In 2000, Bibendum was voted the “greatest logo in history” in a competition sponsored by the *Financial Times*. In a 2009 global campaign that featured the character as a hero, the Michelin Man—which has been the exclusive focus of Michelin advertising since 2001—moved from a “more passive endorser to a more active problem solver.” Reinforced by the slogan “The Right Tire Changes Everything,” the new ad campaign emphasized the role tires play people’s everyday lives.⁵



The Michelin Man—whose actual name is Bibendum—has served as the centerpiece of the tire brand’s advertising for years.

Source: Michelin, North America



THE SCIENCE OF BRANDING 4-1

Counterfeit Business Is Booming

From Calloway golf clubs to Louis Vuitton handbags, counterfeit versions of well-known brands are everywhere. The current size of the counterfeit market is estimated to be \$600 billion, representing costs of \$200–\$250 billion annually to U.S. businesses. The fakes are soaking up profits faster than multinationals can squash counterfeiting operations, and they're getting tougher and tougher to distinguish from the real thing. The difference can be as subtle as lesser-quality leather in a purse or fake batteries inside a cell phone. And counterfeiters can produce fakes cheaply by cutting corners on safety and quality, as well as by avoiding paying for marketing, R&D, or advertising.

It's not just luxury items and consumer electronics that are being copied. The World Health Organization says up to 10 percent of medicines worldwide are counterfeited. Those drugs not only purloin pharmaceutical industry profits but also present a danger to anyone who takes them because they are manufactured under inadequate safety controls.

Counterfeiting has become increasingly sophisticated and pervasive. To avoid being detected, counterfeiters are knocking off smaller brands that don't have the resources to fight back, focusing on fewer high-end brands given the recent economic downturn, and increasing prices on fake goods sold over the Web to counter consumer suspicions.

The U.S. Trade Representative's office now publishes an annual "notorious markets" list of the worst sites—physical and online—for piracy and counterfeiting. These days, 81 percent of counterfeit goods in the United States come from China. Other sources are Russia, Ukraine, Pakistan, India, Mexico, and several countries in Southeast Asia (Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia) and Latin America (Ecuador, Paraguay, and Argentina).

The operations are financed by such varied sources as Middle East businessmen who invest in facilities in Asian countries for export, local Chinese entrepreneurs, and criminal networks. Online auction retailers such as eBay and China's Baidu have become unintentional middleman in the market and have been successfully sued for millions by luxury makers such as LVMH (which makes Louis Vuitton, among other brands).

The replication process has also speeded up as counterfeiters have honed their engineering skills and increased their speed. Chinese factories can now copy a new model of a golf club in less than a week. And executives at a variety of companies say



A popular target for counterfeiters who turn out fakes like these, Louis Vuitton uses legal means to vigorously defend its trademarks.

Source: Iain Masterton/Alamy

counterfeiters have no trouble copying holograms and other security devices intended to distinguish real products from fakes.

Producing counterfeit goods is as profitable as trading in illegal drugs but does not carry the same risk. In many countries, convicted counterfeiters get off with a fine of a few thousand dollars. Chinese authorities have ignored the problem for years, mostly because it did not hurt Chinese industries. But as the country's corporate interests grow and Chinese companies start getting hurt by the counterfeit industry, experts say the Chinese government will be more cooperative. They believe China is the key to stemming the counterfeit trade.

Some companies have decided to target the end users of knockoff products, hoping manufacturers will eventually be forced to get a license and pay royalties. And some patent holders are beginning to get creative and target anyone on the supply chain who knowingly ignores counterfeit businesses. Louis Vuitton has partnered with New York City landlords to prevent the sale of counterfeit Louis Vuitton goods by tenants on notorious knockoff hot spot Canal Street. But because the business of counterfeiting thrives on globalization, experts say all many companies can do for now is hope to slow, not stop, the counterfeiters.

Interestingly, some provocative academic research shows that fake products are not uniformly bad for companies. Although some consumers may initially feel pleased at buying a fake handbag, for example, many ultimately realize the fake cannot replace the genuine item. While some who cannot afford to buy genuine luxury items may always buy fakes, other consumers will find that buying a counterfeit motivates them to later buy the real thing.

Sources: Julia Boorstin, “Louis Vuitton Tests a New Way to Fight the Faux,” *Fortune*, 16 May 2005; Robert Klara, “The Fight Against Fakes,” *Brandweek*, 27 June 2009; Stephanie Clifford, “Economic Indicator: Even Cheaper Knockoffs,” *New York Times*, 31 July 2010; “U.S. Calls China’s Baidu ‘Notorious Market,’” *Reuters*, 28 February 2011; Renée Richardson Gosline, “Rethinking Brand Contamination: How Consumers Maintain Distinction When Symbolic Boundaries Are Breached,” working paper, MIT Sloan School of Management, 2009;

Keith Wilcox, Hyeong Min Kim, and Sankar Sen, “Why Do Consumers Buy Counterfeit Luxury Brands?,” *Journal of Marketing Research*, 46 (April 2009): 247–259; Young Jee Han, Joseph C Nunes, and Xavier Drèze, “Signaling Status with Luxury Goods: The Role of Brand Prominence,” *Journal of Marketing* 74 (July 2010): 15–30; Katherine White and Jennifer J. Argo, “When Imitation Doesn’t Flatter: The Role of Consumer Distinctiveness in Responses to Mimicry,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 38 (December 2011): 667–680.

Protectability

The sixth and final general consideration is the extent to which the brand element is protectable—both in a legal and a competitive sense. Marketers should (1) choose brand elements that can be legally protected internationally, (2) formally register them with the appropriate legal bodies, and (3) vigorously defend trademarks from unauthorized competitive infringement. The necessity of legally protecting the brand is dramatized by the billions of dollars in losses in the United States alone from unauthorized use of patents, trademarks, and copyrights, as described in *The Science of Branding* 4-1.

Another consideration is whether the brand is competitively protectable. If a name, package, or other attribute is too easily copied, much of the uniqueness of the brand may disappear. For example, consider the once red-hot ice-beer category. Although Molson Ice was one of the early entries in the category, it quickly lost its pioneering advantage when Miller Ice and what later became Bud Ice were introduced. Marketers need to reduce the likelihood that competitors can create a derivative based on the product’s own elements.

OPTIONS AND TACTICS FOR BRAND ELEMENTS

Consider the advantages of “Apple” as the name of a personal computer. Apple was a simple but well-known word that was distinctive in the product category—which helped develop brand awareness. The meaning of the name also gave the company a “friendly shine” and warm brand personality. It could also be reinforced visually with a logo that would transfer easily across geographic and cultural boundaries. Finally, the name could serve as a platform for sub-brands like the Macintosh, aiding the introduction of brand extensions. As Apple illustrates, a well-chosen brand name can make an appreciable contribution to the creation of brand equity.

What would an ideal brand element be like? Consider brand names—perhaps the most central of all brand elements. Ideally, a brand name would be easily remembered, highly suggestive of both the product class and the particular benefits that served as the basis of its positioning, inherently fun or interesting, rich with creative potential, transferable to a wide variety of product and geographic settings, enduring in meaning and relevant over time, and strongly protectable both legally and competitively.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to choose a brand name—or any brand element, for that matter—that satisfies all these criteria. The more meaningful the brand name, for example, the more difficult it may be to transfer it to new product categories or translate it to other cultures. This is one reason why it’s preferable to have multiple brand elements. Let’s look at the major considerations for each type of brand element.

Brand Names

The brand name is a fundamentally important choice because it often captures the central theme or key associations of a product in a very compact and economical fashion. Brand names can be an extremely effective shorthand means of communication.⁶ Whereas an advertisement lasts half a minute and a sales call could run to hours, customers can notice the brand name and register its meaning or activate it in memory in just a few seconds.

Because it is so closely tied to the product in the minds of consumers, however, the brand name is also the most difficult element for marketers to change. So they systematically research

them before making a choice. The days when Henry Ford II could name his new automobile the “Edsel” after the name of a family member seem to be long gone.

Is it difficult to come up with a brand name? Ira Bachrach, a well-known branding consultant, has noted that although there are 140,000 words in the English vocabulary, the average U.S. adult recognizes only 20,000; Bachrach’s consulting company, NameLab, sticks to the 7,000 words that make up the vocabulary of most TV programs and commercials.

Although that may seem to allow a lot of choices, each year tens of thousands of new brands are registered as legal trademarks. In fact, arriving at a satisfactory brand name for a new product can be a painfully difficult and prolonged process. After realizing that most of the desirable brand names are already legally registered, many a frustrated executive has lamented that “all the good ones are taken.”

In some ways, this difficulty should not be surprising. Any parent can probably sympathize with how hard it can be to choose a name for a child, as evidenced by the thousands of babies born without names each year because their parents have not decided on—or perhaps not agreed upon—a name yet. It is rare that naming a product can be as easy as it was for Ford when it introduced the Taurus automobile.

“Taurus” was the code name given to the car during its design stage because the chief engineer’s and product manager’s wives were both born under that astrological sign. As luck would have it, upon closer examination, the name turned out to have a number of desirable characteristics. When it was chosen as the actual name for the car, Ford saved thousands and thousands of dollars in additional research and consulting expenses.

Naming Guidelines. Selecting a brand name for a new product is certainly an art and a science. Figure 4-3 displays the different types of possible brand names according to brand identity experts Lippincott. Like any brand element, brand names must be chosen with the six general criteria of memorability, meaningfulness, likability, transferability, adaptability, and protectability in mind.

Brand Awareness Brand names that are simple and easy to pronounce or spell, familiar and meaningful, and different, distinctive, and unusual can obviously improve brand awareness.⁷

Simplicity and Ease of Pronunciation and Spelling. Simplicity reduces the effort consumers have to make to comprehend and process the brand name. Short names often facilitate recall because they are easy to encode and store in memory—consider Aim toothpaste, Raid pest spray, Bold laundry detergent, Suave shampoo, Off insect repellent, Jif peanut butter, Ban deodorant, and Bic pens. Marketers can shorten longer names to make them easier to recall. For example, over the years Chevrolet cars have also become known as “Chevy,” Budweiser beer has become “Bud,” and Coca-Cola is also “Coke.”⁸

Surname

Dell, Siemens, Gillette

Descriptive

American Online, Pizza Hut, General Motors

Invented

Häagen-Dazs, Kodak, Xerox

Connotative

Duracell, Humana, Infiniti

Bridge

Westin, DaimlerChrysler, ExxonMobil

Arbitrary

Apple, Yahoo!, Infiniti

FIGURE 4-3

Lippincott Brand Name Taxonomy

Source: <http://www.lippincott.com/>

To encourage word-of-mouth exposure that helps build strong memory links, marketers should also make brand names easy to pronounce. Also keep in mind that rather than risk the embarrassment of mispronouncing a difficult name like Hyundai automobiles, Shiseido cosmetics, or Façonnable clothing, consumers may just avoid pronouncing it altogether.

