

logo design vs. branding - what's the difference?

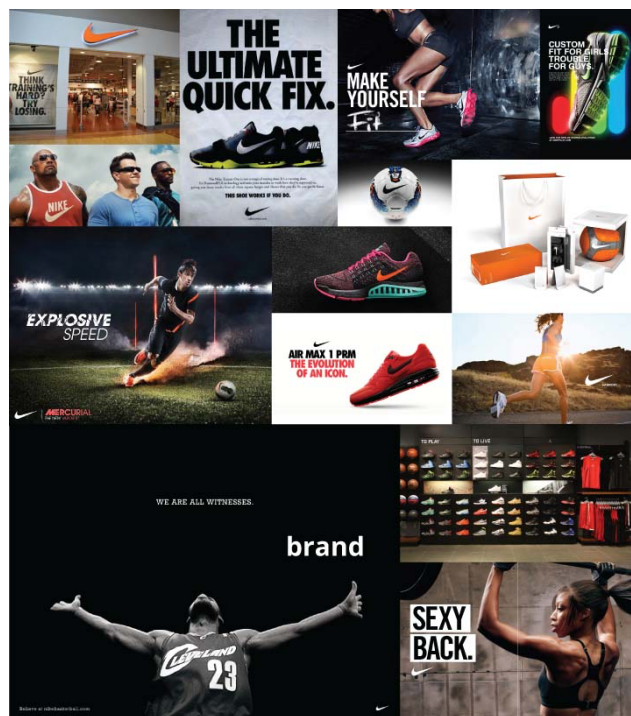
Everyone knows what a **logo** is. It's that shape companies use to represent their company; like Nike's swoosh, McDonald's golden arches (M) or Starbucks green mermaid. But what's branding exactly? **Branding** is a more holistic perspective of how your customers experience your company. While a logo is only a small simple mark, a brand includes every single touchpoint your customers have with your company

Let's use Nike as an example and consider the differences between a logo and a brand.

Nike's logo is the swoosh. It's a nice clean simple shape that represents motion and speed. The name Nike is derived from the Greek Winged Goddess of Victory. It's very nice, but it's just a mark – a simple shape.



Nike's branding includes its commercials, sports celebrity endorsements, product packaging, store design, product placement on tv and in movies, sponsorships, in-store graphics, hang-tags, the music in its videos, the design of its website, print ads, product photography, technology, and on and on and on... It's every touch point you have with Nike



So, why does it matter? Here's why:

your customers don't experience your company in the form of a logo.

They experience your brand through your website, or your menu or your product packaging or your commercials.

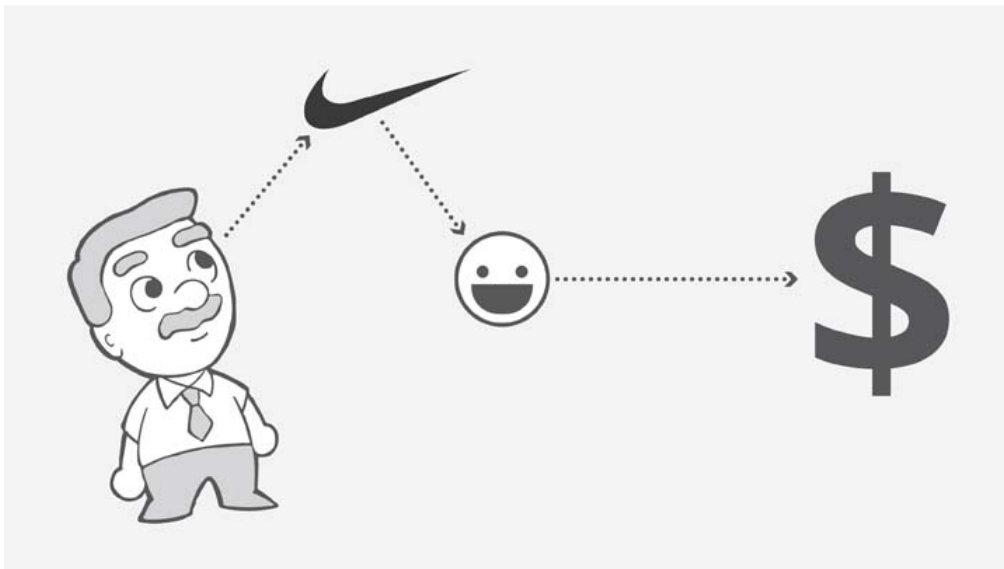
Look at it this way

Step 1. A potential customer sees a logo.

