

ULTIMATE GUIDE TO
BUILDING
Your Brand

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This book will take you through what a brand is, how brand standards work, and why you should use the 4 core elements to strategically build your brand. You can use this book to identify your target audience, determine why they should choose you, develop messages that will connect, and put those messages in the right places. Taking the time to strategically build your brand will save money and produce a better return on investment with your marketing efforts.

“**ONLY 1** **COMPETITOR**
CAN BE THE
CHEAPEST
— the others have to use
Branding. **THE**
STRONGER
THE BRAND, the greater the
PROFIT MARGIN.”

-MARTY NEUMEIER



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“DON'T TRY TO MAKE A
product **FOR**
EVERYBODY, BECAUSE THAT IS A *PRODUCT*
FOR *NOBODY.*”

-SETH GODIN

PART 1:

PHILOSOPHY

“ *Creativity*
WITHOUT STRATEGY
is called **ART, CREATIVITY**
With STRATEGY is called
ADVERTISING. ”

- JEF L. RICHARDS



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My story...

Before we start this journey together, I want to give you some history so that you know where I am coming from and have some faith that I am able to help you. I have learned so much from my previous experiences and that can help you to build your brand

After college at the University of Louisiana (home of the Ragin' Cajuns #GeauxCajuns), I moved to Los Angeles and had the opportunity to work with some of the greatest branding minds on the west coast. I got my start at Creative Artists Agency (world's largest talent agency representing A-list actors, actresses, writers, directors, producers, musicians, and athletes) working in the talent department. I had the opportunity to personally work with some incredible actors and actresses including Gwyneth Paltrow, Uma Thurman, Helen Hunt, Blair Underwood, Janine Turner, Jessica Lange, Beverly D'Angelo, Eric Stoltz, Bonnie Hunt, Rita Wilson, Jennifer Grey, and more.

CAA had just launched an advertising division and began luring away major clients (including Coca-Cola) from the Madison Avenue ad agencies. CAA created the first Polar Bears campaign. It was a real lesson in marketing and global branding to see how it was done at that level.

I was 22 years old and this was my first 'real job'. I was in a big city, working in a huge global company with 300+ employees and hundreds of millions of dollars in annual revenue. It was an incredible learning experience.

I was recruited away from CAA when a director client, Brett Leonard, launched a new company, L2 Communications, and I had a chance to be a part of building it from the ground up. Building a brand new business, when I was only 24, was full of new opportunities and experiences. We didn't have the power and budget of CAA, so I had to learn to be very resourceful.

In our first year in business, we finished production on TriStar Pictures' Hideaway



(starring Jeff Goldblum, Christine Lahti, and Alicia Silverstone), started a new movie, *Virtuosity* (with Denzel Washington & Russell Crowe in his first American film), and I launched a product development division, among other things.

Virtuosity was a sci-fi thriller with a then-record number of visual effects shots in a film, and we established an entirely new method for marketing movies using websites and the internet. Revolutionary at the time.

Launching the product development division was awesome. I was just young enough to not know that I didn't know anything. We had a real "us against the world - let's just figure it out" attitude. We partnered with a client from CAA, Mimi Rogers (the 1st Mrs. Tom Cruise) to develop and market an exercise product she used called *Stretch & Flex*. We debuted on Home Shopping Network and sold out in minutes. Being in St. Petersburg, on the set at HSN, was awesome and a great study in the science of what makes people buy.

Another product we launched, the Frank Serafine Sound Library, was a collection of sounds and sound effects from the master of sound production. This was a specialized product for sound engineers, recording houses, video editors, and radio stations. Going from a very broad retail-oriented product, like *Stretch & Flex*, to a very narrow-audience B2B product, like the Sound Library, was another amazing real world lesson in how to build a brand with vastly different target audiences. And traveling to industry trade shows across the country was educational. (I spent a lot of time with a lot of Teamsters.)

After our successful appearances on Home Shopping Network with the *Stretch & Flex*, I received a call from media mogul Barry Diller, who was in the process of buying HSN. Well, he was in the process of buying a lot of companies - USA Network, Home Shopping Network, Ticketmaster, Silver King Broadcasting, Lycos, City Search, and more. This was an incredible opportunity to be a part of building a huge global media conglomerate - quite a bit different from launching a startup.

The branding challenges with acquiring all of these different companies was an incredible learning experience. This was my first lesson in the challenge of 'house of brands' v 'branded house' in a real world scenario.

I returned home to Louisiana after 6 years in Los Angeles when my grandmother got sick, and I was blessed to be here every day for the last year of her life. I accepted a position at a regional advertising agency in my hometown of Lafayette and started to focus on small to midsize companies.

Learning the inner workings of brand building and marketing startup/small companies



was another great step in my growth. These companies needed a fresh perspective to learn how to stand out and get noticed by their target audiences. The west coast branding I had been doing had not reached the south yet so It was a great time to share my experience.

After two years, I accepted a position as an in-house marketer for a regional multi-line automotive dealer. To go from doing a dozen tasks for a dozen clients to 100 tasks for 1 client was a great shift. Being an in-house marketer, becoming a trained and certified media buyer, and tackling all of the challenges of doing everything as a one person department while managing a multimillion dollar annual budget was awesome. This was the culmination of a decade of experience.

Then, in 2001, I took the plunge and co-founded a strategic branding agency, brandRUSSO. Here, I have taken all of my knowledge, experience, case studies, and client work and we developed a tried and true trademarked branding process, Razor Branding™.

After decades of working with clients large and small,with a variety of budgets, and serving as an in-house marketer myself, I realized that there are certain things we all need:

- Community to provide support, advice, and feedback
- Courses for ongoing knowledge and lifelong learning
- Content to stay up to date as our industry evolves
- Connection to others going through the same challenges.
- Collaboration with a strategic team
- Coaching with group or 1-1 calls for specific advice & direction

So I've taken all of this knowledge and experience and turned it into Brand State U. This way I can help as many of you as possible to make sure that the marketers that can't afford to hire an agency can still get professional guidance.

I'm glad we've connected and I look forward to building your brand with you.

Let's Get Going!

Jaci

“ YOUR
Brand
IS WHAT
OTHER PEOPLE
SAY ABOUT YOU
WHEN YOU’RE *not*
IN THE ROOM.”

- JEFF BEZOS



CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS A BRAND?

Before we even begin to talk about branding, and building a brand, we have to first establish what it is we're talking about. Define our terms, so to speak.

Branding goes back to the beginning of time. Think about when farmers used to bring their cattle to market. People in the villages knew the livestock by the name of their farms. If one farmer has raised their cattle in the grassy fertile plains, and another farmer has raised their cattle on the rocky mountainside, the townspeople could use the mark of the farm to know the difference. Because each farmer fed their cattle differently and raised them in different environments, the townspeople wanted to be sure they purchased the products they thought tasted best.

Branding Irons are used to sear the mark of the owner into the hide of each head of cattle communicating a series of messages to prospective buyers. Much like a logo on a car or pair of shoes, the mark tells a story about price, quality, and craftsmanship.

“The brand mark should be an indicator of the quality and value of the product.”

The use of symbols to represent wares, dates back thousands of years to the time of early Egyptians. Whether it was farmers marking their cattle, craftsmen marking their leather and metal goods, or potters engraving their creations to let buyers know who made the products, where it was made, and which materials were used, these brands told a story to prospective customers.

During Old Norse times, the word brandr referred to burning, like the marks being made from a hot branding iron. These marks tell an entire story with one visual. No matter where the product was sold, it was identifiable with where it was made, who made it, and the materials used in its construction.

MARK OF QUALITY

As more and more cattlemen and craftsmen used these marks to identify their property and creations, their customers started to associate value with individual makers, seeking out their products with increasing demand. Other people sought to join the producers and guilds of these products, to learn from those at the top of their field.



Imitation became more and more common (not the sincerest form of flattery), and the marks were used to demonstrate ‘genuine’ goods from a reputable and sought-after supplier. Guilds and producers began formalizing their marks and differentiating themselves from each other.

During the Industrial Revolution, as items were produced in higher volume, branding and marks were used to ‘remove’ the generic nature of the goods. To protect their mark of quality, companies pressured politicians to preserve their point of difference, and the Trade Marks Registration Act passed into law in 1875.

Canny businessmen spotted gaps in the market and realized businesses didn’t need to be the only one, or even markedly different; they just needed to position themselves as such.

James Walter Thompson started an advertising agency in the late 19th century and detailed the concept of trademark advertising, and from there the use of slogans, mascots, custom design and messaging grew into the behemoth that is branding and marketing today.

“If you only focus on colors and typeface and not how people feel about you then you have developed a set of colors, not a brand.”

“ PRODUCTS

ARE MADE

IN THE

FACTORY,

BUT *brands* ARE

CREATED *IN THE* MIND.”

-WALTER LANDOR



CHAPTER 3

WHAT IS IT NOT?

brand

/brand/

noun

1. a type of product manufactured by a particular company under a particular name.
“A new brand of detergent”
2. an identifying mark burned on livestock or (formerly) criminals or slaves with a branding iron. “The brand on a sheep identifies it as mine.”

But, branding is more than these dictionary definitions. To understand what branding is all about, let's start by defining what it's now.

A brand is not a logo. This is actually a brand identity.



LOGO

The brand identity, aka logo, represents the brand. It is the visual representation of the brand, but it is not the brand itself. Just like when someone wears a jersey with a team name across their chest. They don't actually play for that team, just wear a shirt that represents their support.



COMPANY

Although people often reference a particular company as a “this brand of company” or “that brand of company”, that is actually a misuse of the word. A company isn’t a brand and a brand isn’t a company.

PRODUCT

Just as with companies, products are often referenced as a “specific brand of product”. But those aren’t brands. They are shoes, cereal, headphones, pants, etc. But those are not brands. They are products.

SERVICE

The services that companies provide are like products that they sell. They are unique to that company but they are not brands. The company is known for their services - accounting, legal, etc - and the work they provide. These services are not brands. They are offerings, just like products.

Some companies build their brands based on the services they provide and the way they provide their services. The customer service at companies like Disney and Chick-Fil-A have helped to build their brands. But the service isn’t the brand.

“A brand is a person’s emotional connection to a company, product, or service.”

The important takeaway is that it is a person’s emotional connection. This means that it is the feelings of the person. The hardest thing for a company to comprehend is that they don’t own or control the brand. The 2nd hardest thing for a company to accept is that it is based on emotions, not logic. *The emotional connection is in the heart of the beholder.*

“

BUILD SOMETHING

100 *Love,*
PEOPLE

NOT SOMETHING

1 MILLION PEOPLE

Kind of LIKE. ”

-PAUL GRAHAM



CHAPTER 4

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Branding matters because it centers on the connection with your target audience. You can spend all of your budget on search engine optimization (seo) and pay per click (ppc) to get to the top of the search results but that will only guarantee that you are on the list with 12 other options.

It's the investment in building your brand that will cause your target audience to choose you over the other options. With all things being equal, why should someone choose your company, your product, or your service...it's your brand. The way a person feels about you is the reason they will choose you. It usually won't be because of logical or rational reasons. They will choose you based on their gut feeling...their emotional connections to you.

As you build your brand, you will need to be purposeful in how you differentiate from the other companies and their products in your space. You have to stand out so that you don't blend in.

The challenge is that it is human nature to blend in. We are hardwired to take the safe path and "do it the way it's always been done". Standing out feels risky and dangerous.

