

Your Brand Is A Promise



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Your Brand Is A Perception.

A strong brand experience can engage and retain customers, create credibility and drive revenue. So what exactly is a brand?

A brand is the emotional and psychological relationship you have with your customers or potential customers. This relationship shapes a person's perception about a product, service or company. In other words, the brand is defined by individuals not companies or markets.



Taking Control.

Now, branding may seem like a discouraging pursuit in which you have no control as to how your brand is perceived. But you can still take control of your brand! Your role is to guide your customers' perceptions of your company or product. Strong branding strategy emphasizes both exposure and experience.

Exposure

Through exposure by
messages about the brand

Experiences

Through actual experience
with the brand

Exposure

Exposure to a company's brand is created through messaging. While a company can't directly control the customer's perception of the brand, a company can influence the customer's perception of the brand by communicating the qualities that make this product different from their competition.

Experiences

In addition to exposure, branding is further enhanced by your customers' experiences with your company. Customers interact with your brand online, in-store, through packaging, collateral, customer service, advertisements, e-mail, etc. Each of these interactions should personify the competitive advantage of your product or service and be consistent in its messaging.

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Branding then is defining, promising and delivering a unique brand experience consistently. Your brand is a promise to your customer. You have the opportunity to fulfill or to break that promise.



Keeping the Promise.

Develop the foundation of your brand by establishing a brand messaging architecture. This will include your brand essence, brand character and brand positioning -the unique differentiator that you'll promise to your customers.

Brand Essence: guiding principle

Brand Character: personality, tone

Brand Positioning: unique selling point, targeted differentiation

Once this is finalized, your next step is to develop the company brand across multiple customer touch-points. If your company is a start-up or very early growth stages, you have the unique opportunity to create your company's brand positioning, creative execution, and online presence in a way that will be an "evergreen" situation. The start-up company has the opportunity to clearly and concisely articulate its targeted purpose through the company logo, business card, online website, packaging, etc..

If you are a growth-oriented company, i.e. a company that has introduced the brand and yet the brand is mature enough to require review, then we suggest starting with a brand audit to understand what elements of your external and internal messaging are in alignment with the newly-developed

brand platform, and begin the effort to revise those existing communication vehicles accordingly. Some can't imagine the number of touch-points across the customer lifecycle, but the following visual gives a perspective as to the numerous ways your brand interacts with the customer.



Takeaway.

Your brand is a promise to deliver a differentiated experience to your customers. It's your responsibility to deliver on that promise on a daily basis. If you fail to do so, you are not likely to see the loyal customers that a great branding strategy will help you retain.