



# What is a brand?

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## 50 WEEKS OF MARKETING

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### WEEK 1

BYB MARKETING – BRAND YOURSELF BETTER.

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# So, what is a brand?

**Many people associate a brand with a logo or a name... But it's so much more!  
Your brand defines everything about your company.**

'Branding' was originally the identifying marks burnt into the skin of livestock, slaves and criminals. In 2020, branding is everything that contributes to your customers' opinions and feelings about your company. It's your reputation and how people recognise you, influenced through all the intangibles such as individual customer experiences and word of mouth.


This topic summarises important aspects of branding and how they work together to help build a reputation for your business to stand out from the competition.

***"Strong brands can improve customer loyalty and  
therefore generate higher revenues in the long-term."  
(Keller, 2003)***

## Brand Management

A clearly defined brand strategy should be an essential document for any successful company. It's not easy to be instantly recognised and trusted by the people you want as your customers. It takes a deeper understanding of your customers to set a strategy that creates value and builds a relationship.

Branding should be carefully managed, as businesses need to deliver on their brand promise. If the brand is successful in its efforts, the consumer will perceive the brand to have good intentions and capability to deliver. This increases customer trust and loyalty.



***A strong brand  
“increases  
customers' trust of  
invisible products,  
while helping them  
to better  
understand and  
visualise what they  
are buying.”  
(Berry, 2000)***

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A brand is built up over time.

You can't establish trust with most people right away. They need to get to know you first! You're going to reach far more people if you're consistent over a period of time, than if you try and fit into a current fad or trend. The internet is a powerful tool to reach a very large amount of people. But you want them to be listening! If you produce rubbish content, people will probably think you're a little bit rubbish.

Your marketing influences perceptions of your brand and the quality.

**You need to have something interesting to say, and you need a differentiator.**



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## Brand Image & Identity

The way people perceive your brand is called your brand image. It is everything a potential customer associates with a business and it defines their overall opinion. Marketing, experiences and memories associated with that brand are the basis for a brand image, and it comes in the form of a gut opinion or mental flash of recognition. You cannot control this, as individuals will have their own brand image.

However, a business can control their brand identity. It's a marketing strategy with intent to nurture a certain image in consumers' minds. This is all the elements that make up a brand and its marketing. This includes colour, design, and logo. It's also the personality of a brand, the tone of voice in your copy for example.

Brands communicate in a certain way, such as a tone of voice (e.g. Funny or Serious), to establish a unique personality. Companies apply different human characteristics to their brands to influence customers' associations – e.g. Tough (off-road vehicle) or fit (sportswear). A well-researched and distinct brand identity should be the foundation of any successful business.

### **Your Brand Story**

All brands have a story. Yet not many brands communicate it effectively, or at all.

A brand story gives people a sense that they know you, if only just a little. A summary of how the business started, why you're in that industry, why you're credible, what makes you different, and how you benefit customers and provide a solution to their problems.

Your story should be written in a certain way to engage the reader, and should include a hero (you), a villain, overcoming adversary - giving the feel-good factor. Great brand stories are universal, and appeal to our emotions.



# *A good brand story should:*

- Embrace your personality
- Illustrate your values
- Capture attention
- Connect with the reader
- Take the reader on a journey
- Be emotive
- Have characters such as a hero and a villain
- Help people get to know you
- Tell why your credible
- Reflect on the lessons you've learnt
- Inform us why your brand exists
- Explain the problem you solve
- Have a call to action
- Framed to be easy to follow & understand
- Be consistent across your marketing

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## Value Proposition

**What is your point of difference?** What makes your brand any difference to the next one offering similar products? Why should consumers purchase your brand over your competitors?

Your value proposition should answer these questions. This becomes the essence of your brand positioning strategy, which is where you sit in the market relative to competitors.

Your brand must communicate your unique offering, to try and entice customers to choose your brand. A promise of value you deliver.

***Three principals that help guide a value proposition are:  
quality, innovation and reliability.***

## Differentiation & Targeting

Globalisation and the rise of digital marketing has brought intense competition. It's hard for your brand to be memorable when there's so many alternatives. That's why a point of difference with your branding is so important. It is how you are recognised and judged.

