



Labels, Logos, and Brands – What’s the Difference?

Clinton Neill, Assistant Professor, Agricultural and Applied Economics, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, 24061

Understanding the difference between a label, logo, and brand will help better market your products. This publication will identify the differences between the three components and how to use them to increase awareness and demand for your products.

Labels

A label is an item attached to a product to inform consumers about the attributes of the product. A label should convey the facts about what is contained in the product. Sometimes a label is mandatory and regulated by regulatory agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, etc.

There are many types of information and labels used to convey them. For example, the nutrition facts panel is a label that conveys nutritional information about the product. Also, labels can convey information about organic, non-GMO, and fresh production, though these labels are regulated for state and federal agencies.

Logos

A logo is a symbol used to identify your company that brings instant public recognition. A logo conveys a unique visual identity to represent and communicate your brand using

colors, fonts, and images. Your logo should provide consumers with identification, make your product/business distinct from competitors, and communicate your business and say something important about your organization.

The three most used types of logos are font-based, literal illustrations, and abstract symbols. Font-based logos consist solely of the company name in a unique font that makes it stand out, such as the Coca-Cola logo. Literal illustration logos use an illustration that directly relates to what the company does. One example is a lawn mowing company using a lawn mower as part of their logo. Abstract symbol logos immediately identify with a company brand and image. Abstract symbol logos are typically risky to use as it requires consumers to immediately associate your company with that symbol. An example of a successful abstract symbol logo is the Nike checkmark. This is easily recognized by consumers, but has taken decades to build this level of brand recognition.

Brands

A brand is a unique set of designs, signs, symbols, words, or a combination of these, employed in creating an image that identifies a product or service and differentiates it from competitors. A brand has one objective: to attract consumers. A brand creates consumer loyalty and is unique as it cannot be copied by

competitors. In some instances, a brand can command a premium price. A brand is a critical component of success in a marketplace as it creates the central piece to messaging, communication, and marketing in all of your promotional materials. Labels and logos work together to create your brand and creating a clear brand message is paramount.

Your Company Name

No matter the logo you use, your business will need a name. Your business name needs to be registered in your state and cannot duplicate or closely resemble another company's name. You can easily search for business names and see if your proposed business name is available by searching the [Commonwealth of Virginia State Corporation Commission](https://sccefile.scc.virginia.gov/NameAvailability) website. You will also find the necessary steps and forms to register your chosen business name.

References

Commonwealth of Virginia State Corporation Commission website:
<https://sccefile.scc.virginia.gov/NameAvailability>

Acknowledgements

This material is supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2015-49200-24228 and the Southern Extension Risk Management Education Center. This work is in collaboration with the Virginia Tech Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition. The material in this publication is based on work done at the Food and Agricultural Products Center at Oklahoma State University.