

# Global brands essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Identity](#)



Explain how signs and symbols can mean different things to different people.

In today's society, we have experienced 2 major shifts that have revolutionized the entire business landscape. The first and most important one is competition. The mere fact that business is becoming increasingly hypercompetitive is an understatement. Home-based businesses and self-employed professionals are growing at an explosive rate. The goal, nowadays, is to be the one that they choose to buy from or do business with amongst all other possibilities. In today's global economy, products, services, and communication often move beyond national borders and influence people from diverse cultures.

Satellite television, the Internet, and a more mobile population mean that potential consumers may encounter brands and products in more than one market area. Customers have an understanding of a brand as its promoted in their own community but find that the brand means something else in another region. This inconsistency of brand message can create confusion and possibly call the credibility of the brand into question.

Many businesses and industries will require a different strategy when positioning their brand in a global marketplace. Applying brand names to international markets remains a challenge to multinational corporations. Consumers' sociolinguistic backgrounds shape their responses to brand names. This manuscript uses a sociolinguistic approach as a conceptual framework in understanding brand naming and translating in the world market.

Multinational companies are cognizant of brand names being an integral part of marketing strategy and critical in successfully distinguishing themselves from competitors in the eyes of consumers. Scant attention, however, has been given to questions such as, " To what extent

are global marketers motivated to integrate brand naming practice into the cultural fabric of consumers in countries other than their own?” and “ What resources do consumers rely on to make sense of each other’s brand names which may sound foreign to their own socio-linguistic systems?”\n

nHistorically, nations have used brands to build a new ethos after national upheaval following revolutions, changes in government, and emergence from violent or anarchic regimes into new nationhood. Branding is a tool for ordering society and communicating values.\n\nVisual symbols are an essential part of corporate communication. The development of an appropriate corporate logo is an expensive and a time-intensive process. Symbols are a part of human nature. They have appeared in all cultures during all periods of history and they illustrate the development of civilization. Symbols contain powerful messages, and at the same time, they stimulate people’s emotions, intellect and spirit. It is difficult to identify a particular meaning for a specific symbol. This is especially true since their meaning may vary dramatically from culture to culture or even over time.\n

nLogos are visual identities that represent companies, corporations, businesses and institutions. The purpose of a logo is to allow audiences to identify a company based upon the perceived logo. A logo is used to represent the overall essence, philosophy, or feeling of a company. Although the role of a logo is essential to the image of a company, little research has been done to examine how logos are perceived and how they come to represent the values of a business or service.\n\nA Sign says one thing, and says it clearly and without ambiguity. If you are driving across an intersection which has a STOP sign for the oncoming cross-traffic, wouldn’t

you want them to see a sign that said “ Stop!” – and not one that said “ Stop, but maybe not?”\n\nThat’s what the great psychologist Dr. Carl Jung defined as a “ sign” – something with a single meaning and no other. For different sign and symbols have different meaning for different people. So, we have to take it into account when we creating new brand.\n\nThe “ sign” word used in astrology refers to a sector of the sky, and its interpretation could have many possibilites. However, now that I consider it more closely, I see that the definition of a “ sign” includes it being exactly 30 degrees or arc – no more, and no less. No ambiguiuty there! This other kind of “ sign” is something like the “ signs” referred to in Genesis I: 14 of the Bible, which says the sun and moon and stars were made by God “ for signs”. We look for a “ sign” of rain in the sky. We can look for a “ sign” of a coming highest ocean tide by watching the phases of the Moon. This kind of “ sign” may be intended to have a single meaning, but often we have trouble in discerning, or agreeing, just what that single meaning is.\n\nA symbol must, according to Carl Jung, not have any definition at all. It has many levels of meaning, not just one obvious one, and should represent a concept which is initially difficult to grasp intellectually in the full scope of its meaning – like a work of art which defies any simple description of all its nuances. If you can define it, it has changed from a symbol to a sign.\n\nThe cross was a symbol in many ancient religions; but when the Catholic Church took the “ crucifix” form of the cross as their symbol for the crucifixion of Jesus, and started wearing metal crosses on necklaces, it started to become more of a sign that said one thing: “ I am a Roman Catholic”. The original cross symbol meant many different things, according to how the beholder chose to interpret its

