

Shannon Walsh  
April 14, 2011  
Essay 3

## **The Soul Behind the Logo**

Company logos are representative of whatever image they are trying to portray. When Starbucks Coffee Company changed their logo March 8<sup>th</sup> 2011, people seemed to think it was a big deal. What the regular customers don't understand is that the logo change was not just about the release of the new tribute blend, new cups, petite pastries or the balloon display outside all Starbucks locations, but it was about what stood behind it all. When Starbucks dropped the "Starbucks Coffee" from its logo, there were threats of protest from customers. Committed customers were more upset about the logo change than less committed customers were. One dedicated customer commented, "Removing the Starbucks name off your logo does not make any sense. I have been a big supporter of Starbucks since the early days, taken expensive rides in taxis to get my morning coffee, even waded through two feet of snow in my business suit. I do not see the logic of your business development folks. Free advertisement on every cup, every day. Think about it." What this dedicated customer does not know is that this is not the first time the Starbucks logo has been changed. This is the fourth siren logo since Starbucks started in 1971, so why people are making a fuss about it is beyond me. Elizabeth Fuller, journalist from The Christian Science Monitor, questions whether or not the new logo really "evokes Starbucks". Customers are confused about why Starbucks decided to drop the text from the cup and focus more on the siren. Is the famous Starbucks Siren a strong enough logo like the golden arches of McDonalds? The Starbucks logo is just as recognizable as the Nike or Apple symbols and, like them, does not need text to advertise the company.

Howard Shultz, CEO of Starbucks, stated on the Starbucks website that, "the new interpretation of the logo at its core is the exact same essence as the Starbucks experience and

that is the love we have for our coffee, the relationship we have with our partners, and the connection we build with our customers". There is a reason why so many people love Starbucks; it's the feeling you get after connecting with your favorite barista or that first sip of a caramel apple spice on a fall day. Starbucks Coffee Company is recognized not only nationally but also around the world and their logo is not just an advertisement but a statement. Starbucks' decision to take the logo and make it new represents their moving forward as a company and is letting their customers know that they are not just "Starbucks Coffee". The logo change was in celebration and recognition of their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They continue to grow and remain a strong company, despite the closing of 600 U.S. stores in 2008, which is telling in itself.

People complain about the pricey beverages but for some reason, even after the closing stores, people continue to pay the price. It is Starbucks' mission to be a "third place" to their customers, and being a partner and barista myself, I can see how this third place concept is truly appreciated by certain regulars. Starbucks' original mission statement was, "To establish Starbucks as the premier purveyor of the finest coffees in the world while maintaining our uncompromising principles as we grow." Going along with the modern, simple and more universal logo, Starbucks' more recent mission statement backs up their concept that they are not just there to serve coffee but "To inspire and nurture the human spirit - One person, One cup, and One Neighborhood at a time." Starbucks partners have the power to make someone's day better. I vividly remember asking one customer how their day was going and they told me that their husband just lost his job. My team that morning decided not to charge her for her venti frappuccino and that simple gesture brought her to tears. It is the uplifting experience that Starbucks brings to its customers and the broadened logo represents this; we are more than just coffee. A Facebook user commented about the logo on Starbucks' page saying, "I like the logo!

Thanks for keeping the same iconic green circle that I'm always glad to see! To those who think it needs to say Starbucks on it- I think you don't get it. Starbucks has such fantastic brand power people worldwide will know who it belongs immediately”.

Howard Shultz understands that “the world has changed and Starbucks has changed”. They are thinking beyond coffee and bringing in more to offer. Shultz stated that the “evolution of the new logo does two things: it embraces and respects our heritage and at the same time evolves us to a point where we feel it’s more suitable for the future.” The new logo not only supports Starbucks’s mission to be more than just coffee but it makes a strong statement. Starbucks does not need text on their cup for people to recognize the company and all that comes with it. Starbucks as a company proves its strength because this new logo can stand alone.

## Works Cited

Fuller, Elizabeth. *The Christian Science Monitor*. "Starbuck's logo change: No name. More mermaid. Will it sell more coffee?" January 6, 2011

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