

# Research on the Application of Cartoon Image in Brand Visual Image

-- Taking Three Squirrels from E-commerce Brand as an Example

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**Abstract.** No matter in the social environment or as a media, cartoon image as an art form appears in many fields. It is not only the embodiment of human wisdom and creativity, but also a form of expression of human spiritual civilization world yearning. Based on the analysis of the concept and characteristics of cartoon, cartoon image, brand and brand visual image, this paper expounds the application advantages of cartoon image design in brand visual image combined with the three Squirrels brand visual image. Finally, this paper hopes to provide more creative and design ideas for brand visual image based on the analysis of all the previous design content and theoretical summary, perfect integration of cartoon image and brand visual image, inject new vitality for commercial promotion, so that it has a stronger competitiveness in this diversified supermarket.

**Keywords:** Cartoon; Cartoon Image; Brand Image.

## 1. Cartoon Overview

'Cartoon' is an exotic word, and there are two different versions of its etymology. One is that it came from the French 'carton'; The other is that it comes from the Italian word 'cartone'. The term "cartoon" is used as a general term for various anime and manga. Cartoon, as an art form, originated in Europe, and two important historical conditions led to the emergence of the word "cartoon"; First of all, the development of the budding capitalism led to the superstructure affecting the economic base in turn, the power of the citizen class grew stronger, and the social structure changed significantly. Secondly, with the development of the Renaissance Movement, more open artistic ideas were accepted by the public. These two conditions complement each other, making the aesthetic trend more popular, simple instead of traditional painting.

In academic circles, cartoon is regarded as an art form and visual symbol, which personifies, exaggerates and abstracts characters, animals, plants and things through artistic creation, and endowing them with specific emotions and action forms. Cartoon images are easier to spread widely in the new media era due to their intuitiveness, interest, affinity and other characteristics, and have a profound impact on the audience.

## 2. Cartoon Images and Their Characteristics

As image art, cartoon has the obvious characteristics of "clear at a glance". Compared with words and other complex abstract graphics, cartoon images have more intuitive advantages in the way of communication. On the one hand, the cartoon image is simple and pure, the picture is straightforward and interesting, easy to attract the attention of viewers, in an instant to impress people; On the other hand, the dissemination of cartoon images is easier to circulate in different countries, and there is no communication barrier between the world's national languages, which makes the communication between people easier. take the classic cartoon Tom and Jerry as an example. Since its publication in 1940, the cat and mouse in the film has been one of the most popular cartoon images in the world. The whole film has not a single line, and has been wildly loved by people with its simple story content and highly intuitive image.

### 3. Types of Cartoon Images

#### 3.1 Cartoon Plant Images

Cartoon plant image refers to the "plant" as the prototype as the source of inspiration for creative design. The most classic and representative example of the cartoon plant image as a prototype is Plants vs. Zombies, a puzzle strategy tower defense stand-alone game, in which players choose to plant different plants and match different battle lineups to effectively block zombies from the security center. In the game, there are sunflowers that provide sunlight to buy other plants, peppers that cause explosions, nuts that play a defensive role, and pea shooters and corn throwers that attack and defend enemies. These are all common plant images in our life, and the designer designed its function and appearance in the game based on the characteristics of each plant. This game is mainly based on vegetables, melons and fruits, which is welcomed and loved by the public in the later launch. Multiple versions have been developed successively. The plant varieties available for purchase in the subsequent optimization are also expanded, such as aquatic plants, tropical plants, potted plants and other plant images are used as reference elements for cartoon plant image design.

#### 3.2 Cartoon Animal Images

Most animation works at home and abroad are based on animal-based cartoon images. For example, Peppa Pig (Figure 1), which takes the shape of a pig as the creation prototype, has a long mouth, small eyes and short ears. It is mocked by netizens as a cartoon shape that looks like a hair dryer, with warm colors like pink and red as the main colors. There are also many designs based on the shape of rabbits, such as Bugs Bunny, StelloLou (Figure 2), Judy Rabbit, among which Star Delu is a pink purple rabbit created by Disney. The designer has set a rich emotional image and interpersonal relationship for it. It is a dream rabbit whose dream is to become a Broadway dancer, and its best friend is Disney bear Duffy. These rich characters are deeply loved by people, men and women, young and old, the audience is wide. In addition to the above types, there are many cartoon animals, such as Pleasant Goat and Big Wolf, SpongeBob Squarepants, Winnie the Pooh, Ahri and so on. Cartoon animal images can be divided according to the types of animals, and can be further subdivided into wild animals, domestic pets, poultry and livestock, etc., according to the living mode and state of the animals. According to the animal subject division can be divided into land animals, birds, aquatic animals, etc.