meaning. Today, a cross might be regarded as a mathematical “ plus sign”, which means “ add this to that” or “ more than” or just “ and” or “ plus”. In ancient times a cross might mean “ the cross of Matter”, which is basically what it represents in astrology, where it appears as “ the Cardinal Cross”. The vertical bar symbolizes Spirit which interpenetrates the horizontal bar representing Matter, or the Earth plane (horizon line). The symbol of a cross within a circle is used to represent the Part of Fortune in astrology, but it can also represent the Earth itself. The symbols have different meaning for different people. For example, we do not know when this maze or labyrinth structure first was conceived, but it is found among the ideograms carved into rock faces in Val Camonica in the southern Alps. They look like most neolithic rock carvings, and might well have been carved about 3, 000 years ago, although we cannot be sure. We see this ideogram on an Etruscan vase from about 550 B. C. Later, about 300 B. C., it was used on coins in Crete, as the logotype, so to say, of the ruler there. A nineteenth century explorer, H. H. Bancroft, writes that the Pima Indians in America in old times told the invading Spaniards about a building far up the Gila River in Arizona and New Mexico, which had a plan of this structure. In Arizona it is known as Mother and child and Mother earth. The ideogram is quite common in Europe. One finds it, for instance, as decorations in the floors of many medieval churches in France and Italy. Elsewhere it is found formed by rows of stones outdoors. The ideogram is called Virgin dances in Finland, Troy fortresses in Sweden, Babylon in Russia. It is also called St. Peter’s game, Jerusalem, Jericho, and Nineveh. Gender Symbols are common astrological signs handed down from ancient Roman times. The

pointed Mars symbol represents the male and the Venus symbol with the cross represents the female. Double interlocking male symbols have been used by gay men since the 1970s. Double interlocking female symbols have often been used to denote lesbianism, but some feminists have instead used the double female symbols to represent the sisterhood of women. These same feminists would use three interlocking female symbols to denote lesbianism.

Also, some lesbian feminists of the 1970's used three interlocking female symbols to represent their rejection of male standards of monogamy. Also in the 1970s, gay liberation movements used the male and female symbols superimposed to represent the common goals of lesbians and gay men. These days, the superimposed symbols might also denote a heterosexual aware of the differences and diversity between men and women. A transgendered person might superimpose the male and female symbols in such a way that the arrow and cross join on the same single ring.

The Magen David (shield of David, or as it is more commonly known, the Star of David) is the symbol most commonly associated with Judaism today, but it is actually a relatively new Jewish symbol. It is supposed to represent the shape of King David's shield (or perhaps the emblem on it), but there is really no support for that claim in any early rabbinic literature. In fact, the symbol is so rare in early Jewish literature and artwork that art dealers suspect forgery if they find the symbol in early works.

The symbol of intertwined equilateral triangles is a common one in the Middle East and North Africa, and is thought to bring good luck. It appears occasionally in early Jewish artwork, but never as an exclusively Jewish symbol. The nearest thing to an "official" Jewish symbol at the time was the menorah.

In the

middle ages, Jews often were required to wear badges to identify themselves as Jews, much as they were in Nazi Germany, but these Jewish badges were not always the familiar Magen David. For example, a fifteenth century painting by Nuno Goncalves features a rabbi wearing a six-pointed badge that looks more or less like an asterisk.

In the 17th century, it became a popular practice to put Magen Davids on the outside of synagogues, to identify them as Jewish houses of worship in much the same way that a cross identified a Christian house of worship; however, I have never seen any explanation of why this symbol was chosen, rather than some other symbol.

