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Does the Shape of a Company's Logo Matter?

Capturing the essence of a company's brand in one symbol (its logo) can be hard—or soft. According to a recent study in the [Journal of Consumer Research](#), the shape of a logo (specifically, whether it's more rounded or angular) affects how consumers perceive a company and its products.



“Consumers associate round with ‘softness’ and angular with ‘hardness.’ Our research shows the correlation is so powerful that merely viewing the logo of an unknown company can influence our feelings about its products or services,” write authors Yuwei Jiang, Gerald J. Gorn (both Hong Kong Polytechnic University), Maria Galli (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), and Amitava Chattopadhyay (INSEAD, Singapore).

In one study, consumers shown a mock ad for a generic sneaker assumed the shoe was more comfortable when the fake logo was circular (with mainly curved lines) and more durable when it had an angular logo (with straight lines and sharp corners). When shown an ad for a sofa with either a round or angular logo, people had similar expectations of comfort vs. durability.

In another study, the shape of a company's logo even altered consumers' predictions about its customer service. After reading a story about a passenger having a problem with overweight luggage on a fictitious airline, consumers assumed the airline personnel would be warmer and more sensitive to that customer's needs when the airline had a circular logo versus an angular one.

Google's recent logo change included making the two *g*'s and *o*'s nearly perfect circles and removing the serifs (small flourishes used in some typefaces). Google brand representatives claimed it better reflected the best aspects of the company—simple, uncluttered, colorful, and friendly.

“Designing effective logos has become a sophisticated, complex, and expensive process, entailing myriad decisions about font, color, images, etc. Our research provides key insights into one profoundly important piece of the puzzle: the impact of roundness or angularity on public perception,” the authors conclude.

Yuwei Jiang, Gerald J. Gorn, Maria Galli, and Amitava Chattopadhyay. “[Does Your Company Have the Right Logo? How and Why Circular and Angular Logo Shapes Influence Brand Attribute Judgments.](#)” *Journal of Consumer Research*: February 2016.



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