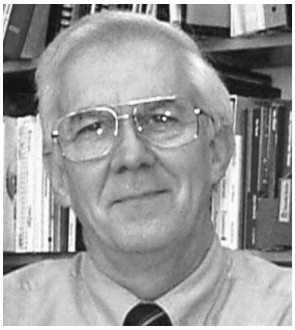

Beyond "Eyeglasses"!

If you buy anything in this day and age, it is almost impossible to avoid product brands. We are targets of sophisticated advertising campaigns that attempt to imprint the logo of a product or service so deeply in our psyches that we are unable to respond in any other way than a shock of recognition. When you see that simple little ''Swoosh'' logo on Tiger Woods' golfing cap, most of us branded television viewers think: Nike. Mission accomplished.

At times, it's not a particularly pleasant way to view the world. I wonder about my two granddaughters, who are about eight months old. As they grow they will be bombarded with images and sounds intended to establish recognition of various products. And it doesn't happen in a vacuum. As their grandfather, I have bought Tigger dolls at Downtown Disney and one of my granddaughters has a Stitch (from Disney's *Lilo and Stitch*) doll that is bigger than she is. That young lady probably doesn't have a chance since her mom and dad work in the worlds of comic books and science fiction.

It has become part of the world we must live in. This is evident to me as I sit on the Georgia Tech campus, across North Avenue from the world headquarters of Coca Cola, one of the first and perhaps greatest brand names in the world. Perhaps it is a tribute to the longevity of the product and proximity of the source, but I could no more drink a Pepsi than dishwater. Such are tastes formed.

There are brands everywhere. In some cases the brand represents a very tangible object, such as a car or a camera. In the case of Kodak, it isn't the logo that brands its products; it's the color. At one time the company was affectionately known as ''Mother Yellow.'' But there are other instances where there is no tangible product. There the need for branding is perhaps even more necessary. Consider your cell phone service. The tangible part, the cell phone, is the product of one of a few manufacturers who distinguish their product not so much by branding as by an ever-increasing set of whistles and bells. But the service providers attempt to brand this intangible product using celebrities like Catherine Zeta-Jones or goofy symbols.

Sometimes the product is tangible, but hidden. The best example may be the Pentium microprocessor found in many PCs. With one little logo and a strongly focused ad campaign, Intel has made the world aware that many computers are powered by one of their chips. So one company has managed to establish itself as a valuable contributor to today's computer technology with little stickers on the front of the machines.

Optics has very much the same problem as the microprocessor manufacturers. The optical components and devices that we design, fabricate, and sell are, for the most part, hidden inside chassis and consoles, underground and overhead, supporting other technologies. As I've said before, our field has a refractive index of unity—we are invisible.

Wouldn't it be great if there were some kind of small icon or logo that indicated: Optics Inside! (One might object, if optics, why not electronics? But everyone already knows there is electronics inside by virtue of the batteries and transformers that demand our attention from time to time. Not optics; it just goes about doing its job, moving photons, unnoticed by anyone.) Ah, well, branding optics like Intel ain't gonna happen. But efforts by industrial and professional organizations to develop a common story, a single logo, and a unified approach for presenting optics to the public might begin to raise awareness beyond ''eyeglasses.''

Donald C. O'Shea
Editor

Rudolf Kingslake Medal and Prize

The Rudolf Kingslake Medal and Prize is awarded annually in recognition of the most noteworthy original paper to appear in *Optical Engineering* on theoretical or experimental aspects of optical engineering. The 2002 Rudolf Kingslake Medal and Prize is awarded to **Thomas Tsao** and **Zhiqing Wen** for their paper entitled **"Image-based target tracking through rapid sensor orientation change,"** which appeared in the March 2002 issue. This paper, selected by the Kingslake Award Committee, is recognized for its innovative biological-based approach to tracking.

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