

# Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center



## FOOD TECHNOLOGY FACT SHEET

Adding Value to Oklahoma

405-744-6071 • [www.fapc.biz](http://www.fapc.biz) • [fapc@okstate.edu](mailto:fapc@okstate.edu)

### Logos Vs. Labels: What's the Difference?

**Rebecca Bailey**  
FAPC Communications Graduate Assistant

**Mandy Gross**  
FAPC Communications Services Manager

#### Introduction

Branding is a critical component for any company wanting to have a presence in the marketplace. Not only does branding entail the communications strategy used to communicate your company's message, but it also relates to the emotions consumers have when they come in contact with your business. Messaging and communications, as well as marketing and promotional materials, work together to create a company's brand.

Logos and labels are two marketing pieces used to build and communicate your company brand. When differentiating between a logo and label, it is easy to confuse the two. While both are vital, must-have elements for any company selling a service or product, they serve two different purposes.

#### What is a Logo?

A logo is a symbol used to identify your company that brings instant public recognition. Logos use colors, fonts and images to convey a unique visual identity to represent and communicate your brand. This symbol is often used consistently on all marketing materials, including signs, paper, promotional items, etc.

Effective logos should offer a combination of identification, distinction and communication of your company.

- **Identification:** A logo identifies your company in the marketplace. It is often your first impression on potential customers. In a visually symbolic way, a logo represents your company to the outside world.
- **Distinction:** An effective logo will distinguish you from competitors. New products appear in the market each day; an effective logo delivers distinction from other companies for customers to recognize and select.
- **Communication:** Your logo should serve as a communication channel that says something about your company. Every logo says something about the company it represents, whether it is subtle or direct.

Font-based, literal illustrations and abstract symbols are the three most-used logo types.

1. **Font-based:** Consists solely of the company name in a unique font that makes it stand out, such as Coca-Cola.
2. **Literal illustrations:** Uses an illustration directly related to what the company does, such as a lawn mower alongside the name of a lawn-care service.
3. **Abstract symbols:** Immediately identified with the company's brand and image. This logo choice is a risky move, as it requires customers to immediately

### The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Bringing the University to You!

The Cooperative Extension Service is the largest, most successful informal educational organization in the world. It is a nationwide system funded and guided by a partnership of federal, state, and local governments that delivers information to help people help themselves through the land-grant university system.

Extension carries out programs in the broad categories of agriculture, natural resources and environment; home economics; 4-H and other youth; and community resource development. Extension staff members live and work among the people they serve to help stimulate and educate Americans to plan ahead and cope with their problems.

Some characteristics of Cooperative Extension are:

- The federal, state, and local governments cooperatively share in its financial support and program direction.
- It is administered by the land-grant university as designated by the state legislature through an Extension director.
- Extension programs are nonpolitical, objective, and based on factual information.

- It provides practical, problem-oriented education for people of all ages. It is designated to take the knowledge of the university to those persons who do not or cannot participate in the formal classroom instruction of the university.
- It utilizes research from university, government, and other sources to help people make their own decisions.
- More than a million volunteers help multiply the impact of the Extension professional staff.
- It dispenses no funds to the public.
- It is not a regulatory agency, but it does inform people of regulations and of their options in meeting them.
- Local programs are developed and carried out in full recognition of national problems and goals.
- The Extension staff educates people through personal contacts, meetings, demonstrations, and the mass media.
- Extension has the built-in flexibility to adjust its programs and subject matter to meet new needs. Activities shift from year to year as citizen groups and Extension workers close to the problems advise changes.

Oklahoma State University, in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Robert E. Whitson, Director of Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. This publication is printed and issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Vice President, Dean, and Director of the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and has been prepared and distributed at a cost of 74 cents per copy. 1213

#### Logo Examples



1. Font-based



2. Literal illustration



3. Abstract Symbols

associate your company with that symbol. However, established companies often evolve into this once they have built a prominent identity, such as Nike, Apple and Starbucks.

