How To…Logos

Faye Mensah
California State University, Monterey Bay

Recommended Citation

How To…Logos

Faye Mensah

Keywords: Genre, Logos, Pixar, YouTube, CHAT

Who Do We Have Here?

I spy with my logo eye something red, yellow, green, and blue in the form of the letter G. Unless this top search engine no longer exists, the logo described should be Google. For the past few weeks I have been researching the making of logos and how most people learn where and how to create one. So far I have discovered that logos are a widely acquired activity. Though there are many sources for learning how to create logos and brands, most of these sources collectively utilize YouTube to reach their audiences. I have spent much time CHATting about how to make a logo. For those without knowledge of CHAT or need a quick refresher, it is the Cultural Historical Activity Theory, which explores how people, ideas, and objects coordinate to carry out an objective or activity. In simple terms, it is an Activity System. CHAT can be broken down into seven concepts: production, representation, activity, distribution, reception, socialization, and ecology. Each is equally important when thoroughly conducting an activity, whether people realize they follow the concepts or not. These concepts are not easy to comprehend, even for myself. However, there is someone who needs more understanding than me this time; therefore, let's grab a little help.

Meet the Hoodoo Cycle (Figure 1), it will be taking me and you (the Hoodoo Cyclers), on a research adventure. Today's adventure is of course on logos, how to make them and where to learn how to make them. However Cyclers, we are not alone in this. I would like to introduce Nana (Figure 2)! She is a friend from the CHAT Activity Analysis System who CHATed with past readers like you, through the activity of Pixar animation. Nana is also a Storyteller and Story Artist at Pixar. Currently, she has been assigned with developing a logo for an animated film's antagonist company, as well as been asked to be the next video
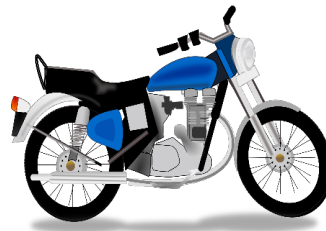

Figure 1: Hoodoo Cycle

instructor for Pixar and Khan Academy's online course Pixar In a Box. The instructional video, which will give details on how to make and use logos for animated films, will also be placed onto Khan Academy's YouTube channel. But what's the problem? Nana has no idea how to design a logo or make a video… but she is about to learn! What better way to learn than by using a "How To" video online. "How To" YouTube videos are number one! Hop onto a cycle Nana, it is time to begin the Production.

Figure 2: Meet Nana

Production

First steps first Cyclers, we need to utilize the rules, tools, and structures designed in order to create a YouTube video. This is known as Production. Most videos on YouTube need to be prepared, shot, edited, re-edited, detailed, uploaded, and promoted. The process is very similar to making a presentation, film, or story. YouTubers rely heavily on their content selection, screen presence, camera, editing, and promotion. Look (Figure 3)! Nana found a WikiHow article discussing the step by step process for making a "How To" YouTube video, starting with the preparation for the video to promoting the video on a YouTube channel. There

are four steps in shooting alone that discuss the importance of character on screen, "1: Take a few deep breaths and relax. Don't harbor any feeling of tension, or anxiety." YouTube "How To" video hosts seem to require constant reminder of this for this video to be successful. It insists on a peer-to-peer like scenario where the host needs to communicate with the audience in a manner that is approachable. Anyone who clicks play should be able to listen without feeling intimidated. Being a promoter for Pixar and Khan Academy, Nana will probably use a confident and slightly humorous screen character.

Figure 3: Nana and Her Laptop

This is great Nana, now you have an idea about the production of the video. And rest assured, this wonderful piece of information is notable. In Brandon Widder's article "From Start to Finish, DT's Definitive Guide to Creating and Uploading YouTube Videos," he states that the process includes, "Choosing your content…recording your YouTube video…editing your YouTube video…[and] uploading your YouTube video." Widder further discusses the importance of a strong screen personality and the

Figure 4: Surprised Nana

different computer cameras, tangible cameras, and video software that can be elicited for filming the video. The reason is quality. No one looking to learn from an online video will watch something if the image is of poor quality and cannot be clearly seen or heard. Nana seems a bit surprised (Figure 4) that "How To" videos are not much different than most other YouTube videos, except that they are specifically meant to teach an audience how to do…something. However, Nana has realized that all of these production tools and rules start with preparation or rather, planning. Seems our ride is far from over.