Step 2. If the logo is 'good', they have an emotional and intellectual reaction. They instantly know what the company sells, and they know it's awesome!

Step 3. They decide to purchase the product or service.

Naturally, if this is how business owners think branding works, then they would expect to have a strong positive emotional reaction when seeing a new logo concept for their company. But they don't. Almost all business owners upon seeing a new logo design for their company do NOT have a strong emotional reaction. And since they don't, they assume the logo design is bad. After all, they have a strong positive emotional reaction to the Nike logo! That's what makes it a good logo. Right?



wrong

So, if the logo itself doesn't trigger a positive emotional reaction, why the heck do I get so excited when I see the Nike logo? Here's how it really works:

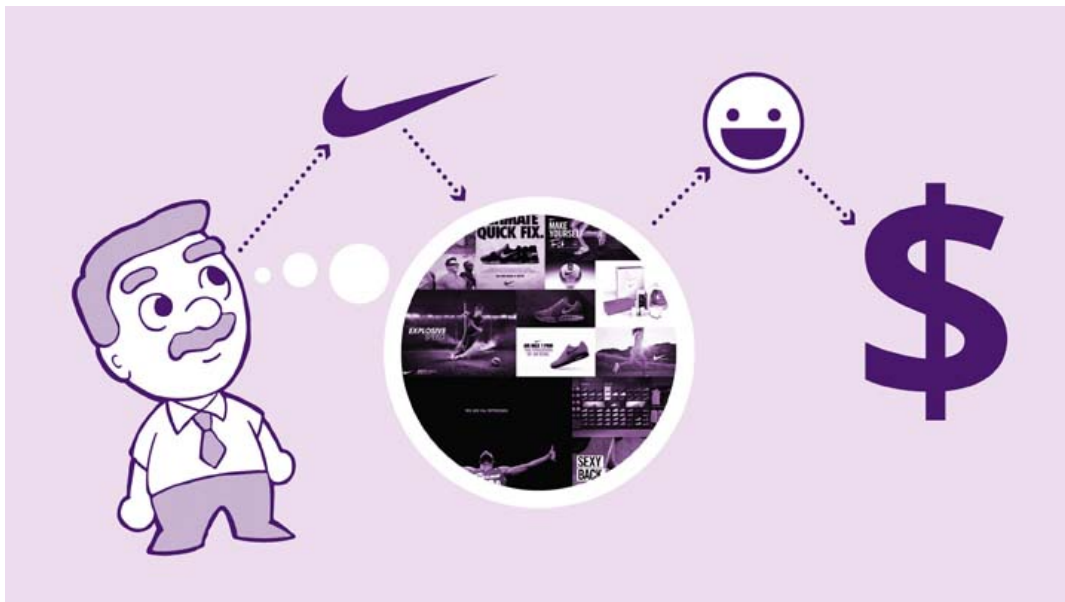
Step 1. A potential customer sees a logo.

Step 2. If the logo is familiar to them (such as Nike's swoosh), they will instantly remember all the experiences they've had with the brand – the commercials, your experience owning Nike products, seeing your attractive neighbor wearing Nike clothes, the packaging, the way your friends talk about the brand, celebrity endorsements, etc.

Step 3. These memories trigger the emotional and intellectual response. Yes! I know this company! I know their products, and they're COOL!

Step 4. They decide to purchase the latest pair of Nike shoes.

As you can see, the logo is only a visual queue to the brain to recall their experiences interacting with the company (also known as the 'brand')! The memory of the brand experience is what triggers the emotional reaction!



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