



Brand Identity

What...

*Brand Identity is
a unique set of brand associations
that the brand strategist
aspires to create or maintain.*

*These associations represent
what the brand stand for
and imply a promise to customers
from the organization members.*

The importance...

- What are my core values?
- What do I stand for?
- How do I want to be perceived?
- What personality traits do I want to project?
- What are the important relationships in my life?

Why...

- Brand Identity provides direction, purpose and meaning for the brand
- It is central to a brand's strategic vision
- It is the driver of one of the four principal dimensions of brand equity
 - Namely, Associations

Why...

- There is value in expanding the concept of a brand
- A limited/tactical perspective inhibits strategists from building a strong brand even when potential exists
- To achieve maximum brand strength:
 - Scope of a brand identity should be broad rather than narrow
 - Thrust should be strategic rather than tactical
 - There should be internal and external focus to brand creation

Brand Identity Traps

Brand identity traps

- Critical to understand what brand identity is and is not
- Four traps represent approaches to creating an identity that are:
 - Excessively limiting or tactical and...
 - That can lead to ineffective and often dysfunctional brand strategies
- Needless to say, they need to be avoided!

Brand identity traps

- The Brand Image Trap
- The Brand Position Trap
- The External Perspective Trap
- The Product-Attribute Fixation Trap

The brand image trap

- Brand image is how customers perceive the brand
 - It provides useful and necessary background information when developing brand identity
- A brand image trap results when efforts to go beyond the brand image is lacking
- The brand image becomes the brand identity rather than just one input to be considered

The brand image trap

Brand Image

- Is passive and looks to the past
- Tends to be tactical
- Might not be salient

Brand Identity

- Should be active and look to the future, reflecting associations aspired for brand
- Should be strategic, reflecting a business strategy leading to sustainable advantage
- Should reflect brand's enduring qualities

The brand position trap

- A brand position is the part of brand identity and value proposition that is to be communicated and that demonstrates an advantage over competing brands
- The Brand Position trap occurs when the search for a brand identity becomes a search for a brand position
- This inhibits evolution of a full-fledged brand identity

The external perspective trap

- This occurs when firms fail to realize role that brand identity plays in helping organization understand its basic values and purpose
- It is hard to expect employees to make a vision happen if they do not understand and buy into that vision

The product-attribute fixation trap

- Here the strategic and tactical management of the brand is focused solely on product attributes
- Attributes are not the only relevant bases for customer decisions and competitive dynamics
 - A brand is more than a product

The product-attribute fixation trap

- This trap is often caused in part by a reliance on research focusing on attributes
- Product attributes as the basis for brand identity have important limitations:
 - They fail to differentiate
 - They are easy to copy
 - They assume a rational customer
 - They reduce strategic flexibility

Related constructs

- Brand Image
 - How the brand is now perceived
- Brand Identity
 - How strategists want the brand to be perceived
- Brand Position
 - The part of the brand identity & value proposition to be actively communicated to a target audience

Broadening the concept of a brand

- The key to developing a strong brand identity is to broaden the brand concept to include other dimensions / perspectives
- A brand identity planning would result in a brand identity system
- Here, the brand identity provides a value proposition and results in a strong brand-customer relationship

Breaking out of the traps

- To help break out of the traps, brand strategists should consider the brand as:
 - Product
 - Organization
 - Person
 - Symbol
- The objective is to help consider different brand elements and patterns that can help clarify, enrich and differentiate an identity

Breaking out of the traps

- Not every brand identity needs to employ all or even several of these perspectives
 - For some brands, one will be viable / appropriate
- However, each brand should consider all and use those that help in articulating what brand should stand for in the customer's mind

The brand-as-product

- Product-related associations will almost be an important part of a brand identity
 - They are directly linked to brand choice decisions/use experience
- The product scope
- Product related attributes
- Quality / Value
- Association with use occasion
- Association with users
- Link to a country or region

