

depositphotos

Enter keywords

Search Images

Photos

Vector Images

Videos

FACEBOOK

LINKEDIN

TWITTER

EMAIL

COPY LINK

Expert Explains What Makes The Best Logos So Good

Richard Feloni

Apr 11, 2014, 5:50 PM

91,034

FACEBOOK

LINKEDIN

TWITTER

EMAIL

COPY LINK

Every day consumers are confronted with countless logos, mostly unaware of how these icons are constantly transmitting a slew of messages aimed at the subconscious.

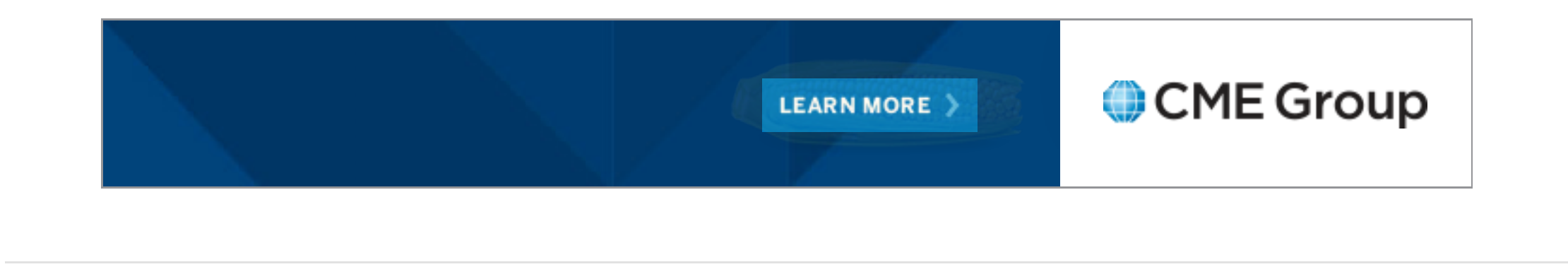
"A company's logo is its shorthand, a visual cue that tells a story of the brand's culture, behavior, and values," said [Su Mathews Hale](#), a senior partner at the New York brand-strategy and design firm Lippincott. Because a logo may only have a second to tell this story, creating one "can sometimes be the most difficult aspect of branding," she said.

We had her guide us through some of her favorite projects she's worked on, as well as some of the corporate logos she most admires.

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc



In 2005, Wal-Mart recruited Lippincott to reimagine its brand. It wanted to shed its image as a big corporate outlet for cheap products and become seen as a place where people could wisely save money and buy premium groceries. Wal-Mart debuted its new logo in 2008.



Mathews and her team felt that the old logo's all-caps, dark blue letters screamed "corporation" and had become inextricably linked to the popular view among critics who saw Wal-Mart as a malevolent giant crushing small businesses across the country. They deemed the star serving as a hyphen generic and forgettable. They also believed that businesses with hyphenated "mart" names conjured up images of corner stores and cheap outlets.

