SCHOOL OF BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENT

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

SDE1503 – VISUAL IDENTITY & BRANDING

UNIT - I

VISUAL IDENTITY & BRANDING

Subject Name: Visual Identity & Branding   **Code:** SDE 1503

UNIT – I – BRANDING

WHAT IS A BRAND?

The term brand refers to a business and marketing concept that helps people identify a particular company, product, or individual. Brands are intangible, which means you can't actually touch or see them. As such, they help shape people's perceptions of companies, their products, or individuals. Brands often use identifying markers to help create brand identities within the marketplace. They provide enormous value to the company or individual, giving them a competitive edge over others in the same industry. As such, many entities often seek legal protection for their brands by obtaining trademarks.

UNDERSTANDING BRANDS

As mentioned above, a brand is an intangible asset that helps people identify a specific company and its products. This is especially true when companies need to set themselves apart from others who provide similar products on the market, including generic brands.[1] Advil is a common brand of ibuprofen, which the company uses to distinguish itself from generic forms of the drug available in drugstores. This is referred to as brand equity.

People often confuse logos, slogans, or other recognizable marks owned by companies with their brands. While these terms are often used interchangeably, they are distinct. The former are marketing tools that companies often use to promote and market their products and services.[2] When used together, these tools create a brand identity. Successful marketing can help keep a company's brand front and center in people's minds. This can spell the difference between someone choosing your brand over your competitor's.[3]

A brand is considered to be one of the most valuable and important assets for a company. In fact, many companies are often referred to by their brand, which means they are often inseparable, becoming one and the same.[4] Coca-Cola is a great example, where the popular soft drink became synonymous with the company itself. This means it carries a tremendous monetary value, affecting both the bottom line and, for public

companies, shareholder value

This is why it's important for companies to protect their brands from a legal standpoint. Trademarks identify exclusive ownership over a brand and/or product, along with any associated marketing tools. Registering trademarks prevent others from using your products or services without obtaining your permission.

HISTORY OF BRANDS

Brands have long been used to set products apart over the course of history. The idea of branding may go as far back as 2000 B.C., where merchants used it to sell their wares in different markets. At that time, it was commonly used as a technique to denote ownership of a product or a piece of property.

Branding has been used throughout the ages. The oldest known generic brand still used today is an herbal paste from India called Chyawanprash. In the 13th century, Italians began putting watermarks on their paper as a form of branding. The term brand also refers to the unique marks burned into the hides of cattle to distinguish the animals of one owner from those of another.[6]

But one of the most popular uses was in rural America. You've probably heard of the term branding, which was used by cattle ranchers, who used to brand their livestock as a form of identification. Brands started taking off after companies started packaging their goods in the late 1880s to distinguish themselves from other companies.

TYPES OF BRANDS

The type of brand used depends on the particular entity using it. The following are some of the most common forms of brands:

- Corporate Brands: Corporate branding is a way for companies to market themselves in order to give themselves an edge against their competition. They make a series of important decisions in order to accomplish this, such as pricing, mission, target market, and values.

- Personal Brands: As mentioned above, branding isn't just for companies anymore. People use tools like social media to build their own personas, thereby boosting their brands. This includes regular social media posts, sharing images and videos, and conducting meet-and-greets.

- Product Brands: This type of branding, which is also known as merchandise branding, involves marketing one particular product. Branding a product

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requires market research and choosing the proper target market.

- Service Brands: This kind of branding applies to services, which often requires some creativity, as you can't actually show services in a physical way.

- Employer branding: Focusing on employees to understand the vision, mission, goals, products, and services of the company. It is designed to educate employees in order for them to uphold the corporate brand to their customers.

- Cause Branding: Attempting to attract customers by associating the company with a cause or purpose that potential customers would find beneficial to their personal goals or in line with their values. This might be a percentage contribution of company sales to charitable organizations or donations to nature and wildlife preservation councils.

- Co-Branding: Becoming more familiar to the consumer all the time. These include, for example, mini-marts attached to gas stations, banking facilities within grocery stores, and Laundromats attached to anything from bowling alleys to family entertainment centers. This branding falls in the "one-stop shopping" category.

- Spirit Branding: Hit the consumer market big time by selling soft drinks with the slogan of I'd like to teach the world to sing . . . . It's that "get a good feeling" from using our product approach. The world looks brighter and things just go better when you start your morning off with our product.

- Community Branding – Showing the collective good a company can do for the community in which it and its employees reside. This branding can include company and employee outreach programs to help the needy, support the elderly, contribute to public education, or provide emergency relief and jobs for the unemployed. It's a promise to the people in the community that this company will be a beneficial partner to them.

- Culture branding : Another method of branding, branding to employees may be something new to consider in waging war against sagging morale and high employee turnover. Culture branding is making promises to employees concerning their working environment and relationship to their leaders and managers. In this case, "promises" are different from guarantees and opportunities in that they are offered free of encumbrances other than taking advantage of them through either purchase and use or employment agreement.

Apple, Google, Microsoft, Amazon, and Facebook were the most valuable brands in 2020, according to Forbes.

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CREATING A BRAND

When a company settles on a brand to be its public image, it must first determine its brand identity, or how it wants to be viewed. For instance, a company logo often incorporates a company's message, slogan, or product. The goal is to make the brand memorable and appealing to the consumer.

The company usually consults a design firm, team, or logo design software to come up with ideas for the visual aspects of a brand, such as a logo or a symbol. A successful brand accurately portrays the message or feeling the company wants to get across. This results in brand awareness, or the recognition of the brand's existence and what it offers. On the other hand, an ineffective brand often results from miscommunication.[1]

Once a brand has created positive sentiment among its target audience, the firm is said to have built brand equity. Some examples of firms with brand equity and possessing very recognizable brands of products include Microsoft, Coca-Cola, Ferrari, Apple, and Facebook.

If done right, a brand results in an increase in sales not just for the specific product being sold, but also for other products sold by the same company. A good brand engenders trust in the consumer, and, after having a good experience with one product, the consumer is more likely to try another product related to the same brand. As noted above, this phenomenon is often referred to as brand loyalty.

BENEFITS OF BRANDS

Creating a brand provides numerous benefits, whether that's to a corporation or an individual. Successful branding leads to a lot of impressions. But what does this mean? A company that can get its message across is able to induce and evoke emotion within its customer base. These consumers develop unique relationships with these companies, allowing the latter to capitalize on their loyalty. Companies also rely on these customers to help draw in other, new consumers.

This helps companies build trust and credibility. After all, people are more apt to purchase goods and services (or brands) from companies they know and trust. This gives companies a competitive edge against their competition. Keeping brands in the minds of consumers means a bigger bottom line.[93]

It also helps corporations introduce newer products and services. Since consumers are going to stay loyal to brands they know and trust—and with whom they already have a

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relationship—they're more likely to spend when new products are released, even if they're more expensive.

Let's use Apple as an example. The company has built a hugely loyal customer base that is willing to overlook the price tag associated with an iMac, MacBook, iPad, or iPhone because of their loyalty to the brand. Many existing customers are completely willing to replace their existing electronics when the company releases new ones.

CASE STUDIES:

Apple

Apple is the largest company in the world, so it is only fitting that it also has the most recognisable brand. Consumers all over the planet own Apple products – from iPhones and iPads, to Apple Watches and iPods – which can help to explain the company's brand recognition.

There are many theories behind the brand logo of a bitten apple. Some point towards the biblical story of Eve eating an apple from the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. Others say that the bite in the apple is meant to signify a 'byte' of data. This is known among brand creators as a 'wink' – a purposefully humorous or hidden message within a brand that is not common knowledge.

Apple's current branding was shaped to a large extent by the company's founder, Steve Jobs. The initial logo was the current incarnation of the bitten apple, but instead of monochrome black it was in the colours of the rainbow. The monochrome logo currently in use took form in 1998, and it has helped to establish Apple's reputation for minimalism.

Google

The **Google** brand is engrained in the minds of anyone who has ever used the eponymous search engine. The simple logo, which is the word 'Google' colourised in blue, red, yellow and green has gone through some redesigns – most recently in 2015.

The 'e' at the end of the logo is at an angle to serve as a reminder that the company will always be a bit unconventional, according to Google's design blog. Aside from their standard logo, Google also creates various 'Google Doodles' on days of significance or to recognise the achievements of a person on their birthday throughout the year. These are always customised for a specific day. Examples include Google Doodles for New Year's Eve, Bastille Day, German Reunification Day or Marie

Curie's 144th Birthday.

Google's brand recognition is so strong that even after the company was incorporated under the Alphabet Inc. umbrella, people still refer to it as Google, and any internet searches are often referred to as 'Googling' for something, rather than other more generic search terms. This is due in part to the monopoly that the company has in the search engine world, with competitors such as Microsoft's Bing proving to be less popular with consumers than Google's service.

Amazon

Amazon's brand is based on being the one-stop online store, where you can buy everything from books to fitness equipment or furniture. As Amazon has expanded to dominate the ecommerce business, so too has its brand become more and more recognisable.

The logo is the word 'Amazon', with an arrow going from the first 'a' to the 'z' – a 'wink' to customers that the company sells everything from a to z. Services that the company provides such as Amazon Prime have helped it to become trusted by consumers, with fast and reliable delivery almost always assured.

Amazon's brand recognition is also aided by the fame of its founder – Jeff Bezos – who is the world's richest man. While this can be good for sales and increasing brand recognition, it can also be bad when disputes over low employee wages come to the forefront.

Microsoft

Microsoft is the last of the tech giants on this list of brand recognition, but it is still the fourth most recognisable brand in the world. This is due in some part, to the fame of the company's founder Bill Gates, who has regularly topped global rich lists as one of the wealthiest and most charitable individuals in the world.

Microsoft has various brands under its umbrella, including Office and Windows, but both of these pale in comparison to the brand recognition of Microsoft as a global corporation. After it was founded by Gates and childhood friend Paul Allen in 1975, Microsoft helped to bring about the microcomputer revolution – which goes some way to explaining the company's brand recognition in the present day.

The Microsoft logo has been unchanged since 2012, and it features four coloured boxes – red, green, blue and yellow – stacked up to make a larger box, next to 'Microsoft'.

![Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology logo]

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Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola is the most recognisable non-tech brand on this list and the only drinks brand. The current Coca-Cola logo is largely unchanged from the 1950s, which is when the iconic red was introduced.

Aside from the core Coca-Cola brand, there are also a variety of different products which have been introduced to appeal to a wider audience. These include low sugar and flavoured varieties of the same drink, which are still marketed under the Coca-Cola umbrella.

As with some of the other brands on this list, Coca-Cola has become a symbol for capitalism around the world – and the brand evokes strong imagery of America. This is helped by the company's large advertising budget, which is more than the advertising budgets of Apple and Microsoft combined.

Coca-Cola recognises that a large part of its brand recognition comes from the culture surrounding its beverage, rather than people just drinking it to quench their thirst. The focus on culture has helped to establish Coca-Cola as one of the most recognisable brands in the world.

Characteristics Of A Brand

A brand is an inherently valuable asset that has the following characteristics –

Intangible: It is an intangible asset that can't be separated from the offering. It is a perception of the identity the offering has that is often used to recognize it and differentiate it from other products. Dynamic: A brand is more of an experience than just an identity. Every customer might have a different perception of the brand according to his/her experience with the same. Distinctive: The sole purpose of developing a brand is to develop a distinctive identity having human-like features like name, colour, personality, etc.

Amorphous: Branding doesn't have constraints. Offerings are branded, and brand experiences are created at almost every touch point, and such experiences and interactions have infinite possibilities.

Emotional: Branding is when a human-like personality is associated with an offering. Such human-like personalities develop emotional connections with customers.

Highly Recognizable: Brands are highly recognizable and differentiable. They have their own attributes that help their customers recognize and differentiate them from

generic offerings as well as from other players in the market.

Consistent: A brand develops an identity which, when consistent, develops an image (perception) in the minds of the customers. Hence, consistency is an important characteristic of a brand.

Brand Elements

The brand is the sum total of all the visual and non-visual, tangible and non-tangible elements that drive the perception of the customer and makes him believe what the company wants him to. These brand elements include –

Visual Identity: Brand visual identity includes the recognizable and communicable brand outlook like name, logo, colour, slogan, typography, graphics, etc.

Brand Associations: These are the associations that come to the customers' mind when they think of the brand. These can be advertisements, brand ambassadors, brand's offering features, class, lifestyle, emotions, etc.

Brand Purpose: Brand purpose represents what the company stands for and what are its social obligations towards society, consumers, and the environment.

Brand Promise: It's the value customers expect to get whenever they interact with the brand or buy its offerings.

Brand Identity: Brand identity is the set of all the branding activities a company indulges in order to be perceived in a particular way to the target audience.

Brand Personality: Brand personality is the association of human characteristics and traits with the brand to which the customers can relate.

Brand Voice: Brand voice is the uniformity in the selection of words, the attitude and values of the brand while addressing the target audience or others.

Brand Image: Brand image is an aggregate of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a customer holds regarding the brand.

Brand Experience: Brand experience is awakening a holistic sensory experience to build an all-rounding relationship between customers and a brand.

Brand Equity: Brand equity is the aggregate of assets and liabilities attached to the brand name and symbol, which results in the relationship customers have with the brand.

Brand Architecture: Brand architecture is an organized structure of the company's portfolio of brands, sub-brands, and other offerings.

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Brand Positioning

Brand positioning is an act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinct place in the mind of the target market. – Philip Kotler

- Brand positioning is the unique space a brand occupies in the brains of the customers.
- It makes customers view a specific brand in a unique way by associating emotions, traits, feelings, and sentiments with it.
- These associations make it stand out from the competition.

Characteristics Of A Good Brand Positioning Strategy

- Relevant
- Clear
- Unique
- Desirable
- Deliverable
- Points Of Difference
- Recognizable Feature
- Validated By The Customer

Value-Based Positioning

Value-based brand positioning strategy positions the brand based on the value the customers get on buying or consuming the brand's offerings.

Features-Based Positioning

When the competition is huge and the products are similar, companies usually position their products by focusing more on product-specific features like price, quality, or other micro features depending on the product sold.

Problem and Solution Based Positioning

Most of the brands focus on positioning their products as a one-stop solution for a specific problem.

Lifestyle Positioning

By positioning itself as a lifestyle brand, a brand tries to sell an image and identity rather than the product. Cigarette, Alcohol, and Tobacco companies are often seen to use lifestyle positioning while marketing their products.

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Parent Brand Driven Positioning

This positioning strategy aims at establishing a brand promise and a reputation of the parent brand.

Experience-Based Positioning

Experience-based positioning refers to positioning the offering based on the experience the customer gets while buying or consuming it. Restaurants, hotels, and other service-based operators use this type of brand positioning strategy

INTERIOR DESIGN

Interior design helps to uplift our spirits and also helps to effectively optimize the space in our home making the best use of the available space.

- Interior design plays a very important role in our life today, making our lifestyle more modern and stylish.

- Not only that it also introduces us to elegance and comfort and helps to raise the functionality in our life.

- Interior designers make sure that the interior spaces they are designing are always functional, safe, and beautiful.

- As interior designers, they get to also choose the colours, materials, textures, furniture, flooring, wallpaper, lighting, and other materials for every interior space or building. This shows the importance of interior design

STYLES OF INTERIOR DESIGN

Modern Minimalist Style

This style is a form of extreme accuracy, nothing is too much, without heavy backgrounds. The emphasis is on simplicity, the colors may be dull or bright, in any case flashy colors. Pieces are either geometric shapes – square, rectangular, round, but the surfaces are clean, no scenery, no details. Minimalist modern style by its name, illustrates the simplified forms.

Classic Style

It is a refined style, developed, rich in details, which are found both in the structure of furniture, lighting, etc. as well as in sets, prints. The furniture is the "art" type, carved or inlaid details and apply. Decorated with floral elements, vegetable, various leitmotif or scenes drawn from legends

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Rustic Style

Style structure is a crude, rough details, structure elements of furniture / lighting can be in tree trunks, logs, branches, jute. Style is found in mountain vacation homes, rural.

Classic Reinterpreted Style

It is a refined style, elegant, where classic forms details are found in a new approach. The forms preserves the structure of old forms or parts in general updating them sometimes, or some elements of a furniture style combined with modern elements, creating that fusion between old and new. Finishing parts are in a new approach-painted and varnished, with different and innovative colors, surface gold, silver, finished with patina or serigraphic.

Retro Style

It is the style of '50s, '60s or '70s. In that period it is anticipated design pieces to come. The songs have a playful approach, funny structure, their form and the play of colors and prints that we find in each piece. We find for the first time new approaches to design forms, yet they remain air-old began the design lines. Prints with geometric shapes, lines, plaid or printed with illustrations belonging to the Pop Art style.

Maverick Style

It is part of modern style, this approach is very inventive, unusual and unconventional. Young, explosive, inventive not respect the rules. Structure can be obtained by joining pieces, overlapping volumes and volumes twisting colors can be randomly chosen even for the same room, seemingly nothing happens, only part of the eccentricity of this style.

High-tech Style

Hightech style is an innovative modern style, the emphasis being on furniture structure where every detail of combination is not random and it is part of that structure. Screws, rivets, wheels apparent booms, rough metal finishes, appearances bulbs are specific to this style. The finishes used are often of metal, glass and plastic and wood in small proportions and for parts we find fabric-upholstered as simple as we can, leather. The colors are often dull-gray, white, small black scale.

Elegant Country Style

Rural style is elegant furniture style with influences from English, French or Scandinavian classic pure style can be called rural chic. Furniture finishes are nice, bright

![Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology logo]

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colors-white, pastel colors and forms were taking over traditional furniture but not abundant decorations. Surfaces are painted or sometimes have a slight patina.

BRANDING CHALLENGES

- Branding has been around for centuries as a means to distinguish the goods of one producer from those of another.

- When entering a foreign market with Brand, the culture, language and mindset of people in that country must be studied first and then appropriate Brand communication efforts must be taken.

Six Challenges in Global Branding

Strong brands requires a clear strategic approach to handle the six efforts (6Es) involved in creating strong brand.

Economic Assistance:

The main challenge faced by the brand leaders is to focus on the short term returns. Brand is a long term asset, introduction of price; discount or freebie promotion for initial acceptance of the product may lead to brand dilution and failure in the long run.

Effect of Approving:

There must be consistency in quality/performance, if not betterment so as to sustain the growing complexity of International market in terms of Consumer's changing tastes and multiplying competition. The company must continuously innovate and maintain good customer relations though their consumer touches points, so as to create brand loyalty among existing users.

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Economic, Legal and Political Conditions:

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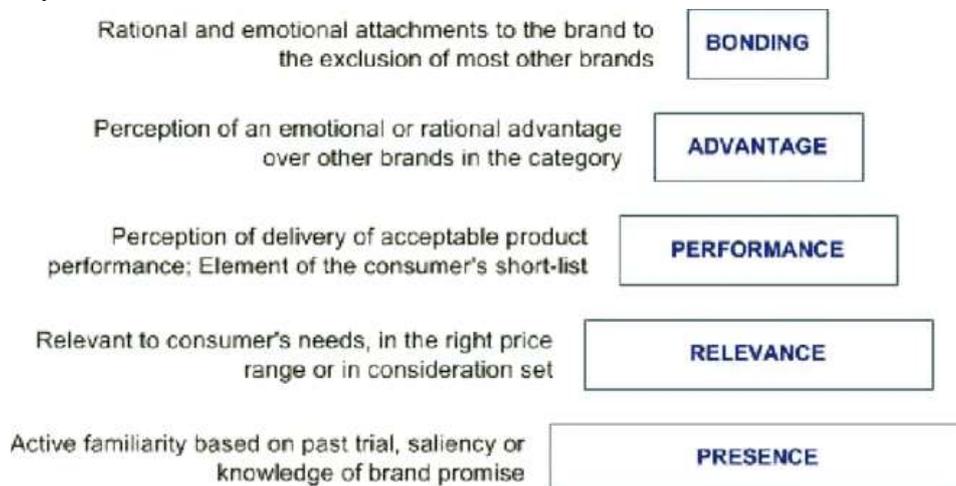www.sathyabama.ac.in

Condition implies the Economic, Legal and Political conditions prevailing in a foreign market. Law related to Advertising content, product specifications, distribution options, etc vary from one country to another. The Economic condition in UK made LG play down its tagline "Life is Good" in Advertisements due to recent credit crunch.

