

# 37 of the world's most famous logos and what you can learn from them

 [google.com/amp/s/99designs.com/blog/logo-branding/worlds-most-famous-logos/amp/](http://google.com/amp/s/99designs.com/blog/logo-branding/worlds-most-famous-logos/amp/)

The most recognizable and famous logos in the world are those of some of the most well-known organizations and brands. These may not appear the most complex in design, but they often boast hidden meaning, memorability and impact.

Whether they've existed since the brand originated, been slowly but consistently been tweaked again and again, or if they're completely different to what came before, we flick through the most famous logos in the world to gain a deeper understanding of successful logo design.

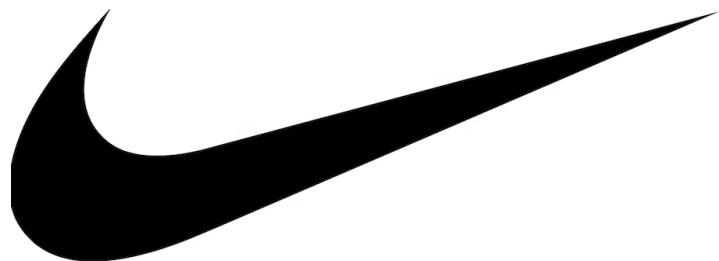


Illustration by [OrangeCrush](#)

## 1. Nike

Nike's swoosh, designed by Carolyn Davidson, is one of the most iconic logos in the world, literally.

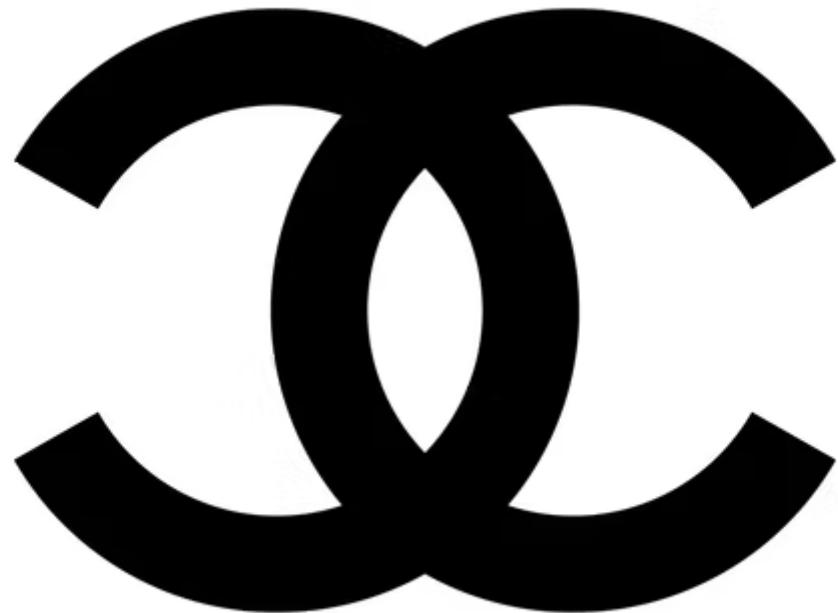
The swoosh mimics the wings of Nike, the goddess of victory in Greek mythology and the company's namesake. It also looks like a checkmark and signifies getting things done or in other words, "Just do it." With a fluid silhouette evoking motion and speed, you can, you can see how much space there is to instill brand values into an abstract, minimal design.



via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

## 2. Chanel

Chanel is a fashion label synonymous with luxury, elegance and the founder's Parisian identity, hence her initials interlocking into the logo we recognize today.



Via Chanel, Inc.



Via Chanel

The color scheme is black and white. The brand name, the wordmark logo, often sits directly under it with plenty of negative space. There are no effects or enhancements beyond the interlocking. It's all very neat and perfectly symmetrical, perfect for the fashion house credited for the original "little, black dress." Its simplicity is what makes this logo potent, it can carry the brand's core values, even on an off-brand piece.

