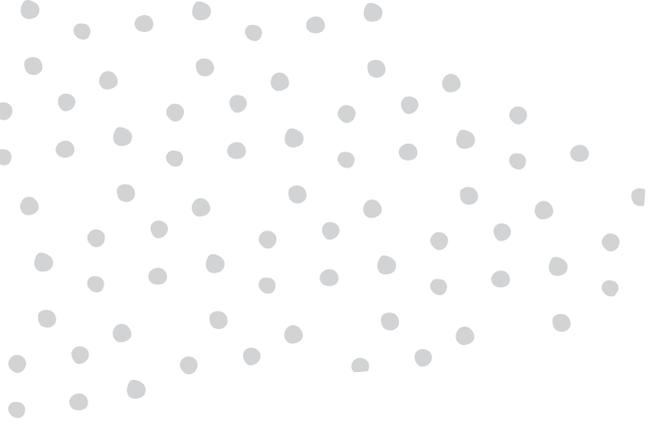


The Ultimate Guide to Brand Management



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**The Ultimate Guide
to Brand Management**

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What is 'brand'?

There are as many definitions of 'brand' as there are brand managers and marketing consultants.

A logo is not a brand.

Let's say that again: your logo is not your brand.

Your branding, or visual identity, is absolutely a component of your brand - it should be a visual translation, a reminder, of your brand promise and the experience but it is not the sum of your brand.

If you develop a logo and do not think about the product market fit you have developed a logo, not a brand.

If you develop a core colour palette and do not think about how to craft and deliver your message, you have developed a set of colours, not a brand.

If you think about how to construct an ad and do not think about how to make the experience exceed your customers' expectations, you have built an ad, not a brand.

Your brand is the promise to the customer.

Your brand is not your product or your name.

Your brand might include attributes of your product, but it is more than that. It is intangible and linked to subjective qualities.

A new veneer is not your brand.

Changing your branding, especially your visual identity, won't make your business different. It is essentially a new veneer on your house, but the walls of the house and the experience inside remains the same.

Your brand is the promise to the customer.

It is the sum of their experiences and knowledge of your brand.

Your customer defines your brand, but you can influence it.

Influencing perception

You can influence your brand (the promise and the perception) through the triggers and levers of branding, of which visual identity is one lever.

You can influence your brand through the language you use and the tone and personality you use when you write your ads and content.

You can influence your brand through the channels you use to communicate and advertise. You can influence your brand through those who speak on your behalf to their audience.

Brand marketing standards are evolving as we develop greater understanding of how to influence and shape the perception of the brand.

The most essential precept to remember, of course, is that your reality and perception need to sync - this isn't about a false veneer or 'fake news' - do the right thing by your customers, and your brand will become more meaningful.

You can influence your brand through those who speak on your behalf to their audience.

A photograph of a modern conference room, overlaid with a blue tint. The room features a long, dark conference table surrounded by white office chairs. A large television is mounted on the wall at the far end of the room. The floor is covered in a patterned carpet. The overall atmosphere is professional and clean.

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

- Jeff Bezos

The history of 'brand' in 2 minutes

To understand the history of brand management, we need to understand where the term ‘brand’ originated.

‘Brand’ in the modern sense, is commonly associated with the name of a product or service. A brand is more than the name or logo, of course, it is the promise to the customer, and their perception of how well you deliver upon that promise.

An indelible mark

Go back a couple of millennia, however, and a brand was an object used by livestock owners to mark their animals so they would be identifiable across lands, at market and in the slaughterhouses. The branding iron was used to sear the mark of the owner into the hide of each head of cattle.

Egyptian funeral monuments show branded cattle, making the practice at least 4000 years old.

Yes really, that long ago.

Potters also used marks and engravings to identify who made the product, where it was made and even the materials used. Chinese potters were using distinguishing marks more than 4000 years ago.

The practice existed long before the word was defined. The term brand originated in Old Norse - *brandr* - and referred to burning wood. By the 17th century, it applied to a stamp of ownership made by branding.

It meant no matter where the product was sold; it was identifiable as having come from a particular place and farmer. As well as aiding to reduce theft, it helped build a reputation for the quality of the meat and hide.

Mark of quality

Eventually, people started to associate value with individual makers, seeking out these products with increasing demand. Other people sought to join the producers and guilds of these products, to learn from those at the top of their field.

Imitation was increasingly common, and the brands or marks were used to demonstrate 'genuine' goods from a reputable and sought-after supplier. Guilds and producers began formalising their marks and differentiating themselves from each other.

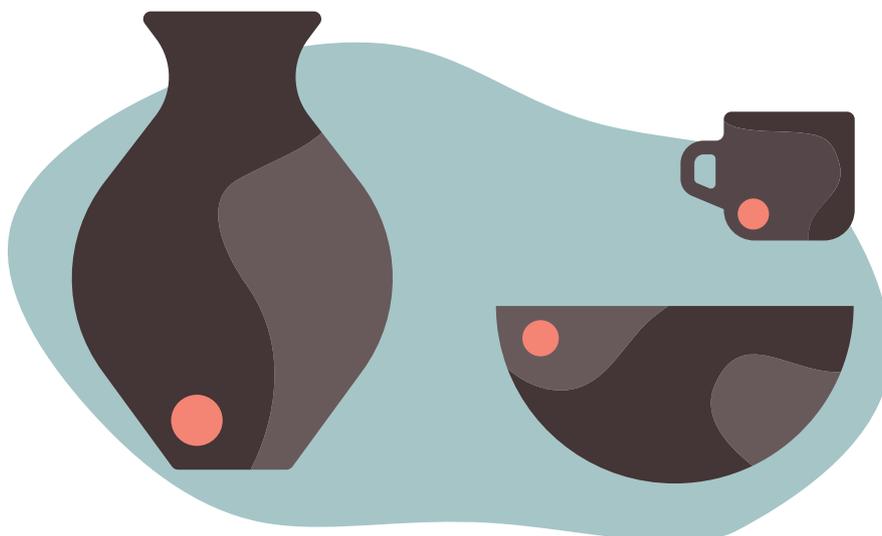
During the Industrial Revolution, as items were produced in higher volume, branding and marks were used to 'remove' the generic nature of the goods.

(Did you see what we did there? It didn't make the item any less generic, but it did change the perception of the product ... the start of modern brand and branding as we know it).

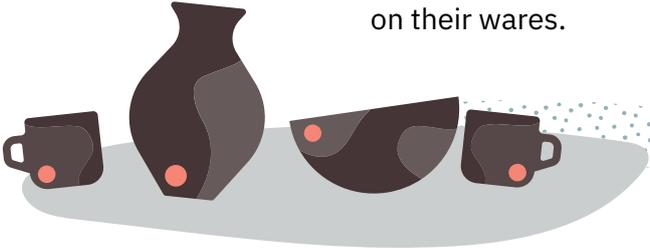
To protect their mark of quality, companies pressured politicians to preserve their point of difference, and the Trade Marks Registration Act passed into law in 1875.

Canny businessman spotted gaps in the market and realised businesses didn't need to be the only one, or markedly different; they just needed to position themselves as such.

James Walter Thompson started an advertising agency in the late 19th century and detailed the concept of trademark advertising, and from there the use of slogans, mascots, custom design and messaging grew into the behemoth that is brand and marketing today.

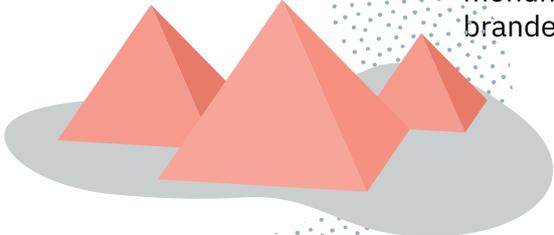


Chinese potters are using brand marks on their wares.

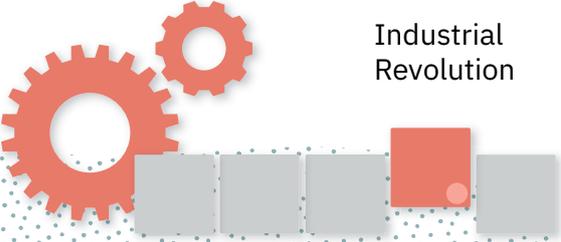


>4000 years ago

4000 years ago



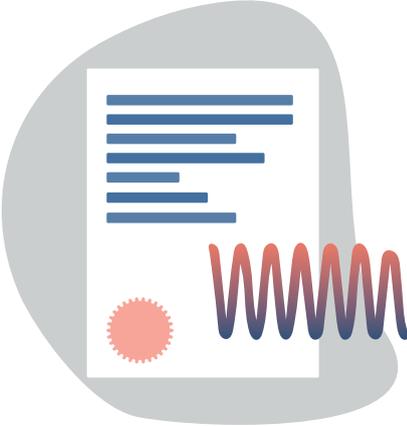
Egyptian funeral monuments show branded cattle



Industrial Revolution

Branding is used to 'remove' the generic nature of the goods

1875



Creation of the Trade Marks Registration Act

Late 19th century



James Walter Thompson opens the first advertising agency

The basics of brand management

If you are serious about your organisation's brand and creating a lasting and meaningful experience for your customers, good brand management is the linchpin around which you need to build this experience.

What is brand management?

Brand management is the development and execution of strategy to strengthen brand perception in the market. Your brand is only as strong as its perception, and resultant sales, so it is imperative to have a brand management strategy. This strategy allows you to inform and influence your target market, building strong relationships with potential clients, customers and partners.

Brand management enables your organisation to position each interaction and communication piece, in the right way for your audience - to build a meaningful

understanding of what you do and how you make a difference to them.

Brand management traditionally encompasses:

- Brand architecture or hierarchy
- Visual identity
- Messaging and communication
- Product, positioning and price
- Brand experience
- Customer relationship to the brand and other users of the brand

Key brand definitions

Brand

A brand is a shortcut in a customer's mind to understanding what you do and how you do it. It is the sum of experience and knowledge of your company positioning, your reputation.

A brand is your customer's perception of your organisation.

Branding

Branding, on the other hand, consists of all the marketing and communication techniques and tactics you use to influence this perception. The measures you use to influence will be dependent on your audience; channels and objectives.

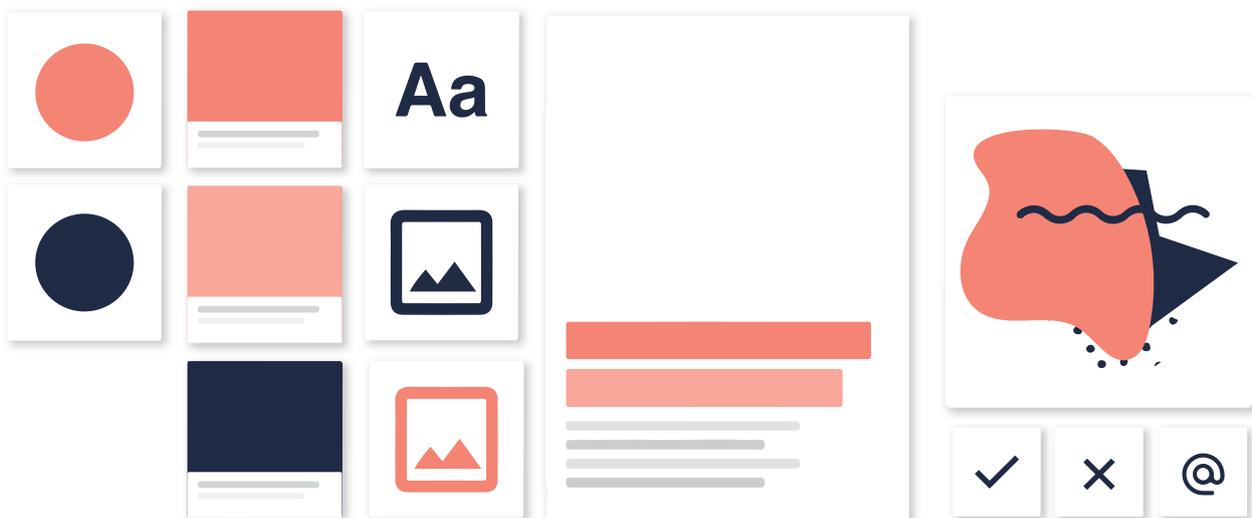
Visual Identity

Your visual identity is one of the tools you employ in your branding strategy to influence and shift your customer's perception.

Your visual identity includes:

- Logos
- Colours
- Typography
- Images
- Messaging hierarchy
- Illustration styles
- Icons
- Design elements

Brand guidelines are the traditional way to present and manage your visual identity for use in your branding activities.



Brand architecture and brand hierarchy

Brand architecture lays out the structure of brands within an organisation. The way brands interact or relate to one another is mapped and accorded a hierarchy.

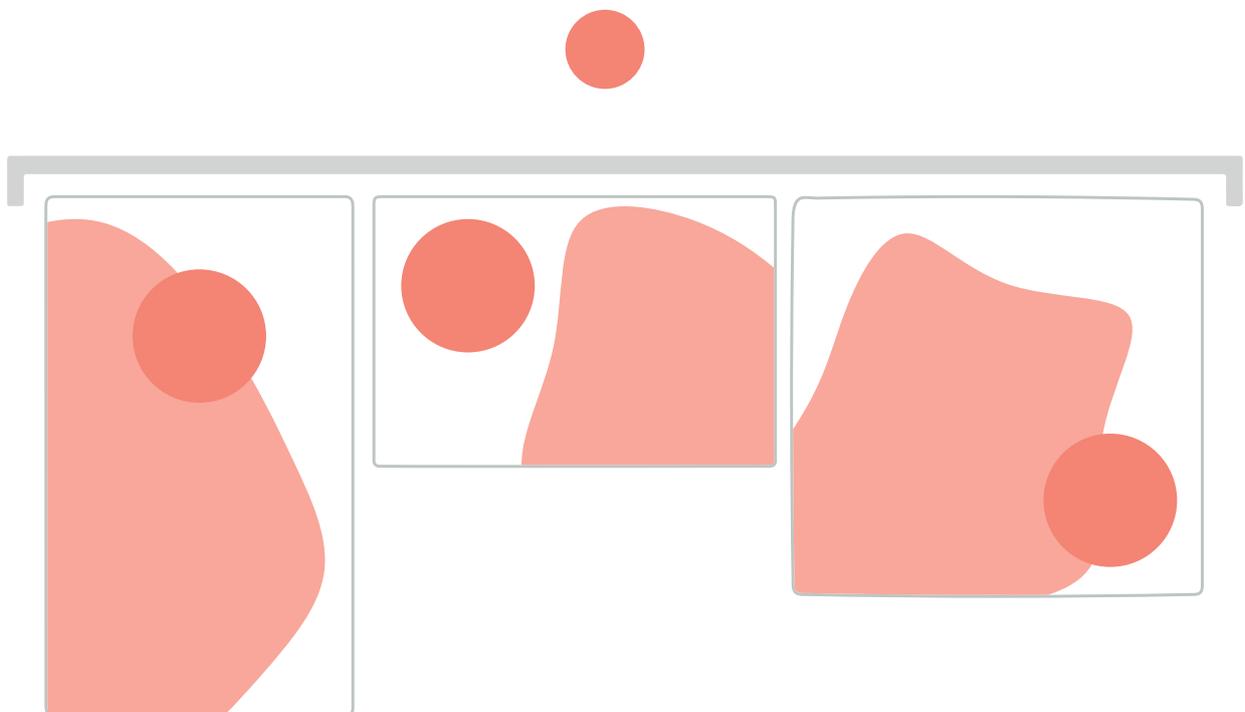
In some organisations products = brands, and in other organisations a brand is wrapped around a group of products.

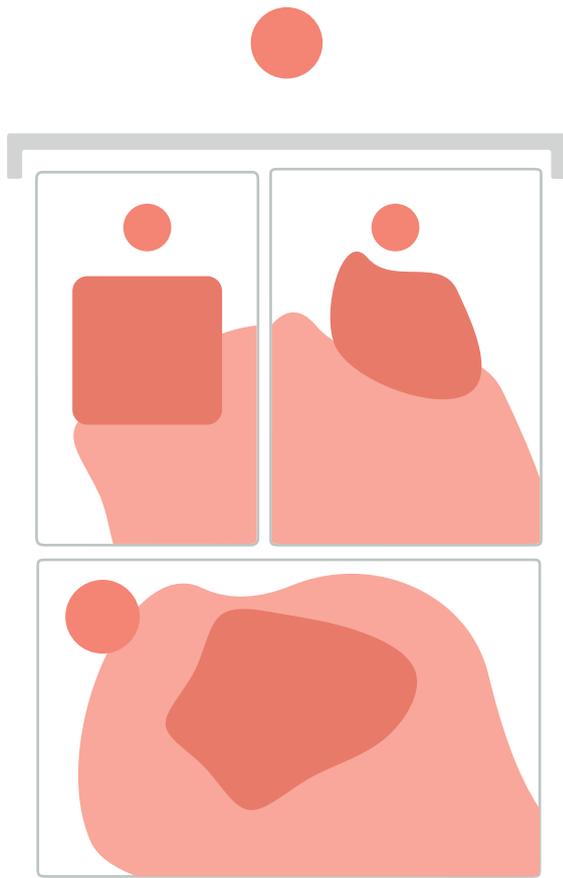
When we look at brand architecture, there are some key terms you will need to be comfortable with.

Master brand or a corporate brand

This brand is consumer-facing and may be used as a pure corporate brand, without sub-brands, or more commonly used across products and categories, associated with sub-brands.

Virgin is an example of a corporate brand. It is instantly recognisable to customers and sits in front of sub-brands like Virgin Mobile and Virgin Australia.

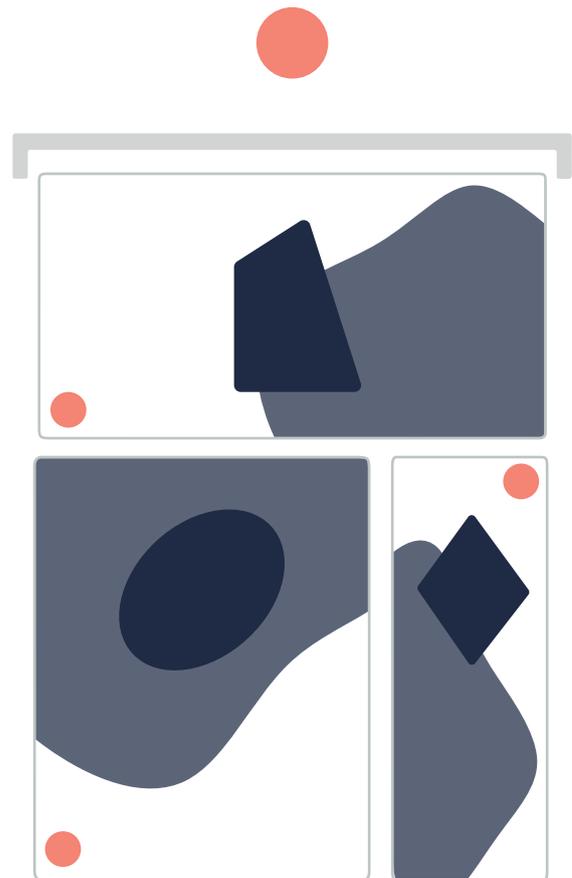




Sub-brand

This type of brand is part of a larger brand family (a master brand) but has its own identity and brand identity attached to a master brand.

Polo by Ralph Lauren is in this instance a sub-brand. Polo is the product brand endorsed by the master brand of Ralph Lauren.

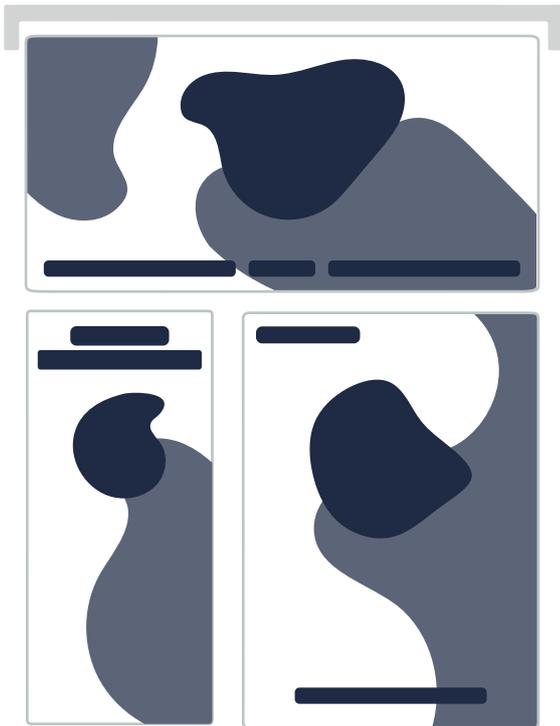


Product brand

A product brand has a corporate brand backing it, but the corporate brand isn't the hero of the product brand.

Gillette is a product brand because while its parent brand, Proctor & Gamble has a minimal branding presence on the packaging, it is not known as P&G Gillette.





A product doesn't automatically equal a brand

One thing to note at this juncture is that a product brand shouldn't mean treating all products or services as brands.

In fact, having your products all look like they belong to the same family strengthens your whole brand.

You may have multiple services delivering fitness training, e.g. Kids Fit Fast and New Mums Fit Fast but that doesn't mean each product needs its own visual identity - they can all operate as product or service names in your master brand identity.

Invisible brand

This type of brand isn't really a brand, but more a company who owns lots of sub-brands and product brands.

