The Influence of Logo Design and Branding on Political Campaigns

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“Today’s society is undeniably brand conscious. We’re attracted to brands that project messages we like… Forward thinking companies [politicians] understand that if their brand carries a message, it carries equity. Companies [politicians] now are using that equity to deepen relationships with customers [citizens] by offering supporting products that reflect the personality of the brand. It’s called relationship marketing and it works”

Nee 2008, as cited in Hockett 2005
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I. Introduction

In much the same way that companies market their products to consumers, political candidates must make themselves appealing to potential voters in a campaign. Research has shown that advertisers can influence consumer choices by manipulating colors, fonts, and graphical elements in their advertisements (Rafaeli, Sagi and Rozin, 2008; Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001). Voters and the reporting media have grown to understand the tactics campaigns use for television advertisements, but little has been discussed about tactics used by campaigns for other controlled forms of media, such as the print and digital content distributed. While we know that marketing and candidate branding are an important part of any political campaign, we are less certain if graphical changes can influence vote choice.

Candidates running for office in the United States have long used slogans, fliers, buttons and yard signs, with the intent of increasing name recognition and likelihood of support (Garecht 2011). In the 1950’s, Dwight Eisenhower’s bid for the presidency morphed a military general into a national celebrity with the commercials, “I Like Ike” (“1952 Eisenhower vs. Stevenson” 2012). And in 1960, John Kennedy won the first televised presidential debate against Richard Nixon because he appeared healthier and more enthusiastic. For 60 years, candidates and their campaigns have understood the value of creating a characterization of candidates that the voting public will connect with to increases in name recognition, favorability, and likelihood of support.

Since the era of one-minute campaign commercials, cable television, the Internet, and new technologies have changed the way consumers react to information. Consumers are bombarded with information, which has led to a shorter attention span by consumers and a greater emphasis being placed on how to make material more appealing. A coordinated visual presence, the use of logos in political movements, and the development of an identifiable brand are all components of the strategy to target consumers in this new marketing era. In the way that consumers select products, do voters select candidates? Is it possible that font, color and simple graphical elements can make a candidate more appealing? Make a candidate more memorable? Understanding these influences means that political scientists can better predict the way voters will react to candidates
and campaigns in elections. Understanding what, if any, influence how materials presented may influence voters will help campaigns better focus the spending of hard-to-come-by finances.

In 2008, Barack Obama and his marketing team developed a campaign brand that went beyond slogans and utilized visuals unlike any other campaign in presidential election history (Nee 2011; Seidman 2010; “The hardest working...” 2008; Zavattaro 2010; Arnon 2008; Brown 2011). The use of a meaningful and coordinated visual presence was enhanced by its consistent and repetitive use that combined to create a presence that mirrored the tone for the campaign, and became the inspiration for the research conducted in this paper. Graphic design teaches individuals to place content strategically in a way that creates flow for the reader and to ensure that graphics have meaning with the content of the page. With the question of whether the same applied to political campaign materials and how these elements affect voters, this paper seeks to find out if trends exist; do certain elements result in a higher likelihood of success for the candidate’s campaign?

Eliminating the benefits of an incumbent candidate who has naturally higher name recognition, open-seat races provide a situation where the opportunity for influence is immense. Whether the visual trends and theories about the influence of graphics in presidential races hold true with congressional races will be the focus of this thesis (“Winning the election” 2008; Nee 2011; “The hardest working” 2008; Seidman 2010). Through content analysis and an experimental analysis I hope to answer the question: How does branding influence the likelihood of voter support for a candidate? To answer this question, I will define what makes a good logo and brand, how consumers respond to these graphic elements, and how voters can be thought of as political consumers. I will analyze what makes a logo complex, realistic and comprehensible; how fonts, color, graphic elements, frequency and repetition influence the effectiveness of a campaign’s graphics; and show how all these variables combine to potentially influence support for a candidate. I will provide a review of the literature already conducted on these related issues and review how trends discussed have been used in past political campaign marketing material through a basic content analysis. Lastly, relying on an experiment, I will see if the trends established in prior research and from my content analysis will hold true in a survey of undergraduate students who will be asked to judge a
series of candidates based on the variables discussed.

II. Literature Review

In order to understand the influence of logo design and branding on the influence of political campaigns, three premises must be evaluated, understood, and confirmed. First, the literature review will address the established notion that voters use shortcuts in deciding which candidates to support. Other political scientists have sought to explain the cues voters take to “navigate a sea of political claims” (Nee 2011), but they fail to discuss which graphical elements create subliminal context clues that influence voters. Secondly, the literature seeks to establish that branding and graphics are an integral shortcut used by consumers. Analyses of how graphical elements influence consumers in other areas do not directly test of materials are received in a political environment. After, a review of academic and practitioner theory will explain how voters are consumers of material produced by political campaigns.

A. Voter Shortcuts

Voters use a myriad of shortcuts to assist in their electoral choices, ranging from political party affiliation to endorsements. A study done by Lupia analyzes the information used by voters deciding insurance reform ballot initiatives (Lupia 1994). The results of the study indicate that voters use certain cues to make seemingly informed electoral choices in a shortened amount of time (Lupia 1994, 72). Understanding that voters look for cues to help shorten the amount of time and effort necessary to make election-day decisions is beneficial to the purpose of this study. Lupia’s efforts to establish that voters utilize informational cues to make decisions means that voters may interpret graphics as a form of information and use graphical clues to assist in making voting decisions.

One of the main determinants of electoral success can simply be a candidate’s ‘curb appeal.’ Curb appeal is the feeling voters get when they “drive by” a candidate a few times on television and form an emotional impression,” that help them determine whether or not they will support a
candidate (Westen, 2008, 294). A study done by Princeton researchers evaluates the importance of the “drive by” preview candidates get from voters by gauging voters’ opinion of a candidate’s competency based on a brief preview of their photo (Westen, 2008, 195). With 70 percent accuracy, the population selected the candidate who won the election with only a brief preview of the candidate’s photo. This experiment validates the idea that voters use visual short cuts to supplement their decision of which candidates to vote for.

B. Logos and Branding

Symbols are “…representations of organizational culture and values,… identity,… emotion,… and legitimacy” (Rafaeli, Sagy and Rozin 2008, 845). Essentially, people subconsciously associate meaning with logos and connect ideas and opinions to visual elements. Rafaeli, Sagy and Rozin explain the meaning and value logos bring to entities by developing a comprehensible identity for consumers. The consumer then has a more immediate reaction when they see that visual element in the future, and tie the emotion to the idea and brand. They add that the social context of the logo can evoke emotion or action from the consumer. Through their research, they argue that consumers are more willing to comply with requests when the requests are being made by an organization that appears more legitimate. They define legitimacy as being socially constructed symbols like logoed materials and clothing that become established with compliance. The study defined compliance as “one party accepting or responding positively to a request made by another party” (Rafaeli, Sagy and Rozin 2008, 846). As companies must strive to develop branding that exerts legitimacy and provides a visual representation of the company, campaigns need branding and logos to fulfill the same needs.

Research finds that individuals complied with requests from representatives and organizations more frequently when they had a recognizable logo established and when their request appeared more legitimate. In a study comparing industry and trade logos, Rafaeli et al. suggest that logos must fit into a framework of what is socially acceptable for the given industry, citing white smocks with physicians as an example, and skulls and crossbones in a company logo as a bad ex-
ample (Rafaeli, Sagy, and Rozin 2008). As logos establish value and lend legitimacy to industries and organizations, they do for political campaigns. Campaigns need logos and branding to create a presence that will be complete and unified to convince voters of the campaign’s organization and candidate’s viability, while remaining within the socially constructed ideas of what is acceptable for a political body.