### 3. McDonalds

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The McDonald's logo, also known as the "Golden Arches", was inspired by the real golden arches that were part of the fast food chain's original restaurant design. The logo design brings together the two arches that adorned the restaurant chains and turns it into a lettermark logo, an "M".

Over its signature red background, the iconic golden arches logo drives the "50s drive-in" aesthetic of the chain. It's an image that's synchronous with the McDonalds brand, because they've used it just about everywhere and anywhere. It's on their packaging, uniforms, physical buildings, adverts—any type of communications that involve McDonalds, involve this logo. The lesson? Be consistent.



Simply one of the most recognizable logos in the world,  
via [McDonalds](#)

#### 4. Tesla

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The company that made an undeniable impact on one the largest industries in the world is unsurprisingly futuristic looking and at first glance, just a cool-looking "T". The company's founder described the logo as "a cross-section of an electric motor". Similar to other famous brand logos, Tesla also incorporates the company's first letter and then infuses it with its branding. The "T" is also designed in a way to evoke an upwards motion powered by electricity and moving towards the future. Small details can add a great deal of meaning to an otherwise static monogram logo.



**TESLA**

This now-iconic logo is more than a modern T,  
via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

#### 5. Apple

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From the biblical story of Adam and Eve to the apple that fell on Isaac Newton's head, apples are always around, hauling quite a bit of symbolism. Why Apple chose an apple as its pictorial mark and why there is a bite in it has inspired lots of legends, from being the

cyanide-laced apple that Alan Turing bit into to a visual pun on a “byte”.

The designer Rob Janoff has said that the bite was a way to distinguish the very simple apple from another fruit. But the fact that the logo is so famous that it has not one but several myths floating about it tells a story in itself. The symbol of the apple (with the tiny aforementioned twist) is a very sleek and literal visual cue for the word “apple”. The logo bridges age-old, earthy wisdom with what is contemporary, ever-changing and transient. It reads like a promise.



Logo variation via [Apple](#)

## 6. Shell

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Shell showcases the power of word-object association once again. The company’s logo symbol has changed over the years but one thing that has always been there is the image of a single seashell.

The logo is also known as “the pecten” because it is modeled after the Pecten Maximus, a mollusk with a distinctive and large shell. The current design’s contrast between curves and points, primary red and yellow, suggest an art deco influence. Just because you’re in one industry, doesn’t mean you have to find your visual inspiration from it only. Shell didn’t look to garages or oil to find the basis for their logo—think imaginatively.



The red and yellow shell is universally known, via [Shell](#)

## 7. Starbucks

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The inspiration behind the “Starbucks Siren” emblem logo design is very much based in epics and myth-making; the founders chose the name Starbucks based on Moby Dick’s most sensible character, Starbuck.

From then on, they are said to have gone through old marine books to find a mythical creature that they felt represented their company, a siren. These nautical references are also harmonious with the company's birthplace and the major port city, Seattle.

Incorporating niche characters into a logo gives personality and warmth to the design. It creates a deeper, richer brand persona to help your audiences connect and remember you. It could be a good idea to think about books you've read over the years—would any of the characters relate to or symbolize your brand in some way? It might just be one aspect of their personality that your brand shares in its values that you're looking for. As we see in the Starbucks logo, using cultural references in designs make some of the most memorable logos.



Via [Starbucks](#)

## 8. Toblerone

Toblerone's logo is unforgettable and an example of great branding for several reasons. For starters, it's a logo inspired by a location. It is made up of a wordmark and a mountain, the Matterhorn to be precise and this very mountain also happens to be the inspiration behind the chocolate's unique shape: delicious little triangles, tied together as if they are a mountain range.

The logo also has an optical illusion that's easy to miss but hard to unsee. The negative space on the mountain actually caused [a storm on Reddit](#) as users discovered there, hidden in the Toblerone mountain's etching, actually lies a bear. Clever tactics like this can really draw attention to the brand and strengthen marketing.