Their visual identity operates primarily below the line - not in public consciousness - and they don't spend money positioning their brand.

COTY is one of the biggest players in the beauty space, but their brand is virtually unrecognised. Their product brands are well known in their own right, however, and include Covergirl, Max Factor, Bourjois and Rimmel.

COTY

The importance of brand architecture and hierarchy

When a brand manager begins to map and develop a brand hierarchy, it is important to consider your audiences and your product or service offering.

Similar value offerings

If you have multiple products all aimed at the same audience, it makes sense to have them all sit within the one brand.

Samsung does this very well for its mobiles, TVs and air conditioners, for example. The audience is the same - consumers who believe in quality, appreciate the service network that comes from an established brand and like innovative technology - so they can position them all under a single brand.



Different value offerings

If, however, you have multiple products aimed at different audiences, and therefore different value offerings, you might consider building these under separate brands, so there is no confusion about what you do and who the customer is.

Unilever owns both Dove and Lux, both producing beauty soaps and shower gels. Lux is a more generic, less aspirational brand than Dove, and therefore has a different audience. Building these two brands separately allows Unilever to have a presence in different sections of the market, delivering products to two audiences, who are unlikely to switch to the other if one ceased production.



Brand hierarchy examples

Single master brand

Universities often have a strong master brand and similar value offerings to cater to their audience, but different product categories in this one brand.

Faculties, for example, usually belong to the master brand and are named to provide consistency across the organisation.

Monash University used the same visual identity framework for their 2018 Open Day and colours were used to differentiate the faculties in directional signage.

Monash University built a strong and consistent brand identity for their audience, with enough flexibility to be genuinely useful for campaigns and signage.



Understanding how to build your brand architecture, or make a change to brand architecture is a skill brand managers, and indeed the entire executive team, should have a confident handle on.

Sub-brands and product brands

Company structure and ownership also influences brand hierarchy and architecture, of course, particularly following mergers and acquisitions when the contract often includes brand structure and naming conventions.

One of the best examples of this is, of course, chocolate.

This brand hierarchy illustration looks at the way master brands, sub-brands and product brands can all work in concert. Each brand has their own identity, and you can see some of the brands are sub-brands and others, product brands.

Understanding how to build your brand architecture, or make a change to brand architecture is a skill brand managers, and indeed the entire executive team, should have a confident handle on.

Mondolez International owns the Cadbury brand among many other chocolate brands. Cadbury has many sub-brands (Cadbury Creme Egg, Cadbury Dairy Milk) while also being a product brand.

Mondolez grew their chocolate portfolio by acquiring Toblerone. It has its own identity, own branding and a separate value proposition to Cadbury, so it made no sense incorporating it into their existing brand structure.



Strategies for a house of brands or a branded house

The question of a house of brands or a branded house leads into brand architecture and is another way to approach the development of your architecture and structure.

Whether you are an established brand looking to expand or a new business mapping your future brand and product structure, you will benefit from a considered approach to brand hierarchy, allowing you to scale your brand when you grow.

Brand strategy considerations

Building a strong brand is the goal of any brand strategy. When deciding what brand strategy is suitable for your company, there are some key considerations:

- Consider your outcomes and your audience - what is the outcome you are promising to deliver through your brand?
- Who will benefit from you delivering this promise?
- What will your naming conventions be?
- Will you build awareness of all brand entities or just those consumer-facing?

Branded house definition

A branded house is structured so all brand names and product brands use the name of the master brand in their naming conventions and have a tie through their visual identities as well.

Each brand feeds into the master identity, reinforcing the brand attributes, and also draws down on the strength of the master brand. To re-appropriate a cliché, for a branded house, the sum of the parts makes the whole larger and stronger.

Branded house example

An example of a branded house is Apple. Apple has multiple products, and many of them are known well enough to stand apart as product brands. However, they are all clearly branded Apple and leverage the brand visual identity and ethos of the master brand.



Building and controlling a single brand is also easier for brand and marketing teams.

Benefits of a branded house strategy

The branded house strategy works well to provide a common platform for individual product brands while each marketing and positioning element simultaneously builds both the product brand and the master brand.

A branded house takes advantage of the same outcomes and audience - it capitalises on existing synergies and doesn't cannibalise products within the house because the purposes are differentiated.

Planning, resources and budget are all centralised rather than split between teams and brands in a branded house model. Building and controlling a single brand is also easier for brand and marketing teams.

Negatives of a branded house strategy

A branded house strategy makes it difficult to add new audiences (who aren't users of your core brand) or to add new brands through mergers and acquisitions. New audiences often need a different outcome from the product or category, a different value proposition or a different price. They may be consciously avoiding your brand because it doesn't meet their needs and will be sceptical of a play into a new space

with the existing brand, or it may not be possible to make a play into this space because of strategic or value-based limitations.

An Android phone user is unlikely to adopt an Apple tablet because they philosophically disagree with the closed ecosystem of Apple. The product brand in this instance (linked to the master brand) doesn't allow this flexibility.

A house of brands doesn't grow stronger by referencing other product brands; it becomes stronger by demonstrating singleness of purpose for each product brand.

House of brands definition

A house of brands has diverse audiences, outcomes, brand purposes and visual identities sitting underneath a corporate brand. The brands are promoted as separate entities, often without reference to the corporate brand, let alone each other.

A house of brands doesn't grow stronger by referencing other product brands; it becomes stronger by demonstrating singleness of purpose for each product brand.

The most critical element to underpin a house of brands is the audience and the brand's promise to this audience.

House of brands example

Unilever is the brand behind many brands.

Some of its most prominent brands in Australia include Lynx, Dove, Lipton, Streets, Bushell's and Continental. These products are so disparate, with the purposes and audiences so diverse that it couldn't possibly market them all under the one brand. Some of this is naturally due to the acquisition of additional brands over the 80+ year history of the company.

However, the strength of the Unilever brands is the individual and recognisable brand identities – customers buy Lynx because they think it will get them through the awkwardness of teenage years with as little heartbreak as possible. They are purchasing the brand – the promise to the customer – that is unique to Lynx.

The Lynx logo is a red circle with the word "LYNX" in white, uppercase letters.

Benefits of a house of brands strategy

A house of brands works best with the individual brands clearly defined by distinct target markets and marketing strategies - most commonly consumer brands. It works where a particular target market doesn't respond to the other brand, e.g. the user of Dove for Men doesn't want his body care routine associated with that of teenage boys, i.e. the Lynx brand.

In a hybrid brand house model some of the brands remain linked and others, while being in the same category perhaps, sit separately.

Negatives of a house of brands strategy

The downside of a house of brands architecture is that it requires more effort to plan and build the different brands that make up a house of brands. Again, it is imperative that the brands don't cannibalise each other – in that case, you are better off with a branded house.

Alongside increased effort is increased budget, because you cannot rely on cross-overs from one product brand and audience to naturally pitch another brand to the same audience.

Hierarchies can often be quite complex in a house of brands and the corporate brand underpinning all of them can become lost.

Unilever, for example, had no branding presence on the packaging of its product brands for years, and now has only a small logo presence.

Hybrid brand house definition

A hybrid brand house usually occurs following mergers and acquisitions - what started out as a branded house (all linked through the master brand with common-brand promises, naming conventions and visual identities) has now become a little bit of a Frankenstein's monster with new brands now part of the roster with separate promises, positioning and branding.

In a hybrid brand house model some of the brands remain linked and others, while being in the same category perhaps, sit separately.



A house of brands works best with the individual brands clearly defined by distinct target markets and marketing strategies

Hybrid brand house example

An example of a hybrid brand house is Coca-Cola.



Coca-Cola has the core Coke range - Coke, No Sugar, Diet - all using the Coca-Cola brand and visual identity. They also own Sprite, Fanta, and Powerade among other product brands.

These product brands all have their own identities, product visions, brand personalities and positions within the market.

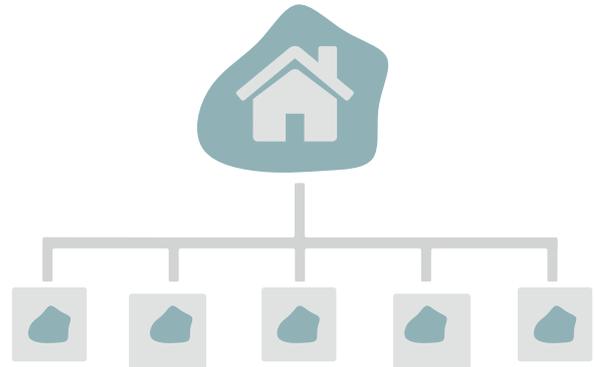
Benefits of a hybrid brand strategy

A hybrid brand commonly occurs through purchasing another company or expanding their offering into new spaces, e.g. adding sports drinks to the roster. It allows you to capture new markets and audiences and ensures new offerings don't confuse your existing customers.

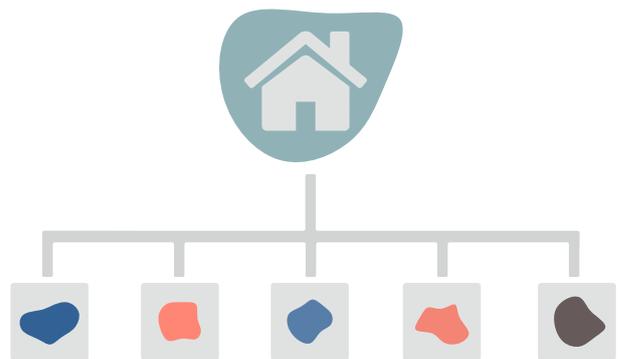
Negatives of a hybrid brand strategy

This model essentially becomes the same as a house of brands with the same budget and management considerations.

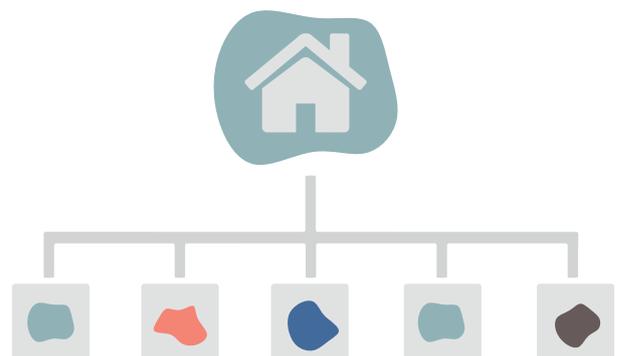
Branded House



House of Brands



Hybrid House



What does on-brand mean?

Branding is important and getting it right is even more so. This is why smart companies create style guides or use brand management platforms that help their employees stay on-brand.

However, what does on-brand mean?

Your brand is the embodiment of your promise to consumers and the stories you share. Your mission, vision, core values and company culture are all part of your promise and story. These things influence the buying behaviour of a market.

Being on-brand is to fulfil those promises and share your stories in a consistent, including predictable, manner that is recognisable by consumers. This means holding true to your messaging and nurturing the emotional connections you've been gifted with by your audience.

To be on-brand demands consistency and complete alignment between everyone in your company. Your overall brand image can suffer and the organisation's potential is limited without these.

Maintaining a uniform visual identity is paramount to staying on-brand. This includes your logo, communication style, colours and possibly other things unique to your business.

Are you staying on-brand?

What others think about you, what you think of your business and how you communicate are crucial factors that can make or break brand building - they can be likened to kryptonite.

You see, people can be fickle, and their beliefs or feelings about your brand can change almost instantly with different motives.

Communicate inconsistent messaging that isn't in line with your brand promise and you risk taking a massive reputational hit.

The following signs will let you know if you're staying on-brand.

1. Your marketing materials and content are aligned

Take a moment to look at several pieces of the marketing content you've got in public view. See if key branding aspects

are in alignment, such as design, font type, messaging, call to action and brand voice.

Is everything in a harmonious state?

This is where a style guide becomes invaluable.

For instance, you can investigate your social media channels, other off-site online networks, tangible and intangible marketing assets to see if you're staying on-brand. Prioritise the areas that require your attention and implement changes as needed.

2. Consumers talk about you

We're sure you agree it's great when consumers talk about you in a good way. Whether it's because you're known for your corporate responsibility, service or product, fulfilling expectations or exceeding expectations, getting noticed and eliciting favourable emotions is integral. However, that's not necessarily the kind of talk that lets you know if your company is on-brand.

Instead, you want people to think of your brand whenever they want a solution that your product/service solves. Surveys aimed at a randomly selected audience within your target market are great for gathering data to measure this. Simply ask a question that requires the answer to be a solution you provide and see if people choose your brand as an option. Maybe cap the options to 2 selections out of 4 brand choices.

3. Your customers find it easy to describe your brand

Reach out to your current customers, ask them to describe your brand and see if they use similar language as the ones you use to describe it. This is typically another strong indicator that you're doing a fantastic job at staying on-brand.

Your focus shouldn't just be on the terms they use, but the feelings their chosen words convey. For example, the words 'pleasant' and 'satisfying', generally exude the same emotions. What we say is linked to how we feel because words elicit emotions. Often the best source of inspiration is your customers, and perhaps you'll discover better words you can use to describe your brand.

To be on-brand demands consistency and complete alignment between everyone in your company.



Why you should care about being on-brand

Think of all the companies that have become synonymous with their offered solutions.

You think of Google when contemplating search engines, Amazon when you think of online shopping and Kogan when you want to buy electronics. However, these brands didn't accomplish synonymousness overnight; it took years of consistent on-brand communications.

Remaining on-brand is something that the largest and oldest businesses in existence do astonishingly well. Your consumers care about owning the best products, but what might influence them further is a recognisable brand. For customers, it's a shortcut to decision-making that is indispensable.

That's how large brands became considerable and why being on-brand can elevate your business's growth.

Simplify reputation building

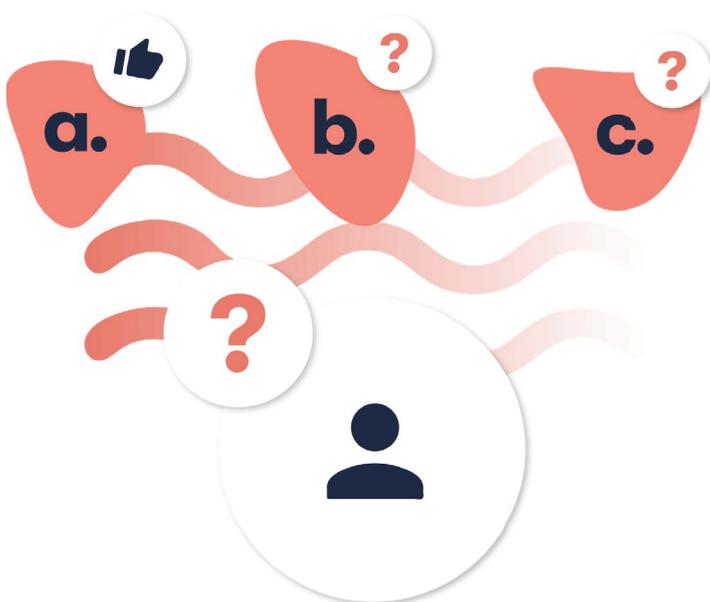
Building a robust business reputation is a challenge every company faces.

People will associate positive and negative experiences/events with your solution or product, which may affect your brand's reputation. Sometimes those events aren't even about your company.

A company that is repeatedly on-brand will naturally garner more attention, trust and likability.

You can mitigate most risks by being on-brand. The aim is to ensure that you're more associated with the good than the bad by prolifically differentiating your organisation. Staying on-brand separates you from the competition. That's why it's crucial to execute branding that is consistent with your brand promise.

Your team, service/product and business conduct among others come into play too. A company that is repeatedly on-brand will naturally garner more attention, trust and likability.



Advertising is more impactful

Make it stick.

Your marketing messages need to be remembered by the consumer in one way or another for a positive ROI. Advertising becomes more impactful the more people

A genuinely consistent voice, message and purpose that deliver on company promises will always produce the best outcomes.

recognise it. They may skip your ad but recollect your brand within their minds in minutes because it's recognisable. That's the power of being on-brand with everything you do.

A genuinely consistent voice, message and purpose that delivers on company promises will always produce the best outcomes.

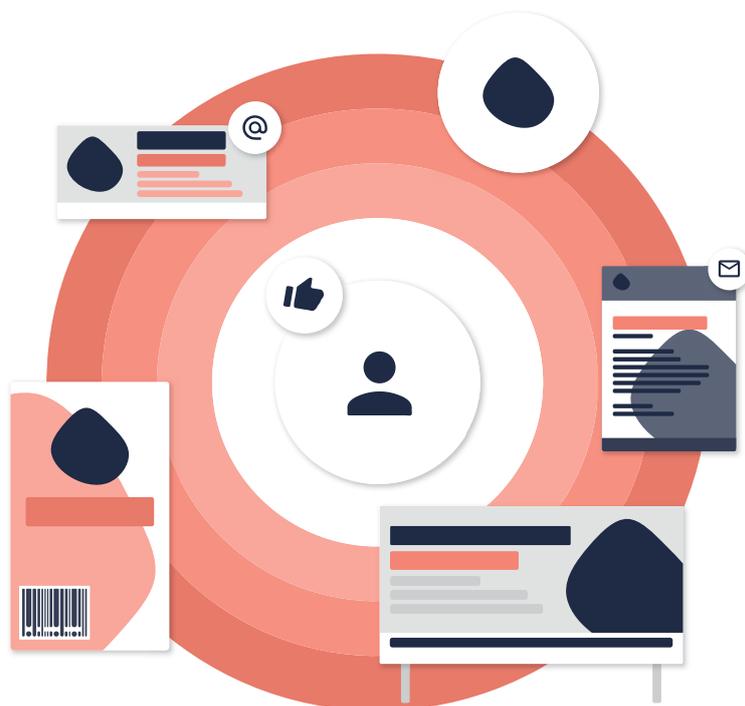
Get people to care

We're picky creatures - we never choose to do business with brands on a whim.

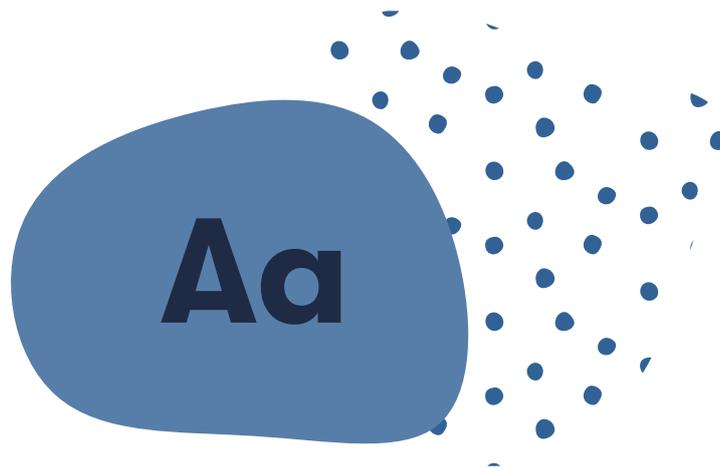
There's always a journey that a buyer follows and an identified reason for their choice. Very often it's because you were more memorable than your competitors.

Today the average consumer has access to several networks online and offline with plenty of companies competing for their attention. You have to be on-brand at all times if you want to defeat obscurity.

Many brands have died before their time because they're too quickly forgotten and the world loses out on experiencing their products. Make sure you're remembered by being on-brand.



Brand strategy from A to not- quite-Z



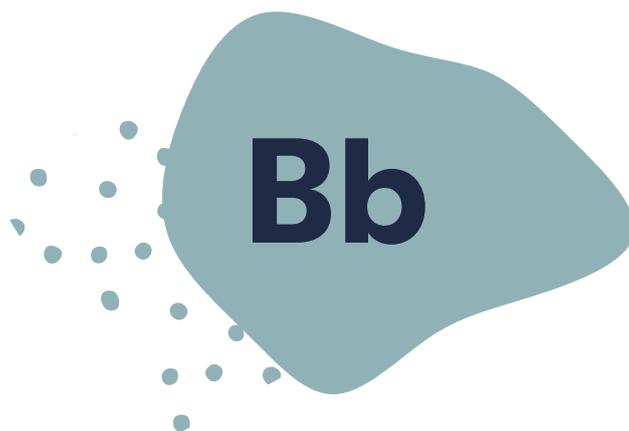
A is for Audience

The selection of your audience is one of the most complex and important pieces of your brand strategy puzzle. Ideally, the identification of your audience, and the research to support it, should be done before developing your brand, product and service. Successful brands are not a product in search of an audience, but rather a product whose audience identified the problem and support the solution.

A is for Advertising

When most people outside the marketing sphere think brand, they think advertising. For them, it is where they most commonly experience a brand. When you are building advertising campaigns, it is vital to consider both your audience and the outcome. What action do you want your audience to take after seeing the campaign?

Place your campaign where your audience is and then make it easy for them to act on the call to action. Build a multi-touchpoint campaign across the right channels to increase recall and the likelihood to engage. Moreover, know what your point of diminishing return for each channel is - don't waste your money where it will have no impact.



B is for Brand Promise

Defining your promise to the customer is perhaps the second most important piece of any brand strategy, the most important being delivering upon your promise. Your brand promise is your stake in the ground - your declaration of what you stand for.

It should also be specific, not a broad 'we make our customers' lives better'. The brand promise isn't your mission statement; it is at the core of every decision about product and service.

