

Branding Strategy

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"The art of marketing is the art of brand building. If you are not a brand, you are a commodity. Then price is everything, and the low-cost producer is the only winner." - Philip Kotler, Kellogg

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Branding is not...

Your trademark(s) - Those are legal properties
Your mission statement - That's a reminder
Your logo or slogan - These are your company's signatures
Your products or services - These are your deliverables
An advertisement - These are vehicles which deliver your message

Branding is...

The perception of your company within the hearts and minds of the market; no more, no less.

Why is branding important?

A strong brand sets you apart from your competitors. It allows you to attract loyal fans rather than merely selling to customers. It creates opportunities for strong emotional connections that drive consumer spending.


Branding is the difference between Apple and HP, two perfectly capable computer companies with two vastly different market valuations (950B vs 38B). "I love my iPhone," is a more common phrase than, "I love my HP laptop."

How to build your brand?

1. Find and establish your niche. Clarify your distinct ability to make an impact.
2. Determine the desired relationship between your customers and your product or service.
3. Create intangible, emotional bonds through every customer interaction.
4. Like people, a brand requires a name, a personality, a character, and a reputation. Aim high.

To develop your brand's distinct personality, ask yourself these questions:

1. What is the deep need that we satisfy? What is our raison d'être?
2. What is our core competence? What are we really good at?
3. What do we believe that others do not believe?
4. What is our promise to our customers?
5. What are the unobtainable desires that our company is based on?

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"A brand is the personification of a product, service or even entire company. Like any person, a brand has a physical "body": in P&G's case, the products and/or services it provides. Also, **like a person, a brand has a name, a personality, character and a reputation.** Like a person, you can respect, like and even love a brand. You can think of it as a deep personal friend, or merely an acquaintance. You can view it as dependable or undependable; principled or opportunistic; caring or capricious. Just as you like to be around certain people and not others, so also do you like to be with certain brands and not others. Also, like a person, a brand must mature and change its product over time. But, its character, and core beliefs shouldn't change. Neither should its fundamental personality and outlook on life. People have character ... so do brands. A person's character flows from his or her integrity: the ability to deliver under pressure, the willingness to do what is right rather than what is expedient. You judge a person's character by his/her past performance and the way he/she thinks and acts in both good times, and especially bad. The same is true of brands."

- Robert T. Blanchard of Procter & Gamble in his 1999 "Parting Essay"

"Be yourself; everyone else is already taken." - Oscar Wilde

"The idea that business is just a numbers affair has always struck me as preposterous. For one thing, I've never been particularly good at numbers, but I think I've done a reasonable job with feelings. And I'm convinced that **it is feelings—and feelings alone—that account for the success of the Virgin brand** in all of its myriad forms."

- Sir Richard Branson

"People don't buy quarter-inch drills; they buy quarter-inch holes."

- Theodore Levitt, Economist

"A great brand taps into emotions. **Emotions drive most, if not all, of our decisions.** A brand reaches out with a powerful connecting experience. It's an emotional connecting point that transcends the product." - Scott Bedbury, Nike, Starbucks

"Product marketing differentiates your products from other products. **Brand marketing differentiates your customers from other customers.**" - Bernhard Schroeder

"So often people are working hard at the wrong thing. **Working on the right thing is probably more important than working hard.**"

- Caterina Fake, Founder of flickr.com


"Value is not intrinsic; it is not in things. It is rather within us; it is the way in which man reacts to the conditions of his environment."

- Ludwig Von Mises, Austrian Economist

"Selling to people who actually want to hear from you is far more effective than interrupting strangers who don't." - Seth Godin

"A product or service is an object. **A brand is a personality.**"

- Micheal A. Pacheco, Marketing and Digital Strategy Consultant

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