Via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

## 9. Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola has had one component of its logo that has always stayed pretty much the same—a flowing, cursive and italicized wordmark with a wave or ribbon-like tail underlining the first ‘C’.

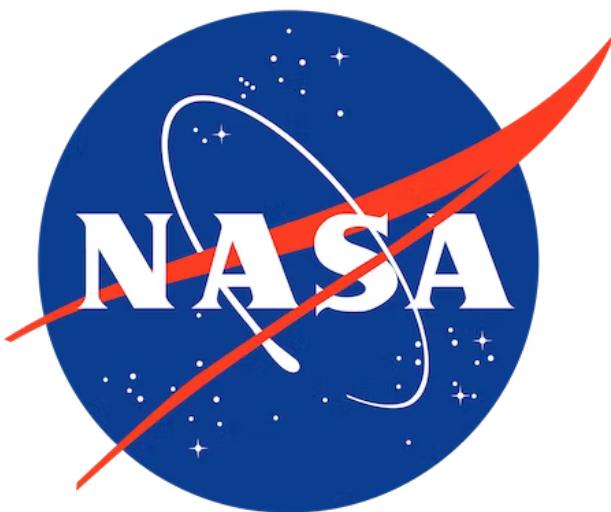
The key here is that the famous logo’s font feels retro, but not dated. They’ve also recently brought back the “red disc” logo design, pictured above, to unite the various alternate Coca Cola products—and logos.



## 10. NASA

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Nasa’s current, spherical logo, imaginatively coined “the meatball”, was actually their first logo. Fairly literally presenting a planet-like silhouette, the wholesome logo depicts stars and orbits across it in the colors of the American flag.



via [NASA](#)



via [NASA](#)

The meatball was replaced by another logo, entitled “the worm”, between 1975-1992. This wordmark logo featured continuous, curvy letters that echo the bodily movements of a worm. Looking at it now, it feels a little retro and Star Wars-esque. Yet, back when it was released, it was considered to be contemporary, minimal and futuristic.

Nasa turned to [nostalgia branding](#), when they made the change back to the meatball, saving the worm design primarily for their rockets. They understand the strong associations that audiences have made with their world-famous logos. The meatball reigned during their most infamous period, with Lance Armstrong wearing the symbol across his chest as he landed on the moon. The brand has monopolized on these positive memories and associations still held by audiences today with the meatball, while finding space for their stylized worm design.

## 11. The London Underground

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London Underground’s logo, also known as the “roundel”, has been around for over a century. It originated after simplifying the original image of a wheel and created the Johnston Typeface, choosing sans-serif letterforms for optimal legibility.

The logo has alternate color schemes for different stations and modes of transportation, but the red and blue version is the main one. Overall, the minimal symbol is accessible, easy to understand and reliable—everything you would want out of public transportation.

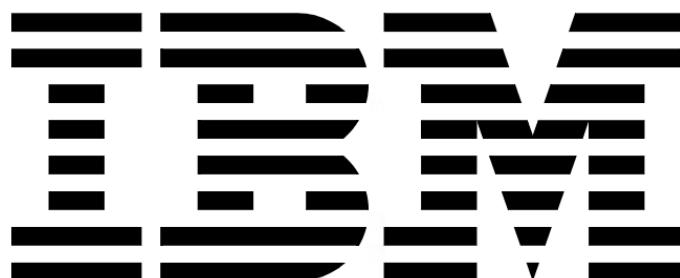


via [Transport for London](#)

## 12. IBM

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IBM’s 8-bar logo has not changed since it was first created by Paul Rand (who has also created the logos for UPS, Enron, Westinghouse, among others). The stripes convey speed and dynamism, while the capital and bold serif letters convey confidence, authority and a strong



Via [IBM](#)

sense of modern minimalism. At the time, using negative space with a font in this way was considered super innovative. Now, it leans more on the audiences' sense of nostalgia for that period of time.

