

Kraft Foods

New: Corporate identity (formal name, logo and tag line)

Launched: February 9, 2009 to employees, February 17 to public

Relaunched: June, 2009

Story in brief:

(June update) Listening to consumers, Kraft's leaders have modified the corporate presence they launched just four months ago.

Question: Do design blogs influence business leaders? **Answer** (from Michael Mitchell, Senior Director External Communications): "They were not the primary drivers but they were a consideration. Obviously we listen to consumers, and the design community are consumers of our brand as well as of our products."

(February) Kraft Foods, you will recall, was acquired by Phillip Morris in 1988 and combined with General Foods, then spun out just two years ago.

Earlier this February, a Wall Street Journal story referred to Kraft Foods as "the maker of processed cheese," a gross understatement of the corporation's scope and scale. This was nobody's fault but Kraft's, which in recent years made no distinction between its corporate identity and its cheese-category brand; it used the "racetrack" mark for both purposes, thus assuring we would all make the same mistake... investors and analysts, too.

In a presentation to analysts, CEO Irene Rosenfeld fixed this, introducing a "higher purpose" (the tag line) and almost incidentally, "a new look and feel":
"Make today delicious' defines, unites and inspires us. During the past two years, we've built a solid foundation by reinvesting in our brands, putting a new organization in place and improving our cost structure. As the next step in our turnaround, we're adding three new ingredients to our recipe for success -- a higher purpose that acts as a common call to action, values in action that guide our behavior and a new look and feel to visually depict our renewed energy. Together, they will accelerate our journey from good to great." Adds Kraft chief marketing officer Mary Beth West, *"Going forward, [Kraft's new brand identity] defines, unifies and simplifies our employees and gets everyone thinking about one common purpose."*

A communications agency called Nitro Group designed the new logo, bundling lower-case type (in two weights) locked to a two-color tag line and to a swoosh, *"an upward, red smile exploding into an array of seven 'flavor bursts,' each of which represents a different division of Kraft's business. (The triangular shape, for instance, is meant to evoke Kraft's DiGiorno pizza brand.)"* (Brandweek)

Credits:

C.E.O. - Irene Rosenfeld

Identity design - February - Nitro Group

Identity design - June - Kraft credits Nitro plus teamwork from internal designers, the Genesis agency, and Landor Associates

First Impressions:

Strategy: By clearly distinguishing the corporate brand from the food category brand, Rosenfeld has made it possible to build a corporate culture (and reputation).

Execution - February: Unfortunately, it is amateurish. Far too much going on: it will clutter, not grace, things to which it is applied. Lighter-weight 'foods' is counterproductive; the swoosh and burst shapes don't work well with each other nor with the wordmark; and the tag line should not have been treated as integral to the logo.

Execution - June: Significantly improved. The "flavor burst" now has an anchor in Kraft, which is now the visual hero, underscored by a less intrusive "smile." The corporate name is whole again in weight, and the calmer tagline, while still uncomfortably close, is no longer necessarily integral to the mark.

Other Comments:

It's friendly enough without the lower-case K and F; caps would give it a little more of the corporate importance it deserves.

Corporate Brand Matrix ratings:

0% structural, 100% strategic, 0% functional (est.)