Research on logos and branding has found that individuals prefer simpler logos with more repetitions over multi-meaning logos, or logos that have multiple elements that may each have their own potential interpretations (Janiszewski & Meyvis 2001). Subliminal and repetitive exposure to a graphic will result in a “relationship between exposure and affect because there is no opportunity to attribute the fluency to prior exposure” (Janiszewski & Meyvis 2001, 19). In a measurement of consumers’ reactions to exposure, 75 percent of studies showed a positive response to graphics following repeated exposure to those graphics ranging from “nonsense syllables, words, slogans” to “abstract drawings, pictures, faces” (Janiszewski & Meyvis 2001, 19). Janiszewski and Meyvis created an experiment where subjects were exposed to logos a different number of times and asked to express preferences, rate complexity and guess industries of the logos. This report is significant because it explains how subliminal and repetitive exposure does influence the viewer, and the influence, or fluency, cannot be attributed to prior exposure.

Janiszewski and Meyvis created an experiment where subjects were exposed to logos a different number of times and asked to express preferences, rate complexity and guess industries of the logos. Participants preferred simpler logos with more repetitions over multi-meaning logos (Janiszewski & Meyvis 2001). They report that subliminal and repetitive exposure to a graphic will result in a “monotonic relationship between exposure and affect because there is no opportunity to attribute the fluency to prior exposure” (Janiszewski & Meyvis 2001, 19). This study establishes that consumer recognition, and inclination to choose a specific logo, are classified as “fluency.” Fluency of a graphic is increased with exposure, is a bell curve with complexity, and consumption is increasingly fluent when the logo is subliminally presented. Fluency is divided into two categories, perceptual and conceptual frequency (Janiszewski and Meyvis 2001, 20). Conceptual frequency is
classified as stimuli, or graphics, that provide meaning after exposure, and provides the stronger response of the two fluencies. Conceptual frequency “can be made stronger by elaboration,” which can be interpreted as repetition of the use of a graphic.

Two theories of the effects of repetition are discussed that ultimately explain that a balance must be struck between establishing consistent use of a logo and overuse to strike a balance between education and ineffectiveness of a graphic (Janiszewski and Meyvis 2001). The two-factor theory explains an exposure increases knowledge about the graphic and its meaning but eventually leads to the consumer growing bored with the information. The dual-process theory explains that exposure leads to a desire to respond and not to respond. These results and theories indicate that political candidates interested in having a complete visual identity, or well-developed brand, will need to have logos that are simple in nature but have an apparent meaning, and are repetitively but subtly used in order for these logos to be recognized and effective among voters.

III. Theory

A. Voters find shortcuts to help make election decisions

“People vote for the candidate who elicits the right feelings, not the candidate who presents the best arguments” (Seidman 2010, as cited in Westen 2007, 4). Westen based this argument on a review of empirical literature on the effects of political advertisements. Since elections can become a complex “political landscape,” Nee says logos help to create a “simplified political reality” that helps voters better understand the choices in candidates (Nee 2011, 6). Westen writes, “The first and most important goal of any campaign, then, is to associate the candidate with positive feelings, such as excitement and hope” (Westen 2008, p. 284). The theory Westen outlines is one of voters making political shortcuts through unrelated points of consideration, like emotion. “The political intelligence that leads to voter enthusiasm is complex, but it is often expressed in subtle ways that register with voters, largely unconsciously” (Westen 2008).
B. Elements of branding and logos

Rules established surrounding logos apply to all graphical elements involved in the visual branding of a campaign. The font, color and other visual elements must embody a certain level of elaboration, naturalness, harmony, parallelism and repetition that seem appropriate for the content’s environment or purpose. As Holly Munson, a blogger for “Constitution Daily” writes, often the most effective details are subtle, but if even one component is out of place, it can be apparent to the viewer (Munson 2012). Though she admits that much of the perception surrounding these logos and branding campaigns can be subjective to the content reader, she contests, “would companies spend millions of dollars each year on slick marketing campaigns if they didn’t somehow help them meet their goals of solidifying consumer loyalty and motivating prospective consumers?” Seidman says, “a good brand is unique and recognizable, identifies a product or service, and ‘connects’ with audience members emotionally and credibly to create loyalty” (Seidman 2010, 5-6).

i. Visibility

Janiszewski and Meyvis (2001) compiled a list of characteristics that are necessary for logo effectiveness. In order for a graphic to achieve success, the graphic must be visible to its audience (Janiszewski & Meyvis 2001, 19). This means that the graphic must be used consistently, with repetition, and appear at the optimal duration for the audience to fully absorb its meaning (Henderson and Cote 1998, as cited in Nee 2011, 15, 18-19). Nee also suggests that logos that utilize patterns and repetition within the arrangement and content of graphic elements, to create a more appealing graphic for consumers. It makes sense that if a logo is not used consistently, and frequently, the influential content associated with the design will have no effect on consumers.

ii. Meaning

For a logo to be able to be successful with its intended audience, the content and technique with which the material is conveyed should be done in a manner with which the consumer can connect. Nee outlines Henderson and Cote’s three golden rules to a successful candidate, includ-
ing that the logo have a “degree of realism” and that it is “comprised of natural shapes” (Henderson and Cote 1998, as cited in Nee 2011, 15, 18-19). Logos must exert some sense of naturalness, or an accurate and seemingly normal depiction of what it is representing (Nee 2011, 15). The logo must also be designed with harmony and proportion, or in a way that does not distort the content to the point it is incomprehensible.

The graphic will only achieve success with an audience if there is a perceived “truth to the statement of the graphic,” or the graphic honestly depicts the message it is conveying to its audience (Janiszewski & Meyvis 2001, 19). For campaign brands, this will mean the use of relevant colors like red, white and blue; that includes graphical elements that make the brand complex but not overwhelming; and include natural or relevant elements like stars and stripes.

iii. Comprehensibility

The message, and the graphic itself, must be comprehensible, or simple and easy to understand, to the audience reading the graphic (Janiszewski & Meyvis 2001, 19). The graphic must be clear to the reader, and not be designed so abstractly or in a manner inappropriate to the setting that it does not confuse the reader. Contrastingly, the graphic must also display a level of elaboration, or complexity (Nee 2011, 15). Nee also suggests that elements within the graphic also be placed near one another, or parallel, and that graphics that utilize circular patterns and elements will be easier to understand by consumers because of the frequency with which circles appear in logos and in nature. Henderson and Cote suggest as a rule for logo design, that logos should have, “simple elements but moderate elaboration of characteristics, depth and complexity” (Henderson and Cote 1998, as cited in Nee 2011, 15, 18-19).

To increase the likelihood that consumers comprehend a logo, Henderson and Cote suggest that campaign logos be associated with other recognizable shapes and concepts (Henderson and Cote 1998, as cited in Nee 2011, 15, 18-19). The graphic re-branding of the Democratic Party in 2010 included the use of a new logo that mimicked the Obama for America 2008 circular logo and a blue color palate similar to what had also been associated with the campaign (Brown 2010). The
familiar circle and shades of blue signaled to political activists that the logo was affiliated with the
president and traditional Democratic values.

Candidates who use these logo characteristics will have greater branding success. With rep-
etition, these graphics will be recognized, viewed favorably and leave an impression of the candi-
date and their campaign by becoming a visual shortcut.