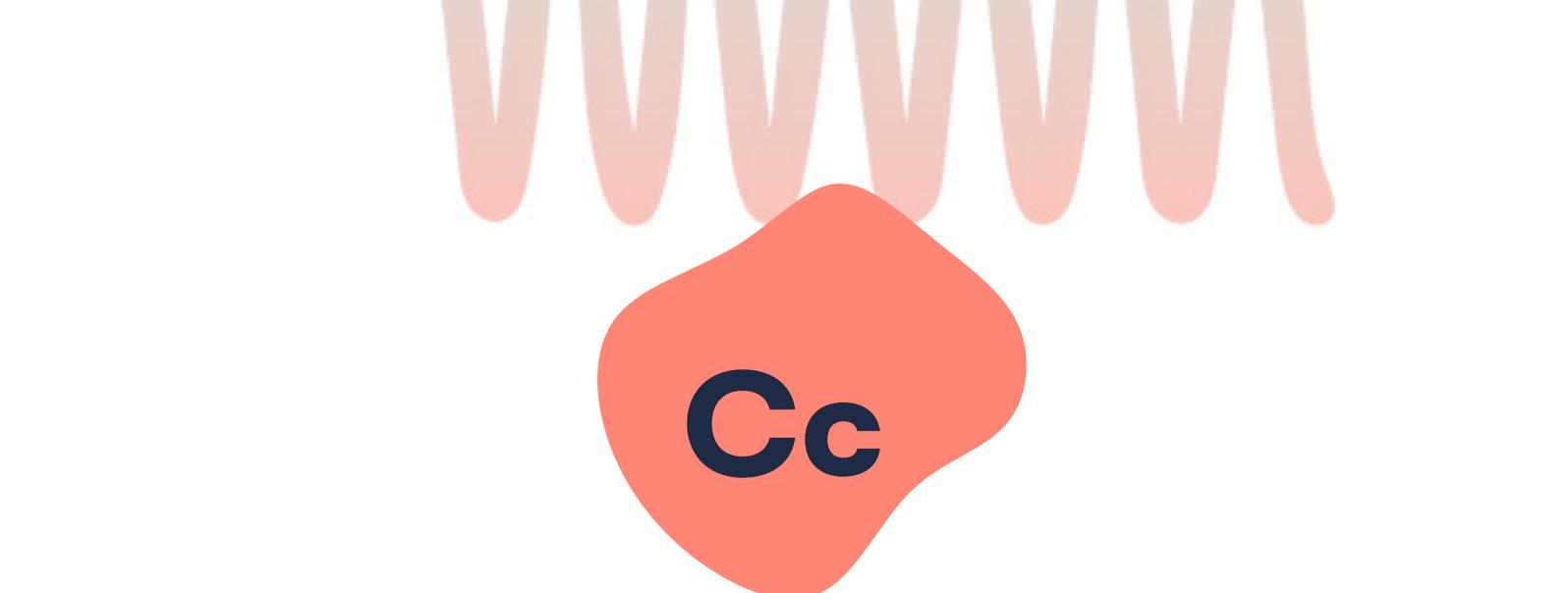
Does this bring us genuinely closer to delivering upon the promise for the customer?

B is for Brand Anatomy

Brand anatomy is the underpinning of your brand, the components that hold it together, much like the anatomy of the human body.

The brand anatomy includes:

- Brand Purpose
- Brand Promise
- Brand Positioning
- Value Proposition
- Brand Values
- Brand Personality
- Brand Story



Cc

C is for Culture

The culture of your company has a direct impact on your brand strategy and your ability to execute it. We would love to pretend this isn't the case, and that it is all in the planning, but the culture influences the people who are called to envision the strategy and act upon it. Do you have a culture that encourages and rewards innovation? Do you have a culture that fosters groupthink? Does your culture reflect your brand promise?

For enterprise-level organisations, you will need to assess the culture twice - the company-wide culture and the sub-culture within your department.

C is for Competitive Analysis

Brands don't operate in a vacuum, so being across your competitors can help influence your understanding of the market, the target market and how you shape your brand strategy.

A robust competitive analysis provides information about how to position yourself against competitors - 'how we win' - and it encourages you to be innovative and not simply position on price, or wait for volume with an in-demand product or service.



C is for Communication

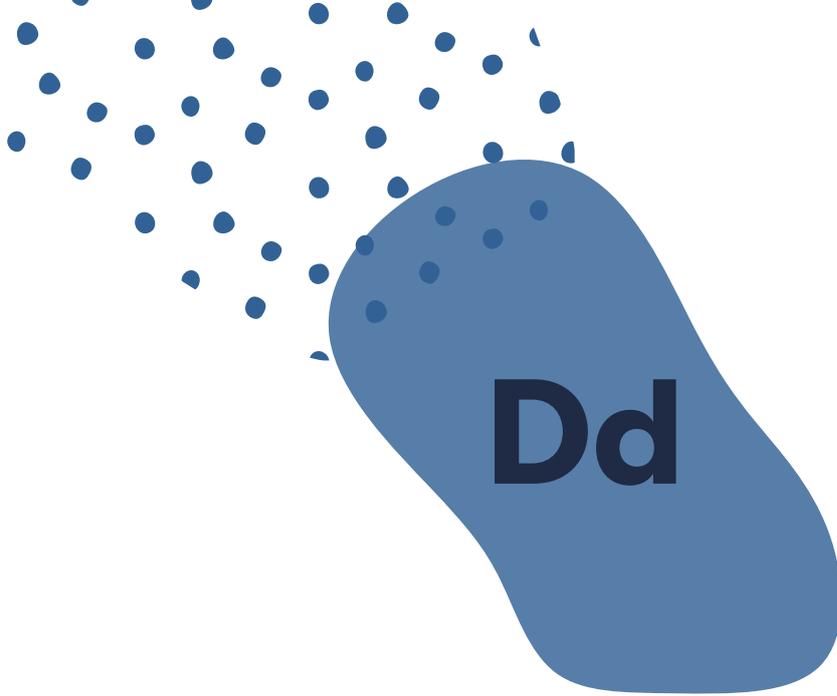
For enterprises, brand strategy development and execution may be a centralised function, however it affects the entire company. Communication about your brand strategy internally, and the branding and marketing actions you take to deliver it, will decrease friction within the company when you come to deliver it. Most people just want to know what you are doing so they can be comfortable and then move on to their own tasks.

Communication shouldn't be series of 'blasts' - pushing information out to tick a box. Rather, brand strategy communication should be a dialogue and bring your internal stakeholders along the journey, with learning and education from both sides.

C is for Customer Journey

If you haven't mapped your customer journey yet, it is reasonable to assume you don't really have a brand strategy. Without knowing the path to success for your customer in detail, you and your team can't fully understand how to influence the touchpoints and move people more efficiently and more effectively.

Mapping the customer journey isn't simply the headings of your pipeline, it is about understanding the intrinsic actions of both the customer and your company to understand where to reduce friction, where to pivot to a new solution and how to build an advocate.



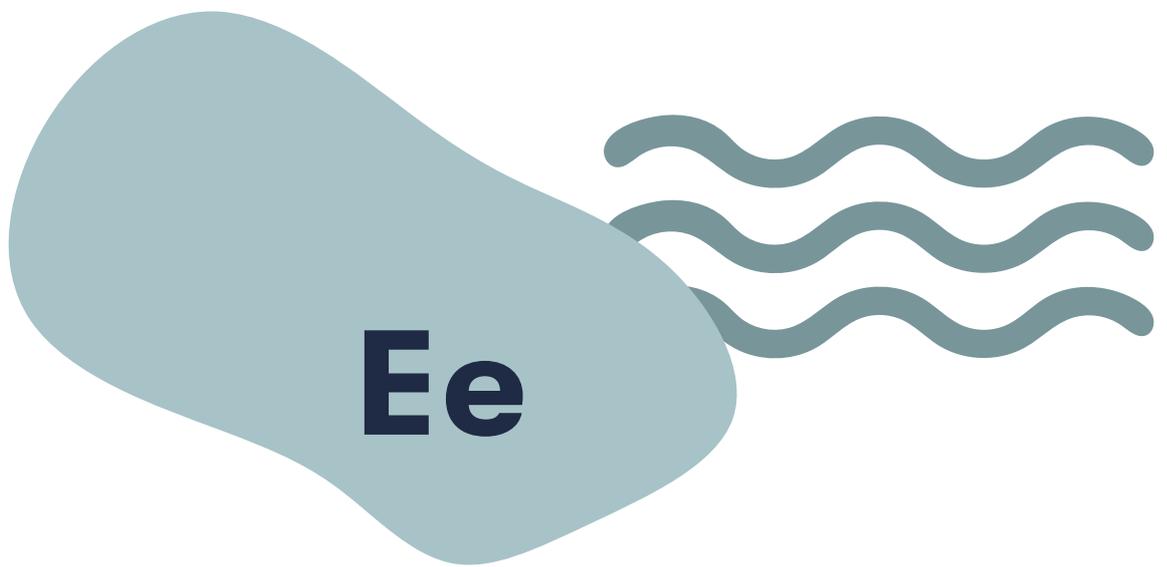
D is for Data

Data is both the holy grail of marketers and brand managers, and the bane of our existence. We love having it and building it, but so often we don't use it effectively in either the development or execution of our brand strategy. Do a data audit across the entire organisation - even outside your department - to understand what product or service data, customer data, financial data is available.

Understand how this data is stored, accessed and used. Is there data in the organisation that can help you make better decisions that you aren't currently using? Do you need to break down data silos and integrate it with your martech systems to create a better customer experience?

D is for Distribution Channels

Understanding how to reach your audience is vital. Core to your brand strategy should be identifying which distribution channels will be used to raise awareness for, influence, inform and activate your audience. Distribution channels for your communication include those above the line and below the line; bought, owned, earned; those with partners; internal and external channels.



E is for Event Activations

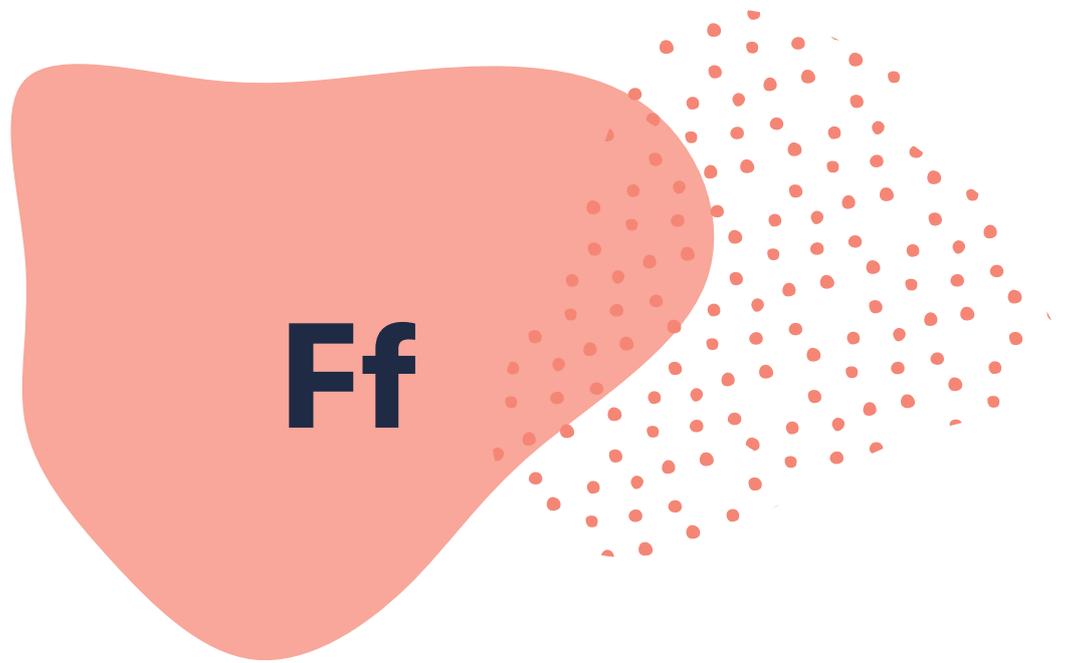
Not suitable for all brands, event activations for others form an integral part of their brand strategy. Events are where you can meet your customers and engage with them directly, where you can craft a brand experience and control every aspect of it (unlike some other distribution channels).

An event activation is both an opportunity to make sales and an opportunity to increase your understanding of the target market.

E is for Engagement

Engagement is such a fraught topic because engagement doesn't equal intent, but so many agencies and companies use it as a signifier of success, contributing to ROI. Certainly, the right type of engagement can lead to a transaction, but when engagement could be as simple as a double-tap, it doesn't necessarily have intrinsic value in your brand strategy.

Build a strategy with the right type of value-add engagement, one that has meaning for both your brand and the customer.



F is for Financial Control

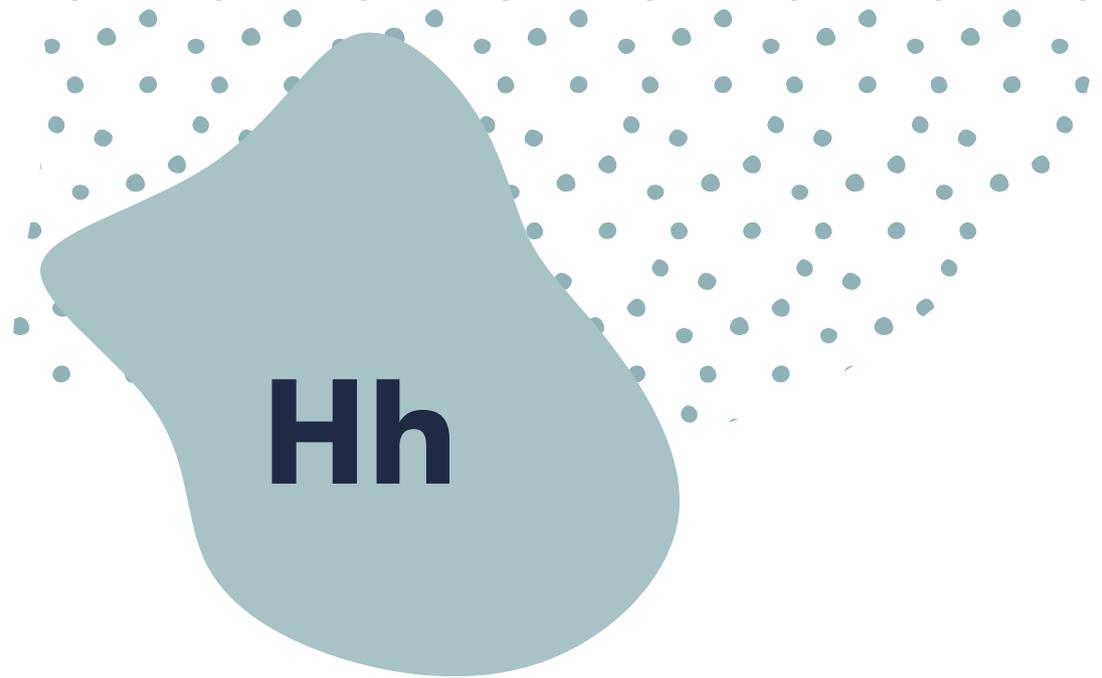
Financial control is imperative for any successful marketer or brand manager. Financial control means robust processes, strong reporting, transparency, delegations and a budget linked with your strategy. Managing your budget well enables you to have easy conversations with your CFO and Finance Manager - you know what you are spending where, the results attributable to it and where investing more resources would enable you to deliver more.



G is for Goals

Setting goals for your brand strategy provides something to assess your progress against. Goals for an enterprise brand strategy could be broken down across a number of areas:

- Revenue
- Profit
- Cost per acquisition
- ROI
- Stages of the customer journey
- Prompted and unprompted brand awareness
- Market share
- NPS
- Employee satisfaction



H is for House of Brands, Branded House and Hybrid House Hierarchy

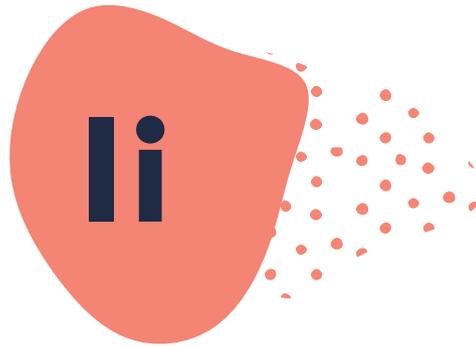
Brand architecture lays out the structure of brands within an organisation. The way brands interact, or relate to one another, is mapped and accorded a hierarchy.

In some organisations products = brands, and in other organisations a brand is wrapped around a group of products.

A **branded house** is structured so all brands names and product brands use the name of the master brand in their naming conventions and have a tie through their visual identities as well.

A **house of brands** has diverse audiences, outcomes, brand purposes and visual identities sitting underneath a corporate brand. The brands are promoted as separate entities, often without reference to the corporate brand, let alone each other.

A **hybrid brand house** usually occurs following mergers and acquisitions - in a hybrid brand house model some of the brands remain linked and others while being in the same category perhaps, sit separately.



I is for Internal Co-Creation

There are lots of touchpoints with the brand from prospective customer to advocate. Employees play an invaluable role in influencing how the external market understands and interprets the brand.

Employees are both 'readers' of the brand - reading and seeing the official brand construct crafted by the brand and marketing team - and also 'authors' of the brand, writing the brand afresh with every interaction they have with external stakeholders.

Brand meaning and understanding develops through interactions and experiences with formal brand communications and management. However, interplays with employees are where it is most deeply experienced.

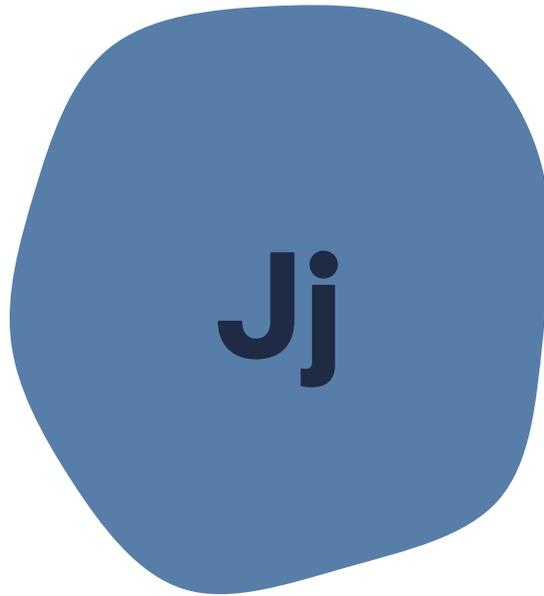
Misunderstandings in reading the brand, or a poor internally-communicated brand, can influence an employee's brand promise delivery, and therefore impact a

customer's perception of the brand, and we all understand perception is reality.

This is why brand co-creation with employees is vital. Brand managers, when re-crafting or honing the brand promise and framework, working with internal stakeholders from across the business, will develop a substantially more robust brand solution. It will be more easily 'read' and translated, creating a more consistent experience for external stakeholders, especially students.

If all areas of the business feel represented through this co-creation, they will be more willing to be avid readers of the brand and accurate writers of the brand.

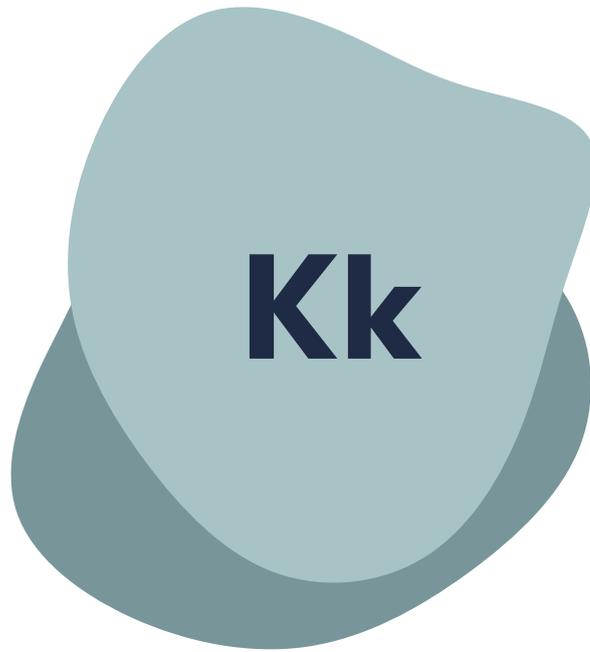
Engaged employees delivering on the brand promise is a brand manager's single most potent weapon in a competitive marketplace.