Brands with difficult-to-pronounce names have an uphill battle because the firm has to devote so much of its initial marketing effort to teaching consumers how to pronounce the name. Polish vodka Wyborowa (pronounced VEE-ba-ro-va) was supported by a print ad to help consumers pronounce the brand name—a key factor for success in the distilled spirits category, where little self-service exists and consumers usually need to ask for the brand in the store.⁹

Ideally, the brand name should have a clear, understandable, and unambiguous pronunciation and meaning. However, the way a brand is pronounced can affect its meaning, so consumers may take away different perceptions if ambiguous pronunciation results in different meanings. One research study showed that certain hypothetical products with brand names that were acceptable in both English and French, such as Vaner, Randal, and Massin, were perceived as more “hedonic” (providing pleasure) and were better liked when pronounced in French than in English.¹⁰

Pronunciation problems may arise from not conforming to linguistic rules. Although Honda chose the name “Acura” because it was associated with words connoting precision in several languages, it initially had some trouble with consumer pronunciation of the name (AK-yur-a) in the U.S. market, perhaps in part because the company chose not to use the phonetically simpler English spelling of Accura (with a double c).

To improve pronounceability and recallability, many marketers seek a desirable cadence and pleasant sound in their brand names.¹¹ For example, brand names may use alliteration (repetition of consonants, such as in Coleco), assonance (repetition of vowel sounds, such as in Ramada Inn), consonance (repetition of consonants with intervening vowel change, such as in Hamburger Helper), or rhythm (repetition of pattern of syllable stress, such as in Better Business Bureau). Some words employ onomatopoeia—words composed of syllables that when pronounced generate a sound strongly suggestive of the word’s meaning, like Sizzler restaurants, Cap’n Crunch cereal, Ping golf clubs, and Schweppes carbonated beverages.

Familiarity and Meaningfulness. The brand name should be familiar and meaningful so it can tap into existing knowledge structures. It can be concrete or abstract in meaning. Because the names of people, objects, birds, animals, and inanimate objects already exist in memory, consumers have to do less learning to understand their meanings as brand names.¹² Links form more easily, increasing memorability.¹³ Thus, when a consumer sees an ad for the first time for a car called “Fiesta,” the fact that the consumer already has the word stored in memory should make it easier to encode the product name and thus improve its recallability.

To help create strong brand-category links and aid brand recall, the brand name may also suggest the product or service category, as do JuicyJuice 100 percent fruit juices, Ticketron ticket selling service, and *Newsweek* weekly news magazine. Brand elements that are highly descriptive of the product category or its attribute and benefits can be quite restrictive, however.¹⁴ For example, it may be difficult to introduce a soft drink extension for a brand called JuicyJuice!

Differentiated, Distinctive, and Unique. Although choosing a simple, easy-to-pronounce, familiar, and meaningful brand name can improve recallability, to improve brand recognition, on the other hand, brand names should be different, distinctive, and unusual. As Chapter 2 noted, recognition depends on consumers’ ability to discriminate between brands, and more complex brand names are more easily distinguished. Distinctive brand names can also make it easier for consumers to learn intrinsic product information.¹⁵

A brand name can be distinctive because it is inherently unique, or because it is unique in the context of other brands in the category.¹⁶ Distinctive words may be seldom-used or atypical words for the product category, like Apple computers; unusual combinations of real words, like Toys“R”Us; or completely made-up words, like Cognos or Luxottica. Even made-up brand names, however, have to satisfy prevailing linguistic rules and conventions—for example, try to pronounce names without vowels such as Blfft, Xgpr, or Msdy!

FIGURE 4-4
Sample Suggestive
Brand Names

ColorStay lipsticks
Head & Shoulders shampoo
Close-Up toothpaste
SnackWell reduced fat snacks
DieHard auto batteries
Mop & Glo floor wax
Lean Cuisine low-calorie frozen entrees
Shake'n Bake chicken seasoning
Sub-Zero refrigerators and freezers
Cling-Free static buildup remover

Here too there are trade-offs. Even if a distinctive brand name is advantageous for brand recognition, it also has to be credible and desirable in the product category. A notable exception is Smuckers jelly, which has tried to turn the handicap of its distinctive—but potentially dislikable—name into a positive through its slogan, “With a Name Like Smucker’s, It Has to Be Good!”

Brand Associations Because the brand name is a compact form of communication, the explicit and implicit meanings consumers extract from it are important. In naming a new peer-to-peer communication technology, the founders landed on the descriptive “Sky peer-to-peer” which they decided to shorten to Skyper. When the corresponding Web address Skyper.com was not available, they shortened it again to the much more user-friendly Skype.¹⁷

The brand name can be chosen to reinforce an important attribute or benefit association that makes up its product positioning (see Figure 4-4). Besides performance-related considerations, brand names can also communicate more abstract considerations as do names like Joy dishwashing liquid, Caress soap, and Obsession perfume. Consider the reasoning behind the name of Colgate’s new mini toothbrush.

COLGATE WISP

Famed brand-identity firm Lexicon has developed some wildly successful brand names, such as BlackBerry, Dasani, Febreze, OnStar, Pentium, Scion, and Swiffer. To develop a name for a new disposable mini toothbrush from Colgate, the firm went through a careful development process. The center of the disposable toothbrush held a dab of special toothpaste that made rinsing unnecessary and brushing on the go possible. Deciding to focus on the lightness, softness, and gentleness of the product, Lexicon’s global network of 70 linguists in 50 countries brainstormed metaphors and sounds that conveyed lightness. One name—Wisp—jumped out at company founder David Placek. Subsequent consumer research validated its positive connotations, and a new name was born.¹⁸



Colgate decided to call its new disposable mini-toothbrush Wisp because the name had positive connotations of lightness.

Source: Colgate-Palmolive Company

A descriptive brand name should make it easier to link the reinforced attribute or benefit.¹⁹ Consumers will find it easier to believe that a laundry detergent “adds fresh scent” to clothes if it has a name like “Blossom” than if it’s called something neutral like “Circle.”²⁰ However, brand names that reinforce the initial positioning of a brand may make it harder to link new associations to the brand if it later has to be repositioned.²¹ For example, if a laundry detergent named Blossom is positioned as “adding fresh scent,” it may be more difficult to later reposition the product, if necessary, and add a new brand association that it “fights tough stains.” Consumers may find it more difficult to accept or just too easy to forget the new positioning when the brand name continues to remind them of other product considerations.

With sufficient time and the proper marketing programs, however, this difficulty can sometimes be overcome. Southwest Airlines no longer stands for airline service just in Texas and the southwestern United States; and RadioShack doesn’t just provide equipment for ham radio operators and now sells a wide variety of consumer electronics. Such marketing maneuvers can be a long and expensive process, however. Imagine the difficulty of repositioning brands such as “I Can’t Believe It’s Not Butter!” or “Gee, Your Hair Smells Terrific!” Thus, it is important when choosing a meaningful name to consider the possibility of later repositioning and the necessity of linking other associations.

Meaningful names are not restricted to real words. Consumers can extract meaning, if they so desire, even from made-up or fanciful brand names. For example, one study of computer-generated brand names containing random combinations of syllables found that “whumies” and “quax” reminded consumers of a breakfast cereal and that “dehax” reminded them of a laundry detergent.²² Thus, consumers were able to extract at least some product meaning from these essentially arbitrary names when instructed to do so. Nevertheless, consumers are likely to extract meaning from highly abstract names only when they are sufficiently motivated.

Marketers generally devise made-up brand names systematically, basing words on combinations of morphemes. A *morpheme* is the smallest linguistic unit having meaning. There are 7,000 morphemes in the English language, including real words like “man” and prefixes, suffixes, or roots. For example, Nissan’s Sentra automobile is a combination of two morphemes suggesting “central” and “sentry.”²³ By combining carefully chosen morphemes, marketers can construct brand names that actually have some relatively easily inferred or implicit meaning.

Brand names raise a number of interesting linguistic issues.²⁴ Figure 4-5 contains an overview of different categories of linguistic characteristics, with definitions and examples. Even individual letters can contain meaning that may be useful in developing a new brand name. The letter *X* became popular (e.g., ESPN’s X Games and Nissan’s Xterra SUV) because *X* represents “extreme,” “on the edge,” and “youth.”²⁵ Research has shown that in some instances, consumers prefer products with brand names bearing some of the letters from their own name (Jonathan may exhibit a greater-than-expected preference for a product named Jonoki).²⁶

The sounds of letters can take on meaning as well.²⁷ For example, some words begin with phonemic elements called *plosives*, like the letters *b*, *c*, *d*, *g*, *k*, *p*, and *t*, whereas others use *sibilants*, which are sounds like *s* and soft *c*. Plosives escape from the mouth more quickly than sibilants and are harsher and more direct. Consequently, they are thought to make names more specific and less abstract, and to be more easily recognized and recalled.²⁸ On the other hand, because sibilants have a softer sound, they tend to conjure up romantic, serene images and are often found in the names of products such as perfumes—think of Chanel, Ciara (by Revlon), and Shalimar and Samsara (Guerlin).²⁹

One study found a relationship between certain characteristics of the letters of brand names and product features: As consonant hardness and vowel pitch increased in hypothetical brand names for toilet paper and household cleansers, consumer perception of the harshness of the product also increased.³⁰ The actual font or logotype used to express the brand name may also change consumer impressions.³¹

Brands are not restricted to letters alone.³² Alphanumeric names may include a mixture of letters and digits (WD-40), a mixture of words and digits (Formula 409), or mixtures of letters or words and numbers in written form (Saks Fifth Avenue). They can also designate generations or relationships in a product line like BMW’s 3, 5, and 7 series.

Characteristics	Definitions and/or Examples
Phonetic Devices	
Alliteration	Consonant repetition (Coca-Cola)
Assonance	Vowel repetition (Kal Kan)
Consonance	Consonant repetition with intervening vowel changes (Weight Watchers)
Masculine rhyme	Rhyme with end-of-syllable stress (Max Pax)
Feminine rhyme	Unaccented syllable followed by accented syllable (American Airlines)
Weak/imperfect/slant rhyme	Vowels differ or consonants similar, not identical (Black & Decker)
Onomatopoeia	Use of syllable phonetics to resemble the object itself (Wisk)
Clipping	Product names attenuated (Chevy)
Blending	Morphemic combination, usually with elision (Aspergum, Duracell)
Initial plosives	<i>/b/, /c-hard/, /d/, /g-hard/, /k/, /p/, /q/, /t/</i> (Bic)
Orthographic Devices	
Unusual or incorrect spellings	Kool-Aid
Abbreviations	7 UP for Seven Up
Acronyms	Amoco
Morphologic Devices	
Affixation	Jell-O
Compounding	Janitor-in-a-Drum
Semantic Devices	
Metaphor	Representing something as if it were something else (Arrid); simile is included with metaphor when a name describes a likeness and not an equality (AquaFresh)
Metonymy	Application of one object or quality for another (Midas)
Synecdoche	Substitution of a part for the whole (Red Lobster)
Personification/pathetic fallacy	Humanizing the nonhuman, or ascription of human emotions to the inanimate (Betty Crocker)
Oxymoron	Conjunction of opposites (Easy-Off)
Paranomasia	Pun and word plays (Hawaiian Punch)
Semantic appositeness	Fit of name with object (Bufferin)

FIGURE 4-5
Brand Name Linguistic
Characteristics

Naming Procedures. A number of different procedures or systems have been suggested for naming new products. Most adopt a procedure something along the following lines. Figure 4-6 displays some common naming mistakes according to leading marketing and branding consultancy Lippincott.³³

1. *Define objectives.* First, define the branding objectives in terms of the six general criteria we noted earlier, and in particular define the ideal meaning the brand should convey. Recognize the role of the brand within the corporate branding hierarchy and how it should relate to other brands and products (we'll discuss this in Chapter 11). In many cases, existing brand names may serve, at least in part. Finally, understand the role of the brand within the entire marketing program and the target market.