The brand-as-organization

- This perspective focuses on attributes of organization rather than those of the product
- Organizational attributes are enduring / resistant to competitive claims than are product attributes
 - It is much easier to copy a product than to duplicate an organization with unique people, values & programmes
 - Organizational attributes usually apply to set of product class, & competitor in 1 product class may find difficult to compete
 - Organizational attributes like being innovative is hard to evaluate / communicate and it is difficult for competitors to demonstrate that they have overcome any perceived gap

The brand-as-person

- This perspective suggests brand identity that's richer/ more interesting than one based on product attributes
- Brand personality can create a stronger brand in several ways:
 - Help create a self-expressive benefit that becomes a vehicle for customer to express his/her personality
 - Can be the basis of relationship between customer and brand
 - Help communicate a product attribute and thus contribute to a functional benefit

Brand-as-symbol

- This perspective can provide cohesion and structure to an identity and make it easier to gain recognition and recall
- Elevating symbols to the status of being part of the identity reflects their potential power
 - Visual Imagery: Nike's swoosh, McDonald's arches
 - Metaphors: Energizer bunny, Rin's lightening
 - Heritage: Amul, Aavin, Vicks, Doordarshan



The Identity Structure

The core identity

- Represents the timeless essence of the brand
- Associations that are mostly constant as the brand travels to new markets
- More resistant to change
- Includes elements that make the brand both unique and valuable

The core identity: Examples

- McDonald's
 - Value Offering, Quality, Service, Cleanliness, User
- Nike
 - Product thrust, User, Performance, Enhancing lives
- Close Up
 - Gel form, User, Red colour

The extended identity

- Includes elements that provide texture and completeness
- Fills in the picture, adding details that help portray what the brand stands for

The extended identity: Examples

- McDonald's
 - Sub-brands, Logo, Characters, Convenience
- Nike
 - Personality, Logo, Sub-brands, Slogan, Endorsers
- Close Up
 - Mnemonic, Variants, Packaging

The identity structure

- Core identity for a strong brand should be more resistant to change than elements of extended identity
- Within a product class, a larger extended identity means a stronger brand
 - One that is more memorable, interesting, and connected to the customer's life



Value Proposition

Value proposition

*A brand's value proposition
is a statement of
the functional, emotional and self-expressive
benefits
delivered by the brand
that provide value to the customer*

Value proposition

*An effective value proposition
should lead to a brand-customer
relationship
and drive purchase decisions*

Functional benefits

- Benefit based on a product attribute that provides functional utility to the customer
 - Most visible and common basis for value proposition
- Such a benefit will usually relate directly to the functions performed by the product
- If a brand can dominate a key functional benefit, it can dominate a category
 - Close up and fresh breath
 - Surf and stain removal

Emotional benefits

- When purchase or use of a brand gives a positive feeling, that brand is providing an emotional benefit
- Emotional benefit adds richness and depth to the experience of owning and using the brand
- Most functional benefits will have a corresponding feeling or set of feelings
 - Freshness and confidence, in the case of DFT

Self-Expressive benefits

- A brand can provide a self-expressive benefit by providing a way for a customer to communicate his/her self-image
- Purchase and use of brands is one way to fulfill the need for self-expression
 - Feeling 'smart' by buying Surf
 - The 'can do' attitude by wearing a Nike

Self-expressive Vs Emotional benefits

Emotional Benefits

- Feelings
- Private products viz., books, soaps etc.,
- More transitory
- Consequence of using the product

Self-expressive Benefits

- Self
- Public setting/products viz., cars, apparels etc.,
- Permanent, linked to consumer's personality
- Act of using the product

Critical Supports



Critical supports

- Critical supports are also known as ‘reason to believe’ or ‘reason why’
- The evidence that shows how and why the brand is better than alternative brands
 - Provides credibility
- They could have a rational component and/or an psychological component

Critical supports: Manifestations

RTB can manifest in many ways

- Superior product details
- Expert endorsements
- Emotional reasons related to the values of the brand
- Demonstrations
- Heritage