## 13. Prada

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Luxury fashion powerhouse, Prada, treasures their original wordmark logo so much that they've never changed it. This is typical of brands donning emblem logos, which signify tradition and legacy.

# PRADA

[via Prada](#)



[Via Prada](#)

Its "R" has an end stroke that is blocky and angular. It contrasts the curves of the other parts of the letter and the thin strokes of the A next to it. This varying within the font-weight (the thickness and thinness of the letters) creates a flow and movement within the otherwise static wordmark.

Emblem logos tend to signify tradition and legacy. Prada's emblem combines a very angular and simple outer shape to contain its wordmark, a coat of arms and a ribbon. It is simultaneously modern and traditional. It's also smart to have a unique logo silhouette to adorn products with.

## 14. PlayStation

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When PlayStation decided to focus on 3D polygon graphics, it needed a logo to express this shift. Designer Manabu Sakamoto created a logo that held an optical illusion perfect for a gaming brand, an upright “P” and an “S” that lay flat at its feet.

The colors that make up the logo are primary colors, red, blue, and yellow and the green serves as a soft transition in between. With a simple trick of depth that was new and adventurous, the logo helped PlayStation convey the message that this was a brand committed to new technology and a few steps ahead of its rivals. To have a logo that distinguishes a company from competitors, consistent research is key.



The main logo of Prada is a wordmark via PlayStation

## 15. The Olympics

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Across the globe, the five rings linked together signify the same thing to a global audience: the world's bests in sports. The five rings represent the five continents, each with a different color, coming together in movement. And to convey this sense of togetherness, the designer has linked and interwoven its spherical rings.

All in all, the Olympics logo is a brilliant example of cross-cultural design, meaning that the designers chose a symbolic logo that would be enjoyed pretty equally across cultures. How do you achieve this? Research your market and ensure the colors, shapes, icons, and figures you use do not represent significant or negative concepts in different cultures.



The “Olympic rings” represents the Olympic Games globally. Via [International Olympic Committee](#)

## 16. Marvel

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Marvel introduced its daring red and white logo in the early 2000s, the new face of legendary comics for a new millennium. “Marvel” is in bold white letters over a bright red background with letters close together and sometimes even overlapping or connecting. This intentional and hurried effect creates a sense of force and urgency, much like a superhero called to action.

You can still see the older, retro logo shown above that has the words “Marvel Comics” on some of the merchandise, especially the comic books. This reflects nostalgia marketing, a strategy using the positive associations of familiarity to reinforce consumer trust.



via [Marvel Comics](#)



via [Marvel Comics](#)

## 17. Amazon

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Amazon’s famous wordmark logo is straightforward with just the right touches of detail that express the brand identity.

The clean black and white, all lower space logo is easily legible. The arrow connects “a” to “z” with one swift move, just like your experience will be on the platform. This arrow is also sometimes called “the smile”, bringing a friendly touch to the logo. The curve below the “z” where the arrow lands is gently curved and brings motion to the design.



via [Amazon](#)

What’s even better is that it can all be condensed into the favicon, the icon that is sometimes on a URL, tab or a webpage. Designing a logo that can be boiled down into a smaller icon is important, especially for a digital product.

## 18. Barbie

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The Barbie logo design came from its founders. Back in 1959, the eye-catching bright pink and the fun sans-serif typeface written in cursive style was something the toy doll industry hadn't seen.

It was meant to communicate directly with children, fun, whimsy and ready to play. Over the years, the logo was redesigned many times but the company eventually returned to the original logo with the retro look. The logo became a big part of the iconic Barbie aesthetic, toys that are adventurous and modern trendsetters. The memorable logo was timeless enough to carry the Barbie doll through the changing times, from beachgoers to astronauts. It shows that a logo that is distinctly style (and vibe) driven is necessary for a company with frequent and changing product releases.



via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

## 19. Google

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Google shared the newest version of its logo in 2015. The goal with the new update was to create a logo that worked with responsive design, it could go onto any screen without compromising its integrity. Since the beginning, the logo has been simplified more and more with each update. It was always the same logo, just increasingly easier on the eyes.

