

A Point of View on Logo + Identity Evaluation

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Evaluating the creative output of a corporate identity project can be an arduous process, where personal taste is hard to isolate from other influencing factors. While research is not an all-in-one solution, if undertaken properly, it can provide valuable direction and contextualize internal opinions and decisions.

Why research identity?

Getting an external read on a proposed new logo and identity direction is an important reality check to ensure:

- The relevance to the marketplace
- The “own-ability” of visual elements
- The support of a desired brand positioning

What does it inform?

An external, primary research study can provide an evaluation of proposed logo(s) and identity(ies) under consideration in context of:

- Fit to the company/product category
- Fit to the desired positioning attributes for the brand
- Fit to the existing perceived brand equity (if a redesign for an existing brand)
 - Stretch to capturing new equity
- Impact on perceptions of branded products/services
- Differentiation versus competitors

How can it go wrong?

However, it is also important to know that the marketplace is not aware of a brand’s business strategy or of its future potential. These elements are key factors for a new logo and identity and are the prime reasons why external research should not be used to:

- Exclusively pick a winning design
- Art direct (such as pick a color; blue is always the favorite)
- Judge likes/dislikes
- Make detailed head-to-head comparisons between new and old

Things to keep in mind

- **Confidentiality:** A large quantitative study runs the risk of news of your identity change leaking to the press and competitors.

- **Qualitative deliverables:** Qualitative methods will provide explanation of perceptions and associations as well as direction for refinement.
- **Quantitative deliverables:** Quantitative methods will provide statistically valid measurement but no/very limited design direction.
- **Realistic situations:** Logos should be evaluated within the context customers and prospects will experience them. If it's a B2B corporate logo, the full new look and feel should be shown. If applied to products that will be on-shelf, logos on-package with shelf stand-out and brand recall exercises are also recommended (with the understanding and expectation that recall of a new design will most likely not outperform that of a high-awareness existing design).
- **Global check:** It is important to ensure that there are no local or cultural-specific issues with designs.
- **Controls:** It is important to plan research methodologies rigorously to reduce bias and unnatural situations.
 - In qualitative studies, concepts should be rotated. New concepts should be fully explored before exposure to existing designs.
 - In quantitative studies, monadic sample cells should be used, with an individual respondent rating only one new design direction fully, enabling unbiased side-by-side comparison of results. Only at the end of the survey should respondents make head-on comparisons.

Pros and cons of basic methodologies

Qualitative - Timing: 5-9 weeks (dependant on number of interviews/groups & geographies)

- **Telephone interviews** with Internet-assisted display of designs

Positives

- Most time and cost-effective qualitative means to reach diverse audience, including B2B and global representation
- Findings provide direction for possible refinements
- Verbatim quotes illustrate findings

Negatives

- Lack of statistically projectable sample
- **Focus groups** (smaller groups, such as triads)

Positives

- Best for client viewing and if first-hand experience of designs is desired
- Findings provide direction for possible refinements
- Verbatim quotes illustrate findings

Negatives

- Lack of statistically projectable sample
- More expensive/longer fieldwork if global

Quantitative – Timing: 4-8 weeks (dependant on methodology & geographies)

- **Internet survey**

Positives

- Most time and cost-effective
- Findings are statistically projectable metrics

Negatives

- Risk of exposure
- No detailed explanation of reason for reactions
- Limited direction for refinements

- **Telephone survey** with Internet-assisted display of designs

Positives

- Best quantitative sample quality control

Negatives

- Risk of exposure
- No detailed explanation of reason for reactions
- More expensive/longer fieldwork
- Limited direction for refinements