Representation

Engines off Cyclers, Nana needs to think (Figure 5). Representation is all about planning the genre, so how should she plan her video? Her content needs to include logos and how to make and utilize them in film, but what else requires consideration? Well Nana, allow the cyclers to and I to introduce

Avnish Parker, a young Creative Motion Graphic Designer and Sound Designer who uploads tutorials on effects, motion graphics, and logos using different software applications from Adobe Creative Cloud. From Parker's 2017 video, "How to Make Logo in Photoshop – Photoshop Tutorial for Beginners – Basic Idea," he explicitly explains in the video description how he wanted to create a video for people looking to brand, or make a Facebook page or YouTube channel, but are unable to hire a professional.
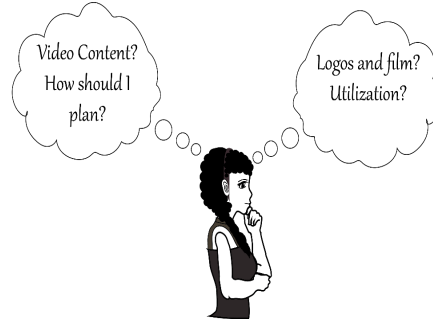

Figure 5: Nana's Thinking

In this video he shows (using a screen camera) the creation of a professional looking logo using Photoshop, "No creativity or designing skill required, just [a] simple few steps to follow, and you are good to go." Parker thoroughly accounts for his audience in his planning and it has been reflected in his video as he takes them through a step by step process of what to do, using figures or images, in recorded real time of him creating a logo in Photoshop. He even uses a cordial and joking tone when addressing the audience, inviting them to

Figure 6: Pixar Decree

follow along on their own computers and ask questions in the comments section below or on his social media. The video was simple, had appropriate time length, and was enjoyable based on his 11K plus likes the video received. Oh Nana, please stop being upset that you forgot the most important rule of the Pixar Decree: never forget the AUDIENCE (Figure 6). THE CHAT system is here to help you as it has in the past. There's that spunky smile, Nana. Moving forward, video production takes many actions to create and finalize its product. It only starts at the camera. Virtual Reality helmets on, we are about to embark on a somewhat bumpy (active) ride.

Activity

Nana enjoys cardio and the occasional swim as much as the next person, but what does physical activity have to do with a "How To" YouTube video for logos? No, Nana, CHATting about physical activities is not about exercising, it is a CHAT about the actions taken to put the writing genre (video) together. This is Activity. After reviewing the previously gathered information, Nana takes out her list of all the rules, tools, and actions she must follow to create her "How To" logo video. So far (Figure 7) …

"I need to decide on a camera, choose a cameraman, choose my topic, decide how to present my topic then decide on focus content, set a film schedule, decide if I want to use professional tools, choose my setting (should be noise free, no distractions), write and study my personal script, shoot the video…oh but I need to—"

Figure 7: Nana Slow Down!

Woah, slow down Nana. Yes, there are a multitude of rules and tools that go into the activities, creating a more detailed list of the activity guidelines one can follow. What I mean by activities are the main summarized list of activities that all together are used to produce the "How To" video.

From our research, we can determine that for this genre, Nana needs to prepare for the video, choose a stage or setting, write a script with a proper tone for her message, create a screen character, possibly animate, choose examples that assist and cover her topic thoroughly, film the video, edit the video, re-edit or detail the video, which are the finishing touches, interact with the audience, thank the audience and not forget to tell them to press that like button. Maybe create an intro, upload the video, choose a good name for the video, promote the video, and add links to the channels and websites to both Pixar in a Box and Khan Academy in the description. So, this is still a relatively long list—do not give that look Nana—but it is still a more summarized version of every detailed action written on Nana's thesaurus of a list (Figure 8).

