

Symbol or Wordmark Logo?

Contributed by Tony Spaeth | Courtesy of Identityworks
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Symbol or Wordmark Logo? by Tony Spaeth | Courtesy of Identityworks Which logo strategy is best? When should a CEO choose a wordmark, when a symbol? In general, consider a symbol only when: • Your name is too generic, too long, doesn't translate well globally, or is hopelessly deficient in personality. • You need an emblem on the product, as on a car hood–or a sneaker. • You need to link subsidiaries to the parent and can't easily use the name. (The Bell symbol served this function for the old AT&T and its operating companies.) • You have (or can afford) ample media, to teach us what the symbol means. Choose a wordmark when: • Your name is reasonably distinctive but not (yet) a household word. • You want to associate products or subsidiaries with the parent more clearly and directly than a symbol permits. • Communication funds are limited and should be focused on name recognition. A case in point: In 1995, Novell wanted to be a more powerful umbrella brand over its various software names. Consultants Frankfurt Balkind designed a striking new N symbol, appropriately expressive of a focal “enterprise networking” concept, accompanied by an elegant low-key wordmark. In 1996, the “dots” were banished from marketing communications, to better focus on the branding essential–the Novell name. Rationale: “We don't have time for trinkets that serve no functional need.” Bottom line: Wordmark or symbol, make sure your identity consultant provides a strategic application-based rationale–not just a pretty face. Tony Spaeth, owner of Identityworks.com is an independent identity consultant, focused on the uses of identity as a tool in managing and marketing.