

Lesson 4: You Can't Sell This Thing

Summary

Grade Level: 6–12

Introduce students to new product trademarks/logos, packaging, and advertising. Teams of students will design and create a logo/trademark, packaging box, and poster for advertising their new product/invention. They will present their new product/invention, marketing items, and information about the marketing target audience, cost to produce, selling price, and storage/handling to the class.

State of Wisconsin Academic Standards

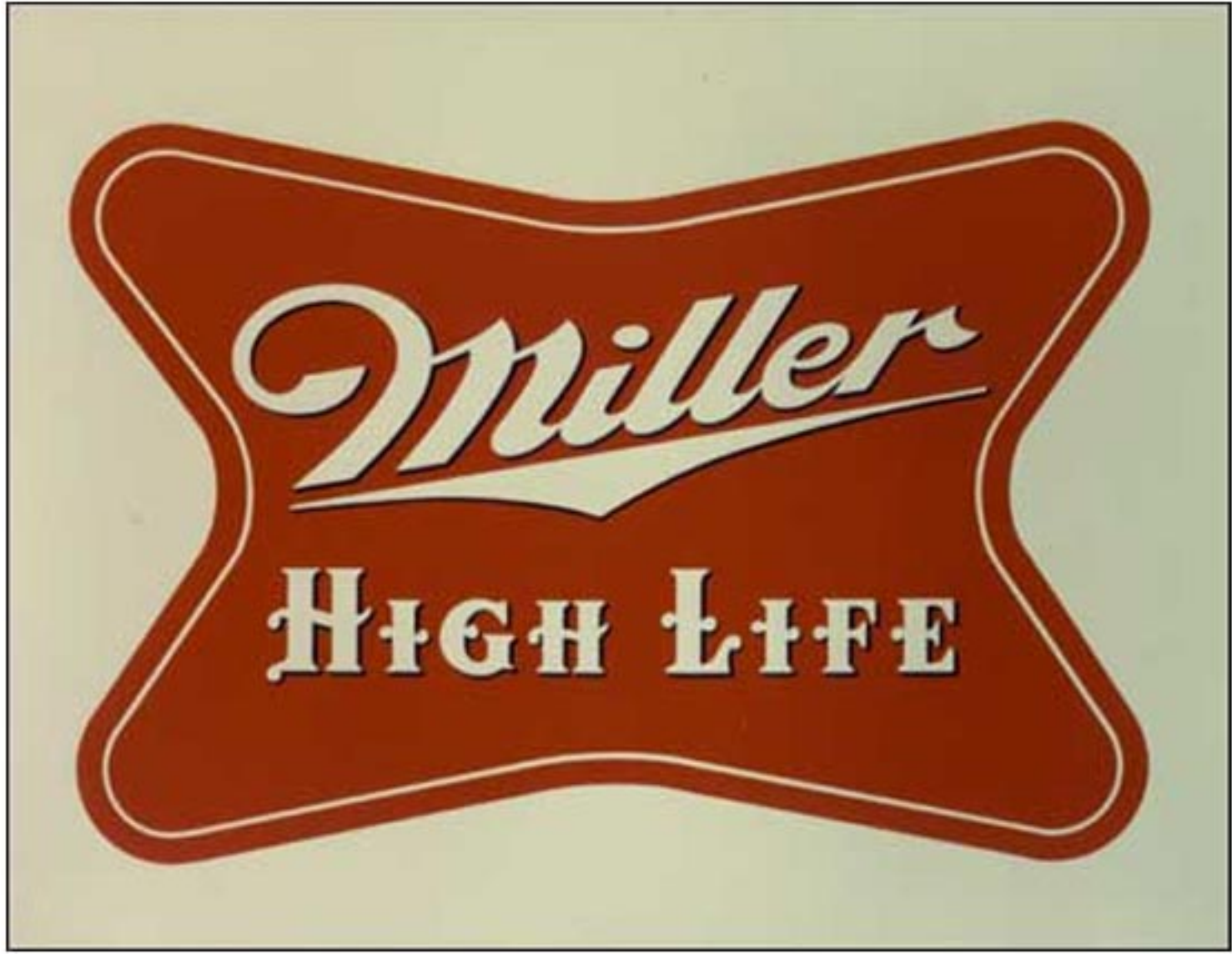
Fine Arts, Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Technology

Objectives

- Become aware of the types and importance of trademarks/logos
- Use design principles to develop a trademark/logo, packaging, and advertising poster for their new product
- Work in cooperative groups
- Become aware of the role and importance of mass-marketing and advertising
- Organize and present information in a logical format to the class
- Become aware of the concept and role of “planned obsolescence” in industrial design and mass-marketing

Materials Needed

- *Miller Brewing Logo, Wienermobile, Allen-Bradley Switchgear*
- Examples of various images of three types of trademarks/logos: descriptive, symbolic, and typographical
- Drawing paper and pencils, posterboard, paints, markers, colored pencils, rulers, x-acto knives, glue, tape, plastic wrap, cellophane, etc. and computer with drawing/paint or CAD software to make trademarks/logos, packaging boxes, and advertising poster



Miller Brewing Logo

What to Do

Using the preceding images of Brooks Stevens’ designs and images of other trademarks/logos, discuss with the students trademarks/logos.



