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LOGO RESEARCH REPORT: Citi Bank

Citibank was founded in 1812 in New York City. As time passed it branched out to other cities. They had significant name changes like the City Bank of New York and First National City Bank of New York. Since it was founded, it has gone through lots of change including its rules, regulations, size, and aesthetics. Due to the limited amount of technology, logos in past eras weren't made very effectively and timeless like what most modern logo makers aim for when creating a new logo. But this bank in particular made a big leap in modernizing its mark before their competitors.



[1955-1976 Original Citibank logos](#)

From 1955-1976, Citibank's logo made subtle changes to its very formal and classical looking logo. You can tell that overtime they realized their pictorial mark was too complex and not simple enough to tell what it really was. They simplified it as much as they could but it still seemed like they needed to make another change. It seemed that because they were one of the first banks founded in the US, they thought that keeping the words "FIRST NATIONAL" in their logo was significant enough to not remove until the early 2000s. In 1976 they officially decided to gradually change their name from First National City Bank to Citibank.

Their very first edition of their new Citibank logo involved a good amount of change. The logo looks more modernized while still looking formal and professional. The first edition still contains a mark but its now simplified to just a shape which certainly looks more adequate for a logo. Although they changed to a sans-serif typeface early in the evolution of this logo, the typeface they use here is more timeless looking and with it being italic, just brings it up a notch. I also noticed they introduced some figure-ground into the logo by morphing the "N" and "K" together into one. It almost looks like its an arrow pointing into a direction.

As for me, I think the new logo works well having combined two previous logos for the merge. Paula kept it simple while having incorporated the important elements. I really like the typeface they used to hold the professional look while keeping it sleek and modern for an endless viability. One thing to point out as well is the contrast done by the two different weights to having the name "Citi" pop out more and the word "bank" having the simple light weight to keep it formal. The red and black is something we see commonly for lots of banks but with Citibank, they use somewhat low intensity blue with a very high intensity red. They designed it differently where the type uses one color and the simple umbrella mark has the red. None of that distracting bold red box surrounding the type like in other bank logos which I think is good that they avoided. It wasn't until 2000-2010 came around to start seeing what we know today.



[2000-2002
Paula Schers napkin sketch](#)



[Present
Citibank logo](#)

Now you can tell that this sleek, modern, italic look has inspired other logos like Community Financial Service Centers (CFSC). For the second and current edition of the Citibank logo, there is an interesting story behind it. In 1998 Citibank merged with Travelers Inc so they decided to create a campaign and also introduce a new version of their logo. Citibank started to work with Pentagram, a large design studio that consists of multiple designers. Before they even began planning what they wanted to do, Paula Scher made a quick sketch on a napkin while they were out for lunch. This napkin is now often referred as the 1.5 million-dollar napkin. The sketch was simple but the process to the final product was anything but that. The idea was to merge both logos into one. They kept the word Citi as the word mark and Travelers umbrella as the mark. The logo has a very minimalistic but still intriguing with the colors pallet used and the typography. They used figure-ground to include the umbrella with the word "Citi" by having the lowercase "t" look like its handle. They also are using the red arch as a symbol for the merge between companies and the evolution from past to future. A small yet notable change was that they added some hierarchy by contrasting the words "Citi" and "bank". Its a slight change considering the logo is usually seen small but it still worth realizing the designers took this into consideration.



Present
Citibank

SOURCES

- <https://logos.fandom.com/wiki/Citibank#:~:text=In%20October%201999%2C%20Citibank%20changed,Citi-corp%20merged%20with%20Travelers%20Inc.>
- <https://www.citigroup.com/citi/about/timeline/>
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