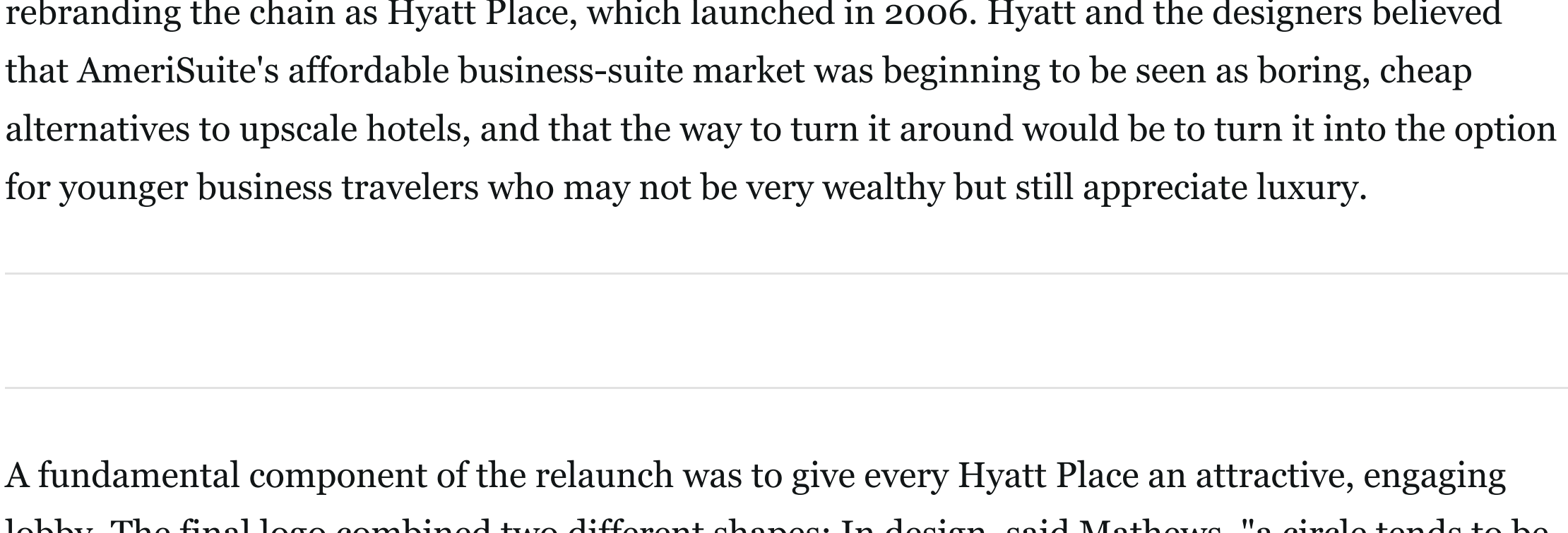
They decided to keep the color blue, which Mathews said is the world's favorite color, but go for a brighter hue they believed evoked modernity and trustworthiness. They replaced the sharp angles of the original letters with "a more humanistic font." Finally, they decided on an asterisk-like symbol they wanted to look like "a lightbulb going off in your head," a metaphor for Wal-Mart shoppers being smart for taking advantage of affordable, quality products. They chose a hue of yellow that appeared hopeful but didn't make it too bright because "bright yellow is associated with low-cost items in retail," said Mathews. She was happy to find that focus groups also interpreted the spark as a sun or flower, both positive associations.