Wienermobile

Originally, trademarks were used to identify products only. However, over the years the uses for trademarks have grown to include identification of organizations, corporations, companies, institutions, and services. Designed correctly, trademarks can be an extremely powerful tool—approximately 95% of the people in the United States are able to immediately recognize the McDonald’s trademark. What are other immediately recognizable trademarks that you are aware of? The main purpose of the trademark or logo is to identify an organization, product, or service.



Allen-Bradley Switchgear

Trademarks can be classified into three general groups: descriptive, symbolic, and typographic. These three types of logos can be found individually or in combination. Descriptive logos are those that visually describe an organization’s product. These are generally used by companies that produce only one type of product. The logo should be simple and easily recognizable.

- What is an advantage of using a descriptive logo? It can be an effective means to creating immediate recognition of an organization and its product.
- What are disadvantages of using this type of logo? If a logo design is based on a product, it automatically excludes any other unrelated product that may have been developed in later years; if a company’s product changes or evolves, the logo can be outdated and not represent the product that the company now produces.
- What are some recognizable descriptive trademarks that you are aware of?

Symbolic trademarks may be more appropriate for organizations that provide skills, services, information, or a wide variety of products. If a symbolic logo is designed correctly, it will provide a positive message and immediate recognition.

- What are some recognizable symbolic trademarks that you are aware of?
- What qualities or characteristics of the organization, product, or service can you identify that are incorporated into the logo designs you listed?

Typographical logos are probably the most common form of logo used through out the world. Typographical logos make use of letterforms. Letterforms can be a word or words, initials, or just a special letter. Typical letter uses on logos include distorting company initials, modifying letter shapes, or creating original letter shapes.

- What are some recognizable typographical logos that you are aware of in your community?

An important consideration for the design of a good logo is the ability to be reduced or enlarged and still be recognizable. A designer must pay particular attention to the logo's design to be sure it does not lose its message or become confusing when it is reduced or enlarged.

- What types of trademarks are used for the Miller Company, the Allen Bradley Company, and the Oscar Mayer Company? How successful is each trademark in representing the company, product, or service?

Allow time for the teams of students to develop an idea and rough drawing of a trademark/logo for their new product—created from either the previous Design a Better Bag or Design a New Product lesson plan. The logo can be descriptive, symbolic, typographic, or a combination. Encourage the students to design an original logo that is no larger than 5 x 5 in. The logo should reflect the design principles of proportion, balance, contrast, rhythm, and unity. Review the design principles with your students as necessary. Use images of various logos as inspiration. Using the computer, have the students draw and print the final logo designs.

Discuss with your students how packaging plays an important role in the marketing and distribution of products. In today's world of mass-marketing and self-service, a product package is much more than just a container. Packaging may be made from a wide variety of materials including paper and related materials, plastics, glass, wood, composites, and metals. The design, shapes, colors, and materials represent considerable efforts by companies to produce functional and attractive packaging design.

- What are some types of specialized packaging that you use? [examples: glass for expensive perfumes, plastic pump containers for toothpastes, microwaveable containers for food, resealable foil packaging for cereal boxes]

Packages for products must be designed to take several factors into account. First the package must protect the contents. Every other consideration is secondary to the function of the package as a utilitarian container. Second, a package design must meet reasonable cost standards because in many cases the cost of packaging is a major expense for most companies. Once these two requirements of package protection and costs have been satisfactory met, marketing and advertising considerations can be undertaken.

The functional and aesthetic parts of a package design are directed toward a package design that is easy to handle and store, is durable, does not soil readily, stacks neatly, and is suitable for its contents. Color, transparent windows, text, and graphics are used to make a product package more attractive to potential buyers of the product. Additionally, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act of 1966 states that packaging and labeling should enable consumers to obtain accurate information as to the quality of the content and should enable the consumer to make value comparisons.