C. Voters as Consumers of Political Campaigns

Nee argues that because of the “consumerist nature” of today’s public, product consumption
can be related to political consumption and uses the following statement as an example of their
exchangeability by “substituting the word ‘politicians’ where the word ‘companies’ is used and ‘cit-
zens’ where the word ‘consumer’ is used:

Today’s society is undeniably brand conscious. We’re attracted to brands that project
messages we like… Forward thinking companies [politicians] understand that if their brand
carries a message, it carries equity. Companies [politicians] now are using that equity to
deepen relationships with customers [citizens] by offering supporting products that reflect
the personality of the brand. It’s called relationship marketing and it works”
(Nee 2008, as cited in Hockett, 2005, 5-6).

Rafaeli, Sagy and Rozin’s research about the legitimacy a logo and brand gains for a company means
that campaigns utilize logos to create a presence that will convince voters of their viability and or-
ganization.

“Political candidates are inexorably engaged in a marketing game, so turning presidential
candidates into commodities via branding was the next logical step” (Zavattaro 2010, 124). In a
website designed to help new candidates understand campaigning techniques, pages are dedicated
to helping candidates understand, design and use graphics with their campaigns (Garecht 2011).
“Signs only serve three individual purposes in a campaign: raising name identification, getting out
the vote, and scaring your opponent” (Garecht, How to design… 2011). Garecht gives candidates
three rules while designing their logos: be simple, consistent and creative to connect voters to your
campaign identity (Garecht, Top 3 Principles of Political Design, 2011).

The logo for the Obama campaign, as well as some of the iconic images created for the can-
didate, successfully achieved the goals outlined in Garecht’s instructions, connected voters emo-
tionally and created loyalty to the Obama brand that caused voters to react to the Obama brand like consumers do to a product brand (Seidman 2010). The importance of brand development indicates that the logo of a campaign should be used as part of a consistent and repetitive larger campaign brand. Seidman argues that Obama’s 2008 campaign developed the best visual campaign ever seen in a presidential election that would rival those of multi-million-dollar international corporations (Seidman 2010). The marketing of the Obama campaign was so revolutionary that the marketing team was named Advertising Age’s “2008 Marketer of the Year” for the strategy and development of the Obama brand (Nee 2011, 4).

Eric Appleman, the president of Democracy in Action, an ongoing web project through George Washington University that has monitored the trends and news of every election since 2000 (Appleman 2010). A digital brand consultancy and design studio, Sender LLC, was hired by David Axelrod in 2006 to “do something different” and design the logo for the Obama campaign (Appleman 2008). As Appleman explains, what resulted was the “most analyzed and commented upon” logo in a field of many candidates, which he later comments, will have forever changed the value campaign place on branding and graphics. He dissects the logo content and designs of the 2008 presidential candidates, and establishes that there are long-running trends in color, name usage and graphic elements (Appleman 2008). He begins stating that red, white and blue, are the most frequently used colors in presidential logos, and yellow is occasionally seen as an accent color. He explains that text can vary greatly in both design and content. As Appleman says, typefaces can be serif or sans-serif; use all capitalized letters, all lowercase letters or a variation; and candidates may choose to use solely their first name, solely their last name or their full name. Analyses like this, and the interviews with Sender that discuss the effort that went into developing a visual identity, prove that political entities recognize the importance of treating voters like consumers and providing a complete product.

The most remarkable thing about the logo were the subtle modifications made to it that fit Nee’s explanation of elements vital to the success of a logo. The elaboration, parallelism, and repetition by the Obama campaign of the logo to different sub-groups allowed the branding of
the campaign to connect with every major targeted audience (“The hardest working” 2008). “For each segment of people, the logo changes accordingly, tip-toeing a fine line between cliché and clever, and never crossing to the former’s dark side. The iterations are quickly identifiable and feel genuinely concerned with connecting to the people they are talking to, without pandering,” (“The hardest working” 2008). The physical logo undergoes slight modifications for groups of individuals, and is paired with a modified version of “[Insert Group] for Obama” where a single phrase solidifies the targeted group (Appendix I, O). The campaign went further to appeal to state organizations by including the red lines mimicking the Midwestern fields of Illinois, in a single letter in the state’s name (Appendix I, P). These subtle changes allowed for voters in specific geographic or social circles to be targeted to in a visual manner.

“The Brand Coalition,” an online blog analyzing the branding of products, did a two-part analysis of the 2008 presidential campaign logos. Much of the dissection focused on the importance of color and font, and how the style embodied the goals and desired perceptions of the candidates (“Winning the election” 2008). The blog’s September 18, 2008, post focuses on the evolution of the McCain campaign logo in the summer and fall of 2008, from a moderately-thin serif font, Optima, which mimic’s McCain’s own moderate political inclinations, to a bolded version of the same font after the addition of Sarah Palin, perceived to be an attempt to emphasize strength (Appendix I, Q). The use of a graphic star, as Brand Coalition comments, embodies the ticket’s commitment to the military and our veterans.

Voters will be drawn to successful logo and branding campaigns, and will use these graphic symbols as a way to make a shortcut between visual materials and their feelings on a candidate, ranging from quality of the message to the viability of the campaign. A brand is “a visual tool” that connects the company’s image and reputation with consumers while developing an emotional connection (Nee 2011, 9). A “logo” is merely the “face” of a company and merely serves to provide “instant recognition of an organization” (Nee 2011, 9). Nee implies that it is necessary for campaigns to establish both in order to connect with the voting public. Using the theories of the rational and active voters, Nee states that it is important for campaigns to improve their visual identities to ap-
peal to individuals who need these simple indicators to make fast judgments about candidates (Nee 2011, 12-14). Seidman analyzes the Obama “O,” explaining the stripes represent the heartland of America - Obama’s home state of Illinois - and the sun represents optimism for the future (Seidman 2010, 6). Seidman also points out the many ways the logo was adapted to target audiences to draw them into the campaign, including “Women for Obama” where the “O” logo was used in the center of the female sign. As Nee explains, the color and meaning of the designs created by the Obama campaign, elicited feelings from voters which helped to gain recognition and support among voters looking for shortcuts (Nee 2011).

IV. Content Analysis

In order to evaluate the use of logos in the influence of political campaigns, I first conducted a content analysis to determine that all conditions explained by prior research are in fact true and how consumers react to product branding and graphic design is transferable to political campaigns (Zavattaro 2010, 124; Nee 2010). The second working assumption is that trends and voter reactions established in presidential races are transferrable to United States House of Representative races. Since the ballots for these two offices are oftentimes cast by the same individuals, and both types of campaigns are striving to exert legitimacy, meaning and a compelling identity that will connect with voters, it is reasonable to think that the branding strategy of presidential campaigns is relevant to United States House of Representatives races who are trying to achieve the same goals.

I randomly selected 10 open-seat races, from different states and regions across the country, that were open-seat United States House of Representatives races in 2010. A Democrat previously held five of the seats and five of the seats were previously held by a Republican. Using the web addresses of the candidate’s campaign websites and the National Archives project, The Way Back Machine, I located the October 28, 2010, screen captures of each candidate’s “Home” page, “About the Candidate” page, the “Issues” page, and the “Volunteer” page to ensure consistency of use. In 80 percent of instances the logo used was consistent on every page. In all instances, the elements coded were determined from the logo used on the candidate’s “Home” page. I looked at 22 graphi-
cal characteristics to find potential trends and points of comparison among the designs used and coded in a simple “0” or “1” code, and analyzed results by looking at percent of the population who used the element. Elements analyzed included the candidate’s name, use of color, font choice, and the use of certain graphics (Appendix I, R).

After coding all 20 candidate’s materials, I decided that in order to determine what elements were most influential, it would be important to compare and focus on the graphics of winning campaigns. If I wanted to know how candidates could influence elections, as others have argued they did in presidential races, I decided I would need to focus solely on identifying the trends among campaigns that won their elections. Overwhelmingly, campaigns used a candidate’s first and last name, the position sought, the colors included in the American flag, and a graphic line, as part of a consistent campaign logo. Other results can be found in Appendix I, S.

