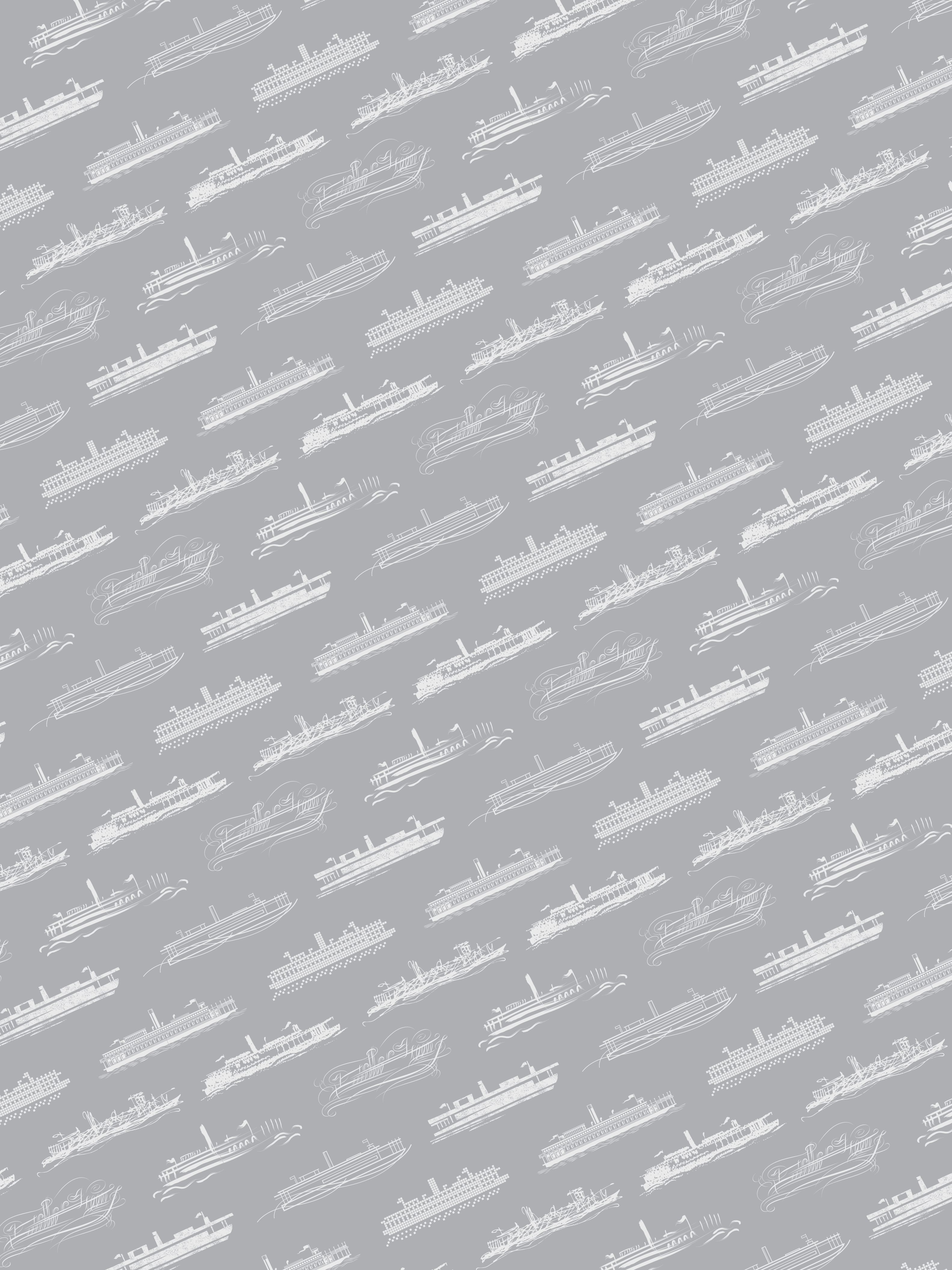
The essentials of branding from *The Big Book of Marketing* McGraw-Hill, 2010




Landor



CONTENTS

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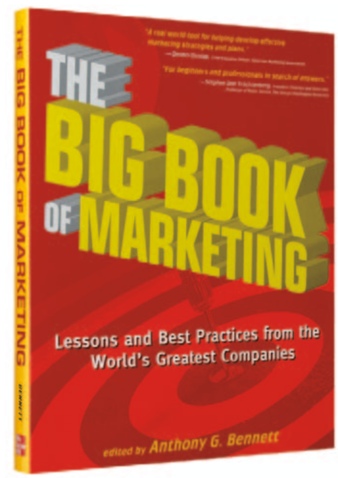
The essentials of branding



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Introduction

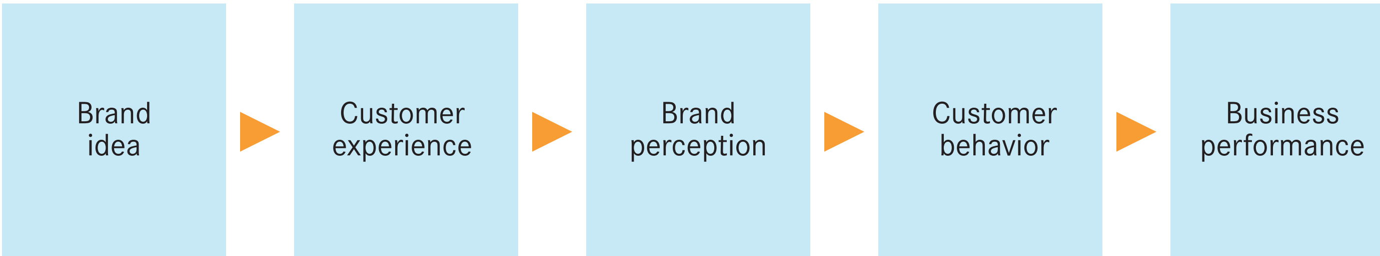
It is incredibly rare for a product or organization to be without a brand. There are museum brands (Guggenheim, Smithsonian), people brands (Martha Stewart, David Beckham), political brands (Obama versus McCain, Labour versus Conservatives), destination brands (Australia, Hong Kong), sport brands (Manchester United, New York Yankees, Super Bowl), nonprofit brands (Red Cross, Oxfam, RED), branded associations (YMCA, PGA, Association of Zoos and Aquariums), along with the product, service, and corporate brands with which we are all familiar. Many old marketing textbooks talk about brands versus commodities (no-name products), but in today's world very few true commodities are left. Even basic foodstuffs have some sort of identifier on them, whether it is a private-label store brand such as Walmart's Great Value salt or a major brand such as Morton Salt.

Brands help people make a choice, a choice among salts, financial institutions, political parties, and so on, and the choices are increasing. The number of brands on grocery store shelves, for example, tripled in the 1990s from 15,000 to 45,000.[1] The purpose of branding is to ensure that your product or service is the preferred choice in the minds of your key audiences (whether customers, consumers, employees, prospective employees, fans, donors, or voters). The way in which the brand affects business performance is illustrated in figure 1.

Business performance is based on the behavior of customers, whether they choose to buy a particular product or service. And that behavior is based a great deal on the perception customers have of the brand: how relevant it is to them and how differentiated it is from the other brands in the same category. In turn, customers derive their perceptions of a brand from the interactions they have with it. Finally, that customer experience, ideally, is informed by a brand idea — what the brand stands for: the promise it is willing to make and keep in the marketplace. If the first part of this chain of cause and effect is indistinct or irrelevant to customers, there is little chance the rest of the chain will work, and the brand will not affect the business' bottom line. Yet, despite the proliferation of brands and their inextricable link to business performance, it is not easy to define what a brand is, along with how to create, manage, and value it.

1 McKinsey & Company, "Strike Up the Brands" (2003).

Figure 1: Brand Affects Business Performance



The difference between a brand and branding

Most experts define what a brand is in one of two ways. The first set of definitions focuses on some of the elements that make up a brand:

- "The intangible sum of a product's attributes: its name, packaging, and price, its history, its reputation, and the way it's advertised."[2]
- "A name, sign, or symbol used to identify items or services of the seller(s) and to differentiate them from goods of competitors."[3]

The second set of definitions describes the associations that come to mind when people think about a brand:

- "Products are made in the factory, but brands are created in the mind."[4]
- "A brand is a person's gut feeling about a product, service, or company.... It's a person's gut feeling, because in the end the brand is defined by individuals, not by companies, markets, or the so-called general public. Each person creates his or her own version of it.[5]

What do we mean by "created in the mind"? When we think of Coke, we may think of the time we went to Disney World years ago. It was an incredibly hot day, and we drank an ice-cold Coke from the iconic glass Coke bottle and there was nothing more refreshing. When we think about the can, we might think red. Today perhaps we think of *American Idol* (and wonder whether they are really drinking Coke in those plastic cups). We think of how that Christmas polar bear ad made us smile. Those of us who are old enough may remember the "I'd like to teach the world to sing" commercial. These personal Coke brand associations are neither positive nor negative, they just come to mind. Coke has worked incredibly hard at implanting some of these brand associations in our minds: The idea and delivery of refreshment (and the supply management and distribution that are behind this), product placement, the color red, the association with a popular TV program, and the advertising all make us feel good about the brand. Coke has not controlled the buildup of these associations, but it has tried, at every stage of our experience with the brand, to positively influence them.

Accepting the second set of definitions poses more of a challenge. The first definition suggests that the brand is the purview of the marketing department—just get the name, logo, design, and advertising right and you have your brand. The second shows how the brand is inextricably linked to the business. The creation of the brand may begin in the marketing department, but the experience of the brand has to be driven through all parts of the organization. Every interaction, or touchpoint, in a customer's experience of a brand makes a difference.

If you consider Apple, the quintessential brand success story, the most powerful parts of the customers' experience of the brand are not confined to traditional brand elements, such as the logo, the name, or the advertising. It is the environment of the Apple stores that encourages you to stay and explore (and upgrade) and interact with its products and its Genius Bar. It is iTunes as much as the iPod, the applications as much as the iPhone. It is Apple's customer service and tone of voice that are seamless, from the instruction manuals to the real-time chat in the support section of the online store. The brand is driven throughout this whole experience, throughout every interaction.

2 David Ogilvy, primary.co.uk/viewpoints (accessed 12 May 2009).

3 *Dictionary of Business and Management* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

4 Walter Landor, founder of Landor Associates.

5 Marty Neumeier, *The Brand Gap: How to Bridge the Distance between Business Strategy and Design* (AIGA New Riders, 2006).