J is for Job Description

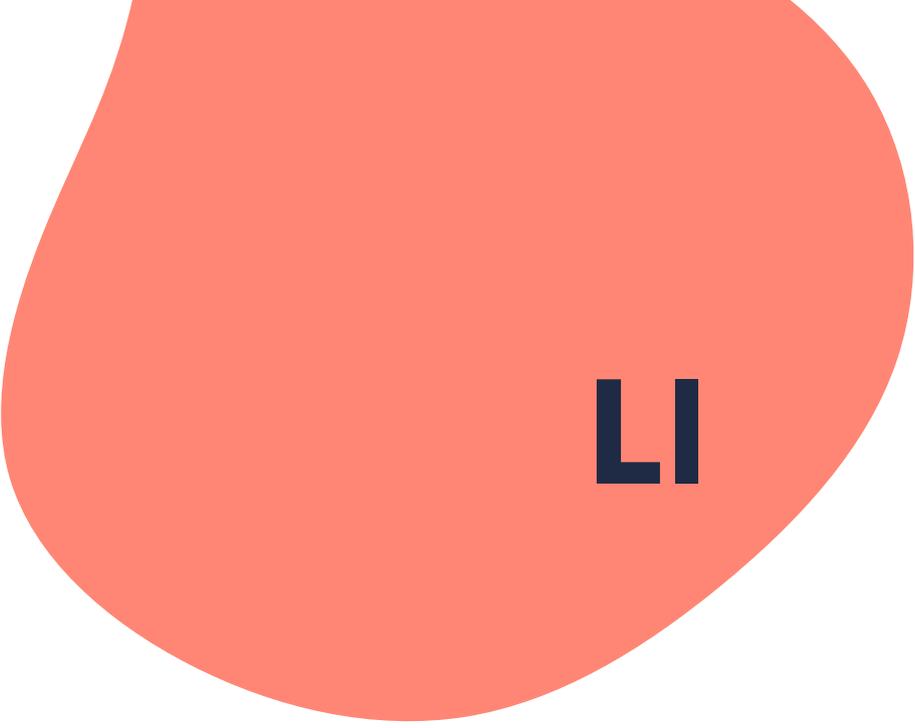
A successful brand strategy hinges on the people who execute it, and their skill sets. Giving your team ownership and the support of job descriptions allows them to own their space and challenges them to progress.

The backbone of a shared understanding of what the role requires and what your expectations are, combined with a knowledge of your strategy enables you to support your employees to deliver while also building a business case for additional resources as required.



K is for Knowledge Base

Brand and marketing are generally fast-moving environments with lots of moving pieces. A central knowledge base, whether that is a wiki, intranet or a well-structured shared drive means your team doesn't lose momentum when executing campaigns and initiatives. The history of campaigns, previous years and results will ensure you continually iterate and improve, rather than repeating that which didn't work.



LI

L is for Logo

Protecting your logo, and by extension, the rest of the visual identity representing your brand, is a vital part of your remit - your logo should be used in the right way to extend your customer's understanding of the brand. In an enterprise, keeping a rein on logo use remains a difficult proposition with so many people needing to use the visual identity, and therefore, increasing the risk the brand guidelines aren't applied correctly.

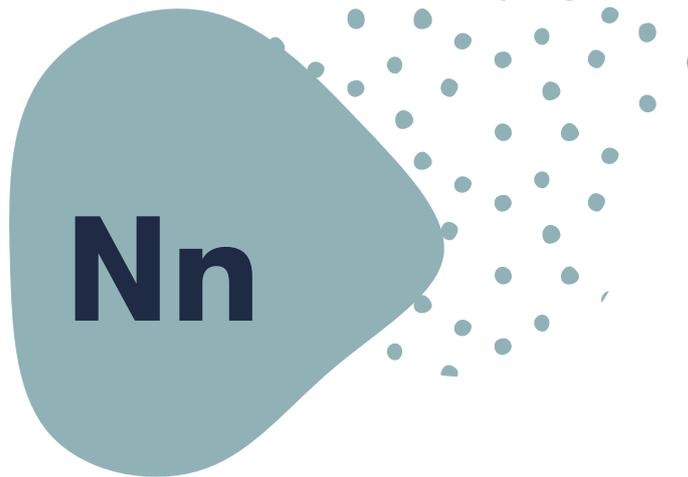


M is for Market Share

Building market share allows brand managers to win against competitors and build a compelling financial story internally and to shareholders as your forecast growth is greater than the industry average. Increasing market share allows you to be more efficient in your marketing spend because the increased share will contribute to a growth in prompted and unprompted brand awareness.

M is for Marketing

Branding consists of all the marketing and communication techniques and tactics you use to influence the perception of your brand. Marketing is essentially moving people - it is moving them from unknown to known, from lead to customer, from customer to advocate. At each point, your communication and marketing tactics are influencing their progression. The selection of your tactics and levels will determine your success in marketing and positioning of your product or service.

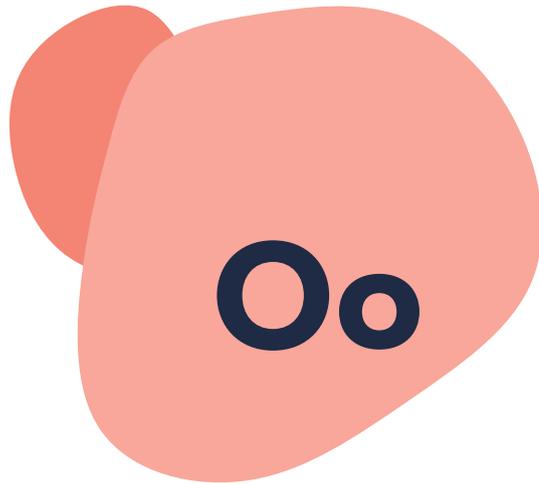


N is for Nurturing

Marketing automation continues to dominate the agenda of many marketing teams - implementing it or refining it to maximise your ROI. Nurturing your prospects, potential customers, current customers and other stakeholders is important to influence their understanding of, and willingness to engage with, the brand. Mapping your customer journey is a vital component of successful nurturing and good brand managers don't stint in this space.

N is for Narrative

The narrative you tell about your brand is at the core of your identity. For startups, this may be your founding story, but for scaleups or anyone larger, your narrative should be about the quantifiable difference you make in the lives of your customers. Your narrative needs to be compelling and have a story arc, but not be War and Peace. Put your customer as the protagonist at the centre of your narrative and make sure your narrative tweaks dependent on your persona and platform.



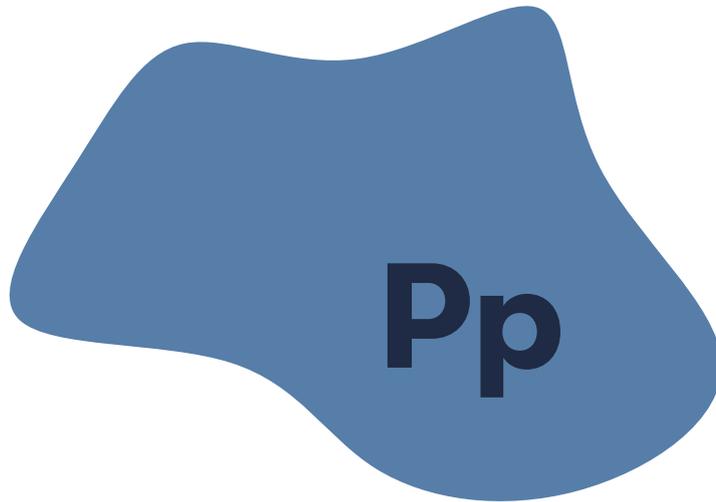
O is for Ownership of Outcomes

Marketers and brand managers need to own the outcomes of their work and even that of process further down the pipeline. This ownership allows you to tweak the brand strategy dependent on the results continually, and ensure you are building an efficient and sustainable strategy.

Outcomes in this instance are more concrete than sentiment and 'awareness', although they may be part of your matrix. The more concrete the outcomes you are delivering and measuring, the more value you are demonstrating the brand provides.

O is for Outsourcing

The successful execution of a brand strategy relies on the right skills to deliver the components well. The skills you need may exist in your team but if they don't, be confident and outsource. This might be through a formal agency retainer relationship, on a project basis, with individual freelancers or offshore teams. The best plan can be undone by shoddy work, so set aside the budget for outsourcing where you need it.



P is for Product

A brand and brand strategy is only as successful as the product or service you have available. Certainly you can sell the sizzle, but in the end, it is the sausage that people want.

(For anyone reading this outside Australia, this isn't going to mean a lot. We have sausage sizzles; sausages cooked on the barbeque and then served in bread, and they are basically a religion - onion on top - and certainly a rite of passage on election day).

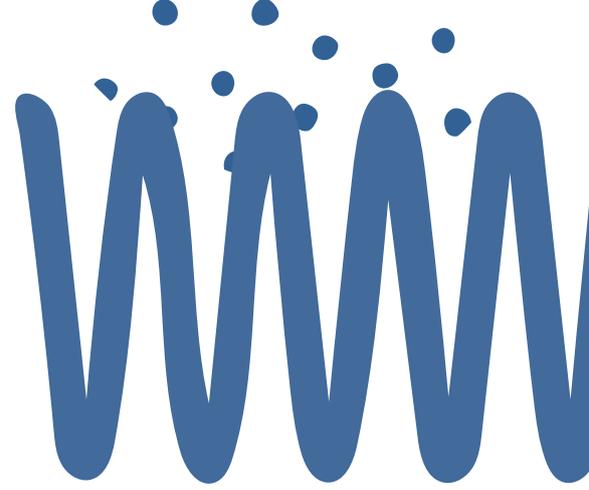
If your product isn't strong enough to shut out competitors, work with your product manager and business analysts to identify the gaps in the market, the gaps in the product and product range and how to fill these.

P is for Positioning

Positioning maps your place in the market, how you sit against your competitors and how your customer values your offering. You can position yourself against any axes, and many people use the Magic Quadrant by Gartner, but really what matters is the axes that matter to your customer. Why do they choose your brand over others? What story do they tell themselves when they choose your brand?

Your customer might value individuality and communication, and your product allows them to deliver on both those fronts. Competitors might allow communication but not individuality, or vice versa. Your market for this positioning doesn't need to be enormous, find the smallest viable audience and position for them.





P is for Personas

Personas, avatars, ideal customers - these frameworks allow you to segment your customers and prospective customers to craft your messages and campaigns, targeting the people most likely to respond and convert. Personas allow you to identify the common motivations, concerns, outcomes and job stories for your segments and position accordingly - they might all be using the same product, but for different reasons.

For example, as a university, you offer degrees. A school leaver might study to get a job, but a mature-age student might study to change careers. They engage with the same product, but for different reasons. So your messages and channel placement, at the very least, will be tailored to the school leaver persona and the career changer persona.



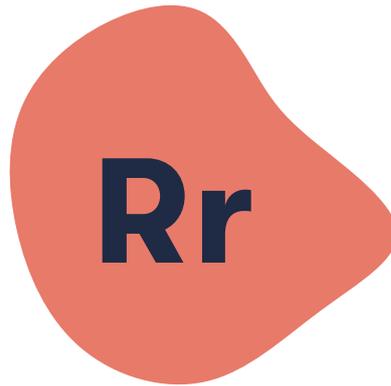
Q is for Qualitative and Quantitative

Qualitative and quantitative research are both invaluable for marketers. A great marketer knows their audience well and takes time to know the data genuinely, and this can often appear as ‘gut instinct’ because they haven’t needed to consult a report in a meeting.

Gut instinct, however, is simply knowing your audience profoundly and being able to extrapolate behavioural characteristics from this knowledge.

Both qualitative and quantitative research is required to support this instinct, and without the other, either can provide a skewed understanding of the data. Just holding small qualitative focus groups, for example, can produce confirmation bias because attendees often understand the desired outcome and want to please in the face-to-face setting.

Additionally, it can be hard to secure your actual target audience for focus groups, no matter the data set the research agency works from. Quantitative research is built upon the premise of you asking the right questions of a sample size big enough to limit distortion. It is difficult to ask follow-up questions to provide clarification, and the lead-times are often extended to support the volume of contacts required to meet a valuable *n*.



R is for Rebrand

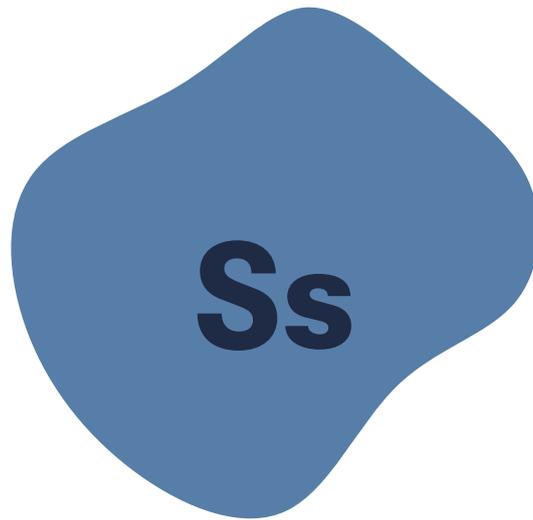
Rebrands can provide an excellent circuit-breaker for a brand, especially to align or realign with an audience, and are often the starting place for implementing a new brand strategy. A rebrand needs to be implemented for a specific reason (boredom isn't one of them) and supported throughout the whole organisation to achieve success.

A rebrand might be implemented for any of these reasons:

- Market movement
- Offering change
- Competitor movement
- Customer change
- Brand reputational damage
- Merger or acquisition

R is for Relationships

A successful brand strategy is delivered on the strength of relationships - relationships with suppliers, throughout the enterprise and, most importantly, with your customers. A great brand manager develops their strategy and uses the strength of others' extensive expertise to make adjustments to the plan and the delivery. Building relationships with suppliers and the extended business helps build trust and efficiency for brand solutions.

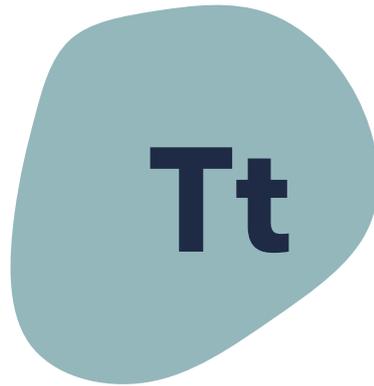


S is for Strategic Solutions

A good brand strategy is only as strong as the weakest component. A brand strategy should accurately reflect the challenges of the whole business, not the visual identity difficulties. It should also provide strategic solutions and support for the broader business (within budget of course!).

For example, advertising isn't a strategic solution in and of itself, the right audience selection, channel selection, conversion-based messaging and customer service all contribute to the success of advertising as part of your brand strategy.

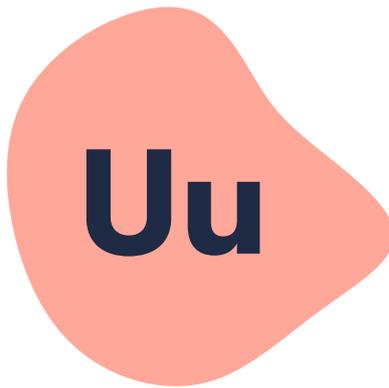
A good brand manager will build a brand and marketing strategy as a response to the broader business strategy, to drive the key metrics of the whole business, not just the marketing KPIs.



T is for Tone of Voice

Tone of voice is a comparatively small matter for a brand manager but has an impact in all areas of the business. Your team, and those dealing with customers directly, will benefit from tone of voice training and a framework to provide a consistent experience for the customer.

Tone of voice is developed from one of the components of your brand anatomy - brand personality - and helps employees shape the right approach to reinforce brand positioning. A tone of voice guide traditionally also includes the basics of grammar, spelling, punctuation and, correct word and symbol usage.



U is for Understanding your audience

The best brand managers develop a brand strategy demonstrating a deep understanding of their audience. This understanding is best gathered through data and observation.

Hunt out data sources across the entire enterprise - not just those in the marketing team - breaking down data silos to understand how different datasets provide insight into others and can provide an end-to-end view of the customer. Watch for outliers in your data because even these tell a story.

Develop a constant feedback loop, integrating data and observation. Talking to customers, witnessing them interact and transact with your brand will help inform a robust brand strategy.



V is for Vision

A brand strategy benefits from a robust company vision - the brand vision begins to translate the company vision into customer-centric benefits and helps create a framework for the brand and marketing team to work from. The vision sets a course for the future and allows for growth and responsiveness to changes in the market.

It should encourage innovation and problem solving of this bigger picture. A good brand manager translates this vision onto one for their team as well - how the company vision and brand vision applies to their jobs and how they can bring it to life.

V is for Visual Identity

Most people conflate brand and visual identity as one construct, when in fact they are very different propositions. The brand is the sum of experience and knowledge of your company positioning, your reputation. Your visual identity is one of the tools in your branding strategy to shift your customer's perception.

Your visual identity should be clearly identifiable and differentiate you from your competitors. It should build and influence your customer's understanding of your brand, be suitable for all channels and communication methods and be able to be applied throughout the organisation, not just by the central marketing team.



W is for Workflows

A strategy needs to be operationalised - without this, it is merely words on a page. Strong workflows help move a strategy to execution.

Increasingly in enterprise, these workflows occur within a Marketing Resource Management (MRM) platform, allowing visibility between teams and suppliers and ensuring vital deadlines are hit and objectives achieved.

Whether you have MRM or not, workflows from budgeting to approvals to communication should be mapped and followed by brand managers.

The power of brand integrity

The power of brand integrity (saying what you do and doing what you say) is at the centre of many friction points between brands and their customers.

Saying what you do and doing what you say (particularly the second part of the phrase) is incredibly powerful, and cannot be replaced by advertising spend, spin campaigns or investor calls.

In transparency lies the strength, and power, of integrity.

What is brand?

Your brand is your promise to your customer. It is the sum of their experiences and knowledge of your brand, not your pushed messaging and advertising.

Brand is intangible and linked to subjective qualities, defined and informed by your customers' perceptions.

It might have tangible attributes like a logo and visual identity - a visual translation, a reminder, of your brand promise and the experience, but it is not the sum of your brand.

What does it mean to have integrity as a brand?

Let's start with what it means to have integrity as a person because essentially your brand is an extension of people - the decisions they make and the actions they take.

Personal integrity is the demonstration of moral and ethical principles, to know what you stand for, will deliver upon and why. Integrity is the accuracy of one's actions, corresponding to a consistent framework of beliefs.

Brand integrity is delivering on your messaging.

Personal integrity is demonstrated, for example, when you call out behaviour that

is against your values of equality, rather than witness it without trying to influence the situation and the behaviour positively.

When we extend this into the world of brand integrity, there are two components. The obvious, of course, is integrity - demonstrating behaviour consistent with your implicit and explicit brand promise.

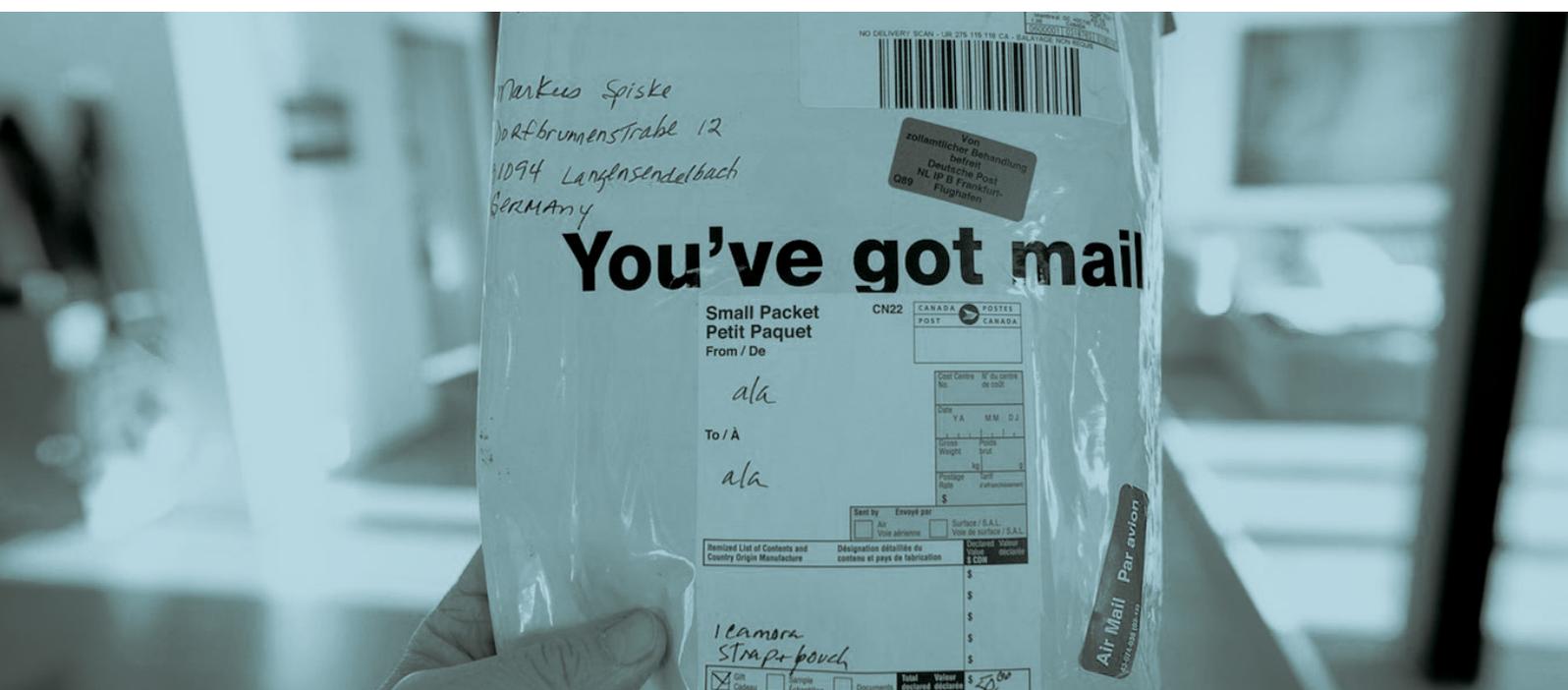
The second part is the intangible nature of brand - brand integrity comes through your people and processes demonstrating alignment with your brand promise.

Brand integrity is not making sure the logo is used correctly.

Brand integrity is not having consistent messaging through your marketing and sales.

Brand integrity is delivering on your messaging.