STAND OUT

It's literally in our DNA to want to blend in to be safe. Go all the way back to the laws of the jungle and see how herd animals navigate life in the wild to realize how risky it feels to stand out. A herd of antelope or zebras will stick together to appear larger, and less vulnerable, to any predator looking for lunch. Should one animal stray too far from the pack, they would instantly be seen for their actual size and most probably picked off.

Humans have this same fear. Although we won't be picked off, like an animal, we can be picked on. Think about the 'herd' mentality of high school girls. (No offense to teenage girls - I'm raising 3 of them myself.) They seem to always dress the same, wear their hair the same, speak the same, listen to the same music...basically travel in a herd to safely blend in. Unlike the animals in the wild, they won't be picked off, but they will be picked on.

So, it is literally human nature to blend in for safety - don't stand out and don't draw



attention to yourself. Now you understand why it feels so contrary to say or do things with your marketing that would cause your company to stand out. It feels like a risky proposition.

Often, companies rely on price as the 'safest' way to stand out. But, if you focus on price then you can quickly become a commodity. Most companies can't win the battle on price - and only one company can be the cheapest.

Don't become a commodity.

Don't base your advantage on price.

Don't blend in

Use your brand promise to stand out.

“Once you find your niche, it will make you rich.”

“**YOUR BRAND**
is the **SINGLE MOST**
Important
INVESTMENT you can
make
IN YOUR BUSINESS.”
-STEVE FORBES

PART 2:

**ELEMENTS OF
BRAND IDENTITY**



CHAPTER 5

BRAND HIERARCHY

When a brand manager begins to map and develop a brand hierarchy, it is important to consider your audiences and your product or service offering.

SIMILAR VALUE OFFERINGS

If you have multiple products all aimed at the same audience, it makes sense to have them all sit within the one of brand identities.

Dove does this very well. Their products are all grouped together in the same value offering. Dove Shampoo, Dove Conditioner, Dove Soap, Dove Moisturizer, Dove Face Wash are all packaged similarly and bought by the same audience, so it makes sense to keep the products connected. The white container with the gold bird is recognizable from the other end of the row in a grocery store.

DIFFERENT VALUE OFFERINGS

If, however, you have multiple products aimed at different audiences, and therefore different value offerings, you might consider building these under separate names and brand identities, so there is no confusion about what you do and who the customer is.

Unilever owns both Dove and Lux, both producing beauty soaps and shower gels. Lux is a more generic, less aspirational brand than Dove, and therefore has a different audience. Building these two product groups separately allows Unilever to have a presence in different sections of the market, delivering products to two audiences, who are unlikely to switch to the other if one ceased production.

Brand hierarchy examples

SINGLE MASTER BRAND IDENTITY

Universities often have a strong master brand identity and similar value offerings to cater to their audience, but different product categories in this one brand. The athletic department, for example, usually belongs to the master brand identity and is named to provide consistency across the organization.



University Of Louisiana utilizes one typeface and mark (the Fleur de lis) for the academic brand identity while utilizing a different typeface and mark (the pepper) for the athletic teams. The goal with every organization is to build a strong and consistent brand identity for their audience, with enough flexibility to be genuinely useful for campaigns and signage.

Understanding how to build your brand architecture, or make a change while being consistent is a skill of true brand managers, and indeed the entire executive team.

SUB-BRAND IDENTITIES AND PRODUCT BRAND IDENTITIES

Company structure and ownership also influences brand identity hierarchy and architecture, of course, particularly following mergers and acquisitions when the contract often includes brand identity structure and naming conventions.

A brand hierarchy illustration looks at the way master brand identities, sub-brand identities and product brand identities can all work together in concert. Each company/product needs to have their own brand identity with each working together consistently to become more than the sum of their parts.

Understanding how to build your brand architecture, or make a change to brand architecture is a skill brand managers, and indeed the entire executive team, should have a confident handle on.

Mondelez International owns Cadbury among many other chocolate companies. Cadbury has many sub-products(Cadbury Creme Egg, Cadbury Dairy Milk) while also being a product itself.

Mondelez grew their chocolate portfolio by acquiring Toblerone. It has its own identity, own brand standards and a separate value proposition to Cadbury, so it made no sense incorporating it into their existing brand identity structure.

The question of a house of brands or a branded house leads into brand architecture and is another way to approach the development of your architecture and structure.

Whether you are an established company looking to expand or a new business mapping your future growth and product structure, you will benefit from a considered approach to brand identity hierarchy, allowing you to scale your business and products when you grow.

BRAND STRATEGY CONSIDERATIONS

Building a strong brand is the goal of any brand strategy. When deciding what brand strategy is suitable for your company, there are some key considerations:

Consider your outcomes and your audience - what is the outcome you are promising to deliver through your brand?

- Who will benefit from you delivering this promise?
- What will your naming conventions be?
- Will you build awareness of all brand entities or just those consumer-facing?



BRANDED HOUSE DEFINITION

A branded house is structured so all product names and product brand identities use the name of the parent product in their naming conventions and have a tie through their visual identities as well.

Each brand identity feeds into the master identity, reinforcing the brand identity attributes, and also draws down on the strength of the master brand identity. To re-appropriate a cliché, for a branded house, the sum of the parts makes the whole larger and stronger.

Branded house example

An example of a branded house is Apple. Apple has multiple products, and many of them are known well enough to stand apart as their products. However, they all clearly utilize the Apple brand identity and leverage the ethos of the parent company.

BENEFITS OF A BRANDED HOUSE STRATEGY

The branded house strategy works well to provide a common platform for individual product brands while each marketing and positioning element simultaneously builds both the product brand and the master brand.

A branded house takes advantage of the same outcomes and audience - it capitalizes on existing synergies and doesn't cannibalise products within the house because the purposes are differentiated. Planning, resources and budget are all centralized rather than split between teams and brands in a branded house model. Building and controlling a single brand is also easier for brand and marketing teams.

NEGATIVES OF A BRANDED HOUSE STRATEGY

A branded house strategy makes it difficult to add new audiences (who aren't users of your core products) or to add new products through mergers and acquisitions. New audiences often need a different outcome from the product or category, a different value proposition or a different price. They may be consciously avoiding your company/products because it doesn't meet their needs and will be sceptical of a play into a new space with the existing product/service, or it may not be possible to make a play into this space because of strategic or value-based limitations.

An Android phone user is unlikely to buy an Apple tablet because they philosophically disagree with the closed ecosystem of Apple. The product in this instance (linked to the master company) doesn't allow this flexibility.

House of brands example

Procter & Gamble is the company behind many products. Some of its most prominent products include Tide, Charmin, Iams, Bounty, Pringles, Gillette, Duracell, Crest, and many more. These products are so disparate, with the purposes and audiences so diverse that it couldn't possibly market them all under one company/product name. Some of this is naturally due to the acquisition of additional products over the 100+ year history of the company.



BENEFITS OF A HOUSE OF BRANDS STRATEGY

A house of brands works best with the individual products clearly defined by distinct target markets and marketing strategies - most commonly consumer brands. It works where a particular target market doesn't respond to the other offerings.

“In a hybrid model of a house of brands, some of the products remain linked and others, while being in the same category perhaps, sit separately.”

NEGATIVES OF A HOUSE OF BRANDS STRATEGY

The downside of a house of brands architecture is that it requires more effort and expense to plan and build the different products and brand strategies that make up a house of brands. Again, it is imperative that the products don't cannibalize each other – in that case, you are better off with a branded house.

Alongside increased effort is increased budget, because you cannot rely on cross-overs from one product and audience to naturally pitch another product to the same audience. Hierarchies can often be quite complex in a house of brands and the corporate underpinning all of them can become lost.

“A house of brands works best with the individual brands clearly defined by distinct target markets and marketing strategies.”

HYBRID BRANDED HOUSE DEFINITION

A hybrid branded house usually occurs following mergers and acquisitions - what started out as a branded house (all linked through the master brand identity with common- brand promises, naming conventions and visual identities) has now become a little bit of a Frankenstein's monster with new products now part of the roster with separate promises, positioning and brand identities. In a hybrid branded house model, some of the products remain linked and others, while being in the same category perhaps, sit separately.

Hybrid brand house example

An example of a hybrid branded house is Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola has the core Coke range - Coke, No Sugar, Diet - all using the Coca-Cola brand identity. They also own Sprite, Fanta, and Powerade among other products. These products all have their own



identities, product visions, brand personalities and positions within the market.

BENEFITS OF A HYBRID BRANDED HOUSE STRATEGY

A hybrid branded house commonly occurs through purchasing another company or expanding their offering into new spaces, e.g. adding sports drinks to the roster. It allows you to capture new markets and audiences and ensures new offerings don't confuse your existing customers.

NEGATIVES OF A HYBRID BRAND STRATEGY

This model essentially becomes the same as a house of brands with the same budget and management considerations.

What it means to be on-brand...

Branding is important and getting it right is even more so. This is why smart companies create brand standards and strategic brand plans to stay on-brand.

However, what does on-brand mean?

Your brand is the embodiment of your promise to consumers and the stories you share. Your mission, vision, core values and company culture are all part of your promise and story. These things influence the buying behaviour of a market.

Being on-brand is to fulfill those promises and share your stories in a consistent, including predictable, manner that is recognisable by consumers. This means holding true to your messaging and nurturing the emotional connections you've been gifted with by your audience. To be on-brand demands consistency and complete alignment between everyone in your company. Your overall brand image can suffer and the organization's potential is limited without these.

Maintaining a uniform visual identity is paramount to staying on-brand. This includes your logo, communication style, colors and possibly other things unique to your business.

Are you staying on-brand?

What others think about you, what you think of your business and how you communicate are crucial factors that can make or break brand building - they can be likened to kryptonite. You see, people can be fickle, and their beliefs or feelings about your brand can change almost instantly with different motives. Communicate inconsistent messaging that isn't in line with your brand promise and you risk taking a massive reputational hit.

The following signs will let you know if you're staying on-brand.

1. Your marketing materials and content are aligned. Take a moment to look at several pieces of the marketing content you've got in public view. See if key branding aspects are in alignment, such as design, font type, messaging, call to action and brand voice. Is



everything in a harmonious state? This is where a style guide becomes invaluable. For instance, you can investigate your social media channels, other off-site online networks, tangible and intangible marketing assets to see if you're staying on-brand. Prioritize the areas that require your attention and implement changes as needed.

2. Consumers talk about you. We're sure you agree it's great when consumers talk about you in a good way. Whether it's because you're known for your corporate responsibility, service or product, fulfilling expectations or exceeding expectations, getting noticed and eliciting favorable emotions is integral. However, that's not necessarily the kind of talk that lets you know if your company is on-brand. Instead, you want people to think of your brand whenever they want a solution that your product/service solves.

“To be on-brand demands consistency and complete alignment between everyone in your company.”

3. Your customers find it easy to describe your brand. Reach out to your current customers, ask them to describe your brand and see if they use similar language as the ones you use to describe it. This is typically another strong indicator that you're doing a fantastic job at staying on-brand. Your focus shouldn't just be on the terms they use, but the feelings their chosen words convey. For example, the words 'pleasant' and 'satisfying', generally exude the same emotions. What we say is linked to how we feel because words elicit emotions. Often the best source of inspiration is your customers, and perhaps you'll discover better words you can use to describe your brand.

Why you should care about being on-brand

Think of all the companies that have become synonymous with their offered solutions. You think of Google when contemplating search engines and Amazon when you think of online shopping. However, these brands didn't accomplish synonymousness overnight; it took years of consistent on-brand communications.

