DEFINING BRAND IDENTITY

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WHAT IS BRAND IDENTITY?

“Brand identity is the cornerstone of brand strategy and brand building.

“It provides an articulated description of the aspirational image for the brand, what you want the brand to stand for in the eyes of customers and employees.

“This description drives the brand-building component of the marketing program, and greatly influences the rest of your brand’s activity.

“When the brand identity clicks, it will reflect and support the business strategy, differentiate from competitors, resonate with customers, energize and inspire employees and partners, and precipitate a gush of ideas for marketing programs.

“When absent or superficial, the brand will drift aimlessly and marketing programs are likely to be inconsistent and ineffective.”

David Aaker, March 19, 2014
https://www.prophet.com/blog/aakeronbrands/185-it-starts-with-a-brand-vision
BRAND PLATFORM = BRAND IDENTITY + BRAND IMAGE

“The brand platform is the cornerstone of brand management.

“Each brand should have its explicit, concise and sharp written brand platform, making clear what it wants to stand for.

“The brand platform is the normative blueprint of the brand the company wants to build.

“It summarizes the two key pillars of brand management: Brand Identity and Brand Positioning.”

Jean Noel Kapferer,
The New Strategic Brand Management, 2012
BRAND IDENTITY GUIDES BRAND-RIGHT DECISIONS

- Keeps organization future focused
- Internal alignment tool
- Assessment framework – where are we falling short?
- Filter for decision-making
BENEFITS OF A STRONG BRAND IDENTITY

- Energy – Set a high level of ambition for the brand.
- Inspiration – Identify the deep consumer insight or societal tension to be addressed.
- Passion – Focus the brand on the big ideal or crusade.
- Consistency – Provide a common creative activation all across the range of portfolio brands and activities.
- Delivery – Match products with real needs, with passion and ‘edge’.
Positioning is....

- Focused on distinctive characteristics, the ‘discriminator.’
- A comparative concept, relative to competitive set.
- More about product(s) than the brand as a whole.
- Shorter-term in outlook, less stable, less lasting, and enduring, and less rich in meaning.
- Specific to a target market and time.
- Used to support external communications while the Identity is mainly used internally.
BRAND DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

1ST STEP

Current Image
Market Perceptions

12-18 months

Positioning Relative to Alternatives

3RD STEP

2ND STEP

Brand Vision
Emotional Brand Connection
5-7 Years

Today

Future

Time
SEVEN SIGNS YOU’VE DEVELOPED A BRAND IDENTITY

When you know (and the organization agrees on) the answers to the following questions, your Brand Identity is clearly defined:

1. What is the brand’s particular vision and aim?
2. What makes it different?
3. What need is the brand fulfilling?
4. What is its permanent crusade?
5. What are its values?
6. What is its field of competence? Of legitimacy?
7. What are the signs which make the brand recognizable?
A well-defined Brand Identity helps answer many questions that arise inside companies every day, such as:

- Can the brand sponsor a particular event or sport?
- Does the advertising campaign suit the brand?
- Is the opportunity for launching a new product inside the brand’s boundaries?
- How can we change the communication style while remaining true to the brand?
- How can communications decision making be decentralized regionally or internationally, without jeopardizing brand congruence?
All brand identities include capabilities, personality and rallying cry.

**Brand Amplitude Brand Identity Prism™**

- **Capabilities:** What do we do?
- **Personality:** What’s our style?
- **Rallying Cry:** What does all this add up to?
Our framework goes beyond these basics to include culture, community and the brand’s noble purpose.

Brand Amplitude Brand Identity Prism™

- **Capabilities**: What do we do?
- **Personality**: What’s our style?
- **Internal Values & Culture**: Who are we?
- **Rallying Cry**: What does all this add up to?
- **Shared Values & Community**: What do we have in common with customers?
- **Noble Purpose**: Why do we exist?
- **Aspirational Self-Image**: What do customers want their use of the brand to say about them?

PRISM ELEMENT: CAPABILITIES

- This element answers the question: What do we do?

- Even an image-based brand must deliver material benefits. We focus on capabilities, which are about the brand’s value-added.