The identity of the PGA communicates the organization's preeminent status as well as the rich cultural heritage of the sport.

But if a brand exists in an individual's mind, and if it is delivered by the business, what is the role of branding? Branding cannot control what people think of a brand, it can only influence. A brand can put some of the elements in place that will help people understand why they should choose or prefer a particular good, service, organization, or idea over another. Branding and related marketing disciplines can help influence and explain how many of these associations in our minds have been built, and whether they were built through advertising, PR, employee behavior, supply chain management, and so on.

Branding is about signals — the signals people use to determine what you stand for as a brand. Signals create associations.

— Allen Adamson, *BrandSimple*[6]

The bulk of this chapter will explain the process that determines the foundational signals of a brand: what a brand stands for (the brand idea); the attitude it projects (the brand personality); its name and how it talks (the verbal identity); what it looks like (the visual identity); and what it feels and sounds like (the sensory identity). Creating these foundational signals is the core business of a branding agency.

Before foundational signals are created, however, a certain amount of groundwork needs to be done to ensure that the best conditions for success are in place. The first two sections explain this essential preparation. The third describes the creation of the foundational signals. The final sections focus on what to do next with these foundational signals once they have been created, looking at delivery of the brand experience, managing the brand, and measuring the performance and value of brands.

6 Allen Adamson, *BrandSimple: How the Best Brands Keep It Simple and Succeed* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Starting a branding project

Starting a branding project includes finding the right reason, commitment, and strategy; analyzing brand equity; and uncovering insights and opportunities.

Start with the right reason

Take care to get born well.
—George Bernard Shaw, playwright

Fundamentally, there are two reasons a business needs branding. Either a new product or company has been created or there is a desire to change an existing brand to better reflect new business objectives (most often called a "rebrand"). There must be a solid business reason to change, or refresh, a brand and a brand idea. Without a solid business objective and brand idea, the judging of brand change becomes purely subjective. Suffice it to say, when you embark on a rebrand it is critical to ensure that you are rebranding for the right *business* reason, and if there is a desire to alter some visual or verbal elements, a clearly defined brand idea is essential for guiding this change.

Start with the right commitment

It is critical to have the right steering committee before starting a branding process. Because the brand idea reflects what a company says it stands for and its vision for the future, the CEO must be 100 percent in agreement with it. And because a brand is inextricably linked to the business, all branding initiatives need to involve the business leaders, not at every stage of managing the project, but at every stage that a significant decision needs to be made, particularly in the early stages when the brand idea and personality are being defined.

The areas of the business that interact with the target audience need to be represented on the brand steering committee to ensure that the brand idea will be delivered. If this means that the steering committee increases to more than eight to ten people, then "buy-in" stages are needed in the process to keep decision making manageable while ensuring that the areas of the business responsible for living up to the brand are committed to the process.

Finally, experts in the field of branding will also be essential partners in the process. Branding agencies are usually hired as partners and guides in the process, since they are in the business of helping to create and manage this kind of change. The best agencies show strong strategic and creative thinking and output and have relevant expertise (not necessarily expertise in the same industry or product category, but experience in handling similar problems for similarly sized organizations and products, or with similar target audiences).

The foundational signals of a brand need to last at least a decade, and creating them is costly, so investing in the right advice is important at both the macro level ("How do we align our business with the brand idea?") and the micro level ("What should we do about our printers to ensure the new brand color reproduces well around the world?"). Because creating a new brand or undertaking a rebrand requires significant investment and signals change, there is really only one opportunity to do it; so it must be done right.

The foundational signals of a brand need to last at least a decade.

Start with the right business strategy

Good branding cannot save a poor product or business. In fact, the desire to rebrand can sometimes mask a fundamental business problem and can distract managers from actually addressing it. Before you brand anything, it is important to have a strong, clear answer to three simple questions: (1) What are we selling? (2) Who is it intended for? and (3) What is the benefit to customers?

What are we selling? In a very practical sense, selling involves making tough decisions about the market you are in, such as Intel's decision to abandon manufacturing computer memory chips and focus on microprocessors. Or it can be about deciding how you intend to describe the product or service being offered. In *Welcome to the Creative Age,* Mark Earls tells the story of working for Clarks, one of the leading shoe companies in the United Kingdom, and spending time in focus groups. His agency hit on an idea that resonated well: not a reexpression of the brand but a reevaluation of what Clarks was selling. Clarks had defined the business of selling shoes as a "replacement business"—replacing shoes that were worn out. The new model was about selling pleasure—buying new shoes that give you a lift.

Who is it intended for? The more specific and targeted the answer to this question, the better. For example, rather than focusing on "moms," target "moms who put their careers on hold and are now back in the workforce trying to juggle career advancement with guilt about not having the time or energy to puree homemade baby food every evening." For corporate brands, it is more difficult to focus on a single audience; at a minimum, both customers and employees need to be considered. But for both product and corporate brands, it is important to understand insights into these audiences to ensure that the brand idea resonates.

What is the benefit to customers? A company should be able to articulate clearly, in a few words, the unique aspect that differentiates its product from the competition and provides a benefit to its customers. This is called the "unique selling proposition," the "dominant selling idea," the "unique value proposition," or the "universal guarantor of performance."

Start with the right focus: Customers

One of the most important first steps in a branding project is to create a framework that identifies and compares all possible interaction points where a customer experiences the brand. This is often called a "customer journey," and the interactions are sometimes referred to as "touchpoints." These interactions can be physical, such as in a supermarket, at an airline check-in desk, or in a showroom. They can be digital, such as through a download from a company website or on social media sites like Twitter or YouTube. Interactions can be analog, such as on the phone, via advertising on TV, or through promotional events.

The important thing is to create the framework from the customers' point of view and not simply compile a list of all things currently being executed to build the brand. Doing only the latter will not help you discover a new interaction that could better connect the customer to your brand. Creating the

Equity research conducted for Gatorade found that the lightning bolt (depicted here on bottles circa 2002–05) was the most distinctive element of its brand.

full framework, however, will foster understanding of where you are delivering the brand promise, where you are failing to keep it, where you need to innovate to improve the experience, and where you should spend your marketing dollars to generate the most impact.

Analyze the brand's equity

When a rebrand is undertaken, or if a new brand has another brand attached to it (for example, through a parent brand endorsement), it is important to understand where current brand equity lies to avoid inadvertently losing key elements that are actively building consumer recognition and relevant brand associations. To be clear, we are not talking about the broadest definition of "equity"—the accumulated value of a company's brand assets, both financially and strategically, which comprises the overall market strength of a brand. Rather, we are talking about the equity inherent in the brand signals to help answer questions such as "Should we keep the logo?" "Should the brand still be red?" "Should we continue to use the same brandline?"

When embarking on a rebrand, provided it is not occurring for a predominantly negative reason, you will often hear people within a company speak about the strong equity inherent in the current brand signals. "We can't get rid of the tagline. We've had it for five years. It has a lot of equity." "People love the logo. It's who we are. You can't change that." "Don't get rid of 'green.' It's a core brand color." Employees are likely to have some emotional attachment to certain brand signals. But often, impartial brand equity research must be conducted to truly understand where real equity lies and whether it remains relevant moving forward.

For the redesign of the Gatorade packaging in 2002, PepsiCo and Landor conducted equity research with customers who were asked to draw the bottle. This was a simple exercise, but one that resulted in a marked consistency of output. The lightning bolt seemed to be the most important and distinctive design element associated with the brand; it was recalled and drawn many times, and consumers associated it with a "spark of energy." Other aspects (orange cap, brand colors, bottle shape) also had strong recall, but did not evoke the same emotional responses.

But equity is not simply about awareness—it is also about relevance. The reason that Gatorade increasingly focused on the bolt in subsequent package designs and other marketing communications was not simply because people recalled it, but because they associated it with the difference Gatorade made to their athletic performance. In 2009, however, facing increasing pressure from Coke's Vitaminwater and other competitors like Powerade, PepsiCo instituted a dramatic redesign for Gatorade that minimized the bolt and emphasized a collegiate-looking serif-type letter *G* as the prominent label graphic. Apparently, PepsiCo made this decision without conducting extensive packaging research and, at this writing, the results at point of sale have been mixed. It will be interesting to see whether this dramatic rebranding helps turn the brand's fortunes around.

The Xbox 360, with its integrated online gaming and multimedia capabilities, completely sold out when it was released in 2005.

Consider also the spate of brands such as Atari and Mini that have recently returned from the dead to take up residence at retail once more. Part of a phenomenon dubbed “dormandise” by consumer trend spotters at trendwatching.com, these brands hope to capitalize on residual brand equity to leapfrog competitors. Of course these revived brands get a head start on awareness, but with brands such as Atari, much more work needed to be done to bring the brand out of eight-bit graphics and give it relevance in the world of PlayStation and Xbox. As Steven Mallas wrote, “Atari’s brand equity doesn’t have that differentiated, maverick feel of yesteryear when it was always associated with the cutting edge of video game technology and was worshipped by hardcore players at the forefront of the video game revolution. Nowadays, it is an all-purpose distributor that finds intense competition in the likes of Electronic Arts and Activision.”[7] Atari’s fiscal losses ($38.6 million in 2004, a significant reversal of $17.4 million profit in 2003) seem to affirm the point. Just because people recognize a brand does not mean they have positive impressions about it or that they will purchase it.

Overemphasizing recognition in the brand equity equation is a quick way to get an immensely distorted picture of a brand’s value. Ultimately, it can have the effect of making a company think that everything is so good there is no need to change anything. Yet if people know about the brand, but it does not reflect what you want it to stand for in their minds, then it is not relevant to keep. GE walked away from the ubiquitous tagline *We bring good things to life* because it no longer encapsulated what it stood for as a business.

A rebrand is a marker of change. It should be undertaken for a business reason.

Uncover insights and identify opportunities

From an agency’s point of view, the process of creating a new brand or a rebrand usually starts with a “situation analysis,” often called an “audit,” or what Scott Bedbury calls a “big dig.”[8] Even in the creation of a new brand you are never starting with a completely clean slate. This big dig can be as small or as large as you want to make it, and there are various models and ways to structure it. It often involves consumer and/or customer research, whether primary or secondary.

The most important thing to keep in mind about a situation analysis, however, is that the ultimate purpose is not to gather information. Its purpose is to assemble *insights* about customers, the category, competitors, or the brand itself in order to identify an opportunity that will shape the brand idea.