Remaining on-brand is something that the largest and oldest businesses in existence do astonishingly well. Your consumers care about owning the best products, but what might influence them further is a recognizable brand. For customers, it's a shortcut to decision-making that is indispensable. That's how large companies became considerable and why being on-brand can elevate your business's growth.

SIMPLIFY REPUTATION BUILDING

Building a robust business reputation is a challenge every company faces. People will associate positive and negative experiences/events with your solution or product, which may affect your company's reputation. Sometimes those events aren't even about your company.



“A company that is repeatedly on-brand will naturally garner more attention, trust and likability.”

You can mitigate most risks by being on-brand. The aim is to ensure that you're more associated with the good than the bad by prolifically differentiating your organization. Staying on-brand separates you from the competition. That's why it's crucial to execute branding that is consistent with your brand promise. Your team, service, product and business conduct among others come into play too. A company that is repeatedly on-brand will naturally garner more attention, trust and likability.

Advertising is more impactful if you make it stick.

Your marketing messages need to be remembered by the consumer in one way or another for a positive return on investment (ROI). Advertising becomes more impactful the more people recognize it. They may skip your ad but recollect your product within their minds in minutes because it's recognizable. That's the power of being on-brand with everything you do.

“A genuinely consistent voice, message and purpose that delivers on company promises will always produce the best outcomes.”

GET PEOPLE TO CARE

We're picky creatures - we never choose to do business with companies on a whim. There's always a journey that a buyer follows and an identified reason for their choice. Very often it's because you were more memorable than your competitors.

Today the average consumer has access to several networks online and offline with plenty of companies competing for their attention. You have to be on-brand at all times if you want to defeat obscurity. Many companies have died before their time because they're too quickly forgotten and the world loses out on experiencing their products.

Make sure you're remembered by being on-brand.

“FACTS ARE
IRRELEVANT.
WHAT MATTERS IS WHAT
THE
Consumer
BELIEVES.”

-SETH GODIN



CHAPTER 6

POWER OF BRAND IDENTITY

Your brand identity represents your company, your products, your services, and most importantly it represents the relationship between you and your customers. For some companies it has a greater dollar value than any tangible items like merchandise, parts, recipes, tools, products, and processes.

NAME

The name of your company, products, and services need to represent who you are. Gone are the days of utilizing a word that starts with A, AA, or AAA to capitalize on an alphabetical advantage. Without a phone book, the alpha listing no longer provides any value.

The name should not be focused on where you are located (Louisiana) or what you do (Restaurant) because Louisiana Restaurant does not do anything to establish who you are or build your brand.

Remember, when it comes to names, the name might not instantly convey who you are - that might take time.

Gap is a space between two things, not khaki pants.

Starbucks is a dollar to buy a star, not coffee.

Nike is a goddess of Greek mythology, not a shoe.

Amazon is a rainforest, not an online store.

Those words became representative of the company, store, and products they sell after years of time and millions of dollars has been spent on advertising and brand building. Don't expect it to happen overnight.

TRADEMARK

It doesn't matter how great your name might be if it isn't actually your name. Before you fall in love with a name for your company, product, or service, you need to be sure that it is legally available for your use and ownership. First step is to check if the domain name (URL) is available. If so, register it immediately and then proceed with the proper trademark registration process. Be sure to utilize a legal professional to ensure that your valuable asset is properly protected.



TYPOGRAPHY

Utilizing a specific typeface (font) will provide another way for your brand identity to be unique and memorable. These visual indicators are important to provide an indicator of what your company/product is all about. Typeface will provide clues as to your industry, price point, quality, and customer match. You will want your type to be as timeless as possible so that you aren't utilizing something that is trendy and has to be updated often.

COLOR PALETTE

You will want to select colors that are complementary with each other, fit with your company/products, and be appealing to your target audience. It is important to understand the colors of your industry and competitors so that you aren't duplicating any of their choices. Imagine if another soda company utilized the red & white of Coca-Cola.

It will be crucial that your brand identity have options for full color, 2 color, 1 color, reversed, and black & white options. These need to be anticipated and planned out in advance of use to ensure consistency.

LAYOUT

Just as you need to anticipate your color palette, you also need to prepare for the usage. Your brand identity needs to have options for vertical, horizontal, square, and possibly even circular uses. Your brand standards needs to include options as small as a social media icon and as large as the side of an 18 wheeler. Be prepared for all of the different places where you might need your brand identity to represent your company & products.

MARK/BUG

Your brand identity is more than the words, colors, and layout. It also includes a graphic mark or bug. Think about the Nike swoosh or McDonald's M. In the beginning, your mark will need to be connected to your name, but over time, it can become a stand alone graphical representation for your company & products.

“ YOUR
Culture
IS YOUR
BRAND. ”

-TONY HSIEH



CHAPTER 7

BRAND STANDARDS

The purpose of the brand standards is to serve as a written guide with directions for exactly how your brand identity can be used. It will also include the rules of the road for what is not allowed.

Specifying the exact Pantone colors prevent someone from choosing their favorite shade of blue or creating an orange and black version to celebrate Halloween. These brand standards will protect your investment and ensure consistency in the usage of your brand identity. This document will serve as the rules and guidelines for anyone that interacts with the brand identity.

POSITIONING & PERSONALITY

Your brand identity needs to have a personality. Imagine if you took the logos off of tweets by Wendy's and Chick Fil A. You would still be able to tell the difference between the two because they have such a distinct personality. Be sure that your positioning is clear and your personality is unique.

TONE OF VOICE

Whether your tone of voice is more humorous or somber, reflective or sarcastic, formal or casual, you need to establish what your voice will sound like and ensure that it is carried through all of the different applications. Consistency will be crucial to properly projecting the preferred tone of voice.

GRAMMAR AND STYLE

Beyond the AP Guide, you will want to firmly establish the grammar and style that is right for your target audience. Some companies prefer to use highly technical language while others stick with the commonly used approach of keeping the language at a grade school level.

TARGET AUDIENCE

You will need to define all of your target audiences and clearly assess the approach for each. The overall target audience for your company as well as the audiences for each product, service, and market. Listing each audience with the corresponding messages will enable you to quickly reference when developing marketing materials.



KEY MESSAGES

Establishing the messages for each target audience will enable the company to stay on message. Whether it is a tagline, elevator speech, website home page, or brochure, having the messages detailed in your brand standards provides a foundation for all marketing materials.

PAPER SYSTEM

Consistency is key and designing the paper system will assist with protecting the brand identity. Developing the designs for business cards, letterhead, email signatures, notecards, and any other industry/company specific materials will help to ensure that they are utilized consistently throughout the company.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Whether you are taking custom photos or using stock photos, it is important to make them your own. Add a border, filter, logo, or some other distinguishing mark that will make them unique to your company.

SIGNAGE

Just like with photography, you will want to make sure your signage, tombstone signs in front of your building and wayfinding signage around your facility, are all well designed and completely connected to your brand identity.

MISSION

Your company's mission is the journey that it is on. In your brand standards, be sure to specify the impact, audience, and actions to ensure that your entire company is on the same mission.

VISION

Your company's vision is what you are working towards, your destination. In your brand standards, be sure to specify why your organization exists and what big, huge, ambitious impact you want to make in the world.

CULTURE

Your company's culture is the shared values, attitudes, standards, and beliefs that characterize the members of your organization and define its nature. Your corporate culture is rooted in your company's goals, strategies, structure, and approaches to labor, customers, investors, and the greater community.

VALUES

Your company's values are how you plan to achieve your mission. Your core values should guide all of your company's decisions. You need to determine the 3-7 core values that matter the most. These are the behaviors that the company's will value over making a quick buck.

“

I BELIEVE

THAT THE

Greatest **DANGER**

OF

ADVERTISING

is not
that of

MISLEADING PEOPLE, BUT THAT OF

boring **THEM TO DEATH.** ”

-LEO BURNETT



CHAPTER 8

WEAR YOUR MERCH

Ultimately, you want your logo to look so good that people are willing to pay money to wear it across their chest. Just like the jersey of their favorite team, you want your employees, customers, and anyone really to represent your company and products by wearing your brand identity.

The more that people want to wear your merch, the more that says something about your company. This happens when you have a great brand identity, well designed merchandise that is easy to obtain, and, most importantly, people believe it says something positive about them to wear your logo.

The billion dollar promo item industry is completely built around people wanting to wear the hats, shirts, stickers, and jackets of companies that they like and whose goals are connected to theirs.

“ THE AIM OF
Marketing
is to

KNOW & *UNDERSTAND*

THE **CUSTOMER** SO WELL

that the *product*  *SERVICE*

FITS HIM & SELLS ITSELF. ”

-PETER DRUCKER



CHAPTER 9

IMPORTANCE OF BRANDING

Why does all of this matter?

What is the importance of branding?

When it comes down to it, people see an average of 8000 advertising messages per day. So it is almost impossible to expect your message can cut through the clutter and get their attention. Hence, the importance of crafting a message that will really connect.

Ultimately, consumers have too many choices for every purchase they make. This makes branding more important than ever before. Your target audience doesn't have time to get education on you or your competition. They are going to go with their gut instinct if they don't see any differentiation between their choices and your products.

Consumers will go with their gut instinct which is why branding has to be an emotional connection.

“

IF I HAD ASKED

PEOPLE WHAT THEY

Wanted,

THEY WOULD HAVE SAID

FASTER HORSES.”

-HENRY FORD



CHAPTER 10

BRAND ADVOCACY

Your ultimate goal should be to turn your customers into brand advocates. This comes from setting an expectation with them. Your company will want to meet or exceed that expectation so that your customer feels taken care of.

Every interaction with your customer establishes a brand promise. Consistent delivery of that promise provides another set of expectations met or exceeded.

When your customers consistently receive products and services that meet or exceed their expectations, then that creates trust.

When your customers trust you, trust your product, trust your service, trust your process, trust your pricing, basically when they trust the entire experience they will become loyal to your company.

People become advocates for the companies and products that they love. This advocacy is the ultimate goal. This is word of mouth marketing at its core.

Consistently delivering on your brand promise creates trust.

Trust leads to loyalty.

Loyalty develops advocacy.

Advocacy is word of mouth marketing.

“ IF YOU HAVE MORE
MONEY **THAN** *Brains,*
YOU SHOULD **FOCUS** ON
OUTBOUND MARKETING.

IF YOU HAVE MORE
Brains, **THAN** MONEY,
YOU FOCUS ON
INBOUND MARKETING. ”

-GUY KAWASAKI

PART 3:

BASICS OF BRAND STRATEGY

“ IF YOU TRY TO BE

ALL THINGS

TO ALL *People*

then you aren't

BUILDING A BRAND,

YOU ARE JUST BEING

bland. ”

-JACI RUSSO



CHAPTER 11

BRAND MANAGEMENT

In a nutshell, brand management is defined as the development and execution of strategy to strengthen brand perception in the market. Your brand is your reputation. If you are truly serious about your company's brand and creating a lasting and meaningful experience for your customers, good brand management is the center around which you need to build the customer experience.

“Your customer’s perception of your company will determine your potential for sales, so it is imperative to have a brand management strategy.”

Your brand strategy allows you to inform and influence your target market, building strong relationships with potential clients, customers and partners. Brand management enables your organization to position each interaction and communication piece, in the right way for your audience - to build a meaningful understanding of what you do and how you make a difference to them.

Brand management traditionally encompasses:

- Brand architecture or hierarchy
- Visual identity
- Messaging and communication
- Product, positioning and price
- Brand experience

Visual Identity

Your visual identity is one of the tools you employ in your branding strategy to influence and shift your customer's perception.