It's also a logo that lends itself to significant alterations while retaining its basic structure—I'm referring to the Google Doodle. Having a logo that is basic and simple enough leaves a company with a lot of freedom to play around with it according to current events. This dynamism gives the logo (and the company) relevance.



via [Google](#)

## 20. Pepsi

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Pepsi's iconic logo, the Pepsi Globe, was at first based on its bottle cap and had red, white and blue colors to channel American patriotism during World War II.

The history of Pepsi's logo has a lot to do with it having a competing product to Coca-Cola. This is an example of a logo that is successful because it does a great job of distinguishing the brand from its competitors. They initially also had a cursive style wordmark on its logo but later changed into a contemporary sans-serif to distinguish

them from Coca Cola. They kept their spherical symbol to show consumers that they were still the same brand as before, but new and improved, to maintain vital customer trust.



pepsi

via [PepsiCo](#)

## 21. Tate

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The version that joined the organization on its journey to be a well known brand is one that was a wordmark of the name, to which the lead designer Marina Willer added a signature blur effect. The idea behind the blur effect was to invite onlookers to focus their eyes and really take the logo in. Pretty smart, right?



The team then created 75 slightly different versions of the same TATE, each varying a little by looking slightly more in or out of focus. This idea, while being super cool and unlike anything else, did cause some organizational confusion eventually. In 2016, the logo was “simplified” for the sake of consistency and is the version we see above.

## 22. National Geographic

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The National Geographic logo looks simple enough but a great deal of market research went into creating it, with having a recognizable, versatile identity was the top priority for design agency Chermayeff & Geismar. And, a thoughtful attention to detail is how they came up with including the magazine’s iconic gold border within the logo, next to the white, all-caps serif.

It is simple enough to go over any background, ideal for the magazine’s legendary photographs and covers. It’s also important to note that as the magazine grew to include subsidiaries, the logo could include an additional word to distinguish them from each other.

A logo that isn’t too niche and structurally rigid will hold strong as a brand grows and branches out.



via [National Geographic](#)

## 23. Mercedes-Benz

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The owners at the time chose Mercedes's three-point star as their logo symbol because it meant something to them as a family. It was a symbol their late father had used to designate their family home and it was also something that came to mean land, sea and air.

Even though the symbol of a star isn't something that's groundbreaking, it's hard to deny that this isn't simply a "star". The Mercedes-Benz star design has very distinct shadings, that gives it dimension and brings its 3d metallic form to mind, with all its angles and glimmers. It's also enclosed in a circle which all its three points touch, giving the impression that this circle contains everything necessary.



via [Mercedes Benz](#)

## 24. Instagram

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The Instagram logo is also its app icon and always was. This doesn't sound that special since Instagram is and always was an app but the fact that this little symbol of a camera has represented the company through its massive growth is quite significant.

The camera symbol was initially modeled after a Polaroid camera, because the app allowed you to take and share photographs instantly. The logo doesn't look like it initially did but it still has the shape of a polaroid camera, it's just a bit more symbolic and a bit less literal. The lesson here, once again, is that a great logo can represent the company's goal and purpose in one small symbol.



via [Meta](#)

## 25. FedEx

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The FedEx logo is famous from a design perspective. The much-lauded logo is not only extremely simple in appearance but has a very nifty design trick under its belt: using negative space to form an arrow between the “E” and “x”. This arrow conveys speed, a firm sense of direction and a delivery service so smooth and fuss-free that you barely notice it's happened.

This famous logo is a stellar example of “less is more”: using negative space can help you pack a lot into your logo without overcrowding it with elements.

