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1 Timely Comics logo, 1939. 2 Atlas Comics logo, 1951. 3–4 Marvel Comics' first official logo, 1961. 5 Marvel's logo, 1971. 6 Marvel's logo, 1983. 7 Marvel's logo, 1987. 8 Marvel's logo, 1990. 9 The "red brick" was introduced in 2000. 10 Updated version, 2012.

HOW MARVEL BECAME MARVEL™

THE PATH FROM SMALL-SCALE PUBLISHER TO GLOBALLY RECOGNIZABLE BRAND IS LONG AND LITTERED WITH LOGOS.

Before Marvel became the entertainment juggernaut it is today, the company lived a few other lives. First as a scrappy comic book publisher trying to make its name in an increasingly competitive landscape. Later as a comic book empire, setting the standard for all others who entered the field. Throughout Marvel's 80-plus-year history, the company has changed plenty—and with it, its logo. Using design, each reinvention offered a chance to show the world a different side of Marvel.

It all started back in 1939 when Martin Goodman launched Marvel's predecessor, Timely Comics. During its first couple of years, the company sported a crest-shaped logo designed with blue-and-white stripes that echoed the era's patriotic attitude. When Timely became known as Atlas Comics in 1951, the new logo reflected its more cosmopolitan name with a globe wrapped in a wavering banner. With the appearance of *Fantastic Four* #1 in 1961, the Marvel Age had begun, but the company would still have to wait decades before it assumed the bright "red brick" logo it's known for today.

Along the way, Marvel used a series of logos that were resolutely nondescript. Monogrammed letters and blocky banner logotypes sat at the top of each cover as a quiet reminder to readers that there was a creative machine behind the *Spider-Man* issues they were reading. Marvel's early graphic identity was less about Marvel the company, and more about making room for the characters inhabiting its expanding universe. The strategy was effective—in the 1960s, Marvel developed a powerful stable of characters that would define the company for decades to come.

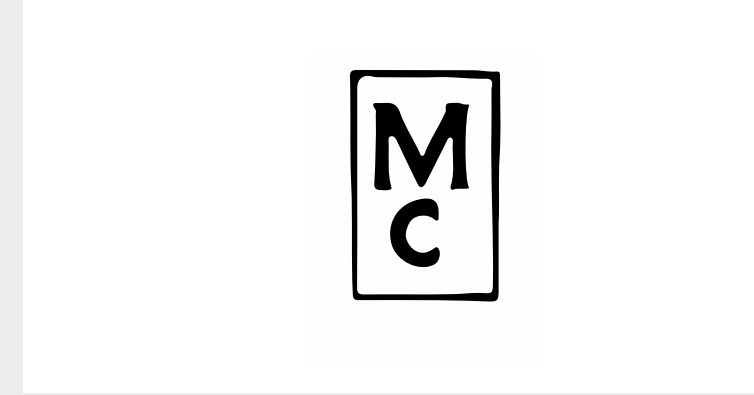
By the 1970s, Marvel dropped the words Comics Group, and its logo started to take the shape of the classic sans serif design readers know today. Then, in 1990, it made a radical departure and adopted one of its most best-known logos to date: a blocky letter *M* with Marvel carved out of the letter's top third.

A bright-yellow script font reading Comics stretched across the Marvel word mark, lending it a '90s-era aesthetic reminiscent of other popular entertainment logos of the time, like MTV. This red logo was the basis from which Marvel's leadership would develop the famous red brick that today is used across the company's various properties.

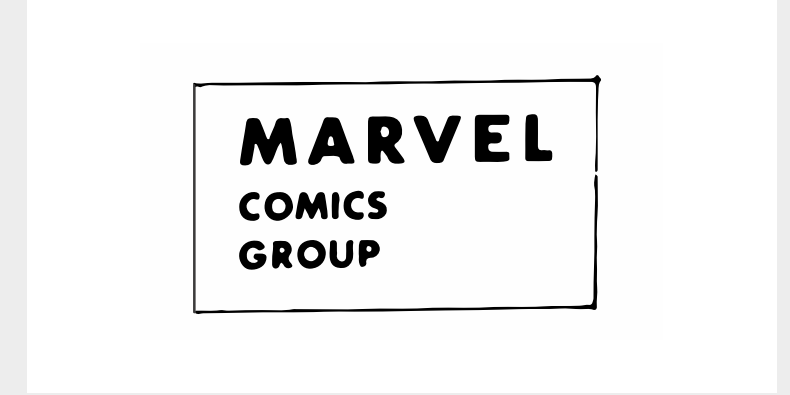
In the mid to late '90s, Marvel was in need of a reset. After emerging from bankruptcy, the company was eager to establish itself as more than a comic book publisher. It focused on licensing deals for films and TV shows, and made a bigger push into merchandise. As the company expanded, the "comics" logo became limiting. Marvel's new logo needed to be bold and simple. It needed to work well with the comics' expressive cover art. But most of all, it needed to represent the company's growing ambitions to become an entertainment company.

Marvel's leadership worked with a team of designers to overhaul the comics logo into something more functional and streamlined. The red *M* of the previous logo inspired the rectangular red box that holds Marvel's iconic logotype. The designers tweaked the sans serif text to create a distinctive kerning where the letters gently connect with each other, almost creating a box within a box. They opted for a distinctive, bright, true red that could hold its own against an ever-shifting palette of comic book art, low-quality paper stock, and various packaging materials.

Since introducing the red brick in 2000, Marvel has used the logo across all of its intellectual property, from comics to film. Over the years, designers have subtly tweaked the letterforms, but the bold, contrasting design remains virtually unchanged. It's a far cry from the early days of Marvel, when logos were treated as a visual aside on comic book covers. Today, Marvel is a brand unto itself, with a logo to match.



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