Efficient distribution channel:

A distribution channel decision is vital and rigid, that it expensive to change, once decision is made. More recently, information technology and particularly the Internet have shrunk the world even further. A business might have partners and employees half a world away, and consumers can get products from those locations in a matter of days

BRAND DYNAMICS

- Throughout history, most brands have been intentionally static — rigid brand guidelines developed with the goal of strict adherence, leaving little or no room for more flexible expressions of the brand.

- The fixed nature of the brand identity, consistently applied, was one of the most significant brand-building tools companies had at their disposal as they sought to create instantly recognizable brands.

- To meet the demands of today's world, a brand's identity needs to be flexible enough to adapt for print-based media, digital channels, the physical world (like buildings and billboards), and a global economy

- Brand managers learn to create dynamic brand identities: those that can freshen up, personalize, or contextualize their brand without losing sight of its core brand identity.

Rational and emotional attachments to the brand to the exclusion of most other brands	**BONDING**
Perception of an emotional or rational advantage over other brands in the category	**ADVANTAGE**
Perception of delivery of acceptable product performance; Element of the consumer's short-list	**PERFORMANCE**
Relevant to consumer's needs, in the right price range or in consideration set	**RELEVANCE**
Active familiarity based on past trial, saliency or knowledge of brand promise	**PRESENCE**

- A dynamic brand is defined as a brand with more energy that can show change, movement and flexibility.

- Dynamic brands are often called living brands, because they physically change or move, reflecting the very definition of dynamism.

- "A dynamic identity is essentially opening up one or more of the components [of a brand] to a dynamic influence," says designer Paul Davis.

This is the first step in designing a dynamic brand identity and should contain the following

elements:

- A logo and/or mark

- A typographic system

- A color palette

- Guidelines for using icons, photography or illustration

- A methodology of approach

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SDE1503 – VISUAL IDENTITY & BRANDING

UNIT - II

Subject Name: Visual Identity & Branding   **Code:** SDE 1503

UNIT – II – POSITIONING

What Is Brand Identity?

Brand identity is the visible elements of a brand, such as color, design, and logo, that identify and distinguish the brand in consumers' minds. Brand identity is distinct from brand image. The former corresponds to the intent behind the branding and the way a company does the following—all to cultivate a certain image in consumers' minds:

- Chooses its name
- Designs its logo
- Uses colors, shapes, and other visual elements in its products and promotions
- Crafts the language in its advertisements
- Trains employees to interact with customers

Brand image is the actual result of these efforts, successful or unsuccessful.

Understanding Brand Identity

Apple Inc. consistently tops surveys of the most effective and beloved brands because it has successfully created the impression that its products are sleek, innovative, top-of-the-line status symbols, and yet eminently useful at the same time. Apple's brand identity and brand image are closely aligned.

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Consistent marketing and messaging leads to a consistent brand identity and, therefore, consistent sales.

At the same time, it is possible to craft a positive brand identity that fails to translate into a positive brand image. Some pitfalls are well known, and attempts by legacy brands to appeal to a new generation or demographic are especially treacherous. An infamous example is a 2017 ad by PepsiCo, Inc., which depicted a non-specific protest that appeared to allude to Black Lives Matter, a movement protesting police violence against people of

color. The brand identity it wished to project, as a spokesperson subsequently described it, was "a global message of unity, peace, and understanding."

Instead, the ad was widely disparaged for "trivializing" Black Lives Matter, as *The New York Times* put it. The moment in the ad, when a white actress hands a Pepsi to a police officer and seems to resolve all of the fictional protesters' grievances, instantly became the focus of heavy criticism. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s daughter Bernice King tweeted, "If only Daddy would have known about the power of #Pepsi," accompanied by a picture of Dr. King being pushed by a police officer in Mississippi. Pepsi pulled the ad and apologized.

Pepsi's sales do not appear to have been directly affected by this gaffe, but in some cases, a negative gap between brand identity and brand image can affect financial results. The teen apparel retailer Abercrombie & Fitch suffered a severe downturn when its once-popular brand became associated with garish logos, poor quality, oversexed advertising, and plain meanness. The company refused to sell women's clothing size XL or larger, for example, because, "We go after the attractive all-American kid with a great attitude and a lot of friends," the chief executive officer (CEO) said. "A lot of people don't belong, and they can't belong."

By the same token, building a positive brand image can bring in consistent sales and make product roll-outs more successful. An example of the benefits of brand loyalty is seen in the introduction of two new subscription-based music streaming services in 2015. Tidal and Apple Music had to make very different choices in the marketing and roll-outs of their services because of brand loyalty. Apple, an established brand with very loyal customers, didn't have to invest in the type of celebrity-oriented marketing that Tidal used to promote its new service.

Brand Identity and Value

Beyond saving the company money on promotion, a successful brand can be one of the company's most valuable assets. Brand value is intangible, making it difficult to quantify. Still, common approaches take into account the cost it would take to build a similar brand, the cost of royalties to use the brand name, and the cash flow of comparative unbranded businesses.

Nike, Inc., for example, owns one of the world's most instantly recognizable logos, the "swoosh." In *Forbes* "The World's Most Valuable Brands 200" 2018 ranking, the Nike

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brand ranked 18 with an estimated value of $32 billion, even though, in a world devoid of brand perception, taking the swoosh off of Nike's shoes and apparel would change nothing about their comfort or performance.

Building Brand Identity

The steps a company should take to build a strong, cohesive, and consistent brand identity will vary, but a few points apply broadly to most:

1. Analyze the company and the market. A full SWOT analysis that includes the entire firm—a look at the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—is a proven way to help managers understand their situation so they can better determine their goals and the steps required to achieve them.

2. Determine key business goals. The brand identity should help fulfill these goals. For example, if an automaker is pursuing a niche luxury market, its ads should be crafted to appeal to that market. They should appear on channels and sites where potential customers are likely to see them.

3. Identify its customers. Conducting surveys, convening focus groups, and holding one-on-one interviews can help a company identify its consumer group.

4. Determine the personality and message it wants to communicate. A company needs to create a consistent perception, rather than trying to combine every conceivable positive trait: utility, affordability, quality, nostalgia, modernity, luxury, flash, taste, and class. All elements of a brand, such as copy, imagery, cultural allusions, and color schemes, should align and deliver a coherent message.

Building a brand identity is a multi-disciplinary strategic effort, and every element needs to support the overall message and business goals. It can include a company's name, logo, and design; its style and the tone of its copy; the look and composition of its products; and, of course, its social media presence. Apple founder Steve Jobs famously obsessed over details as small as the shade of gray on bathroom signs in Apple stores. While that level of focus may not be necessary, the anecdote shows that Apple's successful branding is the result of intense effort, not serendipity.

Brand identity is everything that a firm wants a brand to be in the minds of customers. This includes the visual symbols of a brand, ideas, emotions, qualities and experiences that a brand seeks to represent. A clear and compelling identity allows products and services to stand out in a crowded market.

The following are common elements of brand identity.

Concept

The basic foundational idea behind a brand. For example, an authentic drive to build the best snowboards on the planet.

Values

Values that you embrace such as sustainability.

Visual Branding

The visual symbols of a brand such as a logo.

Promise, Mission, Vision

Content that directly explains what a brand represents such as a promise, mission and vision.

Quality

Beyond words, actually delivering quality products and services that have value to your customers.

Customer Experience

The end-to-end intangible elements of products and services such as products designed to be fun to use.

Culture

The culture that emerges around your brand.

Legacy

The history of your brand often carefully presented with storytelling techniques.

CULTURAL CONTEXT & BRANDS

Brands operate within their audience's cultural context. This context has its own values, ideologies, symbols, meanings, and recognized makers and influencers. It also has cultural tensions and contradictions. More and more, whether they're aware of it or not, people demand that brands acknowledge and contribute to this cultural context. It's about brands playing a proactive role, confidently taking a stand, and doing so while being accountable for the images and messages they put out there.

Brands that ignore this wider cultural context risk to be heavily criticised and punished on social media. Take last year's Protein World's example. In a time of female empowerment, redefinition of beauty and standing up against objectifying the female body, Protein World launched their "Beach Body Ready" campaign. The result: a huge social media backlash and

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eventual campaign ban in the UK. Being provocative is one thing, but undermining and even attacking the cultural context that you're a part of is nothing short of brand-suicide.

To avoid this, brands first need to acknowledge and understand the cultural context of their audience: their values, ideologies, influencers, and cultural tensions. Secondly, develop a value proposition that steps away from product features and benefits, and instead develop a narrative and positioning that acknowledges and contributes to the culture, or perhaps even resolves specific cultural tensions. In other words, stand up for something that people consider meaningful and which is also aligned to the brand's essence. Only then will brands be able to produce creative campaigns that are more culturally relevant: connecting with influencers and leaders, leveraging cultural values and ideologies, and making an actual contribution to the audience's culture.

Brand recognition is the extent to which the public can identify your brand from its visual symbols and products. Brand awareness goes a step further to the point that the public can recall information, emotions or general impressions about your brand

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Definition of Situation Analysis

Situation analysis is defined as an analysis of the internal and external factors of a business. It clearly identifies a business's capabilities, customers, potential customers and business environment, and their impact on the company. A situation analysis is an essential part of any business plan and should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it is current.

Factors to Consider in Situation Analysis

When considering performing a situation analysis of your business, it is important to look at several factors:

- *Product situation.* Determine your current product. You may want to view this definition in parts such as the core product and any secondary or supporting services or products that you sell. Viewing your products and services separately helps determine how each relates to your core clients' needs.

- *Competitive situation.* Analyze your main competitors and determine how they compare to your business such as competitive advantages.

- *Distribution situation.* Review your distribution situation in terms of how you get your products to market, such as through distributors or other intermediaries.

- *Environmental factors.* Determine the external and internal environmental factors, which can include economic or sociological factors that impact your business's performance.

- *Opportunity and issue analysis.* Conduct a SWOT analysis to determine any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that may affect your business and its performance.

While this information may be obvious to most business owners, it can be beneficial to review the core fundamentals.

Determine If Your Situation Analysis Is Useful

To determine if your situation analysis is functional and provides value, it should:

- Be simple and practical to use
- Be clearly understandable to an outsider
- Focus on key factors impacting your business, both internally and externally
- Clearly identify future goals for your business
- Spark even further analysis

If your analysis falls short of these items, it should be reworked.

Common Challenges in Situation Analysis

You also may encounter one or more of these common challenges:

- You've listed an excessive amount of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, so that the information appears confusing and makes it difficult to get a strong picture of your business at a glance.
- You are lacking prioritization within your analysis.
- You are too broad going through the factors, so it's difficult to really focus on them.
- The factors you have listed are opinion, not fact.
- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats lack distinguishing factors.

If performed properly, situation analysis can be a useful tool for determining the health of your business. Once you know how your business is doing, you can set proper strategies to ensure its success in the future.

The Market Situation section of your plan includes research and analysis of your target market, competitors, business challenges, and your company's competitive differentiators. It should contain your best and most clear description of the current state of the marketplace.

This section should describe your company's strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats you face. This "SWOT" (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats) analysis can help you determine the best areas to focus your marketing efforts.

A sampling of the kinds of questions the Market Situation section should answer are:

What are your products/services or product/service lines?

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- How big is your market opportunity?

- What is your sales and distribution setup?

- What geographic area do you sell to?

- Who is your target audience (in terms of population, demographics, income levels and so on)?

- What competitors exist in this marketplace? What is your market share relative to them?

- Historically, how well have your products sold?

Trying to make the right decision in every aspect of your business can be impossible unless you have structured input to add to your thought process. Situational analysis – where you use market research and other observations to drive decision-making – can help structure your strategic marketing plan and determine its effectiveness, allowing you to make course corrections when your plan isn't achieving expected results.

Using Situational Analysis with Market Research

Using market research, a situational analysis defines potential customers, evaluates projected growth, assesses competitors and makes a realistic assessment of your business. It involves targeting the specific objectives in the business and identifying the factors that support or hinder those objectives. This assessment often is called a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis.

Strengths and weaknesses involve an internal evaluation of the company, while opportunities and threats are derived from an external review. A SWOT analysis usually is presented as a list of information but can also fit into a matrix model.

Internal Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses

An internal analysis is a thorough review of the strengths and weaknesses within an organization, usually by evaluating the company's culture and image, organizational structure, staff, operational efficiency and capacity, brand awareness and financial resources. Strengths are positive attributes, which can be tangible or intangible, and are within the control of the organization. Weaknesses are factors that may hinder the achievement of desired goals.

External Analysis of Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities and threats are measured as part of an external analysis. Both can occur when things happen in the external environment that may require a change within the business. These external factors may include market trends, supplier or partner changes, customer flows, increasing competition, new technology, and economic upturns or downturns.

Opportunities present themselves as attractive factors that can propel or positively influence the

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company in some way. Threats are external factors that could place the organization's goals at risk. These often are classified by their level of severity and probability of occurrence.

SWOT Profile to Create Goals and Strategies

A SWOT profile is used to create goals, strategies and implementation practices. It aids in decision-making throughout the company and creates a standard description of the organization. The four categories are used in relation to one another.

For example, a business may decide to build up a weak area to pursue an upcoming opportunity. A SWOT profile can be used in problem solving, future planning, product evaluation, brainstorm meetings and workshop sessions.

Multiple Perspectives to Investigate Influences

Multiple perspectives are required to thoroughly investigate the internal and external influences on a business. A SWOT analysis can oversimplify a situation when factors are forced into categories in which they may not apply. Also, the classification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats can be somewhat subjective. For example, certain factors could qualify as both an opportunity and a threat.

CUSTOMER NEEDS

Consumers pay a premium for Morton because, over time, the brand has created a perception of quality, consistency, and trust. Leading brands like Morton are more than just products or services— they evoke memories and emotions associated with quality.

When consumers trust a brand, it makes them loyal—and when they are loyal, they buy more.

1. BRANDS PROVIDE PEACE OF MIND.

Consumers want comfort, happiness, and satisfaction in their lives, and they get it in part through the products they buy. If the brands they use consistently deliver a positive experience, consumers form an opinion that the brand is trustworthy, which gives them peace of mind when buying.

2. BRANDS SAVE DECISION-MAKING TIME.

So you are in the market for a new HDTV and decide to search Amazon. You type in "HDTV" and get 101,685 results. How do you cull the list down to a manageable number of choices? You choose a brand. Type in "Samsung HDTV," and you reduce your choices to 1,319. Picking a brand helps reduce the clutter, making it easier to find what you are looking for.

3. BRANDS CREATE DIFFERENCE.

Any grocery store aisle has more product options than anyone can reasonably consider purchasing. What allows us to select one peanut butter brand over another or over a generic product? Branding

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helps define—in an instant, with a minimum of thought—what makes your product different and more desirable than comparable products.

4. BRANDS PROVIDE SAFETY.

People, by nature, generally avoid risk and seek safety. Imagine you're on a business trip in an unfamiliar city, and you need to pick a restaurant for dinner. You're most likely to pick a national restaurant brand over a local one because you're familiar with the national brand. It's the safe and predictable choice because you know what to expect. Brands offer safety and reduce the risk of disappointment.

5. BRANDS ADD VALUE.

Why do consumers pay higher prices for brands compared to unbranded or generic products? Is it better quality, the look and feel, or is it the brand's stature in society? It's probably a combination of each. Successfully branded products make more money for their companies by commanding premium prices.

6. BRANDS EXPRESS WHO WE ARE.

What smartphone do you own? What car do you drive? What shoes do you wear? The brands we use make a statement about who we are and who we want to be. People become emotionally attached to the brands they use and view them as part of their self-image. Apple's classic "I'm a PC / I'm a Mac" campaign shows how brands can reflect the personalities and self-perceptions of their users.

7. BRANDS GIVE CONSUMERS A REASON TO SHARE.

We all have opinions about the things we experience, and we like to share them with others. Whether it's a good book, a good movie, or a great meal, we become brand advocates when we share positive brand experiences. In our increasingly social world, we have more opportunities than ever to spread the benefit of our experiences. Strong brands give consumers a reason to share their experiences.

Aspirational brand strategy may appeal to a person's psychological, social and/or economic aspirations, rather than their psychological, social and/or economic realities. Aspirational brand strategy positions a product or service through image, appealing to what they want to be. Customer loyalty is built up by creating stories about the product rather than relying on product features to see the product. The effect is to differentiate a product or service through emotions. No real claims are made through this strategy, as it aims to win hearts rather than minds and is used powerfully in the fragrance, cosmetic and personal care markets. In this way premium prices can be put on products as emotional value has been created. The strength of aspirational brand strategy in creating a source of

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competitive advantage is that a product feature can always be matched by a competitor and a claim can be imitated, but the same emotions are hard to create in consumers for similar products. For this reason aspirational brands can occupy a defined market space by itself.

Aspirational brand strategy has emerged out of a world where diversity is a marketplace phenomena and there is now an explosion of choice in contrast to the markets of half a century ago where the important consumer goods at the time were automobiles, refrigerators, televisions, etc. that were sold on features. This started changing in the 1970s when segmenting started to grow and every different type of product feature was used to develop market share over competitors. This grew to the stage in highly developed markets where primary product image builders (advertising, promotion, price and packaging) could not be used effectively to differentiate products and intangible attributes became the major means of achieving product differentiation (Hunter 1995). Now themes are the great product differentiators where a total product and company must become integrated to deliver a message to the consumer.

This theme approach to new product development is a useful tool to meet consumer paradigm shifts occurring in various markets. Several contemporary themes can be equated with a number of growing consumer segments.

Some contemporary Western consumers are losing their faith and trust in the established institutions of the Western culture, including the church, government and corporations. This loss of faith and trust is creating a spiritual vacuum where consumers are searching for something that is missing. There is a similar situation in China where growing middle-upper class have been brought up without religion and no longer feel affinity to the "old revolutionary culture" of China. This situation is leading consumers in a number of directions;

- As society is becoming more 'self centred' in their aspirations, custom made goods and personal customer service is now very important. This can be seen in the rise of private banking, custom made computers and cars, tailor-made suits and fashions, and shopping for unique items in specialized shops rather than chains.

- Consumers are looking for unique items that are hand-made, exclusive and come from an ethical background to fill the spiritual void. The rise of Fair-trade and establishment of farmers markets and eco-tourism is providing consumers with more fulfilling consumption experiences.

- Consumer alternatism gives rise to alternative marketing and promotional strategies such as viral marketing and on-line buying through the internet. Shopping in this way provides the consumer with a story and feeling of control.

- Seeking alternatives is leading to less consumer brand loyalty and more experimentation with new products and new brands, as well as quick changes, meaning shorter product lifecycles. The development of new brands and new images is more widely accepted than before. New brands and images give new experiences like the low cost airline Air Asia has done in winning new customers in South East Asia. Likewise, adventure and eco-tourism is rapidly growing as consumers look for new experiences in their leisure time.

- The new generation feels no guilt about 'over the top' luxury as the post war generation did. Top luxury is acceptable to both self esteem and social exposure as this generation fulfils are role in a live for today in the white collar professional job market. Luxury is about feeling good and looking good.

- People are very concerned about health and the sector is growing rapidly with five star private hospitals, health tourism and the rise of nutraceuticals and cosmoceuticals. Organic foods sold at premium prices are growing. Sportswear and sports equipment is about being seen and trendy, gyms are full and racing bikes dominate the roads during weekends.

- People want to deal with corporate entities that do the right thing. People are then doing the right thing by association –a kind of spiritual materialism. This shows in the rise of ethical products and companies with social programs and supply chains that benefit those that are not as fortunate

- Many paradoxes exist in consumers where for example they see no conflict in being concerned for the poor and needy and surrounding themselves in luxury, or see no inconsistencies in taking a budget airline to a holiday resort location and staying at a five star resort (Hunter 2009, P. 573).

