

# The History of “Big Orange”



Official Home Depot Logo 1

Though there are quite a few other companies in the “home improvement” retail marketplace, Home Depot was the first of its kind when opened in 1979. Founded by Bernie Marcus and Arthur Blank in Atlanta, Georgia, the Home Depot logo has gone through quite a few changes to arrive at what people affectionately call “Big Orange”.

Some of their early logo experiments also reflected their early struggle to find a name for their one-stop home improvement store. Their first idea played with names such as “Thumbs”, “Builder’s Terminal”, “MB ValuMart”, and “Ye\$ You Can \$ave”. A cursory examination of the early sketches shows seeds of the current logo in some of the



Home Depot Idea 1 1



Home Depot Idea 2 1

discarded names. Other names such as “SaveX” and “Home Save” were also discarded along with their preliminary colors (greens, yellows, blacks) and sketches, but we see



Home Depot Idea 3 1

the “Home” theme and the now signature orange color planting the seed for the company’s current logo.

Having passed over many names, initially, the store was opened nameless, but was collecting buzz (as nothing like it existed at the time). Home Depot historian, *Jennifer Wyatt*, told *Business Insider* that an early investor by the name of *Marjorie Buckley* actually came up with the name. While Buckley and her husband were in their car they passed an old train depot that had been transformed into a restaurant and ended up suggesting the name “Home Depot”. According to Wyatt, Marcus and Blank fell in love with the name’s “down-to-earth, no-frills” quality. Understanding the need for branding based on their previous roles as President and CFO (respectively) of one of the



One of the first Home Depot stores 1

first home improvement retailers in the country, *Handy Dan*, Marcus and Blank hired renown Canadian branding expert and designer, *Don Watt*.



*Current Home Depot Logo 1*

Taking a cue from previous design sketches and his own immense knowledge of color theory, Watt chose the color orange (specifically *Pantone PMS 165c*) to represent the company's brand. In color theory, the color orange represents "energy", "passion", "value", and "power" among other attributes. The high contrast, bracketed, Stencil typeface – commonly seen on freight stamps in serif and non-serif variations - was another design decision aligning with the movement and energy of the orange color. Designed to symbolize success, the boxed, stamped logo was ultimately a nod to crates used to transport freight, which kept it in sync with the "depot" theme.

With stores in all 50 contiguous states as well as in all 10 provinces in Canada, the Home Depot logo has become iconic and instantly recognizable. These early, carefully weighted design decisions were key in making The Home Depot logo synonymous with home improvement worldwide.

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