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1. How have global brands adapted to cultural differences. \n

Conversely, representational symbols are culture-oriented images. For instance, an owl represents wisdom in American culture, but people from other cultures might interpret it differently. According to Jung (1964), cultural symbols are collective images accepted by individual societies and these symbols have gone through a long process of transformation and conscious development. Therefore, representational symbols tend to be culture-specific.

Although millions of dollars have been spent on designing corporate logos, there are examples in which logos are perceived negatively and detract from the image of their brands. Three logos were identified which actually downgrade their company's image: Oldsmobile, British Airways, and American Express. A negative perception might cause costly damage for a company and a redesigned logo would take some time to be recognized. In contrast, another survey found that several logos were

highly effective in representing their companies: Borden, IBM, and Mercedes Benz.

The researching group of scientific studying and comparing the logos and different meaning of the same symbols in USA and Hon Kong. The result of this studies are in the table in Appendix 1. Based upon these survey results, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the non-significant outcome of the paired sample t-test for all of the logos suggests that subjects from both cultures have similar perceptions of the visual attributes of each logo. This, in fact, implies that people from these two cultures have similar interpretations of certain visual elements. Second, based upon the results of the top three responses from each culture, two of the three selected attributes for four of the logos (2, 3, 5, and 6) were the same for both cultures.

Third, for logos 2 and 3, the most popular selected attributes (“innovative” for logo 2 and “cooperative” for logo 3) were the same for both cultures. Based upon descriptions, subjects focused on analyzing the design elements of each logo, particularly shape, line, and figure/ground relationships. For instance, to describe logo 3, subjects indicated that the logo was perceived as “cooperative” because the “same shape repeats and goes around in same direction” and “three similar shapes merge together.”

Subjects also tended to relate a logo to a particular object. For instance, in logo 1, subjects said that the logo “looks like a podium” and “the three shapes form a diamond shape.”

These explanations are consistent to the meaning of symbols as described earlier, namely that “symbols stand for something else by relationship, suggestion, interpretation, resemblance, or association.” People tend to associate a visual icon with something that they already know and that’s familiar to them. The responses for four out of the



six logos were quite different between the two focus groups. There were two logos (3 and 6) for which two of the three selected textual attributes were the same.

Although the selected attributes were quite different between the two groups, it's interesting to note that the descriptions for some of the logos were quite similar. For instance, in logo 1, Hong Kong subjects described the " shapes pointing down" as forming a diamond shape which speaks of " quality." United States subjects also described the " shapes pointing down" but said that those shapes depicted " focus." Additionally, the horizontal lines in logo 1 conveyed the perception of steps to both groups, however, subjects in Hong Kong perceived this as " stability" whereas subjects in the United States perceived it as " hierarchical."

The rigid standardization of a brand's emblem or logotype may initially suggest a leaning towards formalism, in that no deviation from the original aesthetic presentation is ever tolerated. Nike, for example, could never change the orientation of their famous ' swoosh' without affecting its most valuable quality – recognizability.

However, if it were possible to separate the logo from the schema it evokes, the essentiality of the image's meaning (and the insignificance of its form) would become immediately apparent. This separation is, of course, impossible to execute with a symbol as drenched with personal and social connotations as a globally-acknowledged logo, but perhaps it can be imitated with the help of some of some image editing software. (Appendix 2).