Consumers have values, aspirations and paradoxes and are exposed to new technologies, ideas, and products on a daily basis. Consumers are not so much looking for products that satisfy needs as much as they are seeking experiences and business models that touch their spiritual side. Psychological satisfaction is thus consequently the strongest differentiation a marketer can create (Davis 2002). Social media is connecting consumers in a way that has never been seen before where products become a narrative and marketers don't have full control of their branding and image and need to collaborate with customers. Products must achieve a balance between spiritualism and also satisfy material wants and desires at the customer, employee, and shareholder level to be successful. Companies must integrate their values into their products. The issues that any firm must satisfy in order to successfully develop an aspirational brand strategy is to balance the concept of spiritual

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materialism that consumers look for in a product to make a connection. The concept of spiritual materialism.

Aspirational brand strategy is about being innovative and providing people with the means of fulfilling their aspirations and can be applied in almost any market. Unilever's strategy in India to service the bottom of the market by creating pack sizes that can be used on a daily basis and selling them through 'moms and pops' stores in the slums is allowing people to pursue their aspirations of becoming a micro-entrepreneur and getting out of poverty (Prahalad 2009). CEMEX Mexico's scheme to sell the building materials to poor rural families to make home extensions for their married children also fulfils family aspirations for the development of their extended family (Chan Kim & Mauborgne 2005). Village technology breakthroughs in India that improve infrastructure in villages helps satisfy peoples' aspirations for better lives (Hart & Christensen 2002).

Companies spend hundreds of millions of dollars on projecting an aspirational image to consumers through sounds, images, colours and celebrities to trigger responses from consumers. Fictional and real characters like Colonel Saunders (KFC), Ronald McDonald (McDonalds), Clark Gable (Gordons Gin), Steve McQueen (Ford Motors), and John Travolta (Qantas Airways), etc. are used to add lustre to the products they endorse or act as spokesperson for. Their public recognition, attractiveness, extraordinary lifestyles are characteristics that can be transferred to the product by association (Mc Cracker 1989). Aspirational branding strategy is sometimes related to heroism where founders/CEOs like Sir Richard Branson and Steve Jobs become metaphorical figures for taking on the large corporations like David and Goliath or visionary wizards (Zaltman & Zaltman 2008). Table 1. below lists some well known brands and the images and emotions associated with them.

The starting point for aspirational brand strategy is imagination (Levitt 1986, P. 127). Product creation requires imagination to construct the customer orientations necessary (Gabay 1998, Postma 1998). But the essence of opportunity also requires consumers to be imaginative, to imagine what it would be like to live at Sanctuary Cove on the Gold Cost of Queensland, Australia, to imagine what it would be like consuming a Ferrero Rocher Chocolate, to imagine climbing the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, to imagine skiing at Boulder, Colorado during the winter holidays, to imagine owning an Apple iPhone, to imagine wearing Beyonce Perfume, to imagine the benefits to the community a cup of Starbucks Coffee would have, and how that raffle ticket would assist the fight against cancer. Imagination is an aid to practical thinking and opens the door to making purchasing decisions (Brown & Patterson 2000). All our hopes, enlightenment, fears, and desires come from

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imagination. Brands are able to give consumers a sense of identity and enrich their life experiences.

Table 1. Some major brands and the aspirations they tap

Brand	Image and Emotions Associated with brand
McDonalds	Family enjoyment and togetherness around a fast food meal.
Nike	Transformation on the sports field
Norgen-Vaas Ice Cream	Indulgence
The Body Shop	Social equality and justice in business
Disney	A magical world of fantasy for the family
Air Asia	Now everyone can afford to fly
Apple	Transforming how people use technology
Amazon	The largest range of reasonably priced books available
Google	Making the world's information accessible

Aspirational brand strategy reaches out to a person's self concept, either their ideal self, their social self, or their actual self. This can be very powerful when appealing to how one would like to be or how one would like others to see the self. This can often relieve anxiety caused by the difference between what a person is and would like to be. One of the keys to aspirational brand strategy is finding out why people really buy products, how people see their own relationship between their own self concept and material possessions. A person may buy a Mercedes to boost their self perception of status, a Porsche for a lost youth or yearn to be noticed, a Volvo for a feeling of safety, or a 4WD for adventure, etc.

A person's personality and particularly their self concept influences what they buy and consume. There are a number of theories of personality and self concept that places emphasis on different aspects in defining and shaping each theory. Self concept is much wider than personality as it also incorporates their national, cultural, racial, religious and sexual identity which can have a strong bearing on consumption habit. The importance of self concept is to find out a person's attitudes, beliefs, and motivations so that an aspirational brand strategy can be attuned to them.

Each of the variables above will influence aspirations of individuals. For example, different societal identification anchors or social classes will have different aspirations, but these may differ across different domicile outlooks, racial and ethnic groups, and national identities, etc. **But if marketers** can find common patterns within selected groups, then these groups can be appealed to. For

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example, sociable people will tend to go out more with friends and want to have coffee in public places. These groups may have other things they care about such as being able to get on-line to the internet, or being community involved. They may have lots of time to spare or only have time to pick up a coffee on the run. These will influence the brand persona that can be created, something like the persona of what a person would want to be in the Jungian sense. National pride and the threats of globalization was used by the Danish soft-drink manufacturer of Jolly Cola to defend itself against Coca Cola, by creating the images of coca-colonisation turning the symbolism of Coca Cola against itself in the 1980s (Askegaard & Csaba 2000).

However behaviour is also somewhat unpredictable and people do not just react towards incoming stimuli, they also create their own situations and realities upon which they make their choices and act. Some behaviour is related to the stress and anxiety of realizing the gap between the real self and the ideal self and the disappointments that brings. Some people will affiliate with groups that help them cope with stress and buy products that build up their self concept, but not all people act in the same way.

Aspirations filter perceptions so that a person perceives things in their own unique way and makes their own interpretations. Perception is the process through which people filter, select, and organize information to create a meaningful picture of the world. Through the perception process people screen out most stimuli and only select what information that they are attentive to. Through various causes, what is called selective distortion; people interpret information in a way that supports what they already believe. This requires marketers to understand how perceptions will affect consumers' interpretations of a brand, advertising, and promotion.

People acquire attitude and beliefs and evolve their self concepts from life experiences. These attitudes and beliefs influence a person's buying behaviour. Attitudes consist of peoples' evaluations, feelings and tendencies towards people, objects, ideas, and situations, and therefore people carry attitudes about almost everything. An attitude determines whether a person likes or dislikes something and usually carries emotions. A belief is a descriptive thought about something which a person thinks is correct. A belief may or may not be based on knowledge, opinion, or faith. Unlike attitudes, beliefs do not necessarily carry with them the same emotions that attitudes carry.

A person's attitudes fit into their behavioural patterns and are extremely difficult to change. Companies usually try to fit their branding creation into the attitude set, rather than try to change attitudes. There are some exceptions to this and if successful, create very strong unique market positions for firms. In Victoria, Australia milk consumption had been slowly declining for 25 years.

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The image of milk was that it was just for children to drink at school. Then in 1978 the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority launched the Big M flavoured milk brand with a fun, youthful, and social image, using popular rock bands, models in beach scenes, and themed story lines in a number of massive advertising campaigns. The product established itself as a true alternative to existing soft drinks, changing the attitudes of young consumers.

To turn attitudes into behaviour there must be motivation. A motive is a need that is sufficiently strong for a person to feel an urge to take some form of action to satisfy the need. There are a number of levels of needs that can be aligned with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1954). Primary needs consist of biological and safety needs which require satisfaction to survive. After these basic needs are satisfied, social and esteem needs become a concern of individuals, and finally people have some need for their own self actualization, self meaning and understanding[1]. Today consumers tend to search for spiritual resources on top of material fulfilment (Fogel 2000). A consumer typology is related to demographic and psychographic segmentation. Psychographic segmentation is one of the primary marketing tools today, which focuses on lifestyles, attitudes, values and beliefs. This can be illustrated using Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a way to understand market segments (Kotler et. al. 2007). When a product is matched to consumers' aspirations and primary, secondary product attributes and strategy is accurately aligned, this theoretically gives a product a maximum chance of success.

As we have seen with the Big M example above, milk could be a basic survival need or with some creativity and imagination repositioned as a social or esteem based product. A single product may generate different levels of need. For example a person may buy a bicycle as a means of transport and exercise. But at another level he or she may want to impress others. At a deeper level he or she may want to feel young and free again. This is where the marketer can select and develop the most powerful needs to build up an aspirational brand.

Once identifying consumer aspirations and summarizing them into a theme, a consumer typology can be created. It is the consumer typology that the new product must appeal to. Product attributes should be designed to match the chosen typology. With this product attribute profile the new product development process can continue onto the other steps, as there is a clear idea of what is really required. The aim is to merge the brand image and the physical product together in synergy so the product presentation (formula, packaging, colour, advertising and corporate image), promotion, and other market strategies become all consistent (Lienado 1984). An example of a potential theme for a hypothetical range of products: Borneo Rainforest products could be as follows; Sabah is on the

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heritage; There is nature and serenity; Sabah is a place of peace, health and harmony (Hunter 2006).

Behaviour is complex as it is an interplay between stimuli, the brand, the environment, cues, attitudes and beliefs, and social reinforcements. An aspirational brand strategy hopes to motivate behaviour and if that behaviour leads to a satisfying experience, the consumer will seek to repeat the experience. This is not an easy process to manage even with large resources and a budget. However small SMEs with creative use of viral marketing practices and social media in some cases have been able to utilize these forms of strategies very well.

Branding gives the images to consumers of what companies do and stand for. This makes a person anticipate a certain level of satisfaction or service, where for example a person knows what it is like to fly on Air Asia, eat a Big Mac,or drive a Mercedes. One knows what the company stands for with the branding. The brand projects goodwill, thoughts, myths, realities, which affects consumer's beliefs and assumptions about the company, its brand, and product. This is why almost more than half the values of companies are made up of goodwill.

Enterprises must take great care when employing an aspirational brand strategy as the company really needs to be truly integrated with the strategy or consumer skepticism will quickly set in and destroy any concept and image. Employees and shareholders must understand the strategy goals and be part of them with their commitment. BP's Gulf Crisis in 2010 has shown this and the firm's aspirations of being environmentally friendly and concerned has taken great damage which will take possibly years to recover.

A brand needs to be bold, memorable and appropriate for its audience. It needs to be recognizable and also provide a consistent image of the company it represents. When you break it down, a good brand must incorporate a set of ideals. The more ideals a brand surrounds itself with, the better it becomes.

So, what are these ideals? Alina Wheeler, a renowned expert in the branding world, has compiled a list of nine compelling aspects – all critical to any creative process responsible for building a brand. These truly are the essentials that any marketing director, branding team or CEO should pay attention to:

Vision: A compelling vision by an effective, articulate, and passionate leader is the foundation and the inspiration for the best brands.

Meaning: The best brands stand for something – a big idea, a strategic position, a defined set of values, a voice that stands apart.

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Authenticity: Authenticity is not possible without an organization having clarity about its market, positioning, value proposition and competitive difference.

Value: Building awareness, increasing recognition, communication uniqueness and quality and expressing a competitive difference create measurable results.

Differentiation: Brands always compete with each other within their business category, and at some level, compete with all brands that want our attention, our loyalty and our money.

Flexibility: An effective brand identity positions a company for change and growth in the future. It supports an evolving marketing strategy.

Coherence: Whenever a customer experiences a brand, it must feel familiar and have the desired effect. Consistency does not need to be rigid or limiting in order to feel like one company.

Sustainability: Sustainability is the ability to have longevity in a world that is in constant flux, characterized by factors that no one can predict.

Commitment: Organizations need to actively manage their assets, including the brand name, the trademarks, the integrated sales and marketing systems and the standards.

The above list is an excerpt from Alina's book, *Designing Brand Identity*, fourth edition.

Building a brand that rises to the top is no easy feat – make sure your branding team is comprised of members that can truly contribute to the process. Take a holistic approach when creating and growing your brand. Incorporating all these ideals above, and not just a few, will ensure that each aspect is thought about and paid attention to, so your brand becomes a real success story.

BRAND PERCEPTION

Customers, not companies, own brand perception. Brand perception is what customers believe a product or service represents, not what the company owning the brand says it does. Brand perception comes from customer use, experience, functionality, reputation and word of mouth recommendation - on social media channels as well as face to face.

Good and bad in the automotive industry

Take Volvo. Historically always synonymous with safety and excellent build quality within a somewhat boxy design, its public brand perception was once that it was a dull car for sensible, staid people, with jokes about 'Volvo drivers' – poor drivers protected from other road users by their indestructible, tank-like vehicles.

From the early 2000s onwards, Volvo underwent an image revolution. Embracing authentic, sleek, minimalist and fashionable Scandi-chic design without relinquishing its top-notch safety reputation, Volvo became a premium car brand, easily competing with the likes of Audi, BMW and Mercedes-

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Benz. Volvo is also at the forefront of green technology, the evolution of autonomous driving and even customer experience – you can now get your goods delivered directly to your Volvo. Volvo drivers are no longer laughed at: they are envied.

Brand perception as a sensory experience

A brand is more than just the sum of its products. It has its own, carefully-crafted personality that represents its parent company's vision, mission or culture. So it's not surprising that the brand as a personality jibes with customers on a personal level – a mental impression, or perception. A customer mentally processes sensory messages from a brand to create their own perception, and marketers take full advantage by exposing it to all our senses:

- **Visual:** Instantly-recognisable logos (Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Disney (Mickey Mouse), Cadbury, PG Tips) and high budget, entertaining commercials.
- **Auditory:** Catchy musical jingles (Intel) or catchphrases (the cheesier and more annoying the better) that make their way into popular culture (eg 'Give Me a Break!', Kit Kat).
- **Olfactory:** Our sense of smell has a remarkable ability to trigger memories and emotions. Smell marketing is as simple as a café wafting the scent of frying bacon out into the street, or as complex as airlines' use of patented scents in their cabins and hot towels and on their crew to enhance their brand experience.
- **Taste:** Free samples or special offers to taste new products.
- **Emotional:** Heartstring-tugging Christmas TV ads (John Lewis, Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury's)

What Does a Brand Perception Survey Do?

Brand Perception Surveys help you understand how your brand is perceived in the mind of customers, prospects, employees and other stakeholders. They paint a picture of the mental real estate your brand owns and how it is considered against competitive brands.

At a very simple level, a brand is just an idea connected to your product. For example:

- **Simple + Computer = Apple**
- **Cola + Youth = Pepsi**
- **Rebel + Motorcycle = Harley Davidson**
- **Pictures + Temporary = SnapChat**

Brand perception studies track how well consumers are accepting the ideas you try to associate with your brand. The ideas they associate with your brand help determine their affinity towards it.

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- **There are 4 core human factors that lead to brand affinity:**
- **Cognitive –** the concepts that a consumer associates with your brand
- **Emotional –** the feelings that a consumer associates with your brand
- **Language –** how a consumer describes your brand
- **Action –** the experiences a consumer has with your brand

Brand Identity Ideals

The basic question is: what makes one brand better than another? And why? What are the essential characteristics of the best identities? How do we define these best identities?

Ideals are essential to a responsible creative process, regardless the size of a company or the nature of a business. These ideals stand true whether the identity engagement is launching an entrepreneurial venture or creating a new product. Be it a new service, or re-positioning a brand, working on a merger, or creating a retail presence.

1. Vision your brand

First of all, vision requires courage. Big ideas, enterprises, products, and services are sustained by individuals who have the ability to imagine what others cannot see. And the tenacity to deliver what they believe is possible. Furthermore, behind every success story is a passionate individual who inspires others to see the future in a new way. Brand identity begins with a conversation about the future. Hearing the vision face to face is critical to the identity process. As a result, leaders who take the time to share their most audacious dreams and challenges frequently understand the power of symbols. They also value storytelling to build their culture and brands.

2. Meaning

Another questions raised is what do best brands have in common? They all stand for something. Because this can be a big idea or a strategic position. It can also be a set of values, or a voice that stands apart. While symbols are vessels for meaning. Also, they become more powerful with frequent use and when people understand what they stand for.

Certainly they are the fastest form of communication known to man. Meaning is rarely immediate and it evolves over time. Designers transform meaning into unique visual form and expression. It is critical that this meaning is explained so that it can be understood, communicated, and approved. Knowing this, all elements of the brand identity system should have a framework that stands for meaning and logic.

3. Authenticity

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In psychology, authenticity refers to self-knowledge and making decisions that are congruent with that self-knowledge. Similarly, organizations who know who they are, and what they stand for, start the identity process from a position of strength. They create brands that are sustainable and genuine. Brand expression must be appropriate to the organization's unique mission, history, culture, values, and personality. As reality is qualified, altered, and commercialized, consumers respond to what is engaging. Even more, they also identify with personal, memorable and above all, what they perceive as authentic.

4. Differentiation

Bumper-to-bumper brands shout for our attention. The world is a noisy place filled with a panoply of choice. Why should consumers choose one brand over others? It is not enough to be different. Brands need to demonstrate this difference and make it easy for customers to understand what makes them so. If your brand suddenly didn't exist, would anyone miss it? A really good brand leaves a big gap.

5. Durability

Brands are messengers of trust. We are all moving at blinding speed. Our institutions, technology, science, lifestyles, and vocabulary are in a state of continuous flux. Consumers are reassured by trademarks that are recognizable and familiar. Durability is achieved through a commitment to the equity of a central idea over time. Also, the capacity to transcend change.

6. Coherence

Whether a customer is using a product, or talking to a service representative. Even if they are making a purchase on their iPhone, the brand should feel familiar. The experience should have the desired effect. Coherence is the quality that ensures that all the pieces hold together in a way that feels ideal to the customer.

It should not feel rigid and limiting. But rather, it is a baseline that is designed to build trust, foster loyalty, and delight the customer. A brand identity system is unified visually and structurally. It builds on cohesive brand architecture and utilizes specially designed colors, typeface families, and formats. The identity system advances immediate recognition of the company and supports brand attributes across various media.

7. Flexibility

Innovation requires brands to be flexible. No one can say with certainty which new products or services a company might offer in five years. Or, for that matter, what devices we will all be using to communicate with one another. Probably not even how we will purchase our worldly goods. Brands

that are open to change need to have flexible brand identity systems in place. Because of that it's necessary for them to quickly seize new opportunities in the marketplace. The brand identity toolbox encourages creativity within parameters that always keep the brand immediately recognizable. Certainly, a carefully designed balance between control and creativity makes it possible to adhere to the identity standards. All this while achieving specific marketing objectives.

8. Commitment

A brand is an asset that you have to protect, preserve, and nurture. Actively managing the asset requires a top down mandate and a bottom up understanding of why it is important. The best companies provide their employees with tools that make it easy to be a brand champion. Building, protecting, and enhancing the brand requires desire and a disciplined approach to insure its integrity and relevance. The mantra is to keep moving. Thus, with ongoing management, dynamic adherence to the central idea, monitoring of standards that help preserve the asset, and tools the organization needs to build its brand.

9. Value

Finally, creating value is the biggest goal of most organizations. The quest for sustainability has expanded the value conversation with consumers. Being socially responsible, environmentally conscious, and profitable is the new business model. Finally, a brand is an intangible asset. Above all, brand identity, which includes all tangible expression from packaging to websites, upholds that value.

What Is Brand Architecture? – Components, Types, & Examples

Expansions, acquisitions, mergers and other such strategies, although good for the company in the long run, create a lot of clutter and confusion in the minds of the customers as to what belongs to the company and what not.

This confusion of whether the product belongs to the brand they follow or not reduces the target audience's willingness to buy and often lead to many sub-brands being unnoticed by the target segment.

However, marketers and other employees of the companies are not able to sense this confusion from the inside as they are accustomed to how things are within the company.

The only way to sense and resolve the confusion is to get a clear view of outside the walls and organise brand outlook which specify the different subsections of the brand and connect it with the main brand and other sister brands. This is the brand architecture.

What Is Brand Architecture?

Brand architecture is an organized structure of the company's portfolio of brands, sub-brands, and other offerings.

In simple terms – It shows how the brands, sub-brands and other offerings of the company are organized and how they relate to each other.

Brand architecture is just like the family tree you used to create for your school projects. You specify the master brand (the grandparent) and move downwards by drawing its relations with other brands and their interpersonal relations as well. Everyone on that tree is related, but everyone is still unique.