For organisations larger than a sole trader, brand integrity isn't necessarily a simple proposition. Your mileage may vary, of course.



It is simple to say you put the customer at the centre of your brand and experience, but a lot harder to do.

Firstly, for many organisations, there are often stakeholders as vital to the success of the business as customers, like shareholders, whose needs and expectations don't align with those of customers'.

Secondly, processes may mean non-customer centric metrics are in place, leading to misalignment of brand promise and action.

Rather than measuring a phone call on a genuine customer support resolution, time to answer and length of the call become the operator measures.

Implementing a quick change might have the emphasis instead of achieving the right change, even though it may take a little longer.

Lack of budget and resource might be a barrier to delivering on your brand promise - you know the experience and perception you want to build but 'Champagne tastes on a beer budget' means you can't.

Misalignments of brand promise and actions

It's such a bland way to describe almost cataclysmic friction - the misalignment of brand promise and actions - but this misalignment leads to spectacular examples of damaged brand integrity and broken brand promises.

This misalignment can occur when brand integrity gets chipped away. It gets chipped away when people make decisions for themselves instead of the promise and the customer.

It doesn't happen in one fell swoop, it happens when someone makes a non-brand promise centric decision and isn't pulled up on it, by peers or superiors, and it becomes acceptable to move to chase other goals ahead of brand integrity.

Brand integrity occurs when your stated purpose and your actions align.

Sometimes the brand integrity is damaged when your overt, loudly promoted brand promise doesn't match your actions, and sometimes it can be when the implied promise conflicts with the organisations' activities.



Brand integrity weakened at Facebook

Facebook's brand promise is to make the world more open and connected. Their brand integrity - and their share price and market valuation - has been damaged by the results of their poor decisions. A 'scandal' doesn't damage brand integrity; it is damaged by the decisions that led to the weakening or breaking of their brand promise.

From the lack of governance over Russian advertising attempting to influence the 2016 US Presidential election to Cambridge Analytica unauthorised data access to hacking to smearing critics through a PR campaign, Facebook is now further than ever from their promise to make the world more open and connected. When you position yourself at the centre of a personal and social intersection, it matters how you keep your brand promise - people want to feel good about using your platform.



Diesel emits brand integrity issues for Volkswagen

The #dieselgate drama of 2015 damaged the brand integrity of Volkswagen when it was discovered they were cheating the EPA's emissions measurement with a piece of firmware installed in their diesel cars. VW's positioning is a brand built around family and sustainability.

Criminal charges were eventually laid, awards rescinded and VW paid billions of dollars in fines. The damage to the integrity, however, continues with sales still down three years later and the scandal bought up every time an article about VW is published. The power of their brand integrity continues to be diluted every time this happens.



Mamamia's brand integrity takes a hit

Mamamia's stated purpose to make the world a better place for women and girls, and the integrity they hope to gain from this focus, is damaged every time they re-publish an article written by a woman, without permission, and without remuneration.

Baking integrity into your brand

The best way, indeed perhaps the only way, to build and maintain brand integrity for your organisation is through people, the right people.

A promise is words, but integrity is the lived and demonstrated experience.

The right people, hired well, with the right systems and processes to support them will execute the organisations' vision and brand promise with integrity.

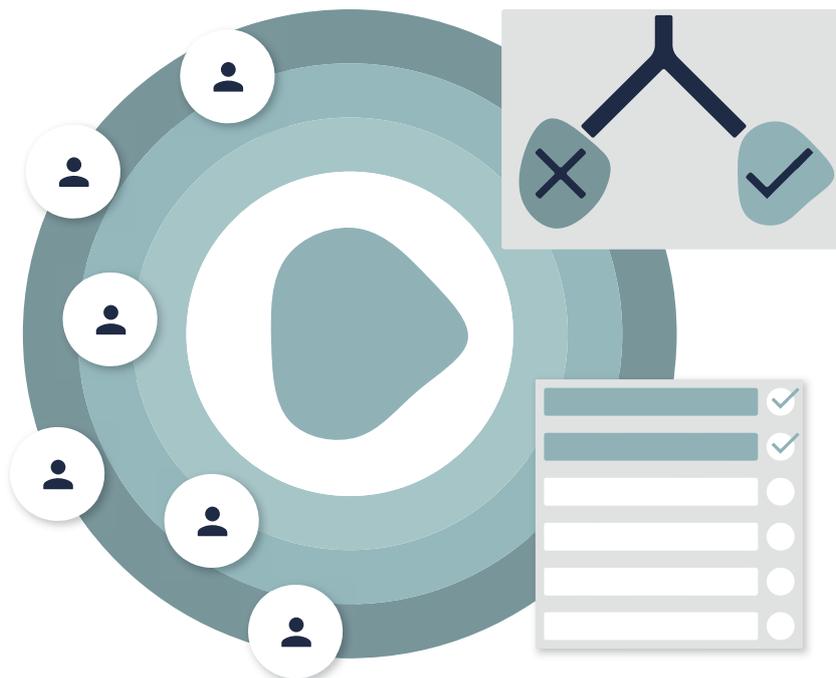
Empowering your team to call out behaviour and actions that belie your brand integrity and supporting them when they do will ensure integrity is baked into your organisation and therefore your customer experience.

A promise is words, but integrity is the lived and demonstrated experience.

You can have a long code of conduct, signed by everyone, but unless the right people are there to act with integrity and are supported when they call out behaviour not in line with your promise, the entire brand takes a hit.

The power of brand integrity means:

- Every person fulfils your brand promise, every time.
- Making decisions to support your brand promise with the aim of enhancing it and bringing it further to life.
- Building KPIs around your brand promise.





How good brand management translates to results

Good brand management is the art of moving people to full engagement with your brand.

Good brand management means you are:

- Fulfilling the brand promise
- Understanding your customers
- Moving the right levers to get them to understand the brand and desire to be a part of the story
- Driving potential customers to act on your calls to action
- Taking advantage of the positive narrative these customers are telling about your brand
- Scaling the brand into new areas because of the resonance with the existing target market

Good management allows the organisation to double down on their key strengths to align with the brand promise.

By moving levers including the marketing message, target market identification, channel selection and placement, a brand manager can deliver results like:

- Increased prompted and unprompted awareness
- Increased volume of leads
- Better quality leads
- Increased conversion
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Increased employee satisfaction
- Extended and new markets
- Increased revenue
- Increased market share
- Increased share price
- The opportunity to acquire competitors and start-ups

Good management allows the organisation to double down on their key strengths to align with the brand promise.

Brand managers paint a clear picture of what success looks like from the initial impression on the website through to the tone on the phone calls to how a product is presented in store. All of these conscious decisions reinforce the brand promise and provide a framework for the organisation to work within.

Visually, good brand management creates a consistent look and feel - across every touchpoint, every piece of content - building the understanding of the brand and a strong hook on which to hang that understanding of the brand.

Creating this shortcut in people's minds makes it easier for them to recall your brand, makes it easier to choose your brand and creates value in that recognition and that shorter path to purchase.

Good brand management translates to results by allowing the business and the marketing and brand teams to focus on metrics that deliver an ROI. The scattergun approach of an ill-disciplined brand, and brand manager, may deliver short-term, sugar-high results, but the discipline of strong brand management leads directly to a positive impact on the goodwill line of a P & L.

Good brand management is not about managing the file structure of your DAM - good brand management is about influencing the perception of your brand and translating that perception to action.

Good brand management translates to results by allowing the business and the marketing and brand teams to focus on metrics that deliver an ROI.

Brand management in a decentralised environment

If brand management is a little bit like herding cats, then brand management in a decentralised environment takes an incredible amount of finesse and a strong plan.

A brand is only as strong as its weakest usage - our cumulative experiences of the brand form our impressions, and if these experiences are in disarray, if these experiences are discordant and divisive, our impression of the brand is the same.

A strong brand is vital, and more difficult, to corral in a decentralised organisation.

These are our tips for brand management in a decentralised environment.

Strong brand guidelines

Brand guidelines are not merely logos, colours and a typeface. Brand guidelines should contain the why, not just the what.

Strong brand guidelines need to be robust scaffolding on which to build marketing and communications solutions and should scale into the different areas of the business who use the brand.

The visual identity needs to flow from the vision and values of the company and be supported by design solutions that sit comfortably with the brand promise.

- Why are the values expressed in this way?
- Why are these the best colours to represent the audience and outcome?
- Why do we express the brand personality in this way?
- Why do we build our messaging hierarchy like this?

Strong brand guidelines are more than a series of images with ticks and crosses to represent the dos and don'ts of the identity. They should allow the user to apply the brand successfully outside the rigorously constructed examples; they should let the user understand how to create a compelling piece of content to solve a problem.

If users need to build a flyer to explain a new product, do they know how to write headline text and subheading copy with a compelling benefit?

If users are creating large format out-of-home does your guide explain the copy should be nine words or less and at a certain size for a specific speed zone?

Strong brand guidelines need to be robust scaffolding on which to build marketing and communications solutions and should scale into the different areas of the business who use the brand.

Holistic marketing plan

Central marketing teams have oversight for central marketing campaigns, but may not necessarily write marketing strategies and plans for the whole organisation, or include the different divisions of the business.

Writing a holistic marketing plan ensures those groups are represented in both your thinking and the scheduled marketing and communication activities. It ensures your central campaign can be scaled successfully into all areas of the business and can be adapted for their needs - on-brand and without extensive revision.

Trying to retrofit a campaign into diverse business divisions can be frustrating for both the central team and stakeholders. Misaligned ideas about what success looks like, unnecessary versions and slow-to-market mean your decentralised stakeholders are less likely to come to the central team and more likely to go rogue.

A holistic marketing plan demonstrates you are thinking of them and can help them achieve their objectives.

Understand the functions and outcomes of people using the brand

It is easy to have distinct and unambiguous brand management when only the central brand and marketing team applies the brand. Once the use of the brand extends past this core team, however, it is vital you understand how your stakeholders need to use the brand and what capability and capacity they have to apply the brand.

Asking yourself several questions helps create a strong understanding of their needs:

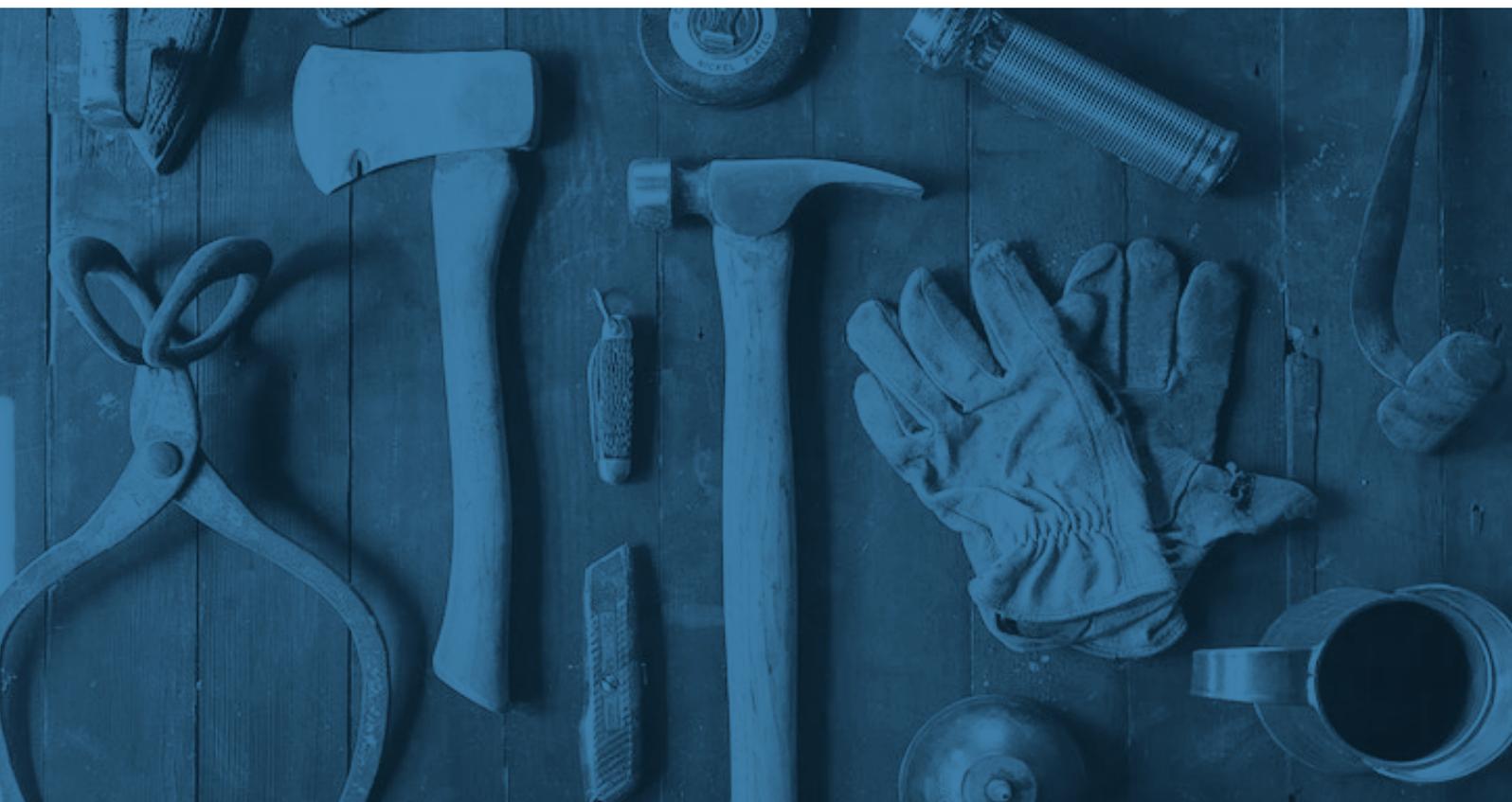
- What do they care about?
- What sort of marketing do they usually do?
- Do you have the plan and collateral to help them achieve their targets?
- Why are they currently choosing to go outside the brand guidelines?

Your team will have more success implementing the brand across a diverse organisation if you understand what people need from their use of the brand.

For example, does your brand management allow for quick turnarounds to take advantage of short-term offers, for example, does a faculty staff member have the opportunity to speak to a group of high school students about courses tomorrow?

Does your brand management allow for events to be produced and run at remote locations without needing to come to you for branding and artwork?

Your team will have more success implementing the brand across a diverse organisation if you understand what people need from their use of the brand.



Great communication

As central brand owners, we make changes to the brand, and as the central marketing team, we develop and implement marketing plans. Often we focus on task after task and project after project because this is a big and consuming responsibility, without pulling back to think about how to position this work to our internal stakeholders.

We talk every day in our team as we build and grow elements and campaigns. Taking the time to communicate these and communicate them well outside our team has a powerful impact on successful brand management.

How do people in your organisation like to consume their internal communication?

Incorporating multiple channels into your communication, rather than a single channel, will help ensure maximum uptake of your message:

- Intranet banner and news article
- Resource update
- Email
- Instant messaging
- Old-fashioned phone calls from account managers and key contacts

Remember to include data, stats and details to make it more relevant to your audience.

Only the necessary approvals

As the central team, with your brand let loose throughout the organisation, it can be very tempting to ask to approve every use of brand assets.

This is a dangerous path to walk because it results in one of several scenarios:

1. Your team is overwhelmed with approval requests with short turnaround times
2. Your stakeholders are frustrated at having to ask for permission to do elements of their job
3. Your stakeholders don't send collateral through for approval - instead, going rogue and doing what they wish

There are absolutely times you will need to approve the use of the brand, but if your guidelines are robust enough, you have built enough trust. And if the framework for applying your brand is simple, you will not need to approve every social post, email, ad, poster, postcard, flyer, sign, and the list goes on.

Identify what really needs to be approved, supply pre-approved copy and assets and coach and mentor people to apply the brand correctly.

Empowerment

We know your team doesn't intend to have long lead times, but your resources are stretched, and your workload continues to grow. Rather than forcing people to wait 2-3 weeks for a simple design solution, empowering your clients with the brand elements will help you to build a strong brand.

Empowering your stakeholders to connect with the brand and use it without feeling like they will get a rap over the knuckles will help you successfully manage the brand in a decentralised environment.

If people feel confident they understand the why and the what, if they feel confident you trust them and feel confident in your vision for the brand and marketing, they will be empowered to use your brand well, to ask for advice and to encourage others to do the same.

Ambassadors and advocates

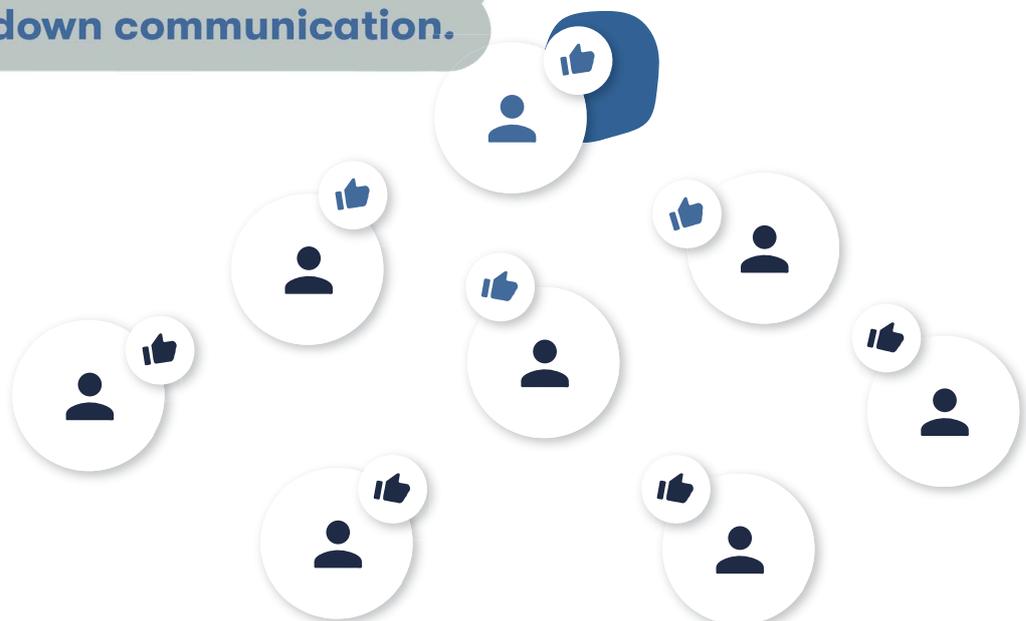
When you are speaking to a new group for the first time, the advice is to find the 'friendly' in the room and engage with them.

Good brand managers need to do the same - find those influential people in the broader teams who understand the vision for the brand, who understand the push-pull of brand use and how important it is to adhere to the guidelines and use them to advocate for strong brand use and management on your behalf.

Peer-to-peer influence has far more impact than an impersonal email or top-down communication.

Build a 'friendlies' network and use them to help you achieve your vision.

Peer-to-peer influence has far more impact than an impersonal email or top-down communication.



Transparency and involvement

We all know what it is like when something happens to us, instead of with us.

As brand managers and marketers with so much responsibility and pressure, it can often be quicker and 'easier' to implement a change and talk about it after or to quietly publish an update to the brand guidelines without broadly disseminating it.

The best brands, the best organisations, engage their people on the journey.

Talk to your broader stakeholders about their connection to the brand, their need for brand and marketing elements, their frustrations and bottlenecks.

Involve them in focus groups, feedback sessions and planning workshops. It doesn't mean you have to take on board all of their commentary, but it allows you to understand their perspective, adopt what works and educate them about your position and perspective.

Managing a brand is complicated - make it easier on your sleepless nights by implementing best practice for a decentralised team.



How to ensure brand compliance

Managing a brand is a complex undertaking, especially if multiple stakeholders are using the brand. The more stakeholders, the more difficult it is to ensure brand compliance.

As a brand manager, 'managing the brand' can be reduced to logo control, but true brand management - and ensuring brand compliance - involves working across the entire organisation.

What is brand compliance?

Brand compliance means ensuring the brand promise and the brand delivery align. It is about ensuring that employees 'read' the brand well and then 'write' the brand well as they engage with consumers.

Employees are both 'readers' of the brand - reading and seeing the official brand framework and message created

by the brand team - and also 'authors' of the brand, writing the brand afresh with every interaction they have with external stakeholders. Brand meaning and understanding develops through interactions and experiences with formal brand communications and management, indeed, but interplays with employees are where most customers experience the brand outside the digital space.

The best demonstration of this is, of course, the gulf between marketing campaign (or marketing message) and delivery.

- The marketing campaign talks about being the lowest price, but simple research says two competitors are cheaper.
- The marketing campaign has a tag line indicating your future is their highest priority, but every person you speak to delivers only the bare minimum of engagement
- The marketing message conveys expert advice and service, but the experience has you meeting with a graduate following a script.

In each of these (admittedly simple) examples, there is a misalignment between what is offered and the experience - the brand promise is set but is not delivered.

Nothing is outside the scope of a brand manager to ensure brand compliance

So often organisations treat brand and brand management like a marketing-only situation, perhaps misunderstanding that brand isn't visual identity in totality. Nothing could be further from the truth - delivering upon the brand promise is the responsibility of the entire business.

Ensuring brand compliance is about ensuring each touchpoint aligns with and delivers upon the brand touchpoint. Brand managers should be engaging with every area of the business to help bed down their understanding of the brand and then how to deliver upon that.

From product design to marketing to sales process to customer service and post-sales service and support to internal communications and processes, all of these need to be compliant with the brand promise.