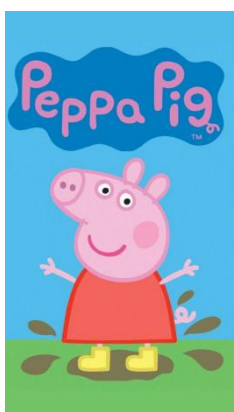


Figure 1. Peppa Pig



Figure 2. The Disney doll character StelloLou

#### 3.3 Cartoon Characters Images

The cartoon character image is based on the character as the creation prototype of the cartoon image. The designed cartoon character image has the appearance of human. Typical cartoon characters are led by American cartoon animation, among which the cartoon characters of superhero series such as Iron Man, Batman and Superman are deeply rooted in people's hearts. Barbie princess series, Sailor Moon, Disney princess and other cartoon characters are popular. In addition, "China

Doll" is the representative of the cartoon character used in the brand image. Although these cartoon characters have different styles, such as powerful hero characters, soft and romantic female images, as well as abstract and generalized cute doll images, these cartoon characters have a common characteristic, which is significant human modeling characteristics.

### **3.4 Other Cartoon Images**

Other cartoon characters are specifically all cartoon characters except animals, plants and characters. For example, in recent years, the corporate image design of Misue Ice City, a rookie in the milk tea industry, is "Snow King". Misue Ice City is a chain institution that focuses on fresh ice cream and tea drinks. It personifies the snowman, endowing it with an amiable expression, and adds human clothes and supplies. Kulomi in the Japanese animation Fantasy Magic melody does not have a specific prototype image. He may come from the imagination of the designer. This kind of cartoon image can be used as the design prototype of other cartoon images because it cannot find reference objects in real life. As well as the Disney Princess series of films furniture, toys, electrical appliances and other daily necessities are given life, as cartoon images. In short, there are various types of cartoon images, and almost all things or ideas can be used as materials for symbolization of cartoon images. This is precisely because cartoon images are imaginative and rich in shape, so they are loved by people and can spread quickly in a wide space.

## **4. Brand Image**

### **4.1 Brand Overview**

The understanding and functions of "brand" are also different in different stages of time. The original purpose of "brand" is to distinguish private property. In the Middle Ages, many artisans made things to highlight their products among many products, and also to protect their products from being copied and imitated, so as to guarantee customers who choose their products, so as to make "marks" on products to distinguish them from other products. This form is the earliest embryonic stage of brand trademarks. At present, there are many definitions of brand, and each expert has different opinions. The American Marketing Association (AMA) believes that brand is a mark "used to identify the name, term, logo, symbol, design and combination of a product or a group of services to distinguish it from other competitors' products or services". this definition emphasizes the role of the brand as a special symbol, that is, the initial "mark" - a identifying function. Ogilvy's explanation of brand is more vivid and comprehensive. Brand is a "symbol", an "entry ticket" for consumers' cognition of enterprises, and a sense of "spiritual identification" for consumers to buy products. Ogilvy's brand definition emphasizes the influence of consumers' association and experience perception on brands through certain ways. Philip, American marketing authority. Kotler believes that a brand is a name, noun, symbol or design, or the sum of the above, whose purpose is to distinguish one's product or service from other competitors. This point of view is similar to Ogilvy's, both of which emphasize the importance of consumers' own perception, which means that the formation of brands is closely related to consumers' subjective factors, such as lifestyle, cultural concept and personality pursuit.

### **4.2 Visual Image of the Brand**

Brand visual image design is a beautiful art, set beautify life, beautify the brand, beautify the social environment. A very important step in shaping a brand is to design a visual image for the brand. A good visual image of the brand is conducive to brand publicity and has a long history. Brand visual image is the source of the first impression of the brand that directly gives consumers strong visual impact, so that the public can get enterprise information at a glance, generate brand identity, so as to achieve the purpose of brand recognition. Generally speaking, brand image (CIS) includes three aspects: brand concept identification (MI), brand visual identification (VI), brand behavior identification (BI). The brand visual identity system (VIS) takes visual communication as the main

carrier, refers to the brand visual perception and identification system, is the enterprise culture concept, enterprise norms, commodity service standards and other brand recessive elements of the abstract, obscure concepts into the brand overall unity, system standards, specific visual language symbols, for the external display of the brand image To highlight the good image of the enterprise, highlighting the brand personality. Thus, consumers can form a clear visual identity and good brand impression when using brand products or services.