Allow time for the students to design and construct a prototype box format package for their new product/invention that includes the following: Trademark/Logo, Price Dot, UPC Label, Brand Name, Consumer Information, Weight of Contents, Graphic/Color

The prototype package should reflect the design principles of proportion, balance, contrast, rhythm, and unity. Have the students note and document the marketing target audience, cost to produce, selling price, and ease of storage and handling by the consumer.

Encourage students to develop a slogan for their product/invention. Have students define the terms “slogan” and “jingle.” Discuss the purpose of having a slogan. Solicit examples of slogans/jingles from the students. Samples slogans include:

- “Things go better with Coke.”
- “COKE IS IT!”
- “TRIX ARE FOR KIDS®”
- “GE: WE BRING GOOD THINGS TO LIFE!®”

When a slogan is named, discuss reasons for its effectiveness. Allow time for thought in which the students can create slogans for their new products/inventions.

For a crash course in advertising, discuss the visual effect created by a television commercial, magazine or newspaper advertisement. Have the students collect some advertisements that are eye-catching and discuss them in class. Some of the advertisements might be dominated by words and others by images that "say it all." Have students create a poster to promote their new product/invention. The poster should include an advertising slogan, an image of the product/invention, and a description of product/invention. Additionally, the poster should reflect the design principles of proportion, balance, contrast, rhythm, and unity.

Have each student present their new product, prototype packaging, and advertising poster to the class. Think of the class as a board of directors for the company. Each 1 - 2 minute presentation of the new product/invention should include your new product/invention model, prototype packaging, advertising poster, marketing target, cost to produce, selling price, and storage/handling.

After the presentations, let the students choose five outstanding new products/inventions by using the ballot system. Then discuss with the students why the top five new products/inventions were chosen.

Using the chosen five outstanding new products/inventions, initiate a discussion about “planned obsolescence”. Have teams of students choose one of the five products/inventions and develop a list of potential changes for the product over a span of time. Below is suggested information about “planned obsolescence” for incorporating into discussions with your students.

What is “planned obsolescence”?

Stevens was proud to claim that he had coined the term “planned obsolescence,” by which he described a strategy for stimulating sales based on making products appear, through design, to be improved over their previous (equally functional) models. Today, planned obsolescence also is considered a method of stimulating consumer demand by designing products that wear out or become outmoded after limited use. What products do you use that wear out or become outmoded after limited use?

Where did the concept of “planned obsolescence” come from?

It stemmed from the 1920s in the United States, with obsolescence identified as the main means of ensuring economic prosperity. Christine Frederick, an early advocate of applying Frederick W. Taylor's Scientific Management techniques in the home, became a convert and argued the case for obsolescence in a book, *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, published in 1929. “The machine and power era,” she wrote, “makes it not only possible but vital to apply in the home the doctrine of creative waste. By this term I mean the relaxation, by those of us who can afford it, of the old desperate grip most of us had upon values and utility in goods.” Instead of holding on to possessions, a readiness to “scrap” or lay aside a product before its natural life of usefulness was completed, in order to make way for the newer and better product, was now the essence of order. This included a willingness to apply a large share of one’s income, even if it pinches savings, to the acquisition of the new goods or services or way of living.

What did Brooks Stevens think about “planned obsolescence”?

Stevens envisioned good design as always changing from year to year, so that it could keep up with new technologies and new social tastes and demands. The way Stevens saw it, this “planned obsolescence” keeps the wheels of production and consumption going at full tilt, to the benefit of the whole economy. For better or worse, his pragmatic vision—a design of constant flux that prizes the new above any objective standard of quality—is the kind of design that we live with today.

Didn't Brooks Stevens care about the environment?

Stevens lived in an era when people were not as conscious of threats to the environment as we are today. All the same, however, he was careful to say that planned obsolescence was not the same as organized waste. He envisioned “obsolete” products going on the secondhand market, where they could be purchased by people of lower incomes. That way, he reasoned, everyone would have access to more and better goods. Of course, it has not always worked out that way.

Teacher Options

- Have students develop and record a radio promotion of their new product/invention. The promo might include facts about the usefulness of the new product/invention, a clever jingle or song, sound effects, humor, etc.
- Hold a 'New Products Convention' or 'Inventions Convention' in the classroom and let the students choose five outstanding new products and/or marketing campaigns by using the ballot system. Then discuss with the students why the top five new products/inventions and/or marketing campaign were chosen. These could then be posted on a web page created by the class along with everyone's new products/inventions.
- Using paper maché technique, have students develop a three-dimensional promotional vehicle or helium-type advertising icon for their new product/invention.
- Have teams of students sketch a series of 'planned obsolescence' drawings for a chosen invention.