Your visual identity includes:

- Logos
- Colors
- Typography
- Images
- Messaging hierarchy
- Illustration styles
- Icons
- Design elements

How good brand management translates to results

Good brand management is the art of moving people to full engagement with your company and products.

Good brand management means you are:

Fulfilling the brand promise

Understanding your customers

Moving the right levers to get them to desire to be a part of the story

Driving potential customers to act on your calls to action

Taking advantage of the positive narrative these customers are telling

Scaling into new areas because of the resonance with the existing target market

By moving levers including the marketing message, target market identification, channel selection and placement, a brand manager can deliver results like:

- Increased prompted and unprompted awareness
- Increased volume of leads
- Better quality leads
- Increased conversion
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Increased employee satisfaction
- Extended and new markets
- Increased revenue
- Increased market share
- Increased share price
- The opportunity to acquire competitors and start-ups

Good management allows the organization to double down on their key strengths to align with the brand promise.

Visually, good brand management creates a consistent look and feel - across every touchpoint, every piece of content - building the understanding of the brand promise



and a strong hook on which to hang that understanding of the brand message.

“Good brand management translates to results by allowing the business and the marketing team to focus on metrics that deliver an ROI.”

Creating this shortcut in people’s minds makes it easier for them to recall your brand message, makes it easier to choose your product and creates value in that recognition and that shorter path to purchase.

The shotgun approach of an ill-disciplined brand, and brand manager, may deliver short-term, sugar-high results, but the discipline of strong brand management leads directly to a positive impact on the goodwill line of a P & L.

Brand managers paint a clear picture of what success looks like from the initial impression on the website through to the tone on the phone calls to how a product is presented in store. All of these conscious decisions reinforce the brand promise and provide a framework for the organization to work within.

“Good management allows the organization to double down on their key strengths to align with the brand promise.”

“ IF PEOPLE **THEY** *Share*
BELIEVE **VALUES**
WITH A Company,
THEY WILL STAY
Loyal TO THE BRAND. ”

-HOWARD SCHULZ



CHAPTER 12

BRAND INTEGRITY

The power of brand integrity (saying what you do and doing what you say) is at the center of many friction points between brands and their customers.

Saying what you do and doing what you say (particularly the second part of the phrase) is incredibly powerful, and cannot be replaced by advertising spend, spin campaigns or investor calls.

“In transparency lies the strength, and power, of integrity.”

What is a brand?

Your brand is your promise to your customer. It is the sum of their experiences and knowledge of your brand promise, not your pushed messaging and advertising. Your brand is intangible and linked to subjective qualities, defined and informed by your customers' perceptions.

It might have tangible attributes like a logo and visual identity - a visual translation, a reminder, of your brand promise and the experience, but it is not the sum of your brand. What does it mean to have integrity as a brand?

Let's start with what it means to have integrity as a person because essentially your company is an extension of people - the decisions they make and the actions they take.

Personal integrity is the demonstration of moral and ethical principles, to know what you stand for, will deliver upon and why. Integrity is the accuracy of one's actions, corresponding to a consistent framework of beliefs.



Personal integrity is demonstrated, for example, when you call out behavior that is against your values of equality, rather than witness it without trying to influence the situation and the behaviour positively.

When we extend this into the world of brand integrity, there are two components. The obvious, of course, is integrity - demonstrating behaviour consistent with your implicit and explicit brand promise.

The second part is the intangible nature of your brand - brand integrity comes through your people and processes demonstrating alignment with your brand promise.

Brand integrity is not making sure the logo is used correctly.

Brand integrity is not having consistent messaging through your marketing and sales.

Brand integrity is delivering on your messaging.

For companies larger than a solopreneur, brand integrity isn't necessarily a simple proposition. Your mileage may vary, of course. It is simple to say you put the customer at the center of your brand and experience, but a lot harder to do.

Firstly, for many organizations, there are often stakeholders as vital to the success of the business as customers, like shareholders, whose needs and expectations don't align with those of customers'.

Secondly, processes may mean non-customer centric metrics are in place, leading to misalignment of brand promise and action. Rather than measuring a phone call on a genuine customer support resolution, time to answer and length of the call become the operator measures. Implementing a quick change might have the emphasis instead of achieving the right change, even though it may take a little longer.

Lack of budget and resource might be a barrier to delivering on your brand promise - you know the experience and perception you want to build but 'Champagne tastes on a beer budget' means you can't.

Misalignments of brand promise and actions

It's such a bland way to describe almost cataclysmic friction - the misalignment of brand promise and actions - but this misalignment leads to spectacular examples of damaged brand integrity and broken brand promises. This misalignment can occur when brand integrity gets chipped away. It gets chipped away when people make decisions for themselves instead of the promise and the customer.

It doesn't happen in one fell swoop, it happens when someone makes a non-brand



promise centric decision and isn't pulled up on it, by peers or superiors, and it becomes acceptable to move to chase other goals ahead of brand integrity.

“Brand integrity occurs when your stated purpose and your actions align.”

Sometimes the brand integrity is damaged when your overt, loudly promoted brand promise doesn't match your actions, and sometimes it can be when the implied promise conflicts with the organizations' activities.

Diesel emits brand integrity issues for Volkswagen

The #dieseldrama of 2015 damaged the brand integrity of Volkswagen when it was discovered they were cheating the EPA's emissions measurement with a piece of firmware installed in their diesel cars. VW's positioning is a brand built around family and sustainability.

Criminal charges were eventually laid, awards rescinded and VW paid billions of dollars in fines. The damage to the integrity, however, continues with sales still down three years later and the scandal brought up every time an article about VW is published. The power of their brand integrity continues to be diluted every time this happens.

Baking integrity into your brand

The best way, indeed perhaps the only way, to build and maintain brand integrity for your organization is through people, the right people.

“A promise is words, but integrity is the lived and demonstrated experience.”

The right people, hired well, with the right systems and processes to support them will execute the organizations' vision and brand promise with integrity. Empowering your team to call out behavior and actions that belie your brand integrity and supporting them when they do will ensure integrity is baked into your organization and therefore your customer experience.

You can have a long code of conduct, signed by everyone, but unless the right people are there to act with integrity and are supported when they call out behavior not in line with your promise, the entire brand takes a hit.

The power of brand integrity means:

- Every person fulfills your brand promise, every time.
- Making decisions to support your brand promise with the aim of enhancing it and



bringing it further to life.

- Building Key Performance Indicators (KPI) around your brand promise.

Brand management in a decentralized environment

If brand management is a little bit like herding cats, then brand management in a decentralized environment takes an incredible amount of finesse and a strong plan. A brand experience is only as strong as its weakest usage - our cumulative experiences of the company and products form our impressions, and if these experiences are in disarray, if these experiences are discordant and divisive, our impression of the company and its products is the same. A strong brand is vital, and more difficult, to corral in a decentralized organization.

These are our tips for brand management in a decentralised environment.

Strong brand guidelines

Brand guidelines are not merely logos, colors and a typeface. Brand guidelines should contain the why, not just the what.

The visual identity needs to flow from the vision and values of the company and be supported by design solutions that sit comfortably with the brand promise.

- Why are the values expressed in this way?
- Why are these the best colors to represent the audience and outcome?
- Why do we express the brand personality in this way?
- Why do we build our messaging hierarchy like this?

Strong brand guidelines are more than a series of images with ticks and crosses to represent the dos and don'ts of the brand identity. They should allow the user to apply the brand experience successfully outside the rigorously constructed examples; they should let the user understand how to create a compelling piece of content to solve a problem.

If users need to build a flyer to explain a new product, do they know how to write headline text and subheading copy with a compelling benefit?

If users are creating a billboard does your guide explain the copy should be nine words or less and at a certain size for a specific speed limit?

Strong brand guidelines need to be robust scaffolding on which to build marketing and communications solutions and should scale into the different areas of the business who use the brand identity.



Holistic marketing plan

Central marketing teams have oversight for central marketing campaigns, but may not necessarily write marketing strategies and plans for the whole organization, or include the different divisions of the business.

Writing a holistic strategic marketing plan ensures those groups are represented in both your thinking and the scheduled marketing and communication activities. It ensures your central campaign can be scaled successfully into all areas of the business and can be adapted for their needs - on-brand and without extensive revision.

Trying to retrofit a campaign into diverse business divisions can be frustrating for both the marketing team and stakeholders. Misaligned ideas about what success looks like, unnecessary versions and slow-to-market approaches mean your decentralized stakeholders are less likely to come to the marketing team and more likely to go rogue.

A holistic strategic marketing plan demonstrates you are thinking of them and can help them achieve their objectives.

Understand the functions and outcomes of people using the brand identity

It is easy to have distinct and unambiguous brand management when only the marketing team applies the brand standards. Once the use of the brand guidelines extends past this core team, however, it is vital you understand how your stakeholders need to use the brand identity and what capability and capacity they have to apply the brand standards.

Asking yourself several questions helps create a strong understanding of their needs:

- What do they care about?
- What sort of marketing do they usually do?
- Do you have the plan and collateral to help them achieve their targets?
- Why are they currently choosing to go outside the brand guidelines?

For example, does your brand management allow for quick turnarounds to take advantage of short-term offers, for example, does a staff member have the opportunity to speak to a group of customers tomorrow?

Does your brand management allow for events to be produced and run at remote locations without needing to come to you for branding materials and artwork?

Your team will have more success implementing the brand across a diverse organization if you understand what people need from their use of the brand materials.

Great communication

As brand managers, we make changes to the brand identity, and as the marketing team, we develop and implement marketing plans. Often we focus on task after task and project after project because this is a big and consuming responsibility, without pulling back to think about how to position this work to our internal stakeholders.



We talk every day in our team as we build and grow elements and campaigns. Taking the time to communicate these and communicate them well outside our team has a powerful impact on successful brand management.

“How do people in your organization like to consume their internal communication?”

Incorporating multiple channels into your communication, rather than a single channel, will help ensure maximum uptake of your message:

- Newsletter
- Resource update
- Break room poster
- Email
- Text message
- Old-fashioned phone calls from account managers and key contacts

Remember to include data, stats and details to make it more relevant to your audience.

Only the necessary approvals

As the marketing team, with your brand let loose throughout the organization, it can be very tempting to ask to approve every use of brand assets. This is a dangerous path to walk because it results in one of several scenarios:

1. Your team is overwhelmed with approval requests with short turnaround times
2. Your stakeholders are frustrated at having to ask for permission to do elements of their job
3. Your stakeholders don't send collateral through for approval - instead, going rogue and doing what they wish

There are absolutely times you will need to approve the use of the brand, but if your guidelines are robust enough, you have built enough trust. And if the framework for applying your brand identity is simple, you will not need to approve every social post, email, ad, poster, postcard, flyer, sign, and the list goes on. Identify what really needs to be approved, supply pre-approved copy and assets and coach and mentor people to apply the brand standards correctly.

EMPOWERMENT

We know your team doesn't intend to have long lead times, but your resources are stretched, and your workload continues to grow. Rather than forcing people to wait 2-3 weeks for a simple design solution, empowering your team with the brand elements will help you to build a strong brand identity.

Empowering your stakeholders to connect with the brand standards and use it without feeling like they will get a rap over the knuckles will help you successfully manage the brand guidelines in a decentralised environment.



If people feel confident they understand the why and the what, if they feel confident you trust them and feel confident in your vision for the brand identity and marketing, they will be empowered to use your brand standards well, to ask for advice and to encourage others to do the same.

