IRONWOOD
BUSINESS CONSULTING

Branding Breakdown
A Cheat Sheet for Employers

Introduction

1. What is Branding?
2. Why is Branding Important?
3. Branding Foundations
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What is Branding?

Branding is the process of creating a distinctive image, name, and message that identifies and differentiates a product or company from others in the market. Branding is a company's reputation. Branding isn't just for potential clients but equally important for current and future employees.

Branding is "trending" now more than ever. When we hear the word today, we likely think of popular logos and taglines rather than farmers branding their livestock. But the practice of branding has been used for centuries and the need for companies to be easily identifiable in the crowded marketplace continues to increase.

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Creating Brand Alignment

- Employee engagement
- Management commitment
- Customer experience
- Organizational infrastructure
- Processes, procedures, systems, and standards

Why is Branding Important?

- Creates a cohesive message
- Unifies the workplace
- Increases customer loyalty
- Builds status and esteem
- Helps attract and retain high performing employees
- Fosters innovation and creativity
- Reduces turnover

A consistent brand identity builds credibility and authenticity.

Branding Foundations

Brand Promise - Your brand must have a clear, consistent, and compelling promise. This is how you ensure your message is heard above all the noise that potential clients and employees are hearing in this current chaotic environment. This is the commitment made by the brand to its customers, representing what both internal and external customers can expect from their interactions with the company.

- Mission
- Vision
- Core Values

Brand Positioning - This is a company's unique value proposition.

- What does your company do?
- Who are your customers?
- What makes your company unique?
- What are your company's differentiators?

Brand Identity - Identity helps create the visuals and images associated with a company's brand.

- Logo
- Color palette
- Typography
- Imagery/Symbols/Shapes
- Marketing collateral

Brand Voice - The consistent expression of a brand through words and prose styles that engage and motivate its audience.

- Tone
- Informative/Authoritative
- Friendly
- Inspirational
- Quirky/Fun
- Sincere
- Luxury/Sophisticated
- Bold

Brand Personality - This refers to the human traits or characteristics associated with a brand. They are universally recognized symbols or character types that evoke specific emotions and behaviors. Brands often use these *archetypes* to define their brand personality, enhance customer connections, and differentiate themselves from competitors.

Popular Archetypes

- The Jester
- The Lover
- The Hero
- The Outlaw
- The Sage
- The Ruler
- The Caregiver
- The Innocent
- The Explorer
- The Creator
- The Magician
- The Everyman

The Science Behind Branding

There are so many different considerations that go into building a successful branding strategy. The goal of branding is to create an emotional connection and experts know how to subtly sell to the subconscious.

Color psychology

It's important to note that cultural differences can influence how colors are perceived.

1. Red: This color often represents energy, passion, excitement, and urgency. It can create a sense of impulsiveness and stimulate the senses.

2. Blue: Often used by corporate brands, blue evokes feelings of trust, loyalty, reliability, and tranquility. It's also associated with communication and productivity.

3. Yellow: This color is associated with happiness, positivity, and warmth. It's often used by brands looking to evoke pleasant, cheerful feelings.

4. Green: Green is commonly associated with nature, health, and tranquility. It's often used by brands in the health and wellness space or companies with a strong environmental focus.

5. Black: Black can communicate a sense of luxury, sophistication, power, and exclusivity. Many luxury brands use black in their logos or marketing materials.

6. White: This color signifies purity, simplicity, and cleanliness. It's often used by brands looking to convey a minimalist, modern, and efficient image.

7. Purple: Purple combines the stability of blue and the energy of red. It's associated with luxury, creativity, and royalty.

8. Orange: This color is a blend of the energy of red and the happiness of yellow. It's often associated with creativity, adventure, and enthusiasm.

9. Pink: Pink is often associated with femininity, love, and compassion. It's commonly used by brands targeting a female audience.

Shapes

- Circles: Unity, commitment, trust
- Squares: Foundation and strength
- Triangles: Movement and progress
- Arrows: Direction, speed, progress
- Horizontal lines: Stability and calm
- Vertical lines: Infinite possibilities and forward thinking

Familiarity (The Mere Exposure Effect)

Repeated exposure to a brand can subconsciously create a connection and familiarity. Myths and symbols are strikingly similar throughout the world. This is another reason why archetypes are so successful in marketing - because they are familiar.

Imagery

- Trees - life, growth, wisdom, prosperity
- Lion - courage, strength, royalty
- Rose - love, romance, appreciation
- Wolf - independence, freedom, ferocity
- Sun - power, energy, glory
- Owl - wisdom, mystery, learning
- Water - calm, purity, cleanliness

Employer Branding

Employer branding is a company's outward message about who they are and what makes them special. It serves two major purposes:

- To attract new talent by enhancing the appeal of belonging
- To retain existing employees with job satisfaction through thoughtful communication strategies

Next Steps:

- Review current interview procedures and fill in any gaps in the process
- Create an onboarding and orientation program that is informative, welcoming, and sets up new employees for success
- Use brand ambassadors on your team to help spread your message
- Provide learning and development opportunities to your workforce to build confidence while enhancing skills
- Create a strong DEI initiative
- Compare your company's compensation strategy, benefits, and initiatives to the current market to ensure you are remaining competitive

Reach out to onbrand@ironwoodbc.com if you'd like to learn more about our services and to receive additional branding tips for your business.