Many of these actions can be seen in a "How To" logo YouTube video by photographer, typographer, and logo and branding specialist William Patterson. Nana watched his video. She saw how polished his script was, the confident character he relayed on camera, the strong examples for logos tricks and tips he used, how smooth the video footage was, his friendly interaction with audience as more of a friend rather than instructor, and how he chose to film in his home, which corresponds with editing, writing, and tone. The actions Patterson took to create this "How To" logo video allowed for effective communication and multiple positive responses. Every action, every detail; it counts, and is usually worth all the effort. Nana feels more confident knowing that these videos require similar actions taken, often seen in films, both in live action and animated ones. All these great 'Tubers are everyday joes like Nana. She can do this. Great job Nana, but there are still a few more items to CHAT about because as with any other writing genre, the video must be shipped off. Buckle up and hold on tight; Cyclers, head for the Distribution Tunnel.

Figure 8: The Look

Distribution

Cyclers, Nana, pay attention. When a "How To" YouTube video is completed, there is still work to be done. The Youtuber now has the responsibility to upload or publish the video for viewers to be notified of the video views, likes/dislikes, and comments to be received by the Youtube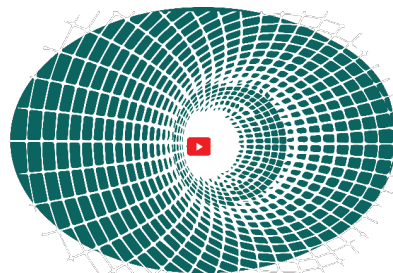r and the publisher, which is YouTube. The results of what happens once the product is finished and the time from when it has been uploaded to the time it reaches international viewers, moves through what is known as the Distribution Tunnel (Figure 9). For this reason, the Hoodoo Cycle has warped us through the tunnel into YouTube. Logos are a universal visual design tool for branding communication. If a person doesn't know how to do something, then they will use the web to search for their DIY and "How To" information. However, more people are seen learning by visual example and process rather than reading about

Figure 9: Distribution Tunnel

topics concerning design. Of course, there are multiple websites where anyone can find video tutorials and classes that teach various areas of information on designing a logo. Although, not many people click those links directly who are not working on a research paper or contain prior knowledge. The first visual choice is the internationally utilized and famed YouTube.

That is correct, Nana (Figure 10), great enthusiasm. Hear that Cyclers? For "How To" logo videos, maintaining a target audience is great because that is what branding and logos partially account for. However, uploading the video to YouTube for multiple audiences with less restricting tags, allows the video to be watched by anyone no matter where he or she might reside.

Tags help, but upload speed is the greatest provider. According to Sathish Manikandan, Assistant Content Manager at Magicbox Animation Private Limited,"It doesn't Take Long to get views to your Video. If you have such a great content and also with the help of some good promotions, Your Video will definitely outperform others in YouTube. And if your Channel already has above 10,000 views, ads will be displaying in your video and you'll get paid for that [advertisement]."

Figure 10: She Gets It

From what I have seen, uploading videos myself, it does not take more than thirty seconds to a minute before someone views a newly uploaded YouTube video. Of course if a person is new, then views may take a little longer. Even Nana found Pixar in a Box by following Khan Academy on YouTube and receiving their notifications. Of course, after clicking the link in the description of the video she watched, she discovered much more than animation storytelling. Note, the video may be uploaded and seen, but not clicked.

Khan Academy's YouTube video "Pixar in a Box/Welcome to Pixar in a Box/Khan Academy" was uploaded in August of 2015 under the education category. The video itself welcomes people to an adventure into Pixar education on animated films and their several creations. Everyone's favorite lamp and bouncy ball, which are the Pixar logo, are hopping in to say, "Hello" (Figure 11). The uploaded

Figure 11: Pixar Figure Logo (Wiki)

description contains links to other channels associated with Khan Academy and Pixar in a Box; an encouragement to learn more. Khan and Pixar uploaded the video with open ended tags, letting the audience decide whether or not they want to watch the video. The video has received over one million views and eight thousand likes. The comments below the video show that they have gained a huge amount of traffic from their YouTube followers who appear to be satisfied by the "How To" course videos they pressed play on. Add links and tags to the list, Nana.