What is an insight? Professor Mohanbir Sawhney describes it as “a not yet obvious understanding that can be the basis of a competitive advantage.”[9] Insights can be about a business, brand, category, or customer. These insights come from interpreting information available in a creative and analytical way, often using a framework, model, or map. And opportunities are usually identified through a combination of insights that connect multiple areas such as competition; category; customers; product or organization; heritage, ambition, and stories; and brand architecture.

7 Steven Mallas, “Atari’s Challenging Level,” The Motley Fool (7 May 2004).

8 Scott Bedbury with Stephen Fenichell, *A New Brand World: Eight Principles for Achieving Brand Leadership in the Twenty-First Century* (Penguin Putnam, 2002).

9 Mohanbir Sawhney, “Insights into Customer Insights,” Defying the Limits, vol. 5, 6 (October 2004), defyingthelimits.com (accessed 23 March 2006).

The brand strategy

Creating the brand signals includes defining the brand idea, brand architecture, and brand personality, and producing the creative brief.

Defining the brand idea

A good situation analysis leads to insights and identifies areas of opportunity for a brand, but a stake must then be placed in the ground to define the brand idea: what you want the brand to stand for. There is no magic formula or model for this. It takes smart people, clarity, and creativity of thought, debate, and sometimes more research to determine the right brand idea.

The most important thing about your brand idea is that it is differentiated from the competition and relevant to your target audience. It is essential to give the target audience a reason to choose your brand over all others. If there is nothing different about your brand, there is no reason to purchase it; if you are different but that difference is not important or meaningful to consumers, it is equally unlikely your brand will be purchased.

Creating the brand idea also requires a leap of faith to articulate something that captures the good about the present state of the brand, and, more importantly, a vision for its future. Mark Earls talks about the brand idea having to create "a longer-term trajectory for your business and your working life. It is rooted in a dream of the world as it should be. A dream that you feel and believe in with your whole being, rather than the small part of yourself that business normally connects with."[10]

The more visionary this idea, the more it can inspire the people who are tasked to deliver it. And the more relevant and differentiated it is, the better the outcome. This idea of having a noble purpose above and beyond the commercial or product equation seems to be gaining more traction in the Internet age. Consider Dove's *Campaign for real beauty,* or Ikea's purpose being defined as *Creating a better everyday life for the many.* Brands that claim a higher purpose in their brand ideas, and those that do it earlier than their competitors may connect better with consumers in the long run.

However, the limits of differentiation are important to note. The brand idea does not have to be, nor is it likely to be, different from any other idea that has ever been expressed by a brand before. Difference is a relative term and is proportional to a brand's competition: other brands the target audience might choose instead of yours. For example, if the proposed brand idea for a child's new toy is "stimulating imagination," this should not be disregarded because GE also stands for "imagination at work." The child or parent is not going to be making a choice between the toy and a GE steam-assisted gravity drainage produced water evaporator.

Similarly, you want the brand idea to be ownable; not in the sense of patenting the idea or the words, but rather in the sense of delivering the idea, relentlessly and with commitment. This way, the idea becomes so well associated with a given brand that any competitor would be foolish to invest time and money claiming it stands for the same thing.

10 Mark Earls, *Welcome to the Creative Age: Bananas, Business, and the Death of Marketing* (John Wiley & Sons, 2002).

P&G's brand architecture employs a multibrand strategy, managing its many global brands without a parent endorsement.

Many models can be used to help encapsulate the brand idea. Consumer goods companies with large marketing departments usually have their own models; branding agencies have theirs. Companies often want to incorporate a vision statement, mission statement, and sometimes add a brand positioning statement.

The most valuable piece of any of these models is getting to a short, memorable phrase that encapsulates the core of what the brand is about. This is not a brandline or tagline, although it could become one. Rather, the brand idea defines what the brand is about at its most basic level. For example:

- GE is about *imagination at work.*
- Nike is about *authentic athletic performance.*
- eBay aspires to be the *global online marketplace.*
- Ikea seeks to *create a better everyday life for the many.*

These simple articulations can be fleshed out into a paragraph, a positioning statement, a mission statement, or a vision statement, but if the core brand idea is not clear, then all elements emanating from it will be even weaker. Content will be spun off (PR messages, ad copy, websites, leadership speeches, recruitment specs, blogs), and without a clear idea to link back to, the brand will quickly become disparate, hard to manage, and not associated with anything distinct in the consumer's mind. The brand idea acts as a strategic filter for the future; it is a waste of time to fill in models or craft mission statements without spending time clarifying the brand idea first.

Defining the brand architecture

One component of developing a brand strategy requires establishing a clear structure and relationship among brands in a portfolio. This process is usually called "brand architecture." Fundamentally, brand architecture is about deciding what you want to show as your face to the market and how to present your goods and services to your target audience. Many models and a great deal of marketing terminology are used to describe different approaches to brand architecture.

Figure 2: Popular Branding Words

COMPANY DESCRIPTION		PURPOSE	
Superior	Trusted	Enhance	Progress
Leading	Innovative	Improve	Quality
Pace setting	Inspirational	Grow	Value
Number one	Creative	Success	Peace
World class	Passionate	Performance	Harmony
	Customer-focused		

But all fall somewhere among three strategies:

1. A monobrand strategy (sometimes called a "branded house"), in which one brand is applied across everything. Examples are GE, Virgin, and IBM.
2. An endorsed or subbrand strategy, in which the organization owns a variety of brands that include the parent name in some way. Examples are Nestlé, Cadbury, and Marriott.
3. A multibrand strategy (or house of brands), in which a company uses many different brands with no parent endorsement. Examples are Procter & Gamble (P&G), Diageo, and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK).

Almost all brands, particularly those that have been around for a while and have gone through various mergers and acquisitions, sit somewhere in the messy, real-life middle with a hybrid strategy. For example, Starwood Hotels has a Sheraton brand that itself endorses Four Points by Sheraton. It owns standalone hotel brands, such as W Hotels, Westin, and St. Regis, and yet shows its face to the market as Starwood in its loyalty program that spans all its hotels. Toyota endorses the Prius, Corolla, Tacoma, and RAV4 brands (along with others) but not its luxury brand, the Lexus.

As these examples show, determining the best portfolio strategy is often difficult and rife with trade-offs. It is important to remember that brand architecture is not about internal organizational structure. Well-designed architecture will be consumer-oriented and help customers make choices between one product or brand and another. It will use the minimum number of brands to cover the maximum number of market opportunities, while clearly differentiating among brands. Not only will good brand architecture reflect the strategic vision of the firm, but it should also improve financial performance by helping organizations direct resources to the best bets for future growth by minimizing redundancy among brands and cutting underperforming brands.

Brand architecture should not just rationalize an existing portfolio and stretch the remaining brands into new areas, as tempting as that may be. It is important to be careful with assumptions about how far current brands can stretch to cover future growth areas by understanding what each brand stands for in customers' minds. For example, when Polaroid began selling conventional camera film under the Polaroid label, this brand extension did not work because in the minds of consumers Polaroid stood for *instant* photography, not *generic* photography. The consumer's idea of Polaroid would not stretch enough to accommodate the new meaning.

In contrast, because Virgin stands for something so broad (essentially the idea of challenging convention), and because Virgin delivers its promise so relentlessly, the company has extended successfully into categories as diverse as financial services, mobile phones, airlines, beauty products, beverages, and space travel.

Although a very rational and analytical process, brand architecture often becomes an emotional topic for a company because it is mistaken for an attempt to change the organizational structure. For example, when a company decides not to create a subbrand for a business unit and instead uses the

The yellow beam of the Ernst & Young identity symbolizes a brand personality that is dynamic, optimistic, and always striving forward.

master brand (for example, going to market as "Deloitte" rather than as "Deloitte Tax"), employees can feel that their role is being downplayed, or even in jeopardy. Such strategic decisions must therefore be carefully and clearly managed to help employees understand that brand architecture is not about restructuring the internal organizational chart (which addresses optimizing delivery and costs), but rather about the company's face to its markets (which concerns maximizing revenue). One is not a mirror image of the other.

Defining the brand personality

Many brand strategists may be uncomfortable with the following statement: "There are *not* an infinite number of brand ideas in the world, and many brands occupy very similar territories." If you look across the list of global Fortune 500 companies, the statements about what the organizations stand for generally use some combination of words similar to those in figure 2.

We need not be downhearted by this. If, as Christopher Booker says, there are only "seven stories in the world,"[11] yet tens of millions of books, films, and plays tell these stories differently, the opportunity for relevant differentiation remains strong. BP and Toyota both focus their ideas on a sense of progress. However, nobody would say these brands are the same. One way they differ is through personality, and defining this is the next important element in building a brand.

The premise behind Rohit Bhargava's book *Personality Not Included* illustrates how critical it is for companies to move beyond being faceless organizations and express authentic personalities in order to thrive in the social media era. Given that functional attributes and benefits are not unique or long lasting enough to build a brand around, and that benefit areas are not infinite in number, defining the personality and expressing it across all interactions with customers is an important way to differentiate a brand and build relevance with customers. But a discussion around brand personality can be a difficult one to have in a boardroom. Brand personality is usually seen as an accepted part of what helps to differentiate a smoothie or chips brand. But a financial institution? A petroleum company? A parcel delivery firm? Not so acceptable. Yet often it is these types of companies that could benefit most by appearing more human.

Bhargava describes personality as "the unique, authentic, and talkable soul of your brand that people can get passionate about."[12] Defining company values is often the way large corporations try to articulate this. But when working on the creation of a brand idea, agencies are often told: "Don't touch the values." This may be because the client has already gone through a huge program internally to define them (or, just as likely, a group of senior executives crafted a values statement in a board meeting years ago) or the values have been in place since the founding of the firm and are an inextricable piece of "who we are." But when we look at values across an industry they are often remarkably similar. Consider the big four accountancy firms: If we take out *integrity, respect, collaboration,* and *leadership* (since at least three of the big four share these values, which do nothing to help differentiate the firms), we are left with

11 Christopher Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* (Continuum, 2006).

12 Rohit Bhargava, *Personality Not Included: Why Companies Lose Their Authenticity and How Great Brands Get It Back* (McGraw-Hill, 2008).

One way of building internal passion for brands is through the creation of stories.

very little: some *energy* and *enthusiasm* from Ernst & Young; *seeking facts* and *providing insight* from KPMG; and *getting strength from cultural diversity* from Deloitte. Not exactly the foundations of a brand personality to get passionate about.

