

## HISTORY OF BRANDING

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### ABSTRACT

Branding has a very long history, both in India and around the world. Brands were applied to cattle and humans before being it applied to products. Branding was existed almost in all the cultures around the world. But it was conceptualised only of late. Bass & Company, the British brewery, claims their red triangle brand was the world's first brand. This article documents to narrate the informations relating to the branding history in a lucid manner.

**Keywords:** Branding, cattle, human, products, Bass & Company

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### INTRODUCTION

Branding has a very long history, both in India and around the world. The concept of branding was in practice much earlier all over the world, but only of late it was acknowledged and conceptualised. This is an attempt to narrate the informations relating to the branding history in a lucid manner.

### OBJECTIVES AND METHOD

The prime objective of this article is to answer the question what the history of branding is. History says that branding has a very long history and a sincere effort is undertaken to through this article to narrate the same. The historical method is applied in this article to gain a better understanding of what brands and branding are, whether these phenomena have evolved over time, and if so, how. There is a precedent for the use of the historical method applied successfully to the discipline of marketing (Fullerton 1987, 1988; Low and Fullerton 1994; Nevett 1991 to name but a few) and it is expected that such a method will effectively shed light on the above-mentioned questions. The main reasons necessitating the use of historical method include the following: evidence suggesting that brands and branding did exist in ancient times, lack of research on these topics from prior to the 20th century and archaeological

observations from periods in history for which consumer responses or marketing literature are non-existent. Further, new methods now exist which have led to the discovery of artifacts previously unknown to our culture, and, which importantly shed light on the questions we are examining.

### BRAND - ETYMOLOGY

The term brand has been used for a long time in books, but its usage was quite different. Early usages of branding referred to stigmatisation. The word "brand" is derived from the Old Norse 'brandr' meaning "to burn." It refers to the practice of producers burning their mark (or brand) onto their products. In English lexicon, the word brand originally meant anything hot or burning, such as a firebrand, a burning stick.

### BRANDS APPLIED TO CATTLE

Ancient people around the world used marks to identify cattle. For over 4,000 years, brands have been used for identification of livestock. Branding of cattle and livestock go back as far as 2000 BC. The term "maverick," originally meaning an unbranded calf, comes from Texas rancher Samuel Augustus Maverick who, following the American Civil War, decided that since all other cattle were branded, his would be identified by having no markings at all.

Cave paintings in south-western Europe from the Stone Age and Early Bronze Age depict branded cattle, as do Egyptian wall paintings and tombstones dating back almost 4,000 years. The brands were painted on with pine tar or paint in early history. Later, when the vast trail herds of cattle were driven north to market, hot iron brands were used.

### **BRANDS APPLIED TO PRODUCTS**

Ancient people used brands to identify the ownership of goods. Pottery was one of the first products to be marked in this fashion. Chinese, Indian, Greek, and Roman pottery often bore the mark of the potter who had made the piece, as well as marks conveying the same sort of information about ownership, source of materials, and historical period that was stamped on other items produced in these cultures.

Some of the earliest examples of marked pottery appeared in China 4,000-5,000 years ago. Marks placed on Greek vases could denote not only the makers of the pieces but also the merchant who bought the items 'wholesale' and then sold them to others in the marketplace. Archaeologists have identified roughly 1,000 different Roman potters' marks in use during the first three centuries of the Roman Empire, which would seem to indicate that a large number of individuals were each producing a relatively small number of goods.

There were trademarks on pottery in Mesopotamia (now Iraq) dating as far back as 3000 B.C. At the time of the Pharaohs to identify their own products, brick makers in ancient Egypt placed symbols on their products.

Quarry marks and stonecutters' signs have been discovered on materials used in Egyptian buildings as much as 6,000 years ago. These marks and similar markings on ancient buildings in Greece, Israel, Syria

and Turkey seem to have more closely resembled modern trademarks in terms of their function. Quarry marks indicated the source of the stones used in buildings, and stonecutters' signs, which might be either painted on or carved into the stone, helped workers, prove their claims to wages. Medieval stonemasons in Germany developed a very elaborate system for crafting individualised marks that identified their work, but the purposes underlying the markings were the same.

Bricks and tiles from Mesopotamia and Egypt bore inscriptions indicating the name of the monarch who had commissioned the structure or who held power during the time of its construction. In contrast, Roman builders stamped their bricks and tiles to indicate the source of the raw materials used or to identify the person who either made the object or built the house in which it was used. Even the signatures on paintings of famous artists like Leonardo Da Vinci can be viewed as an early branding tool.

In the 1200s, England required bread makers, goldsmiths and silversmiths to put their marks on goods, primarily to insure honesty in measurement. In the Medieval times, printers also used marks as did paper makers (watermarks) and various other craft guilds.