AMBASSADORS AND ADVOCATES

When you are speaking to a new group for the first time, the advice is to find the ‘friendly’ in the room and engage with them.

Good brand managers need to do the same - find those influential people in the broader teams who understand the vision for the brand experience, who understand the push-pull of brand use and how important it is to adhere to the guidelines and use them to advocate for strong brand guidelines use and management on your behalf. Build a ‘friendlies’ network and use them to help you achieve your vision.

“Peer-to-peer influence has far more impact than an impersonal email or top-down communication.”

TRANSPARENCY AND INVOLVEMENT

We all know what it is like when something happens to us, instead of with us. As brand managers and marketers with so much responsibility and pressure, it can often be quicker and ‘easier’ to implement a change and talk about it after or to quietly publish an update to the brand guidelines without broadly disseminating it.

“The best companies engage their people on the journey.”

Talk to your broader stakeholders about their connection to the company, their need for marketing elements, their frustrations and bottlenecks.

Involve them in focus groups, feedback sessions and planning workshops. It doesn’t mean you have to take on board all of their commentary, but it allows you to understand their perspective, adopt what works and educate them about your position and perspective.

Managing a brand relationship is complicated - make it easier on your sleepless nights by implementing best practice for a decentralized team.

“ IF PEOPLE LIKE YOU
THEY WILL
Listen TO YOU,
BUT IF THEY
TRUST YOU, THEY’LL
Business DO
WITH YOU.”

-ZIG ZIGLAR



CHAPTER 13

BRAND COMPLIANCE

The brand compliance definition can vary from company to company, but the basic concept remains the same:

“Brand compliance ensures continuity in marketing campaigns across corporate and local affiliates and confirms corporate and local marketers adhere to specific standards for all distributed assets.”

Marketers working for brands with multiple locations, locally or globally, often find themselves needing a way to create and distribute assets with a unified company vision. Developing brand compliance helps to achieve this and provides peace of mind. Let's dive a bit deeper into the importance of brand compliance for marketers.

Why Brand Compliance is Essential for Marketers

Companies with local affiliates often struggle to find ways to create consistent branding that stretches across every location.

Local marketers may have different ideas than corporate marketers on what appeals to the community around them. Corporate marketers don't always have the time to interact daily with local marketers. Especially for companies with thousands of locations, this would be an impossible undertaking. The solution to this problem is to establish and maintain brand compliance.

Brand compliance guidelines help manage brand consistency at a local and regional level. With the addition of a brand compliance system, businesses can create a seamless workflow for marketers all under one tool.



Through a brand compliance system marketers can easily:

- Adhere to guidelines to understand whether or not a concept fits with the overall company vision.
- Utilize a system, like a digital asset management platform, that holds approved digital assets for local marketers and maintain access to approved images, videos, and copy that already meet branding standards.

Brand compliance helps marketers create and distribute assets with a united vision that customers instantly recognize no matter where they are in the country or world. For example, a restaurant that has locations all across the nation uses the same visual branding for each location, though certain local touches are added to campaigns to meet local needs and wants. This ensures customers recognize the company anywhere because they keep the main marketing elements consistent.

Brand compliance makes sense for marketers that want to give customers a reliable experience. Furthermore, this type of system allows marketers to work together no matter their location.

“ IN OUR FACTORY,
WE MAKE
cosmetics.

IN OUR STORE,
WE SELL *Hope.*”

-CHARLES REVSON



CHAPTER 14

REBRANDING

Rebranding an organization, particularly one at an enterprise level, is a complicated prospect and needs to be approached with the right framework to support a successful transition.

Are you envisioning your rebrand will be a completely new proposition by shifting your brand promise, position or audience to a new promise, position and audience? Perhaps you have always stood for a breadth of offering, but the market now looks for niche solutions, so your everywoman promise needs to be recrafted to identify a niche position and audience.

Alternatively, is your rebrand simply a refreshing of your visual identity? Has the style of presentation and visual identity of your competitors moved around you, and you feel dated in comparison.

These two solutions are at opposite ends of the spectrum, requiring vastly different levels of research, resources and resolve.

Step One, Making the decision to rebrand

The first strategy is to identify why you are proposing a rebrand.

How will your rebrand benefit the organization?

What is motivating you to recommend this solution?

Has the market moved?

The market has shifted around you to change the value proposition of the entire market, and your position and promise have not moved in this new direction, and your awareness and sales have dropped accordingly.

The best example of this, of course, is the introduction of streaming/video on demand to home entertainment following the improvements to the scale and stability of the internet, shifting the market from the rental of physical content to streamed



content. The market shifted, and Blockbuster was lost in the stampede.

Has the offering moved?

The audience and the market remain the same but for some reason the offering has shifted. What you used to be able to sell at volume for good margin has been devalued or become less profitable. Your audience or perhaps other external factors like regulation might be driving this movement.

An example of this is the introduction of legislation on soft-drinks, the so-called 'sugar tax'. The offering in this category has shifted dramatically from full-leaded drinks to low- and no-sugar drinks and the manufacturers are also buying up bottled water brands to offset the perception of unhealthy solutions (and the downturn in sales). The 'sugar tax' has seen some manufacturers reduce the quantity of sugar in their products to pay a lower levy.

Have your competitors moved?

This can be a complicated signal to interpret - are they moving into these spaces (or visual identity styles) because that is what the audience wants or is their move driven by an unproven direction from their board or executive, not necessarily in response to their customers or market.

Has the customer moved?

Perhaps the customer has physically moved, or moved their purchase channels from offline to online or changed their weighting of product attributes. It may not mean your whole customer-based has shifted, but it may mean you could engage with a new audience or present a more profitable offering to your existing audience.

Has the business suffered reputational damage?

No brand manager likes to be in this position, but sometimes the only way to resuscitate a company is to rename/rebrand, although increasingly people's short memories and desire for convenience, and PR firms earning their keep are keeping companies alive for longer than was previously possible.

Is there a merger or acquisition?

The terms of the M&A will dictate whether you need a rebrand and whether it will be a new name and identity or a blend of the two, or whether it will still operate as a standalone entity in the brand hierarchy.

An example of this is the merger of Disney and Pixar. There were many similarities in their audience, product categories and go-to-market strategies, and both brands were beloved by the audience. Rather than lose one brand, or upset the advocates of one brand by establishing a hierarchy, the solution was to establish a new logo mark with both as equal and to position their communications and marketing to build their



combined audiences.

Step Two, Making the decision to rebrand

Once you are clear on the reason, the second strategy to identify is the scale of the rebrand - a refresh of the visual identity or a significant shift of the promise of the whole organisation and the work you do.

To some extent, the reason will determine how comprehensive the rebrand is but ensure you are confident in this decision by supporting both your reason and the degree of your rebrand through extensive research. Once you are confident in your decision, you can move into the research and planning phases.

Research phase

The research phase of a rebrand includes extensive qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Plan your research methodically and allow time to analyze the results. Working with a market research firm, supported by internal business analysts can help you understand the audiences, how to engage them and what success looks like in this research phase.

Stakeholder identification

Start by looking at your stakeholders and defining them. Think about how different groups engage with, and use the brand identity, and split them accordingly. You won't get enough useful information by grouping all employees together. Look at their relationship to the brand promise and begin your research accordingly.

For example, you might look at:

Internal stakeholders

- Board members
- C-suite and senior leadership team
- Third-level managers
- Frontline employees
- Prospective employees

Remember to select employees from across all business units, and from all levels of the business.

External stakeholders

- Customers
- Prospective customers
- Government partners
- Suppliers



- Shareholders and investors
- Business partners
- Contractors

Spend time with these stakeholders in one-on-one interviews, in focus groups and also send them quantitative surveys to complete.

Ask the right questions

To make a genuine shift to your brand, talk to your customers to understand their perception of you, how they feel about your product and service offering and how they feel about their experiences with you.

What emotions do they use to describe the experience?

Are these emotions you want to foster or change?

Talk to your employees to identify how they speak about the company to their family and friends, at a barbeque and to each other.

If they had to describe what the organization does, what parlance do they use?

What do they believe the endgame is?

Why did they choose your company to work for?

How do they characterize the culture and the community of the workplace?

Your questioning should unearth the current state of the brand as well as the gaps and future possibilities as seen at all levels of the business. Some of these may be off course because the stakeholder doesn't have the full strategic and market understanding, but it still highlights their perception, and perception is, of course, reality.

SYNTHESIZE FOR MEANING

Once you have gathered this information, synthesize it into meaningful data sets and commentary to share with your team and rebranding partners. It will both help you to understand perception in the market, opportunities, but also how to shape your communication plan to ensure a successful brand rollout.

PLANNING PHASE

Your completed research will allow you to successfully plan the detailed timetable of the development and execution of your rebrand.



As part of the rebrand, you will need to revisit and confirm or re-develop your:

- Brand vision
- Brand purpose
- Brand promise
- Brand architecture and hierarchy
- Brand values
- Brand personality
- Brand messaging
- Ideal customer
- Personas
- Unique selling proposition
- Visual identity and brand guidelines

SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS

Writing a clear brief for your rebrand partners, including the research outcomes, will enable each party to deliver the right result.

A rebrand is a large project, so treating it as such with a project manager, and perhaps even a steering committee, will ensure you deliver on time and that the work doesn't get derailed through the judicious application of ego.

As a project, it is important to set milestones to ensure each business unit and partner contributing has the right elements to progress their piece of the puzzle.

For example, messaging can be developed alongside a new mark - communications experts and designers are both responding to the same brief in different mediums, and good communicators and designers don't need to know the logo is green to write the right proposition, or the tone is 'confident' to produce a mark that encapsulates the brand promise.

Understanding who needs to sign off on the rebrand elements along the way and before final launch will ensure you engage the right people with the proper authority to ensure a successful rebrand.

COMMUNICATION PLANNING

Your communication plan doesn't begin the day you launch the new brand and visual identity into the world - it needs to be written as part of the planning phase and implemented as soon as the planning is finalized.

Your stakeholders will be attached to your brand identity to varying degrees and other than a surprise round-the-world trip, most people don't love surprises. Managing the



messaging, even in the marketing team, is vital to ensure engagement and that there is no sabotage of your work, accidental or otherwise.

Developing your communication plan enables you to identify your key audiences, the benefits, messaging and outcomes to drive for each audience, and to communicate your milestones to the relevant audiences.

A communication plan should include:

- Demonstrated understanding of the situation including the current state of play and key challenges and framing the opportunity
- Approach
- Internal advocates - determine the success of the rebrand
- End users - use the product or service
- Enablers - upon whom the success of the rebrand depends
- Endorsers - promote the brand through broader connections
- Strategic communication framework
- How the goals will be achieved
- Who will be engaged
- Desired positioning
- Tailored messaging for each audience
- Communication approach

DEVELOPMENT PHASE

With your partners briefed, your stakeholders aware of the timelines and a big hairy audacious plan to rebrand your organization, it is time to start the development. If you are just updating your visual identity, but the brand vision, promise etc. remain the same, development means the development of the new identity. If, however, you are moving your positioning and promise, the heavy lifting starts long before the mark is even discussed.

BRAND ANATOMY AND DNA

Engaging experts to help reshape your brand anatomy (brand vision, purpose, promise, values and personality) is beneficial because they can facilitate complicated workshops with varied stakeholders to lock down these critical components.

Identifying the archetype first can also provide clarity and a hook off which to base the other elements. Stakeholders might want to discuss 'look and feel' in these workshops, but really, the brand anatomy exists no matter the livery, so spend time focusing on these.