### What is a label?

A label is an item attached to a product to inform consumers with a variety of information about the product and should always display the company's logo.

### The Function of a Label

A label serves a multitude of purposes. One essential function of a label is to provide potential and existing consumers with information about the product. Labels offer mandatory information for packaged food products and state the facts of what is contained in the package. A proper label should include a principal display panel and an information panel. Labels also function as the first impression of a product. A label should carry a unique, visually appealing design that communicates your brand.

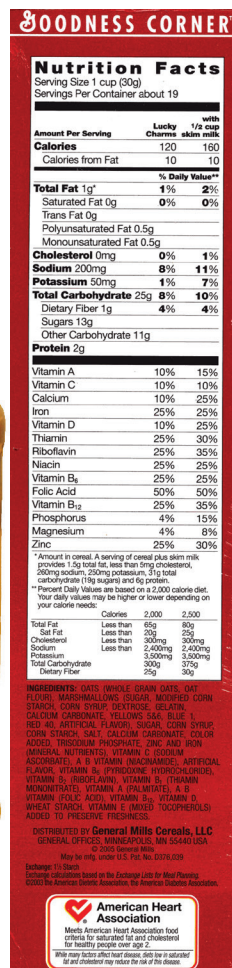
### Principal Display Panel

The principal display panel is the part of a label that will first catch a consumer's eye when shopping. This panel displays the common name of the product, the net quantity of contents and usually the logo or brand of the

product (although the logo is optional and not required by law).

### Information Panel

The information panel includes mandatory elements, including the ingredient listing, name and address of manufacturer, packer or distributor; number of servings, if used; nutrition facts labeling, if used; advisory statements, if needed; disclosure statement; and accompanying information (handling information, such as keep refrigerated, frozen, etc.). The information panel might also include non-regulatory information, including recipe ideas and the history of the company.



### Look of the Label

In addition to providing information, the label also provides consumers with a prior idea about the contents of the package. The label is one of the first things a consumer will see, basically an invitation for them to purchase your product. Labels with a smart combination of color, fonts and finish are more appealing, offering an eye-catching appeal to consumers.

### Label Design

- **Form:** This is the part where you can be creative with a product label. A label should reflect your company ideals and, although, sometimes more is better, less can be best when it comes to label design. Try to use no more than two fonts on a label, but do use different font sizes to add variety. When deciding on colors, try to select a few key colors that will complement the product and tie into your overall brand. Try to have an even balance of content and white space. A cluttered label can be overwhelming and drown out the information you really want customers to see.

- **Usability/Practicality:** While a flashy label may lure the eye to a product, if it is not user-friendly, consumers probably won't waste their time with it. Make sure the label is easy to read and information is easy to find.

### Summary

Logos and labels work together to accomplish a similar goal – promoting your brand. However, while a logo serves as a symbolic visual identifier for your company, a label is used to provide information about a product or service offered by your company.



### References

Bourn, Jennifer. "What is the Difference Between a Logo and a Brand?" Bourn Creative. [www.bourn-creative.com](http://www.bourn-creative.com). October 2, 2009.

Designmodo. "35 Stylish Wine Label Design Examples." <http://designmodo.com/wine-label-designs/>. January 18, 2012.

Gillikin, Jason. "Importance of Logos in Business." The Houston Chronicle. <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/importance-logos-business-577.html>. 2013.

Martin, Megan. "What is a Company Logo?" The Houston Chronicle. <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/company-logo-3479.html>. 2013.

Morris, Richard. "Smart Tips for Designing Your Own Food Labels." Hand Picked Nation. January 28, 2013.

My Markets. "Know What a Logo Does." My Markets Logo Designer, <http://mymarkets.com/lm/01.htm>. 2005.

Scott, Darren, Bowser Timothy, McGlynn, William. "Food Product Labeling Basics: FAPC Factsheet 140." Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center. July 2010.