Components of Brand Architecture

Brand architecture includes a master brand, brand extensions and sub-brands (and even sub-sub-brands). Here's a brief explanation of what these brand architecture components are:

- Master Brand – it's the top-level corporate brand, also called the parent brand, which encapsulates all the offerings of the company. Usually, the parent company's brand name forms the master brand.

- Sub-brand – a sub-brand is a product or service brand which is affiliated with the parent brand but has its own brand name and identity.

- Brand extension – brand extension refers to the process of using an established brand name on new products to increase sales.

Importance of Brand Architecture

- Brand architecture is how the brands within an organisation are related and how they interact with each other. It is created by keeping the target market's perspective in mind.

- Brands need to create a brand architecture as it helps them to –

- **Stay organised internally –** looking at the brand with the eyes of the customers helps to find out the loopholes in organisation structure and the communication strategies and helps the brand to stay organized internally.

- **Manage perception** – Developing brand architecture makes it easier to manage the outside perception about the brand, its offerings, and their relations with each other.

- **Create Synergy** – Having an organised brand architecture creates a synergy among the child brands and the parent brand and help the organisation deliver against a larger brand promise.

Brand Architecture Types

Architecture is an important brand strategy tool which studies and defines the relationship of the parent brand and its child brands. Here are the different types of brand architecture which exists in the market today.

Branded House
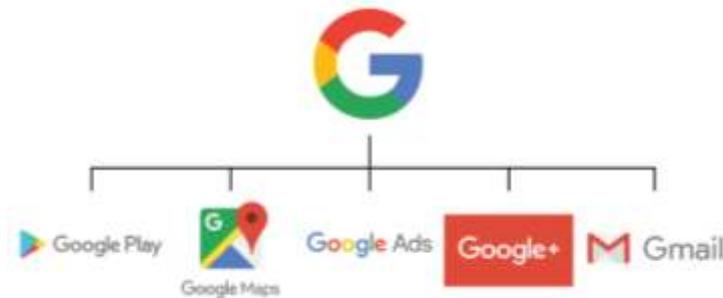
Branded house, also known as monolithic brand architecture, is the most common type of brand extension where the master brand is always present and its name is linked to and leveraged by the extensions.

In simple terms, the company itself is a brand and all the products and services are its extensions or subsets. An example of a branded house is Google and its extensions. Usually, Google follows the branded house brand architecture strategy for its new offerings and prefixes G or Google before such extensions; examples being Gmail, Google Drive, Google Maps, Google +, etc.

House Of Brands

The house of brands strategy, also called pluralistic brand architecture strategy, uses a different approach than the branded house. In this brand architecture strategy, the parent brand owns and manages many sub-brands who in-turn have their own unique brand identity.

In simple terms, the company markets a range of separate brand names which have their own separate identities in the market.

These sub-brands may or may not operate in the same industry, but they do have an identity and positioning which is substantially different from other sub-brands and/or maybe the parent brand.

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An example of the house of brands strategy is P&G which is the parent brand behind Tide, Duracell, Pampers, Pringles, etc.

Endorsed Architecture

An endorsed architecture includes individual and distinct brands which are linked together by an endorsing parent brand.

In simple terms, the offerings have their own brand identity and market presence but the emphasis is given on the parent corporate brand which lends its positioning to the sub-brand. You'll often find the suffix 'brought to you by' or just 'by' in an endorsed architecture strategy. Many times, the brand's are prefixed by the corporate brand as well.

Such a strategy, however, makes it hard for the sub-brands to pave their own unique position in the market. A good example of an endorsed brand architecture strategy is the Marvel Universe. Movies like Iron Man, Spider-Man, and Ant-Man, etc. even though have their own identity and market presence in the market, they got more traction just because they were associated with the Marvel Universe

Another example of such a strategy is Marriot. The sub-brands like Fairfield, TownePlace and Moxy enjoys a good image in the market just because they are endorsed by Marriot.

Hybrid Architecture

Hybrid brand architecture is a mixture of two or more types of brand architectures.

A perfect example of a corporate brand using a hybrid architecture is Microsoft. The company uses a branded house strategy for its Windows and Office offerings and has a totally different house of brand – Xbox when it comes to gaming and gaming consoles.

The Benefits of a Strong Brand Architecture

As a general rule, if a brand has more than one offerings which have their own identity, developing a brand architecture will have numerous benefits. Following is the list of such benefits of brand architecture –

- Clarity in the marketplace – Having a well-structured brand architecture increases the clarity of brands offered and their relation with each other. This not only clears many doubts of the internal audience but it also helps in making better decisions to inform the marketplace about what the company's communication strategy originally lacked.

- Synergy among brands – Brand architecture lists the relationship between different sub-brands and the master brands which eventually creates a synergy among the offerings and help the company communicate about combined solutions and how these brands complement each other (cross-selling).

- Target specific customer segments – Brand architecture effectively segment the target market and makes it clear what offering serves which segment. This often helps the company in making effective marketing strategies for brands which seem similar.

- Clarity in positioning and communication – It's easier to develop positioning and communication strategies for each sub-brand and brand extension if the company has a well-structured brand architecture.

- Enhance consumer awareness – Brand architecture requires the company to look with the eyes of the customers. During the brand architecture process, the problems in the present marketing

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and communication strategies can be pointed out and customers can be made aware of the offerings they didn't know were offered by their favourable brand.

- Build & enhance brand equity – Brand architecture also helps the company make strategies to build and enhance the brand equity of its sub-brands. It also lets the organisation lend its corporate brand equity to its offerings.

BRAND SLOGAN - TAGLINE

A brand slogan is the advertising tagline that conveys the brand's spirit in the shortest way possible. In just a few words, you're expected to grasp the vibe of your brand.

A slogan is usually a short phrase that captures core values, personality, and positioning of a brand.

These few words might give you tons of trouble, because it's not easy to come up with a good brand slogan.

That's why I wrote this article – to showcase some good slogan examples for your inspiration.

By looking at some of the famous brands' slogans and the story behind them, you'll understand what elements make them successful.

Then, we'll go through some tips to help you write a catchy slogan for your company.

Tagline vs Slogan

People often use them as interchangeable synonyms but they don't mean the same.

Larger companies will usually have one tagline e.g. Disney's tagline is "The happiest place on earth"; and many slogans e.g. Disney's slogans are "Where dreams come true", "I'm going to Disneyland", "Where the magic began" and more.

Taglines

1. A tagline is about the business itself, and should stand the test of time (it doesn't change).
2. Taglines represent the tone and feeling you want for your products or services.
3. It is often part of your company graphics ant it stays with you all the time.

Slogans

1. Slogans are intended to be less long lasting and more flexible.
2. They're often used in advertising campaigns. (they changes over time).
3. Slogans are often used only for one product, or one campaign.

In this article let's focus on slogans, or advertising taglines if you wish.

If you're looking for a brand tagline, you should start with developing your brand strategy first.

1. Nike - "Just Do It"

The Nike's "Just do it" slogan, was created 30 years ago by renown advertising agency Wieden +

Kennedy and it's still one of the core components of Nike's brand.

Nike's famous slogan, "Just Do It," was inspired by the last words of Gary Gilmore, a murderer on death row.

The campaign launched in 1988 was highly successful ever since, by featuring numerous notable athletes in order to attract customers and promote the image of Nike.

Nike slogan "Just Do It"

Nike created an image of success through the combination of professional athletes and motivational slogans emphasizing sportsmanship and health.

Colin Kaepernick is the new face of the company's new "Just Do It" campaign.

According to the study conducted by researchers from Texas Tech University called "A study of the antecedents of slogan liking" the Nike "Just Do It" was the most recalled slogan of all.

What can we learn from Nike slogan?

1. It works because it's motivates people. Nike is about sports and working out. "Just do it" sounds like a personal trainer, pushing you to get up from that couch and do the work to get results.

2. The slogan is universal and intensely personal which leads to customers associating their purchases with the prospect of achieving greatness.

3. It's everywhere – that's why it works. Nike is a powerful brand with enormous advertising potential.

2. Apple - "Think Different"

When IBM announced a "Think" slogan, so Apple announced their new campaign in 1997 with its **slogan "Think Different"** created by advertising agency TBWA.

Craig Tanimoto, art director of TBWA said:

IBM's campaign says "Think IBM" and Apple is very different from IBM, so "Think Different" was an interesting concept and the idea that these words can be attached to some of the world's most different-thinking people.

The "Think different" campaign was perhaps the most successful advertising campaign of all time.

Apple slogan—"Think Different".

Apple went so audacious and perhaps preposterous by placing great minds and achievers next to the Apple logo: Albert Einstein, Muhammad Ali, Gandhi, Bob Dylan, and Amelia Earheart.

The "Think different" slogan was introduced in "The crazy ones" commercial which played a pivotal role in helping Apple achieve one of the greatest corporate turnarounds in business history.

When the "Think Different" campaign launched, Apple immediately felt the boost despite having no

significant new products, and changed people's perception of Apple products just being some "toys".

Here are couple great things about the slogan:

1. It's minimalistic, elegant, and effective. It's everything that Apple was striving to be.

2. It's made of just two words, but it tells the brand's story. Apple is all about innovation and changing the world. It's all about thinking differently.

3. Once you hear this slogan, it's impossible for you to forget it.

If you associate with higher qualities (courage, imagination, creations), your ads will be far more evergreen.

People will attack you for your audacity, but at least you're promoting great role models.

The tagline was so good that Apple found different ways to revive it throughout its marketing campaigns over the years.

3. L'Oreal - "Because You're Worth It"

Makeup is a controversial issue because women who wear makeup are criticized for being fake and not respecting their natural beauty.

Society criticizes them when they spend more money on high-quality makeup.

"Because I'm Worth It" was on message in 1973, and today we know that an astonishing 80% of women recognize and respond to this positive phrase and powerful sentiment.

L'Oreal found a simple way to convince women they are not doing anything wrong when buying and applying makeup.

Loreal slogan—"Because you're worth it"

Written in 1973 when a social revolution and a new spirit of feminism was in full swing, it seems clear that the phrase could only have been written by a woman.

In its essence, this is actually a feminist phrase.

No one has the right to criticize a woman for something she wants and loves to do.

This became a legendary phrase through a campaign that involved powerful women as brand ambassadors. Jane Fonda and Freida Pinto – enough said.

4. KFC - "Finger Lickin' Good"

This slogan is so good that it managed to stick around since the 1950s. It just shows that when a slogan is really good, trends can do nothing against it.

KFC slogan—"It's finger lickin' good".

The philosophy behind slogans hasn't changed. Just make it simple and catchy, and you'll be good

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for decades.

Why does "Finger Lickin' Good" work?

1.   It describes people's feelings about KFC food. The slogan itself makes you think of tasty food, and that's exactly what the creator was striving for.

2.   The *lickin'* part is so casual that it makes the brand feel like home. It's how people talk in a conversational, casual tone. A single word shows that this is not a pretentious restaurant. It simply serves the comfort meals you want to keep eating every day.

5. Coca-Cola - "Open Happiness"

Coca-Cola is fortunate to have had some of the greatest creative talent in advertising work on their marketing and "Open Happiness" (2009) campaigns featured some of the best slogans the company has ever produced.

During a time of economic downturn, Coca-Cola wanted America to "Open Happiness" with its new tagline.

When defining happiness, Coca-Cola believes the quest for true happiness is not a quest, but a choice.

Coca-Cola slogan—"Open Happiness"

Open Happiness was the longest used slogan in the history of the company.

Marketing for The Coca-Cola Company based on the Open Happiness theme also appeared in the United States as print ads in newspapers, in television commercials, in outdoor advertising, and in in-store advertising, source: Wikipedia.

What's good about "Open Happiness" slogan?

1.   You can't deny it – it's catchy. Slogans succeed when they're memorable.

2.   Instead of talking about the product, they talk about how the product makes people feel.

3.   Those 3 words differentiate the brand – a great tagline sets a flag in the ground but making a claim about the brand.

4.   It Instills positive feelings about the brand – assiociating happiness with the brand? – Great move Coca-Cola.

This slogan doesn't talk about how Coke taste, looks or smells – but it does leave an impression!

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SCHOOL OF BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENT

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

SDE1503 – VISUAL IDENTITY & BRANDING

UNIT - III

UNIT – III – VISUAL IDENTITY

Visual identity is how you shape perception and create an impression through the visible elements of your brand. Images are a powerful form of communication, specifically because they do not communicate with words. They speak on a primal, emotional level and are thus more persuasive. But with great power of communication comes great responsibility: you'll want to be extra cautious that you're not sending the wrong message.

To make sure your visuals are communicating the way they should, we've compiled this guide to all things visual identity—by the end you'll be prepared to create one that will inspire customers to pay attention.

What is visual identity?

Visual identity is all of the imagery and graphical information that expresses who a brand is and differentiates it from all the others. In other words, it describes everything customers can physically see, from the logo to the interior design of a store.

Often, visual identity culminates in the development of a brand style guide which provides consistent instructions on how the brand should be visually represented at all times and in any situation.

The purpose of visual identity is:

- to create an emotional impression on viewers
- to inform viewers about the nature of the brand and services/products offered
- to unify the many different aspects of a business through consistent visuals

Visual identity vs. brand identity

Visual identity has an intrinsic relationship with brand identity.

On the one hand, brand identity is a holistic expression of everything that makes the brand what it is. It includes visual identity along with non-visual elements such as a brand voice, copy editing guides, a mission statement, core values, etc.

At the same time, visual identity is a distinct discipline that involves a different thought process and approach from brand identity as a whole. Though there is overlap, there are usually different professions involved in each. Brand identity is overseen by marketers, and visual identity involves designers and creative directors.

In short, brand identity describes who a brand is on the inside whereas visual identity expresses who

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a brand is on the outside.

The elements of visual identity

Visual identity is essentially a brand's visual language. As such, its individual elements are, like words, the building blocks that allow the messenger to create meaning. Here, we'll look at these separate elements that come together to form a cohesive visual identity.

Graphics

Graphics, in the context of visual identity, are picture assets that are drawn or designed. They can be as simple as forms and shapes—consider a Lego block or the Coca-Cola bottle and how these distinctive silhouettes signify their respective brands. Or they can be more complex, such as a logo, icons, or even full-scale illustrations or animations.

Typography

Typography is the shape or styling of the text you use in your branding. There are many different types of fonts and each one can have a different effect on the viewer, including different degrees of legibility. For the purposes of visual identity, you'll want to consider the wordmark to your logo, a headline font and a body copy font (which should be the most legible).

Color palette

Color is used to identify a brand through a scheme (no more than three colors are generally recommended) of very specific hues, shades and tints. This means brands do not simply use red or green but shiraz and seafoam. When used correctly, colors can generate some of the most powerful emotional responses in the viewer.

Though the color palette often begins with the logo, these colors should be repurposed for all brand materials. Designers will generally need to assign a primary color (the main color for your brand), a secondary color (to be used in the background), and an accent color (for contrast on assets such as a CTA button). Keep in mind that the absence of color, such as black and white, is a perfectly valid color choice as well.

Imagery

Imagery describes photography and video content as well as any spokespeople who act as the living "image" of the brand in advertisements. When it comes to visual identity, designers must curate only those images that are the most representative of the brand's personality and, most importantly, its customers.

Imagery is the element most related to the target audience because people empathize with faces and naturally want to see themselves reflected in the brands they consume. This means, for example,

creating guidelines around whether any stock images or videos used should read as corporate or showcase everyday people, depending on whom your visuals are meant to be speaking to.

Physical brand assets

Physical assets are the material objects that contribute to a brand's visual identity. Strictly speaking, this may not apply to brands who don't have a physical presence and the nature of these assets will vary even within businesses that do. But as this is an important element of visual identity for physical brands, it is worth going over.

Physical assets can include the layout and design of a store (think of how all Apple Stores look alike with white interiors and glass storefronts), the uniforms that customer-facing employees wear and the china, cutlery and tablecloths used in restaurants. All of these send a message to consumers, including the lack of consistency

How graphic design applies visual identity

Graphic design is the process that takes visual elements and molds them into a cohesive visual identity. The following are the common instances in which a brand will create visuals, where graphic design will act as a roadmap for keeping them consistent, as well as aesthetically pleasing.

Logo and brand assets

Logo and branding design is at the heart of establishing visual identity. A logo is the foremost symbol for a brand, and it informs many of the graphics, color and typography choices of the visual identity going forward. This category would also include identifying materials such as business cards, letterheads and social avatars/cover images, where the aim is primarily to distinguish the brand.

Business and advertising

Advertising is where businesses use their visuals to actively reach out to customers. This can come in the form of flyers, brochures, billboards, tv/magazine/banner ads and more. Because customers rarely seek advertising, the visual elements must identify the brand while going the extra mile to impress, entertain and persuade viewers.

Web and digital design

Digital design is the space where consumers get to directly interact with your visual identity. Visual identity elements here are often expressed through hero or website images, interface color schemes and layout, social media content, animations, icons, buttons and much more. Because digital tools are made to be used, visual identity here must unobtrusively assist the user towards completing their task.

How to design an outstanding visual identitY

Define your brand identity

Your brand identity should guide the visuals, not the other way around. After all, your visuals are meant to express who you are, so it would make sense to first figure out what you're all about.

While you don't have to have every aspect of your brand figured out (as brands can and should evolve over time), decide on the basics of your brand strategy: what is your mission statement? What are your core values? How does your brand help people? Who are your buyer personas? What is your communication style?

Questions like these, and many more, help you see your brand as a character, what she would look like and sound like if she were a real person. Seeing your brand as a person will make it much easier to recognize which visual "outfits" fit and which don't when crafting your visual identity.

Familiarize yourself with the elements of design

In order to construct a visual identity that resonates with people, you must first be familiar with how visuals speak. This is where graphic design becomes important—it is also known as "visual communication" for exactly this reason.

Depending on how you implement them, each of the 6 basic elements of design will have built-in associations that customers will make, and only a select few will be appropriate for your particular brand. For example, some brand fonts might read as old-fashioned while others will read as modern. Some color meanings will convey passion while others will express coolness. Graphic design is ultimately a tool for visual expression, and a tool is only as strong as its user. It can make your life easier if you know how to use it, or it can be a hazard if you don't.

Tell a compelling story

While graphic design is useful for communicating ideas visually, those ideas must come together to tell a captivating story about your brand. Visuals have the power to grab attention, but stories have the power to involve people. They root for the underdog, they scorn the villain, they swoon over the hero.

Good stories are rooted in characters and conflict. Decide who your protagonist is and give them an obstacle to overcome: whether it's your customers and their pain points or it's your business and the noise of other brands who are neglecting their needs.

Take, for example, Ezanov's logo for My Green Heroes. The green shades convey a sense of nature, and the geometric style of the leaf (along with the iPhone photo) show us that the brand is about technology. But it is the way the logo is arranged upright, with the colors transitioning from dark to

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light, that tells the story of an upward climb against environmental destruction. The photo of a modern man confidently sporting a suit gives us our character, poised to take action.

Above all else, your visual identity must adhere to storytelling's most cherished rule: show, don't tell.

Aim for simplicity

Clearly there are a great number of messages, ideas and stories your visual identity can communicate. So many options can be a blessing and curse.

To avoid confusion, it's best to focus on one message at a time. Consumers will take in visual information within a matter of seconds, and unless they are actively seeking out your brand, they will move on just as quickly.

You have limited time to make an impression, so it's essential to home in on the single most important takeaway, and focus the visuals around that. In the case of isuk's poster design, the message is a promise of serenity, which is supported by every visual element—from the calming blue color, to the meditative photo, to the centered alignment.

Balance consistency with contrast

Given the sheer amount of brand collateral that will accumulate over years of business, your visual identity will inevitably involve many moving parts. The challenge is to make sure that every visual element, no matter its specific purpose or medium, looks like part of the same brand. This is where having well documented brand style guidelines can be crucial.

The other challenge that comes with visual consistency is redundancy: a brand that is too predictable can fade to the background. One of the core principles of design that separates design elements from the background is contrast. Look for opportunities to infuse your existing visual brand with new and varied contrast.

Consider, for example, the way goopanic's branding design for Nippon Week begins with a logo and goes on to repurpose the shapes, colors, and typography to create brand new visuals from the old.

Know when to step back and when to stand out

You might assume that the purpose of a visual identity is to be noticed at all times. After all, it's hard to communicate visually if no one is paying attention. But there are times when the best visual identity is one that flies under the radar.