The image on the left above is the original Nike emblem. This same emblem has been color-inverted, changed 180% in orientation, and run through a single distortion filter in Adobe Photoshop 6.0 to create the image on the right. This fairly random sequence of

transformations has rendered the modified ‘ swoosh’ completely unrecognizable from the Nike icon (or any other commercial icon) and thus carries none of the implications, positive or negative, that the original emblem automatically evokes.\n\nAs this permutation demonstrates, the modified image, disassociated from the mental associations engineered into it by its company’s advertisers, loses its concept entirely. Logotypes, therefore, have arisen from the same logic that guided the emerging discipline of conceptual art in the 1960s; the idea is the essential core, and the physical representation of a concept is merely a necessary byproduct of its expression.\n\n\n\n\n\n\n\n\n

\nSince there are two sides to every communication, brand design must take its target groups’ visual habits into consideration. The same sign often means different things to different people. Whether you picture a bride dressed in white or red is a matter of local cultural habit.\n\nBut even in societies where red would be the customary bridal color, the global influence of mass media may already have altered that tradition within some social groups. Internationally launched brands pay attention to the proper usage of color, symbols and wording in each of their major markets. Sometimes brand naming and visuals are also altered for certain regions. The German and the US versions of a Procter & Gamble brand. For German-speakers, the original American brand name sounds very much like a German obscenity.\n\n\n\n\n\n\n\n\n

Even language-independent signs which seem universal to most people in large regions of the world may turn out

to be either meaningless or highly unsuitable in some other regions. The hand sign used in this product's appearance, widely known as an O. K. sign in northern Europe and the USA, is an insulting, obscene gesture in some places such as Sardinia, Greece and Iran.

Besides the logos design one of the foremost element that needs to be taken into consideration when creating a global brand is the name and the related word mark, or symbol, that will be used to represent the company, product, or service throughout the world. The name must be pronounceable in all languages and dialects, free of negative connotations, and not confusingly similar to existing names. This is not so difficult for most corporate brand names, such as McDonald's, Ford, or Visa, but finding a multi-lingual product or service brand name that stands out from the crowd and works with equal success in all countries and cultures is a much trickier proposition.

Sometimes, it is a case of linguistic embarrassment, such as the translation of Pepsi's Come Alive with the Pepsi Generation, which in Chinese translated into Pepsi Brings Your Ancestors Back from the Dead. Other times, it is a matter of cultural context, such as the use of the word *diet* in the Diet Coke brand name, which has either no relevance or an undesirable connotation in several countries and so necessitated the use of Coca-Cola Light as an alternate name. The challenge was to create a compelling branding system that would be consistently recognizable in 146

world markets, whether named Diet Coke or Coca-Cola Light. Coca-Cola positioned its product as a soft drink that would help people look and feel their best rather than one solely centered around the notion of losing weight. In this way, they hoped, consumers would perceive these characteristics just by looking at the product's graphics, regardless of the name it bore. The resulting combination of unique brand visual equities and clear expression of product attributes not only transcends name difference but can also be easily identified whether that name is rendered in English, Korean, Chinese, or Cyrillic characters. As can be seen from the Diet Coke example, trade dress has to remain as consistent as possible in order to create a strong brand expression across all markets, particularly with the emergence of satellite television, the Internet, and an ever-increasing amount of air travel. Ultimately, if consumers cannot recognize "their" brands in advertising or on the shelf, they may decide to switch to competitive brands. In principle, brand identity and distinct positioning messages are best communicated across all countries through packaging graphics that are as standardized as reasonably possible. That said, changing the name slightly for different markets around the world is not as negative as one might think. People tend to recognize brands first by their signature color schemes and unique graphic elements and second by their names. Beyond the product or service itself, the visual identity of the brand also faces problems of acceptance. A color or a design that achieves a positive result in one country may not have the same effect in another. Although the package or logo must portray the product's or company's values, attributes, personality, and positioning, it must also ensure that cultural tastes and differences are taken

into account. In other words, a global brand must retain its autonomy while also adhering to local sensitivities. Starbucks recently encountered loud protests when it signed a year's lease to operate a store within the Forbidden City, in Beijing, China. The coffee retailer boldly erected its trademark green-white-and-black sign, as it had done in hundreds of other locations around the world, and was immediately branded as a capitalist invader of this sacred place, despite the fact that there are many other non-Chinese shops and restaurants within the same walls. The cries to have Starbucks thrown out died down when the company adopted a more discreet signage program.

