

## Branding Basics

Many businesses and organizations confuse the discipline of branding with that of marketing, or worse, assume that branding means hiring a designer simply to develop a logo to burn onto every inanimate object within reach. A brand is a customer's gut feeling about the product or service you offer. It is about each customer's experience with your company.

A 'Branding Incident' is every time a client/customer 'touches' your business. A 'Branding Message' is sent by every employee or representative of your company whenever they have contact with a potential customer/client. The look of your store or office, the quality of customer service, the way the receptionist answers the phone (if a person does answer the phone), the quality of your product or service all make up parts of the branding experience for your customer.

Branding is the foundation stating who you are, what your association is, what you offer to the world, and how your audience should (or does) perceive you. Businesses with a clearly defined foundation have a better change of succeeding. Small businesses have a much easier time, communicating this information to their employees than large organization. Small business owners are better able to monitor the implementation of a branding program. Yes, your logo and marketing materials are part of your brand. A basic truth is that no award winning logo or fantastic looking brochure can make up for an inferior product or poor service delivery. Businesses need good products and great service, and everyone in the organization needs to understand the foundation your brand is built on. Branding discipline, in addition to award-winning design can move your business ahead of your competition.

## Coming to Grip with the Terms

An adequate understanding of basic terms will raise your level of understanding of 'Branding' and help you to realize your goals. Branding can be viewed as a collection of definitions that form a discipline. For the sake of clarity, let us agree that the term "organization" can mean a business, a non-profit organization, an institution, a geographic location or even an individual.

**Brand Identity** – The visual elements (logo, signage, uniforms, brochures, web site, etc.) that are unique to your organization. Even auditory components (T-Mobile's standard cell phone ring) olfactory (the smell of a coffee store or bakery) and tactile (the lush feel of velvet or the comfortable feel of a very good desk chair) elements also contribute to the Brand Identity. All of these elements designed to bring recognition and association to your product/service and subsequently your brand.

**Brand Personality** – The characteristics that describe your product or service as if it were a living being (such as dynamic, sexy, trustworthy, practical, creative, etc). These create visual and experiential experiences to consistently deliver emotional qualities and so create association and retention.

**Brand Values** – What the brand stands for, believes in and, ultimately, where it draws the line.

**Brand Promise** – The benefits, either practical or emotional, gained by customer/clients experiencing your service or product. What pleasures are to be enjoyed? (Tasting a great cup of coffee.) What pains will be reduced? (The joy of not having to do your own payroll or income tax.) How is the bottom-line supposed to be affected? Your promise can be summarized by either of these two formulas “Only (brand name) delivers (benefit) in (product or service) or (Brand name) is the (trusted/quality/innovator) leader in (benefit) in the (product or service category).”

**Brand Concept** – The singular concept or idea that is in the mind of your audience-aka “conceptual ownership.” This is a core component in the discipline of branding. What concepts consistently come to your mind when you think about these companies?

- |              |                |  |
|--------------|----------------|--|
| 1. Volvo     | A. Service     | To check your answers, go to the next page |
| 2. Boeing    | B. Good Prices |  |
| 3. Nordstrom | C. Airplanes   |  |
| 4. Wall-Mart | D. Safety      |  |

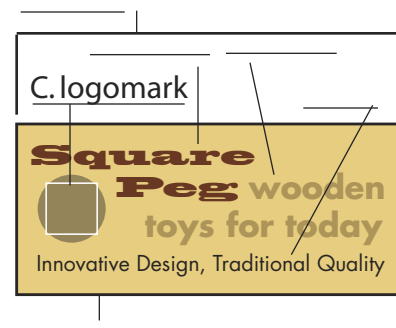
All different sizes of businesses can achieve the recognition within their target community. For example, people in a community know the reliable service stations, the best greenhouses, which church has the best tag sale, etc. The same recognition occurs with specific industries. If your business needs environmentally approved containers, you know which company can provide that commodity at the best priced and with the best service and others in you industry have the same knowledge. Every business needs name recognition within their target community.

### Get the Names Right

You know a logo when you see one, right? Probably, but do you know the correct terminology of all the parts of the logo? Can you correctly fill in the blanks for the illustration?

- A. Signature B. Descriptor C. Logomark  
D. Tag Line E. Logotype F. Containment Shape

To check your answers, go to the next page.



### Answers to Brand Concept Matching

- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
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| 3. Nordstrom | A. Service     |
| 4. Wall-Mart | B. Good Prices |

### Answers to Get the Names Right