## **5. Analysis on the Application of Cartoon Image in Brand Image Take Three Squirrels as an Example**

### **5.1 Background of the Establishment of Three Squirrels**

Founded in 2012, Three Squirrels E-commerce Co., Ltd. is currently the largest food e-commerce company in China by sales. It is an original e-commerce brand of forest food based on nuts, dried fruits and other categories. It mainly relies on Internet technology for online sales to ensure that customers can quickly enjoy fresh and perfect food. Its rapid development has created a miracle in the history of Chinese e-commerce.

### **5.2 Brand Positioning and Brand Culture**

The brand positioning of Three Squirrels is a multi-category Internet forest food brand. The squirrel's favorite food is nuts, and the squirrel is the image of diligent work in nature. It shows that all the products of the three squirrels are selected from the farm of origin, to prevent quality problems, and their attitude is to work hard and serve customers. According to relevant data, consumers aged between 18 and 38 are the main force in the e-commerce food market. This group has its own ideas, pursues fashion and enjoyment, likes online shopping, pays attention to consumption experience, and has strong purchasing power. The products they buy are not only good, but also healthy and affordable. The advantage of Three Squirrels lies in following the trend of e-commerce development, positioning the brand as an Internet food brand, and the concept of "forest department" that reminds people of nature, life, health and freshness. Then, targeting the young people, the main consumers of e-commerce food market, designing visual images that meet their aesthetic and emotional needs, so as to quickly open the market.

### **5.3 Brand Visual Image**

Visual information is a visual image composed of symbols such as text and text. The basic elements of the brand image are designed according to the brand name Three Squirrels and the brand culture concept. The logo of the Three Squirrels has undergone multiple stages of evolution so far. From the initial logo image to the launch of the second logo only within a year, such a rapid optimization of the logo image is a common phenomenon of brand image in the Internet era. See Figure 3 for the evolution of the three squirrels logo. it cannot be said that the current logo is the most perfect. In order to put the product on the market quickly and shorten the design cycle, it is very likely to produce design deficiencies, which should be tested by the market and constantly improved and optimized by the designer. The original three squirrel logo design is a little rough, single shape, color, squirrel image design lack of personality. Later, the three squirrels evolved into a flat and cute cartoon image setting, giving them higher recognition, different clothes, hair, colors, eyes, hand movements are also different, and the overall color purity of the logo has been improved a lot. The three squirrels, Xiao Mei, Xiao ku and Xiao jian, they open their hands or clench their fists, or gesture upward, showing the enthusiasm to welcome every customer, but also highlighting the brand's youthful vitality and fearless attitude. in the third change of the logo, the images of the three squirrels have been fine-tuned, mainly with larger eyes, more obvious differences in the shape of the mouths, and slight changes in clothing. The latest logo is shown in Figure 4, which changes from flat to three-dimensional, pursues 3D effect, and further makes the image of the three squirrels humanoid and

realistic. In addition, the standard character design of "Three Squirrels" under the cartoon graphic is constantly changing. It remains consistent in the first two logos. In the third version, the logo has been updated. In the latest logo, the font design is consistent with the cartoon image design, towards three-dimensional, 3D conversion, visual effects are more straightforward and eye-catching. Every time the brand logo image evolution, adapt to the rapid changes in the Internet era of the market and the target consumers of cartoon aesthetic taste. Cartoon images tell the core values of enterprises in an anthropomorphic way, with a strong affinity. With the standardized use of brand basic elements such as logo, standard color, standard word, exclusive pattern, cartoon image in packaging, web pages and other application elements, unified brand personality symbols are more conducive to the memory and communication of brand image.



