



I Want YOU!

A GUIDE TO INDUSTRIAL BRANDING



The title "TABLE OF CONTENTS" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. A large, light blue gear icon is partially visible in the background on the left side of the page.

Branding isn't just for athletic shoes, coffee shops and cell phones. Branding is for industrial companies too – because it's all about creating an identity that your customers prefer and want.

It's really not that hard. So sit back and relax while we explain how you can create demand for your products and services, and crush your competition.

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WHAT IS A BRAND?

1. That thing they burn into cows
2. A logo or trademark
3. An ad campaign
4. A tagline or slogan
5. I don't really know, but I'll look like an idiot if I admit it



If you want customers and prospects to buy from you instead of your competition, you might want to know the answer to this question.

If you guessed #1, you're correct!

Branding: searing the hide of a rancher's cattle with a distinct mark so that it isn't confused with anyone else's (that's differentiation)

Even engineers – after analyzing all the data – will ultimately make buying decisions based on “what feels right.”

Your “brand” resides in the hearts (feelings) and minds (intellect) of your customers and prospects.



"Your brand is what other people say about your company when you're not in the room."

~ Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon.com



STRENGTH BEGETS STRENGTH



- A strong brand sets you apart from your competition.
- Customers will recall it better than an unknown brand.
- Strong brands create barriers for new competitors, protecting market share.
- More trust is placed in a known brand than a no-name brand.
- Customers are willing to pay more for a strong brand.

SO, TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF...

Think of your brand as your company's personality.

 • What does it look like?

 • How does it speak?

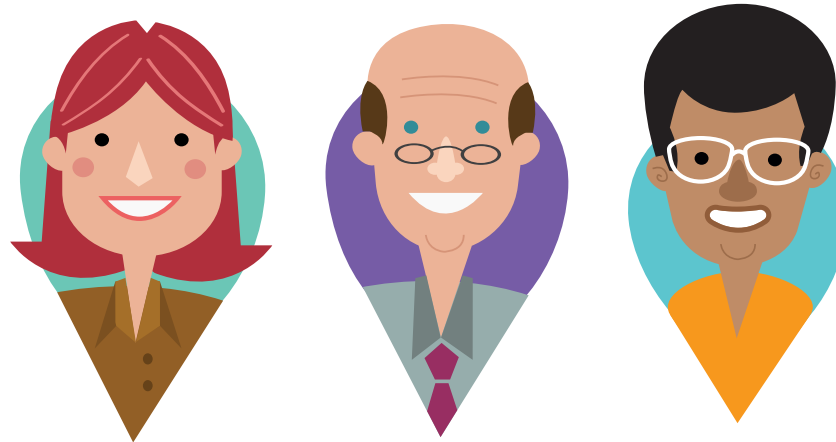
 • How does it dress?

Silly questions? **NO:** to your customers, your company is a real, live entity.

You have the power to create a brand identity that embodies all the attributes you want associated with your brand.



When certain people come to mind, what are your reactions?
Do you feel happy, resentful, love, excitement ... indifferent?



Now, think of how you want your customers to react
when they think of your company.

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LET'S MAKE A CONNECTION

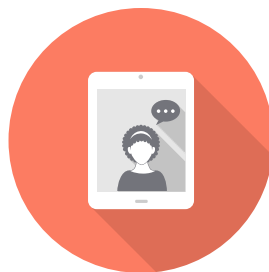
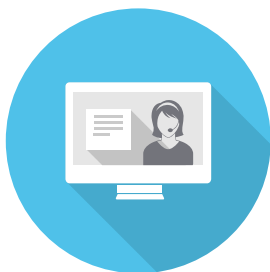
Branding is about relationships. Customers want to know your hopes, your dreams, if you like long walks on the beach underneath a gibbous moon. Alright, not beach walks, but they want to know your history and why you do what you do. To connect with them at this level, you have to determine:

- What is your company's ultimate purpose?
- What are your company's values?
- What are your "brand stories" – interesting things that have helped to build your brand?



*“If you don’t give the market
the story to talk about, they’ll define
your brand’s story for you.”*

~ David Brier



TRUTH IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

- Are you living up to what you say you want your company to stand for?
- Get input from different levels in your organization – and if you really want to do this right, ask customers and vendors.
- There's no "I" in Team, so don't fool yourself into believing you can do this by yourself.
- Remember, perception is relative. One person's perception of your business or product may be very different from another's.



