

Real

From Old Tales

Anne D. Bernstein found a few company names and logos that have their roots in Greek and Roman mythology.

A MOVING STORY: Atlas Van Lines

Atlas was one of the Titans, a family of giant Greek gods. He led them in a war against a younger group of gods called the Olympians. When the Olympians won, their powerful leader, Zeus, punished Atlas by making him carry the heavens on his shoulders (left). Today, Atlas Van Lines doesn't hold up the heavens, but its movers can carry your whole world—with the help of trucks and forklifts.



BATTLE OF THE BATHROOM: Ajax

The ancient Greek epic the *Iliad* tells about a war between the Greeks and the Trojans. One of the story's greatest war heroes was Ajax (left, played by Tyler Mane in last summer's *Troy*). He was known for his enormous size and superior strength. When Ajax cleanser was introduced in 1947, it was named for this powerful Greek figure. Ajax has been fighting grease and grime ever since.



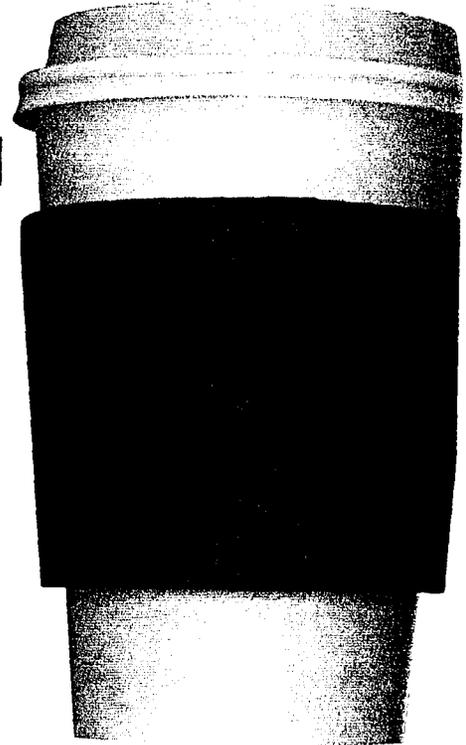
to *Big Sales*



BEAUTY AND THE BEANS: Starbucks

Starbucks says that the female figure on their logo (*right*) is a Siren. According to Greek mythology, the Sirens were half-woman, half-bird creatures who lived on an island surrounded by dangerous rocks. Sailors were lured to the island by the Sirens' beauty and sweet singing, only to end up crashing on the boulders.

Later in history, the Sirens were shown as half woman, half fish (*left*). The Starbucks Siren was drawn according to that tradition. She represents the nautical roots of the company's hometown, the coastal city of Seattle, Washington.



ONE SWELL SWOOSH: Nike

Besides being the name of an athletic-wear company, Nike (*right*) was the Greek goddess of victory. In 1971, Phil Knight, the founder of the company, paid \$35 to an advertising student named Caroline Davidson to design a logo that would look good on the side of a sneaker. She came up with the world-famous Swoosh, which is supposed to represent the goddess Nike's wings. Phil got quite a run for his money!



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PUT THE PETAL TO THE METAL: FTD Florists



FTD stands for Florists' Transworld Delivery, a network of florists that makes it possible to have flowers and gifts delivered around the world. FTD's logo is an image of Mercury (*above*), the Roman messenger of the gods, running with a bouquet. His winged sandals, which helped him get around quickly, made him the perfect symbol for speedy deliveries.

For me? You shouldn't have!



OPEN WIDE AND SAY "HISS": American Medical Association



The American Medical Association is the country's largest organization for doctors. Their logo (*above*) is a snake curled around a staff, which was inspired by Asklēpios, the Greek god of medicine. He always carried a stick with a serpent wrapped around it, and some legends even said Asklēpios could turn into a snake. His slithery stick has been associated with doctors and healing ever since.

I BRAKE FOR ROYALTY: Midas Mufflers



In a famous Greek story, greedy King Midas wished for everything he touched to turn to gold. This didn't work out too well for him, since "everything" included food, drink, and people—even his own daughter (*right*).

In 1956, Nate Sherman, a muffler manufacturer, formed the Mufflers Installation Dealers Association, which he shortened to M.I.D.A.S. Nate liked the connection to the king, so he made a crown part of the original logo. For a while, they even painted their mufflers gold! Although the crown is gone from the logo today (*above*), the company still uses the slogan TRUST THE MIDAS TOUCH. □



MIDAS' DAUGHTER TURNED TO GOLD