1	Using cliched words such as “Innovation” or “Solution” in a name.	In most industry situations these kinds of words are so overused, they no longer have meaning.
2	Insisting on a name that can be found in an English dictionary.	Not only are such names scarce, they also may cause translation or other linguistic problems.
3	Taking the easy way out and settling on initials.	Initials may be easier to trademark, but an enormous budget is typically required to give them meaning.
4	Using terms like “Extra,” “Plus,” or “New” to communicate next generation products or improved line extensions.	Three more examples of words that have lost their meaning through overuse.
5	Adopting license-plate shorthand.	A name that customers have to work too hard to figure out is a turnoff—and a wasted opportunity.
6	Seeing how many names can be combined to make a confusing brand	Most that initially started in this direction have truncated to simpler shorter alternatives.
7	Asking for suggestions from friends and other uninformed sources.	The results that come from this approach seldom relate to or express a company’s business strategy.

FIGURE 4-6

Seven Crucial Naming Mistakes

Source: <http://www.lippincott.com/>

2. *Generate names.* With the branding strategy in place, next generate as many names and concepts as possible. Any potential sources of names are valid: company management and employees; existing or potential customers (including retailers or suppliers if relevant); ad agencies, professional name consultants, and specialized computer-based naming companies. Tens, hundreds, or even thousands of names may result from this step.
3. *Screen initial candidates.* Screen all the names against the branding objectives and marketing considerations identified in step 1 and apply the test of common sense to produce a more manageable list. For example, General Mills starts by eliminating the following:
 - Names that have unintentional double meaning
 - Names that are unpronounceable, already in use, or too close to an existing name
 - Names that have obvious legal complications
 - Names that represent an obvious contradiction of the positioning

Next General Mills runs in-depth evaluation sessions with management personnel and marketing partners to narrow the list to a handful of names, often conducting a quick-and-dirty legal search to help screen out possible problems.

4. *Study candidate names.* Collect more extensive information about each of the final 5–10 names. Before spending large amounts of money on consumer research, it is usually advisable to do an extensive international legal search. Because this step is expensive, marketers often search on a sequential basis, testing in each country only those names that survived the legal screening from the previous country.
5. *Research the final candidates.* Next, conduct consumer research to confirm management expectations about the memorability and meaningfulness of the remaining names. Consumer testing can take all forms. Many firms attempt to simulate the actual marketing program and consumers’ likely purchase experiences as much as possible.³⁴ Thus, they may show consumers the product and its packaging, price, or promotion so that they understand the rationale for the brand name and how it will be used. Other aids in this kind of research are realistic three-dimensional packages and concept boards or low-cost animatic advertising using digital techniques. Marketers may survey many consumers to capture differences in

regional or ethnic appeal. They should also factor in the effects of repeated exposure to the brand name and what happens when the name is spoken versus written.

6. *Select the final name.* Based on all the information collected from the previous step, management should choose the name that maximizes the firm's branding and marketing objectives and then formally register it.

Some segment of consumers or another will always have at least some potentially negative associations with a new brand name. In most cases, however, assuming they are not severe, these associations will disappear after the initial marketing launch. Some consumers will dislike a new brand name because it's unfamiliar or represents a deviation from the norm. Marketers should remember to separate these temporal considerations from more enduring effects. Here is how a new airline arrived at its name.³⁵

JETBLUE

Traditionally, airlines use descriptive names that evoke specific geographic origins, like American, or broad geographic reach, like United. In launching a new airline with a fresh concept—stylish travel for the budget-minded flier—JetBlue decided it needed an evocative name, but not one that sounded like an airline. Working with its ad agency, Merkley & Partners, and brand consultant, Landor, the company generated a list of candidate names—Fresh Air, Taxi, Egg, and It. The name Blue, suggesting peaceful clear skies, quickly became a favorite, but trademark lawyers noted that it would be impossible to protect the name without a distinctive qualifier. The first candidate, TrueBlue, went by the wayside when it was found to also be the name of a car rental agency. JetBlue emerged as the best substitute and the brand was born. JetBlue has also leveraged the “jet” portion of its brand name with its optimistic “jetting” campaign, which occurred during the economic downturn and was a response to difficult times in the airline industry. The ads served to distinguish JetBlue and its “maverick” approach to service. Its “TrueBlue” loyalty program cleverly leverages the second half of its name.³⁶

NOT A
TAGLINE.
A PROMISE.

YOU ABOVE ALL
jetBlue



Jet Blue has used evocative brand imagery and a strong customer focus to build its brand.

Source: JetBlue Airways

URLs

URLs (uniform resource locators) specify locations of pages on the Web and are also commonly referred to as *domain names*. Anyone wishing to own a specific URL must register and pay for the name. As companies clamored for space on the Web, the number of registered URLs increased dramatically. Every three-letter combination and virtually all words in a typical English dictionary have been registered. The sheer volume of registered URLs often makes it necessary for companies to use coined words for new brands if they wish to have a Web site for the brand. For example, when Andersen Consulting selected its new name, it chose the coined word “Accenture” in part because the URL www.accenture.com had not been registered.

Another issue facing companies with regard to URLs is protecting their brands from unauthorized use in other domain names.³⁷ A company can sue the current owner of the URL for copyright infringement, buy the name from the current owner, or register all conceivable variations of its brand as domain names ahead of time.

In 2010, cybersquatting cases reached record levels. *Cybersquatting* or *domain squatting*, as defined by government law, is registering, trafficking in, or using a domain name with bad-faith intent to profit from the goodwill of a trademark belonging to someone else. The cybersquatter then offers to sell the domain to the person or company who owns a trademark contained within the name at an inflated price. Under such cases, trademark holders sue for infringement of their domain names through the WIPO (an agency of the UN).³⁸

The top five areas of legal activity initiated by companies are in the retail, banking and finance, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, Internet and IT, and fashion industries. In 2009, Citibank successfully filed suit against Shui of China under the Anticybersquatting and Consumer Protection Act by showing that (1) Shui had a bad-faith intent to profit from using the domain name citybank.org; and (2) that the name was confusingly similar to, or dilutive of, Citibank’s distinctive or famous mark. Shui was forced to pay Citibank \$100,000 and its legal fees.³⁹

Many sources list the current total of registered domain names at or close to the 200 million mark. As the domain name market has exploded, ICANN—a nonprofit that governs the industry—announced it would begin accepting applications to register customized and unlimited URLs. This decision could have a significant impact for companies, which can now register brand URLs. Canon and Hitachi were among the first brands to apply to register their brand names under the new top-level domain policy.

Brand recall is critical for URLs because it increases the likelihood that consumers easily remember the URL to get to the site. At the peak of the Internet boom, investors paid \$7.5 million for Business.com, \$2.2 million for Autos.com, and \$1.1 million for Bingo.com. Many of these “common noun” sites failed, however, and were criticized, among other things, for having names that were too generic. Many firms adopted names that started with a lowercase *e* or *i* and ended in “net,” “systems,” or, especially, “com.” Most of these names became liabilities after the Internet bubble burst, forcing firms such as Internet.com to revert to a more conventional name, INTMedia Group.

Yahoo!, however, was able to create a memorable brand and URL. Jerry Yang and David Filo named their Internet portal (created as a Stanford University thesis project) “Yahoo!” after thumbing through the dictionary for words that began with “ya,” the universal computing acronym for “yet another.” Filo stumbled upon *yahoo*, which brought back fond childhood memories of his father calling him “little yahoo.” Liking the name, they created a more complete acronym: “Yet another hierarchical officious oracle.”⁴⁰

Typically, for an existing brand, the main URL is a straightforward and maybe even literal translation of the brand name, like www.shell.com, although there are some exceptions and variations, such as www.purlepill.com for the Nexium acid-reflux medication Web site.

Logos and Symbols

Although the brand name typically is the central element of the brand, visual elements also play a critical role in building brand equity and especially brand awareness. *Logos* have a long history as a means to indicate origin, ownership, or association. For example, families and countries have used logos for centuries to visually represent their names (think of the Hapsburg eagle of the Austro-Hungarian Empire).

Logos range from corporate names or trademarks (word marks with text only) written in a distinctive form, to entirely abstract designs that may be completely unrelated to the word mark,

corporate name, or corporate activities.⁴¹ Examples of brands with strong word marks and no accompanying logo separate from the name include Coca-Cola, Dunhill, and Kit Kat. Examples of abstract logos include the Mercedes star, Rolex crown, CBS eye, Nike swoosh, and Olympic rings. These non-word mark logos are also often called *symbols*.

Many logos fall between these two extremes. Some are literal representations of the brand name, enhancing brand meaning and awareness, such as the Arm and Hammer, American Red Cross, and Apple logos. Logos can be quite concrete or pictorial in nature like the American Express centurion, the Land o' Lakes Native American, the Morton salt girl with umbrella, and Ralph Lauren's polo player. Certain physical elements of the product or company can become a symbol, as did the Goodyear blimp, McDonald's golden arches, and the Playboy bunny ears.

Like names, abstract logos can be quite distinctive and thus recognizable. Nevertheless, because abstract logos may lack the inherent meaning present with a more concrete logo, one danger is that consumers may not understand what the logo is intended to represent without a significant marketing initiative to explain its meaning. Consumers can evaluate even fairly abstract logos differently depending on the shape.

Benefits. Logos and symbols are often easily recognized and can be a valuable way to identify products, although consumers may recognize them but be unable to link them to any specific product or brand. Many insurance firms use symbols of strength (the Rock of Gibraltar for Prudential and the stag for Hartford) or security (the “good hands” of Allstate, the hard hat of Fireman's Fund, and the red umbrella of Travelers).

Another branding advantage of logos is their versatility: Because they are often nonverbal, logos transfer well across cultures and over a range of product categories. For example, corporate brands often develop logos in order to confer their identity on a wide range of products and to endorse different sub-brands. Marketers must think carefully, however, as to how prominent the brand name and logo should be on any product, especially more luxury ones.⁴²

Abstract logos offer advantages when the full brand name is difficult to use for any reason. In the United Kingdom, for example, National Westminster Bank created a triangular device as a logo because the name itself was long and cumbersome and the logo could more easily appear as an identification device on checkbooks, literature, signage, and promotional material. The logo also uses the shortened version of the company name, NatWest.⁴³

Finally, unlike brand names, logos can be easily adapted over time to achieve a more contemporary look. For example, in 2000, John Deere revamped its deer trademark for the first time in 32 years, making the animal appear to be leaping up rather than landing. The change was intended to “convey a message of strength and agility with a technology edge.”⁴⁴

In updating, however, marketers should make gradual changes and not lose sight of the inherent advantages of the logo. In the 1980s, the trend for many firms was to create more abstract, stylized versions of their logos. In the process, some of the meaning residing in these logos, and thus some equity, was lost. Recognizing the logo's potential contribution to brand equity, some firms in the 1990s reverted to a more traditional look for their symbols.

Prudential's Rock of Gibraltar logo was changed back from black-and-white slanted lines introduced in 1984 to a more faithful rendition. To harken back to its historic past and reflect its engineering and design prowess, Chrysler used a winged badge to replace the Pentastar five-pointed star design as a symbol of the brand. The wings, intended to symbolize freedom and flying, were found on the first Chrysler manufactured in 1924.

