Say, when you think about marketing and branding, which logos do you think are the most famous logos in the whole world? Let's have some fun and speculate a bit about the most famous logos that we think many folks would quickly recognize…yeah, likely even billions of people!

For a start, how about looking at the world-famous McDonald's? Hey, the latest reports are that there are over 38,000 McDonald's locations in over 100 countries! That's a long way from the early years, when the McDonald brothers cut a deal with Ray Kroc, who in turn leveraged their simple but popular menu of burgers, fries, and milkshakes into what McDonald's is today.

And early on, the McDonald's locations that were built actually had giant, physically-imposing golden arches standing tall, often taller than the restaurant building itself. And that visual of golden arches has been carried forward for decades to this very day—with the McDonald's folks putting images of those arches on virtually everything imaginable, down to each disposable hamburger wrapper! And recently, in mainland China, McDonald's changed its official name to…yeah, you got it: *Golden Arches!* You would be hard-pressed to prove any logo is more recognizable worldwide than the golden arches of McDonald's!

But that won't stop us from taking the challenge of finding equally famous logos! So…how about the logo for Apple? 'Course, you're immediately visualizing it right now, aren't you? The classic apple profile with a bite taken out of it. That's the abiding power of a logo for a brand that's pounded the visual into us for decades, whether it's been MacBooks, Air Pods, or iPhones…or, of course, all three!

Then how about that three-pointed star in the middle of a circle that's found on every Mercedes Benz? Yeah, the vaunted German craftmanship in Mercedes cars is known throughout the world…that's why the Mercedes star has been readily recognized and, yes, flaunted for decades.

And then there's Toyota, with those two ovals fashioned into the letter "T." Toyota is a brand consistently ranked in the top ten worldwide. Speaking of the auto industry, Ford and Chevrolet and other American car brands are hardly ever mentioned on the world's top lists—sadly from too many years spent making good money sticking closer to home…while Toyota was building a robust, recognizable worldwide brand.

Sometimes the power of a logo is really kinda weird. How about a logo that's instantly recognized in virtually every country even though it only pops up every couple years? Yeah, you know what that is—the five intertwined rings of the Olympic games…both Summer and Winter! Five simple circles…five different classic colors—and I would bet you can name those colors with me: red, blue, green, gold, and black!

And you know what happened quite a bit later? Google pretty much "borrowed" those very same basic colors of red, blue, gold and green for some circles of their own—fashioned right there as the company letters spelling the name "Google"…of course, found right where we start so many of our searches.

And so, with that strategy, Google's logo is simply *its very name!* Yeah, but Google isn't alone in making a key word or two the key part of its visual image for branding! How about Kleenex, the brand of facial tissue that became so universal in usage that it became the generic word for facial tissue in America. Hey, how many of us say, "I need a facial tissue"…? Of course we don't: when we have a cold or even suffer an allergy attack, we immediately call out, "I need a Kleenex!" What we really mean is that we need a facial tissue…because when someone then hands you a facial tissue and you use it, you don't get suspicious and say: "Whoa, this isn't a Kleenex, this is an ordinary facial tissue!" Anyway, Kleenex has truly become the generic word for facial tissue. Kleenex isn't the only example of this…how about a Band-Aid, the bandage brand? And here are a few more fun ones. Q-tips. ChapStick. Bubble Wrap. Scotch Tape. Tupperware. Crock-Pot. And, yes, Google! Unless, for some reason, you're a fan of asking someone to "Bing it" for you!

Yes, all of these brand-words are powerful in themselves, beyond a visual logo. Interestingly, when you think of the word "Kleenex," you very likely remember it's presented in a cursive font…the closest one for that apparently is the Montauk Pro Bold font. So, the Kleenex impact is from a combination visual logo and one-word trademark, in a fashion that's often called a "wordmark" in the marketing world.

