

Brand – The story behind the Name, Logo, and Livery

When most people think of ‘brand’ they think of a name, a logo, and, for airlines, a livery. But while these are symbols of the brand, they aren’t “the brand.”

The Brand

On the most basic level a brand is the sum of all negative and positive perceptions about the firm whether experienced directly or indirectly by the market, customer, or potential customer.

A brand sums up all the qualities bestowed on a company by the market. Companies strive to create a brand and the market determines if they achieve it. Some say that you don’t “own” your brand, the customer does.

Brand Promise

All strong brands have in common a clear and honest promise of value. **Strong brands offer a promise of something highly desirable and relevant to customers and deliver on that promise consistently every time.**

Consumers like to affiliate with strong brands and they gravitate to brands that match their own lifestyle and personality. They want to know who you are and what you stand for before they let you stand with them.

For example, Ryanair and Southwest Airlines compete in their markets as low cost carriers. Their brand promise mirrors this strategy.

Wal-Mart competes on low prices and promises that by saving people money they can use those savings to live better.

Brand Differentiation

But just delivering on your promise consistently is not enough either.

Brands need differentiation – they need to either occupy a unique spot in the market or do significantly better than a competitor in a common spot.

→Where can you own a position?

→What articulated or unarticulated needs are not being met by anyone else?

→What significant difference(s) can you identify for your business?

Brand Preference

Think of your favorite brands. **Those that come to mind first are strong brands – they are “top of mind” and come to mind immediately when a customer thinks about how they can best satisfy a specific need or solve a problem.** These brands are strongly recognized for what they offer and can and have successfully delivered.

Brand Delivery

How does a firm deliver the brand promise? Through everyday actions or behavior - every word said, every product interaction, every web click, every service performed. **Brand is what you say and do – it is the origins of your business. It is reinforced through the behavior of every employee and product and iterated in every business decision.**

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Brand Founding

Where does the brand originate? In the startup phase, you are creating your brand founding story.

The personality you create, the strategies you implement, the space your brand will occupy all set your brand's DNA that will drive your business for the generations ahead.

Brand Positioning

Strong brands, with clear purpose and promise defined, then develop

competitive positioning strategies derived from a detailed market assessment - what market segment to go after, what is important to that segment, and how the firm will strategically differentiate itself from competitors in that market segment.

Thus the brand promise originates from the firm's competitive differentiation, or competitive advantage.

Here is a simplified 12-step process for developing a competitive brand.

- 1. Market Assessment** (customer, competitors, business environment, business model)
- 2. Market Segmentation** (demographics and psychographics, geography, behavior, value)
- 3. Opportunity Selection and Competitive Differentiation**
 - a. Identify unmet needs or gaps in the competitive landscape
 - b. Determine how to fill the need or gap with emphasis on competitive differentiation
 - c. Decide which market segment best aligns with the competitive difference
- 4. Company Purpose**

This is more than making a profit. What significant difference do you want to make in the world? It addresses how the firm will change the world, make life better for someone, overcome a challenge, etc.
- 5. Vision/Mission Statements**

Your mission is how you plan to fulfill your purpose. Your vision is a better world where your purpose is fulfilled. A good test of vision and mission statements is replacing your firm's name with a competitor's name. If the statement still reads true, it isn't sufficient.

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6. Company Principles and Beliefs

These help set the ethical and behavioral parameters of the business and become actualized in the business plan and the day-to-day operations of the firm. They are tied to your brand personality.

7. Brand Promise

What you tacitly or implicitly promise that is highly relevant and valued by the potential customer and that is delivered consistently every time.

8. Brand Pillars

The functional, technological, or operational items that must be present to enable the company to create and consistently deliver the brand promise.

9. Operational Guidelines

This is a breakdown of the brand pillars into more actionable components. The guidelines address workforce behavior, business processes, technologies, tools, and methods.

10. Organizational Structure

The company's structure is built to streamline the production and delivery of the brand promise with respect to the operational guidelines, principles and beliefs.

11. Company Name, Logo, and Livery

Now that the company and its brand are fully defined it is possible to create the name, logo, and livery to best reflect its personality

12. Train the workforce and management team

**In conclusion, the brand is what you do,
the way you do it and
the consistency in your delivery of something customers want.**

**It is the delivery of the promise you make.
The Name, Logo and Livery are symbols of that promise.**