BRAND ARCHITECTURE AND HIERARCHY

Your brand architecture will identify how the sub-brands work in concert with one another and how the visual identity will need to reflect the relationships and hierarchy to help users and customers understand the full brand proposition as well as the proposition of individual brands.



For example, you might have different locations requiring a different brand because of cultural reasons, or product lines needing differentiation because of market separation (or even integration). Do the different entities all operate from the same promise and vision or do they have strong reasons for developing a separate promise, and therefore visual identities?

Mapping your ideal customer and personas

The natural extension of the hierarchy is to identify your ideal customer (if you are a B2B business) and then identify the various personas - either B2B or B2C - so you can craft your messaging and campaigns accordingly.

Personas traditionally include:

- Name, age, role/profession, location
- Context and background
- Goals, frustrations and motivations
- Push, pull, anxiety and attachment
- Media types they consume
- Outcome they want

MESSAGING AND DESIGN

Once the anatomy and hierarchy are decided, the messaging and visual identity can now be developed, using these as a framework.

The brand story sits at the center of the messaging structure and is developed for the brand identities and sub-brands, and guides how they interact (or don't) with one another. The messaging, shaped for the various audiences, includes articulating the brand meaning, benefits, key phrases and outcomes.

The design should reflect the essence of the brand promise and meaning, a visual translation of the heart of the brand. The balance for the visual identity development partner will be in providing enough options in the early rounds to allow for the best idea to be honed, but not too many ideas that we have paralysis through extensive choice.

It's crucial the mark and identity aren't developed in isolation :

- How does it translate through to current and proposed collateral?
- How does it work at scale and on mobile?
- How does it work in the brand architecture?
- Greyscale? In other languages? Alongside other brands?

BRAND POSITIONING AND MESSAGING

The brand positioning and messaging should lay out the new framework for the brand, and how to talk about the brand, so users clearly understand the new promise and



power and how they contribute.

Good brand positioning development will include:

Brand guidelines - The brand guidelines should include elements and how to use them, including:

- Logo - full usage, trademarks, endorsements, co-branding, internal logos
- Tone of voice
- Color
- Typography
- Pattern
- Photography
- Icons
- Illustration
- Index of examples - events and activations, campaigns, social, video, animation, audio, paper system, swag, etc.

Constant iteration

The feedback loop you implement will lead towards constant iteration and challenge.

We recommend drawing in people from your research to provide them with the opportunity to feedback (within reason, of course!) This constant iteration and feedback allows you to identify advocates and roadblocks within the organization.

The cycle of iteration and challenge has the advantage of making your identity stronger while increasing the robustness of your reasoning for why elements were selected - after all, no one finds 'just because' a satisfying answer!

Brand essence - a few words to concisely represent your brand

Brand promise - what you promise your customers/stakeholders

Proof points - points of evidence to confirm the brand promise

Features and benefits - solutions the brand provides

Brand descriptors - the words you would use to describe the brand

Brand personality - human characteristics of the brand

How the brand makes the stakeholder feel

How the brand makes the stakeholder appear

Brand values

Brand differentiators

Brand messages

Central themes

Tips & Tricks

Schedule weekly or monthly conference calls with all your development partners - brand anatomy, communication, design, implementation - so they are broadly across



what each is doing and any hurdles they have encountered.

Now is not the time for silos.

Question everything - remove your ego and look at the anatomy and elements through the eyes of your customer and your personas.

Test everything - can people see a natural progression of vision to values; does the mark capture the essence of the brand without words; does the brand message translate across long-form and short-form content; will employees be able to apply the brand easily.

“Don’t just talk to fans - talk to brand users and consumers who will provide a challenging perspective.”

Start building your network of advocates now, identifying advocates in each audience pool, looking for grassroots support rather than leadership advocates

Always allow more time than you think you need for the project. You can certainly push a rebrand through quickly, but with an established, heritage brand there is a lot of connection to navigate and counter methodically to avoid hand grenades being thrown at launch!

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Following the approval of the brand components - from the promise to the visual identity - the implementation phase can commence. Implementation is distinct from the go-to-market stage when the launch of the brand and requisite campaigns occurs.

Your implementation will reflect your decision to do a complete transition at the same time or a staggered rollout of the new brand and visual identity. For example, you might have decided to update the new brand identity and messaging and the visual identity in your digital and high-touch channels and campaigns, but slowly transition your physical locations and large-scale assets like vehicles.

“The implementation phase is about writing and building all the elements you will need to take the brand to market - both internally and externally.”



This part of the project is best managed by someone who has intimate knowledge of all the brand elements within the business and captured in a brand audit. Where is the brand experienced? Where has the visual identity been used?

The design part of this phase is about updating the visual identity for all the collateral -internally and externally.

The communication part of this phase includes the new content production and messaging for all comms channels including the intranet, website, pitch decks, social channels, pr and more.

The most important part of this phase is implementing the internal engagement, training and onboarding for all areas of the business from executive to the frontline so your employees are on-message and on-brand. Without employee engagement, your brand refresh is reduced to new graphics, and that can appear hollow to your customers. We can all think of rebrands that were pitched as a new angle and brand promise in their press releases but turned out to be only a new logo because the implementation was pushed through without this engagement.

Implementation is the deep breath before the plunge.

GO-TO-MARKET PHASE

Your go-to-market strategy for your new brand identity helps shape how stakeholders receive the change from all audiences - your end users, your endorsers, your suppliers, your employees and your investors.

This strategy should not be developed to promote your new look, but instead your new promise and position. If your audience has changed as a result of your rebrand, your advertising will reflect this new audience and showcase your new promise.

For brand and marketing managers, go-to-market is your bread and butter - position your campaign and your communication and channels against your audience, drive your new messages and reflect the audience in your creative.

Once your brand is implemented, and in market, it is critical to deliver a consistent brand presence. It is vital to ensure your promise, values, message and visual identity are uniform, to ensure maximum recognition and buy-in for your new brand.

Finally, celebrate the wins of this project with your team and the organization - it is a massive undertaking and when done well will positively impact your market share and revenue - this is the time to recognize a job well done.



What does it mean to debrand?

Somewhat confusingly, the term debrand has two definitions.

Debranding: the removal of brand elements to appear less corporate and more personal.

Debranding: the shift away from any recognizable brand to appear generic, thus aiming to reduce ad spend and price and increase profits accordingly.

Debranding to appear less corporate, more personal

Brands use this approach when they feel their corporate logo, which traditionally includes a wordmark, would be better received by their target audience when it is a visual only.

Driven by the increasing corporatization, globalization of brand and the increase of competitors, this change has gained increasing traction. Brand managers recognized they needed to differentiate and to appear like they weren't actually corporate behemoths but instead reflected the local audience, their interests and concerns.

It was a concerted effort to appear less corporate and more personal.

The best example of debranding in this sense, from a whole of business perspective, is Nike. In the 90s the company started to move away from their combined logo and wordmark to a pure logomark. This transition occurred on their product and campaigns simultaneously and then transitioned through to packaging and store presentation.

The brand recognition is so strong that if you asked people if Nike still used the word 'Nike' on their storefronts, most people would say yes because the image is so representative of the full brand.

Other examples of corporate debranding include Starbucks, who in 2012 removed their name from their coffee cups (but still have it on their storefronts) and McDonald's who began to utilize just the large M, "Golden Arches", on their signage.

Debranding to appear generic, reduce ad spend and increase profits

The shift to a generic presentation and name, away from a recognizable brand identity is often driven by a cost strategy. If the company doesn't have to raise awareness to drive purchases but can instead position on price and volume, the company can stop spending on advertising, lower their costs and aim for a profit increase.



Private companies have to spend a lot of money for recognition, particularly in supermarkets, where they are competing with each other and with generic products. Generic products aren't just for the price-conscious consumer however with research demonstrating that 9/10 female shoppers are willing to look at private and generic products before making a purchase.

Debranding for either purpose is not to be undertaken lightly - it needs to be in response to research against your audience and be a long-term plan, not a short-term reaction.

PART 4:

**ELEMENTS OF
BRAND BUILDING**

“

USE

FOCUS GROUPS TO

FOCUS THE RESEARCH,

NOT *Be* THE RESEARCH.

Focus GROUPS

ARE PARTICULARLY SUSCEPTIBLE

TO THE

HAWTHORNE EFFECT,

WHICH HAPPENS
WHEN PEOPLE

Know THEY ARE

BEING

TESTED.

”

-MARTY NEUMEIER



CHAPTER 15

FOCUS: WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

Who is your actual target audience?

BE SPECIFIC

Although tempting to assume anyone could be your audience, ‘Everyone’ isn’t actually a “target” audience. The more you can specifically focus on your audience segments, the more you can specifically focus on the benefits your products & services provide to their specific pain points.

How do you segment your audience?

DEMOGRAPHICS

It all starts with demographics, but it can’t end there. Demographics are the surface and obvious descriptors, such as:

- Age
- Gender
- Marital status
- Kids
- Education
- Employment
- Income
- Religion
- Geography

These descriptors allow you to begin the process of segmenting your audience into buckets of commonality. Obviously, demographics can not tell the whole story. If we group all women 25-54 into a demographic bucket, most of them might watch a certain tv show but chances are that they don’t watch the same way. The younger members of the group probably watch via streaming and the older members might still watch it on broadcast networks. Similar, but not the same.

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

A better way to dig a little deeper and segment your audience is to go beyond surface



commonalities and focus on the way your audience feels about themselves and their challenges.

- What hobbies do they have?
- What products/services do they use?
- What are they passionate about?
- What are their opinions about the world?
- How do they feel about the future?
- What values do they hold dear?

GENERATIONAL MARKETING

While still influenced by demographics, looking at their generation as a whole could provide great insight into how to reach them. Their generational habits could include:

- Traditional media they utilize?
- Where do they get their news?
- How tech savvy are they?
- Which social media do they frequent?
- How many hours per day on their computers?
- Which mobile devices do they use?

PERSONALITY PROFILES

Another great way to better get to know your target audience is through personality profiles. There are a number that you can use to analyze your team as well as your target audience to help identify commonalities and connection points.

- Myers-Briggs
- Enneagram
- DiSC Profile
- 16 Personality
- Kiersey Temperament
- True Colors

People do business with people, not businesses. Ultimately your customers aren't really buying from your company, they are buying from your people. So the more you can show the personality of your people and connect with the personality of your customers the more you will be able to sell solutions to them.

“

THERE IS A

Great Deal
OF **ADVERTISING** THAT IS MUCH

BETTER THAN THE
product.

WHEN THAT HAPPENS, ALL THAT THE

Good **ADVERTISING** WILL
DO IS
PUT YOU

OUT

OF **BUSINESS**

Faster.”

-JERRY DELLA FEMINA



CHAPTER 16

PROMISE: WHY SHOULD THEY CHOOSE YOU?

Marketing 101 is based around the 4 P's: Price, Product, Place, Promotion which comes from the book, "Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach by Jerome McCarthy. These are the basic principles of marketing and form the foundation of how you should build your brand. These ingredients are combined to capture and promote a company's unique selling points.

PRODUCT

The first of the Four Ps of marketing is product. A product can be either a tangible good or an intangible service that fulfills a need or want of consumers. Whether you sell custom pallets and wood products or provide luxury accommodations, it's imperative that you have a clear grasp of exactly what your product is and what makes it unique before you can successfully market it.