eBay



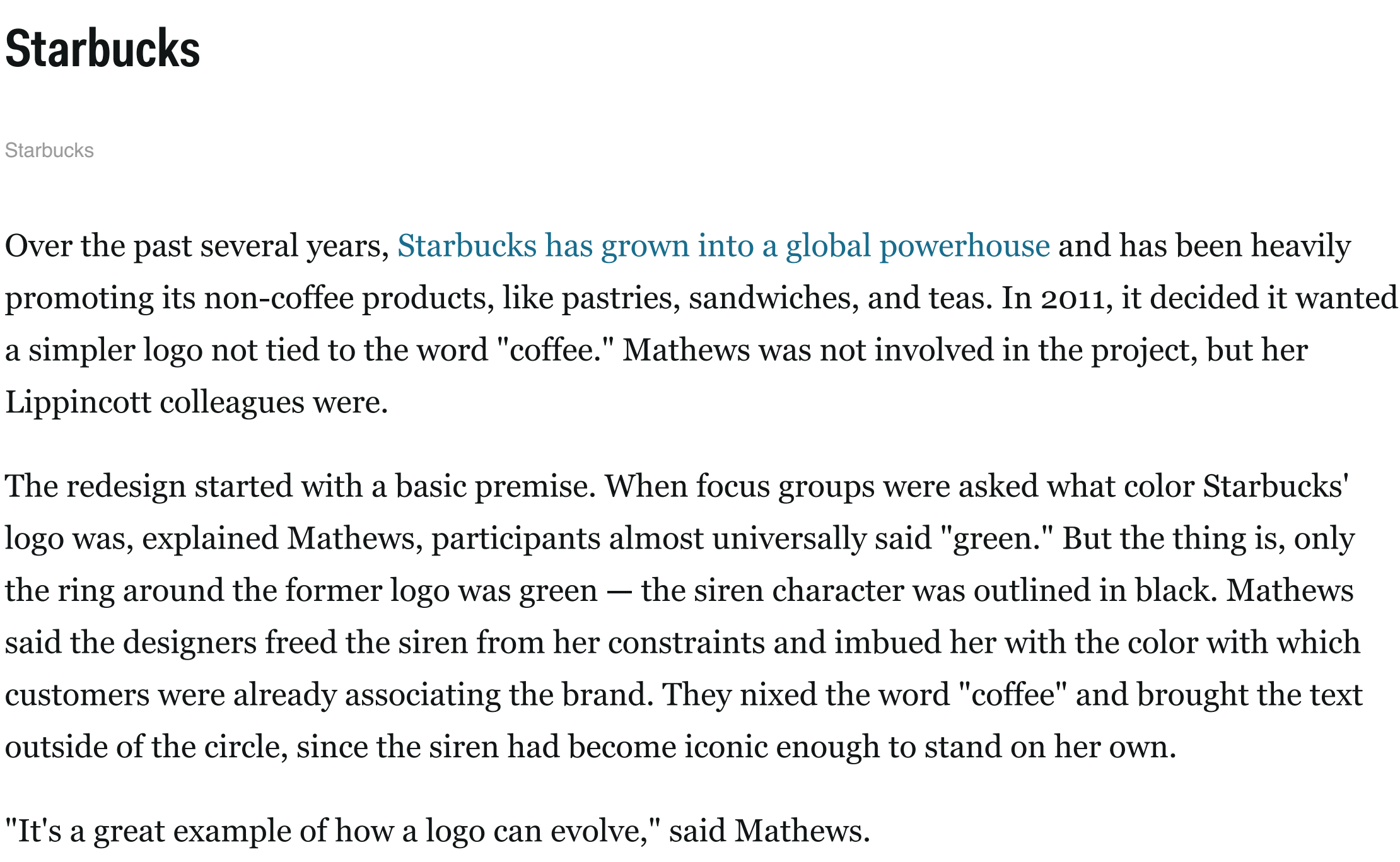
In 2012, eBay basically had the inverse problem from Wal-Mart: It wanted to finally grow up, and its playful logo was getting in the way of its ambition. Mathews said that when Internet companies have electric, jumbled logos, they conjure up memories of the companies that died when the dot-com bubble burst. So, for eBay, she and her team stuck close to the original design but refined the typography, toned down the colors, and put the letters on the same baseline. The resulting logo is "more grounded" and better suited for a company that takes business seriously.

Hyatt Place



Hyatt Hotels Corporation bought AmeriSuites in 2004, and Lippincott was responsible for rebranding the chain as Hyatt Place, which launched in 2006. Hyatt and the designers believed that AmeriSuite's affordable business-suite market was beginning to be seen as boring, cheap alternatives to upscale hotels, and that the way to turn it around would be to turn it into the option for younger business travelers who may not be very wealthy but still appreciate luxury.

Starbucks



Over the past several years, [Starbucks has grown into a global powerhouse](#) and has been heavily promoting its non-coffee products, like pastries, sandwiches, and teas. In 2011, it decided it wanted a simpler logo not tied to the word "coffee." Mathews was not involved in the project, but her Lippincott colleagues were.

The redesign started with a basic premise. When focus groups were asked what color Starbucks' logo was, explained Mathews, participants almost universally said "green." But the thing is, only the ring around the former logo was green — the siren character was outlined in black. Mathews said the designers freed the siren from her constraints and imbued her with the color with which customers were already associating the brand. They nixed the word "coffee" and brought the text outside of the circle, since the siren had become iconic enough to stand on her own.