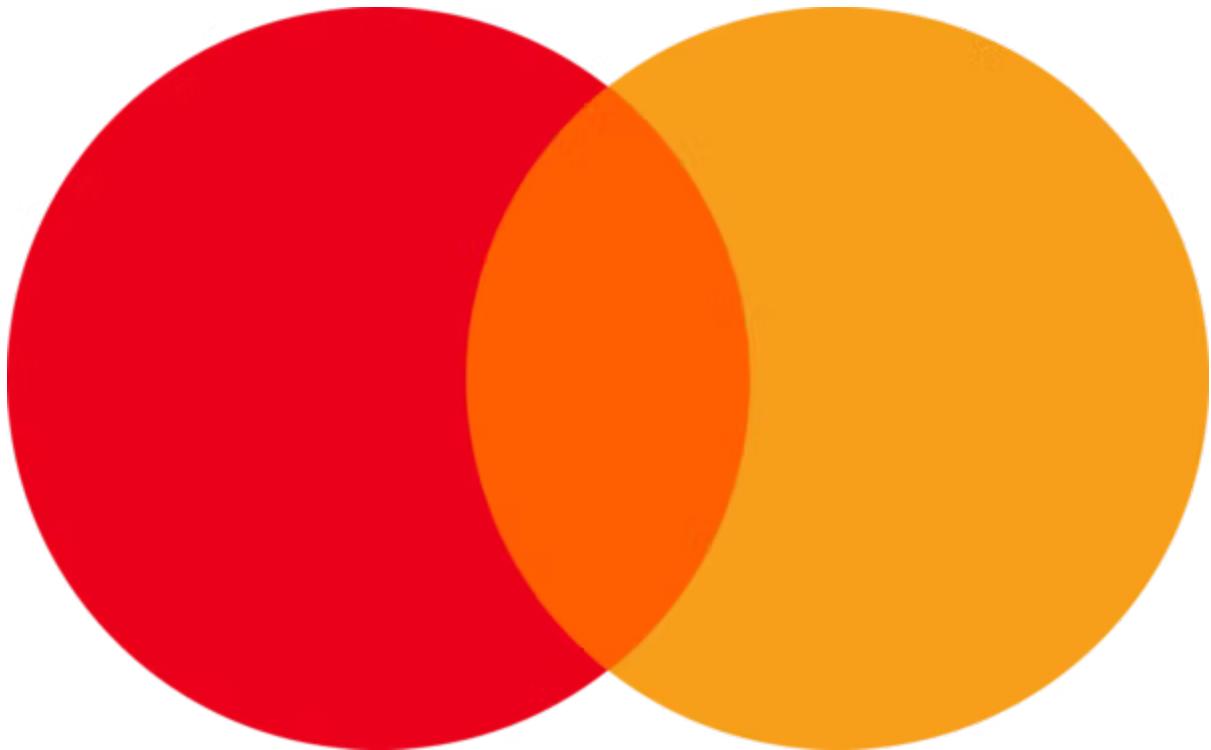


via FedEx

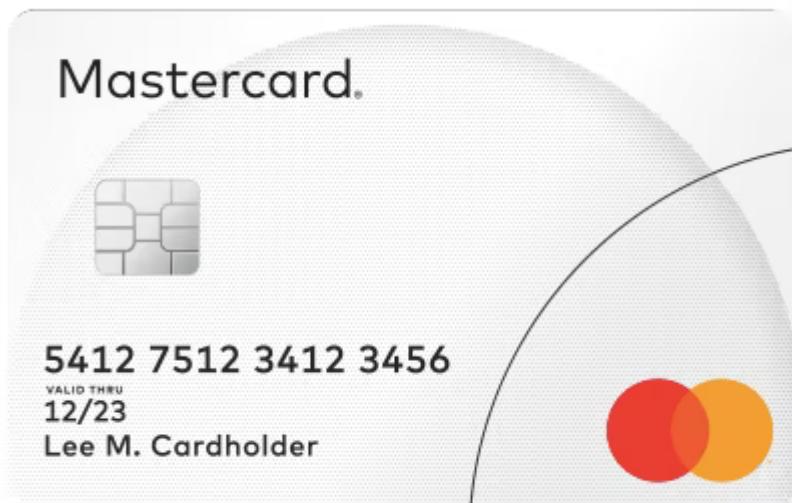
## 26. Mastercard

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A credit card is a symbolic object in itself. The shape of the credit card has to remain consistent even within different brands because they are all used with similar mechanisms, we all have similar wallets and so on. So all the work of distinguishing one credit card from another comes down to the markers on the object itself.



