

The Evolution of Starbucks

By Sedra Sakhi



The first Starbucks opened in Seattle, Washington, on March 30, 1971, where they only sold coffee beans. Starbucks was opened by three partners who met while they were students at the University of San Francisco. English teacher Jerry Baldwin, history teacher Zev Siegl, and writer Gordon Bowker. When they first designed the logo in 1971, they were looking for a logo that would embody the seafaring history of its home city. The three founders of Starbucks hired a consultant named Terry Heckler. In order to have a logo that relates to the history of its home city Heckler went over old marine books. He then came up with a two tailed mermaid, it was based on old 16th-century Norse woodcut. The mermaid in the logo was exotic, she was also topless so there were some complaints but Starbucks just went with it. The problem began when time came to put the logo on the delivery trucks, the image was huge. Later they fixed the problem by changing the hairdo on the mermaid so it draped over the trouble spots.

In 1982 Howard Schultz joins Starbucks as director of retail operations and marketing. In 1986, Howard Schultz tried convincing Starbucks to add espresso drinks to the menu. They denied his idea, so he started his own company, called Il Giornale. Later in 1987 when Starbucks decided to sell the company, Schultz jumped at the chance, he bought it for 3.8 million dollars. He transformed the company to his ideal image of what it should have been. Along with the hairdo change, Starbucks redesigned the logo after merging with Il Giornale. The Il Giornale name was inscribed in a green



circle that surrounded a head of Mercury, the swift messenger god. After the merge of the two companies Heckler who designed the first Starbucks logo, also merge the two logo designs. They kept the Starbucks siren with her starred crown, but made her more contemporary. They also dropped the tradition bound brown, and changed the logo's color to Il Giornale's more affirming green. The font used in this design is Santana-Black.



In 1992 Starbucks decided to change their logo, the mermaid was updated, cropped, and repositioned so that only above the navel is displayed. The cropped close up image of the mermaid and her tails on either side are meant to be mysterious and make people question those not familiar with the earlier logo. This draws more attention to the logo and the company. In 2008 Starbucks attempted to bring back the logo from 1971. They thought that it would appeal to the new hipster movement. They soon realized that their green logo and banding has become so popular that if they make this kind of huge change of their logo it would be unsuccessful. Finally after 40 years to mark a



new chapter in history, in 2011 Starbucks made their final change to their logo which is since present. Since Starbucks has become so widespread, so recognisable that they did need the name anymore. Starbucks now joins the ranks of Nike, McDonald's, Apple, and Target,

a select few global brands that are recognizable enough to get away without a wordmark.