PRICE

Once a concrete understanding of the product offering is established we can start making some pricing decisions. Price determinations will impact profit margins, supply, demand and marketing strategy. Similar (in concept) products and brands may need to be positioned differently based on varying price points, while price elasticity considerations may influence our next two Ps. However, if price is your only point of differentiation, you aren't building a brand - you are just selling a commodity.

PROMOTION

We've got a product and a price now it's time to promote it. Promotion looks at the many ways marketing agencies disseminate relevant product information to consumers and differentiate a particular product or service. Promotion includes elements like: advertising, public relations, social media marketing, email marketing, search engine marketing, video marketing and more. Each touch point must be supported by a well positioned brand to truly maximize return on investment.

PLACE

Often you will hear marketers saying that marketing is about putting the right product, at the right price, at the right place, at the right time. It's critical then, to evaluate what



the ideal locations are to convert potential clients into actual clients. Today, even in situations where the actual transaction doesn't happen on the web, the initial place potential clients are engaged and converted is online.

As part of your marketing process, you need to go through a series of questions:

What do consumers want from your product or service?

How does your product meet those needs?

Where do potential buyers look for your particular product or service?

How do you differentiate from your competitors?

What is the perceived value of your product or service?

What current interactions do you have with potential clients?

There is a 5th P: Promise

Beyond the 4 P's, you need to dig a little deeper for why your customer should choose you over your competition. That is the 5th P, promise. It boils down to why your company exists and why you should be the choice above all others.

“ YOUR CUSTOMERS
DON'T
Care ABOUT YOU,
YOUR PRODUCTS,
OR YOUR SERVICES.
THEY **CARE ABOUT**
Themselves. ”

-JOE PULIZZI



CHAPTER 17

CONNECTION: WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?

The message that you use to connect with each of your target audiences is crucial to cutting through the clutter and getting their attention. With the average person seeing so many messages each day, developing a message that actually resonates is very difficult.

AUTHENTICITY

Your message has to be based on an actual point of differentiation that you can authentically claim and deliver every day. If you set an expectation and then don't meet it, you will do even more damage.

You can't say that you have the "World's best coffee". If you make these generic false promises you will alienate your target audience, even if they even notice it at all. Worse than a fake false promise, is when you say great things about yourself. Your target audience isn't going to believe a compliment that you give to yourself. There is no credibility there.

Every company says they have great people. But is that a believable message that will actually connect with the target audience? What happens when those people leave the company - does it mean you aren't great anymore? How do you have "great" people? Do you recruit better? Train better? Incorporate better processes and procedures? Be wary of these vague false promises that your actions don't back up or support.

FEATURES V BENEFITS

Another 'go to' tactic in message creation is to provide a list of features about your company expecting it to connect with your audience. But, ultimately, they don't care how long you've been in business or how many employees you have. They definitely don't care about the size of your warehouse or the amount of your revenue.

Rather than a laundry list of features, you need to share the benefits that your products and services provide. The more you know about the challenges they are feeling the better you can align the benefits of your products.

**HERO**

The most important part of crafting a message that resonates is to not make it all about you. Although you might be tempted to make your company or product the hero of your story, that would be a big mistake. Huge. Instead, your customer needs to be the hero of their story. Your products are the guide that gets them to their goals.

CHANGE THE CONVERSATION

Find out what they are saying now so that you will know how to change the conversation. Don't let them continue to think what they've always thought and say what they've always said. Instead, change the conversation and let them see a story that will relate to what they are going through.

“ WE NEED TO

Stop
INTERRUPTING
WHAT PEOPLE ARE

INTERESTED IN

& **BE** WHAT PEOPLE ARE
INTERESTED IN.”

-CRAIG DAVIS



CHAPTER 18

HARMONY: WHERE DO YOU PUT THOSE MESSAGES?

There are so many places where you can waste your budget. There are so many different places where your customers are spending their time and attention. Rather than spread yourself (and your budget) too thin, focus on the one or two places where your target audience is most likely to see you most often.

When I was in media buying school, they taught us to spread the budget around to as many different tactics as possible to try to reach 100% of the audience and persuade them 10% of the way.

I suggest that instead, you take a more targeted and tactical approach, only striving to reach 10% of the audience while ensuring they see your message repeatedly so you can convince them 100% of the way.

Choose frequency over reach. With the average person seeing 8,000 messages per day, you will need a specific, creative, and repeatedly seen message to cut through the clutter.

You have a number of different tactics to consider including:

TRADITIONAL MEDIUMS

Television

Radio

Newspaper

Billboard

Magazine

Public relations

Direct mail



DIGITAL MEDIUMS

Email

Website

Search engine optimization (seo)

Pay per click (ppc)

Retargeting ads

Reviews

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook

Linkedin

Twitter

YouTube

Instagram

Pinterest

Snapchat

TikTok

Remember, the goal is not to be everywhere. Instead just focus on the one or two places where your target audience spends most of their time. Don't be distracted by the shiny new options.

“DON'T

TELL ME HOW

GOOD

You make it;

TELL ME HOW

GOOD IT MAKES *Me*

WHEN I USE IT.”

-LEO BURNETT

PART 5:

WHAT'S NEXT?

“ MAKE YOUR CUSTOMER

THE

Hero

OF YOUR STORIES.”

-ANN HANDLEY



CHAPTER 19

STEPS TO BUILDING YOUR BRAND

What's next?

Now that you know more, you can do more. Start by evaluating where your company is and what you might need. Identify the missing pieces of your strategic brand plan to determine what you need next.

Be sure to get the rest of your company on the same page. Any changes you want to make will need their buy-in and support. Remind them that the only way to protect the investment you have made to build your brand so far will require a concerted effort to keep it going.

Conversation is king

Start asking the questions that will give you insight into how your customers feel about your company, products, competition, marketplace, and their place in the world. These conversations can provide real intel into the state of your brand and the potential for growth.

“ MARKETING IS NO
LONGER

ABOUT THE STUFF
YOU MAKE BUT ABOUT THE

Stories

YOU TELL. ”

-SETH GODIN



CHAPTER 20

BRAND STATE U

So, how can you use all of this information to build your brand? *Join Brand State U.*

Building a brand is a daunting task, especially if you are having to figure it all out by yourself. Let us help you.

At Brand State U, we provide what you need:

- Community provide support, advice, feedback
- Courses for ongoing knowledge & lifelong learning
- Content to stay up to date as industry evolves
- Connection to others going through the same challenges
- Collaboration with a strategic branding team
- Coaching with group or 1-1 calls for advice & direction

What are your options?

PLAN 2 BRAND - 8 week brand building bootcamp that you can complete at your own pace. Once done, you will have finished the 240 page workbook and have a 12 month calendar to guide you through all of the steps to build your strategic brand plan.

COURSE LIBRARY - If you would prefer, you can take a specific class on individual topics to help you dive deeper into the areas where you might need more help.

MEMBERSHIPS - With 4 different levels (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) you can receive help on an ongoing monthly basis including social media content, group video coaching calls, branding guidelines, marketing assets, competitive social media reports/analysis, and 1-1 coaching (senior level only).

Elvis Presley told Paul McCartney that he was jealous of The Beatles. As a solo artist, Elvis was out there all on his own - lonely and burdened by the challenges of having to figure it all out by himself. But, he explained to Paul, as a member of The Beatles there were 3 other guys to share the ride, commiserate, and tackle the challenge together.



You don't have to keep being a solo artist. Join the band and let us help you build your brand.

Do It Yourself (DIY) is great when you have all of the time and tools to enjoy the process. But, if you can't afford to hire an agency to do it for you, you can utilize our professional expertise to elevate your game.

At the very least, join our group at www.brandstateu.com/facebook get some free feedback and fellowship.

“**MAKING**
promises **AND**
KEEPING THEM
IS A GREAT WAY TO
BUILD A BRAND.”

-SETH GODIN

APPENDIX:

BRAND TERMS

A-Z



APPENDIX

BRAND TERMS A-Z

A IS FOR AUDIENCE

The selection of your audience is one of the most complex and important pieces of your brand strategy puzzle. Ideally, the identification of your audience, and the research to support it, should be done before developing your brand, product and service. Successful brands are not a product in search of an audience, but rather a product whose audience identified the problem and supported the solution.

A IS FOR ADVERTISING

When most people outside the marketing sphere think marketing, they think advertising. For them, it is where they most commonly experience a product. When you are building advertising campaigns, it is vital to consider both your audience and the outcome. What action do you want your audience to take after seeing the campaign? Place your campaign where your audience is and then make it easy for them to act on the call to action. Build a multi-touchpoint campaign across the right channels to increase recall and the likelihood to engage. Moreover, know what your point of diminishing return for each channel is - don't waste your money where it will have no impact.

B IS FOR BRAND PROMISE

Defining your promise to the customer is perhaps the second most important piece of any brand strategy, the most important being delivering upon your promise. Your brand promise is your stake in the ground - your declaration of what you stand for. It should also be specific, not a broad 'we make our customers' lives better'. The brand promise isn't your mission statement; it is at the core of every decision about product and service. Does this bring us genuinely closer to delivering upon the promise for the customer?

B IS FOR BRAND ANATOMY

Brand anatomy is the underpinning of your brand building, the components that hold it together, much like the anatomy of the human body.

The brand anatomy includes:

- Brand Purpose



- Brand Promise
- Brand Positioning
- Brand Value Proposition
- Brand Values
- Brand Personality
- Brand Story

C IS FOR CULTURE

The culture of your company has a direct impact on your brand strategy and your ability to execute it. We would love to pretend this isn't the case, and that it is all in the planning, but the culture influences the people who are called to envision the strategy and act upon it. Do you have a culture that encourages and rewards innovation? Do you have a culture that fosters groupthink? Does your culture reflect your brand promise? For enterprise-level organizations, you will need to assess the culture twice - the company-wide culture and the sub-culture within each department.

C IS FOR COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Companies don't operate in a vacuum, so studying your competitors can help influence your understanding of the market, the target market and how you shape your brand strategy. A robust competitive analysis provides information about how to position yourself against competitors - 'how we win' - and it encourages you to be innovative and not simply position on price, or wait for volume with an in-demand product or service.

C IS FOR COMMUNICATION

For enterprises, brand strategy development and execution may be a centralized function, however it affects the entire company. Communication about your brand strategy internally, and the branding and marketing actions you take to deliver it, will decrease friction within the company when you come to deliver it. Most people just want to know what you are doing so they can be comfortable and then move on to their own tasks. Communication shouldn't be series of 'blasts' - pushing information out to tick a box. Rather, brand strategy communication should be a dialogue and bring your internal stakeholders along the journey, with learning and education from both sides.

C IS FOR CUSTOMER JOURNEY

If you haven't mapped your customer journey yet, it is reasonable to assume you don't really have a brand strategy. Without knowing the path to success for your customer in detail, you and your team can't fully understand how to influence the touchpoints and move people more efficiently and more effectively. Mapping the customer journey isn't simply the headings of your pipeline, it is about understanding the intrinsic actions of both the customer and your company to understand where to reduce friction, where to pivot to a new solution and how to build an advocate.



D IS FOR DATA

Data is both the holy grail of marketers and brand managers, and the bane of our existence. We love having it and building it, but so often we don't use it effectively in either the development or execution of our brand strategy. Do a data audit across the entire organization - even outside your department - to understand what product or service data, customer data, financial data is available. Understand how this data is stored, accessed and used. Is there data in the organization that can help you make better decisions that you aren't currently using? Do you need to break down data silos and integrate it with your martech systems to create a better customer experience?