Regardless of the reason for doing it, changing a logo is not cheap. According to branding experts, engaging a firm for four to six months to create a symbol or remaking an old one for a big brand “usually costs \$1 million.”⁴⁵

Characters

Characters represent a special type of brand symbol—one that takes on human or real-life characteristics. Brand characters typically are introduced through advertising and can play a central role in ad campaigns and package designs. Some are animated characters like the Pillsbury Doughboy, Peter Pan peanut butter, and numerous cereal characters such as Tony the Tiger and Snap, Crackle & Pop. Others are live-action figures like Juan Valdez (Colombian coffee) and Ronald McDonald. One character has been both in its lifetime.

GREEN GIANT

One of the most powerful brand characters ever introduced is General Mills's Jolly Green Giant. His origin can be traced back to the 1920s, when the Minnesota Valley Canning Company placed a green giant on the label of a new variety of sweet, large English peas as a means to circumvent trademark laws that prevented the firm from naming the product "Green Giant." Ad Agency Leo Burnett used the Jolly Green Giant character in print ads beginning in 1930 and in TV ads beginning in the early 1960s. At first, TV ads featured an actor wearing green body makeup and a suit of leaves. Later, the ads moved to full animation. Creatively, the ads have been very consistent. The Green Giant is always in the background, with his features obscure, and he says only "Ho Ho Ho!" He moves very little, doesn't walk, and never leaves the valley. The Green Giant has been introduced into international markets, following the same basic set of rules. The Little Sprout character was introduced in 1973 to bring a new look to the brand and allow for more flexibility. Unlike the Green Giant, the Little Sprout is a chatterbox, often imparting valuable product information. The Green Giant brand has enormous equity to General Mills, and using the name and character on a new product has been an effective signal to consumers that the product is "wholesome" and "healthy." Not surprisingly, the company has tied many of their recent green initiatives on sustainability to the Green Giant.⁴⁶



One of the most enduring—and most powerful—brand characters ever devised is the Jolly Green Giant.

Source: General Mills, Inc.

Benefits. Because they are often colorful and rich in imagery, brand characters tend to be attention getting and quite useful for creating brand awareness. Brand characters can help brands break through marketplace clutter as well as help communicate a key product benefit. For example, Maytag's Lonely Repairman has helped reinforce the company's key "reliability" product association.

The human element of brand characters can enhance likeability and help create perceptions of the brand as fun and interesting.⁴⁷ A consumer may more easily form a relationship with a brand when the brand literally has a human or other character presence. Characters avoid many of the problems that plague human spokespeople—they don't grow old, demand pay raises, or cheat on their wives. An interesting exception occurred, however, when Aflac fired the human voice to its famed duck character, comedian Gilbert Gottfried, after he posted some controversial remarks on Twitter that made light of the fallout from the earthquake and tsunami in Japan.⁴⁸

Finally, because brand characters do not typically have direct product meaning, they may also be transferred relatively easily across product categories. For example, Aaker notes that

“the Keebler’s elf identity (which combines a sense of home-style baking with a touch of magic and fun) gives the brand latitude to extend into other baked goods—and perhaps even into other types of food where homemade magic and fun might be perceived as a benefit.”⁴⁹ Popular characters also often become valuable licensing properties, providing direct revenue and additional brand exposure.

Cautions. There are some cautions and drawbacks to using brand characters. Brand characters can be so attention getting and well liked that they dominate other brand elements and actually *dampen* brand awareness.

EVEREADY

When Ralston Purina introduced its drumming pink bunny that “kept going . . . and going . . . and going” in ads for the Eveready Energizer battery, many consumers were so captivated by the character that they paid little attention to the name of the advertised brand. As a result, they often mistakenly believed that the ad was for Eveready’s chief competitor, Duracell. Eveready had to add the pink bunny to its packages, promotions, and other marketing communications to create stronger brand links. Through its concerted marketing efforts through the years, however, the Energizer Bunny has now achieved iconic status. Many marketing experts view the character as the “ultimate product demo” because of how effectively it showcases the product’s unique selling proposition—long-lived batteries—in an inventive, fresh way. As the company’s CEO noted, “The message of the Energizer Bunny has remained consistent over the last two decades; he speaks to longevity, determination and perseverance.” The bunny celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2009, having achieved several milestones, including 95 percent awareness among consumers and an entry in the Oxford English Dictionary. Perhaps the greatest compliment, however, is how often everyone from politicians to sport stars have used the Energizer Bunny to describe their own staying power.⁵⁰

Characters often must be updated over time so that their image and personality remain relevant to the target market. Japan’s famous Hello Kitty character, which became a multibillion dollar product and license powerhouse, found its sales shrinking over the last decade, a victim in part of overexposure and a failure to make the character modern and appealing across multiple media.⁵¹

In general, the more realistic the brand character, the more important it is to keep it up-to-date. One advantage of fictitious or animated characters is that their appeal can be more enduring and timeless than that of real people. Branding Brief 4-1 describes the efforts by General Mills to evolve the Betty Crocker character over time. Finally, some characters are so culturally specific that they do not travel well to other countries. The Science of Branding 4-2 describes some guidelines from a leading consultant.

Slogans

Slogans are short phrases that communicate descriptive or persuasive information about the brand. They often appear in advertising but can play an important role on packaging and in other aspects of the marketing program. When Snickers advertised, “Hungry? Grab a Snickers,” the slogan also appeared on the candy bar wrapper itself.

Slogans are powerful branding devices because, like brand names, they are an extremely efficient, shorthand means to build brand equity. They can function as useful “hooks” or “handles” to help consumers grasp the meaning of a brand—what it is and what makes it special.⁵² They are an indispensable means of summarizing and translating the intent of a marketing program in a few short words or phrases. For example, State Farm Insurance’s “Like a Good Neighbor, State Farm Is There” has been used for decades to represent the brand’s dependability and aura of friendship.

Benefits. Some slogans help build brand awareness by playing off the brand name in some way, as in “The Citi Never Sleeps.” Others build brand awareness even more explicitly by making strong links between the brand and the corresponding product category, like when Lifetime would advertise that it was “Television for Women.” Most important, slogans can help reinforce the brand positioning as in “Staples. That Was Easy.” For HBO, a slogan was critical to conveying its unique positioning.



BRANDING BRIEF 4-1

Updating Betty Crocker

In 1921, Washburn Crosby Company, makers of Gold Medal flour, launched a picture puzzle contest. The contest was a huge success—the company received 30,000 entries—and several hundred contestants sent along requests for recipes and advice about baking. To handle those requests, the company decided to create a spokesperson. Managers chose the name Betty Crocker because “Betty” was a popular, friendly sounding name and “Crocker” was a reference to William G. Crocker, a well-liked, recently retired executive. The company merged with General Mills in 1928, and the newly merged company introduced the *Betty Crocker Cooking School of the Air* as a national radio program. During this time, Betty was given a voice and her signature began to appear on nearly every product the company produced.

In 1936, the Betty Crocker portrait was drawn by artist Neysa McMein as a composite of some of the home economists at the company. Prim and proper, Betty was shown with pursed lips, a hard stare, and graying hair. Her appearance has been updated a number of times over the years (see the accompanying figure) and has become more friendly, although she has never lost her reserved look.

Prior to a makeover in 1986, Betty Crocker was seen as honest and dependable, friendly and concerned about customers, and a specialist in baked goods, but also out-of-date, old and traditional, a manufacturer of “old standby products,” and not particularly contemporary or innovative. The challenge was to give Betty a look that would attract younger consumers but not alienate older ones who remembered her as the stern homemaker of the past. There needed to be a certain fashionableness about her—not too dowdy and not too trendy, since the new look would need to last for 5 to 10 years. Her look also needed to be relevant to working women. Finally, for the first time, Betty Crocker’s look was also designed to appeal to men, given the results of a General Mills study that showed that 30 percent of U.S. men at the time sometimes cooked for themselves.

A few years later, Betty Crocker received another update. This ultramodern model, the current one, was the work of a committee that selected images of 75 women of many different races to create a computerized composite. This seventh

BETTY CROCKER MAKEOVER



1936



1955



1965



1968



1972



1980



1986



1996

One advantage of characters—they can be timeless. Although Betty Crocker is over 75 years old, she still looks 35!

Source: AP Photo/General Mills

makeover seemed to have taken—although Betty Crocker was now close to 75, she didn’t look a day over 35! Although the Betty Crocker name is on 200 or so products, her visual image has been largely replaced by the red spoon symbol and signature on package fronts, and she appears only on cookbooks, advertising, and online, where she has over 1.5 million Facebook friends, a Twitter account, and a mobile app downloaded by millions.

Sources: Charles Panati, *Panati’s Extraordinary Origins of Everyday Things* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989); Milton Moskowitz, Robert Levering, and Michael Katz, *Everybody’s Business: A Field Guide to the 400 Leading Companies in America* (New York: Doubleday/Currency, 1990); “FYI Have You Seen This Person?,” *Minneapolis–St. Paul Star Tribune*, 11 October 2000; Susan Marks, *Finding Betty Crocker: The Secret Life of America’s First Lady of Food* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005); “Betty Crocker Celebrates 90th Birthday,” www.marketwatch.com, 18 November 2011.



THE SCIENCE OF BRANDING 4-2

Balance Creative and Strategic Thinking to Create Great Characters

Great characters, the Pillsbury Doughboy, for example, can embody a brand's story and spark enthusiasm for it. But bringing a character to life through advertising requires navigating a host of pitfalls. Character, a company based in Portland, Oregon, helps create new corporate brand characters and revitalize old ones.

During three-day "Character" camps, a team from a client company learns to flesh out a new or current brand character through improvisational acting, discussion, and reflection. According to Character president David Altschul, brand characters are unique in that they straddle the worlds of marketing and entertainment. Their function is to represent a brand, but they compete for attention with other characters to which consumers are exposed through television, movies, video games, and novels. Altschul emphasizes maintaining consistency across all communications and familiarizing all employees with the story behind the brand. The results of Character Camps are intended to equip creative directors with background and insights into the company's character that can spur new ideas and approaches.

These are some tips for brand characters presented at Character Camps.

1. **Don't be a shill.** Human traits are appealing. M&M's were successful in giving the brand more appeal once the M&M characters were given more human traits.
2. **Create a life.** Create a full backstory to fill out the character. This ensures that the character can evolve over time and continue to connect with consumers.
3. **Make characters vulnerable.** Even superheroes have flaws. Maytag launched a new character, the Apprentice, to complement its famous lonely repairman.
4. **Imagine the long run.** Characters like General Mills's Jolly Green Giant have been around for decades. Don't get rid of older characters just to make room for new ones. Consumers can get very attached to longtime characters.
5. **Don't ask too much.** Characters with a simple task or purpose work best. Using characters for new lines or other purposes can dilute their effectiveness.

To be truly effective, brand characters have to be engaging in their own right while staying true to the brand. Most characters though, are conceived as short-term solutions to solve specific problems. If the audience likes a character, companies face the challenge of turning it into an asset. At this point, some companies try to freeze all the character's attributes and preserve them. But Altschul cautions against this strategy, saying static characters can lose their appeal and fail to emotionally connect with consumers. On the other hand, characters that are mass-marketed too heavily can also crash and burn. The California Raisins met such a fate when their licensing program pushed them into every possible type of paraphernalia without much thought about their backstory.

Altschul maintains that viewers connect with characters whose struggles are familiar. He says the way to ensure that a brand character adds value for the long run is to address strategic questions such as: "What is this story about?" "What are the flaws, vulnerabilities, and sources of conflict that connect the character to the brand in a deep, intrinsic way?" "What human truth is revealed through the story that audiences can relate to?"

