

## Ticker symbols: Wall Street's brand names

A ticker symbol is an acronym or abbreviation denoting stocks in a certain company at stock exchanges. Well-known examples at the NYSE/ New York Stock Exchange include: KO (The Coca-Cola Company), XOM (Exxon Mobil Corporation) and WMT (Wal-Mart Stores). Harley-Davidson changed its ticker symbol from HDI to HOG in 2006, as they considered the latter a better match with the brand experience.

A ticker symbol is an abbreviation a stock exchange uses to refer to a company listed on that exchange. These symbols were initially printed on the ticker tape churned out by the continuously ticking printing machine that used to produce a rolling display of stock prices on paper. Most ticker symbols are shortened versions of company names. However, some companies use the name of one of their well-known products, such as Anheuser-Busch, which uses the three-letter code **BUD** (from the name of its flagship product, Budweiser beer). Southwest Airlines uses **LUV** as its ticker symbol, in reference to the location of Love Field in Dallas, where its headquarters are based.

Harley-Davidson CFO Tom Bergmann explained his company's decision to change its ticker symbol from HDI to HOG as follows: 'The new ticker symbol captures the spirit of what Harley-Davidson is all about - the fun of riding motorcycles'. HOG is a registered brand name owned by Harley-Davidson and stands for 'Harley Owners Group'. The Harley Owners Group is an association of over one million Harley riders, making it the largest manufacturer-sponsored rider organisation in the world.

### *Reference(s)*

Marketing News, September 15, 2006 (p.53).