Having c-suite representation and the support of the senior leadership team to work across the business will enable you and your team to raise the level of brand compliance.

A clear framework

Compliance doesn't exist in a vacuum.

Teams deliver on the power and promise of the brand when they feel they have contributed to the 'why' and have control over the 'how'.

Work with the key stakeholders, brand custodians and brand users throughout the organisation to build a framework of the brand promise and educate them on why it is important to deliver to this in things big and small. Empower each team to take ownership of delivery of the brand promise in their space by setting in place expectations, measures and recognition milestones.

Teams deliver on the power and promise of the brand when they feel they have contributed to the 'why' and have control over the 'how'. Micromanaging isn't the solution, so work with stakeholders to build educational moments like roleplays and decision trees, and map the customer journey through their space. This framework helps them stay within the boundaries and understand why it is so important to do so.

It essentially boils down to communication and co-creation.

Prioritise experience delivery

Organisations are used to brand managers and marketing teams governing the use of the logo, typeface and colours. By prioritising experience delivery over visual identity (and not sacrificing that either), there is the opportunity to build something much more lasting and satisfying for both employees and customers.

Rather than look solely at the logo alignment on the flyer the Library Services team have built or the monthly flyer the franchisee has produced, work with them to link the brand to experience delivery. It, of course, includes 'good customer service' but there are degrees of good, and the steps can change, and the tone and flavour of the communication should reflect the brand.

When teams know that the brand and marketing teams understand their business area - and can contribute positively like metrics linked to customer satisfaction - the more harmonious relationship makes it easier to have conversations about non-compliance.

Tools to help brand compliance

One of the most common frustrations we hear as brand managers and marketers is that people don't want to break the rules, but because of time or lack of knowledge, or incorrect tools, they break the brand guidelines.

This frustration is most evident when we look at the visual identity.

Most people using the brand don't deliberately stretch the logo, but using it inside a simple word processing program means there is limited functionality. Most people using the brand don't have access to the font and haven't been trained to use square bullets instead of round, and the templates they are using haven't been set up like that either.

Most people using the brand don't deliberately put too much information on one page, but they haven't trained in design elements, and their manager is cracking down on the costs of printing, so they figure a single-sided print is better than a two-sided print.

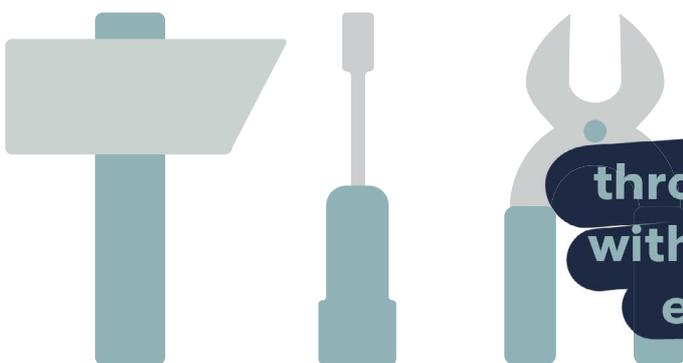
Providing people throughout the organisation with the right tools is vital to ensure brand compliance.

Yes, posting the brand guidelines on the intranet is one part of the solution, but training and conversation are invaluable. It might be working with the admin team on the three things they most commonly do and how to do it 'on-brand', or it might be teaching them some tips and tricks about how to wrangle what they need from word processing platforms. Creating Word and Powerpoint templates with the correct styles is essential and vital to ensuring compliance for long-form documentation.

Provide a platform in which they feel empowered to create the marketing and communication outputs they need, without breaking the guidelines or struggling to implement them. They aren't experts in brand and marketing, but they do need to use the promise, framework and visual identity you have created.

Be present

The most critical part of compliance is indeed communication - working to develop a shared understanding up front,



Providing people throughout the organisation with the right tools is vital to ensure brand compliance.

**Your brand is a story unfolding
across all customer touch points.**

- Jonah Sachs

How to rebrand

Rebranding an organisation, particularly one at an enterprise level, is a complicated prospect and needs to be approached with the right framework to support a successful transition.

Are you envisaging your rebrand will be a completely new proposition by shifting your brand promise, position or audience to a new promise, position and audience? Perhaps you have always stood for a breadth of offering, but the market now looks for niche solutions, so your everywoman promise needs to be recrafted to identify a niche position and audience.

Alternatively, is your rebrand simply a refreshing of your visual identity? Has the style of presentation and visual identity of your competitors moved around you, and you feel dated in comparison.

These two solutions are at opposite ends of the spectrum, requiring vastly different levels of research, resources and resolve.

Making the decision to rebrand, step one

The first strategy is to identify why you are proposing a rebrand. How will your rebrand benefit the organisation?

What is motivating you to recommend this solution?

Has the market moved?

The market has shifted around you to change the value proposition of the entire market, and your position and promise have not moved in this new direction, and your awareness and sales have dropped accordingly.

The much careworn example of this, of course, is the introduction of SVOD to home entertainment following the improvements to the scale and stability of the internet, shifting the market from the rental of physical content to streamed content. The market shifted, and Blockbuster was lost in the stampede.

Has the offering moved?

The audience and the market remain the same but for some reason the offering has shifted.

What you used to be able to sell at volume for good margin has been devalued or become less profitable.

Your audience or perhaps other external factors like regulation might be driving this movement. An example of this is the introduction of legislation in the UK to levy manufacturers of soft-drinks, the so-called 'sugar tax'. The offering in this category has shifted dramatically from full-leaded drinks to low- and no-sugar drinks and the manufacturers are also buying up bottled water brands to offset the perception of unhealthy solutions (and the downturn in sales). The 'sugar tax' has seen some manufacturers reduce the quantity of sugar in their products to pay a lower levy.

Have your competitors moved?

This can be a complicated signal to interpret - are they moving into these spaces (or visual identity styles) because that is what the audience wants or is their move driven by an unproven direction from their board or executive, not necessarily in response to their customers or market.

An example of this competitor movement has played out in the almost simultaneous movement of Coles and Woolworths, those two supermarket behemoths, into house-branded products and away from independent brands. Shelf space in the

milk section is divided in roughly 50/50 - 50% for Coles brand and 50% for all the other brands including Pauls, Maleny Dairies, Norco, Dairy Farmers and Pura. One couldn't move into this space without the other following, so tightly wound was their duopoly at this stage.

Has the customer moved?

Perhaps the customer has physically moved, or moved their purchase channels from offline to online or changed their weighting of product attributes. It may not mean your whole customer-based has shifted, but it may mean you could engage with a new audience or present a more profitable offering to your existing audience.

An example of this is the decline in the share of students studying Education at university in the 27 years to 2015. The share plunged from 17.5% in 1989 to 8.3% in 2015. Students are still enrolling to study at university: 2011 census data showing 36.6% of 20-year-olds attending university or other tertiary institutions (up from 32.6% in 2006), but they are selecting different courses, and universities have reflected this customer movement with new courses and increased Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) in others.

Has the brand suffered reputational damage?

No brand manager likes to be in this position, but sometimes the only way to

resuscitate a brand is to rebrand, although increasingly people's short memories and desire for convenience, and PR firms earning their keep are keeping brands alive for longer than was previously possible.

I am not talking about the sort of reputation damage like the Takata airbag scandal that saw the firm filing for bankruptcy; I am talking about the mess left behind by leaders like Travis Kalanick at Uber who resigned after allegations of sexual harassment and discrimination and the poor leadership demonstrated by Kalanick. The company attempted a rebrand by introducing features like tipping and this year executed another (the second new visual identity in 2 years).

Is there a merger or acquisition?

The terms of the M&A will dictate whether you need a rebrand and whether it will be a new name and identity or a blend of the two, or whether it will still operate as a standalone entity in the brand hierarchy.

An example of this is the merger of Disney and Pixar. There were many similarities in their audience, product categories and go-to-market strategies, and both brands were beloved by the audience. Rather than lose one brand, or upset the advocates of one brand by establishing a hierarchy, the solution was to establish a new logo mark with both as equal and to position their communications and marketing to build their combined audiences.

Making the decision to rebrand, step two

Once you are clear on the reason, the second strategy to identify is the scale of the rebrand - a refresh of the visual identity or a significant shift of the promise of the whole organisation and the work you do.

To some extent, the reason will determine how comprehensive the rebrand is but ensure you are confident in this decision by supporting both your reason and the degree of your rebrand through extensive research.

Once you are confident in your decision, you can move into the research and planning phases.

Research phase

The research phase of a rebrand includes extensive qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Plan your research methodically and allow time to analyse the results. Working with a research or market research partner, supported by internal business analysts can help you understand the audiences, how to engage them and what success looks like in this research phase.

The research phase of a rebrand includes extensive qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Stakeholder identification

Start by looking at your stakeholders and defining them. Think about how different groups engage with, and use the brand, and split them accordingly. For example, you won't get enough useful information by grouping all employees. Look at their relationship to the brand promise and begin your research accordingly.

For example, you might look at:

Internal stakeholders

- Board members
- C-suite and senior leadership team
- Third-level managers
- Frontline employees
- Prospective employees

Remember to select employees from across all business units, and from all levels of the business.

External stakeholders

- Customers
- Prospective customers
- Government partners
- Suppliers
- Shareholders and investors
- Business partners
- Contractors

Spend time with these stakeholders in one-on-one interviews, in focus groups and also send them quantitative surveys to complete.



Ask the right questions

To make a genuine shift to your brand, talk to your customers to understand their perception of you, how they feel about your product and service offering and how they feel about their experiences with you.

What emotions do they use to describe the experience? Are these emotions you want to foster or change?

Talk to your employees to identify how they speak about the company to their family and friends, at a barbeque and to each other. If they had to describe what the organisation does, what parlance do they use? What do they believe the endgame is? Why did they choose your company to work for? How do they characterise the culture and the community of the workplace?

Your questioning should unearth the current state of the brand as well as the gaps and future possibilities as seen at all levels of the business. Some of these may be off course because the stakeholder doesn't have the full strategic and market understanding, but it still highlights their perception, and perception is, of course, reality.

Synthesise for meaning

Once you have gathered this information, synthesise it into meaningful data sets and commentary to share with your team and rebranding partners. It will both help you to understand perception in the market, opportunities, but also how to shape your communication plan to ensure a successful brand rollout.

Planning phase

Your completed research will allow you to successfully plan the detailed timetable of the development and execution of your rebrand.

As part of the rebrand, you will need to revisit and confirm or re-develop your:

- Brand vision
- Brand purpose
- Brand promise
- Brand architecture and hierarchy
- Brand values
- Brand personality
- Brand messaging
- Ideal customer
- Personas
- Unique selling proposition
- Visual identity and brand guidelines

Setting up for success

Writing a clear brief for your rebrand partners, including the research outcomes, will enable each party to deliver the right result.

A rebrand is a large project, so treating it as such with a project manager, and perhaps even a steering committee, will ensure you deliver on time and that the work doesn't get derailed through the judicious application of ego.

As a project, it is important to set milestones to ensure each business unit and partner contributing has the right elements to progress their piece of the puzzle. For example, messaging

can be developed alongside a new mark - communications experts and designers are both responding to the same brief in different mediums, and good communicators and designers don't need to know the logo is green to write the right proposition, or the tone is 'confident' to produce a mark that encapsulates the brand promise.

Understanding who needs to sign off on the rebrand elements along the way and before final launch will ensure you engage the right people with the proper authority to ensure a successful rebrand.

Communication planning

Your communication plan doesn't begin the day you launch the new brand and visual identity into the world - it needs to be written as part of the planning phase and implemented as soon as the planning is finalised.

Your stakeholders will be attached to your brand to varying degrees and other than a surprise round-the-world trip, most people don't love surprises. Managing the messaging, even in the marketing team, is vital to ensure engagement and that there is no sabotage of your work, accidental or otherwise.

Developing your communication plan enables you to identify your key audiences, the benefits, messaging and outcomes to drive for each audience, and to communicate your milestones to the relevant audiences.

A communication plan should include:

- Demonstrated understanding of the situation including the current state of play and key challenges and framing the opportunity
- Approach
 - Internal advocates - determine the success of the rebrand
 - End users - use the product or service, brand
 - Enablers - upon whom the success of the rebrand depends
 - Endorsers - promote the brand through broader connections
- Strategic communication framework
 - How the goals will be achieved
 - Who will be engaged
 - Desired positioning
 - Tailored messaging for each audience
 - Communication approach

Development phase

With your partners briefed, your stakeholders aware of the timelines and a big hairy audacious plan to rebrand your organisation, it is time to start the development. If you are just updating your visual identity, but the brand vision, promise etc. remain the same, development means the development of the new identity. If, however, you are moving your positioning and promise, the heavy lifting starts long before the mark is even discussed.

Brand anatomy and DNA

Engaging experts to help reshape your brand anatomy (brand vision, purpose, promise, values and personality) is beneficial because they can facilitate complicated workshops with varied stakeholders to lock down these critical components. Identifying the archetype first can also provide clarity and a hook off which to base the other elements. Stakeholders might want to discuss 'look and feel' in these workshops, but really, the brand anatomy exists no matter the livery, so spend time focusing on these.

Brand architecture and hierarchy

Your brand architecture will identify how the sub-brands work in concert with one another and how the visual identity will need to reflect the relationships and hierarchy to help users and customers understand the full brand proposition as well as the proposition of individual brands.

For example, you might have different locations requiring a different brand because of cultural reasons, or product lines needing differentiation because of market separation (or even integration). Do the different entities all operate from the same promise and vision or do they have strong reasons for developing a separate promise, and therefore visual identities?

Mapping your ideal customer and personas

The natural extension of the hierarchy is to identify your ideal customer (if you are a B2B business) and then identify the various personas - either B2B or B2C - so you can craft your messaging and campaigns accordingly.

Personas traditionally include:

- Name, age, role/profession, location
- Context and background
- Goals, frustrations and motivations
- Push, pull, anxiety and attachment
- Media types they consume
- Outcome they want

Messaging and design

Once the anatomy and hierarchy are decided, the messaging and visual identity can now be developed, using these as a framework.

The brand story sits at the centre of the messaging structure and is developed for the brands and sub-brands, and guides how they interact (or don't) with one another. The messaging, shaped for the various audiences, includes articulating the brand meaning, benefits, key phrases and outcomes.

The design should reflect the essence of the brand promise and meaning, a visual translation of the heart of the brand. The balance for the visual identity development partner will be in providing enough options in the early rounds to allow for the best idea to be honed, but not too many ideas that we have paralysis through extensive choice.

It's crucial the mark and identity aren't developed in isolation :

- How does it translate through to current and proposed collateral?
- How does it work at scale and on mobile?
- How does it work in the brand architecture?
- Greyscale? In other languages? Alongside other brands?

Brand positioning and messaging

The brand positioning and messaging should lay out the new framework for the brand, and how to talk about the brand, so users clearly understand the new promise and power and how they contribute.

Good brand positioning development will include:

- Brand essence - a few words to concisely represent your brand
- Brand promise - what you promise your customers/stakeholders
- Proof points - points of evidence to confirm the brand promise
- Features and benefits - solutions the brand provides
- Brand descriptors - the words you would use to describe the brand
- Brand personality - human characteristics of the brand
- How the brand makes the stakeholder feel
- How the brand makes the stakeholder appear
- Brand values
- Brand differentiators
- Brand messages
- Central themes

Brand guidelines

The brand guidelines should include elements and how to use them, including:

- Logo - full usage, trademarks, endorsements, co-branding, internal logos
- Tone of voice
- Colour
- Typography
- Pattern
- Photography
- Icons
- Illustration
- Index of examples - events and activations, campaigns, UX, social, video, animation, audio, stationery, swag, fitouts

Constant iteration

The feedback loop you implement will lead towards constant iteration and challenge. We recommend drawing in people from your research to provide them with the opportunity to feedback (within reason, of course!) This constant iteration and feedback allows you to identify advocates and roadblocks within the organisation.

The cycle of iteration and challenge has the advantage of making your identity stronger while increasing the robustness of your reasoning for why elements were selected - after all, no one finds 'just because' a satisfying answer!

Tips and tricks

Tips for a successful development phase include:

Schedule weekly or fortnightly conference calls with all your development partners - brand anatomy, communication, design, implementation - so they are broadly across what each is doing and any hurdles they have encountered. Now is not the time for silos.

Question everything - remove your ego and look at the anatomy and elements through the eyes of your customer and your personas

Test everything - can people see a natural progression of vision to values; does the mark capture the essence of the brand without words; does the brand message translate across long-form and short-form content; will employees be able to apply the brand easily

Don't just talk to fans - talk to brand users and consumers who will provide a challenging perspective

Start building your network of advocates now, identifying advocates in each audience pool, looking for grassroots support rather than leadership advocates

Always allow more time than you think you need for the project. You can certainly push a rebrand through quickly, but with an established, heritage brand there is a lot of connection to navigate and counter methodically to avoid hand grenades being thrown at launch!

Implementation phase

Following the approval of the brand components - from the promise to the visual identity - the implementation phase can commence. Implementation is distinct from the go-to-market stage when the launch of the brand and requisite campaigns occurs.

Your implementation will reflect your decision to do a complete transition at the same time or a staggered rollout of the new brand and visual identity. For example, you might have decided to update the new brand and messaging and the visual identity in your digital and high-touch channels and campaigns, but slowly transition your physical locations and large-scale assets like vehicles.

The implementation phase is about writing and building all the elements you will need to take the brand to market - both internally and externally.

This part of the project is best managed by someone who has intimate knowledge of all the brand elements within the business and captured in a brand audit. Where is the brand experienced? Where has the visual identity been used?

The design part of this phase is about updating the visual identity for all the collateral -internally and externally.

The communication part of this phase includes the new content production and messaging for all comms channels

including the intranet, website, pitch decks, social channels, pr and more.

The most important part of this phase is implementing the internal engagement, training and onboarding for all areas of the business from executive to the coal-face so your employees are on-message and on-brand. Without employee engagement, your brand refresh is reduced to new livery, and that can appear hollow to your customers. We can all think of rebrands that were pitched as a new angle and brand promise in their press releases but turned out to be only a new logo because the implementation was pushed through without this engagement.

Implementation is the deep breath before the plunge.

Go-to-market phase

Your go-to-market strategy for your new brand helps shape how stakeholders receive the change from all audiences - your end users, your endorsers, your suppliers, your employees and your investors.

This strategy should not be developed to promote your new livery, but instead your new promise and position. If your audience has changed as a result of your rebrand, your advertising will reflect this new audience and showcase your new promise.

For brand and marketing managers, go-to-market is your bread and butter - position your campaign and your communication and channels against your audience, drive your new messages and reflect the audience in your creative.

Once your brand is implemented, and in market, it is critical to deliver a consistent brand presence. It is vital to ensure your promise, values, message and visual identity are uniform, to ensure maximum recognition and buy-in for your new brand.

Finally, celebrate the wins of this project with your team and the organisation - it is a massive undertaking and when done well will positively impact your market share and revenue - this is the time to recognise a job well done.



**What does
it mean to
debrand?**

What does it mean to debrand? Somewhat confusingly, the term debrand has two definitions.



Debranding: the removal of brand elements to appear less corporate and more personal.



Debranding: the shift away from any recognisable brand to appear generic, thus aiming to reduce ad spend and price and increase profits accordingly.

Debranding to appear less corporate, more personal

Brands use this approach when they feel their corporate logo, which traditionally includes a wordmark, would be better received by their target audience when it is a visual only.

Driven by the increasing corporatisation, globalisation of brand and the increase of competitors, this change has gained increasing traction. Brand managers recognised they needed to differentiate and to appear like they weren't actually corporate behemoths but instead reflected the local audience, their interests and concerns.

It was a concerted effort to appear less corporate and more personal.

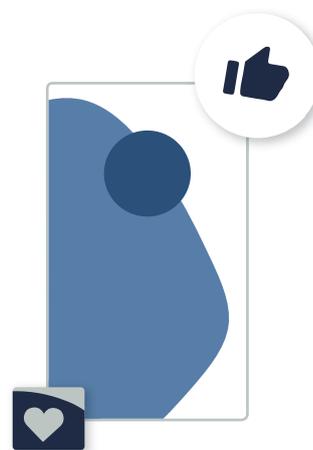
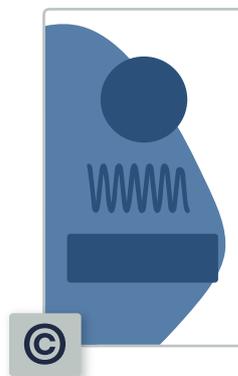
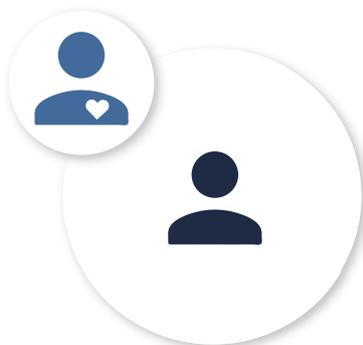


The best example of debranding in this sense, from a whole of business perspective, is Nike.

In the 90s the brand started to move away from their combined logo and wordmark to a pure logomark. This transition occurred on their product and campaigns simultaneously and then transitioned through to packaging and store presentation.

The brand recognition is so strong that if you asked people if Nike still used the word 'Nike' on their storefronts, most people would say yes because the image is so representative of the full brand.

Other examples of corporate debranding include Starbucks, who in 2012 removed their name from their coffee cups (but still have it plastered on their storefronts) and McDonald's who are no longer slavishly plastering it on their signage in Australia.