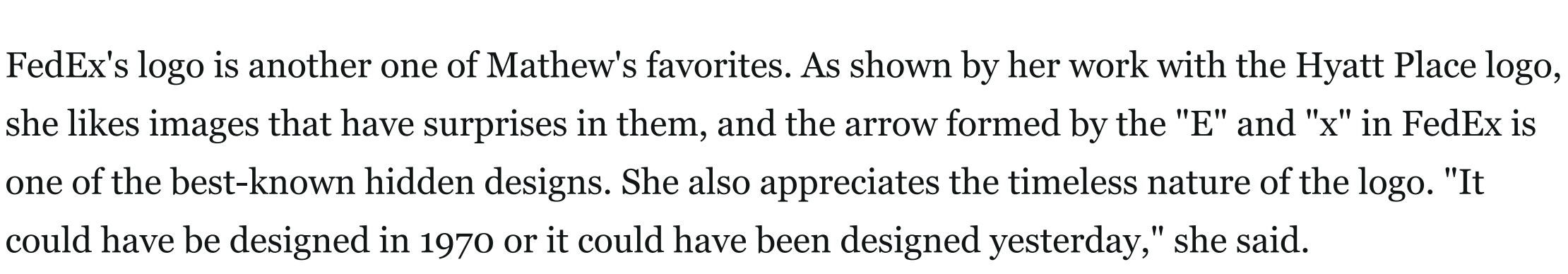
"It's a great example of how a logo can evolve," said Mathews.

NBC

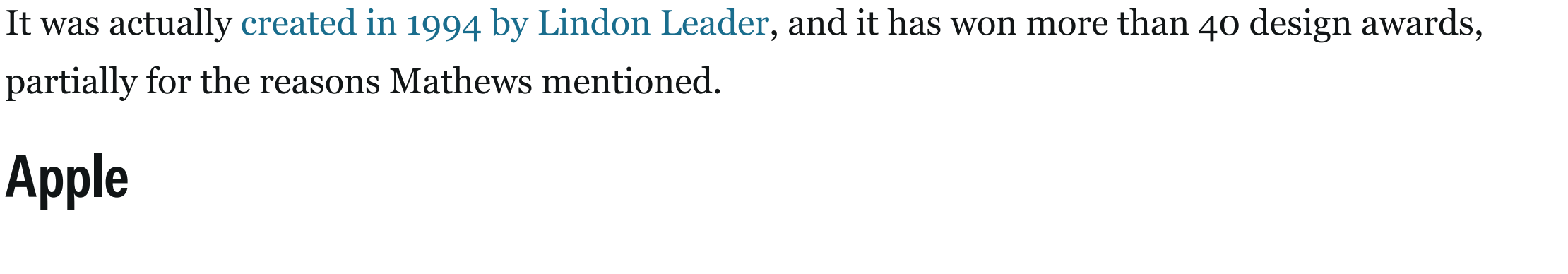


Lippincott has not worked with NBC, but Mathews said the NBC peacock is one of her favorite logos. She thinks the logo has improved over time as it's gotten simpler, and that even though the peacock's colors originally celebrated the advent of color television, the array of colors still transmits feelings of joy and energy.