Consider a website that users are trying to navigate or a newsletter where they are looking for information. Having a web background of vibrant yellow might align with your brand color guidelines, but imagine how distracting that would be for a user trying to read your copy. Visual

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![Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology logo]

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communication often works on an unconscious level, and you can trust that your message is getting across even with a minimal implementation.

On the other hand, sometimes it makes sense to wear your visual identity loud and proud, if you're attempting to differentiate your product from other products on the same shelf, for example. It's important to recognize when it's time to stand out and when it's time to step back.

Design for the medium

No visual identity exists in a vacuum: once you develop any visual asset, the time will come to send it off into the real, or digital, world.

A visual identity for an online brand will naturally look different from a brick-and-mortar brand, where tactile experiences such as textures and die cuts will go a long way with consumers. Different media can even drastically change how your visual elements come across: colors that appear bright in the digital sphere will be darker when printed.

Similarly, serifs are considered the most legible typeface style in print, but sans serif are more legible on a computer screen. Wherever your visual identity takes you, make sure you're adequately prepared for the journey.

What is brand imagery?

Brand imagery is the result of all the visuals that represent your brand's identity. The images that make up your brand imagery can appear in a variety of forms, from billboards to Instagram, websites to print ads. These images are more than simple visuals—they convey an emotion in the viewer (known as "brand feelings."). This often occurs on an intangible level, building trust and confidence over time and repeated exposure.

Put more simply: you can view brand imagery as an opportunity to visually communicate with your potential customer. Whether you're modern or traditional, simple or complex, clean or edgy, show them who you are, why they should trust you and how—if they choose your product—you it will make their lives simpler or better.

What's the difference between brand imagery and brand image?

While brand imagery represents your brand's identity through aesthetic appearance (meaning the images you use to visualize your brand), your brand image refers to how your brand is perceived on the outside and the reputation it has in the world. You can use imagery to help shape your image, but your image is impacted by many other things, such as your values, actions and how you communicate.

How is brand imagery different than a logo?

—

A logo, on the other hand, can be considered part of your overall brand imagery, but it is so much more than that. It is a mark or a symbol that represents your business and it's the most essential first step to building a brand. It is a an emblem by which an organization can easily be recognized on letterhead, signage, online and even on the product you sell. It is custom designed and must be entirely unique for simple and immediate recognition.

How do you create the best brand imagery for your company?

Think of your perfect customer: what is important to her? What does her day look like? If you can visualize that person and what they want, you can source better visuals that your audience will respond to. Understand and acknowledge your competitors and work to set yourself apart from them. For instance, while Mercedes and Dodge are both trying to sell the same product, they are attempting to sell to two different audiences. In Mercedes ads, the cars are most often silver and shown in urban environments, with clean serifed fonts. The color and setting evokes luxury, confidence, and technology. Dodge chooses to use red cars and often sets their cars on racetracks, with bold, heavy sans-serif fonts, to sell the idea that their cars are fast, powerful, and strong.

How are these companies able to make very similar products (cars) appeal to such different demographics?

Short answer: design.

Modern Facebook cover design for sneaker company. Via Feel Designs.

It's crucial to think carefully about color, composition, typography, content and style work together to create different moods. Learn the basics of color theory and typography to understand what message your brand images are sending. For example, dark colors and heavy fonts project seriousness; pale neutral palates can give a modern or even futuristic vibe.

Knowing your audience allows you to pick the design elements to focus on. Audiences are not one size fits all: your audience might react well to your logo on a clean background with a few supporting graphics, while another might only respond to on-trend animated GIFs that will make them smile. You may even want to run some tests to see what resonates. Try two or three different styles and post images to your Instagram account and see what gets the most engagement.

GoPro's instagram brand imagery

Once you figure out what works, stick to it. While you don't want your branding images to be bland, they should resemble each other on some level—whether you choose color palette, typography or style. GoPro has built a very successful following by using images of happy, active people filming

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![Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology logo]

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their wild adventures. The images and videos are different but are tied together by a greater unifier: the GoPro cameras capturing the footage. In that way they sell their brand (active, fun, adventurous) while also remaining consistent in their chosen style.

Always make use of interesting perspectives that will draw a busy customer's eye as they scroll their feeds. Your product in an unexpected location; a bright mural that evokes an exciting environment; a unique person who reflects the look of your desired customer. Through these choices it's possible to curate your feed into something that feels lively instead of purely promotional.

Does it have to be photography?

Though photographs are the most common brand images, many modern companies have developed their branding around illustration. Since loyalty comes only from authenticity, who wouldn't rather see an unexpected pop of illustration instead of another boring stock photo?

Adorable illustration for article about fear of flying via Headspace.com.

The meditation app Headspace has launched a very successful blog called The Orange Dot where they have content about physical and mental health. The whole blog is tied together beautifully with whimsical illustration and pleasing color tones. Quick, think of something more difficult to market than meditation! (And yet, Headspace makes you feel good. And so it makes you want to try the app.

Hip hand-sketched/photograph hybrid ad via Warby Parker

Warby Parker uses illustration mixed with hip photography to create an aesthetic that reflects their in-the-know literary vibe. Since it's impossible to separate the product (glasses) from a certain tinge of nerdiness, Warby Parker sees this as an opportunity to be playful.

What are some great brand imagery examples?

Successful branding images build an internal narrative and external community. The images perfectly represent what the brand stands for and who they are. Mission-based companies like TOMS and Patagonia use social media images to remind their followers that when you purchase their products you buy into more than just a brand. TOMS' imagery keeps the natural world close at hand by consistently featuring sunny backdrops filled with flowers and plants behind their ethically produced products. Patagonia features wilder, jaw-dropping locales in their images to provide daily inspiration to their outdoorsy fans.

Everlane has recently blown up in the women's clothing market for a new kind of radical transparency both in production and marketing. Their design is lovely and clean and their photographs are all bright and well lit. They routinely feature campaigns like 100% Human, for

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LGTBQ rights, and #factoryfridays, showing people who actually make their products in factories across the world. Their target consumer values quality, thoughtful design, and wants to know precisely where the products are coming from.

A picture of Glossier's most popular products via Everlane's Facebook page.

In the same market, Glossier has built a powerhouse makeup brand based on a style dubbed "un-marketing." Their photos tend to be high-fashion mixed with DIY. They encouraged fans to share pictures of their makeup shelves (called "shelvies"). Customers clamor to create photos that perfectly fit the brand's carefully cultivated aesthetic and snag that coveted repost from the company. Both Glossier and Everlane have built successful companies on foundations of strong brand imagery. Young people like the photos and then follow the brand because they see their aesthetic in the company's design and values.

Brand imagery builds your reputation

Successful brand images can build consumer loyalty that goes beyond buying your product or service because it fits a price point or because they recognize your logo. They buy it but because of the values behind it. If you care about the environment you will be more likely to purchase a Patagonia jacket; if you are interested in a car that will last for many years, you might buy a Toyota. These are longheld, loudly espoused beliefs you will hear from people across age groups, markets, and demographics.

Build successful brand imagery and you will cultivate a loyal fan bases that sees themselves in the brand. Once that happens, they will transcend being simply customers and will become ambassadors, championing your product in the outside world.

What Is Brand Image? – Importance & Examples

Brand Image is how customers think of a brand. It can be defined as the perception of the brand in the minds of the customers.

This image develops over time. Customers form an image based on their interactions and experience with the brand. These interactions take place in many forms and not necessarily involve the purchase or use of products and services.

<u>What Is Brand Image?</u>

Brand image is the perception of the brand in the mind of the customer. It is an aggregate of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a customer holds regarding the brand.

An image is the set of beliefs, ideas, and impression that a person holds regarding an object.

– Kotler

A simple definition of brand image could be – the customers' perception of the brand based on their interactions and experience with the brand or their beliefs of what the brand could be.

A brand can be perceived differently by different customers. Hence, the formation of a consistent brand image is a huge task for any business.

Importance Of Brand Image

Every Company strives to build a strong image as it helps in fulfilling their business motives. A strong brand image has the following advantages –

- More profits as new customers are attracted to the brand.
- Easy to introduce new products under the same brand.
- Boosts the confidence of existing customers. Helps in retaining them.
- Better Business-Customer relationship.

A company with a bad image may struggle to operate and might not be able to launch a new product under the same brand.

What Gives Rise To Brand Image?

Companies spend most of their time, efforts, and resources in building their brand identity. They decide how their brand will look, how should the customer feel when they contact with the brand, where should the brand be located in consumers' mind, and other associations. All these, when summed up, give rise to a brand personality which eventually gives rise to the brand image when the customer interacts with this brand or gets to know about it.

Now, it is not always necessary that an image forms out of interactions and experience with the brand. There are times when prospective customers form a an image of the brand in their mind after reading news about the brand or after watching an influencer review it.

This is just like with humans. When we meet a person, we assess his personality and forms a perception of him in our minds based on our interactions. Similarly, we also form perceptions when we hear about that person from some of our friends.

Examples Of Brand Image

- Coca-Cola is a brand known for a product best used at the time of happiness, joy, and good experience. It is the 'original cola' and has a 'unique taste'.
- Woodland Shoes are solid and are an ideal choice for outdoors. They last very long.
- McDonald's has an image of an inexpensive brand that serves the food very quickly.
- Walmart is best known for a retail brand selling goods for a lesser price than usual retailers.
- Rolls-Royce is a premium brand considered to be exclusive for wealthy and influential people.

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- The brand image of Nike is different from other apparel brands. It's considered to be a cult brand which deals only in sportswear.

Brand Image vs Brand Identity

Brand identity is how the company portrays itself to the customers. It's how the brand wants the customer to perceive it.

Brand image, on the other hand, is how the customers actually perceive the brand. The company has less control over its image and always strive to align the brand image with the desired brand identity.

	Brand Image	**Brand Identity**
Definition	Brand image is the customers' perspective of the brand. It is how the customers actually see the brand based on their interactions.	Brand identity is how the brand wants to portray itself to the customers. It's how the brand look at itself.
Control	The brand has less control over its image.	Brand identity is fully controlled by the brand.
Indication	Customers' perception of the brand.	How the brand identifies itself

Types of Logos & How to Use Them

There are 2 main logo categories: Image or icon-based logos and name-based logos. Below, you'll read about 9 types of logos that fit into these groups.

Image-Based Logos

Icon-based logos use images in order to send a message about the brand they're representing. Let's check out the 4 different types:

1. **Brand Marks**

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Brand marks – or pictorial marks – are logos that are made up of a graphic symbol or icon, one that (usually) represents a real-world object. We're talking a logo icon that's simple and straightforward, like the outline of a tree or a coffee mug. This object could tell the story of what your company does – think Youtube's play button – or maybe play with your company name.

Advantages of a brand mark:

Brand marks are clean-cut and easy to remember. If you offer a specific service, an image representing that will send a quick, clear message to your audience.

Also, the simplicity of the design will translate well when resizing your logo across branding materials like business cards or letterheads.

When to use a brand mark:

Is there one thing your business does really, really well? The Twitter brand mark is well-suited because it's a bird, which instantly reminds people that the company tweets. If your business already has some traction, and/or if you specialize in *one* product or *one* service that can easily be represented by an image, then a brand mark could be a great choice for you.

Or, if, like Apple, your business name represents a real-world object, then you could also use a brand mark of that same object.

What to consider before using a brand mark:

Tread cautiously if you're a new business or don't yet have many followers. While a brand mark is often the hallmark of companies that could be considered iconic, you need to first be established enough to be recognized. Otherwise, your logo may not communicate enough about you to your audience, and they'll lose interest in your brand.

Also, bear in mind that if you're planning on expanding your product line to a few diverse objects, your logo may misrepresent what you do.

Inspiration: The Rolling Stones, Apple, Twitter, Target, Royal Dutch Shell

2. Abstract Logo Marks

Abstract logos are your conceptual, think-about-the-big-picture logos.

Like brand marks, an abstract logo consists of just a symbol – but one that is tailor-made for you. This type of image doesn't necessarily mimic an object that exists in real life; rather, it's a unique logo that's designed to express something specific about your brand.

Advantages of abstract logos:

There's room to play with these designs, because you can create a logo that really communicates your values or something about your brand that you'd like to emphasize.

Because an abstract logo isn't restricted to a real-world object or image, there's a lot of wiggle room to say what you want about your company.

When to use an abstract logo:

If you're a business that does several distinct things, a well-thought out abstract mark may be the perfect logo for you! Abstract designs are great for communicating brand values or something else that you want to distinguish about your business.

The Chase logo, for example, is able to represent forward motion, while simultaneously symbolizing the different parts of the bank itself.

You can also do well with a simple abstract logo if you're planning on doing the bulk of your branding online, because simple designs will translate well regardless of the logo size.

What to consider before using an abstract logo:

You'll want to make sure that you refine the logo design until you're sure you're conveying the intended message to the world. Attention to detail is crucial with abstract logo marks, and you don't want your message to be misconstrued with a logo design that's too vague or hard to understand. Notice how the Nike logo is easily recreatable from memory?

Also, a logo with excessive detail in the design may not look the way you want when printed at different resolutions; therefore, consult with a logo designer that understands how fonts, colors and shapes interact.

Inspiration: Airbnb, Pepsi, Microsoft, Nike, Chase

3. Mascots

Arguably the most family-friendly type of logo, mascots are images of a character or person that act as a visual representation of your business. Think of them as your brand's "spokesperson" – much of your advertising will be centered around them.

Advantages of mascot logos:

Mascots give their audience that warm-and-fuzzy feeling, which leads to creating a distinctly memorable brand. Also, nothing appeals to kids more than a physical, tangible character that they can relate to.

And, while you may empathize with the guy standing outside a seafood restaurant waving the arms of a 6'2 lobster costume as he sweats desperately in the August heat, your kids are likely to go crazy over him and beg you to eat there.

Just some food for thought. (See what we did there?)

When to use mascot logos:

These are a great choice for brands trying to cater to children. Many food businesses or restaurants use mascots – like KFC and Kellogg's – as do brands that want to make a complex idea seem more accessible, like Mailchimp's marketing automation platform.

So, if you offer something a little more "dry" or difficult to understand, like a SAAS (software as a service) or plumbing services, a mascot could be a great way to humanize your brand and make it more appealing to your audience.

What to consider before using a mascot logo:

Realize that Mascots may not send the right message if your company's focus is global innovation or disrupting the pencil industry – or, of course, marketing a product that isn't child-friendly.

Case in point: Camel cigarettes ran a ten-year advertising campaign based on their mascot, Joe Camel (also known as Old Joe). However, they had to pull the campaign in 1997 while facing a lawsuit that accused the company of using Old Joe to target children – evidenced by a $470 million increase in cigarette sales to teenagers since the campaign started.

Moral of the story: If you're a company selling cigarettes – don't try to promote to kids. Just don't.

Companies like Pillsbury, on the other hand, are perfectly represented by their wholesome, doughy – I mean, well-rounded – mascots (pictured above).

Inspiration: KFC, Pillsbury, Kellogg's, Mailchimp, Pringles

4. Combination Marks

The name is pretty self-explanatory, but combination logos incorporate – *combine* – both images and words into their design.

Combination mark logos include any combination of images and words that you choose; you can pair a letterform with a mascot, a monogram with an abstract image – whichever combination speaks to you the most. (We'll talk more about some of these other logo types below.)

Advantages of combination marks:

One word: Versatility.

With both symbols and letters at your disposal, you can use your logo to craft a clear brand message that sticks.

The combination also allows for easy rebranding – your company name, for example, combined with an image (abstract or otherwise) will be associated as one, so that eventually your customers will only see the symbol and still immediately think of your brand.

(Nike did just that with their infamous "swoosh"; while their traditional logo is their name combined with the swoosh image, their clothing is often branded with just the swoosh – and is instantly recognized.)

When to use a combination mark:

You'll definitely want to consider this type of logo if you're just starting out. Combination marks will give your audience multiple visual cues when they come in contact with your business, which helps them to remember you – and what you do – over time.

They're also a great option if you want to trademark your logo, as pairing symbols with text will help you to create a distinct image.

What to consider before using a combination mark:

Versatile shouldn't mean excessive. Conceptualize how you want your name and symbol to work together, and keep your logo design clean and on-message.

Inspiration: Pizza Hut, Puma, Mastercard, CVS, Toblerone.

5. Emblem Logos

Even the name has that impressive, traditional feel. Emblems have stood the test of time, from family crests to the royal stamps of powerful monarchs. These logos consist of a typeface that sits within a border – usually a seal or a crest. Think universities and government organizations.

Advantages of emblem logos:

Emblems are memorable, and they lend an air of professionalism, traditionalism and importance to your brand. They also give the impression that your company has been around forever, and it isn't going anywhere any time soon.

When to use an emblem logo:

This logo type is great for brands who want to seem reputable or tell their audience that they uphold traditional values. Emblems look particularly good (read: prestigious) when they're engraved, so it may be a good option for you if you run an organization with uniforms or garments of some kind.

What to consider before using an emblem:

Once again, think about scalability as you design your emblem, since these logos tend to have more detailed designs that may not look as nice when resized.

Also, emblems don't afford you the same flexibility as standard combination marks do, so be absolutely sure about your design before sending your logo into the world.

Inspiration: Starbucks, Stella Artois, Perrier, BMW, Harvard

6. Dynamic Marks

You could say dynamic marks are the new-age logo. Unlike other logos, this type of logo adapts itself to the context in which it's used. This means that rather than having one standard font-color-text combination in your logo, these elements can change – whether on the internet or on different branding materials.

Advantages of dynamic marks:

You can be as creative as you want! Because there are so many mediums through which to build your brand (think responsive web pages or mobile sites, blogs, digital media, merchandise, ads – the list doesn't end) you can modify your logo to fit any scenario or make a slew of impressions on potential customers.

Also, dynamic logos keep things interesting; your audience will be waiting on the edge of their digital seats to see what you come up with next.

When to use a dynamic mark:

This is a great option for brands in entertainment, media, or creative industries. If your business will have a number of different branches, like FedEx, then a dynamic mark with a changing color could be a great way to differentiate those parts to your customers.

What to consider before using a dynamic mark:

You don't want to lose the associative power of your logo. Some of your followers may connect your brand with your colors, others may remember the shape of your icon; if these details are constantly changing, your logo may not cause the same effect as a stagnant logo would. Be mindful of the changes you make, and once again, make sure to keep your logo on message.

**Inspiration: Nickelodeon, AOL, FedEx**

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Name-Based Logos

The following logo types don't use images or icons in their designs, and they primarily use a strong typeface and color palette in order to make their mark. Let's take a look!

7. Wordmark Logos (Logotypes)

Wordmark logos consist of text only – company names, monograms or initials.

Essentially, logotypes are just a business name set in some kind of particular typeface (font).

Advantages of wordmark logos:

No one has to do any guessing when they see a wordmark – it's quite clear what company the logo represents. Because the design is all in the lettering, logotypes are one of the most versatile logo options that are easily transferable onto any marketing material.

When to use a wordmark logo:

If your business name is catchy, this is the perfect way to highlight that and use it to your branding advantage. High-end fashion brands like Tiffany and Co. use wordmarks a lot, as do food brands and tech companies that want to be seen as innovative.

The power of wordmarks are all in their fonts, which means that you can choose a font whose style is highly reflective of your brand's personality – and your audience's eyes will be drawn right to your logo.

What to consider before using a wordmark logo:

Does your business's name say anything about what you do? If you're not well-known, or if your business is named after a person rather than a concept, it may be difficult to create the kind of brand recognition you'd want a logo to help foster without using an image.

Inspiration: Subway, Uber, Coca Cola, ToysRUs, Tiffany and Co.

8. Lettermarks (Monograms)
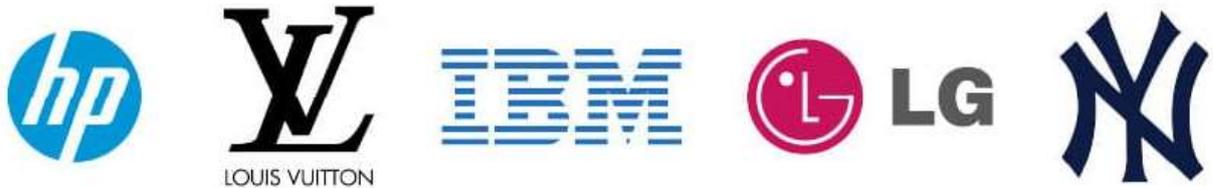
Think abbreviations. Lettermarks, or monogram logos, are typography-based logos that take the abbreviated initials of a company and spruce up their design a bit. Boom! You have a no-fuss, no-frills logo.