Debranding to appear generic, reduce ad spend and increase profits

The shift to a generic presentation and name, away from a recognisable brand is often driven by a cost strategy.

If the brand doesn't have to raise awareness to drive purchases but can instead position on price and volume, the company can stop spending on advertising, lower their costs and aim for a profit increase.

Private brands have to spend a lot of money for recognition, particularly in supermarkets, where they are competing with each other and with generic brands. Generic brands aren't just for the price-conscious consumer however with research demonstrating that 9/10 female shoppers are willing to look at private and generic brands before making a purchase decision.

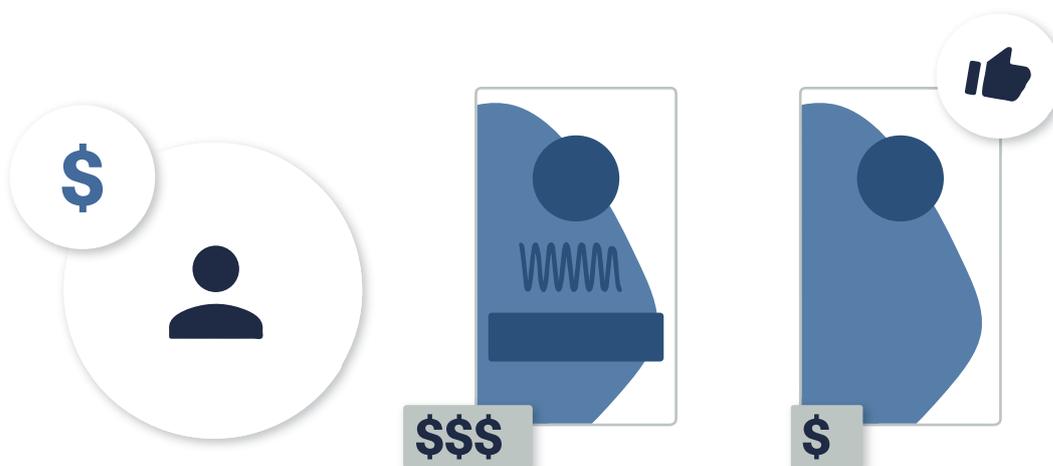


One of the most significant examples of the shift from private to generic brands has been in the supermarkets in Australia - initially led by Coles and Woolworths as a way to extract better deals from suppliers and increase their margins; the strategy is most deftly demonstrated by Aldi.

Generic brands and 'exclusive' brands unknown in Australia populate Aldi's entire shelf space and score very well in taste tests.

Debranding for either purpose is not to be undertaken lightly - it needs to be in response to research against your audience and be a long-term plan, not a short-term reaction.

Whether you decide to move on from your wordmark or to shift your entire presentation, a solution like Outfit will ensure that users within your organisation are 100% on-brand.



The biggest challenges for a central marketing team

The central marketing teams of enterprise-level companies face challenges supporting large and diverse internal clients while also producing campaigns to drive enquiries and leads.

Working as an in-house agency

Central marketing teams support the whole of the organisation by providing:

- Central brand awareness campaigns
- Acquisition and revenue-generation campaigns
- Social channel and communications presence for potential and existing customers
- Brand management

These actions are usually part of their mandate to reach the company objectives and achieve their KPIs. This best practice marketing work is either created and delivered in-house or delivered in partnership with creative and media agencies.

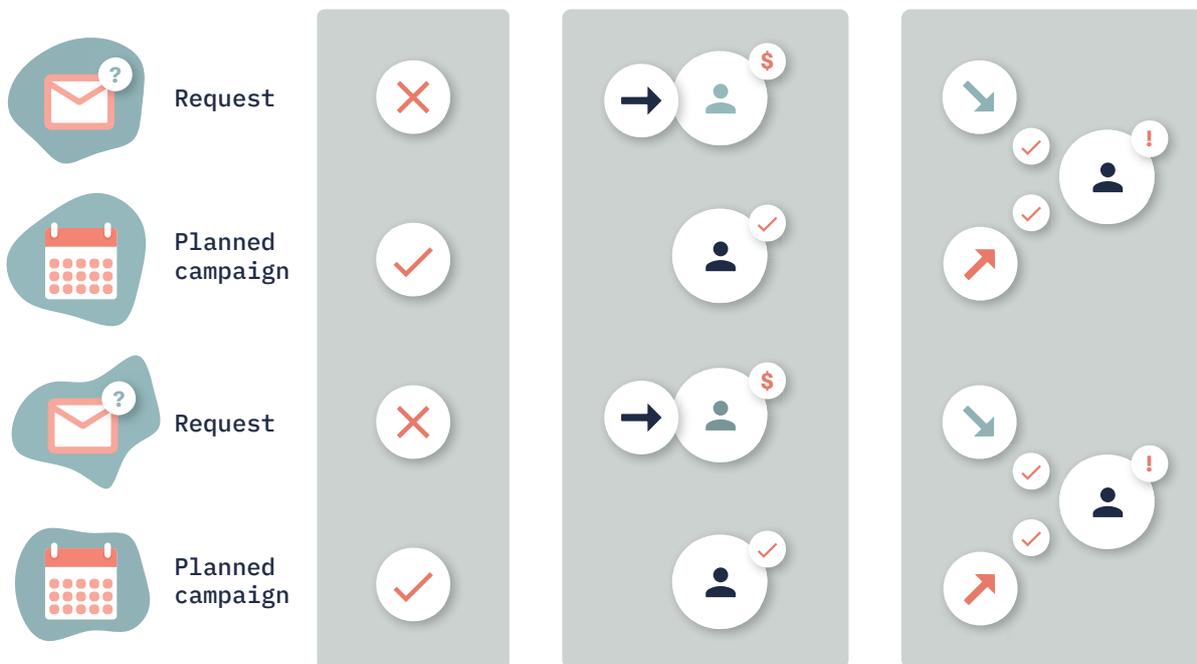
Additionally, many central marketing teams also function as an in-house agency providing marketing and communications solutions to meet a brief from an internal stakeholder.

For Heads of Marketing who run this model, there have traditionally been three options:

1. Not deliver the marketing requests from the organisation outside their central campaigns
2. Outsource the requests to an agency (particularly if the internal design team is small)
3. Deliver the requests using internal resources

This model operates similarly to an external agency - marketing managers will work as internal account managers, having responsibility for some clients, managing their requests, budgets and campaigns. The internal studio team, digital team and copywriters then craft and deliver the solutions.

To some extent, most central marketing teams work as an in-house agency and often deliver a combination of true marketing solutions and graphic design services. The in-house agency solution often leads to teams facing the same challenges, no matter the industry. You may not have all of these challenges, but no doubt you will recognise many of them.



The biggest challenges

1. Subject matter experts

Subject matter experts (SME), or the internal clients in another parlance, often have very defined parameters around what they want and how to deliver their solutions.

As a central marketing team, it is always a balancing act between acknowledging the subject matter expertise while infusing the recommendation and solution with the appropriate marketing expertise. There is often a subtle (or sometimes not so subtle) push-pull between what the SME knows of their subject and what we as marketers know about our audience and appropriate marketing channels.

Their passion for their subject matter and sphere of influence is always inspiring, and it does take an adroit marketing manager to elevate a request to provide a full marketing solution, not just deliver the exact request.

In a previous life, for example, we had SMEs whose solution for 'marketing' was a DL flyer available at specific locations. This project could have taken years to deliver, many hundreds of thousands of dollars, and made a positive and incredible difference to tens of thousands of people, but if we delivered their request verbatim, it would not have done their work justice or reached the right audience in the right way.

We know we can't be experts in every area of business like the people who deliver it at the coalface, but we are experts in marketing - subject matter experts in marketing - and the challenge continues to get other SMEs to recognise this.

2. Workload strain and resource shortage

All teams in all organisations will have workload strain and resource shortage, and marketers don't think we are unique in this regard; however, this often comes about because organisations fundamentally don't understand the labour involved in running an in-house agency, and marketing often struggles with C-Suite representation - see point 6.

Let's break down some of the numbers. An organisation of about 1200 people with revenue of \$250m will normally have about 10-12 business units (with sub-business units in them) who make regular requests of the central marketing team.

This size organisation has typically about 120-130 projects live with the marketing team at any one time, equating to about 1000-1200 scheduled tasks. These projects are a massive volume of work for a multi-disciplinary marketing team of about 15-20 people.

These projects are frequently outside the normal parameters of the marketing function - most marketing teams are running their large-scale campaigns while

also delivering in-house solutions for stakeholders.

So there we have the workload strain.

The resource shortage arises because many marketing teams can't provide clarity around volume, time to complete, outcomes to position a case for either more resources to deliver the projects or an endorsed agreement (at C-Suite level) to allow marketing to decline specific categories of requests from internal stakeholders.

There aren't enough resources to deliver the volume of jobs promptly and often the person who screams the loudest is the one who gets their projects delivered on time and creates a culture of poor client behaviour.

3. Competing priorities

Modern marketing teams are multi-disciplinary, and because of resource shortages to deliver their mandate and expected outcomes, every marketer juggles competing priorities every day.

At the highest level, for central marketing teams, these competing priorities boil down to central brand awareness campaigns and acquisition and revenue-generation campaigns against internal client work. It is a juggling act to deliver above the line campaigns to influence broader campaigns and decision-making and deliver marketing solutions for internal clients who believe they cannot achieve

their objectives without comprehensive marketing and graphic design solutions.

4. Budget cuts

It is a fact of modern-day business, particularly in volatile markets, inevitably we will need to sit down with the finance team to redraw our budgets. These budget cuts are made in two spaces - in staffing and FTE, and, in campaign and production spend.

If the central marketing team can't demonstrate their volume of work, the outcomes they are achieving and a direct link to sales and revenue, the budget discussion can be tough. It can be tough to protect the budget you have, let alone position for more in a harsh environment.

Until marketers can shift the narrative around our work, budget cuts will often come for us first, and deepest, as a central marketing team. When the GFC hit Australia in 2008-2009, the organisation I was working for slashed the marketing budget as a pre-emptive strike against a downturn in sales. I believe in fiscal control, but if you turn the awareness and influence tap off, you can't possibly maintain your sales (and keep people in jobs). Moreover, it is more important than ever to maintain your sales - you need to be standing at the end of the crisis to grow again.

Our reality as marketing managers is that we are often seen as a cost to the business (like HR and Accounts) because it can be

difficult to draw a line between our output and sales. The reality, of course, is that short of retail stores in the right location in the right shopping centre, the work marketing does helps get the brand on the list of customers and therefore opens up the sales channel - providing awareness, leads, traffic and a clear positioning around which sales can close.

5. Brand ownership

Central marketing teams often control the brand, and this brand management leads to the wrong type of work.

So often marketing teams become graphic design studios because the brand is restricted and, to a point, rightfully so, there is a standard of presentation required. It means that instead of using time and expertise to position the brand and organisation from a marketing perspective marketing teams are project-managing graphic design solutions.

Brand ownership by the central marketing team is vital, but it doesn't need to mean brand usage is restricted to those same people - it is a recipe for heartache and long lead times.

6. C-Suite representation

There are organisations with marketing representation in the C-Suite through a Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) role, but this presence isn't as frequent as it needs to be.

Boards traditionally don't have marketing expertise or representation, and this compounds when the Head of Marketing is a third-level manager with no presence within the leadership team and board.

It is from this challenge I believe most of the other challenges stem - we can't move the dial if we don't even have access to it.

Turning marketing challenges to opportunities

These challenges aren't insurmountable but without awareness of them and without a plan to influence a different outcome marketing teams will not progress our narrative or agency within an enterprise.

How to be more efficient with marketing production

Efficiency in marketing production seems like nirvana for most marketers and heads of marketing. Seemingly out of reach for time pressured and resource-poor marketers, we know we should be more efficient, but how exactly are we meant to achieve it?

We break down some of the ways you can create efficiency and best practice marketing solutions. You might be doing some of them, or you might have already implemented them. If this is you, perhaps Outfit might be the solution ;)

Efficiency outcome: Shorten turnaround times

For both internal stakeholders and the marketing teams supporting them, turnaround times cause frustration. Stakeholders often can't understand how it could take 2-3 weeks to supply what is a relatively simple solution, and marketers

struggle to manage the volume of requests across a whole organisation.

Your team could shorten turnaround times by changing the briefing process.

Often the complete information isn't supplied by the client at the time of briefing - by building a request platform with the mandatory information required, you can cut down on the amount of time your team needs to go back and forth before they start the job.

You could shorten turnaround times by having pre-built solutions that only need minor changes.

Rather than building each solution from scratch, you could, for example, provide

2-3 press ads that only need contact details and CTA updated rather than a fresh build each time. You will have information on the most popular types of collateral and most frequent messages, and you can have these ready to go with only 5-10 minutes of updates.

You could anniversaryise promotions and campaigns instead of re-inventing the wheel every time.

Are there campaigns you run several times a year, or once a year? These campaigns don't necessarily need to be 100% new creative each time - you can run the same creative so stakeholders can receive the new artwork with new disclaimer dates. Quickly.

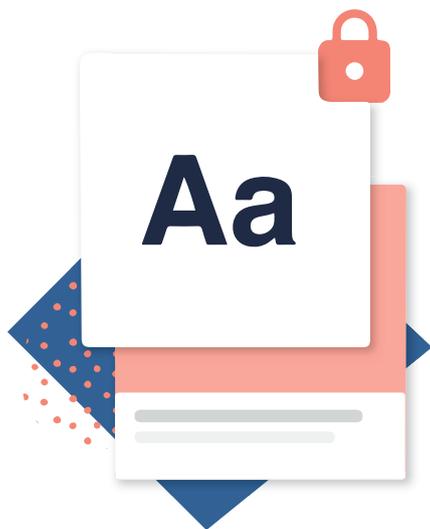


Efficiency outcome: Do less work

Seems so simple - 10 letters - a lot harder than it looks, but not impossible. While it might seem like a wonderful idea to accommodate every request from your stakeholders, you might choose a different path.

You could develop a set kit for stakeholders to draw down from and publish it to your intranet - they can self-service, and your team can focus on other marketing endeavours. Producing collateral they will use without needing to log a job will make both groups happier!

You might need to manage expectations up front - publish a list of the type of work you deliver so the random requests either don't hit your desk or can be politely refused because they don't comply with the agreed list.

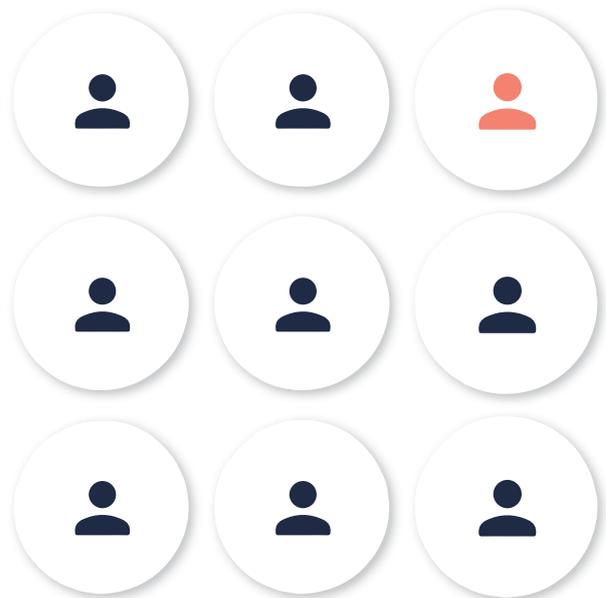


Efficiency outcome: Touch it less

This outcome is both about quality in meaning quality out and also training your design team to pay attention to the detail.

A change to your briefing process means expectations are communicated up front more clearly, and work doesn't start without all the necessary elements. If the document needs to be worked on four or five occasions as new content is supplied or needs 12 rounds of changes because there was confusion about the collateral outcome, all of this takes time (and super-human patience!).

Your design team need to have a rock-solid process for designing and then proofing their own work, so they don't need to redo work to meet the original brief, or have missed mark-ups.



Efficiency outcome: Reduce your spend

If you have an external agency producing non-campaign and non-concept work; if you don't have enough internal design and account management resources to do the work and outsource it the costs will add up quickly.

Reduce your spend by building up either internal design resources or non-agency cost-effective freelance solutions. Designers at \$50/hour enable more budget efficiency than agency charges at \$150/hour and often have a much faster turnaround time.

Reduce your spend by tracking it all, and recognise which expenditure isn't delivering a return on investment. This might mean needing to negotiate with your internal stakeholder to demonstrate the idea they are particularly attached to (and will be the one thing for sure, guaranteed, that enables them to hit their targets) hasn't actually done that over the last three years of attempts and it might be time to look at another marketing or sales solution. I mean, we admire their persistence, but we should have incontrovertible proof it works or doesn't, to justify the expenditure.

Efficiency outcome: Restructure your graphic design team

Restructuring your graphic design team is absolutely NOT the euphemism of restructuring that means people lose their jobs. Instead, this looks at the skill sets, interests and efficiency of your team to optimise it.

You may have an art director or creative director role or perhaps not. Even if this conceptual role isn't formalised, you will undoubtedly have people in your team who are better at concept work, and others who relish the churn of finished art or ticking off lots of smaller jobs in a day. Creatives who are task-oriented enjoy this type of 'punch it out work'. Restructure your team and process to match skills.

It might not be necessary for every designer to work each project through all steps to completion - a creative smorgasbord allows people to select the types of tasks they take the most pleasure in or need to hone their skills in.

Efficiency outcome: Balance between planned and reactive

Across all of these outcomes sits one of the most important - the balance between planned and reactive work. The more you can plan, the more you can ensure you have the right resources available at the right times. Reactive marketing (including unplanned requests from internal stakeholders) means you might need to

wait days or weeks for the person with the right skill set to have the capacity, or you might need to bump other work to wedge something else in.

The world of marketing production has radically shifted through the introduction of new martech solutions including marketing resource management platforms, brand management software, cloud design software and, of course, brand automation.



What is brand automation?

Brand automation isn't yet a common term used by marketers and brand managers, but marketers are increasingly seeking solutions to branding inconsistencies, production bottlenecks and the sheer volume of creative now needed for proliferating marketing and communication channels.

: Brand automation is the process of using technology to automate manual yet predictable on-brand marketing tasks associated with the production process.

Powerful production

Brand automation, at its most basic level, takes existing brand and marketing assets and automates the placement and use of these within a template framework. The template framework means users without design software or skills can produce collateral, on-brand.

Data use

Brand automation goes further than merely applying the right colours or logos based

on a user profile; it produces assets based on data sources and data sets without manual set up or intervention.

This powerful feature enables users to produce an enormous volume of work quickly, straight from the single source of truth - usually a CRM or marketing automation platform.

A brand automation platform doesn't automate the brand experience, but it does make it easier for you to manage and influence brand perception through the creation of the right collateral, personalised, and served through the right channels.

Creative at scale

A brand automation platform takes your carefully crafted branding and visual identity, your tailored messaging and your key outputs and combines these to produce creative at scale.

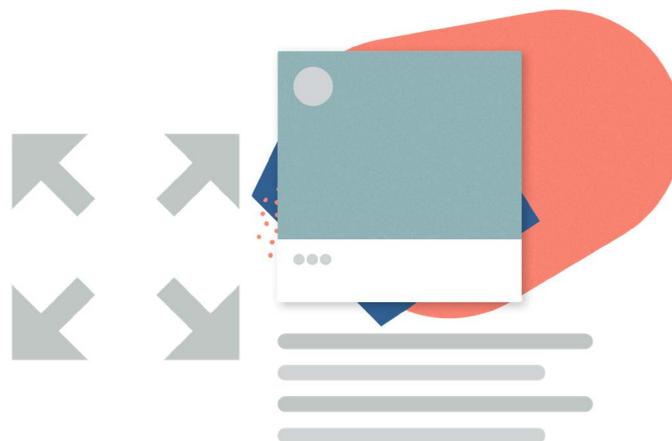
Self-service

Brand automation allows teams within your business to self-service, for them to create collateral without needing to be weighed down with design request processes and brief-writing.

Because brand automation allows marketing production at scale, it is cost-effective, ensuring the team produces more collateral without needing to grow the graphic design team to handle an increased volume.

Automating your marketing production

Automating your marketing production through brand automation allows you to deliver a return on investment both through saved production costs where you don't need to outsource production anymore and through time given back to your in-house design studio.





How does brand automation support a whole organisation?

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The weight of expectation

Central marketing teams support the whole of the organisation by providing:

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These actions are usually part of their mandate to reach the company objectives and achieve their KPIs. This best practice marketing work is either created and delivered in-house or delivered in partnership with creative and media agencies.

Additionally, many central marketing teams also function as an in-house agency providing marketing and communications solutions to meet a brief from an internal stakeholder.

Brand automation removes the weight of expectation for a lot of central marketing teams while supporting the whole organisation.

Brand automation supports marketers

Marketing team structures in large organisations tend to go through cycles - centralised and the decentralised and then back to centralised. No matter your marketing team structure, brand

automation provides a robust platform to build and deliver your campaigns and collateral using content production software.

As a marketer, you chase engagement and sales targets. You juggle multiple markets, campaigns, channels and target markets. We know marketers struggle to produce enough on-brand content to satisfy your customers and deliver sales. Brand automation software allows you to build a campaign quickly, ensuring you can be faster to market.