FedEx

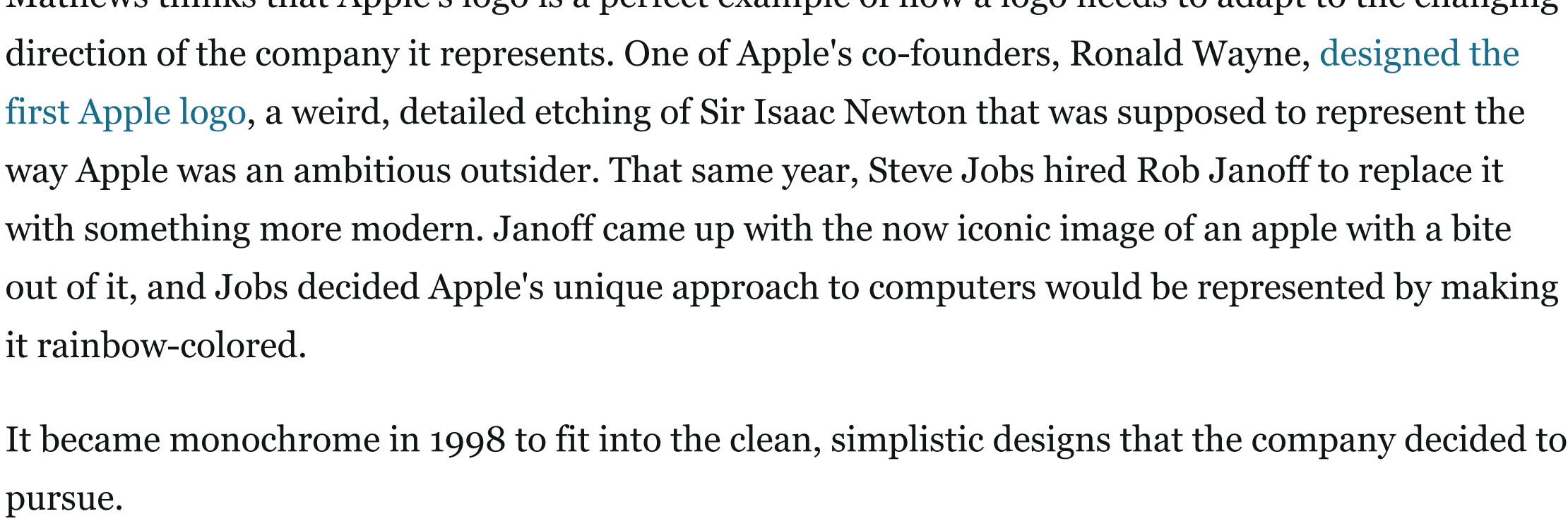


FedEx's logo is another one of Mathew's favorites. As shown by her work with the Hyatt Place logo, she likes images that have surprises in them, and the arrow formed by the "E" and "x" in FedEx is one of the best-known hidden designs. She also appreciates the timeless nature of the logo. "It could have been designed in 1970 or it could have been designed yesterday," she said.



It was actually [created in 1994 by Lindon Leader](#), and it has won more than 40 design awards, partially for the reasons Mathews mentioned.

Apple



Mathews thinks that Apple's logo is a perfect example of how a logo needs to adapt to the changing direction of the company it represents. One of Apple's co-founders, Ronald Wayne, [designed the first Apple logo](#), a weird, detailed etching of Sir Isaac Newton that was supposed to represent the way Apple was, an ambitious outsider. That same year, Steve Jobs hired Rob Janoff to replace it with something more modern. Janoff came up with the now iconic image of an apple with a bite out of it, and Jobs decided Apple's unique approach to computers would be represented by making it rainbow-colored.

It became monochrome in 1998 to fit into the clean, simplistic designs that the company decided to pursue.

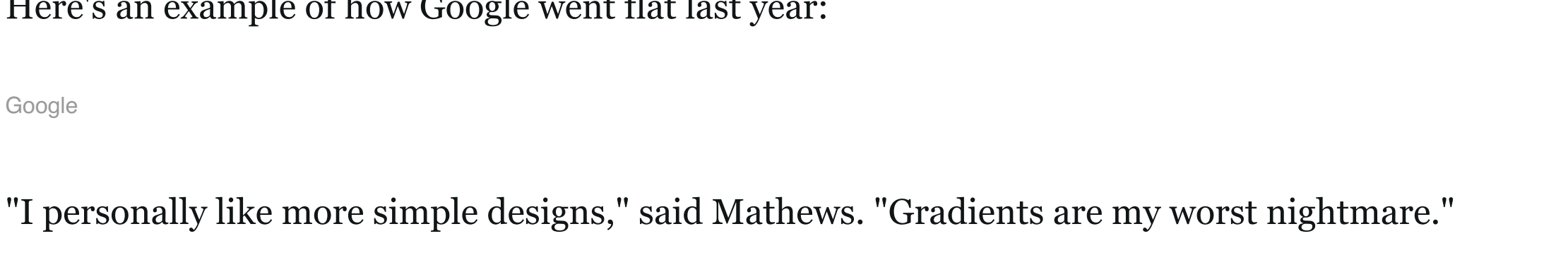
Regarding trends and presentation

When tackling a branding project, Mathews differentiates between the "true and new." She say a logo needs to be "true," in the sense that it should not be fundamentally tied to a trend, the "new." The trendiness is more appropriate in supporting elements of branding, like store experiences or website interfaces. That said, a logo should be fundamentally sound but also be adaptable to the ways it will be presented.