- Example: Angie’s List

**Capabilities:**
- **Community:** Reviews by real homeowners
- **Convenience & Selection:** One stop shop for the best local service providers
- **Increased Confidence:** Help avoiding costly mistakes
PRISM ELEMENT: INTERNAL CULTURE & VALUES

- This element answers the question: Who are we?
- Strong brands are built on a strong culture and a clear set of shared values.
  - The brand’s core beliefs and way of operating.
  - Unwavering, and uncompromising.
- “The cultural facet of brands’ identity underlines that brands are engaged in an ideological competition.” – Jean Noel Kapferer

**Example: Nike**

Nike champions ‘solo willpower’ with a dose of optimism, and addresses a major sociological insight:

*Millions of people in the world today know that they can count only on themselves.*
This element answers the question: Why do we exist?

Strong brands are a vision of the world. The idea of ‘Being of Service’ underlies this facet of the Brand Identity prism. It is meant to be motivating to employees, and important to customers and other external stakeholders.

Noble Purpose refers to the larger goal or cause the brand aspires to serve. It is about the brand’s ambition -- what the brand wants to change in peoples’ lives; how it aims to make their lives better.

Examples:

The Usual Suspects
- Patagonia
- Body Shop
- Ben & Jerry
- Newman’s Own

Newer Entrants
- TOMS
- Innocent
- Honest Tea

Surprising Addition?
- P&G
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BANpF-6ybuY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BANpF-6ybuY)
PRISM ELEMENT: BRAND PERSONALITY

- This element answers the question: What’s our style?
- Some brands are incredibly earnest, others are super smart. By communicating their personality, brands build character. Consumers identify with the brand’s personality or project themselves into it.
- Personality is hard to copy and when expressed consistently, it can be remarkably enduring. It also can be the difference between a brand that engenders feelings of love and loyalty and one that leaves people cold.

Examples:
- Some brands assume the personalities of their founder or staff members (think Virgin Airlines).
- Others assume a personality through their style of advertising (T-mobile),
- Others through their interactions with customers (Nordstrom).
This element answers the question: What do we have in common?

Brand loyalty provides a sense of belonging. Whether it’s formal or grassroots, THIS connection provides a powerful bond and source of distinction.

**Example:** Harley-Davidson’s brand community

- Created a group of ardent consumers organized around the lifestyle, activities, and ethos of the brand
- Retooled every aspect of the organization—from its culture to its operating procedures and governance structure—to drive its community strategy.
- Made Harley into one motorcycle manufacturer that understood bikers on their own terms.

“Shared value suggests that profits that are imbued with a social purpose can enable companies to grow while advancing society. It frames the enterprise mission and objectives in a new way. All profits are not equal. Those that advance society are better, and those that detract from society are inferior.” — David Aaker, *Harvard Business Review*, 6.30.11
PRISM ELEMENT: ASPIRATIONAL SELF-IMAGE

- This element answers the question: What do customers want their use of the brand to say about them?
- Repeated use and reliance on a brand demonstrates its value to the user.
- Brand loyalty provides an emotional or self-expressive benefit.
- Use of the brand tells others something about the user, and it tells the user something about her/himself.

Examples:

- Most luxury brands and many sports brands, among others, rely on aspirational self-image to build customer affinity.
This element answers the question: what does all this add up to?

The Rallying Cry is 3-5 word shorthand encapsulation of your brand identity.

- Defines the category of business for the brand, sets boundaries and clarifies what is unique.
- Should be memorable, crisp and vivid.
- Stakes out ground that is personally meaningful and relevant to employees.
- Not an advertising slogan, and, in most cases, not used publicly.
**RALLYING CRY - EXAMPLES**

- **Emotional Modifier** + **Descriptive Modifier** + **Brand Category/Industry**

*Disney: Fun Family Entertainment*  

*Ritz-Carlton: Ladies & Gentlemen Serving Ladies & Gentlemen*  
[http://youtu.be/AANS1QlS6kQ](http://youtu.be/AANS1QlS6kQ)

