

Reebok's Evolution

The Reebok logo has gone through only 2 major iterations throughout its one hundred and twenty one year history. Like most companies, as a brand evolves in the nature of its identity and overall goal, the logo follows suit. In order to understand that change, you have to go back to see where, in this case, Reebok started.

In 1895, Reebok, or as it was originally known as “J.W. Foster and Sons”, was being produced in the United Kingdom by shoemaker J.W. Foster ([Reebok History - Adidas Group](#)). Although it was still in its infancy stages, J.W. Foster and Sons footwear still managed to reach the 1924 Olympics where it was worn by some of the participating athletes. It was the first shoe to feature spikes at the bottom which allowed a sportsman to run faster. “..Reebok, as it was renamed in 1958 (after “rhebok”, a type of African gazelle) is a ‘worldwide designer, marketer and distributor of sports, fitness and casual footwear, apparel and equipment’” ([Armin](#)). The name change came from JW Foster’s 2 grandson’s who, as mentioned before, were inspired by ‘the Grey rhebok, which is known to be a very agile animal’ ([Vaal Rhebok Hunting and Hunting Gray Rhebuck in South Africa](#)), and is something they wanted their footwear to reflect.

The original logo, which lasted for the first 91 years, reflected where Reebok was established, the United Kingdom. As part of the logo which featured the font type “Mottor Tektura”, the name was accompanied by the U.K.’s Union Jack Flag to complete the classic Reebok brand identity many still have fond memories of. The use of blue for the typeface was probably to evoke the feeling of expertise and stability ([Color Wheel Pro - Color Meaning](#)); these are traits a consumer would look to when purchasing products from a company. Originally, the Union Jack Logo was found on all Reebok products including the sneaker box

(Fig. 1). Although the company has moved on to other logos over the years, they still sell their “classic collection” using the Union Jack logo **(Fig. 2)**.

The second logo, introduced in 1986, was Reebok’s take on becoming more modern and offering a performance product for a new era. The thought process behind it was to build off of what the shoes already offered design-wise. Taking a closer look at the design cues found on the side of the shoe, which later became known as the “side stripe – cross check” **(Reebok Logo)**, Reebok used this as inspiration for the logo that is now referred to as “The Vector Logo”. Unique to the brand, the logo is still used to this day on many of Reebok’s products. More specifically, it can still be found on the inner sole of their shoes and branded all over some of their more signature footwear lines like the Allen Iverson “The Question” sneaker or The Shawn Kemp “Kamikaze”.

While there has only been 2 logo changes that Reebok signifies as major changes during its 121 year duration, during the 2000’s, Reebok shifted its focus and shortened its name to “RBK”. The logo was designed by the Arnell Group, a well known design agency found in New York City **(Reebok Logo)**. The new “RBK” logo was inspired by the Reebok Stock Ticker Symbol. Using high profile stars such as Allen Iverson & Sidney Crosby to endorse their products, Reebok was looking to target a younger audience with a marketing campaign clearly geared towards this demographic. To further push the appeal of being hip amongst the youth, Reebok also gave signature shoes to popular hip hop performers like Jay Z and 50 Cent. However, the logo’s time was very short lived as Reebok returned to it’s full name for its 50th anniversary in 2008.

In such a competitive market with major brands like Nike and Adidas, sales for Reebok products were on the decline during the last 2000s. However, it turned out losing endorsements to it’s parent company, Adidas, was a blessing in disguise. Reebok eventually found its niche

within the fitness world. "We really believe that Reebok's products should be about the benefit of fitness to everyday people" (Brownlee). The brand's latest iteration relies on the Delta symbol to tell its story of a new purpose, which is to enforce personal fitness among its consumers, "The Reebok Delta has three distinct parts each representing the changes -- physical, mental and social -- that occur when people push themselves beyond their perceived limits and embrace an active and challenging life" (Zmuda). Reebok has reinforced such notions by partnering with popular personal training exercise brands like Crossfit and gearing its ads to the yoga, dance, running and aerobics market (Fig. 3).

