



## **Branding**

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Brand is much more than simply a name and logo, a brand is the single most important asset a company has... its very identity! A Brand is a living entity; it stands for something, communicates value and makes a promise to the user. Brand is how the end-user thinks and feels regarding your company and its products. The Still helps clients build enduring brands that become part of peoples' daily lives; reinforcing their loyalty and use.

### **Branding-**

Our role as Brand Stewards is to create messages that make a promise consistent and true to the brand's image and identity. Once defined, the Brand Identity becomes an invaluable organizing principle. We use it for every single marketing decision. As Brand Stewards, we seek to insure that the brand is true--from the advertising to the development of web sites.

The Old Branding Method was simply to create the brand and then communicate the brand (usually through mass-media advertising) directly to each target audience. While this method of branding is still used for many products- it can be prohibitively expensive and is not particularly effective within quickly changing markets.

Companies who continue to rely on this traditional transmission model have fallen behind. Many major brand products are losing their footholds on the market because they do not realize other influencers are affecting the buying habits and brand loyalty of their traditional customers. More advertising isn't always the answer to the woes of struggling brands. What is required is to identify who or what is influencing the marketplace and more importantly their images.

There are multiple influences affecting a brand's position in the marketplace, it is vitally important to identify each influence and design programs to address them—traditional advertising is only one of the tools, and not always the most effective, depending on the target audience.

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The Still develops strategic programs to identify potential brand influencers and create a process for communicating to each of them. The premise behind The Still's process is that the brand must surround and penetrate the target audience to speed consumer adoption through the use of multiple mediums; advertising, direct mail, web, public relations, community relations, events & promotions, viral marketing and word-of-mouth.

We start from a fresh perspective to combine the right messages, with the right messenger and the appropriate communications channels to reach brand influencers and ultimately our target audience. Today, successful brands are not simply built; they are carefully crafted and refined over time. Marketplace dynamics are fluid- so it's a continuous branding and re-branding process.

## **Brand Architecture**

Brands play a critical role in a firm's ability for future expansion. A coherent, brand architecture is a key component of the firm's overall marketing strategy as it provides a structure to leverage strong brands into other markets, assimilate acquired brands, and build new brands as part of an overall branding strategy. Implications for a firm's management and design of its brand architecture are crucial.

With the globalization of markets, due in large part to the internet, companies are increasingly expanding the geographic scope of their operations and entering into alliances with partners. With the spread of global trading and national media, international retailers and the movement of people, goods, and corporations across borders, markets are becoming more integrated.

As a result, firms need to pay greater attention to coordinating and integrating their marketing strategy across these markets.

An important element of marketing strategy is its branding policy. Strong brands help to establish identity in the market place, and develop a solid customer base. A good brand can also provide the basis for brand extensions, which further strengthen a company's position and enhance value. An important brand architecture issue is the use of a Master brand, leveraging brand name strength across boundaries, or extending brands in

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response to local customer preferences. A related issue is what level of branding to emphasize, i.e. corporate or product brands, or some combination of the two.

The central role of branding in defining the company's identity and its position in market- means that it is critical to develop explicit brand architecture. This implies identifying the different levels of branding within the firm, the number of brands as well as their geographic and market scope. The most critical element in this structure is the number of levels and products and how these are used in conjunction with each other.

## **Brand and Social Responsibility**

We know, of course, that consumers take their cues from what others say about a brand. When making decisions about products – consumers consult their friends, favorite magazine or websites. Companies must expand the circle of brand advocates to include not only the end-user but their friends & family, community leaders and unconventional media outlets.

What motivates people to buy products is far more complex today; reputation has never been as important or as scrutinized as it is today. Empowered by the internet; customers, employees, regulators, community leaders, investors and the media watch markets closely, criticize and ask the tough questions regarding the corporations behind the products and services they buy.

The Still develops unique models for managing reputation and consumer buzz. Our model unites traditional advertising disciplines into an integrated, coordinated outreach effort tailored to today's evolved users.

### About the Author

David Hickman is a Partner at The Still and has over 25 years of marketing and advertising agency experience. He has directed several national ad agencies in New York and Atlanta as a Vice-President, Creative Director, Art Director or Marketing Director.

### About The Still

An intellectual property creation, marketing, and media consulting firm, The Still handles all aspects of your company's branding and positioning efforts. The Still provides media metrics analysis, marketing audits, and market research, as well as marketing execution and idea creation. See [http://ideadistillery.com/Brand\\_Analysis.html](http://ideadistillery.com/Brand_Analysis.html).

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