ANALYZE WHAT YOU THINK YOU ALREADY KNOW

You may think you already know all this stuff. But sit in a room full of your top managers and get a discussion going. You may be surprised at what you hear.

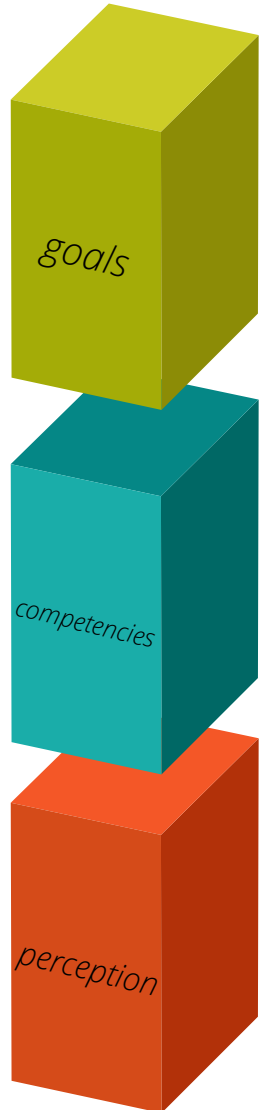
- Who ARE your customers? What are their objectives and what drives them?
- What needs do you think they have that aren't being met?
- What about your competitors? How do you stack up against them?
- What does your typical customer think of the competition?





UNDERSTAND THYSELF...

What about your own company?

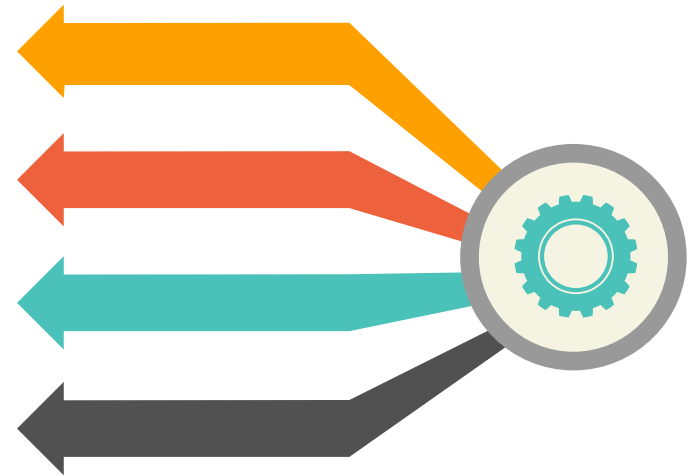


- What are your short and long term goals?
- What are your core competencies – what do you do better than anyone else?
- How do you think your customers perceive you and how do you want them to perceive you?
- How far apart are the 2, and what will it take to narrow the gap?

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

This is really what prospects care about—
and where a great value proposition statement comes in handy.

- A value proposition is a summary of what you will give your customers.
- It should focus on your customers' needs.
- It should state your relevance, differentiation, and substantiate the claims you make about your products or services.



And this is where many (most) industrial companies get it wrong.

Your customers don't care how great **YOU** think your products and services are.



“A brand is a person’s gut feeling about a product, service, organization. It’s not what YOU say it is: it’s what THEY say it is.”

-Marty Neumeier author of “Zag”



AWESOME COMPANIES...

...do things awesomely!

Think about what you offer customers that the competition doesn't. There are 3 main ways to differentiate:



- Master of operational efficiency (lowest price, best value)



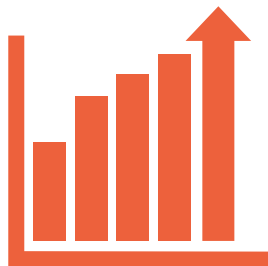
- The market leader guru (the latest technology, best portfolio of services)



- The authority on customer intimacy (in tune with the customer, best overall solutions)

THE MASTER OF OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

- Your customers just want a good product at the lowest possible cost. New technology isn't particularly important. It really is price that counts.
- You're not trying to come up with new or better products or services. You just want to produce more volume at lower cost.
- You focus on improving operational efficiencies to keep costs down.



THE MARKET LEADER GURU



- Your customers care most about “the best” – period.



- Your company culture is completely dedicated to innovation and quality.



- You work constantly on improvements and innovations you can bring to market first.