"Logos used to have to be recognizable down to the size that they would be represented on a business card. Now they have to work at much smaller sizes, because they'll be seen on mobile screens," Mathews said. That's actually the reason why so many logos have become "flatter," in the sense that they've been stripped of techniques like shadowing that add a dimension of depth or movement.

Here's an example of how Google went flat last year:



"I personally like more simple designs," said Mathews. "Gradients are my worst nightmare."

SEE ALSO: [How A Logo's Color Manipulates Your Emotions »](#)

More: [Logos](#) [Marketing](#) [Branding](#) [Advertising](#)

FACEBOOK

LINKEDIN

TWITTER

EMAIL

COPY LINK

Recommended from the Web

Sponsored Links by Taboola

Say Goodbye to iPhone: This Could Be 40X Better

The Motley Fool

If You Have an iPad, This Strategy Game Is a Must-Have

Download on the App Store | Forge of Empires App

Forget Your 401k If You Own A Home (Do This Instead)

The Easy Loan

This App Can Teach You Spanish In Just 3 Weeks

Bubbel

Most Americans Don't Know This Trick to Save on Their Cable and...

Hottest Cable Deals | Sponsored Links

Here's What An Online Masters Degree Should Cost - Search Prices

Education | Sponsored Links

Read Ebooks? Here's The Worst Kept Secret Among Book Lovers

The Book Insider

These Are The Best SUVs You Can Buy Right Now

Kelly Blue Book

These Cars Will Plummet In Value In 2018 - Is Yours On Our List?

BuzzDrives

Savannah, Georgia: This Brilliant Company Is Disrupting a \$200...

EverQuote Insurance Quotes

Recommended For You

Powered By Sailthru

A dentist shares 5 at-home teeth whitening products actually worth buying

How to dress your best in any work environment, from a casual office to the boardroom