As indicated by the results, many elements were used overwhelmingly, which would imply that these elements are popular and potentially beneficial to the success of the graphic. The candidate’s first name was used 70 percent of the time, and the candidate’s last name was used in every instance, which can be interpreted that these are good elements to have in a campaign graphic. The fact that 90 percent of winning campaigns listed the position being sought in some way also indicates that mentioning “for Congress” or “House of Representatives” is necessary for a candidate’s graphical success. These results make sense, because as Seidman explained, in order for a brand to be successful, the corresponding graphics need to help identify the product. For candidates in United States House elections, this would mean providing graphics that convey all relevant information about the campaign, including the name of the candidate and the position they are seeking to be elected (Seidman 2010, 5-6).

Other graphical elements with overwhelming success included the use of a graphic line, which is explained by Nee’s theory that these brands that are developed for campaigns should have an aesthetic appeal, and provide harmony and proportion, for the voters consuming the material and hopefully being persuaded (Nee 2010). Additionally, it explains Westen’s theory that people vote partially on feelings and not entirely on arguments (2007). From the results of Janiszewski and
Meyvis’ experiments which revealed that participants connected more with simpler logos that were used with great repetition, I determined to use clean, simple and modern design trends for all marketing materials developed (Janiszewski & Meyvis 2001, 25). Using subtle and clean designs also mirrored the materials coded in the content analysis from the 2010 midterm elections, which rarely used any elements more complex than gradient backgrounds or action-packed photos. Lastly, the consistent use among all candidates of some combination of red, white and blue, indicated that those colors were most likely integral in the success of the graphic. The use of these colors would be necessary because of Seidman's theory of brands and graphics conveying information to the consumer (Seidman 2010). Using colors associated with our national government would solidify that the candidate was running for a federal office, and instill the patriotic tone to the candidate’s campaign that would be necessary for Westen's theory of feelings (Westen 2007). For any candidate to not center their graphical branding around these colors could convey a lack of nationalistic loyalty from the campaign and have voters question the intentions of the candidate.

V. Hypotheses

A. Stars
I hypothesized that logos that includes a star will have a higher likelihood of support among participants in their initial evaluation of likelihood to support a candidate and be favored more highly among voters in the final question that asks for the participant's preference. The use of a star in the graphics, though subtle, adds to the moderate complexity of the graphic that Nee explains, and provides another subtle hint at a patriotic sentiment from the campaign that could be the greater meaning logos need to be successful (Nee 2010).

B. Fonts

From observations about the subliminal perceptions of personality that font exerts, I hypothesize that graphics that use a serif font will see a higher likelihood of support from voters. The subtle serifs indicate a simple but serious and official tone to the campaign material, that as Gannett
suggests, looks “more presidential,” or Congressional (Gannett 2011).

C. **Color**

I hypothesize that in a comparison of the use of white or blue as the font color or background color on materials, a higher likelihood of support and greater favorability in the final preference poll among voters will result when a candidate uses blue as the dominant background color. Color adds an element of complexity to the graphic and may help the voter establish meaning or emotion to the content of the materials being observed.

D. **Stand-alone graphic**

Due to the shorter length of House races and the fact that the majority of campaigns chose not to utilize these graphics, it would be reasonable to assume that logos including a stand-alone graphic would not succeed. However, the marketing research referenced in the first condition and prior literature indicate that in many consumer-marketing campaigns, products brands that are used with great repetition, can have success with a graphic that could stand by itself, and given repetition and a meaningful design, it is possible that candidates can have the same results (Janiszewski & Meyvis 2001). In this experiment, a graphic of an eagle will be tied to the candidate logo in a way that compliments the logo but is capable of being used as a stand-alone graphic. The patriotic sentiments behind eagles and circular nature of the design, which Nee describes as more visually appealing to consumers, could mean the Mills for Congress graphic package with the eagle will have greater success.

VI. **Methodology**

For as much consistency as there was among candidate materials in the 2010 midterm election graphics coded, there were several areas where the materials provided no trend. In order to understand if a graphical formula existed that would lead to branding success, these areas of subtle differences design elements, seemingly split equally in use by campaigns, became the focus of the
Other research methods could have been used to obtain this information. Case studies of past campaign materials could have been the focus of the primary research. A more complex content analysis that studied a greater number campaigns or qualitative research through interviews could have been used to attain the same information. However, according to Brader, the use of an experiment allows the political scientist to more effectively rule out potential interferences by tightly controlling conditions and through randomization (Brader 2005, 391). For experiments such as this one that are attempting to understand emotion and preference, Brader suggests that conducting an experiment is the most practical way to capture a complete and accurate understanding of participants reactions.

VII. Research Design

After completing demographic questions, students were randomly assigned to one of two groups, Block A or Block B. Both groups were shown a page explaining that the materials viewed were from websites for open-seat United States House races, and that materials should be judged independently as candidates are not competing against one another. Participants in Blocks A and B saw a series of marketing materials for four candidates allegedly running for United States House of Representatives open-seat races. Each candidate is represented by a screen shot of a mock website page (Appendix I, E). Each candidate’s “About Me” page shows the candidate’s graphics at the top of the page, tabs to other pages, and a biography and photo of the candidate, using pre-designed layouts and themes created through Wordpress. Tabs to other pages include, “Home,” “About the Candidate,” “Our District,” “The Issues,” and “Volunteer.”

In designing the mock candidate pages, every attempt was made to help the sites resemble
those of actual candidates. Each candidate’s biography is an adapted version of a real candidate’s biography. Candidates used in the content analysis were used as the inspiration for the content of these mock candidate webpages. The photos of the candidate from the experiment pages, are photos from the real-life candidate’s website that the biography was adapted from. All material that could indicate race, political party affiliation, or partisan issues was removed from the biography, and content was edited to new cities and other personal information to insure that participants could not identify the real-life candidate. These precautions were taken to insure that the candidates in the experiment were as politically neutral as possible, and leave participants to focus on the content of the page and not partisan or racial opinions outside of the experiment. Names for candidates were created using a name generating website, FakeNameGenerator.com.

Participants in both Block A and Block B saw the same four candidates in the same order. On each candidate page, pages had the same design, page tabs, and candidate photo and bio. The only difference made between the pages viewed by participants of Block A and Block B was a single subtle difference in the graphic at the top of the page. Each candidate’s page was used to gauge the level of favorability to a design element. Assuming that the materials are politically and racially neutral, and the materials being viewed by each group are the same, the only difference left that may sway the favorability of a candidate to one group over the other is the graphics used in the marketing materials. By placing the graphic at the top of the page, the graphic is the first element of the page seen by the participants, and the first impression to the candidate by the participants (Appendix I, E).

Voter support, the dependent variable, will be defined by the population’s response to the question asking their likeliness to vote for the candidate. This question will be posed at the end of the materials for each candidate and the participants can respond, “Highly Likely,” “Somewhat Likely,” “Slightly Likely,” or “Not Likely At All” (Appendix I, D). Then participants will be asked to rate the candidate on a feeling thermometer with a scale of 0 to 50, with 0 meaning that they do not like the candidate at all, and 50 meaning they greatly like the candidate. These two questions, posed at the bottom of the page with each candidate’s material will give two forms of evaluation of
the candidate, but the focus will be placed on the first and more simple question of whether they are likely to vote for the candidate or not, since the results of real elections have binary outcomes. After answering these two questions, participants will click to visit the next candidate's page where they will see a similar web page and the same two questions.