Altschul's company helps clients find this intersection between story and marketing by defining the essence of a brand and the character and then clarifying the connection between the two. The brand character is profiled to bring out the personality traits, behavior, and mission that may be used for future storylines. And the participants talk about how the character should look, act, and interact with others to most effectively communicate the essence of the brand. The goal is to create guidelines for how the character may evolve and suggests ways the character could be used beyond traditional advertising media. Altschul suggests that companies also establish principles for the brand to stay "in character," including ways the character can serve as conscience for the brand when making decisions such as line extensions, alliances, and competitive responses.

Sources: Fara Warner, "Brands with Character," *Fast Company*, May 2004; David Altschul, "The Balancing Act of Building Character," *Advertising Age*, 4 July 2005; Carlye Adler, "Mascot Makeover: How The Pillsbury Doughboy Explains Consumer Behavior," *Fortune Small Business*, October 2006, 30–40; www.characterweb.com.

HBO

As a pay TV channel, HBO has always needed to convince viewers it was worth paying extra money for. More than just a pay movie channel, HBO had a tradition of broadcasting original, edgy programming such as *Sex and the City*, *The Sopranos*, and *Entourage* that would not be found on free channels. To highlight its most compelling point-of-difference and brand essence, HBO developed a clever slogan in 1996: "It's Not TV, It's HBO." Externally, the slogan gave viewers a point of reference to understand and categorize the brand. Internally, the slogan gave employees a clear vision and goal to keep in mind: No matter what they did, it should never look like ordinary TV.⁵³



The clever slogan “It’s Not TV, It’s HBO” reinforces how the cable network with shows like *Entourage* is different from other networks.

Source: AF archive/Alamy

Slogans often become closely tied to advertising campaigns and serve as tag lines to summarize the descriptive or persuasive information conveyed in the ads. DeBeers’s “A Diamond Is Forever” tag line communicates that diamonds bring eternal love and romance and never lose value. Slogans can be more expansive and more enduring than just ad tag lines, though campaign-specific tag lines may help reinforce the message of a particular campaign instead of the brand slogan for a certain period of time.

For example, through the years, Nike has used tag lines specific to ad campaigns for events or sports such as “Prepare for Battle” and “Quick Can’t Be Caught” (basketball); “Write the Future,” (World Cup); “My Better Is Better” (multisport); and “Here I Am” (women) instead of the well-known brand slogan, “Just Do It.” Such substitutions can emphasize that the ad campaign represents a departure of some kind from the message conveyed by the brand slogan, or just a means to give the brand slogan a rest so that it remains fresh.

Designing Slogans. Some of the most powerful slogans contribute to brand equity in multiple ways.⁵⁴ They can play off the brand name to build both awareness *and* image, such as “Be Certain with Certs” for Certs breath mints; “Maybe She’s Born with It, Maybe It’s Maybelline” for Maybelline cosmetics; or “The Big Q Stands for Quality” for Quaker State motor oil.

Slogans also can contain product-related messages and other meanings. Consider the historical Champion sportswear slogan, “It Takes a Little More to Make a Champion.” The slogan could be interpreted in terms of product performance, meaning that Champion sportswear is made with a little extra care or with extra-special materials, but it could mean that Champion sportswear is associated with top athletes. This combination of superior product performance and aspirational user imagery is a powerful platform on which to build brand image and equity.

Benetton has had an equally strong slogan on which to build brand equity (“United Colors of Benetton”), but as Branding Brief 4-2 describes, the company has not always taken full advantage of it.

Updating Slogans. Some slogans become so strongly linked to the brand that it becomes difficult to introduce new ones (take the famous slogan quiz in Figure 4-7 and check the accompanying footnote to see how many slogans you can correctly identify). Marketers of 7UP tried a number of different successors to the popular “Uncola” slogan—including “Freedom of Choice,” “Crisp and Clean and No Caffeine,” “Don’t You Feel Good About 7UP,” and “Feels So Good Coming Down,” and for over five years the somewhat edgy “Make 7UP Yours.” A new ad in 2011 featuring hip-hop singer–songwriter Cee Lo Green beatboxing used yet another tag line, “Be Yourself. Be Refreshing. Be 7UP.”



BRANDING BRIEF 4-2

Benetton's Brand Equity Management

One of the world's top clothing manufacturers (with global sales of \$2.4 billion), Benetton has experienced some ups and downs in managing its brand equity. Benetton built a powerful brand by creating a broad range of basic and colorful clothes that appealed to a wide range of consumers. Their corporate slogan, "United Colors of Benetton," would seem to almost perfectly capture their desired image and positioning. It embraces both product considerations (the colorful character of the clothes) and user considerations (the diversity of the people who wore the clothes), providing a strong platform for the brand. Benetton's ad campaigns reinforced this positioning by showing people from a variety of different racial backgrounds wearing a range of different-colored clothes and products.

Benetton's ad campaigns switched directions, however, in the 1980s by addressing controversial social issues.

Created in-house by famed designer Oliviero Toscani, Benetton print ads and posters featured such unusual and sometimes disturbing images as a white child wearing angel's wings alongside a black child sporting devil's horns; a priest kissing a nun; an AIDS patient and his family in the hospital moments before his death; and, in an ad run only once, 56 close-up photos of male and female genitalia. In 1994, Benetton launched a \$15 million ad campaign in newspapers and billboards in 110 countries featuring the torn and bloodied uniform of a dead Bosnian soldier. In 2000, a campaign titled "We, on Death Row" showcased U.S. death row inmates with pictures of the prisoners and details about their crimes and length of incarceration.

Critics labeled these various campaigns gimmicky "shock" advertising and accused Benetton of exploiting sensitive social issues to sell sweaters. One fact is evident. Although the campaigns may have succeeded with a certain market segment, they were certainly more "exclusive" in nature—distancing the brand from many other consumers—than the early Benetton ad campaigns, which were strikingly inviting to consumers and "inclusive" in nature. Not surprisingly, the new ads were not always well received by its retailers and franchise owners.

The ad displaying the dead Bosnian soldier received an especially hostile reaction throughout Europe. In the United States, some of Benetton's more controversial ads were rejected by the media, and Benetton's U.S. retailers commissioned their own campaign from TBWA/Chiat/Day ad agency in an attempt to create a more sophisticated image for the brand. After the



Benetton has never been afraid to court controversy with its advertising, although it has sometimes been to the detriment of the brand.

Source: Newscom

death row ads debuted, Sears pulled the brand from shelves of its 400 stores. Response from U.S. consumers was equally negative: U.S. sales of Benetton products shrank by 50 percent to \$52 million between 1993 and 2000. By 2001, the number of Benetton stores in the United States dropped to 150 from 600 in 1987.

Since 2001, Benetton's advertisements have featured more conventional images—teenagers in colorful Benetton clothing. Benetton maintained that the company would maintain its "socially responsible" status by focusing on noncontroversial themes like racial discrimination, poverty, child labor, AIDS awareness, and so forth. Accordingly, a variety of campaigns were introduced in the ensuing decade, such as "Food for Life" and "Microcredit Africa Works." The first decade in the new millennium, however, saw the emergence of fierce competition from Zara, H&M, and others. Lacking the same vertical integration and "fast fashion" business practices and having lost brand momentum, Benetton found itself surpassed by its more nimble, popular rivals.

Sources: Leigh Gallagher, "About Face," *Forbes*, 19 March 2001; Michael McCarthy, "Benetton in Spotlight," *USA Today*, 16 February 2002, B3; George E. Belch and Michael A. Belch, "Benetton Group: Evolution of Communication Strategy," *Advertising & Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective*, 7th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2007); Armoral Kenna, "Benetton: A Must-Have Becomes a Has-Been," *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, 10 March 2011.

1. _____ Reach Out and Touch Someone
2. _____ Have It Your Way
3. _____ Just Do It
4. _____ When It Absolutely, Positively Has to Be There Overnight
5. _____ Drivers Wanted
6. _____ Don't Leave Home Without It
7. _____ Like a Rock
8. _____ Because I'm Worth It
9. _____ The Ultimate Driving Machine
10. _____ When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best
11. _____ Capitalist Tool
12. _____ The Wonder Drug That Works Wonders
13. _____ No More Tears
14. _____ Melts in Your Mouth, Not in Your Hands
15. _____ We Try Harder
16. _____ The Antidote for Civilization
17. _____ Where Do You Want to Go Today?
18. _____ Let Your Fingers Do the Walking
19. _____ Breakfast of Champions
20. _____ Fly the Friendly Skies

Answers: (1) Bell Telephone; (2) Burger King; (3) Nike; (4) Federal Express; (5) Volkswagen; (6) American Express; (7) Chevrolet; (8) L'Oréal; (9) BMW; (10) Hallmark; (11) Forbes magazine; (12) Bayer aspirin; (13) Johnson's Baby Shampoo; (14) M&M's; (15) Avis; (16) Club Med; (17) Microsoft; (18) Yellow Pages; (19) Wheaties; and (20) United Airlines.

FIGURE 4-7
Famous Slogans Quiz

A slogan that becomes so strongly identified with a brand can box it in. Or successful slogans can take on lives of their own and become public catch phrases (like Wendy's "Where's the Beef?" in the 1980s, MasterCard's "Priceless" in the 1990s, and the "Got Milk?" spoofs in the 2000s), but there can also be a down side to this kind of success: the slogan can quickly become overexposed and lose specific brand or product meaning.

Once a slogan achieves such a high level of recognition and acceptance, it may still contribute to brand equity, but probably as more of a reminder of the brand. Consumers are unlikely to consider what the slogan means in a thoughtful way after seeing or hearing it too many times. At the same time, a potential difficulty arises if the slogan continues to convey some product meaning that the brand no longer needs to reinforce. In this case, by not facilitating the linkage of new, desired brand associations, the slogan can become restrictive and fail to allow the brand to be updated as much as desired or necessary.

Because slogans are perhaps the easiest brand element to change over time, marketers have more flexibility in managing them. In changing slogans, however, they must do the following:

1. Recognize how the slogan is contributing to brand equity, if at all, through enhanced awareness or image.

2. Decide how much of this equity enhancement, if any, is still needed.
3. Retain the needed or desired equities still residing in the slogan as much as possible while providing whatever new twists of meaning are necessary to contribute to equity in other ways.

Sometimes modifying an existing slogan is more fruitful than introducing a new slogan with a completely new set of meanings. For example, Dockers switched its slogan from the well-received “Nice Pants” to “One Leg at a Time” in the late 1990s before reverting to the previous slogan when recognizing it had given up too much built-up equity.

Jingles

Jingles are musical messages written around the brand. Typically composed by professional songwriters, they often have enough catchy hooks and choruses to become almost permanently registered in the minds of listeners—sometimes whether they want them to or not! During the first half of the twentieth century, when broadcast advertising was confined primarily to radio, jingles were important branding devices.

We can think of jingles as extended musical slogans, and in that sense classify them as a brand element. Because of their musical nature, however, jingles are not nearly as transferable as other brand elements. They can communicate brand benefits, but they often convey product meaning in a nondirect and fairly abstract fashion. Thus the potential associations they might create for the brand are most likely to relate to feelings and personality and other intangibles.

Jingles are perhaps most valuable in enhancing brand awareness. Often, they repeat the brand name in clever and amusing ways that allow consumers multiple encoding opportunities. Consumers are also likely to mentally rehearse or repeat catchy jingles after the ad is over, providing even more encoding opportunities and increasing memorability.