Evolving the the brand's overall goal and focus would also mean a need to change one of its most iconic parts, the Reebok font. The long time "Mottor Tektura" font was replaced with a more modern san serif font similar to that of "Gotham-Narrow" for the new crossfit apparel alongside the Delta symbol. This would help symbolize growth in not just ideal but appearance in the mind of its consumers. While it means Reebok has backed off the major sports market, this new streamlined idea for the brand works to its advantage since none of its competitors (like Nike and Adidas) have been as successful in cultivating such a strong community in the personal physical fitness division. With this revitalized focus, "The new Reebok Delta symbol represents the positive and transformative change that fitness can have on a person's life" (Reebok Signals Change With Launch Of New Brand Mark). Hopefully with this momentum, Reebok can make its Delta symbol synonymous in the minds of customers with personal fitness.

Figure Reference

Fig. 1



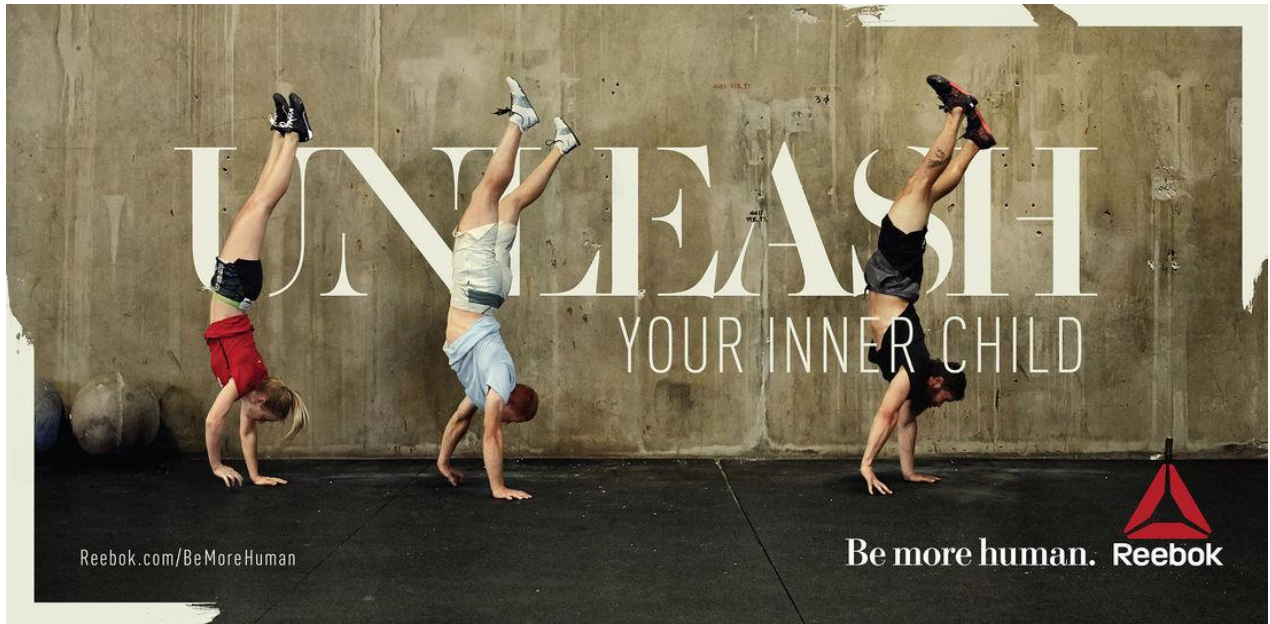
Reebok, Men's Basketball Shoe Box featuring the original Union Jack logo. 1992

Fig. 2



Reebok, Classic leather sneaker with Merlot Highlights. 2015

Fig. 3



Reebok, "Be More Human" Marketing Campaign. Print. 2015

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