And you know other very well-known worldwide logos that use a cursive font. How about the wordmark for that enduring play doll *Barbie?* Yeah, those very bright-pink six letters recognized worldwide: *Barbie!* And how about one of the other very most famous six letters written in a cursive font layered on top of a fantasy-like castle—that's right, the word *Disney!* Using both a visual cue of the castle with a fun, cursive splash of the last name of the creator of Mickey Mouse, Goofy, and way beyond—Walt Disney!

But likely the most famous and enduring cursive logo and wordmark of all is one that's been found worldwide longer than virtually any other American company. Yeah, that's *Coca-Cola*—often with just-right-shade-of-red letters on a white background. That logo and trademark was in many a country around the world before virtually any other U.S. company. Yes, a logo, a wordmark. Powerful!

Probably the most well-known story about creating a logo is that of the so-called Nike Swoosh. You know what that swoosh looks like…I don't have to even describe it. That's powerful! The enduring story is that Nike cofounder Phil Knight wanted a simple logo that conveyed a feeling of motion and speed. The legend is that it symbolizes the wing of the Greek goddess of victory—of course, a goddess named Nike!

And you talk about a successful logo's impact in this crazy world. People around the world pay huge sums of money for all types and garments and shoes that have the Nike Swoosh on them. That's right, people actually pay Nike for the privilege of personally advertising Nike's identity and brand! Now that's marketing! An amazing part of the backstory of that world-famous swoosh logo is that it was created in 1971 for a $35 fee by a graphic artist by the name of Carolyn Davidson. How crazy is that?

Now that Nike Swoosh is seemingly everywhere. So is the wordmark of Nike. And sometimes the word "Nike" appears nestled on top of the swoosh. And Nike the company is now worth many billions of dollars. But twelve years after the Swoosh was created, Phil Knight presented that artist Carolyn Davidson with stock ownership in Nike and a gold ring in the shape of that Nike swoosh. Now that's cool!

McDonald's. Apple. Mercedes Benz. Coca-Cola. Disney. Nike. Seems like it would be super difficult to find a more successful logo or a wordmark-type of branding than these giants of brand identification. Except there really is one better than them all! And *you* know exactly what it is…

The Cross. Yes, the Cross…the visual reminder of the crucified Christ. Found the world over in humble one-room huts and in majestic churches alike. Found on gravesites. Found in artwork. Most important, the Cross has been found in the hearts and imprinted in the minds of hundreds of millions of serious Christians for over two millennia. …But it isn't all just about the visual of the Cross. Yeah, it's about a preeminent wordmark, a name above every other—the name of Jesus—the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior!

Peter said it this way in the earliest hours of the church, recorded in Acts 4:10-12 (ESV): "…let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Now that's extraordinary "branding"—yes, the visual of the Cross, purchased by the blood of Christ and often planted around the world by the spilling of the blood of martyrs. And the power of the name of Jesus Christ, that unique name read and heard and deeply treasured…then, now, and forevermore…and perfectly memorialized in the Bible by the Holy Spirit through several very human authors.

But how about the true, original *Logos*, the Greek word translated as "Word" in English that denotes Jesus Himself. The Apostle John wrote this in 1:14 (ESV), here using the original Greek word logos instead of the familiar use of *Word*. "And the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." So, here's the beginning and the end of it all. The most famous visual representation of an event in history? The Cross. And the most powerful logos in the world,…the name above all names? Yes, Jesus Christ. And we get to represent His brand. Whoa.

A&A: Application & Action

1. What's the consumer-targeted logo you identify with most powerfully? And what's the consumer-targeted name or wordmark you identify with most powerfully? Be specific about what dimension in particular produces your positive reaction.

2. In the current era in America, are the name of Jesus and the Cross lifted up in the best sense of the core purpose of the New Testament? Yes, in America, do you think "Jesus and the Cross" is mostly understood as being about good deeds…or condemnation of people…or solid moral teaching…or the Golden Rule…or a sacrifice made for all humankind unto salvation and eternal life? Discuss.

3. Whether considering the logos and names of consumer brands or the "brand" of the name of Jesus Christ and the visual image Cross, which approach do you find most effective and powerful: visual images…or a name…or a combination of the two? Discuss.