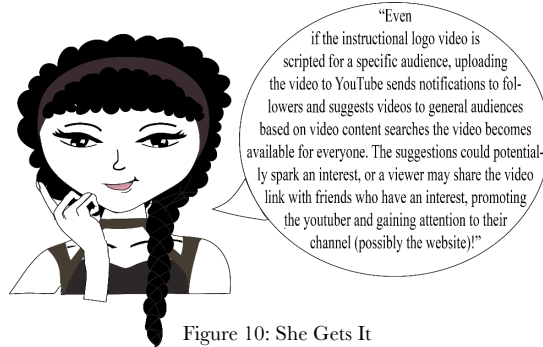What a ride, but we're only halfway there, living on a (video) player. The video is uploaded and ready for views; now we discover how people received the "How To" information. Ride on Cyclers!

Reception

The message has been received and now the viewers are free to use the information anyway they desire. This is Reception. In the case of "How To" logo videos, the knowledge can be used by beginners like Nana or people unable to afford professionals for creating a logo for various purposes, like branding and animation. For others, it may be used as a refresher of a few forgotten skills or a way to learn updated skills, since they can't fall behind in this fast-paced climate. Then there are the people who would rather use the knowledge as a segue into finding affordable or free ways to create a logo using accessible websites that do not require purchases, like other software does. Cheat-cheats (Figure 12).
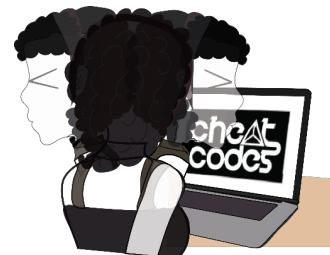

Figure 12: Cheat Cheats/Helpers

Popular blogger Holly Casto, "love[s] to help inspire other women to create their own creative, home-based businesses. [Her] blog is dedicated to helping [people] make that happen." Her YouTube video "How to Design Your Own Logo For FREE; Easy Tutorial" explores how to use web and logo

design websites (mainly Canva) for quick logos that anyone can create without having to spend a dime on most of them. Nana is actually thinking about using one of Casto's listed websites, like Esty, Shopify, Printful, QuickBooks, SquareSpace, or Canva. However, even with good feedback from viewers about how much they enjoy using websites such as these, the easy way out is not the Pixar (or Nana's) way. One YouTube comment said, "Thank you so much for this video, Holly! I used Canva earlier today to make my own logo. It's not anything super amazing, but it's better than nothing. You rock!" Good for you Nana, sometimes going through the entire process of creating a logo from scratch, or at least using Adobe Photoshop, allows for more freedom to create a mind-blowing design. But, Casto and Parker's videos are great for people who want to get their foot in the door. Okay everyone, our ride is nearly over. Time to drive the cycle to the bosses beyond the 'Tube; otherwise called producers.

Socialization

YouTube acts as the publisher for this writing genre, but the Youtubers, businesses, and individuals who edit and piece the video together are the producers. The interactions between these people and logo designers, or people looking to learn how to design a logo, shape how 'How To" logo videos and their institutional providers are developed and viewed culturally as well as socially. Such interactions are defined as Socialization.

Debbie Millman—graphic designer, author, educator, brand strategist, YouTuber, and host/founder of the podcast Design Matters—developed a class of online lessons/tutorials on the website Creative Live for her online class A Brand Called You. On YouTube, the Creative Live channel had YouTube publish a trailer on the class summarizing the class's content, which is branding oneself and creating a logo that uniquely reflects the individual along with their audience. The video itself does what people view now as annoying advertisements, except unlike an ad and more like several Youtubers, they set, and respectively continue, a trend.

In Nana's research, she found that Youtubers are what people would call Webfluential (Figure 13) because of more than half being celebrities within reach: people who are not popping up often in media noise but are out on the streets without crowds of people and heavy amounts of paparazzi attempting to snap a picture of every moment in their lives. Social Media Today article "The Life of a YouTuber [Infographic]" by Kirsty Sharman— Founder and Lead Growth Marketer at WePushMedia.com and Co-Founder of Webfluential, an Influencer Marketing Platform—states how YouTube has

