



# How Logos Define People

We all do it. Selecting from a near infinite range of options, each of us develops affinity for certain products, activities, causes, organizations, philosophies, colors, beliefs, athletic teams, foods, etc. This is the critical point for marketing and fundraising professionals:

**These affinities become personal descriptors. They are a form of identity currency that helps us define ourselves to the world. It works the other way, too. We interpret other people by noting evidence of their affinities.**

Personal affinity creates a powerful language of social communication by generating two kinds of personal descriptors:

**Verbal Shorthand** – we all use and understand small phrases that say volumes about a person: *Soccer Mom. Lakers Fan. MIT Student. Deadhead. Fly Fisherman. Conservative. Sailing Enthusiast. Christian. Serial killer. Pacifist. Shortstop. Hangman. Groupie. Goth. Veteran. Feminist. Pro-This. Anti-That.*

**Nonverbal Shorthand** – each of us understands and uses logos and graphical branding elements in the same way we use verbal shorthand. They identify affinities visually, revealing a great deal about a person when seen on T-shirts, caps, tote bags, pens and a bazillion other products: *Harley Davidson, Red Sox, U.S. Marines, MTV, University of Michigan, NRA, Coca Cola, MADD, the local high school mascot, this religion, that cause, another political party... and an endless variety of other preferences and affiliations.*

Because evidence of personal affinity reveals a great deal about the person who carries it, each of us uses these personal descriptors to define ourselves and to help us interpret others. Consequently, when your station's logo and branding phrase are brandished by a constituent, your organization benefits in three ways:

- It benefits from enhanced **visibility** that strengthens your brand equity in the public's mind.
- It benefits from implicit personal **endorsement** of your organization and its mission, further strengthening brand equity.
- And it provides your constituent with **satisfaction** from the act of communicating a personal connection with your organization and its mission.

Everyone who sees your logo flashed in public knows that your supporter could have chosen to use an item with no logo – or one with the logo of another organization – or even an item with the logo of your competitor. *Instead, your logo is the one being displayed. That choice makes a public statement of personal support.*

**Bottom Line** – The lowly ceramic mug is not merely a device to hold coffee. It is a device to hold your logo in places where it will be noticed and appreciated – on desks, workbenches, tables and counters, in homes and workplaces and wherever else people drink from mugs.

Imprinted apparel is not a fashion statement, it is a mobile mission statement in graphic form – your walking billboard.

And so it goes with tote bags, key tags, desk accessories and thousands of other imprinted promotional products that are seen everywhere. Seen every hour. Seen every day. Seen by everybody – colleagues, friends, enemies, relatives, neighbors, customers, constituents, and strangers. By current supporters. *And by your future ones.*

Of all marketing media, imprinted logos display personal affinities with the lowest cost and greatest impact per impression. Universal dynamics are at work here. Your organization's brand receives enhanced visibility. Its constituents get satisfaction and affinity reinforcement. The general public notes implicit statements of support displayed by constituents. **Energized by pride of association... effectively communicating a connection with your organization and your mission... the trinket with your logo is of little cost and of inestimable value.**

In a series of enormously insightful studies, Leslie Peters, John Sutton and David Giovannoni taught our industry many lessons. Beginning with the heralded "Cheap 90 Study" they laid the groundwork for recognizing that on-air fundraising is programming. This trio was the first to demonstrate that our audience had evolved into a VIRTUAL COMMUNITY of geographically dispersed people sharing similar values and beliefs along with a common reliance on public radio. Playing off that concept, in his farewell address CPB's legendary Madden wisely reminded us that the audience regards public radio "...not as the alternative broadcast medium – but as the ideal broadcast medium!"

The affinity of this market is rooted in the solid achievement of our broadcasters and programmers over several decades. That affinity is the key to your brand integrity. It must drive your decisions about premium use and on-air marketing. Affinity is an asset you must not threaten with inferior quality in programming, marketing or fundraising premiums.



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*Imprinted logoware for nonprofit fundraising & corporate branding programs*