

To design experts, 2008 logos hardly brand new

Looking beyond the issues and into such critical concerns as color schemes and typefaces, Perspective asked several brand identity experts to size up the 2008 presidential campaign logos. They did not like those of John Edwards or Rudy Giuliani, which is just as well, considering. But most of the others left them cold too. The biggest gripe: A lack of modernity.



MICHAEL BIERUT
Partner, Pentagram, a design consultancy. He did the current branding for United Airlines and the naming and branding for its low-fare airline, Ted.

With Hillary and Rudy we're on a first-name basis. Are they trying to project a "friendly" brand?



Plain, flat-out brilliant. Head and shoulders beyond everyone else. The 'O' is designed to stand on its own, like the Nike swoosh. On the Web site, the logo is customized to suit different groups of constituents.



Looks oddly like Hillary's.

BOBBY CALDER
Marketing professor, Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.

The interesting decision here is not to use the Clinton name. "Hillary" alone suggests independence. It also is more personal, speaking to likability. The female name calls out the fact that the candidate is a woman.

The interesting thing here is the placement of the name "Mike." It draws attention to "Huck" which fits the grassroots image of the candidate and breaks up the unusual last name into more familiar parts.



Last name only, the way a drill sergeant would yell it. Combine that with the uniform-ready star and the same typeface as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and you get the message.

It breaks with the traditional red, white and blue. The star is more of a crest, suggesting that the candidate is at a higher level. The logo has the look more of a movie title than a campaign logo. It suggests this candidate has a story to tell.



Outright terrible. It looks like something from a PowerPoint presentation. Is this how they used to do it at [Romney's former venture capital firm] Bain?

In my opinion this is the least successful logo. It is crowded and has a flat feel to it. The eagle symbol, if that is what it is, seems to be crawling more than soaring.

JOE DUFFY
Chairman, Duffy & Partners, a brand identity design firm

The firm has done work for Diet Coke, Fresca and the Bahamas.

I take issue with any candidate who props herself up as a single name, pop culture all-star, a la Cher, Madonna or Liberace. A surname seems to be a good thing if you're asking for people's votes.

The big O obviously stole a page from his friend Oprah's graphic standards manual. The O icon with its "eternal circle" symbolism, the supporting red and white waves of America's heartland ... I actually kind of like this.

This looks like '70's "country bumpkin" to me. I'm sure the yellow was added to the standard-issued red, white and blue to add warmth, but the layout, colors and type design all add up to a scrambled mess.

Well, at least he didn't go down the flag path. This identity design stands out for that reason alone, but it also seems to have a fairly aggressive, somewhat militaristic look to it. It definitely projects a strong, confident attitude.

Falls into the contrived imagery camp, in a very macho kind of way. The screaming eagle (or hawk) looks like a cross between a military insignia and the New England Patriots.

CHUCK ROUTHIER & RICHARD FORD
Creative director, executive creative director, at Landor Associates, a branding specialist.

The firm designed Olympic logos for Salt Lake City 2002, Nagano 1998 and Atlanta 1996.

Using her first name makes her seem more accessible, and reminds many that she's the only female in the race. However, the typography in "Hillary" seems a bit clunky and dated, while the italicization of "for President" offers a softening feminine touch.

Quite likely the most successful exercise in designing a logo. While the identity is not overly nationalistic, it is more thoughtful and considered than the others. It is crisp and contemporary, yet classic.

There are entirely too many elements, typefaces and sizes at play here, implying no focus and a certain naivete. The Coca-Cola-like swoosh gives an all-American, nostalgic feel, but the stars feel out of place.

This logo clearly communicates a key part of his platform, that of national security, and his experience in the military as a reason for him to be commander-in-chief. However, the placement of the 'c' in 'Mc' seems awkward.

The classic, all capital letter, serif typeface makes the candidate seem closed-off and aggressive. The abstract use of the eagle reminds us of the post office. It's not differentiated enough.

JIM PARKINSON
Designer

His clients have included The Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune and Newsweek. Also designed the Rolling Stone magazine logo.

[The logo] looks like someone was working on it and walked away from their desk for a moment. Someone else saw it lying there and decided it must be done, and voilà!

Type is too light. Wimpy. Should be bolder. '08? I think we already know it's '08 he's talking about. Wasted space there. And that crazy symbol. It wastes even more of the space, and what does it say?

There used to be a toothpaste ad that stated, "You'll wonder where the yellow went." Well here it is: Is Mike Huckabee yellow? And bag the word president. If people don't know what you're running for by now, it's too late.

Is black the most upbeat color he could come up with? What's the star all about? Was he a general? I don't think so.

Mitt wins the award for ugliest typeface. The letter widths don't complement one another. The spacing is horrible. Mitt is a hard word to space correctly. It's those two T's together. Short for mittent?