

conceptual note 3-824-448

July 11, 2024

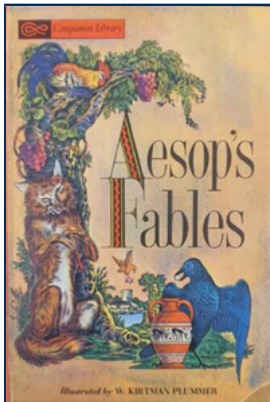
Michael D. Metzger

Brand Anthropomorphism and Personification: Designing Brand Mascots

"Persuasion is often more effectual than force." —Aesop

*"Advertising is fundamentally persuasion and persuasion happens to be not a science,
but an art."¹ —William Bernbach*

Aesop's Fables



Illustrated by W. Kirtman Plummer²

The objective of this conceptual note is to show examples of brand symbols and mascots that have proven effective at enhancing branding recognition, recall, and meaningful differentiation. Brand symbols and their personification in the form of characters or mascots that speak for or represent the brand can create meaningful associations that engage consumers, increase brand loyalty, and, thereby improve business performance in markets as wide-ranging as fashion, consumer packaged goods, automobiles, and even rapidly evolving technology.

This conceptual note touches on academic disciplines that provide foundational knowledge for understanding the meaning and use of such brand symbols in the commercial realm and their importance to social groups or, in business parlance, consumer segments. Throughout the note, examples are provided of how brand symbols embody abstract concepts through carefully crafted, tangible, relatable characters and mascots. The personification examples of the brands demonstrate how customers develop an emotional and even personal connection with a brand, thereby enhancing the brand image, distinctiveness, attractiveness, and loyalty on the part of the consumer.

Cultural Capital and the Drive for Prestige and Belonging

French sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron popularized the term *cultural capital* in their essay "Cultural and Social Reproduction." Bourdieu and Passeron describe cultural capital as social assets possessed by an individual that can promote or prevent their social mobility in a socially stratified

Published by WDI Publishing, a division of the William Davidson Institute (WDI) at the University of Michigan.

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