One way of building internal passion for brands is through the creation of stories. For example, James Dyson's inventiveness and tenaciousness are hallmarks of the Dyson brand personality. When BP defined its *Beyond Petroleum* strategy in 2000, one of the first activities it undertook was to conduct hundreds of interviews with employees within the organization to get at these stories. The output was something called the "BP scroll" that was literally rolled out in a board meeting to help demonstrate that the audacious brand idea and personality being proposed for the brand had roots in the passion and actions of employees. Along with the brand idea of *going beyond,* BP has four values — performance, progressive, innovation, and green — and people inside the company truly embrace them; they can be expressed authentically in communications.

Producing the creative brief

Once a brand idea and personality are in place, the core visual and verbal symbols can be developed. They are usually encapsulated in a "creative brief," literally a short document that a creative team will work from as it designs and generates names, brandlines, and visual and sensory identities. A good brief is succinct (often only one page), uses words and pictures to help stimulate creativity, and has the brand idea and personality at its core. It also reflects learning about competitors and market categories from the situation analysis (for example, by including a section with things to avoid such as a color that a competitor uses consistently). Obtaining client sign-off on the brief is a critical part of managing expectations when it comes to reviewing work. Client sign-off should help to guide discussions around the work at every stage.

Along with the brief, the meeting itself is very important. This is often the first time a creative team will come into contact with a business or product and its challenges. It pays to take time to inspire and educate team members and involve them in discussions about the business challenges and the brand idea. Most brand signals need to last at least a decade, so bringing the team charged with creating them into the process early, and agreeing on the brief together rather than simply handing it to the agency team, will provide the best, most engaged start.

Creating the brand experience

Creating the brand experience involves crafting the verbal identity, designing the visual and sensory identities, and testing the verbal and visual identities.

Crafting the verbal identity

Naming A new brand needs a name whereas a rebrand rarely has a name change. Indeed, changing a name signals that something significant has happened in the business, through forced circumstances, through a merger and acquisition, or through a negative event. A company that changes its name is expected to change the way it does business, too, so a name change should never be undertaken lightly.

Names can take many forms. They can be acronyms: IBM, BP, NBC. They can take the form of existing words or phrases: Shell, Apple, Twitter. They can be names constructed from other words: Spudulike, Kwik Save, Accenture. They can be coined: Avensis, Aventis, Avertis. And they can derive from the names of specific people or families: Ferrari, Hershey, Mercedes-Benz. See figure 3 for more examples.

Ideally, a name should be the pure encapsulation of the brand idea and, along with this audacious goal, should meet other key criteria:

- Be easy to pronounce in every language
- Be memorable (being brief also helps)
- Help people understand what the business is about
- Be able to stretch into other categories and areas in the future
- Have no negative connotations in other languages
- Be ownable and protectable as a trademark in all countries in which you want to operate
- Have an available domain name

This criteria is often given to an agency before it begins to generate names. But how many brand names can you think of that actually live up to all this criteria? Coke? BlackBerry? Facebook? Audi? Google? CNN? Target?

Name creation is an incredibly difficult business. It demands an immense amount of creativity, coupled with a heavy dose of practicality since most of the names created will not be legally available. In fact, almost 90 percent of names created will have to be rejected due to copyright considerations. And this is the most important thing to understand: A name is only one small part of a brand. Its power to build positive associations is limited when it is viewed in isolation. It only really gains meaning over time and in combination with all other brand signals.

Some brands create more than a name. They create a naming device that allows them to link a series of products together under a similar naming convention. The iMac spawned the iPod, iPhone, and iTunes. The iPod spawned the podcast. People tweet on Twitter and use devices such as Power Twitter to improve their brand experience. A good name will likely meet some of the criteria above, though not all; fortunately, there are many other brand signals to work with to help build a more complete picture of what you want your brand to stand for. It is most critical to make sure that the name is legally protected and that due diligence has been applied to check for negative connotations in other languages.

Figure 3: Names of Brands

NAME TYPES	REAL	COINED
Abstract	Apple	Google
	Twitter	Kodak
	Egg	Avaya
Associative	Lucent	Agilent
	Oracle	Clarica
	Sprint	Visteon
Descriptive	British Airways	FedEx
	America Online	Microsoft
	Computer Associates	Wikipedia

Furthermore, prepare to develop a hard skin at the launch of your new name. The media like nothing more than a name change they can react to, and their reaction is almost never positive. A name only becomes imbued with true meaning postlaunch. So as long as the homework has been completed up front, it pays to be patient and focus on constructing all of the many other signals that will help to support and give weight to this meaning.

Brandline Because names can only do so much, brandlines are often developed in conjunction with the name to help signal what the brand stands for. Brandlines are often called "taglines"; however, taglines suggest a sign-off at the bottom of a piece of communication, and they can change as different marketing campaigns change. A brandline is developed as a permanent brand element to be used across different channels, often everywhere the logo appears. For example, FedEx's brandline is *The world on time.* It appears consistently on FedEx trucks, planes, and packaging and has been in place since 1995. Since then, however, FedEx has had many advertising campaigns that have featured different taglines, such as *When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight* and *Relax, it's FedEx.*

Taglines can change (they are tactical), but brandlines remain the same unless a significant rebrand occurs. PricewaterhouseCoopers' brandline, *Connected thinking,* is at the heart of what the company says it stands for as an organization. *Beyond Petroleum* works cleverly to change associations with the name of the company from British Petroleum to something that implies what the firm wants to be about as a brand—going beyond. GE's *Imagination at work* captures the driving mission of the company. The brand overhaul of Citroën saw an end to the tagline *Just imagine what Citroën can do for you* and replaced it with a brandline that captures its business strategy: *Créative technologie.*

Creating a brandline presents many of the same challenges as creating a name (for example, it needs to be legally protectable and often needs to work in different countries), which may be why so many brands eschew a brandline altogether. Other brands seem to feel that a brandline is mandatory but create something that does not work hard enough to help to differentiate them. Look at PwC's competitors: KPMG locks up three words with its logo: *Audit. Tax. Advisory.* It tells people what the firm does but nothing about why it is different from its competitors (who are already perceived as very similar). There is already very little differentiation in this category, and KPMG's brandline does nothing to help. Ernst & Young is stuck with a legacy line from the immediate post-Enron days, *Quality in everything we do;* surely a given for one of the most regulated industries in the world. It focuses on an unspecific parity point (quality) with Ernst & Young's competitors rather than something that differentiates the organization. Deloitte has chosen not to use one, which, according to *Brandweek,* is an increasing trend.[13] Perhaps some companies are finding that if you cannot have a good one (that is, one that focuses on your differentiation and relevance), it is better not to have one at all.

13 T.L. Stanley, "Taglines Lose Their Starring Role in Ads" (26 November 2007) brandweek.com/bw/esearch/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003677226 (accessed 12 May 2009).

Tone of voice Tone of voice is another means of conveying what a brand stands for. Tone of voice is not messaging or writing; it is about how you say things rather than what you say. For example, a brand's voice can be friendly, informative, precise, grounded, real, honest, daring, playful, irreverent, emotional, or witty. The brand voice can express the personality of a friend or teacher, a geek or gamer, a leader or an advocate, a visionary or a knowledge seeker, a magician or an engineer. When tone of voice is consistent, it gives the consumer another means of recognizing the brand and its promise.

When you consider how many people within a company use words to communicate with a target audience on a daily basis, tone of voice would appear to be an incredibly important part of branding. Yet, compared with the development of a visual identity, creating tone of voice is less common. Whatever the reason, many brands do not have a consistent tone of voice, or their tone of voice is not considered when creating the foundational signals for a brand. Even brands that have crafted a tone of voice often do very little to train people on how and where to use it, or to promote its use on an ongoing basis.

A few brands are known for their tone of voice, and they deliver it consistently and memorably. For example, tone of voice helps differentiate maverick brands such as Virgin, as well as staid brands such as the BBC and the *Economist*. Southwest Airlines has a tone of voice that links strongly to its brand personality. The Southwest style is fresh and immediate, expressing respect and warm regard for people in general:

Although we cannot predict what external, uncontrollable events might transpire during 2003, we can forecast with considerable certainty that our valorous, caring, nimble, good-hearted, and resilient people will ensure that Southwest ends 2003 just the way it ended 2002—at the forefront of our industry.

—Southwest Airlines 2002 Annual Report

To help an organization understand tone of voice and its implications for business communications, a common step is to take some current pieces of communication and rewrite them in the new tone. It is better to show than to tell, and focusing on high-profile, visible pieces of communication helps ensure that the new brand voice is noticed. Getting people to act on tone of voice is more difficult, however.

Designing the visual and sensory identities

Great design gives people the shorthand markers of identification and engagement with a product, service, or organization. It stops us in our tracks to think again about our usual choices. It helps us find coffee, aids us in sending urgent documents in an unfamiliar city, or can make us feel part of a smarter or more stylish community. As we sit at the neighborhood Starbucks, typing on a MacBook, wearing Uggs or Adidas, minding a baby asleep in a Bugaboo stroller, we may suddenly realize that all these brands stand for something singular, that all of them have a personality, and that all of them use their visual and sensory identities to create powerful associations that we connect with.

Good Co. Coffee's brand voice uses clever, lighthearted parody to brighten the day of the overstressed corporate coffee drinker.

Some of the most memorable logos communicate multiple meanings. The Amazon.com logo forms a smile and also suggests an *a* to *z* product range. The FedEx logo incorporates an arrow, implying speed and precision.

Logo There is something revered about the logo, and it is probably the first thing that comes to mind when we think about branding. It can mistakenly be where the desire to rebrand begins ("The new CEO doesn't like our logo") and is often where emotions can ride high in a branding project. It may have to do with the fact that the logo becomes personal on our business cards, or perhaps it has acquired such hallowed status that its role in branding is often overemphasized.

A logo becomes a visual shorthand for the meanings people attach to a brand, but it is not the only strong visual symbolism. As with a name, a logo will play up some aspects of the brand but will not be able to communicate others. However, it is also often undervalued, and stories about logos being "drawn on a napkin over a pint" abound, suggesting there is nothing difficult about their creation.

Most logos (also called "brandmarks," "brand identities," or "corporate identities") are made up of several components: the wordmark (usually the name of the company), a symbol (a graphic device placed within, adjacent to, or around the logo), and the colors chosen to reflect the brand. Some logos comprise only a wordmark (such as Kiehl's, Virgin, Google, FedEx, IBM); a few use just a symbol (Nike, Apple, Prince); and others combine a symbol and a wordmark (The Body Shop, UBS, BP).