A well-known jingle can serve as an advertising foundation for years. The familiar “Give Me a Break” jingle for Kit Kat candy bars has been sung in ads since 1988 and has helped make the brand the sixth best-selling chocolate candy bar in the United States.⁵⁵ There was an uproar when, after two decades, the U.S. Army switched from its familiar “Be All That You Can Be” to “Army of One.” Finally, the distinctive four-note signature to Intel’s ads echoes the company’s slogan “In-tel In-side.” Although the jingle seems simple, the first note alone is a mix of 16 sounds, including a tambourine and a hammer striking a brass pipe.⁵⁶

Packaging

Packaging is the activities of designing and producing containers or wrappers for a product. Like other brand elements, packages have a long history. Early humans used leaves and animal skin to cover and carry food and water. Glass containers first appeared in Egypt as early as 2000 B.C. Later, the French emperor Napoleon awarded 12,000 francs to the winner of a contest to find a better way to preserve food, leading to the first crude method of vacuum packing.⁵⁷

From the perspective of both the firm and consumers, packaging must achieve a number of objectives.⁵⁸

- Identify the brand.
- Convey descriptive and persuasive information.
- Facilitate product transportation and protection.
- Assist in at-home storage.
- Aid product consumption.

Marketers must choose the aesthetic and functional components of packaging correctly to achieve marketing objectives and meet consumers’ needs. Aesthetic considerations govern a package’s size and shape, material, color, text, and graphics. Innovations in printing processes now permit eye-catching and appealing graphics that convey elaborate and colorful messages on the package at the “moment of truth”—the point of purchase.⁵⁹

Functionally, structural design is crucial. For example, innovations over the years have resulted in food packages that are resealable, tamperproof, and more convenient to use—easy to hold, easy to open, or squeezable. Consider these recent General Mills packaging innovations: Yoplait Go-Gurt’s yogurt in a tube packaging concept was a huge hit with kids and their parents; packaging for Betty Crocker Warm Delights showcased a microwavable (two minutes), convenient, single-serve dessert treat; and Green Giant Valley Fresh Steamers uses materials that withstand microwave cooking temperatures to offer steamable vegetables with sauce.⁶⁰

Benefits. Often, one of the strongest associations consumers have with a brand is inspired by the look of its packaging. For example, if you ask the average consumer what comes to mind when he or she thinks of Heineken beer, a common response is a “green bottle.” The package can become an important means of brand recognition and convey or imply information to build or reinforce valuable brand associations. Molson’s beer sales increased by 40 percent in the United States after the company modified the bottle’s back labels to include cheeky “ice-breakers” for bar patrons such as “On the Rebound,” “Sure, You Can Have My Number,” and “Fairly Intimidated by Your Beauty.” Buoyed by that success, they later introduced “Answer Honestly” bottle back labels that gave drinkers challenging choices to mull over.⁶¹

Structural packaging innovations can create a point-of-difference that permits a higher margin. New packages can also expand a market and capture new market segments. Packaging changes can have immediate impact on customer shopping behavior and sales: a redesign of Häagen-Dazs packaging increased flavor shoppability by 21 percent; General Mills saw an increase in sales of 80 percent after redesigning Bisquick Shake n’ Pour package to improve its ergonomics and by creating a “smooth, curvy form that reinforces the brand equity”; and a redesign on the packaging for Jimmy Dean’s Biscuit Sandwiches lead to an increase of 13 percent in household penetration.⁶²

One of the major packaging trends of recent years is to make both bigger and smaller packaged versions of products (as well as portions) to appeal to new market segments.⁶³ Jumbo sizes have been successfully introduced for hot dogs, pizzas, English muffins, frozen dinners, and beer. Pillsbury’s Grands! biscuits—40 percent larger than existing offerings—were the most successful new product in the company’s 126-year history when introduced. But sometimes smaller has proven to be successful too.

100-CALORIE PACKS

By 2007, a few years after their introduction by Kraft, 100-calorie snack packs of crackers, chips, cookies, and candy had passed the \$200-million mark. Truly a consumer-driven packaging innovation, they had an appeal that was plain and simple—portion control made easy. The products were identical to those in larger packages but conveniently placed in handy 100-calorie packs for which calorie-conscious consumers were willing to pay a premium. With sales of the packs growing at almost 30 percent a year by 2007, most top food manufacturers—including Kraft’s Nabisco, Hershey, PepsiCo’s Frito-Lay and Quaker Oats, and Campbell’s Pepperidge Farm—introduced their own versions. In the years that followed, however, the 100-calorie snack pack market began to slow down. A number of factors contributed to the cooling off, such as market saturation (190 products were introduced in 2008 and at least 68 in 2009) and customer concerns about their actual effectiveness in controlling caloric intake, their relatively high price, and the amount of wasteful packaging.⁶⁴



Though they were a very successful packaging innovation, 100-calorie snack packs did find it hard to sustain their sales growth over time.

Source: Keri Miksza

Packaging at the Point of Purchase. The right packaging can create strong appeal on the store shelf and help products stand out from the clutter, critical when you realize that the average supermarket shopper can be exposed to 20,000 or more products in a shopping visit that may last less than 30 minutes and include many unplanned purchases. Many consumers may first encounter a new brand on the supermarket shelf or in the store. Because few product differences exist in some categories, packaging innovations can provide at least a temporary edge on competition.

For these reasons, packaging is a particularly cost-effective way to build brand equity.⁶⁵ It is sometimes called the “last five seconds of marketing” as well as “permanent media” or “the last salesman.” Walmart looks at packaging critically and tests whether consumers understand the brand promise behind the package within three seconds and up to 15 feet from the shelf. Note that consumer exposure to packaging is not restricted to the point of purchase and moments of consumption, because brand packages often can play a starring role in advertising.

Packaging Innovations. Packaging innovations can both lower costs and/or improve demand. One important supply-side goal for many firms is to redesign packages and employ more recyclable materials to lower the use of paper and plastic. Toward that goal, U.S. food, beverage, and consumer product manufacturers reported that they had eliminated 1.5 billion pounds of packaging between 2005 and 2011 with another 2.5 billion pounds expected to be avoided by 2020, representing an overall reduction of 19 percent in total average U.S. packaging weight.⁶⁶

On the demand side, in mature markets especially, package innovations can provide a short-term sales boost. The beverage industry in general has been characterized by a number of packaging innovations. For example, following the lead of Snapple’s wide-mouth glass bottle, Arizona iced teas and fruit drinks in oversize (24-ounce), pastel-colored cans with a southwestern motif became a \$300 million brand in a few years with no marketing support beyond point-of-purchase and rudimentary outdoor ads, designed in-house.⁶⁷

Package Design. An integral part of product development and launch, package design has become a more sophisticated process. In the past, it was often an afterthought, and colors, materials, and so forth were often chosen fairly arbitrarily. For example, legend has it that Campbell’s famous soup is red and white because one executive at the company liked the uniforms of Cornell University’s football team!

These days, specialized package designers bring artistic techniques and scientific skills to package design in an attempt to meet the marketing objectives for a brand. These consultants conduct detailed analyses to break down the package into a number of different elements.⁶⁸ They decide on the optimal look and content of each element and choose which elements should be dominant in any one package—whether the brand name, illustration, or some other graphical element—and how the elements should relate to each other. Designers can also decide which elements should be shared across packages and which should differ (and how).

Designers often refer to the “shelf impact” of a package—the visual effect the package has at the point of the purchase when consumers see it in the context of other packages in the category. For example, “bigger and brighter” packages are not always better when competitors’ packages are also factored in.⁶⁹ Given enough shelf space, however, manufacturers can create billboard effects with their brand to raise their prominence and impact. General Mill deliberately “tiled” graphical elements of their packaging so that some of their mega-brands with multiple varieties such as Cheerios, Nature Valley Granola Bars, and Progresso Soup would stand out.⁷⁰

Although packaging is subject to some legal requirements, such as nutrition information on food products, there is plenty of scope for improving brand awareness and forming brand associations. Perhaps one of the most important visual design elements for a package is its color.⁷¹ Some package designers believe that consumers have a “color vocabulary” when it comes to products and expect certain types of products to have a particular look.

For example, it would be difficult to sell milk in anything but a white carton, club soda in anything but a blue package, and so forth. At the same time, certain brands are thought to have “color ownership” such that it would be difficult for other brands to use a similar look. Here is how some experts see the brand color palette:⁷²

Red: Ritz crackers, Folgers coffee, Colgate toothpaste, Target retailer, and Coca-Cola soft drinks

Orange: Tide laundry detergent, Wheaties cereal, Home Depot retailer, and Stouffer’s frozen dinners

Yellow: Kodak film, Juicy Fruit chewing gum, McDonald’s restaurants, IKEA retailers, Cheerios cereal, Lipton tea, and Bisquick biscuit mix

Green: Del Monte canned vegetables, Green Giant frozen vegetables, Walmart retailers, Starbucks coffee, BP retail gasoline, and 7UP lemon-lime soft drink

Blue: IBM technology and services, Ford automobiles, Windex cleaner, Downy fabric softener, and Pepsi-Cola soft drinks

Packaging color can affect consumers’ perceptions of the product itself.⁷³ For example, the darker the orange shade of a can or bottle, the sweeter consumers believe the drink inside to be. Color is thus a critical element of packaging. Like other packaging design elements, color should be consistent with information conveyed by other aspects of the marketing program.

Packaging Changes. Although packaging changes can be expensive, they can be cost-effective compared with other marketing communication costs. Firms change their packaging for a number of reasons:⁷⁴

- *To signal a higher price, or to more effectively sell products through new or shifting distribution channels.* For instance, Kendall Oil redid its package to make it more appealing to do-it-yourselfers when it found more of its sales coming from supermarkets and hardware stores rather than service stations.
- *When a significant product line expansion would benefit from a common look,* as with Planter’s nuts, Weight Watchers foods, and Stouffer’s frozen foods.
- *To accompany a new product innovation to signal changes to consumers.* To emphasize the brand’s “green” heritage, Stevia redesigned the packaging on its SweetLeaf product, changing the look and the size and promoting the 100 percent recycled materials used in its manufacture.⁷⁵
- *When the old package just looks outdated.* Kraft updated its Macaroni & Cheese packaging in 2010—the first time in more than 10 years—to better underscore the brand’s core equities (happiness, smiles, and joy) through a “noodle smile” symbol as well as to unify its three sub-brands.⁷⁶

Packaging changes have accelerated in recent years as marketers have sought to gain an advantage wherever possible. As one Coca-Cola ad executive noted, “There’s no question the crowded marketplace has inspired companies to change their boxes more often, and there’s greater use of promotional packages to give the appearance that things are changing.”

In making a packaging change, marketers need to recognize its effect on the original or current customer franchise for the brand.⁷⁷ Under these circumstances, marketers must not lose the key package equities that have been built up. Branding Brief 4-3 describes some setbacks marketers have faced updating packaging and other brand elements in recent years.

To identify or confirm key package equities, consumer research is usually helpful (see Branding Brief 4-3). If packaging recognition is a critical consumer success factor for the brand, however, marketers must be especially careful. It would be a mistake to change the packaging so significantly that consumers don’t recognize it in the store. Retailers’ opinions can also be important too.

