

# **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 brandcustomer 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

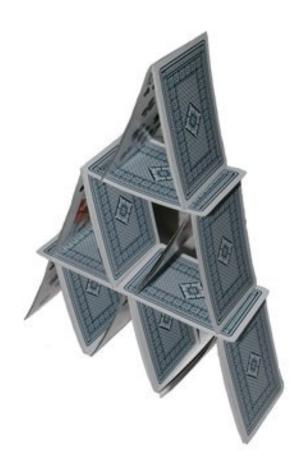
### The brand-as-person

- 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

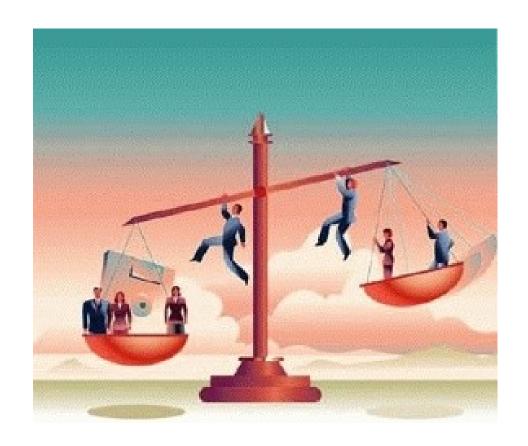
- Nike
  - Personality, Logo, Sub-brands, Slogan, Endorsers

- 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