Some of the most memorable logos communicate myriad meanings, breaking new ground while respecting heritage. For example, the BP sunflower symbol (officially called the Helios mark) is a highly effective encapsulation of the core values of the brand. It is notably progressive and innovative—no other petroleum brand had done anything like the sunflower symbol at the time it was created—and it successfully represents BP's brand idea of *going beyond* to become an environmental leader and a truly great company. Incorporating green, a heritage color for BP, the symbol captures the feeling of pure energy, and its solar power initiative represented in the sunburst flame evokes broader environmental meanings for BP's future.

Some logos add essential communication that is missing from the name alone. For instance, a literal visualization of the word "Amazon" would take you to rainforests or Greek mythology. But instead, Amazon.com's logo helps suggest the range of products available (the arrow points from *a* to *z*) and forms a smile to communicate a sense of the welcoming, helpful, customer-friendly nature of the brand. The FedEx logo incorporates a hidden (negative space) arrow to subtly imply its speed and guarantee that packages will always get there on time. Evoking a story within the brand symbol presents not only a visual metaphor for the brand, but also a word-of-mouth communication campaign. Over the years, many people have recounted the story of discovering the arrow in the FedEx logo as an amusing "aha" moment.

While virtually no brand identity can convey everything about a product, service, or company, a logo must be evaluated on its ability to communicate at least one or two important concepts about the brand. The brief should incorporate these concepts, guiding both the creative team and the client in appraising the recommended designs.

Logos were once designed as purely static, two-dimensional devices with strict rules around usage that no one could distort or change in any way, on any application. This is still the case in many instances, but there are some logos that are designed to be more fluid. This trend started with the MTV logo in 1981, but it can also be seen with brands such as Google, which creates new designs within its wordmark and encourages its audiences to engage in the practice as well. The RED logo builds the brand by associations with others (iPod, Bono) and was created to work with brands as diverse as Dell, American Express, Gap, Hallmark, Converse, and Emporio Armani.

The Olympic 2012 logo created a negative media frenzy when launched in the United Kingdom. Its purpose was to be used in conjunction with other brands, allowing partners to adapt the logo to their own brand colors. But even this flexibility did not go far enough for some who felt that the logo had been "foisted on" the United Kingdom without properly involving members of the community it would represent.

By contrast, in creating the branding for Worldeka (a social-networking platform that brings together citizens who aim to change the world), Landor provided some brand structure — including the simplification of Worldeka to WE, the key insight that encapsulates the brand's collective voice — but decided along with the client to let the online community own the logo and the brandline. This encouraged a multitude of design executions that expanded the visual and verbal language (such as allowing various interpretations of WE: Wrestling Evil, Working Effectively, or World Engaged).

This kind of "open branding" is not appropriate for all brands, but what these examples highlight is that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to logo usage, and tools like animation, customization, and flexibility need to be considered along with colors, fonts, and symbols.

Color Logos are not designed in black and white. The creation of a logo always introduces other core aspects of the brand. For some brands, color is one of the most important associations they have: for example, the Tiffany robin's-egg blue box, ING's orange versus the blue and red of other financial institutions, and Coca-Cola's red.

There is much written about color theory and the meaning of color in different societies. While white is traditionally the color of death or mourning in Asia, yellow means caution in the United States, and red is the color the eye is drawn to most — differing meanings of color should not be the overriding reason to either choose or discount these colors for a given brand. It is more important to go back to the brand idea and personality, and the situation analysis, to ensure that a color palette is chosen that first and foremost differentiates the brand from the competition and is relevant to what it is trying to stand for. Without doing this, designers face the inevitable risk of designing a logo and then being asked, "Can we just see it in red/blue/yellow/pink/aqua?" This exercise should rarely be necessary. If you plot your competitors on a color wheel and are clear about how color theory relates to your brand idea, the choice of colors will be limited.

The Worldeka identity system encourages myriad design executions.

Crest Vivid White differentiates its whitening toothpaste by using the visual cues of the cosmetics category to position it as part of a beauty regimen.

Look and feel, or "house style" Other graphic elements that make up the visual identity can help create something that becomes differentiated and communicates the right associations about the brand. Some agencies call this collection of elements the "look and feel," others the "house style." They consist of the color palette (main and supporting colors), fonts, photography, imagery style, and any other graphic element.

A successful rebrand can occur without ever touching the logo, name, or brandline. Ernst & Young's rebrand is a case in point. Its brand idea is about *achieving potential,* implying a personality that is dynamic, optimistic, and always striving to move forward. The yellow beam powerfully translates this brand idea and personality into a graphic element that allows an organization of more than 130,000 people to create diverse communications that nonetheless look and feel like they came from one brand — Ernst & Young. Absolut used a graphic element derived from its unique bottle shape as a symbol that became far more important than the actual logo in identifying its brand. Target's use of the bull's-eye makes its communications so distinctive that the name Target is unnecessary. These graphic elements are all part of a visual toolbox that help these brands become differentiated and memorable.

Occasionally, however, the use of another graphic element can detract from your brand idea. Snoopy, although now associated with MetLife insurance, is an icon created independently of this organization and one also used by other, albeit nonfinancial products. Yet the Peanuts canine character has become virtually synonymous with MetLife owing to long and extensive awareness-building efforts (and expenditures) while technically having little, if anything, to do with the original brand idea or personality of MetLife. Rather, Snoopy's relationship to MetLife began as an advertising idea, intended to add warmth and borrowed interest to an otherwise somber and impersonal industry.

Packaging A package may have only half a second to engage with a consumer, yet it has a laundry list of functions to fulfill. For example, the structure needs to respect shelf space, sustainability, and safety considerations; the graphics need to include legal information such as weight, nutritional facts, and bar codes, along with names (parent brand, subbrand, flavor names, unique ingredient names), illustrations, photography, icons, logos, and the list goes on. Great package design manages to serve the brand first and foremost, while working within the mandatory limits of legal and structural constraints.

It is important to understand what the brand idea and personality are and project these associations onto the packaging. Innocent smoothies are a much-cited case of packaging success in the United Kingdom. Every aspect of Innocent packaging gets across its brand, from tone of voice and copy, to its recycling efforts, to its name and logo design. Moreover, Innocent packaging does not follow category conventions. Its labels do not show photographs or illustrations of cranberries or raspberries — these images are not a means of differentiation. Breaking traditional category conventions is a simple way to stand apart, but few brands have the courage to do it.

Ariel Cool Clean detergent turned its pack into a promotion by depicting the physical act of turning the dial down to 30°C.

Another way of differentiating packaging is by taking cues from innovation and design in other categories. When Landor designed the packaging for Crest Vivid White toothpaste, it took inspiration from the cosmetic category. The package's vertical orientation, sans serif font, embossing, and clean side panel clearly define a cosmetic product, appealing to consumers who consider oral care part of their beauty regimen. But the design speaks just as loudly to consumers more focused on health care. In the first three months following its launch, Crest Vivid White exceeded sales forecasts by nearly 300 percent, and Vivid White was the top-selling oral care item in Target stores in the United States during the first quarter of 2006. According to Mary Zalla, managing director of both the Cincinnati and Chicago offices of Landor Associates, "Just because no company had ever designed a cosmetic-looking oral care package didn't mean it should never be done. What *has* been done will only get you so far. Great design is about what *can* be done."[14]

Packaging is usually created before all other marketing communications, which may be why, when there is something new to say, a branding violator is added to the front of a pack to link it to a current promotion or ad campaign. Why not use the pack more creatively to link better to these other brand associations that consumers are picking up elsewhere? When U.K. laundry detergent brand Ariel launched Ariel Cool Clean, it was the second in a series of innovative brand-led approaches to on-pack promotion. The goal was to advocate Ariel's effectiveness at 30°C and its inherent energy cost savings to consumers by washing at a lower temperature. One of Ariel Cool Clean's challenges was to overcome perceptions that lower temperatures have reduced cleaning power. The idea was to make the promotion the actual pack design. The "Turn to 30°C" message is reinforced visually by placing the Ariel logo on a washing machine dial that mirrors the act of physically turning the dial down. This concept maintains Ariel brand equities while pushing the boundaries of promotional packaging. Following the launch, Ariel became the market leader.

As noted, package design is connected to both graphics and structure. Branding has usually been reserved for the former, while packaging structure and materials are often unfortunately designed before the brand idea and personality have been defined. A missed opportunity, but one some iconic brands have fully grasped. Martin Lindstrom calls this the "smash your brand" principle, explaining, "Nearly a century ago, when the first-ever Coca-Cola bottle was in the planning stages, the designer received his marching orders. Company executives wanted him to develop a bottle so distinctive that if you smashed it against a wall, you would still be able to recognize the pieces as part of a Coke bottle. The designer obviously lived up to the requirement, and to this day it works."[15] But how many brands could you smash today and still identify—Coke, Heinz Tomato Ketchup, Marmite in the United Kingdom, Gatorade, Absolut? And then it gets harder.

The deliberate use of structure to build brand differentiation varies even within product categories. Perrier, Johnnie Walker, Smirnoff, and other drink brands use bottle shape as a distinctive brand element, while graphics in the canned-drinks market are generally the only differentiator. In another sector, Ferrero Rocher chocolates' gold

14 Mary Zalla, "Creating Great Design Takes Guts: Daring to Be Different Can Give Instant Boost to Market Share," *Package Design* (April 2009).

15 Martin Lindstrom, "Smashing Your Brand," martinlindstrom.com/pdf/articles/Smashing%20your%20brand.pdf (accessed 12 May 2009).

The Greenest Brands in 2008

	U.S.	U.K.
1	Whole Foods	The Body Shop
2	Burt's Bees	Marks & Spencer
3	Trader Joe's	Waitrose
4	Tom's of Maine	Tesco and Sainsbury's (tie)
5	Toyota	ASDA
6	Seventh Generation	Dove and Google (tie)
7	Honda and GE (tie)	The Co-operative Bank
8	Whirlpool	E-ON
9	Aveda	Morrisons
10	Method	Toyota and Nivea (tie)

The ImagePower Green Brands Survey is conducted annually by Landor and WPP partners to gauge consumer perceptions of the "green market" around the world.

wrapping and clear container are essential parts of the brand experience, while a low-cost chocolate product's propylene flow wrap is designed purely to grab attention at the point of sale. Apple is expert at designing packaging that engages us even after we have penetrated the first layer, as anyone who has opened an iPod Nano box will attest.