Some marketing observers consider packaging important enough to be the “fifth P” of the marketing mix. Packaging can play an important role in building brand equity directly, through points-of-difference created by functional or aesthetic elements of the packaging, or indirectly through the reinforcement of brand awareness and image. The Science of Branding 4-3 reviews some insightful academic research.⁷⁸

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Each brand element can play a different role in building brand equity, so marketers “mix and match” to maximize brand equity.⁷⁹ For example, meaningful brand names that are visually represented through logos are easier to remember with than without such reinforcement.⁸⁰

The entire set of brand elements makes up the **brand identity**, the contribution of all brand elements to awareness and image. The cohesiveness of the brand identity depends on the extent to which the brand elements are consistent. Ideally, marketers choose each element to support the others, and all can be easily incorporated into other aspects of the brand and the marketing program.



BRANDING BRIEF 4-3

Do-Overs with Brand Makeovers

With more markets characterized by intense competition, rapidly changing products, and increasingly fickle customers, many marketers are looking at makeovers to breathe new life into their brands. Logos, symbols, packaging, and even brand names are being updated to create greater meaning, relevance, differentiation. Unfortunately, in an increasingly networked world, consumer reaction to changes to any brand element—both pro and con—can be quickly spread. Here are some high-profile examples and the challenges and difficulties their brand makeovers encountered.

Tropicana. In February 2009, Pepsi introduced a dramatic overhaul to its category-leading orange juice. Gone was the visual image of an orange with a straw protruding from it (designed to evoke freshness); in its place was a close-up image of a glass of orange juice and the phrase “100% Orange.” Consumer reaction was swift and largely negative. Customers complained about being unable to differentiate between the company’s pulp-free, traditional, and other juice varieties. Even worse, customers also felt the look was too generic. Facing online fury and with the words “ugly,” “stupid,” and “bargain brand” ringing in their ears, Pepsi capitulated. Announcing that it had “underestimated the deep emotional bond” consumers had with the original packaging, the company reverted to the old versions after only six weeks.

The Gap. Another brand walking into a digital brand-makeover firestorm, The Gap actually asked for it. After unexpectedly unveiling a new logo (the word *Gap* in a basic black Helvetica font with a small blue square over the upper-right hand portion of the p), the company asked consumers on its Facebook page for comments and further logo ideas. Feedback was far from kind, and after enduring a long week of criticism, Gap management announced that “We’ve heard loud and clear that you don’t like the new logo” and reverted to its iconic white text logo and unique brand font.

Gatorade & Pepsi. Around the same time as the Tropicana makeover, Pepsi also completely overhauled its Gatorade brand as well as its classic Pepsi-cola product lineup. Gatorade’s makeover included introducing a whole new system of thirst quenchers and fluid restoration for before (Prime 01), during (Perform 02), and after (Recover 03) exercise. The new brand goal was

to reach athletes in a wide range of sports and experience levels while positioning itself as the one-stop source for hydration and other needs before, during, and after their workouts. Pepsi’s makeover included a new logo—a white band in the middle of the Pepsi circle that appeared to loosely form a smile. Both brand makeovers received some negative feedback and the products experienced sluggish sales afterwards, although several factors may have contributed, including the severe recession.

Lessons. When changing a well-received or even iconic brand element—a character, logo, or packaging—two issues are key. One, the new brand element must be inherently highly regarded. Part of the problems some brands have run into is that their new logos or packaging are just not that appealing to consumers, leading the consumer to wonder why a change needed to be made. Two, regardless of the inherent appeal of a new brand element, changes are hard for consumers and should be handled carefully and patiently.

No wonder Starbucks went to great pains in 2010 to carefully explain the rationale of its logo makeover, its fourth since the brand was created in 1971. The change was prompted by the company’s fortieth anniversary and the new directions it was considering, which would take the brand outside the coffee category. Founder Howard Schultz explained that the iconic green Siren in the center of the logo was made more prominent—by dropping the words “Starbucks Coffee”—to reflect new business lines and new international markets. Like many brand makeovers, it initially met mixed public reaction.

Sources: Linda Tischler, “Never Mind!” Pepsi Pulls Much-Loathed Tropicana Packaging,” *Fast Company*, 23 February 2009; Stuart Elliott, “Tropicana Discovers Some Buyers Are Passionate About Packaging,” *New York Times*, 23 February 2009; “Tropicana to Abandon Much-Maligned Juice Carton,” *Wall Street Journal*, 24 February 2011; Tim Nudd, “People Not Falling in Love with New Gap Logo,” *Adweek*, 6 October 2010; Christine Birkner, “Minding the Gap: Retailer Caught in Logo Fiasco,” *Marketing News*, 21 October 2010; Natalie Zmuda, “What Went into the Update Pepsi Logo,” *Advertising Age*, 27 October 2008; Jeremiah Williams, “PepsiCo Revamps Formidable Gatorade Franchise After Rocky 2009,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 23 March 2010; Valarie Bauerlein “Gatorade’s ‘Mission’: Sell More Drinks,” *Wall Street Journal*, 13 September 2010; Julie Jargon, “Starbucks Drops Coffee from Logo,” *Wall Street Journal*, 6 January 2011; Sarah Skidmore, “Starbucks Gives Logo a New Look,” *Associated Press*, 5 January 2011.

Some strong brands have a number of valuable brand elements that directly reinforce each other. For example, consider Charmin toilet tissue. Phonetically, the name itself conveys softness. The brand character, Mr. Whipple, and the brand slogan, “Please Don’t Squeeze the Charmin,” also help reinforce the key point-of-difference for the brand of “softness.”

Brand names characterized by rich, concrete visual imagery often can yield powerful logos or symbols. Wells Fargo, a large California-based bank, has a brand name rich in Western heritage that can be exploited throughout its marketing program. Wells Fargo has adopted



THE SCIENCE OF BRANDING 4-3

The Psychology of Packaging

Cornell University's Brian Wansink has conducted a series of research studies into the consumer psychology of packaging. His basic premise is as follows: "Many managers think the package's main purpose is to encourage purchase. For many consumer packaged goods, the package keeps on marketing the brand and influencing consumers long after it is purchased. After it is home it can influence how a person perceives its taste and value, how much a person uses at a time, and even how he or she uses it." Here are four of his fascinating findings.

Packaging Can Influence Taste

Our sense of taste and touch is very suggestible, and what we see on a package can lead us to taste what we think we are going to taste. In one study, 181 people were sent home with nutrition bars that claimed to contain either "10 grams of protein" or "10 grams of soy protein." In reality, both nutrition bars were identical, and neither contained any soy. Nevertheless, because many people believe soy to have an unappetizing taste, they rated the bars with "soy" on the package as "grainy," "unappealing," and "tasteless." The right words and image on a package can have a big influence on these expectations.

Packaging Can Influence Value

Long after we have bought a product, a package can still lead us to believe we bought it for a good value. First, most people believe the bigger the package, the better the price per ounce. Yet even the shape of a package can influence what we think. One study found that people believe tall, narrow packages hold more of a product than short, wide packages.

Packaging Can Influence Consumption

Studies of 48 different types of foods and personal care products have shown that people pour and consume 18–32 percent more of a product as the size of the container doubles. A big part of the reason is that larger sizes subtly suggest a higher "consumption norm." One study gave Chicago moviegoers

free medium-size or large-size popcorn buckets and showed that those given the larger buckets ate 45 percent more! Even when the popcorn was 14 days old, people still ate 32 percent more, though they said they hated it. The same thing happens at parties. MBA students at a Champaign, IL, Super Bowl party were offered Chex Mix from either huge gallon-size bowls or from twice as many half-gallon bowls. Those dishing from the gallon-size bowls took and ate 53 percent more. Shapes affect drinking too: people pour an average of 34 percent more into short wide glasses than tall narrow ones.

Packaging Can Influence How a Person Uses a Product

One strategy to increase use of mature products has been to encourage people to use the brand in new situations, like soup for breakfast, or for new uses, like baking soda as a refrigerator deodorizer. An analysis of 26 products and 402 consumers showed that twice as many people learned about the new use from the package than from television ads. Part of the reason such on-package suggestions are effective is that they are guaranteed to reach a person who is already favorable to the brand.

Sources: Brian Wansink and Se-Bum Park, "Sensory Suggestiveness and Labeling: Do Soy Labels Bias Taste?" *Journal of Sensory Studies* 17 (November 2002): 483–491; Brian Wansink, "Can Package Size Accelerate Usage Volume?" *Journal of Marketing* 60 (July 1996): 1–14; Brian Wansink, "Environmental Factors That Increase the Food Intake and Consumption Volume of Unknowing Consumers," *Annual Review of Nutrition* 24 (2004): 455–479; Brian Wansink and Se-Bum Park, "At the Movies: How External Cues and Perceived Taste Impact Consumption Volume," *Food Quality and Preference* 12, no. 1 (January 2001): 69–74; Brian Wansink and Junyong Kim, "Bad Popcorn in Big Buckets: Portion Size Can Influence Intake as Much as Taste," *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* 37 (Sept–Oct 2005): 242–245; Brian Wansink and Matthew M. Cheney, "Super Bowls: Serving Bowl Size and Food Consumption," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 293, no. 14 (2005): 1727–1728; Brian Wansink and Jennifer M. Gilmore, "New Uses That Revitalize Old Brands," *Journal of Advertising Research* 39 (April/May 1999): 90–98; Brian Wansink, *Mindless Eating* (New York: Bantam Books, 2006).

a stagecoach as a symbol and has named individual services to be thematically consistent, for example, creating investment funds under the Stagecoach Funds brand umbrella.

Although the actual product or service itself is critical in building a strong brand, the right brand elements can be invaluable in developing brand equity. Method Products is a prime example of the payoffs from getting both correct.

METHOD

Celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2011 and still one of the fastest-growing companies in the United States, Method Products is the brainchild of former high school buddies Eric Ryan and Adam Lowry. The company took a big supermarket category—cleaning and household products—and literally and figuratively turned things upside down by taking a completely fresh approach. Ryan and Lowry designed a sleek, uncluttered dish soap container that also had a functional advantage—the bottle, shaped like a chess piece, was built to let soap flow out the bottom, so users would never have to turn it upside down. This signature product, with its pleasant fragrance, was designed by award-winning industrial designer Karim Rashid. By creating

a line of nontoxic, biodegradable household cleaning products with bright colors and sleek designs totally unique to the category, Method has surpassed \$100 million in annual revenues. Although it is available in such desirable retail outlets as Target and Lowe's, the company believes its marketing must work harder to express the brand positioning given its limited advertising budget. In addition to its attractive packaging, the company is capitalizing on growing interest in green products by emphasizing its nontoxic, nonpolluting ingredients. It is also developing a strong brand personality as hip, modern, and somewhat irreverent as reflected by its slogan, "People Against Dirty."⁸¹



Method built a highly successful line of cleaning products by paying attention to what was inside the bottle as well as outside.

Source: Christopher Schall/Impact Photo

REVIEW

Brand elements are those trademarkable devices that identify and differentiate the brand. The main ones are brand names, URLs, logos, symbols, characters, slogans, jingles, and packages. Brand elements can both enhance brand awareness and facilitate the formation of strong, favorable, and unique brand associations.

Six criteria are particularly important. First, brand elements should be inherently memorable, easy to recognize, and easy to recall. Second, they should be inherently meaningful to convey information about the nature of the product category, the particular attributes and benefits of a brand, or both. The brand element may even reflect brand personality, user or usage imagery, or feelings for the brand. Third, the information conveyed by brand elements does not necessarily have to relate to the product alone and may simply be inherently appealing or likable. Fourth, brand elements can be transferable within and across product categories to support line and brand extensions, and across geographic and cultural boundaries and market segments. Fifth, brand elements should be adaptable and flexible over time. Finally, they should be legally protectable and, as much as possible, competitively defensible. Brand Focus 4.0 outlines some of the key legal considerations in protecting the brand.