Advantages of lettermark logos:

Likely more than ever before, the world loves abbreviations (maybe we have the current technological era to thank for that?). From our interpersonal communication style – LOL, BTW, OMG – to name a few – to our luxury car companies (BMW), acronyms are throwing themselves all over the modern era.

Also, they're to the point: Lettermarks turn your lengthy business name into an identifiable brand identity.

When to use a lettermark logo:

It's relatively easy to get this logo up and running – after all, there's not much detail to think about – so monograms could be a great option if you're a new/small business who needs to get their name out there.

Lettermarks are also a good choice for you if you have a long business name – like the New York Yankees – which is difficult to print on small objects or read at a small scale. Finally, because monograms are often associated with personalization and wealth, they can be a good option for brands that are trying to appeal to a high-end crowd or offer homemade/handcrafted items.

What to consider before using a lettermark logo:

Know your fonts. The simplicity of the logo should work to your advantage, but make sure you're not stuck with a boring, forgettable logo design; the appeal lies in the details.

Also, you may want to consider embossing your business's full name under your logo on branding materials (like business cards or a landing page) so that people can build an association between

your monogram logo and your company name.

Inspiration: HP, LG, Louis Vuitton, New York Yankees, IBM

9. Letterforms
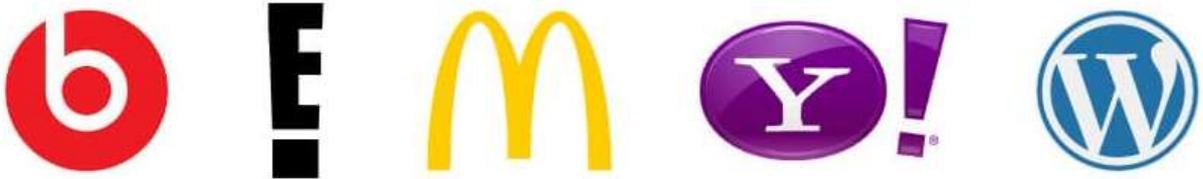
Last but not least, letterforms are the minimalist cousins of monograms; they're just one-letter logos. Of course, these logos should be bold and beautiful (read: designed well), since it is difficult for a letter alone to convey a clear message. Think Favicons ("shortcut" or website icons).

Advantages of letterform logos:

Letterforms are easily scalable. When your logo is just one letter, you can stick it anywhere and have it look equally as good. And, a successfully-designed letterform will subconsciously invoke the full name of your brand in people's minds.

When to use letterform logos:

If you have a long and complicated business name, then letterforms are a good way to make your logo "snackable" while still hinting at your business name. You can play with the typeface to have your letterform stand in for something you offer, like the Beats logo does to symbolize speakers.

What to consider before using a letterform:

Because these logos are just one letter, the design is crucial; if the logo isn't memorable, it's pointless. This could mean it has a funky font, dramatic backdrop or interesting color scheme-anything that makes the letter pop off the page and resonate.

And, make sure the font you use is legible. If your logo is just one letter, you want people to be able to read it.

Inspiration: Beats, McDonald's, WordPress, Yahoo, E! Online

SEQUENCE OF COGNITION

The science behind branding and the brain begins with fundamental truths about visual perception. Firstly, visual perception is our most primary source of information about the world around us. The best way to avoid being eaten by a tiger is to see it coming, after all.

Secondly, visual perceptions trigger ancillary, associated meanings that are the product of repeated exposure over time. Every time you see four intertwined rings in an Audi commercial, the connection between the two is further reinforced.

Finally, the human brain gathers, processes, and interprets visual stimuli in a very predictable fashion: it starts with the simplest type of information and then moves on to increasingly more complex data, which all happens in a fraction of a second.

In her seminal book Designing Brand Identity, Alina Wheeler notes that there are three steps to the sequence of cognition: 1) shape, 2) color, 3) content. Shapes are simple, and processing them first allows for quick decision-making. Color is slightly more complicated, as it's tied to instinct and emotion. Content, particularly linguistic content, is the most complex, as it must be deciphered before its significance is evident.

This is what's known as the Sequence of Cognition. When you design your brand's logo with an understanding of this process, you have the power to radically differentiate it, and foster deep, subconscious connections with your customers. Here's why.

The Definitive Guide to Rebranding

Shape

Shape is the most basic visual stimulus. Even a colorblind person can differentiate between shapes, and while you don't need to be literate to identify shapes, you have to be able to identify shapes in order to read. For this reason, the shape of your visual identity is the most fundamental opportunity to differentiate your brand. If brand research reveals that the majority of your competition is represented by circular logos, you should probably consider a different shape. Don't underestimate the lasting power of that shape either. The Nike swoosh and Apple icon require neither color nor typeface to be instantly recognized by consumers around the world.

Color

Next up on the ladder of complexity, color is the most emotive of visual cues. For this reason, it's arguably the most visceral of optic stimuli, capable of triggering persuasive subconscious reactions. To capitalize on this, authentic brands architect their color systems to express their personality and stand out from the competition. Color psychology is a vast and complex topic of investigation that's

been ruminated on for centuries.

The effects of colors on the human brain range from the physiological (hunger, blood pressure, adrenal activity) to the psychological (excitement, trust, anger). Studies suggest color can have up to a 60% influence on purchasing decisions. When scanning a shelf of soda pop, we know almost instantly where the Coca-Cola has been stocked—its trademark red color has been etched into our subconscious, with all its attendant messaging. Starbucks green is now so recognizable that the company decided to remove its name from its logo altogether.

Content

Not surprisingly, language comes in as the most complex element in the Sequence of Cognition trifecta. Unlike shapes and colors, the significance of words necessitates a decoding process on the part of the brain. More cognitive effort is required to extract the significance of even a single word than that of an "arrow" shape, or bright yellow "caution" indicator. Shape and color grab the attention of consumers; language takes them to the next step, expressly articulating the value of the product or service at hand.

No one step in the Sequence of Cognition is necessarily more important than the others. Rather, each is dependent on the strength of the other two. The process, however, informs how effective brand identities are created. Good identity designers take their clients step-by-step through the progressive levels of cognition, putting in the due diligence to ensure that the significance of each level is exhaustively explored.

The result should be a cohesive design that both differentiates a brand from its competitors and evokes profound truths about its innermost values. It's this type of visual identity that enables a brand to foster valuable, subconscious connections with its target audience.

BRAND DESIGN PROCESS

This is the 6 step process we use for guiding clients through a brand strategy & identity design process.

1. **Discovery** – Call(s) with the potential client and/or a questionnaire. Define the business problems and goals. Proposal & contract signed.

2. **Research & Brand Strategy** – Research the industry, competitors, history. Define the new brand strategy, outlining positioning, messaging and brand voice.

3. **Sketching & Conceptualising** – Let the creative juices flow! Here the brand's identity is created including the logo, font system and colour palettes.

4. **Revisions** – Rinse and repeat until a shortlist of concepts have been selected.

5. **Presentation** – Present the shortlisted work to the client. Revise as required.

6. **Delivery & Support –** Deliver files, style guide and provide support for building their brand.

Please note, the branding process is never as linear as this demonstrates. Every stage overlaps the next stage and often it goes back & forth, but having a path to follow can help the process go smoothly.

Branding Tools to Effectively Establish Your Brand

Do you know about all the current branding tools or ways of marketing your Brand today?

What do you think are the latest branding tools?

Every new brand needs to go through the initial stages of an establishment to make their target audience aware of the various products or services that they offer.

It is not as easy as it looks on paper.

The strategy is easy to be formulated in theory, but way harder to be executed correctly.

Every brand creates its branding and marketing strategy, but at times, what they do not understand is to not to go the same failed path as other brands.

The most important aspect of any branding or marketing strategy is to do in-depth research.

Research can be done on the following factors:

- **Brand industry**
- **Target audience**
- **Area of establishment**
- **Potential consumers**
- **Expectations from the brand**
- **Quality of products or services**
- **Rules and regulations**

The Essential Tools of Branding

Many marketing and branding tools can be used in the brand establishment, such as:

1 – Audio Branding

The latest path to branding is audio branding.

Audio or 'sonic' Brandin enables a company to have a recognisable sound attached to its name.

It allows the user to know a brand without even seeing it.

It is not an easy task to accomplish because many factors are needed to be considered before giving your brand a sound of its own, such as:

- Type of brand

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- Industry catered to
- Tone
- Lyrics
- Target audience
- Copyright issues

Is there a brand that you know from its sound?

Ring any bells?

You need to understand that if you give any particular sound to your brand, then your brand will be associated with it.

So, if it is a bad sound, it stays there forever.

The brand needs to answer the following questions before specifying a tone to it like:

1. What does it brand stand for?
2. What are the attractive differentiations that can lure the customers?
3. What is the sound of the competitors and how is it different & unique?

The proprietary sound shall convey meaning about the mission of the brand to let the customers know why they shall choose you over others.

You need to check if the music is up to date or not because it might portray as the products or services are obsolete or offensive to any culture or caste.

The following brands are the best examples of audio branding:

- 20th Century Fox
- McDonalds
- Intel
- MGM
- Yahoo
- Nokia

Audio Branding can be used to compliment the visual representation.

It taps on two of the human senses and increases the chances of brand recognition.

The customers are just like us; they buy what they see and hear, and a catchy jingle could result in a significant improvement in the sales of the brand.

It gives the brand a chance to be remarkable and distinctive at every point of contact.

Audio branding goes far beyond jingles or licensing popular music; it gives an audio identity to the brand.

It is better than video branding because the customer does not need to see the name to know it is there; the brand is established in their mind.

Slogans and radio ads are part of audio branding!

2 – Video Branding Tools

After the invention of the camera and then the internet, video branding is the most used tool of branding because it allows the brand to express its objectives in the most subtle manner.

There is no limit to video branding because it accommodates audio as well as visual content, which enables more reception in the minds of the customers.

As mentioned above, video content is boundless and can be used for many purposes like the following:

- It allows the brand to showcase its products or services
- It acts as a platform to convey messages and values
- It can be used to communicate with the customers directly
- It can be used as tutorials for a more convenient use of products & services
- It helps the brand to tap into different genres of mindsets and capture all alike.

The most loved aspect of video branding is the fact that it can market what the brand wants, directly to the customers.

You can control the length, content and everything else according to the message that needs to be conveyed.

Television advertisements and web ads are part of video branding!

3 – Visual Branding Tools

Visual Branding is the logo design, poster designs, pamphlets and other visual-textual content that helps the brand to enable customers to identify it.

It is the first thing that catches the eye of the client and as it has fits the adage, "The first impression is the last impression".

It means that it is important to have a good first impression so that the customers can identify the brand by looking at the logo design or the colour combinations used.

The following can express the above in a better fashion:

- When you see a big yellow 'M', the first thought that comes to the mind is McDonald's.
- When you see a half-eaten apple, the first thought is Apple Inc.
- When you see a jaguar symbol, the first though is the Jaguar car company.

All these examples show how important it is for a brand to have eye-catching visuals and a slogan, to

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help the customers to identify them.

Every element that you 'see' of a brand is considered to be the visual representation, even the videos.

The fact that video branding is a different point here is because the viewers will understand the importance of logo design and other collateral, which help a brand in its initial stages.

The logo and slogan are considered to be the two most important elements of brand establishment and require maximum focus.

The name is recognised and accepted with its logo and slogan, especially in its initial stages.

Try to think of how many brands you identify with the help of just their logo design?

4 – Content Marketing tools for Branding

Content marketing is everything that a brand uses to express its objectives; from textual content to video content and audio content to visual content.

Everything that you see or hear about the brand is content, and if it is directed properly, it can be used to increase sales and establish the brand globally.

All of the above points are a part of content marketing.

If properly used; it can be beneficial for the brand to make its customers aware of the different products and services, exclusive sales and queries to enable a smooth consumer experience and a boost in sales.

There are many companies which offer website design and development or 360-degree digital marketing services like social media optimisation, PPC advertisements, website optimisation and SEO services.

Some companies offer affordable SEO packages which include SEO, SMO, PPC, website optimisation and reviews, to enable brands to utilise these services.

Do you understand the different parts of content marketing?

5 – Brand Activation

It is referred to as the live stalls at various locations, which allows the brand to communicate with the customers on a one-to-one basis i.e. live events.

It can be used to solve queries, share information about new products or services and promote the brand, as a whole.

It is a comprehensive branding tool, usually practised in malls and events, where the audience is the brand's target audience.

Examples of activations are as follows:

- T-shirts & accessories outside concerts

- Book Expos
- Food stalls in college events & concerts
- Services' stalls in corporate events

Ever visited a live booth and bought anything?

6 – Event Branding Tools

There is much hype created alongside events because of the scale that it gives to a brand.

Brands sponsor events to market their names and products to the masses with the help of event marketing.

It allows the customers to have a live entertaining experience and simultaneously be part of a particular brand or a group of businesses.

Events are of different types, such as:

- Concerts
- Festivals
- Corporate events
- Seminars
- Conferences
- Plays
- Parties

You can distribute your products at these events in live stalls, give them a taste of the brand and even share information about different products or services with the help of marketing materials.

The customers see the brand in a positive light because of the fun experience that they have in the event, which helps the brand to lure them in to boost sales and create its identity.

Have you been part of an event yourself?

7 – Word of Mouth Marketing Tools

Your brand is established when other people are talking (positively) about it.

Word of mouth promotion is considered to be one of the best and most useful forms of branding because it is more credible and the content goes viral on its own.

It costs negligible amount of money but can result in millions of dollars of sales.

All of the above points act as a catalyst, which later results in this form of promotion.

It can be directed to boost sales and increase brand awareness, but it is hard to initiate because it requires customers to like the name or its content genuinely and willfully share it on different platforms to communicate the brand's message further.

![Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology logo]

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There is no perfect tool to exploit and achieve quick brand establishment, but the combination of above tools help significantly with the process.

It is like a recipe; all elements are as important as each individually.

The perfect mixture gives the perfect result.

Interiors & Branding

Branding doesn't end when the logo has been finalised or when the website has gone live. Recently more business owners have begun to elevate their brand, by making the link between brand identity and their physical space. Whether a business operates from a single site or multiple locations across the country, when it comes to interior branding consistency is key.

WHAT IS INTERIOR BRANDING?

Interior branding is the most overlooked aspect of forming a clear and consistent company brand. It's an opportunity to treat your physical space as a palette and apply the same rules as you would for all other aspects of marketing. It's about more than just a logo or a sign, all elements must work together to form an on-brand, engaging and sensory experience. By carefully considering how your brand could be communicated through the layout, finishing materials, colour, and lighting in your interiors you can achieve that final link in the identity chain.

These design choices will ultimately impact the impression you make on clients, customers, and staff and send a message about who you are as a company. Striking that balance between company imagery, design aesthetics, and functionality can make a huge difference.

WHY BRANDING IS IMPORTANT IN INTERIOR DESIGN

Bringing your interiors in line with your branding can be extremely beneficial in reinforcing your culture and ethos. Interior design is an opportunity to adhere to your own company principles. For example, if you focus on eco-friendly products you can reflect this in your interior by using recycled or reclaimed materials and environmentally friendly lighting. This strengthens your brand and will attract fresh talent who share your goals.

Consistency is the crucial element that binds your identity together. When all of your other marketing materials are coherent the last thing you want is for your interior to contradict the message you wish to portray. A beige interior filled with generic furniture that shows no attempt at creating an engaging space will lead people to assume that you have put just as little thought into the products or services that you offer.

A key question to consider is *"Does the look and feel of the interior evoke that of the brand?"* – it must support and complement the corporate style.
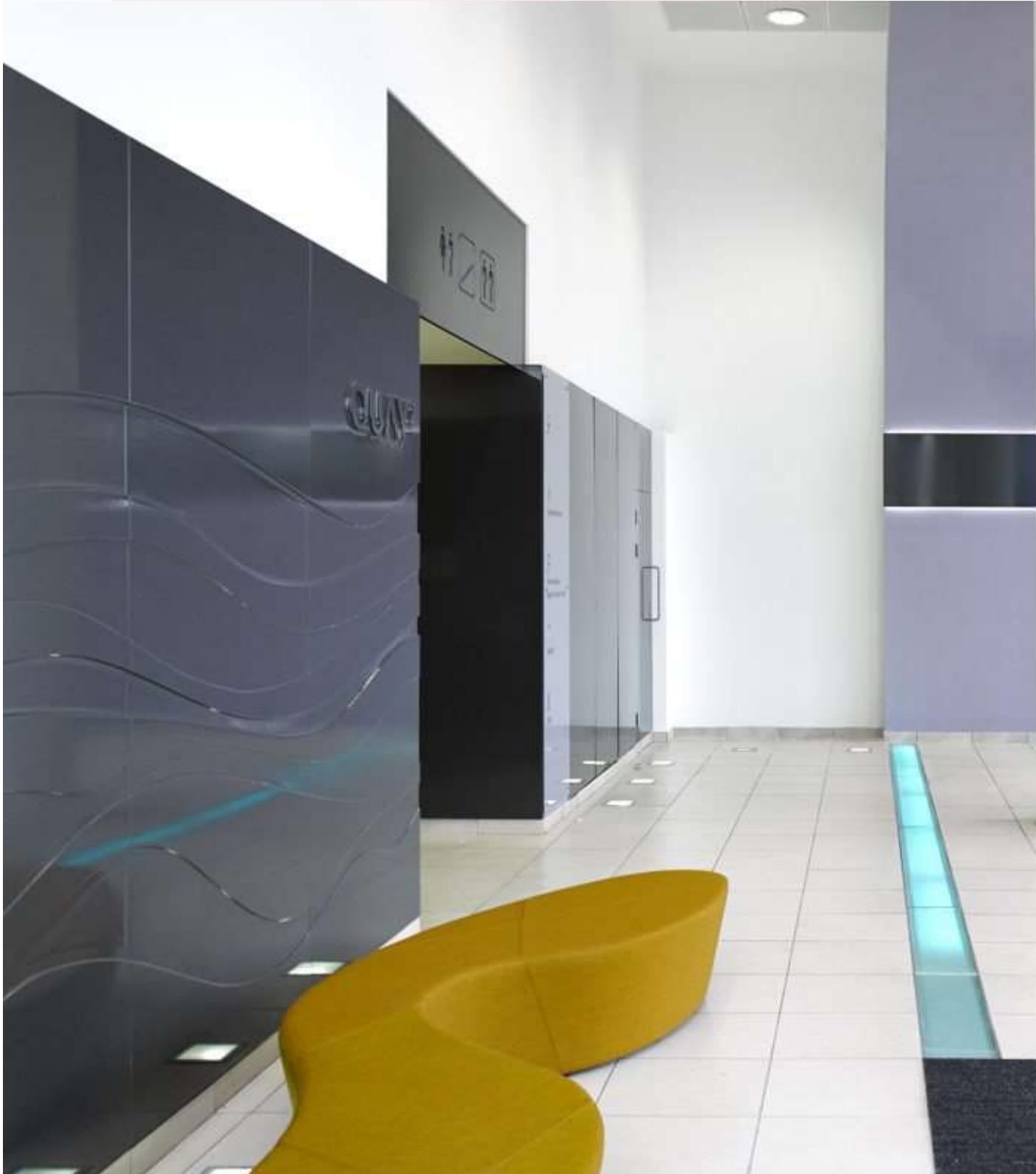
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Interior branding is a worthwhile investment, adding value to your brand and presenting you with the chance to stand out from the crowd and demonstrate what makes you unique.

CORPORATE IDENTITY IN OFFICE INTERIORS

A corporate visual identity consists of five main components; corporate name, logo, font, colour palette, and slogan/tagline. However, the role of interior design is becoming more established, as clients/customers are not always confronted with these 'main' components first. Entering the office space may well be the first chance they have had to form an impression of the company.