Brand automation supports communications teams

Traditionally communications experts need to engage with the design team to produce on-brand collateral and content. Brand automation platforms remove this pain point as your communications team can seamlessly deliver on-brand content through templates without graphic design software or skills.

As communications channels proliferate and more content is required to build a story and have cut-through, communications teams are flat out producing enough content for these channels. Whether the content is snackable on a social channel, email campaigns or website landing pages, your team can create all of this on-brand through a brand automation platform.

Brand automation supports brand managers

You have invested significant dollars in building your brand architecture and visual identity, controlled through your brand team. Unwittingly, stakeholders misuse the brand in their need to have the right collateral at the right time. When using brand automation, your guidelines are always applied to guarantee brand integrity.

Traditional online brand guidelines treat the visual identity rules as a digital display system. Elements are still misused and guidelines ignored. A brand automation platform allows your brand architecture and brand hierarchy to be appropriately applied, with users only seeing the assets they need to.

Brand automation supports graphic designers

Graphic designers haven't refined their craft to change logos or contact details on a business card. Great designers enjoy the campaign concept development and don't want to make round after round of changes to a flyer. Brand automation allows design teams to stop doing the churn and burn marketing production tasks and focus on the strategic pieces you enjoy.

While removing the churn and burn from your list seems exciting, it doesn't mean

you have to sacrifice brand guideline integrity. The templates in a brand automation platform rigorously apply your brand guidelines, and users access your approved images and copy. No more well-intentioned, but misguided clipart, and crazy colours through the ease of templated marketing production.

Brand automation supports sales

You know how it is, a great opportunity comes across your desk, but to meet the deadline you will need to create your collateral instead of the central design team. They do great work, but the lead times are generally more than two weeks. Brand automation allows you to build your sales collateral, so it is always on-brand, without design skills or a design team.

Lead generation can be a complex operation with multiple ad sizes and variations, flyer iterations and customised proposals. Brand automation makes it easy to build ads, print material and proposals to drive leads. Your artwork will always be on-brand and fast with tools like multi-edit, flexible sizing and pre-approved content.

Brand automation supports franchisees

Most franchisees have several design options - use only what is supplied by your franchisor, make design requests of

the marketing team or employ a freelance graphic designer. These solutions can lead to you feeling frustrated. Brand automation eliminates this frustration by empowering you to produce collateral in the platform, without the need for a graphic designer or design software.

As a franchisee, you bought into the very brand you are now a part of, but ensuring you keep the integrity of the brand sounds easier than it is. There are complex brand guidelines, long lead times and tight deadlines to navigate. Brand automation allows you to keep the brand strong while creating collateral yourself.



Asset, content and brand management software

It seems like there are as many categories of brand management software as there are brands.

Brand management, digital asset management, content management and branding automation management are key platforms used in traditional marketing technology stacks for enterprise-level organisations, and there is much cross-over between their features and functionality.

Let's take a look at these categories, what separates them and what similarities exist.

Brand Management

What is a brand management platform?

Brand management software allows brand managers and marketing teams to centrally store, in a single database, brand assets

and files. From this database employees and partners can manage, access, store and share these assets to ensure the correct brand assets are applied.

The in-house marketing team usually manages brand management software, updating assets and guidelines and sharing with partners - agency partners, design and digital partners and freelancers to allow them to use and access brand assets.

What is the framework in brand management software?

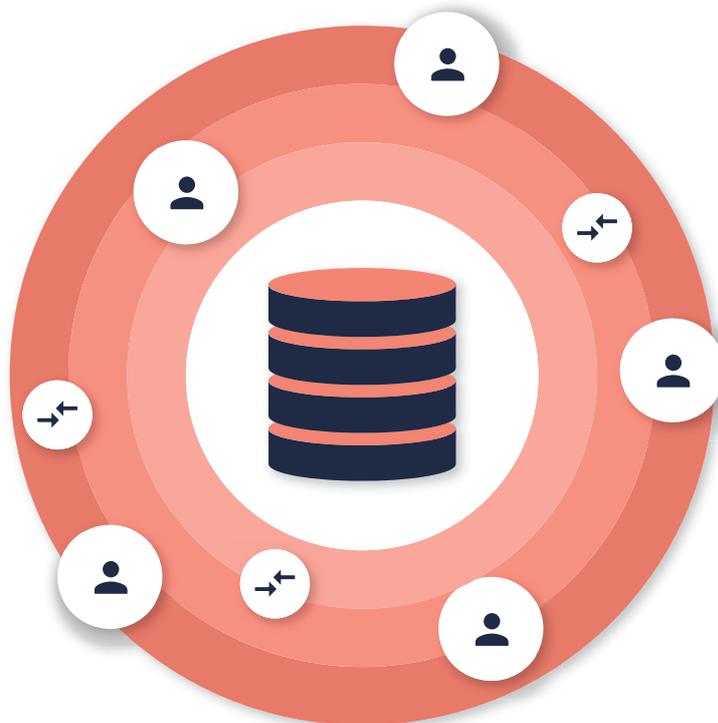
Brand management platforms are traditionally static repositories of brand assets and brand guidelines.

The assets are available for sharing and downloading - logos, colours, patterns, images, UI components, icons and illustrations.

The framework for brand management platforms is usually:

- Style guide/brand guidelines
- Brand assets
 - logo, colour, typography
- UI components
- Media storage

Folders and individual files can be downloaded and shared when required, and the system is the single source of truth for brand assets.



Benefits and opportunities

Brand management software usually sits as a bit of a silo, not integrating with other systems, and as a single source of truth for brand assets which can be invaluable.

Sharing your assets easily and quickly with your partners and having brand guidelines easily disseminated is less risky and fraught than the supply of zip files of assets.

The lack of integration, or real-time use, limits its usefulness, however. The assets stored there are available for download, but to be appropriately used in building brand and marketing collateral, they need to be saved down and placed within an InDesign document, for example.

This functionality, of course, means that there is no guarantee the correct assets are used because we all know what local drives end up looking like - 30 versions of the logo in 4 different outputs with non-standard naming conventions and nobody knows which is the right one for this job.



Digital Asset Management

What is a digital asset management platform?

Digital Asset Management (DAM) is very similar to a brand management platform but often has inbuilt editing capabilities for tweaking files. It focuses less on branding assets and brand guidelines and more on image, audio and video storage and sorting capability.

What is the framework in digital asset management software?

The taxonomy and metadata of digital asset management is a priority - with thousands, tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of images and AV files, being able to find the right assets is imperative. Folder structure, tagging, auto-tagging and metadata ensure you use the correct assets.

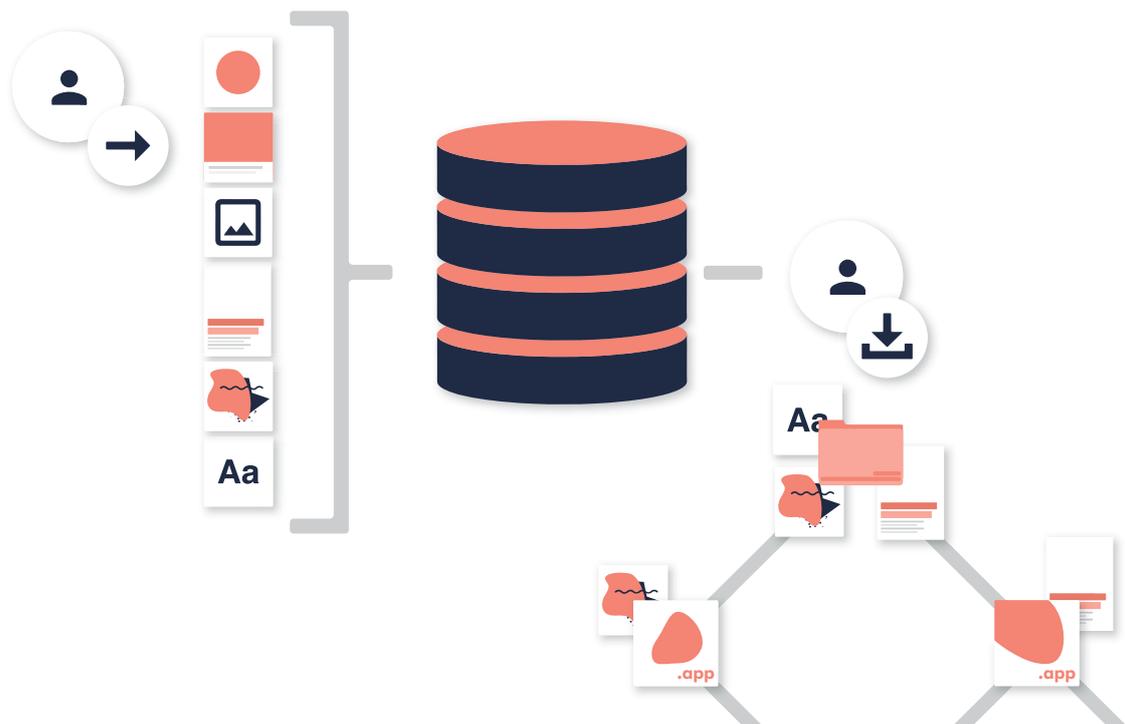
Media asset management is a subset of digital asset management with more functionality around media files like video - it often has in-app simple editing functionality to create snippets or branded top 'n' tail content.



Benefits and opportunities

Good digital asset management software allows only the appropriate assets to be seen and used by the user. This feature minimises the risk of using the wrong images. A good DAM hinges on the taxonomy (folder structure and naming conventions), without this you are required to manually look for the right assets instead of using the search functionality.

Similar to brand management software, most digital asset managers operate as cloud storage and the assets downloaded before use or placement and the need to download before use limits the effectiveness of the central storage solution.



Content Marketing Management

What is a content marketing management platform?

To be clear, we are not talking about your content management system as part of your website to manage the creation and display of website content - we are talking about content marketing management to support your go-to-market and communication strategies.

Content marketing across many platforms, locations and roles quickly become a complex operation, and a content marketing management platform (what a mouthful!) allows you to strategise, plan, develop and execute content through a central platform.

What is the framework in content marketing management software?

The framework for content marketing software hinges around process and collaboration. The centrally documented strategy is used to drive the goals of campaigns and channels. Content produced in the platform is shared, collaborated upon, approved and disseminated without the need for other platforms.

The framework allows you to build strategy and marketing plans, coordinate production, manage content and publishing and review the impact of your work through reporting and analysis.

Content marketing management is a far more advanced version of social media management platforms (which is only one channel in their ecosystem) and shouldn't be compared to Hootsuite or Sprout Social.



Benefits and opportunities

Content marketing management systems allow easy re-purposing of existing content, ensuring your team doesn't need to reinvent the wheel every time they need to write and build content. Some platforms have asset management incorporated, but it isn't the primary function and integration with a specialist DAM is common.

Content marketing management systems are most commonly built for enterprise-level organisations and have the corresponding user count and costs associated with it. Marketing resource management platforms, used as an alternative to content marketing management systems have dedicated budget and financial capabilities.



Branding Automation Management

What is a branding automation management platform?

Brand automation uses technology to automate on-brand marketing production. Brand automation, at its most basic level, takes existing brand and marketing assets and automates the placement and use of these within a template framework.

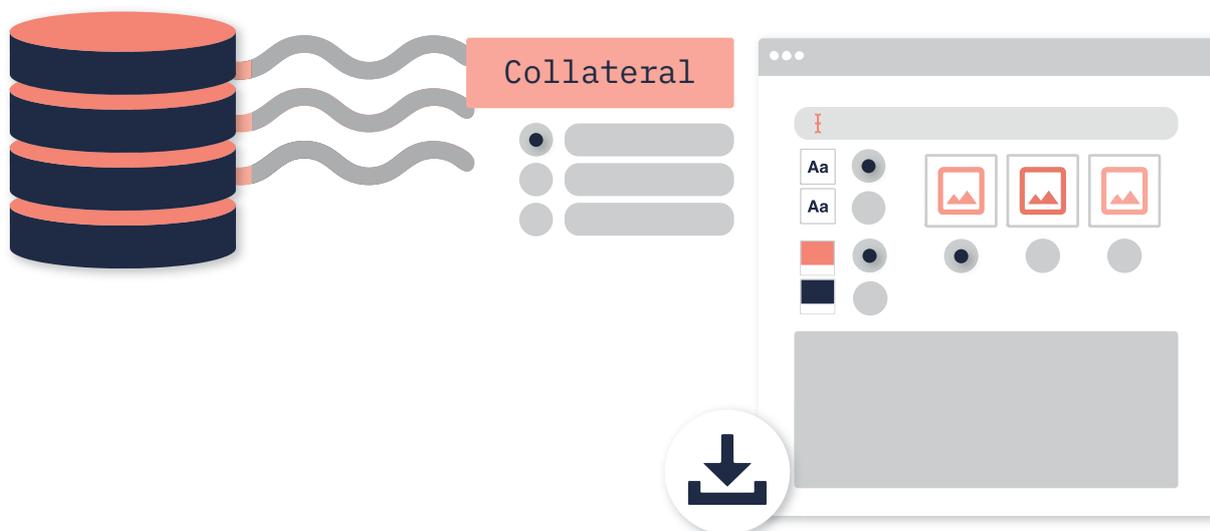
Brand automation goes further than applying the right colours or logos based on a user profile; it produces assets based on data sources and data sets without manual set up or intervention. This powerful integration opportunity enables users to build an enormous volume of work quickly, straight from the single source of truth, e.g. CRM.

What is the framework of branding automation management software?

It takes elements from brand management, digital asset management and content marketing management platforms to create the right assets based on user data, location and brand guidelines. It dynamically uses your assets rather than storing them statically, and because of the platform framework, ensures non-designers can produce branded collateral.

It applies your:

- Logo
- Colours
- Co-branding rules
- Typography
- Grids
- Patterns
- Icons and Illustrations
- Approved copy
- UI components



Benefits and opportunities

Branding automation management allows your teams to use the platform to create their collateral without the need to request anything of the central marketing team.

It is complementary to other martech categories like DAM and content marketing management because it can both draw down on the assets from your DAM and use them 'live' and create collateral for your content marketing platform - feeding the hungry content beast as it were.

Branding automation works best when it has datasets to ingest and apply to creative solutions, increasing production efficiency and personalisation.

Design without the designer is undoubtedly an element of branding automation, but unlike a platform like Canva, it more rigorously applies the brand guidelines into your exact template specifications.

Who are the major players in the branding automation management space?

Traditionally the remit of printers and advertising agencies who wanted to provide easy artwork creation functionality for large clients, ingesting data and branding assets at scale to contextualise collateral is best delivered by a technology and marketing specialist like Outfit.



The Outfit solution

Brand, for companies, continues to be a cornerstone of your point of difference and contributes to both your ability to capture market share and increase the company valuation.

Brand is a cornerstone

Brand awareness, brand attitudes and perceptions shape customers' interactions with companies and certainly contribute to purchase intent. The visual identity and branding execution contribute in large part to these brand attributes and consistency is a minimum expectation with a brand interaction. Personalisation has become key to engagement with a brand.

These elements, and the innovation of new fields within marketing, will continue to ensure that building and maintaining a strong brand will still be of vital importance to a company, even if only to avoid a \$500m writedown to goodwill and brand name.

The pressure on marketing increases

The daily challenges for marketing teams to do more with less and to make a meaningful impact on the bottom line are increasing.

Fuelled by a need to do more with less; enabled by the new and shiny, and hampered by outsized martech stacks, marketers are actively seeking ways to increase relevance to customers and decrease dependence on expensive agency solutions.

Layered company and brand structures, diversified locations and data from multiple sources and of varying degrees of integration further serve to complicate the marketing landscape.

We know organisations struggle to produce enough on-brand content to satisfy customers and deliver sales.

Increased expectation of experience:

Customers expect more from every experience with your brand

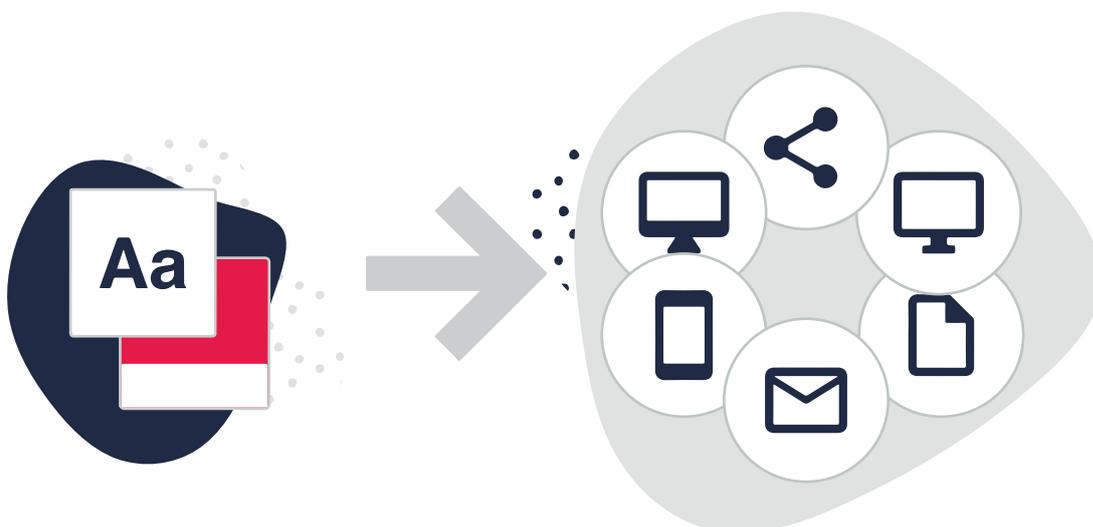
Increased presence: More channels and more people expected to convey the message leading to a decentralised use of brand

Revenue growth: New generation of business leaders and marketers who expect marketing to deliver demonstrable revenue growth

Brand automation with Outfit

Outfit was created to ensure your people and your teams can spend more time doing work that moves people, spend more time being proactive and not reactive, spend more time figuring out ways to exceed customer expectations.

So much of what marketing and brand teams do is formatting and applying the brand in the proper way. Organisations understand that brand is powerful, but sitting it with only a few people with the right software is limiting and creates frustration.



Imagine a platform where the use of the brand was controlled but anyone could build content on-brand. A platform where you could create personalised content at the click of a button. A platform that integrates with your existing martech stack, complementing your existing CRM, marketing automation and resource management.

- Execute with the confidence that comes from standardisation
- Hours of time saved across the organisation
- More people reached with personalised content
- More campaigns launched, tracked and iterated upon
- Reduce your production costs
- Feed the hungry, hungry content beast
- Empower the whole organisation to create on-brand content
- Eliminate the waste and frustration of long build times and data movement

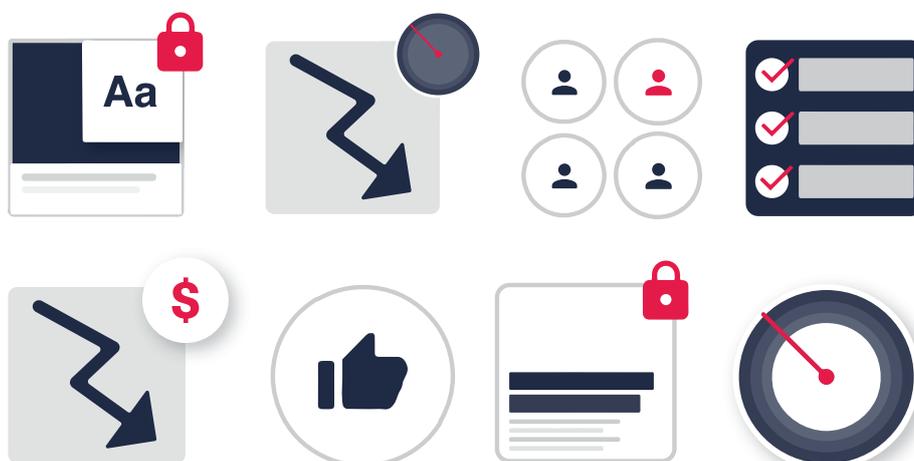
Outfit is a cloud-based, collaborative marketing production tool. It allows the creation of materials using constraint based templates of approved collateral, using HTML.

This ensures all marketing materials produced will be on-brand, whilst empowering marketing teams to produce more materials on the fly.

Any piece of content produced in Outfit is guaranteed to be on-brand. Marketing teams can transition from being a bottleneck of requests, to empowering teams with executable, pre-approved and on-brand content that deliver business outcomes.

Central marketing teams and brand managers have total peace of mind knowing that everything created by departments and partners in Outfit is on-brand, automatically customised to the team, region or customer need.

The power of your brand without the effort because Outfit automates on-brand production at scale.



Connecting Outfit with your business

The average enterprise uses over 1,000 different apps. These frequently include both cloud-based and on-premise applications. In addition, personal and business productivity applications such as chat, social media, work management, CMS, CRM and marketing automation platforms are a key part of daily work, and data from these is often unintegrated with other business data.

Without automated integration, organisations cannot leverage the full power of data in their multiple applications, re-enter data multiple times across applications and constantly context-switch across applications to accomplish tasks.

Using Outfit doesn't mean the reinvention of your systems and processes. We provide our customers with the ability to automate business workflows between Outfit and other cloud and on-premise apps within their business ecosystem.

Create an integrated system, with Outfit in the centre of it all. Pull in data to automatically and dynamically generate documents, on the fly. Push on-brand Outfit documents straight out into the market without any hassle or extra setup.

Talk to our expert team to find out why Outfit's superior brand management and marketing production system is the solution for your enterprise.

[Request a demo](#)