Criterion	Brand Element				
	Brand Names and URLs	Logos and Symbols	Characters	Slogans and Jingles	Packaging and Signage
Memorability	Can be chosen to enhance brand recall and recognition	Generally more useful for brand recognition	Generally more useful for brand recognition	Can be chosen to enhance brand recall and recognition	Generally more useful for brand recognition
Meaningfulness	Can reinforce almost any type of association, although sometimes only indirectly	Can reinforce almost any type of association, although sometimes only indirectly	Generally more useful for non-product-related imagery and brand personality	Can convey almost any type of association explicitly	Can convey almost any type of association explicitly
Likability	Can evoke much verbal imagery	Can provoke visual appeal	Can generate human qualities	Can evoke much verbal imagery	Can combine visual and verbal appeal
Transferability	Can be somewhat limited	Excellent	Can be somewhat limited	Can be somewhat limited	Good
Adaptability	Difficult	Can typically be redesigned	Can sometimes be redesigned	Can be modified	Can typically be redesigned
Protectability	Generally good, but with limits	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Can be closely copied

FIGURE 4-8
Critique of Brand Element Options

Because different brand elements have different strengths and weaknesses, marketers “mix and match” to maximize their collective contribution to brand equity. Figure 4-8 offers a critique of different brand elements according to the six key criteria.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Pick a brand. Identify all its brand elements and assess their ability to contribute to brand equity according to the choice criteria identified in this chapter.
2. What are your favorite brand characters? Do you think they contribute to brand equity in any way? How? Can you relate their effects to the customer-based brand equity model?
3. What are some other examples of slogans not listed in the chapter that make strong contributions to brand equity? Why? Can you think of any “bad” slogans? Why do you consider them to be so?
4. Choose a package of any supermarket product. Assess its contribution to brand equity. Justify your decisions.
5. Can you think of some general guidelines to help marketers mix and match brand elements? Can you ever have “too many” brand elements? Which brand do you think does the best job of mixing and matching brand elements?



BRAND FOCUS 4.0

Legal Branding Considerations

According to Dorothy Cohen, under common law, “a ‘technical’ trademark is defined as any fanciful arbitrary, distinctive, and nondescriptive mark, word, letter, number, design, or picture that denominates and is affixed to goods; it is an inherently distinctive trade symbol that identifies a product.”⁸² She maintains that **trademark strategy** involves proper trademark planning, implementation, and control, as follows:

- **Trademark planning** requires selecting a valid trademark, adopting and using the trademark, and engaging in search and clearance processes.

- **Trademark implementation** requires effectively using the trademark in enacting marketing decisions, especially with respect to promotional and distributional strategies.
- **Trademark control** requires a program of aggressive policing of a trademark to ensure its efficient usage in marketing activities, including efforts to reduce trademark counterfeiting and to prevent the trademark from becoming generic, as well as instituting suits for infringement of the trademark.

This appendix highlights a few key legal branding considerations. For more comprehensive treatments, it is necessary to consider other sources.⁸³

Counterfeit and Imitator Brands

Why is trademark protection of brand elements such as brand names, logos, and symbols such an important brand management priority? As noted above, virtually any product is fair game for illegal counterfeiting or questionable copycat mimicking—from Nike apparel to Windows software, and from Similac baby formula to ACDelco auto parts.⁸⁴

In addition, some products attempt to gain market share by imitating successful brands. These copycat brands may mimic any one of the possible brand elements, such as brand names or packaging. For example, Calvin Klein's popular Obsession perfume and cologne has had to withstand imitators such as Compulsion, Enamoured, and Confess, whose package slogan proclaimed, "If you like Obsession, you'll love Confess."

Many copycat brands are put forth by retailers as store brands, putting national brands in the dilemma of protecting their trade dress by cracking down on some of their best customers. Complicating matters is the fact that if challenged, many private labels contend, with some justification, that they should be permitted to continue labeling and packaging practices that have come to identify entire categories of products rather than a single national brand.⁸⁵ In other words, certain packaging looks may become a necessary point-of-parity in a product category. A common victim of brand cloning, Contac cold medication underwent its first packaging overhaul in 33 years to better prevent knockoffs as well as update its image.

Many national brand manufacturers are also responding through legal action. For national brands, the key is proving that brand clones are misleading consumers, who may think that they are buying national brands. The burden of proof is to establish that an appreciable number of reasonably acting consumers are confused and mistaken in their purchases.⁸⁶ In such cases, many factors might be considered by courts in determining likelihood of confusion, such as the strength of the national brand's mark, the relatedness of the national brand and brand clone products, the similarity of the marks, evidence of actual confusion, the similarity of marketing channels used, the likely degree of buyer care, the brand clone's intent in selecting the mark, and the likelihood of expansion of the product lines.

Simonson provides an in-depth discussion of these issues and methods to assess the likelihood of confusion and "genericness" of a trademark. He stresses the importance of recognizing that consumers may vary in their level or degree of confusion and that it is difficult as a result to identify a precise threshold level above which confusion occurs. He also notes how survey research methods must accurately reflect the consumers' state of mind when engaged in marketplace activities.⁸⁷

Historical and Legal Precedence

Simonson and Holbrook have made some provocative observations about and connections between appropriation and dilution, making the following points.⁸⁸ They begin by noting that legally, a brand name is a "conditional-type property"—protected only after it has been used in commerce to identify products (goods or services) and only in relation to those products or to closely related offerings. To preserve a brand name's role in identifying products, the authors note, federal law protects brands from actions of others that may tend to cause confusion concerning proper source identification.

By contrast with the case of confusion, Simonson and Holbrook identify **trademark appropriation** as a developing area of state law that can severely curtail even those brand strategies that do not "confuse" consumers. They define appropriation in terms of enhancing the image of a new offering via the use of some property aspect of an existing brand. That is, appropriation resembles theft of an intangible property right. They note that the typical argument to prevent imitations is that even in the absence of confusion, a weaker brand will tend to benefit by imitating an existing brand name. Jerre Swann similarly argues that "the owner of a strong, unique brand should thus be entitled, incipiently, to prevent impairment of the brand's communicative clarity by its substantial association with another brand, particularly where there is an element of misappropriation."⁸⁹

Simonson and Holbrook also summarize the legal concept of **trademark dilution**:

Protection from "dilution"—a weakening or reduction in the ability of a mark to clearly and unmistakably distinguish the source—arose in 1927 when a legal ruling declared that "once a mark has come to indicate to the public a constant and uniform source of satisfaction, its owner should be allowed the broadest scope possible for the 'natural expansion of his trade' to other lines or fields of enterprise."

They observe that two brand-related rights followed: (1) the right to preempt and preserve areas for brand extensions and (2) the right to stop the introduction of similar or identical brand names even in the absence of consumer confusion so as to protect a brand's image and distinctiveness from being diluted.

Dilution can occur in three ways: blurring, tarnishment, and cybersquatting.⁹⁰ **Blurring** happens when the use of an existing mark by a different company in a different category alters the "unique and distinctive significance" of that mark. **Tarnishment** is when a different company employs the mark in order to degrade its quality, such as in the context of a parody or satire. **Cybersquatting** occurs when an unaffiliated party purchases an Internet "domain name consisting of the mark or name of a company for the purpose of relinquishing the right to that domain name to the legitimate owner for a price."⁹¹

New American laws register trademarks for only 10 years (instead of 20); to renew trademarks, firms must prove they are using the name and not just holding it in reserve. The Trademark Law Revision Act of 1988 allowed entities to apply for a trademark based on their "intent to use" it within 36 months, eliminating the need to have an actual product in the works. To determine legal status, marketers must search trademark registrations, brand name directories, phone books, trade journals and advertisements, and so forth. As a result, the pool of potentially available trademarks has shrunk.⁹²

The remainder of this appendix describes some of the particular issues involved with two important brand elements: brand names and packaging.

Trademark Issues Concerning Names

Without adequate trademark protection, brand names can become legally declared generic, as was the case with *vaseline*, *victrola*, *cellophane*, *escalator*, and *thermos*. For example, when Bayer set out to trademark the "wonder drug" acetylsalicylic acid, they failed to provide a "generic" term or common descriptor for the product and provided only a trademark, Aspirin. Without any other option available in the language, the trademark became the common name for the product. In 1921,

a U.S. district court ruled that Bayer had lost all its rights in the trademark. Other brand names have struggled to retain their legal trademark status, for example, Band-Aids, Kleenex, Scotch Tape, Q-Tips, and Jello. Xerox spends \$100,000 a year explaining that you don't "Xerox" a document, you photocopy it.⁹³

Legally, the courts have created a hierarchy for determining eligibility for registration. In descending order of protection, these categories are as follows (with concepts and examples in parentheses):

1. Fanciful (made-up word with no inherent meaning, e.g., Kodak)
2. Arbitrary (actual word but not associated with product, e.g., Camel)
3. Suggestive (actual word evocative of product feature or benefit, e.g., Eveready)
4. Descriptive (common word protected only with secondary meaning, e.g., Ivory)
5. Generic (word synonymous with the product category, e.g., Aspirin)

Thus, fanciful names are the most easily protected, but at the same time are less suggestive or descriptive of the product itself, suggesting the type of trade-off involved in choosing brand elements. Generic terms are never protectable. Marks that are difficult to protect include those that are surnames, descriptive terms, or geographic names or those that relate to a functional product feature. Marks that are not inherently distinctive and thus are not immediately protectable may attain trademark protection if they acquire secondary meaning.

Secondary meaning refers to a mark gaining a meaning other than the older (primary) meaning. The secondary meaning must be the meaning the public usually attaches to the mark and that indicates the association between the mark and goods from a single source. Secondary meaning is usually

proven through extensive advertising, distribution, availability, sales volume, length and manner of use, and market share.⁹⁴ Secondary meaning is necessary to establish trademark protection for descriptive marks, geographic terms, and personal names.

Trademark Issues Concerning Packaging

In general, names and graphic designs are more legally defensible than shapes and colors. The issue of legal protection of the color of packaging for a brand is a complicated one. One federal appeals court in San Francisco ruled that companies cannot get trademark protection for a product's color alone.⁹⁵ The court ruled against a small Chicago manufacturer that makes green-gold padding used by dry cleaners and garment makers on machines that press clothes; the manufacturer had filed suit against a competitor that had started selling padding of the same hue. In rejecting protection for the color alone, the court said manufacturers with distinctively colored products can rely on existing law that protects "trade dress" related to the overall appearance of the product: "Adequate protection is available when color is combined in distinctive patterns or designs or combined in distinctive logos."

Color is one factor, but not a determinative one, under a trade dress analysis. This ruling differed from a landmark ruling in 1985 arising from a suit by Owens-Corning Fiberglas Corporation, which sought to protect the pink color of its insulation. A Washington court ruled in the corporation's favor. Other courts have made similar rulings, but at least two other appeals courts in other regions of the country have subsequently ruled that colors cannot be trademarked. Note that these trademark rulings apply only when color is not an integral part of the product. However, given the lack of uniform trademark protection across the United States, companies planning a national campaign may have to rely on the harder-to-prove trade dress arguments.

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 Break me off a piece o’ that
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 Gimme a break,
 Gimme a break,
 Break me off a piece o’ that
 Kit Kat bar
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