Figure 3. Four stages of the visual image of the Three Squirrels brand



Figure 4. The visual image of Three Squirrels

## 6. The Development Trend of Cartoon Image in Brand Visual Image

### 6.1 Absorb the Nutrition of Traditional Arts

Cartoon image is an important form of expression of cartoon art, and it is an exquisite visual plastic art language. As plastic art, nature cannot do without form art, graphic language. China's cartoon development has made brilliant achievements, thanks to China's unique cultural fertile soil. From the perspective of famous cartoon images, some are taken from the ancient Chinese opera art, some learn from paper-cutting, shadow play art, and some learn from the essence of ink culture, folk art, mythology and other cultures, or combine, modify and innovate several art forms. In short, these fruitful explorations and researches provide enough nutrition for the prosperity of cartoon art. Made great contributions for bringing up our national characteristic art. The development of any art cannot exist in isolation and cannot be separated from the cultural foundation of the nation. However, China is an ancient civilization with profound national culture and high artistic attainments, which lays the foundation for the development of new things. The development of cartoon art is extremely dependent on cultural resources, and the precious national cultural resources can be used for it to develop and create a sustainable national cultural industry. Nowadays, with the globalization of economy, how to build a brand with national characteristics has aroused the attention of people of all countries. Only

by maintaining national characteristics in the tide of market economy, always maintain the novel and unique brand characteristics, in order to stand in the world powers. The cartoon image in the brand visual image design should fully consider the cultural concept of the enterprise, dig deeply the cultural resources related to the traditional art, in order to realize the combination of modern design concept and traditional culture design means. In the fusion of tradition and modernity, we should satisfy the value orientation and aesthetic orientation of modern consumers, and draw nourishment from traditional art to reflect modern life taste and brand characteristics. Only the national is the world.

## 6.2 Supplemented by High-tech Means

The development of production technology is the premise for the development and expansion of the cartoon industry. Technology, like the booster of the cartoon industry, makes the visual image of cartoon characters look like tigers and wings, which plays a role in promoting the cartoon art. Meanwhile, the development and progress of cartoon art (art field and artists) also has a demand for technological invention. The aesthetic value of an excellent work of art is the display of its "spirit", and also directly reflects the beauty of fine workmanship. Without science and technology, art is difficult to progress; And without the need for art, technology will lack momentum. It can be seen that cartoon art and technology complement each other, so art and science are interdependent, jointly creating beautiful works of art for human beings. With the development of multimedia technology and digital technology, new technologies and new materials are constantly being applied. The development of cartoon art is moving forward with the spring breeze of science and technology. Cartoon image relying on the network platform in brand visual image communication form, "ideology" and so on have emerged a variety of development trends, into a new era of development. The timeliness and immediacy of network information transmission can make people (or things) become famous overnight, which is very beneficial to the promotion of cartoon image in the brand, in line with the habits of modern people to obtain information, its low cost, advancing with The Times, is indeed a good platform for the brand to borrow momentum. Each technological revolution has brought innovation opportunities for cartoon art, and added a deep and colorful brush to the development history of cartoon art. Nowadays, the emergence of high technology and the rise of digital technology have created more experience-based and interactive ways of creation in man-machine communication, and the artistic effect is often unexpected.

## 7. Summary

In the age of material abundance, brand has become a necessary condition for enterprises to establish themselves in the market, and how to shape brand, publicize and maintain brand visual image has also become a major problem faced by enterprises. Under the social background of "national animation", cartoon image shows its infinite artistic charm and commercial economic potential with the help of the development of media, and finds the best way to combine the commercial promotion of enterprise brand with the brand visual image design.

By collecting, analyzing and sorting out the cartoon images of some successful brands at home and abroad, this paper studies the economic value of cartoon images participating in brand publicity, and makes a detailed analysis of the main forms of cartoon images appearing in brand visual images, so as to select suitable cartoon images for brand publicity and commercial operation. Through the research on the application of cartoon image in brand visual image design, the following conclusions are drawn: cartoon image can almost meet the different psychological needs of people of all ages, so it is very suitable for some brands. By understanding the main ways and approaches of applying cartoon images in brands, we can learn the application methods and modes from the ways of applying cartoon images in successful brands. No matter cartoon images in cartoons or self-designed cartoon images of brands, as long as effective communication mode and marketing means can be used to promote the visual image of enterprise brands.

The cartoon image design in brand visual image is not only the communication of visual image, but also the comprehensive carrier related to enterprise brand characteristics, brand concept, brand social responsibility and consumer aesthetic needs. Therefore, only by comprehensive analysis of various factors can we develop feasible brand strategies and design brand cartoon images that meet brand requirements and consumer needs. We should treat the successful experience of foreign countries with an attitude of learning and tolerance, dig deep national culture to enrich the cultural connotation of cartoon images, fully improve our own visual communication advantages in breadth and depth, and create a brand visual image with Chinese flavor.

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