

GOT SLOGAN? HOW TO USE A SLOGAN TO ENHANCE BRAND IMAGE

Chiranjeev Kohli, College of Business and Economics, California State University, P.O. Box 6848, Fullerton, CA 92834, 714-278-3796, ckohli@fullerton.edu

Lance Leuthesser, College of Business and Economics, California State University, P.O. Box 6848, Fullerton, CA 92834, 714-278-3180, lleuthesser@fullerton.edu

Rajneesh Suri, LeBow College of Business, Drexel University, 3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, 215-895-6980, surirj@dca.net

ABSTRACT

“Just Do It.” Nike’s slogan, and rallying call to athletes everywhere, is as familiar as the brand name itself. Without differentiation, one brand is not perceived as different from the next. The perceived differences between brands are based on customers’ knowledge of the brands. These perceptions are evoked, and to an extent shaped, by the three elements of brand identity – name, logo and slogan.

The brand name gives a product its core identity. It’s the anchor for a brand’s image, and cannot be changed easily. Logos, whether visual depictions of brand names or more abstract designs, serve as visual cues for faster processing and universal recognition across different languages and cultures. As such, logos are rarely changed in a significant way, but are sometimes modified or updated to stay current. Slogans play an important supporting role in brand identity. A brand name – most often no longer than a word or two – cannot say much in a literal sense. The same is true for logos. No doubt, these elements of brand identity can acquire rich imagery and meaning through brand associations established over time. However, they are limited in *creating* an image because they lack the inherent ability to *say* much about the product. Much of this task is left to advertising over the long run. Slogans can bridge this gap, and can and do say something about the image of the product, thereby making it possible to communicate what the brand is about.

Slogans contribute to the attainment of two broad objectives: (1) enhancing brand awareness and (2) creating, supporting or changing the brand’s image or perceptions, that is, positioning or repositioning the brand. The slogan is the most dynamic element of brand identity. Conceptually, the brand name and logo belong to the “product” element of the marketing mix, but the slogan is not as easy to classify. The slogan is, or at least should be, tightly and inseparably linked to the brand. At the same time, the slogan is capable of informing, persuading, and reminding, characteristics of the “promotional” aspects of the marketing mix. Its unique position as bridge between product and promotion makes the slogan particularly important and interesting.

In this paper, we study the existing research on slogans; and then, combined with insights gained from interviews with practitioners, we recommend guidelines for creating effective slogans.