Following evaluation of the four candidates, all participants were brought back to the same post-experiment questions that were used to help further understand the characteristics of the population. The first page in the post-test identifies more characteristics of the population. Participants are asked about to classify their partisan identification, political ideology, level of political activity, and other personal characteristics (Appendix I, J). These questions were saved until after their initial exposure and decision of whether to support candidates, to insure that the questions would not influence the participants' responses. Some questions gauge students' potential interest in design, politics or their tendency to be drawn to branding. Other questions gauge what characteristics participants monitor when evaluating candidates, including stances on policy, appearance of the candidate, marketing, or viability of the candidate.

A. Stars

The first candidate seen by participants was Gary Caldwell, the son of a police officer and district attorney from Massachusetts (Appendix I, E). As a district attorney, Gary has been exposed to a range of family issues that he has since fought to correct as a member of the public sector in both his capacity as a district attorney and as a member of the state legislature. He conveys himself as a rebel within his own party and champion of the electorate. He says he, “is ready to shake things up in Washington and get the results our families deserve – by bringing his tough, smart and effect problem-solving approach to Washington – a place that sorely needs it.” Caldwell’s materials were inspired by 2010 candidate William Keating, a Democrat who represents Massachusetts’ 10th District.

Caldwell's web page is a simple white background with a tan tab bar. Condition 1 establishes that consumers respond more favorably to brands that seem complete and utilize logos that have
meaning. In the content analysis, 40 percent of candidates used a star in their campaign graphics. The “Caldwell for Congress” election will test if an electorate will respond more favorably to a candidate who uses a star in their graphics, as opposed to a candidate who uses no star. The graphic uses the blue font and white background color-scheme that was popular among candidates in 2010. It includes a line as a graphic element, and includes both the candidate’s first and last name, and “for Congress;” as was done by a majority of the cases studied from the 2010 content analysis. Red was used as an accent color in the line, as it was used in 60 percent of the 2010 cases. Block B, however, saw the same content and graphics, except the red accent line between the candidate’s name and “for Congress” was interrupted halfway by a small red, five-point star.

[Image A: Block A and Block B Caldwell for Congress logos.]

B. Font

In the second election, participants will meet Andrew Camp, a third-generation resident of Pennsylvania’s 2nd District (Appendix I, F). He was a high-school athlete, who became a successful business major during his undergraduate years at University of Pittsburgh. Camp now runs the oldest pest management company in the United States, Pest Solutions. Through his years managing this successful, local company, Camp has learned the needs of the District’s residents and has witnessed the stresses the economic collapse has placed on people. “As the 2nd District’s Representative to Congress, Andrew will listen to the concerns and challenges of the people of the 2nd District and fight for them with the same integrity, determination and common sense that he brings to every aspect of his life.” Robert Dold, the Republican who currently represents Illinois’ 10th District in Congress, was the inspiration for Andrew Camp.

Camp’s election answers the question if the typeface used in candidate materials influences voter likelihood of support. Rafaeli discusses the legitimacy logos and graphics provide to an
organization and that certain elements of these graphics can add to, or detract from the perceived legitimacy or viability of an organization (Rafaeli, Sagy and Rozin 2008). Online graphic design communities have discussed the trends in the use of serif and sans-serif fonts by the two parties (Shaw 2011). According to an “Imprint” blog discussion from last year, following the two major parties have shifted the use of sans-serif fonts from being dominated by the Democratic party in 2008, to being overwhelmingly used by the Republican party in 2010, and now being neglected by both parties as the modern branding associated with sans-serif fonts are also affiliated with the messages of “hope” and “change” from the Obama campaign in 2008.

The general frustration with the current path of American politics, has led to an influx of serif-font and traditional branding campaigns for 2012 contestants (Shaw 2011). The success of the Obama campaign in 2008 of affiliating sans-serif fonts with “hope,” “change” and the brand of the campaign, meant that candidates in the 2010 mid-term election steered clear of the established trends associated with the president and his lower approval rating. As Allen Gannett reports, the Barack Obama for America 2012 campaign hired the typography company, Hoefler & Frere-Jones, to create a new font for the campaign –a modified version of the font used in the 2008 graphics (Appendix I, N; Gannett 2011). The difference between the two fonts is the use of a serif, or a dash at the end of some lines of letters and symbols. In Gannett’s same post that discusses the new Barack Obama campaign font, Gannett observes and rates the different fonts used by Republican presidential campaign logos and rates Ron Paul’s graphics to have the greatest promise because the serif font “looks” presidential; a similar praise given to the new Obama campaign font which, because of the addition of the serifs, indicates that he is no longer running for president but is the current president (Gannett 2011). The use of serif fonts in traditional or official capacities conveys a serious and important nature about the content (Appendix I, G).
C. Color

The third candidate in the experiment is Jerry Jackson, a state senator seeking to win the open-seat race in California's 12th District (Appendix I, H). His academic degree from California Polytechnic State University, prepared him for a successful career in agriculture-based businesses. His experience as a business owner has helped him write fiscally sound economic policy at the state level, which he hopes transfers to the beneficial skills at the national level. “Senator Jackson has focuse his efforts on growing California’s economy and keeping jobs in our state, while also improving the state's long-term climate for agriculture and business and working to expand water storage.” Jerry Jackson is inspired by Jeff Denham, a Republican who won California’s 10th District in the 2010 election.

The Jackson election is aimed at deciphering if the electorate will respond more favorably to candidates who use color in their backgrounds. From the 2010 content analysis, three of the open seats analyzed switched from being held by an outgoing Democrat to a Republican. If graphics could have played a role in any of the elections studied, elections where the seat switched and the political preferences of the voters were the most undecided or moderate, would be the leave the most room for other outside influence. In all three seats from the content analysis that switched, the color blue was used as the background, and dominant, color, and white was used as the secondary color for fonts. As Nee explains, color is an integral part in developing a complete brand and logo (2011).

D. Stand-alone graphic

The final candidate in the experiment is Evan Mills, a candidate with many years experience working, managing and owning an engineering company in Ohio. He is a graduate of public
schools and the Ohio State University, and has taught night classes in the community college system. In the early 1990’s he represented his hometown in the state legislature, serving on the finance and banking committees. He is proud to say that, “His voting record reflects the interests of his constituents.” The hypothetical candidate Evan Mills is adapted from real-life candidate, David Mills, a Republican who won West Virginia’s 1st District in the 2010 mid-term election.

It was necessary to test whether the use of graphics that can stand alone, like the “O” from the Obama campaign, could succeed in a Congressional campaign. Whether these stand-alone graphics that have been so widely used and written about in U.S. presidential races, could be successful in U.S. House races is the focus of the Mills election. Only one winning candidate in the open seats evaluated during the content analysis utilized a graphic capable of providing enough meaning and shape to be used in materials as a standalone element. The Obama “O” had enough meaning and was able to be used enough, over a long enough period of time, to gain familiarity and popularity with voters. Presidential campaigns, however, are longer and more widely publicized, which could explain why the use of potentially standalone graphics had yet to be used in United States House of Representatives elections. The Mills campaign at the focus of this part of the experiment uses an adapted version of Spanish designer Guilherme Sebastiany’s interpretation of the Powerhawke company logo (Sebastiany 2010). Powerhawke is a company out of New England that provides security solutions for medium and high-voltage power systems providers (McPhee 2010).

VIII. Results

A. Subject Pool

More than 200 undergraduate students were recruited from an entry-level political science
course undergraduate subject pool. A total of 213 students elected to participate in the study. Students were first presented with a series of demographic questions in an attempt to better understand the characteristics of the population responding. Students were asked their age, gender, race, what school within the university their major was housed, and what year in school they were. The majority of this population, approximately 80 percent, was made up of students ranging in age from 19-21 years old, of voting age. Only one respondent was under the legal voting age (Appendix II, A). Of the population, the majority, 64 percent, of the population reported being male, with only 34 percent reporting being female. 83 percent of the population considered themselves white, while 13 percent reported black, Hispanic or other, and only 3 percent not reporting their race (Appendix II, B). The population was distributed evenly among years in school (Appendix II, C). Seniors were least represented with 15 percent of the population.

