Every successful company, despite the industry that it competes in, has one thing in common, a memorable and impactful logo. Examples of these companies would include, Apple, Louis Vuitton, Nike, and General Electric. So when given the research topic of this paper one company immediately came to mind, Tesla Motors. A car company built from a vision with a product to match. In this paper I will discuss the background of the company and its founder, the background of the logo, and finally some characteristics of the logo.

First the background of Tesla motors. Tesla motors was founded in July 2003 by Marc Tarpenning and Martin Eberhard where they held majority ownership handling everything by themselves with the help of some investors. This lasted almost a year until February of 2004 when Elon Musk became chairmen of the board after leading the company’s Series A financing round with $7.5 million. After becoming a major investor of the company, Musk would then go on to lead more financing rounds helping the company raise more than $53 million in two years. During that time, Tesla would go on to sign a contract with Lotus agreeing for them to manufacture Tesla’s next vehicle. Then, in 2006 the car was unveiled by CEO Martin Eberhard and Company Chairman Elon Musk at an invite only event. The car was named the Tesla Roadster and became the product that really grabbed the public’s attention officially putting tesla on the map with other leading car companies. A year later, in December of 2007, Martin Eberhard steps down as CEO due to financial issues and the position is given to a high-tech entrepreneur by the name of Ze’ev Drori. During his time, Drori made the company profitable, but had also laid off more than 10% of the former team due to changes in structure. After only 11 months company chairman Elon Musk would go on to succeed Drori as CEO and turn the company into the innovative power-house that it is today.

So what makes Tesla motors so different from every other car company? Well Tesla motors was named after the most inspirational figures in physics and electrical engineering, Nikola Tesla. Tesla was born in 1856 in what is now Croatia and later passed away in Manhattan New York. During his life he created a multitude of inventions way ahead of his time, a lot of them still being used today in modern technology. This is where Tesla Motors comes into play. The current Tesla Motor cars run off of an AC induction motor that Nikola Tesla built in 1892 and still, to this today, is one of the most efficient motors ever built. So Tesla motors not only designed a car to match the reputation of the name and engine, but also built the company to the same standards. The Tesla model S is now the most efficient large sedan on the market with a combined gas mileage of 104mpg. Tesla motors created an efficient car with a bold statement and they wanted their logo to have the same feeling. This leads me to the next topic, Tesla’s logo.

When creating the logo, the founders wanted a strong and unique symbol that would portray the vehicles unique position in the automotive industry. So they chose to put a sharp and modern letter “T” inside of a shield. The shield represents the strength and safety of the car while the T stands for the name of the company, Tesla. After getting down their rough idea for the logo, they contacted Prado Studios in California to really bring it to life. Not until Late last year did CEO Elon Musk reveal the deeper meaning behind the company’s logo. What most people didn't know is that the logo isn’t just the beginning Letter of the company’s name, but the T also hints at one of the most important parts of the vehicles function, and that is the cross section of the Electric motor used in every one of their cars (see images 1-4). After discovering this I realized that this logo portrays symbolism, literal meaning, history, and does all of this while still remaining modern and sleek enough to put on the front of an everyday car. It’s extremely well designed and timeless and because of this it struck curiosity and gave me motive to look into specific characteristics of the logo.

When analyzing Tesla Motors’ logo I began noticing certain features that provided a sleek and interesting touch that enhanced the modern feel of the logo. For instance the type face used for the word Tesla in the upper portion of the logo has a very digital feel almost like numbers on a score board. This mechanical touch to the type definitely fits the look of the “T” within the shield below it. But I was curious as to how they created the T, was it just a font or were they layered shapes. Though I couldn’t find any information, I also didn’t find a type face that had a capital or lowercase letter T that looked like that. So I tried recreating the logo in Adobe Illustrator and had success. I used all triangles of various sizes and was able to recreate the logo almost perfectly. With the bar on top being a curved rectangle. The reason why the main logo its self has no color beside silver black and white is because they wanted it to be simple enough to be on a car. But at times they add the color red.

The colors chosen are neutral colors with an eye catching red that is used at times. They choose to use red in times where they need to stand out in certain environments. The cars typically contain a neutral color logo while billboards and tv advertisements will use red to make it pop. This color combination of black, silver/white, and red allows Tesla to emphasize certain parts of an advertisement by having the red as a backdrop for the white and sometimes silver lettering. What I wanted to know next was why of all colors they chose red. Now I understand that red pops but so does orange, teal, and other vibrant colors. I decided to search the psychological effects of the color red and I found an interesting fact. Other than symbolic meanings of the color it can also entice feelings of strength and security, The exact intent of the logo itself.

In Conclusion I believe that the overall structure of the logo is solid. From the way the T was was created to the shape of the shield, these characteristics make the statement that the logo was intended to make. I also appreciate the fact that the logo portrays symbolism, literal meaning, and history all while remaining simple. The men who founded Tesla, Marc Tarpenning and Martin Eberhard, had a vision that will last for years to come. The Current CEO Elon Musk, has already expanded the company towards space exploration and free energy neighborhoods. This company will only grow and I believe this logo will stand for the company’s lifetime.

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