

# Brands and Logos: *Two Different Animals*



Over the years, I have created many logos for my clients. This is always a favorite assignment, and an area in which I've spent many years developing expertise. In designing these essential marketing tools, I have often noticed client confusion about the difference between a brand and a logo. Here's an explanation.

**A brand is the sum of all the assumptions about and impressions made by a business or organization.** It is *always* from your market's viewpoint and is how you are positioned in your audience's mind, based on all and any encounters it has had with your organization. These touch points can include:

- ***Mission/vision***
- ***Building/premises/facilities***
- ***Customer relations and service***
- ***Public relations and news about the organization***
- ***Community involvement***
- ***Communications of any kind***
- ***Actual and virtual word-of-mouth***
- ***Name and visual identity (logo)***
- ***Digital and print advertising***
- ***Social media***
- ***Any point at which a member of your audience comes in contact with your organization.***

This list was adapted from an article by James M. McNamara of Arts Branding, who defines it this way: ***Branding is the practice of aligning all those impressions to ensure that they form a consistent, unified image and message that will***

**differentiate an organization or business from its competition.** Brand perceptions should be managed to inspire purchasing decisions in a business's favor, and monitored to ensure accuracy.

**A logo is the tip of the iceberg of branding,** says McNamara. It's the small percent that shows above the waterline. Logos are part of an overall branding program and often the most visible component, but a brand and branding encompass all the components listed above.

As part of that list, the function of a logo is to represent your brand in a visual way – it's a symbol. As such it has to be an accurate reflection of the values and value of your brand, but it is not the brand itself, just as a map is not the actual terrain it depicts.

In order to create a successful logo, it is important to have a workable brand definition in hand at the onset of the project. In the last several years, branding has become a signature service offered by many design firms. Since the function of branding is to inspire desired decisions and behavior in the designated audience, designers are well positioned to assist clients in brand development. It is a strategic process with specific outcomes. It must always express the value of the brand it represents.

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