Following the experiment, participants are asked a second set of characteristic questions. Questions concerning political ideology and preferences when selecting candidates were reserved until after the experiment to insure that participants were not swayed in their initial evaluation of the marketing materials (Appendix II, D). The population was evenly dispersed in their political affiliation and ideology. 39 percent of the population identified themselves as Democrat, 32 percent as Republican, 20 percent as Independent and the remaining 10 percent as “Other” or “No Party” (Appendix II, E).

Only 27 percent of the population had taken an art class while in college, which could have led to greater awareness of graphics and branding. 70 percent of participants said that the candidate’s stances on issues were the most important factor in deciding who to vote for, while only 5 percent admitted to letting campaign marketing influence their vote. Responses to characteristic questions did not vary based on the political ideology of the participant.
B. Stars

With a statistically significant response, \(p < 0.0733\), voters in Block A were twice as likely to not support Gary Caldwell than voters in Block B. The only difference made between these two groups was the use of a graphic star in the center of the graphic line below the candidate’s name. Nearly 21 percent of subjects in Block A, responded that they would not vote for Gary Caldwell in the open seat race, whereas, only 13 percent of voters in Block B, said they would not vote for Gary Caldwell (Appendix III, A). This statistically significant response indicates a voter preference for candidates that use graphic stars in their campaign marketing material.

Party affiliation had no bearing on the results of this treatment. In the Post-Identification section of the experiment, participants in both groups identified the Gary Caldwell for Congress logo with a star as the graphic they had seen. This statistically significant response, \(p < 0.0957\), shows voter favorability towards the version of the logo that utilized a graphic star. In the final stage of the post-experiment, 86 percent of the subjects said they preferred the version of the logo with the star to the version of the Caldwell logo that was plain (Appendix III, B).

C. Font

With a statistically significant response, \(p < 0.0070\), voters in Block A were twice as likely to not support Andrew Camp as voters in Block B. The only difference made between these two groups was the use of a serif or sans-serif font for the campaign logo. Roughly 62 percent of subjects who viewed the sans-serif font, compared to 38 percent of those who saw the serif font, said they would not vote for Andrew Camp (Appendix III, B).
serif logo responded that they would vote for Andrew Camp in the open seat race but 78 percent of subjects who viewed the more professional serif logo reported they would vote for Andrew Camp (Appendix III, C). This statistically significant response indicates an overwhelming voter preference for candidates that use serif fonts in their campaign marketing material.

As in the first treatment, party affiliation had no bearing on the results. In the Post-Identification section of the experiment, participants in Groups A and B identified which version of the Camp for Congress logo they had seen with equal error, but a greater number of voters identified having seen the serif-typeface version of the logo. In the preference section of the post-experiment, about 60 percent of voters said they preferred the version of the logo that utilized the serif-font, which supports the hypothesis that the “professional” and “official” feeling of serif fonts, is more appealing to voters when comparing candidates (Appendix III, D).

![Votes Against Jackson](image)

[Table 4: Percentage of Blocks A and B voting against candidate, Jackson.]

D. Color

With a statistically significant response, \( p<0.0001 \), voters in Block B were overwhelmingly more likely to support Jerry Jackson than voters in Block A (Table 4). The only difference made between these two groups was the use a white-based graphic with blue text, compared to a blue-based graphic with white text. Approximately 45 percent of subjects who viewed a logo with a blue background responded that they would not vote for Jerry Jackson in the open seat race, while only 20 percent of subjects who viewed a logo with a white background responded that they would not support Jackson’s campaign (Appendix III, E). This statistically significant response indicates an overwhelming preference for candidates that use white backgrounds and blue text over candidates using blue backgrounds and white text.

With a closer look at the data, it becomes apparent that the vote of participants who iden-
tified themselves as Republicans dramatically altered the data (Appendix III, G). Subjects who identified themselves as Democrats were relatively consistent between Blocks A and B, in whether they would vote for Caldwell. In Block A, where subjects saw the blue background, 31 percent said they would not support the candidate and 20 percent said they would not vote for Caldwell when they saw the white logo. Contrastingly, the subjects who identified themselves as Republicans varied greatly. Fifty-five percent of Republicans who saw the blue logo in Block A said they would not vote for Caldwell, compared to only 9 percent of Republicans who saw the white logo in Block B. This large skew between the votes of Democrats and Republicans would have greatly skewed the results of the election. In the Post-Identification section of the experiment, participants in Groups A and B were able to accurately identify which version of the Jackson for Congress logo they had seen. In the preference section of the post-experiment, 75 percent of voters said they preferred the version of the logo that utilized a white background and blue font, which contradicted the hypothesis that a colored background would be perceived by voters as being more branded and convey more emotion (Appendix III, F).

Although no textual clues indicated that the candidate was affiliated with either party, the overwhelming response against the blue-background logo by Republicans Jackson was perceived as a Democrat and therefore voted against because of subliminal color cues. Subjects subliminally associated the color blue with the Democratic Party, the political party commonly associated with that color, regardless of whether the candidate held the same ideology or not. Fifty-seven percent of Republican-won districts studied in the content analysis, used blue as the background color of their logo, including all three seats which switched political party. It is possible that the blue background appealed more to districts that had previously been held by a Democrat because the winning candidate, though a Republican, was perceived as more moderate because of the blue background. Another theory for why the Jackson
logo was overwhelmingly preferred on the white-background logo in the preference section of the post-test could be a result of the stark difference between the white-background logos of every other candidate and the blue-background logo. It is reasonable to think that the bold difference of the blue was overwhelming, and therefore unfavorable to voters.

E. Stand-alone Graphic

No statistically significant trend (p<0.50) was established between the preferences of voters in Block A and Block B. This experiment showed the greatest variation between the design of shown in the two blocks, with one Mills for Congress logo mirroring the Caldwell logo with a star and the other logo testing the theory of a standalone logo with an eagle accent. Approximately one-third of subjects who viewed the logo without the eagle design responded that they would not vote for Evan Mills in the open seat race when the logo was the standard design, and 33 percent of subjects who viewed the logo with the eagle also reported that they would not vote for Evan Mills (Appendix III, H).

Party affiliation had no bearing on the results of this treatment. In the Post-Identification section of the experiment, participants in Groups A and B selected with statistical significance, p<0.0052, the same version of the Mills for Congress logo. This could be explained by the fact that the logo with the star was a mirror of a logo used earlier in the experiment. In the preference section of the post-experiment, 52.52 percent of voters said they preferred the version of the logo that utilized the serif-font and star, as opposed to the 47.14 percent that favored the logo with the eagle icon (Appendix III, I). This opposes the hypothesis that the candidate with the iconic logo would be more favorable with voters.
F. Memory check and participant preferences

The second part of the post-test is a post-identification of the graphics from the candidate materials. In this part, participants were shown both the Block A and Block B version of the graphics, and asked to identify which version of the graphic they had seen (Appendix I, K). The purpose of this exercise was to see if the participant had paid enough attention to, or remembered the graphic enough, to recall which version they had seen. In the Caldwell logo, the mean of participants in both blocks indicated that they had seen the version exposed to Block A, the one utilizing a star (Appendix III, J). In the Camp election post-test, the mean of participants in both blocks indicated a mixed result that implies participants were unable to decipher the subtle difference between the two variations, making their overwhelming preference even more influential (Appendix III, K). Only in the stark contrast of the blue or white logo Jackson memory-check, were participants able to correctly identify with a statistical significance, which logo they had seen (Appendix III, L).