via [Mastercard](#)



via [Mastercard](#)

Mastercard knew that it needed an unmistakable symbol for its brand identification and with the two interlocking circles, it got just that. When observing [how the logo changed over the years](#), the same pattern that we've seen in others is there. The company settled on the two circles as their logo. The clever use of color layering adds depth to the minimal logo. Small design touches can go a long way to creating a memorable design.

## 27. Walt Disney Pictures

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The core of the “Walt Disney” wordmark logo is shared across many of the company’s various brands. It’s made up of the founder’s signature but with some calligraphic touches. For example, the “D” of Disney (that looks more like a G to some). The “I” is

dotted with what looks like a pretzel. These little touches attract imagination and evoke a sense of magic—perfect for an audience of children and nostalgic adults.

A thoughtfully executed calligraphic wordmark design can have a great deal of personality and humanity. This is useful for companies that want to emphasize their human side, rather than the corporate.



via [Walt Disney Pictures](#)

## 28. Formula 1

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The original red, black and white Formula One logo, now retired, was designed when the race began to achieve international recognition and notoriety. It was eye-catching and successful for several reasons. This punchy famous logo design is italicized, with the red part is made up of tiny arrows. Why? Because this visible orientation gives the energy of a lurching car. Ideal for the story the brand wants to tell: speed. And if you look closely you will see that the “1” is created by negative space.



The original F1 logo, via [Formula 1](#)



The latest F1 logo, via [Formula 1](#)

The update is a simplified version to be in line with contemporary style trends of minimalist monogram logos. It's subtle yet effective; smaller updates tend to be more palatable for loyal audiences.

## 29. WWF

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The conservation organization WWF's logo is truly famous worldwide.

The model for the design was a panda named Chi Chi. The logo design featured her, mainly because she was a recognizable member of an endangered species. They needed a symbol that conveyed their conservation efforts across borders and languages. Another reason was that it was organically black and white.

This pictorial mark shows that using a mascot is smart for a brand wanting to connect with audiences on a deeper level: it's emotive and an effective storytelling tool.



via [WWF](#)

## 30. MTV

MTV doesn't have the stature it once did but through the 80s and all the way to the end of the early 2000s, the channel and its legendary logo were household figures across the globe.

Something like MTV had never existed on television before and so its logo had to be startling. The giant, block-letter M positioned behind the scribbled "Tv", represents the coming together of two different styles; music and TV. Its style and tone is unforgettable, the colorful static logo very easily animated using different colorways, patterns and motion graphics.



via [MTV](#)

## 31. Playboy

At the time it came out, Playboy was the first of its kind in the publishing world. The identity the magazine wanted for itself was sexy, refined and witty. How did a rabbit wearing a bow-tie come to represent that?

The image of a “rabbit” has been used as a sex symbol by humans for more than a millinea, there are even references to its fertility in Classical Antiquity. Take a simplified version of that symbol and give it a bow-tie, you have a classy bunny. The choice of keeping it black and white further gave it a sense of elegance. What the logo says is, “It’s lewd but not trashy.”

While the magazine and its aesthetic saw many changes throughout the decades, this sense of core brand identity remained the same largely thanks to the logo.



via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

## 32. LEGO

The current LEGO has been around since 1998. Its most notable features are its bright red background and the bubbly “LEGO font”, designed for the logo.

The background and the shape are an ode to the building blocks that are the company’s main product; the rounded letters with the black and yellow borders are all very toy-like, squishy and fun.

For a somewhat serious and thoughtful toy, the logo is bright, bubbly and zippy.