Starbucks' mistake lay in not understanding that its proud display of brand could also be seen as a brash intrusion into a cultural shrine. An example of a more positive approach in China relates to Pepsi, the number-one soft drink in China. Although its on-pack graphics, recognizable anywhere in the world, were not significantly altered for the Chinese market, the brand has been extremely successful in portraying a local image and establishing an emotional bond with Chinese consumers.

One way this was achieved was by effectively using brand promotion specifically tailored for the Chinese audience. While Britney Spears for Pepsi and Christina Aguilera for Coke are fighting it out on the front lines of the "cola war" in the United States, Faye Wong, a very popular Chinese pop star, is persuasively endorsing Pepsi to her throngs of Chinese fans, making it "their" brand.

All in all, the secret to successful visual branding lies in the consistency of the emotional message that it transmits to customers — across cultures, media, and design trends. On the customers' side, consistency builds trust and leads to brand loyalty. For companies, brand loyalty is desirable because



	<p>the black oval shape draws attention to the center</p>	<p>shapes cut through larger shape Expansive position of shapes and alignment sense of perspective ovals seem to go back into space</p>
Logo 3.	<p>Cooperative same shape repeats and goes around in same direction three similar shapes merge together Dynamic movement in a circular form positive/negative space relationship sense of continuation Efficient shapes are actively moving implied speed, and speed depicts efficiency</p>	<p>Cooperative same shape repeats and goes around in same direction identical spacing in between shapes proximity of shapes; each shape just barely touches another shape is familiar, looks like the yin/yang or the recycle symbol shapes look like they are working together Dynamic movement in a circular form positive/negative space relationship sense of fluidity of weaving, curving line inner shape is also dynamic Focus shape is similar to a camera lens turning</p>
Logo 4.	<p>Efficient sequence of shapes suggest efficiency and</p>	<p>Hierarchical sequence of shapes suggest stacked blocks</p>

	<p>professionalism\n\n• even figure/ground relationship suggests a sense of order\n\n• figure/ground relationship suggests the direction of moving upward\n\nExpansive\n\n• the lines create movement going up\n\n• the overall shape looks expandable\n\nHomogeneous\n\n• symmetrical\n\n• all parts are the same\n\n• rigid shape</p> <p>Diverse\n\n• interlacing of lines\n\n• lines expand in different directions\n\nQuality\n\n• looks like it is growing\n\n• shapes interact\n\nHierarchical\n\n• the lines create movement going up\n\n• looks like an emblem</p>	<p>n• shapes suggest going up and layering\n\n• triangular shape expands as it goes up\n\n• figure/ground relationship suggests a direction, left to right or low to high\n\nStrength\n\n• unity of shape\n\n• linked blocks emphasize strength\n\n• solidity of black bars support the negative space\n\n• repetition of a strong shape\n\n• cohesive, no branching out\n\nStability\n\n• reads as blocks stacked up\n\n• 3D quality of blocks provides depth and feeling of stability\n\n• rigid shape, composed only of straight lines\n\n• man-made shape, not organic, mechanized</p> <p>Dynamic\n\n• looks like it is growing\n\n• there is an outward motion\n\n• suggests that lines will go on\n\nCooperative\n\n• all the lines are linked together\n\n• interlacing of lines\n\nExpansive\n\n• lines all start at the same point</p>
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Logo 6.

and expand outward  
 • the two triangles point upward and downward  
 • the lines create movement going up  
 • the overall shape looks expandable in any direction

Omniscience  
 • whole ball contained by white space  
 • black shapes could move in different directions  
 • eyeball shape  
 • communication: the globe brings the world and people together  
 • circle implies focus  
 • circle implies focus  
 • four points of black shapes all meet at white cross  
 • intersection made by two white lines  
 • Cooperative  
 • the two white lines keep the shape together  
 • four black pieces create the whole

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**Worked Cite:**

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