

A Short Introduction To Branding

What is a brand?

Brand is the proprietary visual, emotional, rational, and cultural image that you associate with a company or a product. When you think Volvo, you might think safety. When you think Nike, you might think of Michael Jordan or "Just Do It." When you think IBM, you might think "Big Blue." The fact that you remember the brand name and have positive associations with that brand makes your product selection easier and enhances the value and satisfaction you get from the product.

While Brand X cola or even Pepsi-Cola may win blind taste tests over Coca Cola, the fact is that more people buy Coke than any other cola and, most importantly, they enjoy the experience of buying and drinking Coca Cola. The fond memories of childhood and refreshment that people have when they drink Coke is often more important than a little bit better cola taste. It is this emotional relationship with brands that make them so powerful.

What makes up a brand identity?

Brand identity includes brand names, logos, positioning, brand associations, and brand personality. A good brand name gives a good first impression and evokes positive associations with the brand. A positioning statement tells, in one sentence, what business the company is in, what benefits it provides and why it is better than the competition. Imagine you're in an elevator and you have 30 seconds to answer the question, "What business are you in?" Brand personality adds emotion, culture and myth to the brand identity by the use of a famous spokesperson (Bill Cosby - Jello), a character (the Pink Panther), an animal (the Merrill Lynch bull) or an image (You're in good hands with Allstate).

Brand associations are the attributes that customers think of when they hear or see the brand name. McDonalds television commercials are a series of one brand association after another, starting with the yellow arches in the lower right corner of the screen and following with associations of Big Mac, Ronald Mcdonald, kids, Happy Meal, consistent food quality, etc.

The first step in creating a brand for your company or organization is a [branding workshop](#).

Is Branding just for large companies?

No, our process can be applied to any business, organization or product. The techniques of branding have been kept secret for many years because they provided a competitive advantage to those companies that used them. Our process takes the proven principles of branding used by companies like P&G, Disney, and Coca Cola and puts them into a simple, understandable and easy to use process. This process can be used by retailers, service businesses, manufacturers and businesses of all types and sizes.

How do we determine our brand identity?

Brand has been called the most powerful idea in the commercial world, yet few companies consciously create a brand identity. Do you want your company's brand identity created for you by competitors and unhappy customers? Of course not. Our advice to executives is to research their customers and find the top ranked reasons that customers buy their products rather than their competitors. Then, pound that message home in every ad, in every news release, in communications with employees and in every sales call and media interview. By consistent repetition of the most persuasive selling messages, customers will think of you and buy from you when they are deciding on whether to buy from you or your competitor.

Return to [To First Page](#)

Copyright 2003, BrandSolutions, Inc. All Rights Reserved