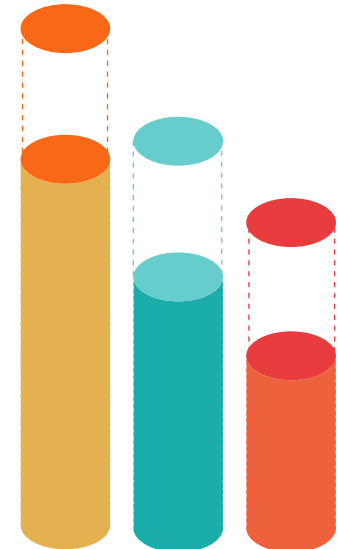


- You stay on top of what your competition is up to and remain a step ahead.



THE AUTHORITY ON CUSTOMER INTIMACY

- Your market is flooded with products or services like yours and pricing is all across the board. But your customers want customized solutions.
- You diligently research your customers' businesses and needs and focus on building successful relationships so you can deliver the ideal products, services and solutions over time.
- You know you can't just say "we offer great service." This is ingrained into your corporate culture, and your employees demonstrate this in every interaction with every prospect and customer.



So, you've written your value proposition, but your work isn't done yet. Now you're going to develop your brand strategy.

- A brand strategy states how you will manage your brand.
- It states how you will position your brand and includes specific tactics that will achieve your goals.
- It shapes how you will do business and project your brand's promise.
- It takes into account internal and external audiences.
- Adherence to the brand strategy is non-negotiable if you're serious about building a strong brand.



TO STAND THE TEST OF TIME –

- build a strong foundation.

Your brand strategy needs a framework that clearly defines how your brand looks to the world – a positioning platform.

A positioning platform contains the messages that MOST represent your desired brand identity (that can be backed up by your value proposition.)

It defines the voice of your brand: Authoritative?
Confident? Casual? Educational? Solution provider?

It explains exactly what your brand will look like visually. It's a good idea to develop a brand style guideline. Consistency helps to create strong brands.



SUCCESS IS ALL-INCLUSIVE

If your brand strategy is only for your Board of Directors, prepare to crash and burn. You have to get everyone from the top down to buy into the promise.

- Map out your internal audience. How will you help them understand how they contribute to the strategy?
- The brand strategy must be the holy grail of your executive management. They should manage employees and make decisions in a way that is consistent with the strategy.
- It's especially important to educate your operational teams about your strategy: HR, customer service, inside and outside sales. They are on the front line with customers and bring life to the brand promise.



TAKE IT PERSONALLY

Your brand strategy MUST begin from the inside out. To ensure that all employees are “living the brand” you will have to continually reinforce its importance.



- Develop tactics to instill the brand promise into your company's culture.



- Have ongoing meetings and training about why it matters and how each employee contributes.



- Create implementation action plans for each department.



- Build accountability into your plan for achieving targets.

Once your internal audience is on board, they begin to spread the message to your customers. Every interaction is an opportunity to help create your ideal brand identity.



Overhaul your current marketing tactics. Make sure they all support your brand strategy.



Sometimes you need an infusion of new ideas to help increase brand recognition and build brand equity.



Think of incentives for your employees to solidify buy-in and motivate them, long-term.



CUSTOMERS ARE PEOPLE, NOT NUMBERS

Sure, you have to be able to measure how successful your brand execution is going, but realize that it takes time for the market to respond.

Your customers need to see your brand's promise carried out many times and in different ways, first.

Just remember to be patient and consistent with marketing tactics and customer interactions.



A quick note: It took Apple a couple of decades to ingrain themselves into the American (and global) consciousness. Now, they are synonymous with innovation, creativity, and the cutting-edge.

SOME PEOPLE LOVE TO RESEARCH – FIND ONE

Over time, you need to measure how you're doing. You need to research how your customers:

- Associate with your brand
- Their awareness of it
- Their attitude about it
- Does their perception of your brand match what you are trying to communicate?



Understanding this will help you determine whether your brand strategy is having the intended effect or not.

THE BIG PAY-OFF

There are long-term, intangible benefits to industrial branding that can never be measured.

Since your brand exists in the minds of others, there is a psychological component that will influence buying decisions for decades if you get the formula right.





WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

YOU have the power to create an image of your company of your own choosing. It will take commitment, a financial investment, and firm adherence to your brand promise, but the reward could be a company that is trusted and preferred over all your competitors, and is successful beyond what you ever imagined.



Marketects can help.

Call us today and we'll lead you through the process.

281-360-1850