Figure 13: Webfluential Cyclers

greatly influenced the creation and advancement of the Gen Z kids (aka. Centennials or Gen C). Sharman notes how a study on YouTube by Google quotes, "'Gen C creativity is made up of two parts; first, there's the act of creating something, and second, the act of sharing it, with both parts facilitating self-expression.'" From my own research I have found an article from Forbes Magazine by Andrew Arnold discussing how late Millennials and most Centennials no longer care about the mainstream celebrity media; it has become tiring. They appreciate peer to peer discussion. "Now it is the common folk who are setting the trends and driving opinions, and they are doing it on YouTube… millennials in large part don't watch TV and don't care much about what mainstream celebrities have to say regarding products or services. They trust their social media tribes and peer-to-peer advice the most." Talk about a (paradigm) shift.
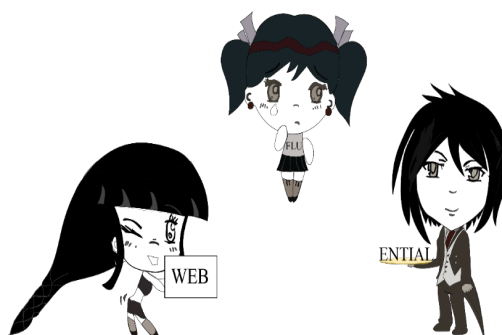
Creative Live had a person who is well known as a blogger and Youtuber who actually interacts with everyday people, which are the ones that contain the knowledge the current and old generation audiences want to discover. In addition, the blogger has created a slogan that empowers the unique self-expression the new generation adores: The Brand Called You. Nana guesses this is why Pixar always states in their own videos that everyone must tell their own stories before creating one for the audiences. There needs to be connection and great "How To" logo videos make sure to teach how a logo is the designer's story as well as the audience's. The viewers who are watching to learn are learning from a peer who was in their spot not too long ago and is not necessarily being paid to teach them. It is a conversation. This is how we socialize. It has been a long trek, but we have one more stop. It is time to reveal the muses (Figure 14), which are the inspirations and influences

Figure 14: They Are The Muses
(Clipart Max)

behind these "How To" logo videos. How do logos impact their instructional videos? Here goes one last ride!

Ecology

This is our next stop. Nana, every genre is impacted by physical and environmental aspects, also known as Ecology. As previously stated, logos are a Communication Design tool used for any type of branding or marketing. Logos are everywhere and are noticed by everyone whether they realize the image or design is a logo or not. With every shift in the way logos are designed for branding, they change how people brand in each generation. In an interview with Cal State Monterey Bay' Professor and Director of the university's Communication Design Major Kevin Cahill, he informed me about revolutionary businesses and designers who changed the way of branding and logos by breaking the original structured rules of standard geometric shapes. Nickelodeon (Figure 15) was the biggest game changer. Their logo can change its form and still stay as the same recognizable logo no matter where it is placed, on and off the TV screen. Like putty, the logo can be molded anyway a person wants it to be for their own self-expression. Understand Cyclers? Uniqueness. This logo is for everyone. In an article by online logo blog

Figure 15: Nickelodeon Logo

FamousLogos.net, they wrote that with "the rounded, oblique and dynamic wordmark systematically reversed out of orange blobs of distinct shapes, the Nickelodeon mark effectively lived up to the challenge of appearing fresh and consistent, while creating a clear, consistent and visually memorable identity." YouTube is also for everyone, their play button logo communicates "click play, the people take over; do what you wish" Nana is too stunned for words (Figure 16). Logos are for everyone, YouTube is for everyone, both are to effectively communicate a lasting message to their target audience and the wide audience. The principles of animation are a principle of design found everywhere. She can change the game and help others do the same. All she needs to do now is teach people "How To". Good job Cyclers and Nana; time to ride on home…vroom, vroom.
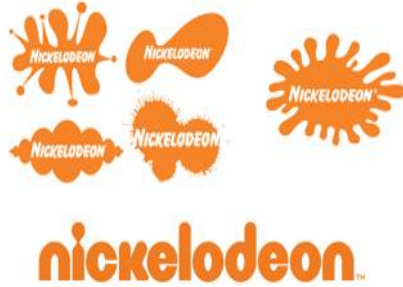

Figure 16: Stunned Nana

Conclusion…

Thank you for the ride Hoodoo Cycle, I will take it from here. Now audience, after a long ride most people would enjoy a nice sleep (I am usually K.O.ed) but allow me to leave you with a few words. Many activities go unnoticed; however, they guide people to carry out an objective. Each activity displays a message in some form whether by design, writing, or video. The thing about research is that a person does not search for what they know or think they know, they search for what they do not. YouTube is a website that I never saw as a genre, a writing genre, or an activity. CHAT is the Cultural Historical Activity Theory which explores how people, ideas, and objects coordinate to carry out an objective or activity. YouTube started with people who had an idea and used several factors to complete the objective of creating YouTube. Logo creation starts the same way. Both are activities that follow the seven concepts: production, representation, activity, distribution, reception, socialization, and ecology. You are not obliged to try CHATting, but you can make the time.