The final part of the post-test is a logo preference (Appendix I, L). Participants see both versions of the logos for each candidate again, but are asked to pick which version of the graphic they prefer. The purpose of this exercise was to see if trends existed between which version of the graphic participants thought they saw, and the version of the graphics they preferred. In the Caldwell logo, the preferences of the voters mirrored the likelihood of support by the two groups and the graphic with the star was more favorable. The Camp logo with the serif font, was overwhelmingly favored among voters, which also mirrored the likelihood of support by the voters in the initial stage of the experiment. The Jackson logo in blue was overwhelmingly disliked by both voters and in the preference poll. Lastly, the Mills polls show the greatest conflict in the results. The iconic logo showed no statistical significance among voters in the initial phase of the experiment, but still managed to win support from 47 percent of the subjects.

The final question of the experiment asks participants which version of the four variables the participant preferred. The purpose of this question was to evaluate which trend was most popular among the electorate – the star, sans-serif font, blue background or stand-alone graphic.
The Gary Caldwell logo took a tremendous 60 percent of the vote. Given the strong statistical significance of the preference for the Caldwell graphic with the star, it is easy to understand why the Caldwell logo was so popular in the final preference poll. Surprisingly, the Mills logo garners 24.29 percent of the votes for final preference, a large jump from the lack-luster preference indicated when comparing the two variations of the Mills logo, or the poor logo identification. The Camp and Jackson logos that use blue and a sans-serif font finish with 9.52 and 6.67 percent of the vote, respectively, which is understandable given how unfavorable the logos were when comparing the Block A and Block B adaptations of the logos.

**IX. Conclusion**

For campaigns developing marketing materials to increase name recognition and likelihood of support, understanding whether certain graphic trends appeal to voters with greater frequency will maximize sparse funds. Literature shows that voters do use shortcuts ranging from party identification to endorsements when deciding which candidates to support (Lupia 1994) and consumers are drawn to well-branded and products and graphics with moderate complexity (Rafaeli 2008). The influence of the Obama campaign in 2008 showed us that graphics and branding can play a vital role in making candidates memorable and appealing to voters (Seidman 2010, Nee 2011). This understanding of the influence of graphics leaves open opportunity for better understanding of how to convey election material to voters in a more appealing and memorable manner.

Success of each experimental hypothesis was determined by how many individuals “voted” for a candidate in the experiment and chose the graphics in the various forms of post-experiment feedback. Since the experiment was conducted on a university campus, and used undergraduate students as its population, it will most closely reflect the views of the youngest demographic of voters, and may not reflect the general population. Further studies could indicate if the use of undergraduate students could influence the results if younger students are more easily swayed by this type of shortcuts and by marketing graphics.
Further research could also explain whether these rules continue to apply in elections for lower levels of office. Candidates for city council or state legislature often explicitly mention their party affiliation through words or graphics, and the use of colors like yellow and green are far more common. Do these colors have meaning to voters at lower levels? It would be reasonable to think that a candidate for school board might see success using yellow, which is commonly the color of school buses, but would a candidate for city council have success, too? Is the mention of party affiliation, whether through text or graphics, more beneficial to candidates at the lower level where voters need more cues to make decisions about less discussed races?

There is no literature or indication within the data that would guarantee that a House candidate’s following of a branding formula would result in election-day victory. However, literature and theory, supported by experiment results, indicate that when a complete brand that follows the trends outlined is used, the likelihood that candidate will be elected increases greatly. Further analysis could explain through case studies if more graphically complete brands are a reflection of the organization and general meaning of the campaign. It would be reasonable to think that a more complete campaign, that has meaning, or ideas, that appeals to voters and a good organization, would think to insure that their marketing material was packaged in a way that was appealing to the voting public. However, the McKinley campaign from West Virginia’s 1st District, that was part of the content analysis pool and the inspiration for the Evan Mills candidate, is proof that candidates with inconsistent branding can still get elected.

The results of the experiment provide strong support for the hypothesis that trends exist in establishing design elements that are favorable among voters. However, success in product branding, whether measured in sales or election victory, will only come if there is good overall quality in the product being promoted. This quality is the meaning and ideas conveyed in the design, and are physical products in sales or ideas and campaign promises in politics. As discussed, it is imperative that branding is consistent, used repeatedly, and is moderately complex and relevant and mirrors the quality of the organization it seeks to represent. This relevance means having content whose color, text and graphics embody the environment the logo is being used.
For United States House of Representative logos, the results of this study indicate that candidates should consider using white backgrounds and blue text with red graphics. The patriotic colors provide complexity to the graphic while adding relevance to the logo given the context of its use. Graphic lines and stars are other integral parts to a successful campaign logo, by providing another element of complexity to a candidate’s logo, and adding elements of relevance when comparing the items to the American flag. Serif fonts provide credibility and provide more relevance to a logo of a new candidate looking to increase name recognition and appear viable, legitimate and electable. Lastly, candidates should consider straying away from untraditional, iconic graphic elements that do not appeal to voters. Variety in font styles, arrangement of elements, spacing and element styles leave plenty of room for future candidates to infuse personality into their campaign logos.

It is outstanding that simple manipulations of elements like font and color can imply subtle context clues that sway subjects to vote for or against a candidate. These simple changes convey subliminal messages about the viability, legitimacy, electability, ideology and patriotism of candidates that leaves an undeniable explanation of graphical elements that truly are necessary for the success of a candidate's ability to convey their campaign to voters.

This insight opens up a new area of study for political scientists to better understand the minds of voters. As mentioned before, certain elements may be more popular among different demographics, genders, races, or political parties. As new design trends become popular in the consumer marketing world, their popularity can be tested in a new area of consumption. Most importantly, these insights will allow campaigns to better focus their resources into a more narrowed style of design, and better understanding of the importance of branding and packaging material.
X. Appendix I: Experiment Information

A. The screen presented to students, providing the opportunity to opt-out of the experiment.

This study is being conducted by Kristen Ditsch to complete work for an undergraduate thesis. This work is being used solely for educational purposes and as part of a course requirement.

Data obtained from this research will never be connected to your name and is completely anonymous. Data obtained from this study will never be published and will not be displayed in any identifying manner. This data will only be used for educational and course-work purposes.

Finally, to maintain full anonymity, I am not responsible for assigning credits for study completion.

By selecting I agree to participate you acknowledge that you understand the conditions of participation.

Note: If you select "I DO NOT agree to participate" you will immediately be taken to the end of this study and will not be able to take it.

- I agree to participate.
- I do not agree to participate.
B. The second page of the experiment, shown to all students who agree to participate in the survey. These questions were used to understand the demographic characteristics of the survey population.
C. The explanation of materials presented to the population before the viewing of the campaign marketing materials.

The following are materials from biography pages of candidate websites. These candidates are each running in open-seat United States House races, which means that neither the candidate shown, nor their opponent, currently holds the seat. These candidates are not running against one another, and your evaluation of the materials is to be for each, independent race.

D. The questions asked of participants in both blocks after each candidate’s marketing materials are shown.

How likely are you to vote for Jerry Jackson for U.S. Congress?
- Highly Likely
- Somewhat Likely
- Slightly Likely
- Not Likely at All

Please rate this candidate on a scale of 0 to 50, where 0 means you do not like Jerry Jackson at all, and 50 means you like Jerry Jackson very much.
E. The “About the Candidate” page presented to participants for the first candidate, Gary Caldwell, a district attorney from Massachusetts. The use of the star in the graphic line was the point of difference between the two blocks.

