

Brands are perceived in the same way as faces

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A recent study on the psychology of trademarks shows that they are perceived by the same psychological mechanisms as those, which enable the recognition of faces. The survey, whose result is particularly interesting for the advertising industry and brand management, originated at the Institute for Experimental Business Psychology at Leuphana University of Lüneburg.

For their investigation, Leuphana researchers Rainer Hoeger and Anne Lange compared the reactions of viewers to 16 well-known brands, such as Coca Cola, Rolex, Porsche or Apple and 18 computer-generated [faces](#). The evaluation of the faces had already been tested in previous studies. The subjects of the study were asked to evaluate both pictures according to predefined categories. They were asked, among other things, to evaluate them according to trustworthiness, care, strength or assertiveness.

The investigations showed that two basic dimensions dictated a large proportion of the way not only trademarks, but also faces are perceived. One of the dimensions constitutes overall assessment. It represents the observer's assessment of how trustworthy [brand](#) marks or persons are and how well-disposed they are towards them. The other dimension concerns the impression of strength. This involves acting on the ability to correctly detect intentions - be they good or bad.

Well-known brands are inclined to use the faces of celebrities, believing they will bring a lot of attention. Regardless of the popularity of the

advertising medium, the observer also links their image to certain properties. It is also possible to test whether this fits the brand image. The newly acquired knowledge about the perception of faces and associated brands will help better identify what determines the perception of brands and how to influence this process. This will create new opportunities for the management and the targeted improvement of brand images.

More information: Lange, Anne; Hoeger, Rainer (2015). Do Brands and Faces Share the Same Perceptual Space? *World Review of Business Research* 5 (2), 163-176.

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