So the crucial question is; what do you want visitors to feel when they step through the door? You need to create a professional, consistent image that ties in with both your corporate identity and your culture. But office design has come a long way since the days of grey cubicles. It is now being recognised as a place to experiment with various engaging architectural and design elements in order to stand out and improve employee productivity and morale.

Consider not only the visitor experience but the well-being of staff and the impact the interior will have on their day to day working life. Research carried out by the Design Council shows that the workplace environment accounts for as much as 25% of job satisfaction, and can affect performance by as much as 5% for individuals and 11% for teams.

Reminding employees of the company's goals and presenting a consistent message across the board can reinforce the reasons why they were drawn to working there in the first place. As a result, it will also encourage them to support and achieve corporate objectives.

VISUAL BRANDING IN RETAIL INTERIORS

When it comes to a retail company with multiple locations, rather than a single site, consistency becomes even more crucial. This ensures that your brand is instantly recognisable no matter where your customers are. Look at Apple for instance, who have designed both their headquarters and every one of their stores to reflect their focus on technological advancement and innovation. The aesthetic of these Apple stores is not only consistent with the image they aim to portray but also their products and packaging.

Consider how you can use the interior design to form an experience that is both engaging and relevant to what you're selling. If you were selling outdoor clothing and equipment, for example, it would be confusing for shoppers to be in a cosy or luxurious setting. Natural colours, materials, and imagery, however, would allow people to see themselves using and enjoying the products. You should be able to use the same descriptive words to describe the physical space as the ones you would choose to describe the products themselves.

Injecting personality and making a visit to your store memorable means customers will come to associate the products with the quality of the interior design.

1. **Home**
2. **News**
3. **The importance of interior branding**

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VISUAL BRANDING IN HOSPITALITY INTERIORS

Similarly to retail, hotels, and restaurants with multiple locations can also benefit hugely from achieving brand consistency across all venues. There is a real opportunity to create a unique

customer experience with hospitality interiors and the design will have an overwhelming impact on whether visitors return or choose to visit one of the other branches. Use branding to differentiate your business from the competition, if it is recognisable across several locations the public will come to associate the quality and consistency of the interior branding with the quality of your food or service.

For restaurants in particular, it's likely that the branding and colour scheme of the sign/logo has been specifically designed to reflect the kind of cuisine on offer. This should be no different when designing the interiors. Whether it's fresh and healthy, rich and indulgent, American or Thai, give customers an experience that's memorable and relevant to your brand and they are more likely to visit again.

DESIGN ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER

The walls and ceiling of your interior represent an opportunity to showcase your brand and apply the points raised throughout this article. You can experiment with materials, textures, and colour to create a truly unique and memorable feature. From slatted panel systems incorporating natural wood to the industrial feel of brick or concrete and the impact of an unusual 3D wall, the options are endless and they don't have to break the bank or take an age to install. All of the Vtec decorative wall and ceiling solutions have been designed to fit within any interior seamlessly and without fuss.

We are passionate about creating a design that is unique to your company. You have the option to combine exciting textures with your company colours. We installed these stunning bespoke 3D panels in a gloss metallic black foil for this innovative business space, incorporating the company's logo and other signage within the panel design. It is now the feature that your eye is immediately drawn to, and communicates that this is a professional, modern and forward-thinking company, as well as tying in with their corporate identity.

It's important to consider how the design choices can impact the experience you want to give your visitors. That's exactly what we did for this Spanish tapas restaurant, recreating the look and feel of a Spanish wine vault by tailoring the London Brick Multi system to the curved ceiling. The result is a space that transports the diner to another place entirely, reflecting the origin of the cuisine and forming a relaxing yet sophisticated atmosphere.

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SCHOOL OF BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENT

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

SDE1503 – VISUAL IDENTITY & BRANDING

UNIT - IV

Subject Name: Visual Identity & Branding   **Code:** SDE 1503

UNIT – IV - STRATEGIES

Target marketing is essential to getting the most from your marketing dollars by reaching out specifically to those who are most likely to buy your products or services; they are your target market or target audience. The three activities of a successful targeting strategy that allows you to accomplish this are segmentation, targeting and positioning, typically referred to as STP.

Defining Target Marketing

According to an Entrepreneur article describing target markets, your target market consists of those people most likely to buy from you, but markets have become so differentiated that it's not enough to target an age group or any other single factor. Not everyone in any age group is buying the same things; they have many different opinions, interests and needs. An age group may make sense for your marketing purposes, but age can only be one part of it. You must consider many other factors to arrive at your target market.

Identifying Your Target Market

The goal in identifying your target market is to be as specific as possible, down to the most minute details. A brainstorming session with others who know your product works well because of the two-heads-are-better-than-one adage. Another person may think of the product and its purchasers differently than you do and focus on a factor other than age, such as level of education, technical knowledge, where they live or their gender. The new viewpoint makes you think of an additional factor, and so on. Other ways to learn about your market are to study survey data or conduct your own survey and research all you can about who buys your competitors' products.

Of course, you'd be happy to sell to anyone, but defining your target market doesn't mean you won't sell to anyone else, according to an Inc. magazine article; it just means putting your marketing dollars where they are likely to bring you the most results. Defining your niche in the market is a way that small businesses can compete with large businesses. Remember, too, that if you sell more than one product, you may have different – or slightly different – target audiences for each one.

When you've defined all you can about your target market or the target audience who will want to hear or read about your product, you may be shocked at the details you've uncovered. For example, perhaps you started out thinking your target market was females aged 30 to 50, but from talking with others and doing some research, you now know that age isn't as much of a factor as that the females

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have children, own homes in the suburbs of larger cities, or have attended college but not necessarily earned a degree.

Using the STP Marketing Strategy

One of the most effective methods of target marketing is to use the segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP) marketing strategy. First, divide your market into segments of buyers who share certain characteristics. According to Smart Insights, the most common segmentation is dividing the market by four criteria: demographics, psychographics, geographics and behavioral characteristics. Next, in the targeting step, you analyze the segments and determine which one or ones are currently your best target audience. For positioning, you discuss ways to reach the segments you chose, narrow those down by discussing the pros and cons of each, and design a plan of how and where to reach each target market.

Dividing Your Market Into Segments

There are many possible methods of market segmentation; you aren't limited to demographics, psychographics, geographics or behavioral characteristics, but they are a good place to start. Demographic criteria are based on the data you have on those in your market, including their ages, gender, level of education, occupations, sexuality, interests and family size. Demographics is the most common segmentation because these characteristics most often determine buying habits.

Psychographics is segmentation according to personality and traits, such as values, opinions and favorite activities. For example, people with expensive lifestyles value luxury and carrying, using or wearing high-end designer items. People who are thrifty value a well-priced product but may also look for quality, though they're not interested in the brand name.

Geographic segmentation is concerned with customers' locations, which could be based on their country, city and state, or whether they're urban or rural residents. Sometimes just a ZIP code can reveal a lot of information. The 1980s television show, "Beverly Hills 90210," made that ZIP code recognizable as standing for wealth, while other U.S. ZIP codes might be known for areas with high levels of poverty or ones where high-tech individuals are known to live.

Behavioral segmentation looks at how customers behave by how they interact with the business. Are they frequent buyers of one item or type of item? Do they usually buy online or in a store? The USC Marshall School of Business advises in its teaching of the STP model that behavioral segmentation also considers whether buyers are frequent customers – in other words, loyal – or occasional buyers. With people using digital applications often to research products and make purchases, businesses can easily track how often a customer uses their websites, what products people are interested in by what

they look at, and what they ultimately bought.

Determining Your Targeting Strategy

After you finish the segmentation, it's time to analyze each segment and determine which to target with your marketing plan. Have all the segments in front of you on one page or a conference room wall so that everyone involved in the process can easily see the description of each segment as you discuss it. Evaluate each segment on:

- Size: If it's too small, it may not be worth targeting; if it's too large, it won't be feasible.
- Reachability: How difficult or expensive will it be to reach this segment and relay your message effectively?
- Profitability: Run the numbers on expected profit from each segment based on the cost to reach the people in it and how much you can sell your products for.

With your budget in mind, determine which segment or segments make the most sense to target with your marketing dollars.

Positioning in the Marketplace

The last step, positioning, refers to the position your business or product occupies in the mind of your potential customers. You may already have a position in mind for your business or products, but if it's an inaccurate or incomplete one, you'll want your messaging to change. If your business or products aren't known to a segment, you need to carefully consider the message you want to convey. It's important to get your message right the first time, according to Wemla, because once people have established a position on something, they rarely change.

Now that you have identified the target market(s) you're going to reach out to, craft the overall message about your business or product(s). A well-rounded marketing plan reaches your intended target market in a variety of ways with a consistent message that appeals to them based on your detailed knowledge obtained through the STP method of target marketing.

Identifying your target audience is all about creating an effective marketing strategy so that your marketing dollars have the biggest bang for their buck. And that happens when your marketing campaign reaches the people who are MOST likely to make a purchase.

How to Conduct Audience Research

In order to clearly understand your target audience, you need to first do a little bit of investigation. By understanding who your products and services are for, and how to find them, you'll be able to create a marketing strategy that actually makes you money.

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1. First, Understand Your Niche Market

Whatever it is that you're selling, it's most valuable to a very specific set of people. This is a niche market.

To understand your niche, take a look at what you're selling and why you're selling it. This will help you understand not only what you have to offer but also why your potential customer will want to buy it.

Ask yourself:

- What need does your product or service satisfy?
- Does your product or service solve any pain points or problems in your target customer's life?
- What are the benefits of purchasing your product or service? How does it improve your potential customer's life?

Whenever you get bogged down in the details of your target market analysis, come back to the answers to these questions. Let them be your guiding light through your research.

2. Look At Your Existing Customers

If you're already turning a profit in your business, then that means that you already have direct access to your target audience. After all, your current customers have already made a purchase with you, so you know for a fact that they convert.

Once you understand your existing customer base, you can target more people like them with your marketing plan.

Take a closer look at your customer base and see if you can identify any patterns in their characteristics, such as demographic or psychographic characteristics like

- Age – What is the general age range of your current customers? Knowing this data will help you when choosing your target segment in social media ads.
- Gender – Are your current customers mostly male or female? This will help you better understand their specific needs and wants that are perhaps unique to their gender.
- Income – How much money do your customers have to spend on your products or services? Are they able to make repeat purchases or do they need to save up for your product? Are there any financial barriers that you need to address?
- Location – Where do your customers live and what time zone are they in? What are some cultural issues that are unique to their location (ie products targeting American football versus real football
- Behavior – How do your customers hang out online? Which pages or brands do they follow

can you incorporate that into your content marketing strategy?

- Lifestyle – How do your customers spend their free time? What kinds of products or services do they need to support those hobbies?
- Values – What are their general beliefs and values? Does this influence their brand loyalty, where they purchase products or what kinds of products they purchase?

You can learn a lot of this information by studying your Google Analytics or social media analytics, which I'll cover in a second.

3. Look At Your Analytics

When you place ads or create a digital marketing strategy, it's important to know precisely what kind of content to share and where to share it. You can easily know this by looking at what kind of content currently brings customers to your online shop and which content converts to a sale.

A lot of the information you want to know is readily available in the analytics dashboard of your website or social media pages

When you dig into the data, you'll be able to understand your audience based on four segmentation types:

1. Demographic Segmentation – This market segment includes attributes like age, gender, ethnicity, religion, location, income, education, etc. It may seem like super dry information (it is) but it will help you tremendously when you are creating your ads.

2. Geographic Segmentation – This data refers to where your target audience lives and informs you when choosing your posting schedule on social media, sending email marketing campaigns, or talking about regionally specific topics. It also helps you understand where to place your ads and when.

3. Behavioral Segmentation – Behavioral segmentation looks at purchasing behavior, occasion-based behavior, the usage rate of your products, purchase reasoning, customer loyalty, and how they interact with your brand. Understanding these data points will help you understand what exactly motivates people to purchase your products.

4. Psychographic Segmentation– Psychographic data reveals what beliefs, values, attitudes, interests, or lifestyle factors may influence a person's shopping behavior.

Market segmentation sounds like a lot of technical details, but really it's just a way to place super efficient ads. This way, your marketing effort isn't wasted on anybody who is not likely to purchase your products.

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4. Look At Your Competition

If you don't already have an existing customer base (or even if you do), then checking out what your competitors are doing will help you understand your own customer profile.

Snoop around their website, blog, social media pages, and ads to see if you can understand their target market strategy. As you investigate, ask yourself these questions

- Can you identify their segmentation tactics?

- Who is their ideal customer?

- Do they have a specific target market or multiple target markets? What is it/are they and why?

- How do they promote their products? What kind of language do they use? What product features do they highlight?

- What is their posting schedule? How often do they post or send emails?

Get to know your competitors as if you're their customer base. Sign up for their newsletters and follow their social media pages so that you can see, first-hand, what it's like to be their customer. Then take notes.

5. Understand Your Product Features And Benefits

When you're doing your target audience analysis, you really want to take the time to understand exactly what motivates potential customers to purchase your products.

This comes after you've figured out who your target audience is and before you start making efforts to reach your target audience. The idea is to catch them in the decision-making process when they're still trying to decide whether or not they want to make a purchase.

The way to do that is to show them how your products or service can directly benefit them and improve their daily lives.

Many marketers talk about this in terms of product features versus product benefits. The product feature is what the product is or does. The benefit is the end result and how it affects your potential customers.

6. Test Paid Ads On Your Target Market

Now that you've completed your audience analysis and have a good idea of who your ideal customer is, it's time to start running ads.

Though search engine optimization is by far the best marketing strategy with the highest ROI, running ads gives you quick gains and lots of data to work with.

Facebooks Ads Manager allows you to easily run ads on both Facebook and Instagram. And if you don't know where to begin with placing ads, you can first check out Audience Insights to compare

your audience analysis to real-life Facebook users.

Target Market Examples

Let's take a look at some major brands that have killed it in their target market analysis. They have found their ideal customers far and wide by being super specific and targeted.

1. Nike Target Market

Nike sells apparel, equipment, shoes, and accessories to athletes and people who play sports. Their products are good quality and last for a long time, driving the price range up enough so that only people with disposable income can afford to purchase their products.

But that's not the only detail about their target audience.

They specifically target young aspiring athletes and runners, two groups of people who rely on motivation to continue pushing themselves beyond their normal limitations.

And we can see this play out in most of Nike's marketing campaigns, where they create motivational ads that can move viewers to tears.

Read more: Nike's Brilliant Marketing Strategy – Why You Should Be (Just) Doing it Too

2. Netflix Target Market

A lesson to be learned from Netflix has less to do with its actual target market, which is constantly evolving, and more to do with their approach to reaching their target market.

They continuously conduct research on their audience and meticulously provide them with what they want. From mail-in DVD rentals to a behemoth online streaming service, Netflix has notoriously leaned into its audience and pivoted when needed.

And in doing so, they let word-of-mouth marketing fuel their sales.

Read more: How Netflix Achieved 137 Million Subscribers – Through Word-of-Mouth

3. Lego Target Market

Lego is a household brand across the entire world and for good reason: though children are the users of their products, parents are the ones buying them.

So Lego built its entire marketing strategy around appeasing the parents. Not only that but Lego also partnered with brands, movies, and video games with cult-like followings further secure its place in the fantasy world that many children escape to.

By understanding their target audience and potential barriers to purchase, Lego turned itself into a multi-billion dollar business.

Read more: How Lego Keeps Winning Fans Wherever It Goes

What is Competitive Positioning?

The primary determining factor of future profits, competitive positioning is your professional business' ability to keep the competition at bay.

Are you frustrated your firm isn't gaining the traction you'd like it to in the marketplace? Why is it that even though your competitors' services may be inferior to yours, they seem to be getting more of the market share? Shouldn't your superior expertise be the solution clients choose? Unfortunately, you may have better solutions than those of your competitors, but the market might not perceive the same value in what you offer.

From an intellectual point of view, it makes sense customers would choose the company that offers the best professional services. In fact, it's typically the companies who better market themselves who win the battle for customers. Luckily, you can push back on this reality by building a competitive positioning strategy that helps you gain more traction, leads, and conversions in your market niche.

In a nutshell, competitive positioning is about your relative place in your market space, but let's dig in a little deeper.

What is a Company's Competitive Position?

If you're familiar with motorsport racing, you've heard commentators talk about the positioning of the cars. When they talk about the vehicle in "the first position," what they mean is that relative to the other cars in the race, that space (or position) is the first one in the first row and closest to the rail. It doesn't mean the car is necessarily the best one in the race.

Put in practical business terms, positioning isn't about making a claim concerning the *quality* of your services or even if your services are better than those offered by others in your sector. Instead, positioning states your offer stands in a certain position within your market relative to your competitors.

Why is Competitive Positioning Important?

The short answer is proper positioning improves your professional services firm's probability of success. Properly executed, competitive positioning is a powerful business strategy tool that helps you identify your market segment, a competitive frame of reference, and brand identity. Positioning always comes before branding because if you aren't clear on what you stand for and what clients can count on you for, no killer logo, eye-catching color palette, or cutting-edge font is going to convince people to use your services.

How do You Develop a Competitive Position?

There are four key components of your brand strategy that should be included in your competitive

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marketing position:

- Your differentiation, or what separates you from the others.
- A value proposition that answers the question "Why should I hire you?"
- A brand promise that tells clients what they can expect to receive every time they interact with your professional services company.
- A singularity concept that lets people know one thing you offer that is a point of market distinction.

Competitive positions can be anything from the level of customer service offered to customization and performance terms.

To position your business on the market, you have to go far beyond price, though you might want to consider *increasing* your rates in a move known as "prestige pricing." Other approaches include:

- Differentiating yourself through the use of innovative tools and techniques that offer clients exceptional value or singular benefits.
- Forming partnerships with complementary professional services.
- Gaining a more in-depth knowledge of your customers through research, data analysis, and other information sources such as surveys.
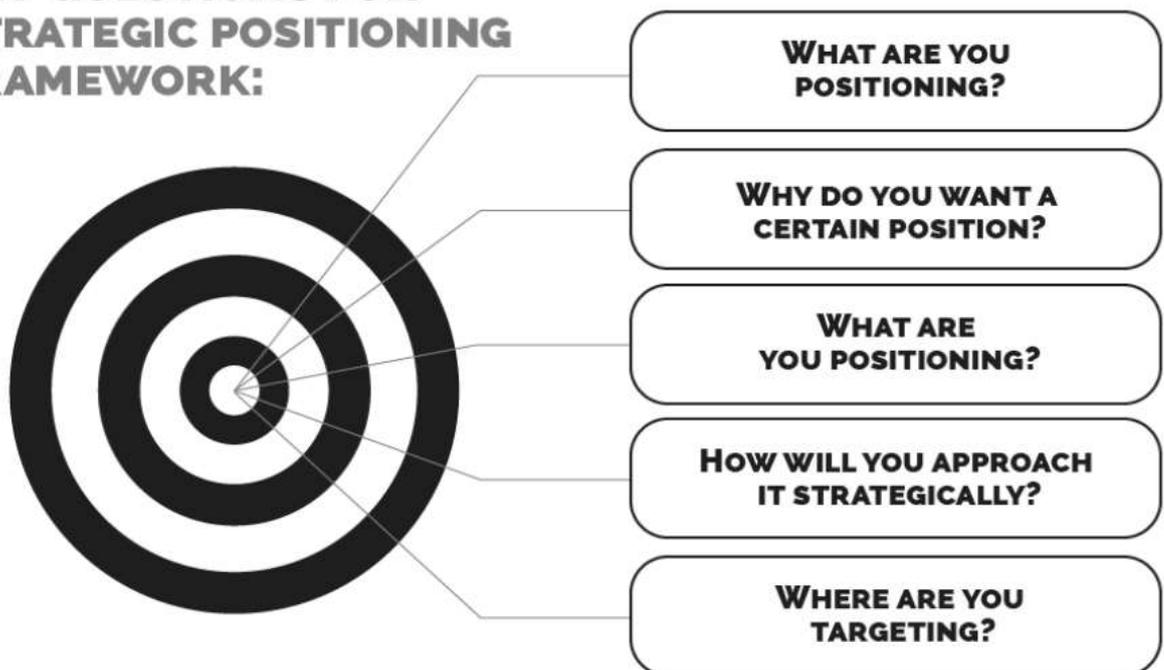- Creating a company culture that attracts the best and brightest talent.
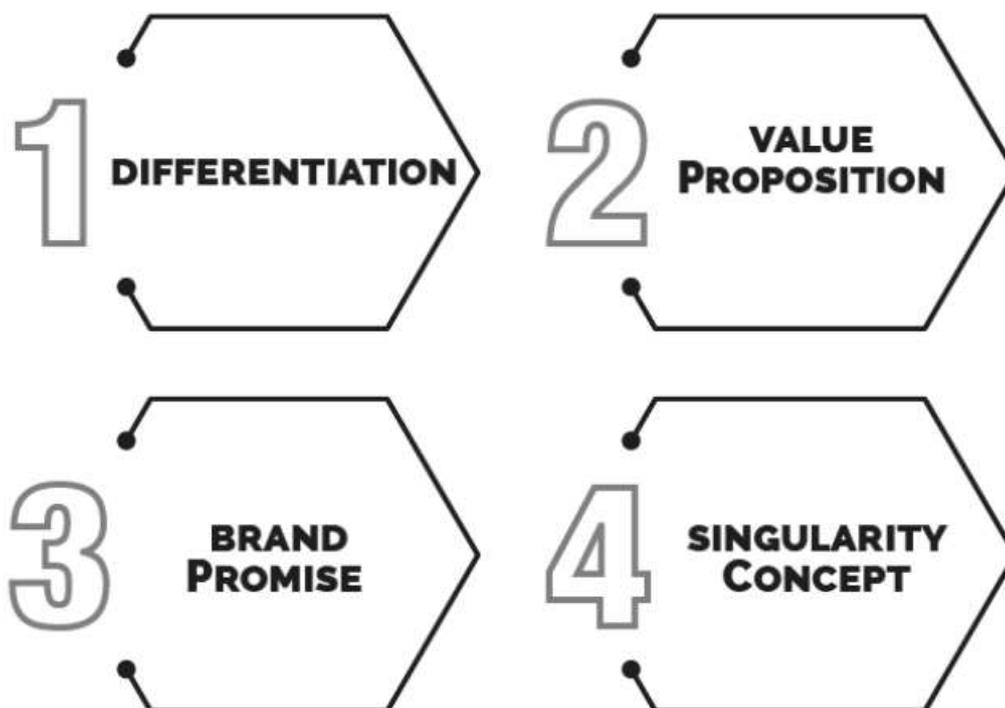
What is Brand Identity in Business?