*BMW: Ultimate Driving Machine*  

*Betty Crocker: Homemade Made Easy*  
[http://youtu.be/qm_TIE2w2Q](http://youtu.be/qm_TIE2w2Q)

Most powerful when it articulates the DNA of a company and is used as a touchstone or North Star when making difficult decisions e.g., about business strategy, crisis management, acquisitions, new product introductions.
EXAMPLE: ZAPPOS BRAND IDENTITY PRISM

**Capabilities**
- Service that delights
- Quality products
- Deep selection and broad assortment

**Internal Culture & Values**
- Embrace and drive change
- Create fun and a little weirdness
- Be adventurous, creative and open minded
- Pursue growth and learning
- Do more with less

**Rallying Cry:**
*Powered by Service*

**Personality**
- Empathetic
- Open and honest
- Positive
- Passionate and determined
- Humble

**Shared Values & Community**
- Easy
- Responsive

**Noble Purpose**
- Deliver WOW!

**Aspirational Self-Image**
- Discriminating, smart

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http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6WHAfWqX3s

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EXAMPLE: HARLEY-DAVIDSON BRAND IDENTITY PRISM

- **Capabilities**
  - Inventive design
  - Custom cruisers
  - Loud & powerful engines
  - Dealer development

- **Personality**
  - American spirit
  - Individuality
  - Rebellious
  - Freedom

- **Internal Culture & Values**
  - Joy of individualism
  - Commitment to adventure
  - Reward of fulfillment

- **Shared Values & Community**
  - Harley Owners Group (HOGs)
  - Harley is not for everyone

- **Noble Purpose**
  - For love of the open road

- **Aspirational Self-Image**
  - Rebel/ “Bad Ass”

**Rallying Cry**

**Live the Cruiser Lifestyle**

http://youtu.be/JLdnIbDSqFs
EXAMPLE: CRAYOLA BRAND IDENTITY PRISM

**Capabilities**
- Accessible, affordable tools
- Vibrant color
- Safe and durable

**Internal Culture & Values**
- Innovative
- Child-centric
- The most colorful place on earth

**Noble Purpose**
- Help parents and teachers raise inspired, creatively-alive kids who can inspire the world

**Rallying Cry**

**Free the WHAT IF…**
Because creatively-alive kids blossom and grow to be inspired, original adults who, in turn, have the ability to inspire the world.

**Personality**
- Fun
- Childlike
- Think like kids do

**Shared Values & Community**
- Unleash the originality that naturally exists in every child

**Aspirational Self-Image**
- Nurture successful, balanced kids with strong sense of self

**ILLUSTRATIVE**

Because creatively-alive kids blossom and grow to be inspired, original adults who, in turn, have the ability to inspire the world.
EXAMPLE: XIAOMI BRAND IDENTITY PRISM

**Capabilities:**
- Top quality
- Ever better and more efficient

**Internal Values & Culture:**
- Hard-driving
- Fast-paced

**Noble purpose:**
- World class products *designed* and made in China

**Personality:**
- Committed
- Smart

**Shared Values & Community:**
- Buy before they’re gone
- Participatory design and marketing

**Self image:**
- Chinese
- Modern
- Proud

ILLUSTRATIVE
Brand Identity Prism

Your Brand ______________________

Capabilities
- 
- 

Internal Culture & Values
- 
- 

Noble Purpose
- 

Personality
- 
- 

Shared Values & Community
- 
- 

Aspirational Self-Image
- 

Rallying Cry
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Winning brands engage end users with a deep inner inspiration. They also have a personality, their own values, and help consumers in their lives and to discover their own identities.

- An effective Brand Identity underlies strong brands and helps organizations keep them vital.

- The Brand Amplitude Brand Identity Prism is an effective tool for Brand Identity development.

- Each element in the Prism requires elaboration to ensure employees understand what it does – and doesn’t -- mean.
HOW WE CAN HELP

✓ Audit your brand to identify gaps and opportunities
✓ Generate ideas for closing the gaps
✓ Develop a compelling, energizing brand identity and audience-specific positionings that align with the identity
✓ Measure and track your brand’s health over time

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