Gary Caldwell
for Congress

As a District Attorney, Gary Caldwell has pursued some of Massachusetts’ toughest cases, making our communities safer and stronger. He knows how to balance a budget and meet a payroll. He has worked on community-based crime prevention. He has cracked down on white-collar criminals who committed financial crimes against the public and cybercriminals who thought they could hide behind a screen. Most importantly, the job has given him a unique view into the needs of our families, children and communities. As a lawmaker, he sought commonsense solutions for the problems our families are facing. But it’s not just what Gary Caldwell has done that makes him the best candidate for Congress, it’s how he did it — with integrity, independence and vision.

The son of a Police Officer who served in the Seabees in WWII and then became a Veterans Services Agent, Gary put himself through Boston College by working at his local post office. He learned the values of public service and hard work at a very early age and has put them to work for us.

In the State House, Gary took on Beacon Hill politics as usual and gained a reputation for being willing to stand up to his own party’s leadership in favor of tough but necessary reforms — and to help the taxpayer. He helped improve our public safety laws, worked to protect consumers, targeted drug traffickers, protected victims of crime and passed commonsense environmental protections. Caldwell has been a fierce defender of the environment, writing the tough law that protects lakes and streams in Massachusetts from chemical pollution and ended the sales tax on services and the estate tax. To protect our families, District Attorney Caldwell has worked to reduce incidences of domestic violence, has cracked down on white-collar criminals, scam artists and sexual predators, and has brought law enforcement and community members together to increase crime prevention efforts.

Now Gary is ready to shake things up in Washington and get the results our families deserve — by bringing his tough, smart and effective problem-solving approach to Washington — a place that sorely needs it.

Gary and his wife, Tavis, have two college-age children, Kristen and Patrick.
F. The “About the Candidate” page presented to participants for the second candidate, Andrew Camp, from Philadelphia. The use of the a sans-serif font in the graphic was the point of difference between the two blocks.
A graphic explaining the difference between serif and sans-serif fonts.
The “About the Candidate” page presented to participants for the third candidate, Jerry Jackson, a state senator from California. The use of blue as the dominant design color and white as the font color, or its inverse, was the point of difference between the two blocks.

Jerry Jackson
for Congress

Senator Jerry Jackson was elected to California’s 12th Senate District in November of 2002, representing the valley counties of Stanislaus, Merced, Mariposa, as well as the counties of Monterey, and San Benito counties. In 2006, voters re-elected Jerry by a landslide margin.

After graduating from California Polytechnic State University, Jerry began working in the agriculture field, where he has since started several successful agriculture-based businesses.

Jerry and Sonja Jackson have been married for 18 years and have two children, thirteen year old Austin and eleven year old Samantha.
I. The “About the Candidate” page presented to participants for the fourth and final candidate, Evan Mills, an engineering business owner from West Virginia. The use of a graphic that could potentially standalone, the eagle, was the point of difference between the two blocks.
J. The questions from the first page of the experiment post-test were shown to all participants. These questions were used to understand more characteristics about the survey population.
K. The post-test identification of the candidate logo used to see if participants could accurately remember which version of the logo they had seen.

L. A post-test check to see which version of each candidate logo participants preferred.
M. A post-test check to see which version of all variable candidate logos, the participants preferred.

N. The new Obama 2012 logo, which includes the modified 2008 campaign font, that now includes serifs.
O. Samples of the use of the Obama logo to target specific groups.

P. Samples of the use of the red fields from the Obama logo in the Gotham font to appeal to geographic targeted audiences.
Q. Variations in the McCain campaign logo discussed by “Brand Coalition.”

![McCain Logo](image1)

R. List of graphic elements in 2010 campaign logos evaluated in content analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points of Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of candidate first name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of candidate last name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of election year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listing position sought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of the color red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of the color blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of white space as a color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using another color, indicate color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a star as a graphical element</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a flag, or flag-like graphic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a graphic line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a symbol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol used as stand-alone image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a serif font</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent logo use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party-affiliation of the candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color of the candidate's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background color of the graphic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accent color used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
S. A table of results from the content analysis of 2010 campaign logos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points of Analysis</th>
<th>Percent Responded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of candidate first name</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of candidate last name</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of election year</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listing position sought</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of the color red</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of the color blue</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of white space as a color</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using another color, indicate color</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a star as a graphical element</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a flag, or flag-like graphic</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a graphic line</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a symbol</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol used as stand-alone image</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a serif font</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent logo use</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party-affiliation of the candidate</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All participants agree to participate in survey.

Yes

All participants agree to participate in survey.

No

Participant leaves survey.

All participants asked characteristic questions.

- Age
- Gender
- Race
- School of major
- Year in school

[Participants randomly assigned.]

Block A
Please evaluate each of the following materials for candidates running in open-seat U.S. House Races.

Gary Caldwell for Congress

Andrew Camp for Congress

Jerry Jackson for Congress

Evan Mills for Congress

[All participants merged.]

All participants asked characteristic questions.

- Party Affiliation
- Political Ideology
- Level of Political Activity
- Part-time work
- Hometown
- College Coursework
- Buying Choices
- Political Action Choices

Post-Identification and Preference
XI. Appendix II: Participant Population

A. Graph and table depicting the age of the experiment population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>24.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>26.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>29.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 22</td>
<td>5.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Graph and table depicting the race of the experiment population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>82.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Graph and table depicting the year in school of the experiment population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>20.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>32.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>30.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>14.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Graph and table depicting the ideology of the experiment population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>39.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>37.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>23.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
E. Graph and table depicting the ideology of the experiment population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>39.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>19.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>31.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/No Party</td>
<td>10.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
XII. Appendix III: Results

A. Table showing t-test results of Caldwell election studying stars.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Block A</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>.2072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block B</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>.1714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Graph and table showing voter preference poll of Caldwell logos.

C. Table showing t-test results of Camp election studying font.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Block A</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>.378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block B</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Graph and table showing voter preference poll of Camp font.

E. Table showing t-test results of Jackson election studying color.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Block A</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>.446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block B</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F.  Graph and table showing voter preference poll of Jackson color.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Version A</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>25.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version B</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>74.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G.  Table showing t-test results of Jackson election studying color, comparing political party affiliation of participants by percent voting against.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Block A</th>
<th>Block B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>54.94</td>
<td>8.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>30.95</td>
<td>20.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H.  Table showing t-test results of Mills election studying the use of a stand-alone graphic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Block A</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>.3304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block B</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I.  Graph and table showing voter preference poll of Mills and the use of a stand-alone graphic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Version A</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>52.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version B</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>47.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
J. Table showing t-test results of voter post-identification test of the two Caldwell logos. Mean average shows the average score of participants in each block, between Variation A and B. On average, most participants in Blocks A and B selected the Block A version of the graphic as what they recalled seeing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1.324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1.242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

K. Table showing t-test results of voter post-identification test of the two Camp logos. Mean average shows the average score of participants in each block, between Variation A and B. On average, most participants in Blocks A and B had a mixed response to which version of the logo they saw, indicating the changes were subliminal and making the difference in the initial voting response and post-test preference more compelling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1.459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1.495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L. Table showing t-test results of voter post-identification test of the two Jackson logos. Mean average shows the average score of participants in each block, between Variation A and B. On average, most participants in Blocks A and B correctly recalled which version of the logo they had been shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1.189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>1.658</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M. Table showing t-test results of voter post-identification test of the two Jackson logos. Mean average shows the average score of participants in each block, between Variation A and B. There was no pattern to explain what version of the logo participants thought they had seen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1.297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1.469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
XIII. Reference