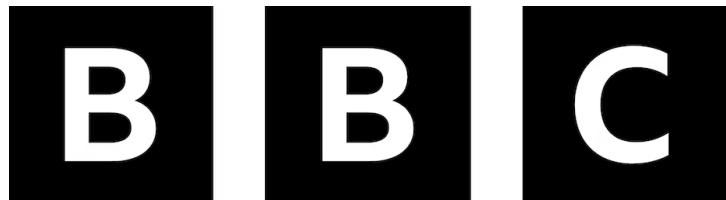


via [Lego](#)

## 33. BBC

The famous BBC logo is made out of three “blocks” for each letter. The emblem is monochrome, generally black or white and sometimes a tad see-through. This basic structure has quite literally been the building blocks on which the logo saw changes once in a while.

The most significant change was in 2021, when BBC officially introduced their corporate typeface into the logo. It was part of a larger rebranding effort to unite BBC’s various subsidiaries under one font and one aesthetic. Any established institution has to keep consistency in mind when updating their logo. Also by using their own typeface, the company no longer has to pay an annual licensing fee to use a font.



via [BBC](#)

#### 34. Uniqlo

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The image shows the Uniqlo logo, which consists of the word "UNIQLO" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letters are arranged in two rows: "UNI" on the top row and "QLO" on the bottom row. The "Q" is stylized with a vertical stroke on its left side. The entire logo is set against a solid red background.

via [Uniqlo](#)



via [Uniqlo](#)

The Japanese clothing brand Uniqlo decided to update their branding to reflect their goal to become a global brand. A global brand that is Japanese, and has a brand identity that is very much rooted in Japanese culture. The bright red and white were selected with the Japanese flag in mind. There are two versions of it, one in English and one in Japanese lettering and the shape is meant to resemble a Japanese ink seal. To me, it looks very much like a seal of approval.

### 35. Star Wars

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The Star Wars movies have had many logo variations over the years, but the iconic wordmark that fully embodies the movie's vibe is the one we see above. It created a fiercely strong aesthetic that's carried on through the decades, using nostalgia marketing and brand consistency to cement its iconic cult status.



via [Star Wars](#)

### 36. Warner Bros

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via Warner Bros.



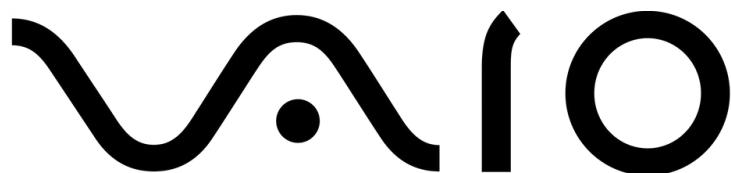
via Warner Bros.

If you were a child watching Looney Tunes or Harry Potter, the version of the Warner Bros. logo you've come to know very well is the image pictured above-right. Its three-dimensional, skeuomorphic design dramatized its commanding presence, whenever it appears on the screen, it oozes Hollywood glamour. And, in comparing this version to its predecessor, we can see how Warner Bros. chose the shield design to be an integral feature of their brand identity.

### 37. Vaio

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Vaio was initially an acronym for "Video Audio Integrated Operation". In looking at the logo, you notice that the "VA" is designed to look like a sine wave, aka an oscillating or wiggling geometric waveform, and the "IO" to represent the binary digits 1 and 0. Together, these elements merge analog and digital



via [Vaio](#)

symbols, which reflects the digital-orientated transition into computing that Sony was making when product.



via [Vaio](#)

## What do you see in these symbols?

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So looking back, can you see patterns in how these famous logos get it right?

There are several common threads. Almost all of these famous logos have their own unique typeface. They are smart with color and use of negative space. They favor simplicity over something that is convoluted, this is especially clear when viewing a logo's evolution.

But the most important lesson is to figure out who you are. Once you have that, you can boil it down to an uncomplicated and replicable symbol, the trick is recognizing its power.