Great package design will only become more important as differentiation on-shelf gets harder. Couple this with the increasing consumer interest in ecofriendly options and better functionality, and the stakes rise dramatically. In the 2008 ImagePower® Green Brands Survey, one of the most notable trends that surfaced is the attention consumers are giving to sustainable packaging. In 2008, Amazon launched a Frustration-Free Packaging initiative to make it easier for customers to liberate products from their packages, focusing on two kinds of items: those enclosed in hard plastic cases known as "clamshells" (said to cause "wrap rage," as anyone who has tried to open one will attest), and those secured with plastic-coated wire ties, commonly used in toy packaging. These types of packaging pose a challenge for brick-and-mortar retailers attempting to prevent incidents of theft. Green and frustration-free are two other aspects to juggle in the development of future packaging that can create positive brand associations.

Smell Smell is one of the most powerful senses. Memories, imagination, old sentiments, and associations are more readily reached through the sense of smell than through any other channel. In humans there are four genes for vision, whereas there are 1,000 allocated to scent, which means we have the ability to differentiate more than 10,000 odors. According to the Sense of Smell Institute, 75 percent of all emotions we generate are due to what we smell.[16]

Some brands are synonymous with a smell. Johnson's has become the baby smell. The smell of Crayola crayons is instantly recognizable and can take most of us on a nostalgic trip back to childhood. In fact, Crayola's smell is ranked 18 among the 20 most recognizable smells in the United States. Kentucky Fried Chicken now regards its signature aroma as one of its key "brand ambassadors."[17]

Scent branding is a relatively new field, but more and more companies are realizing the power of scent to build brand experiences. In 2003, about $30 million was spent on aroma marketing around the world; in 2010, that figure is set to reach $220 million.[18]

Some brands, such as Victoria's Secret and Starbucks, have used scents to connect with their consumers for years. Singapore Airlines, which regularly achieves top ranking as the world's most preferred airline, incorporates the Stefan Floridian Waters scent in perfume worn by its flight attendants, on hot towels, and in numerous other elements of service.

Besides food, fashion retailers, and the occasional airline, scent has been underused as a branding symbol. Things are changing, however: Breathe in Westin Hotels' white tea signature fragrance or the mandarin orange and vanilla scent in the Sony Style stores. Furthermore, scent branding does not need to be limited to a retail, service, or product experience. Most corporations have office spaces

16 Linda Tischler, "Smells Like Brand Spirit," *Fast Company* (19 December 2007).

17 Reena Amos Dyes, "Brands Target Sense of Smell," *Emirates Business 24/7* (20 June 2008).

18 See note 17.

KFC regards its signature aroma as a core brand equity.

and lobbies into which prospective clients walk, and where events, meetings, and interviews are held. The effective use of a positive scent could have a potentially dramatic impact on employees and customers alike.

Choosing the right scent for your brand should link back to the brand idea and personality attributes. Alex Moskvin, director of BrandEmotions at International Flavors & Fragrances, says he studies the DNA of the brand and its relationship to consumers to figure out what resonates olfactorily. In designing a hotel fragrance, for example, Moskvin wants to know if the chain is trying to stand for family-friendly hostelry (think chocolate chip cookies) or a haute couture Zen-like retreat (think sandalwood or hinoki). "We want to capture a smell that makes people feel part of the club," he says.[19]

Sound Sonic brand identity, like its visual counterpart, has many components. Sound can be used as an identifier of a brand, the equivalent of a sonic logo (like the Intel chime, McDonald's "I'm lovin' it," Nokia's ring tone, or Yahoo's yodel), or on the device itself to accompany certain actions (such as the always-welcome sound of Microsoft Windows and Apple operating systems booting up). A longer piece of music can also be used to create positive brand associations (United Airlines uses Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*). These identifying sounds have been a prominent signal of brand experience since the invention of radio (such as the NBC chimes), but in today's cluttered, multimedium, audiovisual, and online world, sonic branding has evolved into an increasingly serious business.

Originally used as a one-off piece of music for a British Airways ad, Leó Delibes' "The Flower Duet" from the opera *Lakmé* became so connected to its brand that when the airline dropped the music in 2000, it received such a volume of complaints that it was reinstated. Today British Airways nurtures its accidental sonic brand: even Dave Stewart from the Eurythmics has worked on one of the many British Airways–commissioned versions of the song. However, trying to appropriate a famous song for your brand, rather than composing something original, is costly and often unsuccessful. In France some years ago, a David Bowie song was used to dramatize the Vittel brand. After a few months, consumers remembered David Bowie but forgot Vittel. In essence, Vittel was asking consumers to remember two brands, David Bowie and Vittel, but the connection was strictly promotional and the stronger brand dominated recall.

19 See note 16.

Consumers derive their perception of a brand from the sum of interactions they have with it.

Although it may take time to build recall, composing a sonic identity or longer piece of music based around a brand idea is a very efficient way to create differentiation and identifiable associations with your brand. Sounds are less likely to exacerbate cultural differences than words and images, particularly in a short sonic identity, and most contain only a few notes that can become relevant across most of the world.

Testing verbal and visual identities

Once you have established a direction for a brand's verbal, visual, and sensory identities, the next step is to test leading concepts on targeted consumers to learn whether the brand signals effectively communicate the intended idea and have the desired impact. Research can be used in two main ways to inform and optimize the design process: insight and equity understanding before design and postdesign validation. Preferably, both should be incorporated into a branding project because you learn different things at each stage.

Many different methodologies for testing brand signals are appropriate, depending on your goals, the category, geography, and whether you are introducing a new brand or a rebrand. Here are some lessons and principles to remember when undertaking a design or naming a research project:

- **People are skeptical about things that are different.** Brand signals are designed to be different. Skepticism is magnified in a group situation. Focus groups are therefore not the right choice for design research. Be creative. Talk to individuals; find them where they shop.
- **Research should be designed to inform your decisions.** Do not aim to pick winners and losers from brand signal research. Use it instead to understand attributes people associate with the signals and assess how well they match what you intend to communicate in your brand idea and personality. Do not expect every signal to communicate everything equally well. Understand strengths and weaknesses and make decisions with the whole picture in mind.
- **Think laterally and metaphorically.** Our brains are programmed this way. Use images, metaphors, and cross-category analogies to help consumers help you. If you want to communicate a sense of indulgence for a chocolate bar name, ask about the name's appropriateness in another indulgent category, such as spas or retail stores specializing in cashmere.
- **Consumers are not namers or designers.** Consumers live in the real world, not the conceptual world. Put the names and designs in as real a context as possible. Let the designers do the designing and the consumers the reacting.
- **Familiarity is a powerful force.** New designs are usually less findable on a shelf than ones with which people are already familiar. Because of this, the strength of a new design must be evaluated on more than just "shelf pop." And new designs often underperform current ones in research; consumers often need time to adjust to new strategies and may not immediately like a new design.
- **Place more importance on emotional rather than rational responses.** Use the research to help you understand them. Do not underestimate emotional identification that cannot be rationalized. Try harder to understand it.

Delivering the brand experience

It is important to stress that only in combination do brand signals make an impact on a customer's experience of a brand. And only when they are deployed boldly, with courage and single-mindedness, will they create impact in the cluttered world of brands we live in. You might notice the logo of an airline first, but it is your experience buying a ticket, waiting in line, flying in the cabin, and interacting with service people that will form your opinion of that airline brand. Red Bull may have a distinctive can, but its sponsorship and events probably imprint the idea of the Red Bull brand most firmly in our minds. Consumers derive their perception of a brand from the sum of interactions they have with it. And delivering the promise of that idea is the work of an entire organization, not just the marketing department.

Only through a deep understanding of its customers can airlines, soft drink companies, or financial institutions deliver a brand promise that lives up to the brand idea. Occasionally, the brand idea will be so well understood that an organization can hit on something that has the power to generate viral communications and amplify the brand idea. For example, Virgin Atlantic's head massage service got everyone talking about how amazing the Virgin experience was. In truth, it was one of the smallest parts of a holistic brand experience, but it generated buzz and marked the Virgin experience as remarkable.

In a world that gets noisier and more complex by the day, a company can design a relevant and differentiated brand and *still* not cut through the clutter to capture public imagination. If you can add a single catalyst, or power application, to the mix and ignite consumer excitement, the entire brand will be elevated by it. Finding this powerful interaction with customers can significantly stretch your marketing dollars and the impact of your brand.

Adopting a female-focused strategy, Preem's petrol and convenience stores added more relevant merchandise and turned its toilet facilities into a genuine point of differentiation, giving women something to tell their friends about.

Managing a brand

Once the foundational signals are in place for a new or refreshed brand, the next step is to begin the process of codifying and communicating these to all the people who will use them. This very involved process takes a long time. You may read about a firm undertaking a rebrand in July of one year, but not actually see it until a year later. It is not usually the production of the visual identity elements that generally takes the most time (and money) but the implementation. This can include media testing, the creation of templates (for specific applications such as presentations, business cards, stationery suites, brochures, internal websites, country-specific homepages), the design of packaging mechanicals (printer-ready files created to printer's specifications), and so on. Implementing a brand requires developing a plan for every touchpoint on the customer journey. It inevitably means creating guidelines: visual identity guidelines, verbal identity guidelines, digital guidelines, and print guidelines. Often these are translated into other languages for online accessibility.

An implementation process might involve updating training modules and brand resource centers. Some organizations develop help centers, particularly in the months pre- and postlaunch, and create brand modules for new recruits to educate them on exactly what the brand stands for and how to use and "live" it. The implementation process also needs to factor in all the other communications partners and their work (advertising, marketing, Facebook sites, screen savers, press releases, leadership speeches, conferences, events, exhibitions, offices, chairs, pens).

This process is typically seen as a key part of brand management, which is generally interpreted as the means of controlling your brand and keeping its expression consistent. It jars significantly with some of the other key aspects of branding: the two-way interactions with customers on their journey, the continually evolving impressions of a brand in people's minds, and the use of social media channels to develop a dialogue with customers rather than push out a stock message.

Brand management used to be about limiting external influences. Rigidity was the means to consistency, and consistency emphasized scale and professionalism. But the Internet and the democratization of image creation have made everything public property. (Is there really such a thing as internal and external communications today?) Today we create brand ideas that transcend the need to impose discipline by inviting partnerships with people, inside and outside an organization, who want to be part of the idea. Brands are no longer about one-way communication; they are about dialogue between the brand and its customers. Indeed, brand implementation can often incorporate cocreation with the consumer; the MyStarbucksIdea website and Dell's IdeaStorm are examples of this.

