

# **BRAND ARCHITECTURE:** Evaluating your existing strategy



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# What is brand architecture strategy?

Architecture strategy is often misunderstood. In fact, when most marketers hear the words "brand architecture strategy," they immediately think of logo lockups and other design guidelines. But brand architecture is much more than that.

Brand architecture strategy is **THE** method for determining how your organization can add new products and services while maintaining customer loyalty and increasing sales.

Bottom line: It's a business strategy. And a powerful one. If done correctly, it can help your organization gain more market share while avoiding product overlap.

Your brand's architecture strategy is likely a constant point of discussion amongst your company's executives. But, your approach may not be intentional, documented or aligned with your business goals. This kit will help.

**Brand portfolios should maximize market coverage so that no potential customers are being ignored, but minimize brand overlap so that brands aren't competing among themselves to gain the same customers.**

*Kevin Lane Keller, "Strategic Brand Management"*

# 3

## Three steps to evaluate your current brand architecture strategy

The first step in creating an intentional brand architecture strategy is to evaluate what you already have. Find out where you're at today. What's working? What's not? How can you fill those gaps? This can be completed in three steps.

**Step 1: Audit your current brand architecture strategy**

**Step 2: Categorize your brand portfolio**

**Step 3: Determine whether your current strategy  
aligns with your business goals**

# Step 1:

## Determine your current approach to brand architecture

You can discover your current brand architecture strategy by first asking one question: Are you a house of brands or a branded house?

If you're having a tough time answering, it might be that your organization uses a mix of the two approaches. The following pages show several brand architecture examples that can help you evaluate your existing strategy. You can also use Brand Architecture Worksheet 1 to map your current approach.



### House of Brands

In this strategy, also known as a product brand strategy, the company name is not identified at all. Instead, product names drive purchases. Proctor & Gamble is a famous "house of brands."



### Branded House

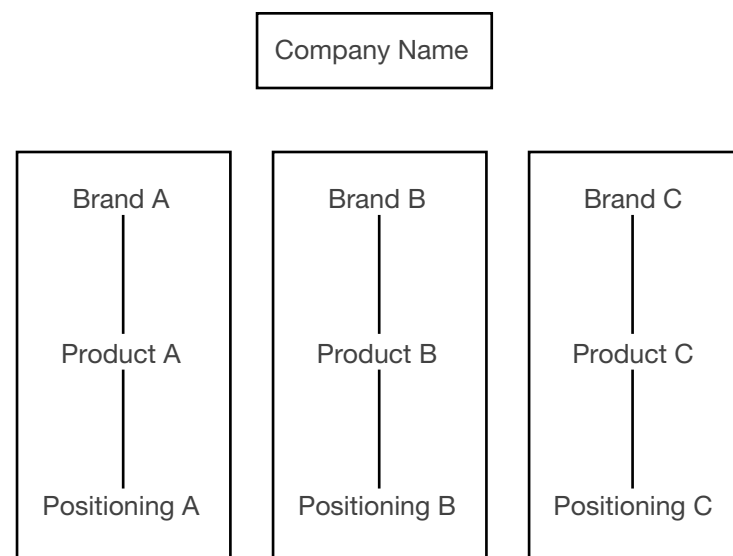
A branded house or masterbrand strategy has one unique brand name that motivates purchases and makes the products valuable. A great example of a branded house is Target.

# Brand Architecture Examples

## House of Brands

### Product Brand

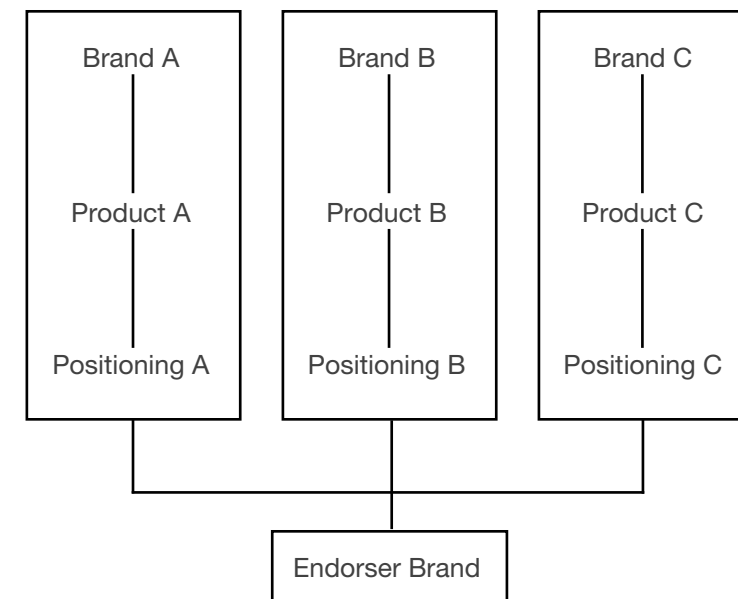
EXAMPLES: Proctor & Gamble, ConAgra



- The corporate brand is hidden
- One name is assigned to one product along with a single positioning
- Each new product is a new brand

