

# Creative Agency, [Commence Studio](#), Rebrands Expanding Regional Coffee Roaster

What do you get when you combine brand strategy with a quirky, playful coffee roaster?

A dog-gone good time.



## The Story Behind Nevada's Iconic Blind Dog Coffee

Behind every great brand there is an equally inspiring story. The Blind Dog Coffee story is one that teaches us to overcome our struggles and that our biggest challenges can become our biggest opportunities.

As a young child Mark Berry, the creator of [Blind Dog Coffee](#), developed cancer that threatened his eyesight. Luckily, Mark received treatment and his cancer went into remission. Fast forward to his 49th birthday, where he was declared legally blind and could no longer earn a living as he had done the past 30 years.

Where others would have chosen to give up, Mark and his family decided they would overcome this challenge as a team. Inspired by a love of caffeine, everything organic and man's best

friend, Mark decided he would professionally roast coffee under the moniker - Blind Dog Coffee. In 2007, the company became official - Does someone have some champagne? From birth, Blind Dog pursued a noble cause. Provide local customers with conscious, organic coffee while raising money for the Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation.

From the beginning, Blind Dog's packaging was bold, bright and a little bit quirky. Recognizable by a bright green bag and a white dog with sunglasses, their packaging oozed personality.



There was only one problem... After years of success in the local market it was time to talk expansion. But would the current packaging compete with other brands on a national level?

How could they take a local, organic coffee company on a mission to end childhood cancer across the country?

With their eyes on the prize and global expansion on their mind, they needed help scaling into bigger markets from Los Angeles to New York and everywhere in-between.

## Creating a Brand Identity primed for Global Domination

After hearing the story behind Blind Dog Coffee and meeting the amazing humans behind the brand, [Commence Studio](#), jumped at the opportunity to work with them. As a creative agency that focuses on branding environmentally and socially-conscious CPG brands - it was a match made in heaven.

\*Queue the angelic voices\*

Commence Studio believes that great branding begins with strategy. You wouldn't travel across the country without a map would you?

Well, you probably would because you have a phone with GPS but you get what we're saying, right?

Every successful company knows where they've been before they decide where they're going. Once they know who they are, they begin to plan how they'll get to where they want to be.

## **Understanding Blind Dog Coffee's Success**

In order to create a brand primed for the big leagues, Commence had to get a deep understanding of the people behind the coffee. After taste testing, touring the roastery and in-person strategy sessions, they had a pretty good idea of who Blind Dog was. Next, they took a look at the current packaging.

What did the current packaging communicate? How did it make customers feel?

To consumers, the bright green packaging was iconic, but the print in the background felt a little busy causing confusion in product hierarchy and value propositions. The current mascot was scrappy, industrial and didn't take itself too seriously. The current design system had some additional challenges when it came to scaling the brand.

For starters, their current logo didn't have an alternative when shown on black vs. white. Creative director, Kylie Souza, had this to say, "When using the current logo, the Blind Dog Team was just inverting it when using it on a dark vs. light background. That means shadows were becoming highlights and it was altering the image in an unrecognizable way".

Second, some of their product names had greater brand recognition than their brand name, which can work for some companies, but ultimately would be a roadblock as Blind Dog started to scale.

With these challenges in mind, the team at Commence needed to understand the market.

## **Understanding opportunity in the space**

Knowing yourself is half the battle. The other half is knowing where you fit into the market. Commence took a good hard look at what makes large coffee brands successful and discovered that they had a few things in common.

#1 They had a great tasting product

#2 They presented that product in a visually appealing way

#3 They connected to customers through their story

First off, Blind Dog Coffee had a product that would make you write home to momma. And second, they had a unique story backed by a charitable cause - but one thing was missing. Their packaging and logo were outdated.

They deserved something that stayed true to themselves but was able to compete with the big players on the shelf.

And that's where Commence Studio knew they could create something incredible.

## Blind Dog Gets a Modern Makeover

Stop us if you've heard this one -

***Knock Knock.***

***Who's There?***

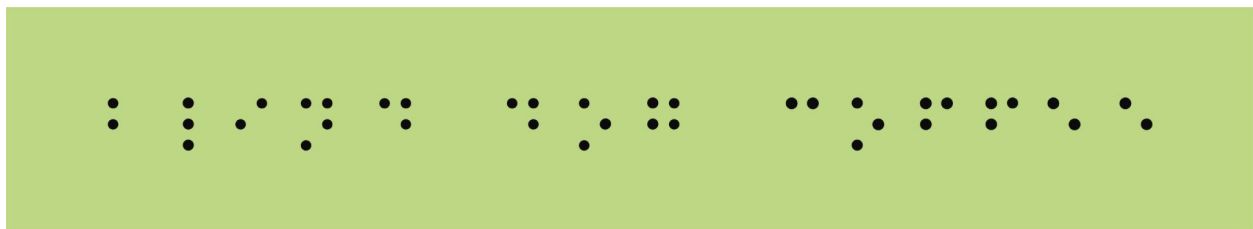
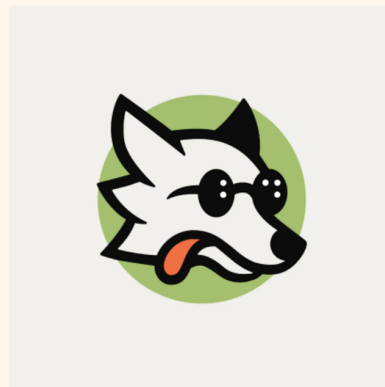
***Fido.***

***Fido who?***

***Don't Fido-ver this coffee now that it's got a new look!***

Working with coffee is all about selling the story. It's about creating a feeling of community and honoring a lifestyle. The design choices that the team made included:

- Modernize the front of each bag
- Keep the quirky-ness of the owners by sticking with the playful dog icon but smoothing some of the lines that came with him
- Primary products get color blocking treatment to the max so customers can start associating their favorite roasts with specific colors of the brand
- A subtle, more professional type choice kept the design clean





Did you notice the easter eggs that the designer left?

Easter egg #1 The artist wanted to show "B" and "D" in the braille alphabet to pay homage to Mark Berry's story.

Easter egg #2 The sides of the coffee bags pay homage to the artwork in the original packaging which were done by local artists

When asked about these Easter eggs, Creative Director Kylie Souza had this to say about it, "With logo design becoming more minimalistic we saw simple opportunities that would create intrigue and add depth to the design. We found a good balance of having interesting moments that fit the brand's personality."

The new [brand identity](#) and packaging system modernized the front and gave primary products a strategic color blocking to make them even more recognizable. The fan favorite - Nevada Black, an Italian Roast - can be seen in an all black color block with artistic accents down the side representative of the iconic Nevada cowboy.



The new and improved brand stayed true to the makers behind the coffee while listening to consumer trends to create a look inspired by the company's culture.

## About Commence Studio

Commence Studio is a [creative agency](#) that's about forward movement. As an agency that specializes in helping CPG brands communicate their mission through disruptive design and strategic marketing tactics.

Their services include [branding](#), digital marketing services, [packaging design](#), [web development](#), [web design](#), [Shopify development](#), [photography](#) and more. Visit them at <https://Commence.Studio> to learn about their full list of services.