The primary purpose of branding is to help your professional services business stand out. Branding your business means sharing its brand values with customers and creating trusting relationships with them.

A brand identity includes all the components related to your services and company, such as its logo, tone, tagline, font. It differs from a brand image in that it's how you *want* your target audience to perceive your company. Brand image is the perception people have of your services. While the terms logo and brand are often used interchangeably, a logo is really a symbol of your business and one small step in developing a strong brand identity.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR STRATEGIC POSITIONING FRAMEWORK:

- WHAT ARE YOU POSITIONING?
- WHY DO YOU WANT A CERTAIN POSITION?
- WHAT ARE YOU POSITIONING?
- HOW WILL YOU APPROACH IT STRATEGICALLY?
- WHERE ARE YOU TARGETING?

Competitive Positioning to Gain an Advantage

Brand positioning is basically the process of setting your professional services business apart from your competitors in a way that builds preference for your brand amongst your target market. The goal is to associate your company with one or more specific ideas or types of services in the minds of people who might invest in your services.

We live in a time when every business must strive to gain an advantage in a hyper-competitive market. Unique brand positioning boosts your organizations visibility and its top-of-mind recall for potential leads and helps shut out the competition. A solid brand positioning strategy provides value to your prospects and ultimately persuades them to hire you.

Even when faced with fierce competition, having a competitive position provides your business with greater opportunities for increased revenue. Most importantly, the stronger your competitive positioning, the greater your ability to hold a position of strength in the marketplace, no matter its level of competition.

Competitive positioning boosts your organisation's visibility and its top-of-mind recall for potential leads and helps shut out the competition.

Brand Positioning In The Target Market For Nike

Its Products offer a wide range of choices for the individuals; from sports equipment, athletic shoes, to clothes. But this paper focuses on Nike athletic shoes- how it has created a distinct impression in consumers' mind and differentiated its products from its competitors. Promotionally, it has continuously tried to target the world's youth population through basketball most popular game around the world. Nike partnered with Michael Jordan to have his name Jordan shoes for basketball and designed Jordan I, Jordan II and followed by many more. Nike's marketing strategy is accepted to be an important component of the company's success. Nike is positioned as a premium-brand, selling well-designed and very expensive products. As same time Nike tries to lure customers with a marketing strategy centering on a brand image which is attained by distinctive logo and the advertising logo: "Just do it". The external influence promoting the Nike is brand is the sports culture of people here in United States. Whether it may be the reason of being physically fit or being allured by the sports personalities, sports have become the essence and passion in the United States. NFL is another event which ties United States culture. Nike shoe are designed for the professional athletes, the craze of extreme sports and fantasy towards sports personalities have been growing.

Nike partnered with new sensation in the soccer world Rhonaldino from Brazil and released a soccer shoe based on him called "Tiempo Guri FG" which influence world's soccer fan. The other external influence promoting Nike is social status of people. The price of Nike shoe is reasonable for the middle class and upper middle class. Teenagers compete among themselves to become coolest of all and climb the ladder of social status by wearing Nike sneakers and such type of brand connect the themes that are relevant to them.

Brand Positioning in the Target Market:

The Nike's effective Marketing Mix Program supports the brand positioning in the target market. The Nike 4P's elements as shown in the architectural diagram, distinguishes it from its rival competitors. Its Products is basically designed for sporting events. Its product is considered to be highly effective and comfortable to the athletes. It has dominated United States sports market. It is recognized for the quality of its shoes and has gained the reputation all over the world. Due to its higher quality shoes, its Prices are usually higher than the normal brand. So, the customers perceive it as high-end product. NBA and NFL has always been its favorite playground to promote the product in the U.S. The United States culture ties closely to American Football, the mostly watched sporting event in the U.S. It has dominated in the football market with its most of the NFL events sponsored by Nike. But for its worldwide customers, it has been successful in teaming up with the Soccer, golf and even in FIFA world cup. Recently, Nike opens Nike golf schools and junior camps for junior golfers wanting to hone their golf skills and achieve the next level of their playing careers. (Worldgolf.com April 10th 2007) The alliance of Nike and Apple brought world sports and music together. Nike + I pod sport kit changed the way people run and created better running experience. Nike chooses independent distributors. NIKE sells its products through about 22,000 retail accounts in the U.S and licensees in other countries. The Brand essence of Nike means a unique way of expressing sport in forms of performance, whereas its Brand personality is seriousness of athletes and global representations.

Competition:

Nike is number one athletic shoe of the United States and creates goods for a wide range of sports; they have competition from every sports and sports fashion brand. Initially, Nike had no direct competitors because there was no single brand which could compete directly with Nike's range of sports until Rebook came along in the 1980s.Now they have competitors like Adidas, Puma and Rebook. The top U.S. made Nike is known as high tech sports shoes.

POSITIONING TERRITORIES

1. **CONCEPT**

   Our perceptions are selective and our memory is highly selective. Harvard psychologist George Miller proposed that only seven 'chunks' of information, like seven brands in a category, can easily be held in short- term memory. Therefore, the importance of good brand positioning is crucial for the success of a business. Positioning is about defining that single thought or idea you want to own and then focusing on owning it. This strongest and most persuasive thought in the customers mind must be true to you, relevant to your audience and must make it difficult for your competition to compete. Most businesses talk about the same things and forget to mention the things that make them truly different. If you're competing with a giant in your category and talk about the same things, you'll lose.

2. **PRICE**

   THE CHEAPEST OR BESTVALUE Coles and Walmart focus on the price or value that they offer. The words 'save everyday' and 'always low prices' are the most persuasive thoughts in the customer's mind when they think of the brand. NB: This was one of Michael Porter's famous strategy choices of price leader vs. value differentiation.

3. **SIZE**

   THE MOST This positioning territory of size focuses on the large range of products or services the brand offers. It is the aim of this territory to fix 'range' into the consumer's mind, so if breadth of choice is the need, then they're the brand that springs in to mind.

4. **SIZE**

   THE LARGEST Positioning on size says 'the bigger, the better'. By stressing the size or number of outlets a brand has, consumers are made aware of the brands market leadership. This territory taps into the social proof of marketing professor Robert Cialdini of 'if they're big', 'everybody must be using them', 'so they must be good'.

5. **FIRST**

   WE ARE THE ORIGINAL Brands that have been in their industry the longest may position their brand towards being the 'original' brand. This adds reliability and increases the perception of the brand's quality. Paddy Pallin and Westpac dominate the 'first' territory by using the words 'first' and 'since'.

6. **EASE**

   THE SIMPLESTTO USE The 'ease' positioning territory is used for products and services

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that are simple to use or make life easier. Ikea focuses their positioning around the simple and easy assembly of their products, while ING focuses on removing the complexity of financial services.

7. **SPEED**

THE FASTEST Technology and courier services are industries that typically aspire to own the 'speed' territory. The decreasing level of consumer patience means that speed is a big factor in consumer choice. Therefore associating speed with your brand is an effective positioning strategy.

8. **RELIABILITY**

THE MOSTTRUSTED Focusing on the reliability territory is an effective positioning territory when the brand's products need to be trusted. FedEx builds this trust with the consumer by using the words 'absolutely and 'positively', that became one of advertising's most well known and powerful promises. As we see from the Rolex ad, endorsement (especially celebrity) is a short cut to trust and a quick way to trust brand cache.

9. **NICHE MARKET**

PRODUCTS FOR'X' Brands focusing on the niche market territory adopt the "inch wide - mile deep approach", where the inch is when the brand can be offered narrowly enough to be the first, second, or third in the category. The mile is when there are enough consumers in that category so that you'll never run out of customers. This means the brand and messaging is specialised and uniquely positioned to appeal to their focused market. Because niche marketing tends to let customers associate or draw affinity with an identity, it can often form strong and lasting bonds. R.M. Williams positioning helps them dominate their niche market as 'The Bush Outfitter'. See also Apple's 'The Crazy Ones'.

10. **GEOGRAPHICAL**

Geographical positioning has the potential to make brands national icons. Vegemite and Qantas are brands that have achieved this and are considered 'Australia's own'.

11. **SOCIALLYRESPONSIBLE** Toms Shoes, Conscious Step, and The Body Shop are all socially responsible brands that have positioned themselves accordingly. This means that when consumers are deciding on a purchase they also feel a level of social reward in buying the product.

12. **ENVIRONMENTALLYRESPONSIBLE**

Brands may sell themselves as environmental advocates with their positioning. Persuading

consumers they are environmentally friendly is an increasingly important factor - especially with chemical or non-renewable products that affect buyer behaviour. While brands often overstate the environmental 'pull', when performance and price are comparable, the value of 'enviro' can be a real differentiator.

13. PERSONAL EXPRESSION

EXPRESSYOURSELF Personal expression is a core human driver. 'Think different', and 'open your mind' both challenge and command consumers to do so to set themselves aside form their competitors. Famously Burger King challenged the ubiquity of the 'Big Mac' being for everyone, and challenged with the 'personalise your burger' which became the now classic positioning of 'have it your way'.

14. PERSONAL ENRICHMENT

TO REWARD ORTO DISCOVER NEWTHINGS Marketing legend Dave Trott talks about two things being required to prompt action: 1) Desirability 2) Permission This territory of rewarding and indulgent nature uses this as leverage to stand out from their competition. 'Because you're worth it' and 'Have a break!' persuade the consumer they have deserved the personal enrichment and/or experience.

15. SOCIAL ENRICHMENT

CONNECTTO OTHERS Nokia and Facebook both use mediums that allow consumers to communicate. Therefore, they focus their positioning territory on how they connect people. Facebook also shows us how visuals are sometimes more powerful than statements.

16. MOST POPULAR

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE Focusing on the brand as being the most popular brand, or the 'people's choice', is an effective positioning strategy as it increases the consumer trust in the brand. Oral-B have achieved this by explaining over a million Australians use the product, and Pepsi have taken the step further through the 'Pepsi taste challenge' to prove that consumers prefer their taste.

17. INNOVATORS

THE FIRST WITH WHAT'S NEXT Brands who show they are the first with the next big thing target the innovative consumers - in particular the technologically savvy. Samsung and Intel both send the message that they are the brands delivering the breakthrough technology, or rather 'sponsoring tomorrow'.

18. SERVICE

To distinguish themselves from competitors, Avis have focused on the customer service approach. By stating 'We try harder', the great customer service that they provide becomes the first and dominant benefit in the consumers mind.

19. **FASHIONABLE**

   WHAT'S IN RIGHT NOW Rolex positions their brand as fashionable which can be seen through promoting their watches as stylish. Levis paint shows how fashion is not just limited to just clothes and accessories.

20. **SMART**

   THE CLEVER CHOICE Nobody wants to look stupid. In fact humans spend much time trying to look 'smart'. Brands that can anchor into being the 'smart choice' can often find powerful positionings.

21. **LEADERSHIP**

   LEADINGTHE WAY positioning your brand towards leadership sends a professional and premium message to consumers. PNC Bank and ESPN both dominate this territory by stating they are the leaders in their market.

22. **TRADITION**

   People often exhibit revisionist's history, where they recall the past as far more favourable and enjoyable than it actually was. Brands that understand this can benefit from these positive associations. Good old fashioned values are focused on within the 'tradition' territory. Wendy's burgers are a classic example of this.

23. **AN OCCASION**

   The benefit of relating a brand or product with an experience or occasion is that it encourages routine consumption. One of the smartest ways to position a brand is to associate it with a usage 'trigger'. For example, Moccona coffee relates a consumers morning with their brand. ! ! Febreeze initially got this wrong by trying to be the 'bad smell cure'. However they later found success by positioning Febreze as something that came at the end of the cleaning ritual, the reward. Instead of reminding the consumer that their home stinks, Febreeze is now implied as a pleasant treat.

PERCEPTUAL MAPPING

As marketers, perceptual mapping can help us make more informed decisions about a company's market position in relation to competitors and strengthen marketing strategies as a result.

What Is Perceptual Mapping?

Perceptual mapping is a visual representation of where a brand, product, or service stands among competitors. It is also known as positional mapping.

This type of competitive analysis framework generally consists of two key attributes as a basis (e.g., price and quality, as seen in the example below). Once you've chosen the attributes you want to focus on, the next step is to plot the brands, products, or services to see how they're positioned among these attributes.

Perceptual mapping utilizes customer input to understand your brand, product, or service from the customer's perspective. However, you can also use specific marketing data to look at the competitive landscape from a digital customer-engagement perspective. This gives an objective look at how customers engage with you and your competitors online.

Ways to Use Perceptual Mapping

Perceptual mapping can be used with both qualitative data and quantitative data. While the process of creating the perceptual map remains the same for both, they serve different purposes. These perceptual mapping techniques show us how to gain insight into customer perceptions and digital customer engagement:

Mapping Customer Perceptions (Qualitative Data)

A perceptual map focused on qualitative data can help us identify subjective feelings and opinions customers have toward a brand, product, or service. The attributes you choose to map can only be determined through a direct line of communication with customers. This can take the form of

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interviews, surveys, polls, reviews, etc.

The first step in this perceptual mapping technique is to figure out two attributes you want your perceptual map to focus on. The easiest way to find these attributes is to put yourself in the customer's shoes, so to speak: what are two important factors specific to your company that customers use to determine if they want to make a purchase?

You can find out what attributes you want to focus on in a variety of different ways, but it generally comes down to two main methods: a company's collective knowledge, and experience of the market or a verified market research study.

Using WordPress as an example, let's say the two attributes we've chosen to map are features and user-friendliness, two things that customers looking for a website builder would want. Next, we'll identify competitors. Let's use Squarespace, Weebly, and Wix — popular brands that also occupy the website builder space. Our goal is to identify how customers perceive the features and user-friendliness of WordPress in comparison to Squarespace, Weebly, and Wix.

For this example, let's pretend we've compiled data from a perceptual mapping questionnaire that shows us how customers feel about the features and user-friendliness of these website builders on a scale of 1 to 10. Using this data, we can plot all of the brands on a map to see how they're positioned next to each other in the context of these attributes.

This gives us a visual representation of how customers view WordPress among its competitors in terms of features and user-friendliness. Do people see WordPress as having better features but Wix as more user-friendly, for example? Having insight into this, WordPress can make decisions on whether they want to address the user-friendliness factor or continue to focus on offering a wide range of features to its customers.

Mapping Digital Customer Engagement (Quantitative Data)

A perceptual map focused on quantitative data can help us identify objective measurable statistics about a brand, product, or service. The attributes you choose to map for this approach need to be based on empirical evidence. That can mean things like a company's location, the number of stores, the number of employees, etc.

This perceptual mapping technique uses marketing data to determine digital customer engagement. Using WordPress.com as an example, we'll start by deciding which two attributes we want to use for our perceptual map. For the purposes of this example, we'll use total engagement on social media and time on site as the two attributes. We'll also use Squarespace.com, Weebly.com, and Wix.com as competitors.
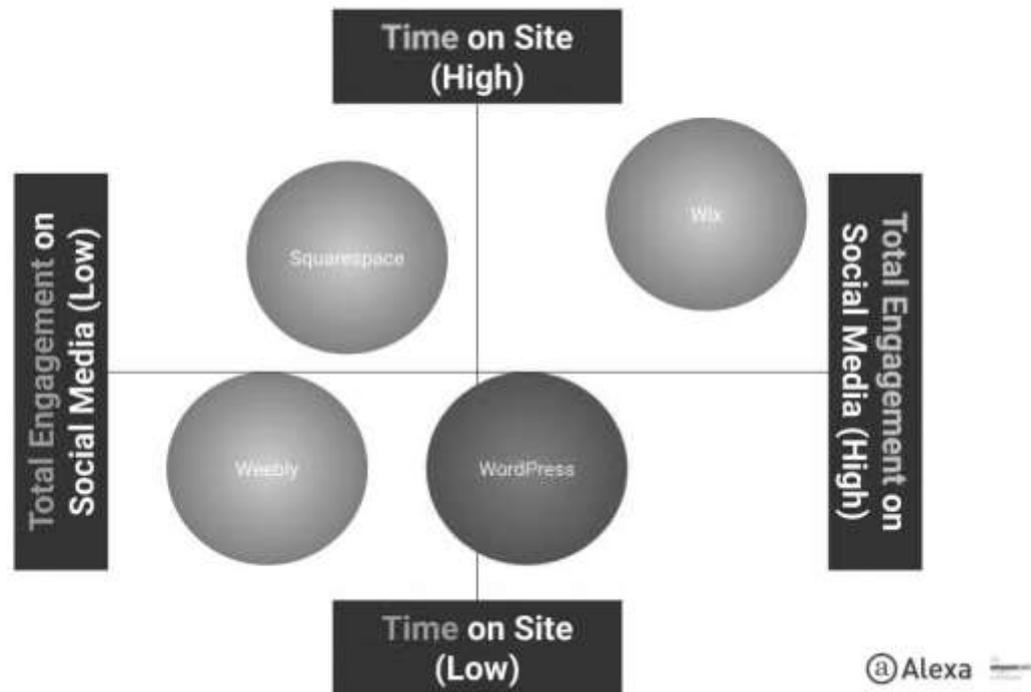
We've kept it simple for the purposes of our example, but you can customize your perceptual map to your liking with company logos, colors, and more:

PERCEPTUAL MAPPING EXAMPLE

Now that we have a concrete visual representation, we can see how WordPress.com is doing among these two attributes next to their competition.

We can see that Wix.com has the highest total engagement on social media and highest time on site among its competitors. We can also see that Weebly.com has the lowest total engagement on social media and lowest time on site.

The next step is to analyze these findings to determine *why*. Is Weebly.com's time on site so low because people are leaving the site quickly or because people know exactly what they want to do while on it? Is Wix.com's time on site so high because people are taking longer to search through it? We need to analyze all the data to determine the *why* behind WordPress.com's positioning next to their competition.

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