

WHAT DOES YOUR LOGO SAY ABOUT YOU, YOUR PLANTS, and YOUR BUSINESS?

By Forrest Stegelin, Extension Agribusiness Specialist



Since your logo is many customers' first exposure to your firm, as found in the telephone book's yellow pages or on the sign at the entrance and/or front of your facilities or on the advertisement circular distributed to your target clientele, the logo deserves considerable attention as a form of public relations. Your logo conveys a perception or image — and perception sells more than does reality. Through a merchandising

process known as sensation transference, people transfer their feelings about a trademark or package or logo to the product it represents.

"Never go to a doctor whose office plants have died."

— Erma Bombeck, writer and humorist.

Shapes, colors, clip art-type images, and related visible items all influence customer reaction to the visual stimuli of a logo. For example, points and jagged edges have negative, hurtful connotations, so more natural forms, such as ovals, should be considered. The oval is a good shape to use for a logo because some of your first experiences are with round things, and in marketing the shape of round symbolizes service, comfort, and being taken care of. Among the color spectrum, the colors of red, white and blue suggest patriotism and loyalty, and the color combination grabs attention with its strong contrast and brightness.

If a landmark exists as a focal point on your property, then that feature should be included in the logo. Examples are windmills, a majestic live oak, a barn, a water feature, a mountain in the background, a creek or babbling brook, or a grape arbor or trellis, and the list continues. Flowers alone don't set you apart from the other sources or competition; after all, floriculture or environmental horticulture is what each of you is about and have for sale to customers. A logo that incorporates a focal feature helps the driver know when they've arrived, instead of having to look for a specific street address or commercial building along a congested high traffic roadway.

In evaluating your business logo, keep several criteria in mind:

Sensation transference -

What overall message does your sign or logo communicate to passerby? Cheap? Expensive? Service? Variety? Quality? The logo's shape, color, and type style all give subtle clues. A crest conveys quality; a signature or script denotes personalization and service; plaid (Scottish) symbolizes value for the money; the prominent use of the color black usually means death when used on food or horticulture.

Visibility -

Obviously, you want to attract attention by proper use of color, contrast, legibility, and spacing. Three out of four shoppers be-

Southeastern Floriculture, May/June, 2000

come aware of your outlet by just passing by and seeing what is for sale, so it important to give some attention to the eyes of the customer — after all, what the eye sees, the eye buys. Furthermore, word-of-mouth recommendations account for about one customer in five. Suggested color combinations for readability and desirability of lettering include black on yellow, black or orange, yellow-orange on navy blue, bottle green on white, or scarlet red on white.

Legibility -

Can people who have never seen your logo tell what it says when they first see it? This is especially crucial for outdoor signage when potential customers are traveling 55 mph or faster, and your business is just a blur in their peripheral vision. The use of the color combinations mentioned earlier and recognizing the spatial relationship of letters being at least one-fifth as wide as the letters are tall is important for legibility.

Focal point sequence -

Where does your eye land when it looks at your logo? Is there a focal point? Our eyes are usually drawn to either a light spot (white space) or to whatever is largest (the landmark).

Color -

When choosing colors for your logo, consider its preference rating, visibility, meaning and design compatibility. Choose a color that is relatively high in both preference and visibility. For instance, yellow attracts attention, but is not one of people's favorite colors. Certain colors are suitable for one product but not another because of a particular association with them.

A logo does not have to be legible or readable to convey its message, although it sure helps. The important thing is to use it consistently on bags, plant identification and point of purchase materials, advertising, uniforms, caps and aprons, sales carts, trucks, stationery and business cards, signs, buildings, and any other materials and items used (or that could be used) to represent your firm. The logo is a consistent and constant form of advertising, as conveyed in the following closing anecdote.

When Philip K. Wrigley succeeded his father as chairman of the Chicago-based chewing-gum company, he continued the firm's practice of heavy spending on advertising to create awareness and maintain customer demand. During a transcontinental flight, a seat mate asked him why he continued to spend so much money on advertising a product that was already one of the best known in the world. Wrigley quickly replied, "For the same reason the pilot of this plane keeps the engine running when we're already at the cruising altitude of twenty-nine thousand feet up."