

FIRST

Company Logo Smackdown

THE KANSAS JAYHAWK VS. THE MEMPHIS TIGER. Mac's Apple vs. Nike's Swoosh. What makes a symbol great? Logomakers say the best corporate icons not only are instantly recognizable but also convey trust, loyalty, and superiority. To determine the best of the 500, we staged a tournament, seeding logo against logo and enlisting a panel of experts (see below) to pick the winners—and an ultimate champion. —Scott Cendrowski

Intel

Nike's simplicity outplays the chipmaker.

Nike

The Swoosh "stands on its own," while GE needs an assist from type.

GE

GE logo's "subtle movement" smokes Altria.

Altria

A lay-up for Target, which "turned this to-the-point logo into an event."

Target

A close call, but Target "is more distinct."

WINNER

As a Target is to an arrow, so the retailer's logo is to its shoppers. **Bull's-eye.**

The two circles score: "Witty simplicity overtakes relentlessness."

Target

A neat tie, but McDonald's "ruthless efficiency" shuts out the coffee mermaid.

McDonald's

Starbucks

Google

FedEx's hidden arrow rules (see the white space between the "E" and the "x").

FedEx

In this tight contest CBS's image trumps FedEx's text.

CBS

CBS: The eye is ultimately "a great fit" for a broadcast network.

Apple

Harley-Davidson's "loud and proud" bar and shield smears the deer.

Harley-Davidson

BofA: "A great symbol whups a bunch of type."

BofA

BofA's "flagscape" sends the bull to the slaughterhouse.

John Deere

Bank of America

Merrill Lynch

Our panelists: Howard Belk, co-president, and Sven Seger, creative director, Siegel+Gale; Michael Bierut, partner, Pentagram; Bill Gardner, principal, Gardner Design



MOST POLITICOS: Goldman Sachs employees and PACs gave \$3.3 million to candidates and parties from January 2007 through February 2008; 72% went to Democrats.