Brand management today should be about determining what cannot change and what must change. Advertising agency DDB talks about the 70/30 rule: 70 percent consistency but 30 percent flexibility. The 30 percent portion relates to language and cultural differences, buying behavior nuances, insights into the target market and its preferences

for media consumption, and so on. For example, this understanding of the balance of consistency and flexibility allows McDonald's to offer a teriyaki burger in Japan and porridge in the United Kingdom, yet still deliver a consistent set of expectations for the familiar golden arches.[20]

Consider the role of the brand launch. Rather than seeing it as the way to push out tools and information, brand managers should make sure that it fully engages employees with the brand idea so that they are inspired to be part of delivering a customer experience that expresses the brand. Brand management in the future should not be about policing standards but rather about nurturing and developing the ongoing brand experience.

It can take more than a year for a well-managed brand like Citroën to implement a refreshed brand across all customer touchpoints.

20 DDB, "Brand Consistency Redefined: Achieving Constancy of Purpose and the 70/30 Rule," Ddb.com/yellowpapers/2007/10 (accessed 12 May 2009).

Measuring the performance of a brand

Tracking brand strength

Building a brand based on differentiation and relevancy is not simply common sense; its success can be proven. In the mid-1980s it was recognized that all brands, regardless of category, country, or target, seemed to live by certain rules. To understand those rules and describe the strongest brands, Landor Associates developed ImagePower®, the first cross-category, multicountry study of brands. In the early 1990s, the ImagePower study was expanded from a few key measures of brand stature to the largest study of brands in the world, the BrandAsset® Valuator (BAV).

BAV stands apart from other brand studies because it is predictive, highlighting leading indicators of brand strength. Moreover, it is an incredible diagnostic tool, illustrating how a brand is performing against not only direct competitors but also against all other major brands in different categories. In this way it replicates a consumer's real experience of brands in the very cluttered brandscape. (You wake up to a Sony alarm clock, eat Kellogg's cereal for breakfast, watch the CNN morning news, turn on your iPhone, and get in a Toyota car to drive to a Safeway supermarket to use the HSBC ATM inside.)

To date, BAV has been fielded in 48 countries, covers some 30,000 brands, has conducted interviews with more than 500,000 consumers, and includes dozens of brand metrics and attitudinal questions. BAV is currently run by Young & Rubicam Brands, a consortium of companies that includes Landor.

BAV posits a proven model on how brands are built that is based on the interrelationship of four brand dimensions, known as the four pillars:

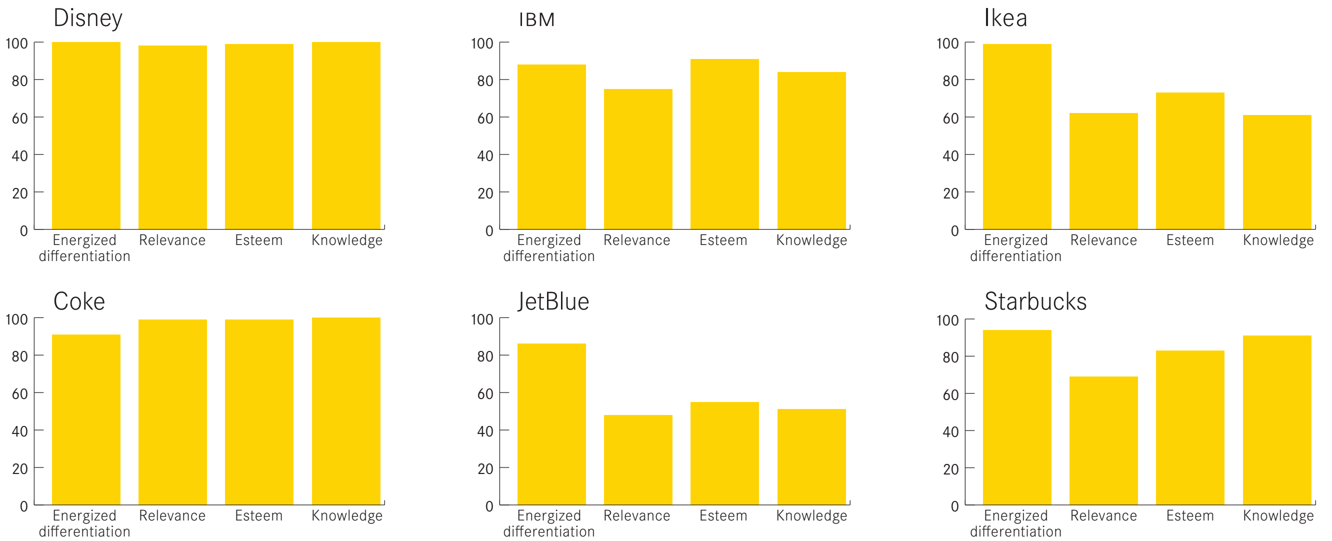
1. *Differentiation:* What makes your brand stand apart
2. *Relevance:* How appropriate this difference is to the audience you want to reach
3. *Esteem:* How well regarded your brand is in the marketplace
4. *Knowledge:* How well consumers know and understand your brand

This model shows how brands are built one pillar at a time, with differentiation being the first, most critical step. A strong brand has high levels of differentiation and relevance. The healthiest brands have greater differentiation than relevance, which gives them room to grow. When a brand has a higher degree of relevance to differentiation it is in danger of being seen as a commodity; Energizer, Bic, and Saran Wrap are examples of this.

Esteem and knowledge, the other two pillars, make up a brand's stature. A brand with a higher level of esteem than level of knowledge is a brand that has a good reputation, although people may not know much about it. This puts a brand in a great position to convince consumers to get to know it better. Brands such as Coach and Movado fit this mold. Too much knowledge and not enough esteem is an uncomfortable place to be, however.

In the case of leadership brands, such as Disney, Coca-Cola, Sony, and IBM, all four pillars are strong. A successful new brand, or a successfully relaunched brand, will demonstrate a desirable

Brand Strength as Measured by BAV in 2009



step-down pattern of pillars, from differentiation as the highest to knowledge as the lowest, indicating that the brand has found a meaningful way to differentiate itself in people's minds. It is ready to intensify its marketing efforts in order to expand its knowledge base. JetBlue and Ikea were in this situation early on and only grew stronger from there. In the early 1990s Starbucks had this profile, moved to a balanced pillar leadership profile, and now is beginning to show slight declines in differentiation.

Measuring brand value

There is a natural desire to understand how much a brand is worth—to have a tangible means to measure what is fundamentally an intangible asset. However, just as absolute control in brand management is not an achievable goal, neither is there a widely accepted, definitive way to accord value to a brand in financial terms.

Nonetheless, several approaches and models have been developed to create estimates for brand value. The application of these numbers falls broadly into two categories: "brand rankings" published in the business press and "brand valuations" that provide more serious support for business decisions.

The lack of consensus over valuation techniques is most clearly seen in the widely divergent value estimates for brands in published rankings and, for many people, calls into question the usefulness of such estimates for more serious purposes.

However, there is good academic and practical evidence that certain approaches provide more robust results than others. Brand value models generally differ in two areas: their structural approach to valuation and the degree of subjectivity used in determining their primary inputs. On one hand, several models employ expert judgment to assess structural factors such as the role of brand in driving business results, and the brand risk that is reflected in the rate used to discount a business' branded cash flows to determine value. In many people's minds, this subjectivity casts doubt on the reliability of the valuations such models produce. On the other hand, more rigorous approaches use statistical models built on objective market data for brand strength and financial performance to assess the value contribution of a brand to a company's financial success.

For example, significant progress has been made with BAV, the research database that employs a well-established approach to measuring brand strength. In one study, partnering with Stern Stewart, a financial consulting firm, BAV was used to show a correlation between brand differentiation and operating margins. The study found that those firms whose brand differentiation grew tended to have an operating margin of 10.5 percent, while those that saw differentiation decline had an average operating margin of 7 percent.[21] Longer term, BAV has been used to track how declines in differentiation often set a precedent for a long-term decline in business performance.

Another brand strength methodology, Millward Brown Optimor's BrandZ, is as expansive as BAV (more than 23,000 brands across 31 countries). BrandZ uses a pyramid model that plots increasing levels of rational and emotional engagement of consumers over six levels. The top of the pyramid,

21 Jon Miller and David Muir, *The Business of Brands* (John Wiley & Sons, 2004).

The 2009 Breakaway Brands®

Landor BrandAsset Valuator

BRANDS *LISTED ALPHABETICALLY*	**2005 PERCENTILE RANK**	**2008 PERCENTILE RANK**	**GROWTH IN BRAND STRENGTH**
Apple	83	96	45%
Google	99	100	26%
Häagen-Dazs	84	95	35%
Hallmark	99	100	25%
National Geographic TV	99	100	20%
Payless ShoeSource	39	78	58%
PayPal	75	92	40%
Special K	60	87	48%
Super Bowl	94	99	41%
Trader Joe's	93	98	29%

Methodology: Landor studied approximately 2,500 brands in BrandAsset Valuator's U.S. database, identifying those brands that exhibited the greatest increases in brand strength from 2005–2008.

the level called bonding (where, on average, 8 percent of customers sit), contributes, along with claimed purchasing data, to a Voltage score, a one-number summary of the growth potential of a brand. Millward Brown Optimor has mapped this score against market share and has proved that brands with strong Voltage scores are more likely to grow market share. Ogilvy and Mather and consultant A.T. Kearney have done further work with these Voltage scores in the United States and the United Kingdom, linking them not only to market share growth but also to profit, total shareholder returns, and levels of business risk.[22]

Three companies publish annual rankings of brand value. The longest-running global study is Interbrand's Global Brand Scorecard, published annually in conjunction with *BusinessWeek*. It assigns a brand value, measured in billions of U.S. dollars, to the world's top 100 brands and plots this against past-year results to show the year-on-year change in brand value. Arguably the best-known and most publicized approach, the scorecard includes qualitative judgments to assign relative weight to contributing factors. It also includes a range of inputs such as analysts' projections, companies' financial reports, and Interbrand's own qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Millward Brown Optimor first launched its list of top 100 global brands in 2005, establishing a methodology based purely on market data that looks both at financials (a brand's reported earnings and assets) and the results of surveys that assess consumers' perceptions of the brands versus their competition.

Another approach, used by U.K. consultancy Brand Finance, aims to forecast the top 500 global brands and focuses its reporting on a number that is said to signify future brand earnings.