Brands must focus their advertising and marketing to target a certain group of customers. Otherwise, your brand can become diluted, and you spend precious time and money on people who are never going to be a customer. Think of it this way, if you spend \$100 directly targeting the people most likely to be your customer, that's far more effective than spending \$100 marketing to everybody, with only \$5 worth reaching your target market.



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## Consistency

One of the foundations of a strong brand is consistency across communication. Colour schemes should be consistent across branding and marketing, and your copy should have a consistent tone, vibe and style, with consistent imaging.

Content needs to illustrate who you are, and the unique experience or value that your brand represents. Whether it's your website, Facebook, LinkedIn or an e-newsletter. Consistent brand messaging throughout your marketing funnel will help convert leads into customers.

Your brand includes every interaction point with potential customers, such as your website, social media, customers support/service, your store or office. Therefore, your brand's promise and communication must be consistent at each brand contact point.

## Brand Associations

Brand associations are the anchor for customer assessments and opinions of a brand, and what it represents. New associations are continuously made with brands, simultaneously with each interaction. These assessments are evaluated against a consumer's personal values and lifestyle.

***Customers value brands and experiences that reflect an aspect of their own personalities, so they generally choose brands that they feel reinforce who they are and what they want to be.***

**Customers subconsciously ask questions about brands such as:** 📌 What are the perceived benefits? 📌 Do we share similar beliefs and values? and 📌 Do I trust them?

The content you create and share on your social media influences perceptions of your brand. It defines your brand. If you share boring content and talk about yourself all the time, that's the brand people will associate with you.



## Authenticity

If customers believe you're authentic, it increases your credibility. You're more likely to be viewed as superior to alternatives because of this. Authentic brands must be committed to their values and delivering on promises. To be perceived as authentic, brands need to come across as human, as it is easier for consumers to recognise a brand's values.

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Customers want to relate to brands in the same way they relate to people. Two important aspects of this that brands need to express are warmth and competence.

***Attributes of warmth include “sincerity”, “integrity”, and “transparency”, whilst competence is conveyed through “credibility”, “reliability”, “continuity” or “consistency”.***

**If you really know and understand your target market**, you position your brand to be as attractive as possible to this group of customers (market segment). If you can create a meaningful connection, you form a relationship, and this is one of the drivers of loyalty.

## Relationship Marketing

**A fundamental of marketing is forming relationships with a group of customers or segment of the market that likes and trusts you.** This is called relationship marketing. It starts by forming a bond, and eventually creating an attachment to your brand with the customer.

If you have a large organisation, all staff members must buy into the brand promise and show a commitment to delivering on it. The company should also regularly take feedback from customers, to see if the brand is delivering on their promise. This will keep the relationship strong, promote customer loyalty and purchase intent.

Forming a relationship increases customers' trust of invisible products, while helping them to better understand and visualise what they are buying.



Trust is synonymous with brand originality, ethicality, genuineness, warmth, and competence. From the consumer perspective, these brand attributes are deeply interconnected. When one attribute is weakened, this negatively impacts on the others and vice versa when one is strengthened.

***Creating a successful relationship contributes to the “equity” residing in a brand (Blackston, 2000).***

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## Brand Equity

One of the benefits of having a strong brand that people remember is the ability to charge more. It's far easier to position your brand as a premium offering. This is because of the brand equity that has been created – explained as the added value of a product in a customer's mind, that attracts (or repulses) consumers to (from) a particular product, service or company.

Brand equity can be explained as the influence brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of the brand. The higher the perception of value, the premium customers are willing to pay.

Brand equity is something I will be covering in a lot more depth as a future topic.

### **Thank you for reading.**

If you've read this far, then you might see value in my 50 weeks of 50 marketing topics program.

This was the first topic. Each week, for 50 weeks, I will produce a document such as this article, a video, and a PowerPoint on a different marketing topic, to help you understand it and apply it to your business to attract more customers.

### **The next four topics will be:**

- The Marketing Mix (4 Ps / 7 Ps)
- Can you fake Authenticity?
- Facilitating Community, and
- Content Creation.