

The Seven Tenets of Branding

When carefully crafted and managed, a brand creates value for both the company and its customers. We know from looking at the top global brands that the value of their brand is often worth more than the hard assets of the company. The difference between selling a product and creating a brand can be the difference between long-term success and potential failure.

Branding is a dynamic and disciplined process that when conducted with a combination of intellect, insight and creativity, yields valuable results for business. Having worked extensively with all types of brands, from unknown to well-known, from a personal service such as health care to technology, science and consumer goods, we have defined seven basic tenets of branding that apply across all types of business. If left undefined or unattended to, customers will create their own interpretation of your brand, which in the long-term can work against your ability to create a highly valuable asset.

The following 7 tenets of branding have proven true across all categories of business:

#1. Brand Happens.

Whether or not you guide the process, the experiences your customers and stakeholders have with your company, product or service create the perceptions that forms a brand image and market reputation.

Crucial to long-term success of a brand are strategies that help create a relationship with the targeted audiences. Smart companies choose to purposefully guide the branding process to ensure that customer perceptions are in close alignment with the desired brand.

#2. A Brand is a promise of an experience. Past experiences and interactions inform future expectations of the brand.

A successful brand must deliver on the promised experience and connect with the consumers emotions. Once the connection is made, it is incumbent upon the company to reinforce the experience over and over again, to build solid consumer relationships and develop brand loyalty.

#3. Successful Brands connect with the hearts and minds of the customer.

What might logically draw your customer to you might not be lasting without creating an emotional connection. An emotional connection gives a brand meaning and is essential for developing brand loyalty.

Just think about the brands you use in your life, from your cell phone and computer, to appliances and clothing, these brands mean something to you and they also say something about you to the people with whom you interact.

#4. Brands create value for both the company and the customer.

A Brand is more than a logo and a name. While they create a way of identifying a company, product, or service, a Brand is the way of experiencing it. A brand is a blend of the tangible and intangible attributes of a company, product or service.

The process of Branding is about discovering the brand potential in your market space and turning it into a tangible asset that will create value for both the company and the customer.

#5. An effective Brand Identity provides a shortcut for your customers and helps them quickly understand who you are, what you do, and your place in the market.

When you look at these two logos you immediately have a preference. You know what they do, how they do it, and more or less, what you will experience when engaging



with each brand. This is one of the many strengths of branding. When you have achieved a level of market presence whereby people understand your brand and can conjure up those associative attributes just by seeing your logo, then you have created a very valuable asset.

#6. When every aspect of your organization is aligned with your Brand, amazing things can happen. Organizational engagement is key to building a strong brand.

Great brands are built when leadership embraces the importance of branding and inspires the people of their organization to live the brand. From employee behaviors to the way the phones are answered, product performance and the functionality of the website; every touch point offers an opportunity to deliver the brand experience.

#7. Brands require constant attention to stay fresh and relevant in the marketplace.

Over time, as the marketplace evolves and changes, competitors come and go, and products and services evolve, it is of primary importance to keep your brand fresh, relevant and differentiated. You can look around and see the casualties of many brands that were once great and highly relevant but did not pay close enough attention to new competitors, marketplace changes and advancements in their field. And then you see the brands that have done it right – stayed fresh and reinvigorated their relevance; Jack is out of the box, Starbucks isn't just in the coffee business and Apple has become the number one global brand.

To learn more about Branding and what you can do to increase your brand asset, contact us at 520-321-1099, info@brombergconsulting.com.

Southwest Airlines

A great example of an organization aligned with their brand is Southwest Airlines. When they entered the market all major airlines were full-service carriers. They offered first class seating, in-flight meals, flight attendants wore professional business-looking uniforms, etc. Overall however, there was not significant differentiation between the top airlines.

Southwest Airlines came along and offered a whole new experience in air travel. With a goal of being the low cost leader in air travel they focused on providing a very different experience for their customers. To achieve this they eliminated many of the conveniences the other airlines were offering which enabled lower pricing and streamlined operations. To help offset the reduction in personal services, they created a personal, friendly and engaging brand experience. They hired super friendly, joke-telling employees who wore casual uniforms, and re-defined the brand experience. Even their website features The Southwest Travel Experience: "Here at Southwest, we like to do things a bit differently than 'the other guys.' We pride ourselves on making it both simple and fun to fly wherever it is that life takes you, with low fares to 70+ destinations nationwide."