### **BRANDS APPLIED TO HUMANS**

Humans were also brand and it is evident from the history. Fugitives, galley slaves, gypsies, vagabonds, brawlers, and the clergy have been marked with "symbols of shame" brands down through history. Between the 1600s and 1800s, criminals were branded (again literally) as a form of punishment and identification. For instance, in England, they branded an S on a person's cheek, while in France, they branded a fleur de lis on the shoulder. As repugnant as it may be

to us today, slaves were also branded roughly during the same time period to connote ownership.

### FIRST TRADEMARK

Factories established during the Industrial Revolution introduced mass produced goods and needed to sell their products to a wider market, to customers previously familiar only with locally produced goods. It quickly became apparent that a generic package of soap had difficulty competing with familiar, local products (Khan & Mufti, 2007). In the 19th century with the advent of packaged goods, industrialisation moved the production of many household items, such as soap, from local communities to centralised factories. When shipping their items, the factories would literally brand their logo or insignia on the barrels used, extending the meaning of "brand" to that of trademark.

The packaged goods manufacturers needed to convince the market that the public could place just as much trust in the non-local product. Campbell soup, Coca-Cola, Juicy Fruit gum, Aunt Jemima, and Quaker Oats were among the first products to be 'branded', in an effort to increase the consumer's familiarity with their products. Many brands of that era, such as Uncle Ben's rice and Kellogg's breakfast cereal furnish illustrations of the problem.

After the 1862 Merchandise Marks Act and the 1875 Trade Marks Registration Act were instituted a plethora of branded and mass-produced consumer goods appeared which offered consistent quality and identical shape and size (Patent Office 1976; Mendenhall 1989).

Bass & Company, the British brewery, claims their red triangle brand was the world's first trademark. Lyle's Golden Syrup makes a similar claim, having been named as Britain's oldest brand, with its green and gold

packaging having remained almost unchanged since 1885. Another example comes from Antiche Fornaci Giorgi in Italy, whose bricks are stamped or carved with the same proto-logo since 1731, as found in Saint Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.

According to Business Week, 30% of the World's 100 Most Valuable Brands were developed before 1900.

Year Founded	Brand
1892	Coca-Cola
1876	GE
1890	Mercedes
1812	Citibank
1850	American Express
1869	Gillette
1795	Budweiser
1898	Pepsi
1855	Merrill Lynch
1891	Merck
1799	JPMorgan
1888	Kodak
1865	HSBC
1869	Heinz
1869	Goldman Sachs
1891	Wrigley's
1806	Colgate
1867	Nestle
1837	Tiffany
1862	Bacardi
1851	Reuters
1853	Levi's
1864	Smirnoff
1880	Johnson & Johnson
1743	Moet & Chandon
1863	Heineken
1849	Mobil
1850	Wall St. Journal
1820	Johnnie Walker
1866	Jack Daniels

Source: BusinessWeek

## NGRAM VIEWER

The Ngram Viewer, a tool launched by Google Labs, creates a graphical representation of how often a phrase has been used in books from a corpus of 5 million books published between 1500 and 2000 A.D. which have been digitised by the Google Books project.

The Ngram query shows that the term branding existed for a long time. The term trademark too had references in the early 1800s, its popularity rose significantly between 1850 and 1860. Between In 1857 trademark laws were enacted in France while in 1862 trademark laws were enacted in the UK. In 1883, the first international trademark agreement was reached at the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property. The countries involved in this convention agreed to provide the same protections regarding marks that they provide to their own nationals.

In 1876, Bass Brewery registered its Red Triangle trademark, which is regarded as the first ever registered trademark. Now famous brands Coca Cola was registered in 1887 while Quaker was registered as a trademark for oats in 1895. In the Ngram search for these brand names, it can be seen that references to all three - Red Triangle, Coca Cola and Quaker Oats started showing up around 1890/95.

In its early years, trademarks were used mainly as "differentiators". Around 1900, J.W.Thompson, a pioneer of advertising, published a house ad explaining trademark advertising. This was an early commercial explanation of what we now know as branding (Mollerup, 1999)

## CONCLUSION

People tend to think of branding as a modern day phenomenon. It is certainly not. During the late 1990s and the early 2000s, branding emerged as a significant area and it became omnipresent. Proctor & Gamble and other consumer product companies began branding their products in earnest in the mid-to-late 1800s. But branding goes far back in time. It may be originated: to insure honesty, provide quality assurance, identify source or ownership, hold producers responsible, differentiate, as a form of

identification and to create emotional bonding. Simply stating, history provides only some insight and perspective on the history of branding.

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