### Endorser Brand

EXAMPLES: 3M, Johnson & Johnson



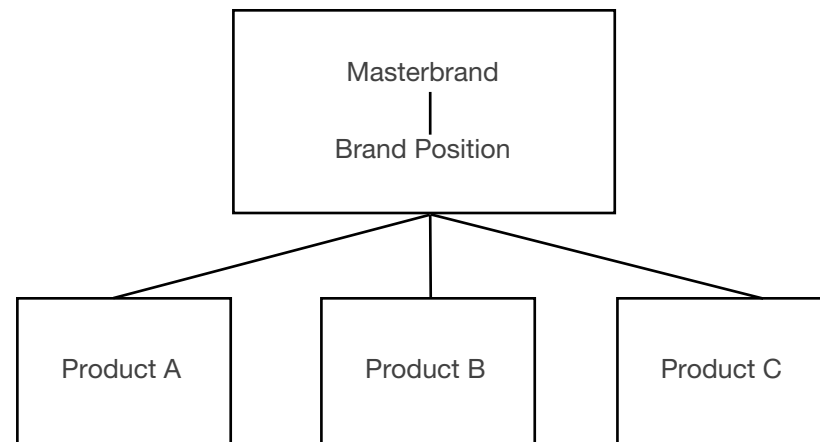
- Company name is well-known and guarantees quality
- One name is assigned to one product along with a single positioning
- Each new product is a new brand

# Brand Architecture Examples

## Branded House

### Masterbrand

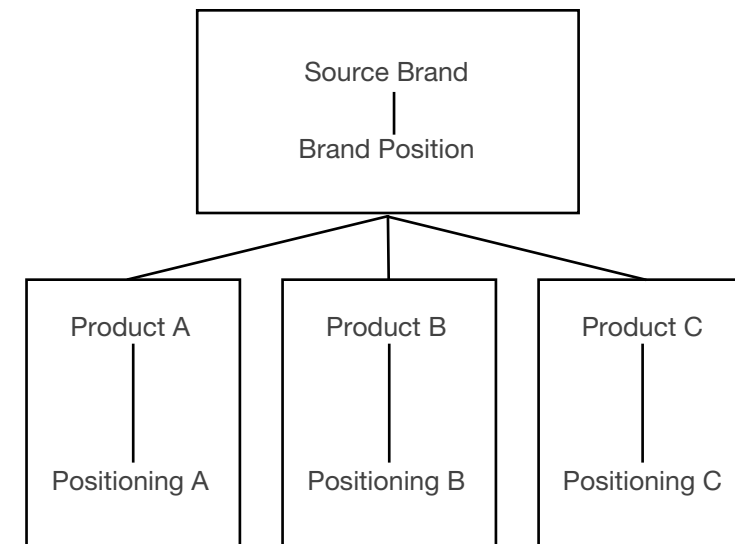
EXAMPLES: Target, Wal-Mart, Sony



- There is one unified brand name known to consumers
- The brand name covers more than one category
- Products align with the brand position of the corporate name and typically don't have their own brand names

### Source Brand

EXAMPLES: L'Oreal, Nestle, Apple



- Company name is well-known and guarantees quality
- Company name takes a backseat position
- Products are the heroes
- Both the source brand and product brands have unique, but aligning positions

# Step 2:

## Categorize your current brand portfolio

Next, you'll analyze the role each brand name in your portfolio plays for the consumer by completing the following items:

1. First, fill out the left-hand column of Brand Architecture Evaluation: Worksheet 2. Simply list all the brand names in your portfolio.
2. Next, ask yourself which role is played by each brand name on the list has. Use the chart on the right to help you. *NOTE: Brand names can play more than one role.*



driver role  
TRUE BRAND

Which brand name motivates the purchase?



value role  
QUALITY BRAND

Which brand name makes the product valuable?



accountable role  
RESPONSIBLE BRAND

Who will the customer call if something goes wrong?



identifier role  
SPECIFIC BRAND

How do customers know they are buying the specific item they want?



# Step 3:

## Determine whether your brand architecture strategy aligns with your business goals

Your brand architecture strategy should amplify both your short-term and long-term business goals. You should be able to explain the “why” behind decisions of how brands within your portfolio relate to one another. To do this, you will use the information gathered in Steps 1 and 2, schedule a strategy session with the appropriate people at your company and work through the questions on worksheet 3.



### Brand Architecture Alignment

Your brand architecture strategy should align with your business goals. The five items above should all be considered before you finalize your approach.

# Request a consultation

**Are you looking for an agency to help  
make sense of your brand portfolio?**

Ervin & Smith is a digital agency that helps brands develop integrated campaigns, improve marketing results and optimize their brand presence. We provide services and training for digital marketing efforts that include: branding, social media marketing, inbound marketing, Web design and development, email marketing, SEO and public relations. Our award-winning agency has been named to Inc.'s Fastest-Growing Privately Owned Businesses and voted a Best Places to Work by Ad Age.

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