Flight attendants share 15 of their favorite travel hacks

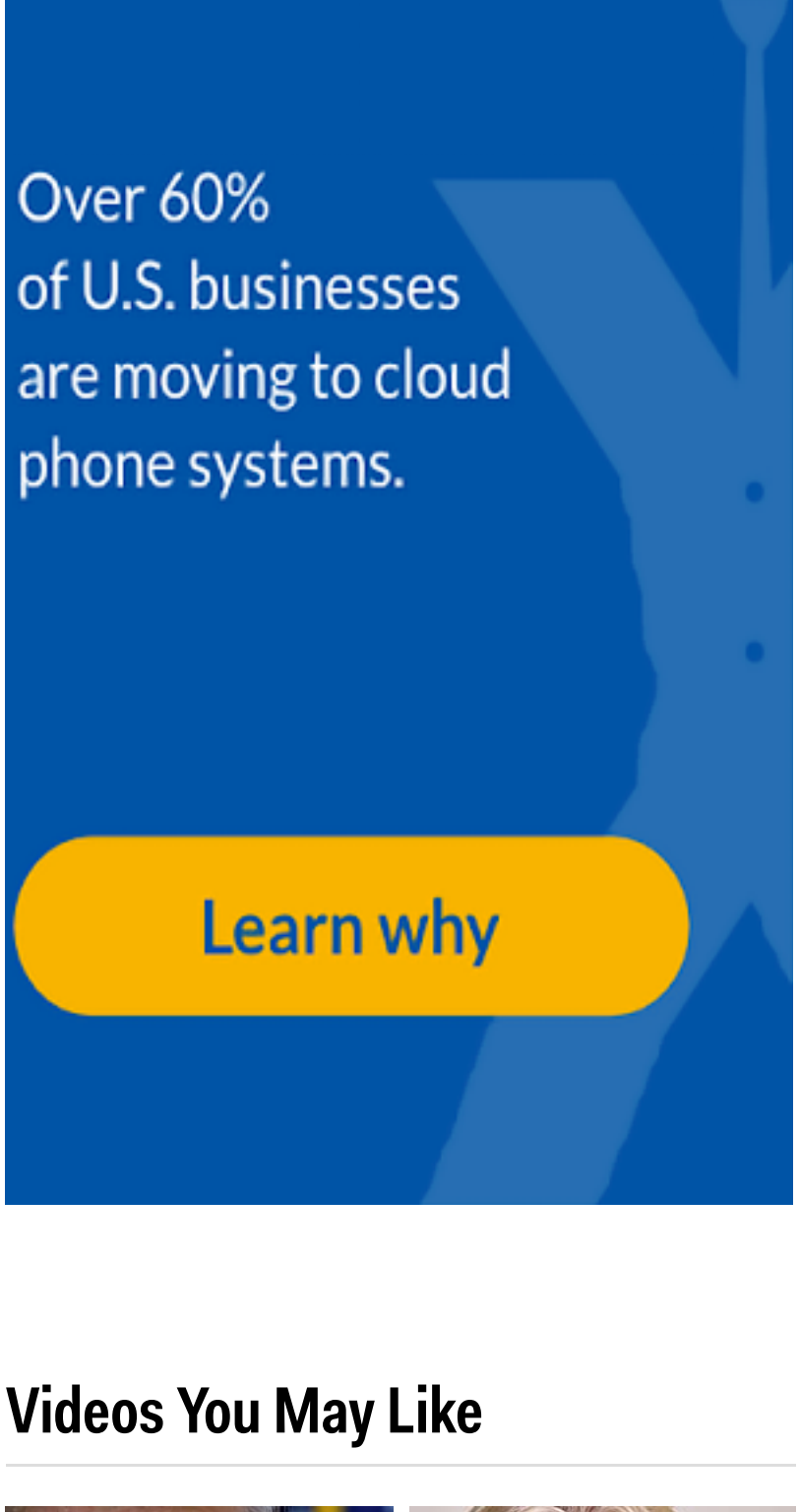
12 inspiring quotes from Martin Luther King Jr.

The Air Force's 'rods from god' could hit with the force of a nuclear weapon — with no fallout

Recommended For You



A family keeps turning down millions for its house next to the Masters golf course



Videos You May Like

MICHAEL MOORE: 'I think there's an excellent chance' Trump will be

RICHARD BRANSON: We've just 'got to give Donald Trump and his

'Really?': A reporter calls out Huckabee's claim that 'countless' FBI employees were

Everything we know about the mysterious SR-72 — Lockheed Martin's successor to

by Taboola

Fast and affordable prototyping. Made easy. for \$599/month

LEASE TODAY

From The Web

Sponsored Links

These Cars Will Plummet In Value In 2018

BuzzDrives

12 Best Family Cars 2018

Kelly Blue Book

by Taboola

Sponsored Financial Content

President Just Unleashed an \$11.1 Trillion Cash Tsunami. (Seven Figure Publishing)

This card has it all: low 0% interest, great rewards & \$0 annual fee. (Compare Cards)

Here are the top 6 dividend stocks you can buy and hold forever. (Wealthy Retirement)

Free from AAIL: 5 Rock-Solid Dividend Stocks (AAIL)

Forget Cryptocurrencies: This Will Create the First Trillionaires (Angel Publishing)

Trump adviser's Russian contact closely linked to Putin family (Financial Times)

dionomi

Featured

It's time for better capitalism

More "Better Capitalism" »

Silicon Valley could help the last people you'd expect — and Elon Musk has given \$15 million to a contest that will prove it

More "Better Capitalism" »

Business Insider Intelligence Exclusive Free Report

Get The Slide Deck From Henry Blodget's Ignition Presentation On The Future Of Media