Unsurprisingly, there are differences in these rankings. In 2008, Interbrand identified Coca-Cola, IBM, Microsoft, GE, Nokia, Toyota, Intel, McDonald's, Disney, and Google in its top 10. Millward Brown Optimor's BrandZ included Google, GE, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, China Mobile, IBM, Apple, McDonald's, Nokia, and Marlboro. Brand Finance selected Coca-Cola, Microsoft, Google, Walmart, IBM, GE,

22 See note 21.

BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands 2010

MillwardBrown Optimor

	Brand	Brand Value 2010 ($M)	% Brand Value Change '10 vs. '09
1	Google	114,260	14%
2	IBM	86,383	30%
3	Apple	83,153	32%
4	Microsoft	76,344	0%
5	Coca-Cola[1]	67,983	1%
6	McDonald's	66,005	-1%
7	Marlboro	57,047	15%
8	China Mobile	52,616	-14%
9	GE	45,054	-25%
10	Vodafone	44,404	-17%
11	ICBC	43,927	15%
12	HP	39,717	48%
13	Walmart	39,421	-4%
14	BlackBerry	30,708	12%
15	Amazon.com	27,459	29%
16	UPS	26,492	-5%
17	Tesco	25,741	12%
18	Visa	24,883	52%
19	Oracle	24,817	16%
20	Verizon	24,675	39%
21	SAP	24,291	3%
22	AT&T	23,714	18%
23	HSBC	23,408	23%
24	Bank of China	21,960	4%
25	BMW	21,816	-9%
26	Toyota	21,769	-27%
27	China Construction Bank	20,929	-8%
28	Gillette	20,663	-10%
29	Louis Vuitton	19,781	2%
30	Wells Fargo	18,746	16%
31	Santander	18,012	12%
32	Nintendo[2]	17,834	-2%
33	Pampers	17,434	-8%
34	BP	17,283	N/A
35	Cisco	16,719	-7%
36	RBC	16,608	12%
37	Bank of America	16,393	6%
38	Budweiser[3]	15,991	20%
39	Exxon Mobil	15,476	N/A
40	Shell	15,112	N/A
41	Disney	15,000	-35%
42	Carrefour	14,980	0%
43	Nokia	14,866	-58%
44	Accenture	14,734	-2%
45	ICICI Bank	14,454	N/A
46	Honda	14,303	-2%
47	Colgate	14,224	15%
48	Intel	14,210	-38%
49	L'Oréal	14,129	-6%
50	Orange	14,018	6%
51	PetroChina	13,935	N/A
52	American Express	13,912	-7%
53	Mercedes-Benz	13,736	-11%
54	Citi	13,403	-8%
55	T-Mobile	13,010	20%
56	BBVA	12,977	3%
57	NTT DoCoMo	12,969	-18%
58	Pepsi[4]	12,752	-15%
59	Nike	12,597	5%
60	Movistar	12,434	14%
61	Chase	12,426	17%
62	Target	12,148	-1%
63	H&M	12,131	1%
64	Subway	12,032	9%
65	Porsche	12,021	-31%
66	Dell	11,938	-23%
67	MasterCard	11,659	57%
68	Samsung	11,351	80%
69	Telcel	10,850	N/A
70	O_2	10,593	23%
71	TD	10,274	-7%
72	MTS	9,723	6%
73	Petrobras	9,675	N/A
74	FedEx	9,418	-1%
75	Baidu	9,356	62%
76	eBay	9,328	-28%
77	Siemens	9,293	-31%
78	Goldman Sachs	9,283	25%
79	Wrigley's	9,201	-15%
80	Zara	8,986	4%
81	The Home Depot	8,971	-3%
82	Red Bull[5]	8,917	9%
83	ALDI	8,747	1%
84	Nissan	8,607	-16%
85	Starbucks[6]	8,490	17%
86	Hermès	8,457	8%
87	Barclays	8,383	20%
88	US Bank	8,377	N/A
89	Standard Chartered	8,327	1%
90	China Mercantile Bank	8,236	2%
91	State Farm Insurance	8,214	19%
92	Beeline	8,160	-8%
93	J.P. Morgan	8,159	4%
94	Sony[7]	8,147	30%
95	Morgan Stanley	8,003	18%
96	Auchan	7,848	N/A
97	Gucci	7,588	2%
98	Bradesco	7,450	13%
99	Avon	7,293	-16%
100	TIM	7,280	14%

1 The Brand Value of Coca-Cola includes Lites, Diets and Zero
2 The Brand Value of Nintendo includes Wii and Nintendo DS
3 The Brand Value of Budweiser includes Bud Light
4 The Brand Value of Pepsi includes Lites, Diets and Zero
5 The Brand Value of Red Bull includes sugar-free and Cola
6 The Brand Value of Starbucks includes stores as well as coffee sold at the supermarket
7 Brand Value includes PlayStation 2 and 3, as well as PSP

HSBC, HP, Nokia, and Citi. More significant, as well as differing top 10 lists, the single-number evaluations of brand worth also diverge considerably. For example, in the 2008 studies, Millward Brown Optimor suggested that the Google brand is worth more than three times what Interbrand reported ($86.1 billion versus $25.6 billion).

Clearly, brand valuation scores are not as definitive as other measures of financial performance, but the better models going forward will be those that take into account objective measures of brand strength based on consumer perception. After all, if we go back to what a brand is, and if we believe it is ultimately held in the minds of consumers, brand valuation models that do not factor consumer perceptions into their results may be seriously flawed.

Brand value is perhaps still best understood in hindsight, by looking at the price that companies are prepared to pay for brands. P&G bought Gillette in 2005 for $57 billion, and the value that P&G put on the Gillette brand was 17 percent higher than its stock market value.

Although measuring the ultimate worth of a brand is still evolving as a discipline, what is firmly accepted is the importance of brands to business performance the world over. Creating a strong brand is an even more complicated task than valuing one, and it is never actually complete. The stronger the foundation, however, the more chance there is that all the "scraps and straws" that consumers pick up along the way will accumulate into strong preference and long-term affinity for a brand. ■

Landor Associates created many of the brands and designs pictured in this article.

PGA identity, p. 3
Gatorade packaging, p. 6
Xbox packaging, p. 7
Downy packaging, p. 9
Crest Glide packaging, p. 9
Puffs packaging, p. 9
Fairy packaging, p. 9
Daz packaging, p. 9
NyQuil packaging, p. 9
Always packaging, p. 9
P&G identity, p. 9
Alldays packaging, p. 9
Tide packaging, p. 9
Ariel packaging, p. 9
Febreze packaging, p. 9
Blend-a-med packaging, p. 9
Secret packaging, p. 9
Ernst & Young identity, p. 11
Good Co. Coffee identity and packaging, p. 15
FedEx identity, p. 16
Worldeka identity, p. 17
Crest Vivid White packaging, p. 18
Ariel packaging, p. 19
KFC identity and packaging, p. 21
Preem identity and environments, p. 23
Citroën identity and environments, p. 25

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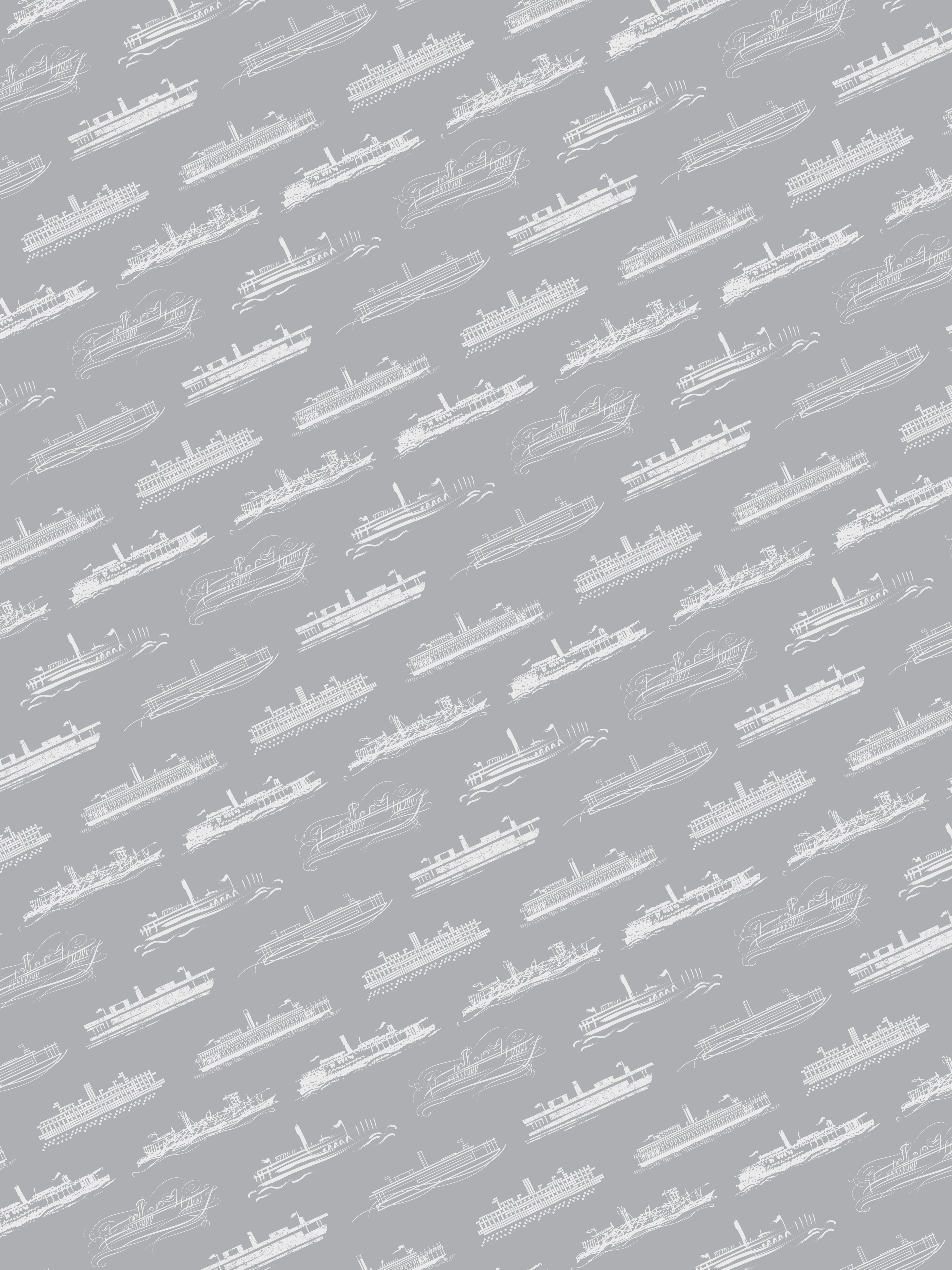

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