D IS FOR DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

Understanding how to reach your audience is vital. Core to your brand strategy should be identifying which distribution channels will be used to raise awareness for, influence, inform and activate your audience. Distribution channels for your communication include those above the line and below the line; bought, owned, earned; those with partners; internal and external channels.

E IS FOR EVENT ACTIVATIONS

Not suitable for all brands, event activations for others form an integral part of their brand strategy. Events are where you can meet your customers and engage with them directly, where you can craft a brand experience and control every aspect of it (unlike some other distribution channels). An event activation is both an opportunity to make sales and an opportunity to increase your understanding of the target market.

E IS FOR ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is such a fraught topic because engagement doesn't equal intent, but so many agencies and companies use it as a signifier of success, contributing to return on investment (ROI). Certainly, the right type of engagement can lead to a transaction, but when engagement could be as simple as a double-tap, it doesn't necessarily have intrinsic value in your brand strategy. Build a strategy with the right type of value-add engagement, one that has meaning for both your brand and the customer.

F IS FOR FINANCIAL CONTROL

Financial control is imperative for any successful marketer or brand manager. Financial control means robust processes, strong reporting, transparency, delegations and a budget linked with your strategy. Managing your budget well enables you to have easy conversations with your CFO and Finance Manager - you know what you are spending where, the results attributable to it and where investing more resources would enable you to deliver more.

G IS FOR GOALS

Setting goals for your brand strategy provides something to assess your progress against. Goals for an enterprise brand strategy could be broken down across a number of areas:



- Revenue
- Profit
- Cost per acquisition
- Return on investment
- Stages of the customer journey
- Prompted and unprompted brand awareness
- Market share
- Employee satisfaction

H IS FOR HOUSE OF BRANDS, BRANDED HOUSE AND HYBRID HOUSE HIERARCHY

Brand architecture lays out the structure of products within an organization. The way products interact, or relate to one another, is mapped and accorded a hierarchy.

A branded house is structured so all brands names and product brands use the name of the master brand in their naming conventions and have a tie through their visual identities as well.

A house of brands has diverse audiences, outcomes, brand purposes and visual identities sitting underneath a corporate brand. The brands are promoted as separate entities, often without reference to the corporate brand, let alone each other.

A hybrid brand house usually occurs following mergers and acquisitions - in a hybrid brand house model some of the brands remain linked and others while being in the same category perhaps, sit separately.

I IS FOR INTERNAL CO-CREATION

There are lots of touchpoints with the brand from prospective customer to advocate. Employees play an invaluable role in influencing how the external market understands and interprets the brand. Employees are both 'readers' of the brand - reading and seeing the official brand construct crafted by the brand and marketing team - and also 'authors' of the brand, writing the brand afresh with every interaction they have with external stakeholders.

Brand meaning and understanding develops through interactions and experiences with formal brand communications and management. However, interplays with employees are where it is most deeply experienced.

Misunderstandings in reading the brand, or a poor internally-communicated brand, can influence an employee's brand promise delivery, and therefore impact a customer's perception of the brand, and we all understand perception is reality.

This is why brand co-creation with employees is vital. Brand managers, when re-crafting or honing the brand promise and framework, working with internal stakeholders from across the business, will develop a substantially more robust brand solution. It will be more easily 'read' and translated, creating a more consistent experience for external stakeholders, especially students.



If all areas of the business feel represented through this co-creation, they will be more willing to be avid readers of the brand and accurate writers of the brand.

Engaged employees delivering on the brand promise is a brand manager's single most potent weapon in a competitive marketplace.

J IS FOR JOB DESCRIPTION

A successful brand strategy hinges on the people who execute it, and their skill sets. Giving your team ownership and the support of job descriptions allows them to own their space and challenges them to progress.

The backbone of a shared understanding of what the role requires and what your expectations are, combined with a knowledge of your strategy enables you to support your employees to deliver while also building a business case for additional resources as required.

K IS FOR KNOWLEDGE BASE

Branding and marketing are generally fast-moving environments with lots of moving pieces. A central knowledge base, whether that is a wiki, intranet or a well-structured shared drive means your team doesn't lose momentum when executing campaigns and initiatives. The history of campaigns, previous years and results will ensure you continually iterate and improve, rather than repeating that which didn't work.

L IS FOR LOGO

Protecting your logo, and by extension, the rest of the visual identity representing your brand, is a vital part of your remit - your logo should be used in the right way to extend your customer's understanding of the brand. In an enterprise, keeping a rein on logo use remains a difficult proposition with so many people needing to use the visual identity, and therefore, increasing the risk the brand guidelines aren't applied correctly.

M IS FOR MARKET SHARE

Building market share allows brand managers to win against competitors and build a compelling financial story internally and to shareholders as your forecast growth is greater than the industry average. Increasing market share allows you to be more efficient in your marketing spend because the increased share will contribute to a growth in prompted and unprompted brand awareness.

M IS FOR MARKETING

Branding consists of all the marketing and communication techniques and tactics you use to influence the perception of your brand. Marketing is essentially moving people - it is moving them from unknown to known, from lead to customer, from customer to advocate. At each point, your communication and marketing tactics are influencing their progression. The selection of your tactics and levels will determine your success in marketing and positioning of your product or service.



N IS FOR NURTURING

Marketing automation continues to dominate the agenda of many marketing teams - implementing it or refining it to maximise your ROI. Nurturing your prospects, potential customers, current customers and other stakeholders is important to influence their understanding of, and willingness to engage with, the brand. Mapping your customer journey is a vital component of successful nurturing and good brand managers don't stint in this space.

N IS FOR NARRATIVE

The narrative you tell about your brand is at the core of your identity. For startups, this may be your founding story, but for scaleups or anyone larger, your narrative should be about the quantifiable difference you make in the lives of your customers. Your narrative needs to be compelling and have a story arc, but not be War and Peace. Put your customer as the protagonist at the centre of your narrative and make sure your narrative tweaks dependent on your persona and platform.

O IS FOR OWNERSHIP OF OUTCOMES

Marketers and brand managers need to own the outcomes of their work and even that of process further down the pipeline. This ownership allows you to tweak the brand strategy dependent on the results continually, and ensure you are building an efficient and sustainable strategy.

Outcomes in this instance are more concrete than sentiment and 'awareness', although they may be part of your matrix. The more concrete the outcomes you are delivering and measuring, the more value you are demonstrating the brand provides.

O IS FOR OUTSOURCING

The successful execution of a brand strategy relies on the right skills to deliver the components well. The skills you need may exist in your team but if they don't, be confident and outsource. This might be through a formal agency retainer relationship, on a project basis, with individual freelancers or offshore teams. The best plan can be undone by shoddy work, so set aside the budget for outsourcing where you need it.

P IS FOR PRODUCT

A brand strategy is only as successful as the product or service you have available. Certainly you can sell the sizzle, but in the end, it is the sausage that people want. If your product isn't strong enough to shut out competitors, work with your product manager and business analysts to identify the gaps in the market, the gaps in the product and product range and how to fill these.

P IS FOR POSITIONING

Positioning maps your place in the market, how you sit against your competitors and how your customer values your offering. Why do they choose your product over others? What story do they tell themselves when they choose your product?



Your customer might value individuality and communication, and your product allows them to deliver on both those fronts. Competitors might allow communication but not individuality, or vice versa. Your market for this positioning doesn't need to be enormous, find the smallest viable audience and position for them.

P IS FOR PERSONAS

Personas, avatars, ideal customers - these frameworks allow you to segment your customers and prospective customers to craft your messages and campaigns, targeting the people most likely to respond and convert. Personas allow you to identify the common motivations, concerns, outcomes and job stories for your segments and position accordingly - they might all be using the same product, but for different reasons.

Q IS FOR QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE

Qualitative and quantitative research are both invaluable for marketers. A great marketer knows their audience well and takes time to know the data genuinely, and this can often appear as 'gut instinct' because they haven't needed to consult a report in a meeting.

Gut instinct, however, is simply knowing your audience profoundly and being able to extrapolate behavioural characteristics from this knowledge.

Both qualitative and quantitative research is required to support this instinct, and without the other, either can provide a skewed understanding of the data. Just holding small qualitative focus groups, for example, can produce confirmation bias because attendees often understand the desired outcome and want to please in the face-to-face setting.

Additionally, it can be hard to secure your actual target audience for focus groups, no matter the data set the research agency works from. Quantitative research is built upon the premise of you asking the right questions of a sample size big enough to limit distortion.

R IS FOR REBRAND

Rebrands can provide an excellent circuit-breaker for a brand, especially to align or realign with an audience, and are often the starting place for implementing a new brand strategy. A rebrand needs to be implemented for a specific reason (boredom isn't one of them) and supported throughout the whole organization to achieve success. A rebrand might be implemented for any of these reasons:

- Market movement
- Offering change
- Competitor movement
- Customer change
- Reputational damage
- Merger or acquisition



R IS FOR RELATIONSHIPS

A successful brand strategy is delivered on the strength of relationships - relationships with suppliers, throughout the enterprise and, most importantly, with your customers. A great brand manager develops their strategy and uses the strength of others' extensive expertise. to make adjustments to the plan and the delivery. Building relationships with suppliers and the extended business helps build trust and efficiency for brand solutions.

S IS FOR STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS

A good brand strategy is only as strong as the weakest component. A brand strategy should accurately reflect the challenges of the whole business, not the visual identity difficulties. It should also provide strategic solutions and support for the broader business (within budget of course!). For example, advertising isn't a strategic solution in and of itself, the right audience selection, channel selection, conversion- based messaging and customer service all contribute to the success of advertising as part of your brand strategy. A good brand manager will build a brand and marketing strategy as a response to the broader business strategy, to drive the key metrics of the whole business, not just the marketing KPIs (key performance indicators).

T IS FOR TONE OF VOICE

Tone of voice is a comparatively small matter for a brand manager but has an impact in all areas of the business. Your team, and those dealing with customers directly, will benefit from tone of voice training and a framework to provide a consistent experience for the customer. Tone of voice is developed from one of the components of your brand anatomy - brand personality - and helps employees shape the right approach to reinforce brand positioning. A tone of voice guide traditionally also includes the basics of grammar, spelling, punctuation and, correct word and symbol usage.

U IS FOR UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE

The best brand managers develop a brand strategy demonstrating a deep understanding of their audience. This understanding is best gathered through data and observation. Hunt out data sources across the entire enterprise - not just those in the marketing team - breaking down data silos to understand how different datasets provide insight into others and can provide an end- to-end view of the customer. Watch for outliers in your data because even these tell a story. Develop a constant feedback loop, integrating data and observation. Talking to customers, witnessing them interact and transact with your brand will help inform a robust brand strategy.

V IS FOR VISION

A brand strategy benefits from a robust company vision - the brand vision begins to translate the company vision into customer-centric benefits and helps create a framework for the brand and marketing team to work from. The vision sets a course for the future and allows for growth and responsiveness to changes in the market. It should encourage innovation and problem solving of this bigger picture. A good



brand manager translates this vision onto one for their team as well - how the company vision and brand vision applies to their jobs and how they can bring it to life.

V IS FOR VISUAL IDENTITY

Most people conflate brand and visual identity as one construct, when in fact they are very different propositions. The brand is the sum of experience and knowledge of your company positioning, your reputation. Your visual identity is one of the tools in your branding strategy to shift your customer's perception. Your visual identity should be clearly identifiable and differentiate you from your competitors. It should build and influence your customer's understanding of your brand, be suitable for all channels and communication methods and be able to be applied throughout the organization, not just by the central marketing team.



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