I hope this has been helpful Nana, especially that you now understand where to seek information on how to make a logo and how to create a "How To" YouTube video, your next step is to go watch some videos yourself (Figure 17). Cheer up Nana, the post-work results are well worth the effort. Maybe watching some fun YouTube videos before the "How To" videos will get her laughing; after all YouTube is for everyone, its logo says so. Click play.

Figure 17: Pouty Nana/ Cheer Up

Work Cited

Arnold, Andrew. "Why YouTube Stars Influence Millennials More Than Traditional

Celebrities." Forbes Magazine and Under 30 Network, 20 June 2017,

https://www.forbes.com/sites/under30network/2017/06/20/why-youtube-stars-influence-

millennials-more-than-traditional-celebrities/#6c14550348c6. Accessed 13 November

2018.

Cahill, Kevin. Personal interview, 3 October 2018.

Casto, Holly. "About Holly Casto." Holly Casto, https://hollycasto.com/about/. Accessed 12

November 2018.

H, Elysse. "You Rock!" YouTube, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHsc2y-lVSU.

Accessed 12 November 2018.

Hercules Gods and Muses. Disney Clip Art Galore. Clipart Max,

https://www.clipartmax.com/middle/m2i8G6b1b1d3Z5H7_hercules-gods-and-muses-

clip-art-disney-clip-art-galore-hercules-muses/. Accessed 22 November 2018.

"How to Create a Great Logo Design." YouTube, uploaded by Will Paterson, 6 January 2015,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksr1-fM3ptU. Accessed 11 November 2018.

"How to Design Your Own Logo for FREE | Easy Tutorial." YouTube, uploaded by Holly

Casto, 26 September 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHsc2y-lVSU. Accessed

12 November 2018.

"How to Make Logo in Photoshop - Photoshop Tutorial for Beginners - Basic Idea." YouTube,

uploaded by Avnish Parker, 27 January 2017, https://www.youtube.com

/watch?v=NVKju7nZvDI. Accessed 12 November 2018.

Manikandan, Sathish. "Hi There…" Quora, 3 November 2017, https://www.quora.com/How-

long-does-it-take-to-get-views-on-YouTube. Accessed 22 November 2018.

Millman, Debbie. A Brand Called You. Creative Live, 2018, https://www.creativelive.com/class

/a-brand-called-you-debbie-millman. Accessed 12 November 2018.

Motorcycle Vector Art. Known Host. Good Free Photos,

https://www.goodfreephotos.com/vector-images/motorcycle-vector-art.png.php.

Accessed 23 November 2018.

"Nickelodeon Logo." Famous Logos, 2013, https://www.famouslogos.net/nickelodeon-logo/.

Accessed 11 November 2018.

Nine Co-authors. "How to Make a How-To Video for YouTube." wikiHow,

https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-How-to-Video-for-

YouTube#Preparing_to_Shoot_the_Video_sub. Accessed 10 November 2018.

Parker, Avnish. AvnishParker. https://www.avnishparker.com/. Accessed 13 November 2018.

Pixar exhibition at the PAC in Milan 25.JPG." Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository.

27 Oct 2016, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:-

ITALY-_Pixar_exhibition_at_the_PAC_in_Milan_25.JPG. Accessed 23 November

2018.

Sharman, Kirsty. "The Life of a YouTuber [Infographic]." SocialMediaToday, 8 November

2016, https://www.socialmediatoday.com/social-networks/life-youtuber-infographic,

Accessed 12 November 2018.

Widder, Brandon. "From start to finish, DT's definitive guide to creating and uploading

YouTube videos." Digital Trends, 22 August 2013, https://www.digitaltrends.com/

computing/how-to-make-a-youtube-video/. Accessed 12 November 2018.