



How to Unlock Your Remarkable Brand

Module 1:
What is a brand and why does it matter?

Part of the *Remarka
brand*TM method

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Course overview

Module 1: What is a brand and why does it matter?

Your brand is more than your logo, more than the stuff you make, more than the services you provide, and more important than you might think. Dive into the history of branding to see where it started and how brand helps you win in a crowded marketplace.

Module 2: Discover your brand values

Do you know why your organization exists or what it truly values? Discover your brand's non-negotiable values and see why defining those values will make your brand stronger.

Module 3: Define your brand personality traits

Your brand needs to be tangible and thus needs a personality. Defining your organization's personality traits will help you stand out with your customers, staff, vendors, and shareholders.

Module 4: Develop your brand story

People need to know why you exist, how you do what you do and why they should care. Your brand story will piece together everything defined up to this point and give you a crafted story that will inspire everything your brand communicates.

Launch your brand

Laying your brand's foundation is just the beginning. Now, take the hard work you just put in to develop other aspects of your remarkable brand.

Appendix

Save a tree or two by only printing the worksheet portions of each module.

Course overview

Building a brand is much more complex than many people think, and chances are you already know that if you're here looking for guidance on brand building. Welcome!



This “How to Unlock Your Remarkable Brand” Brand Foundations Course will walk you through what a brand actually is, why it's important, and how to think correctly about your brand. Along the way, we will provide exercises and worksheets to get you and your team thinking about what your authentic brand is and how to manifest it.

Different ways to complete this course

- 01 THE QUICKEST WAY:** If you're a busy person and don't have a whole day or even a couple hours to spare to complete this course, consider this a quick read. Skim through the content to learn about branding and its importance and you'll still get a lot out of this.
- 02 BREAK IT UP:** Don't have a full day to spare? Break this module up into bite-size pieces. Each module can be completed in 1-2 hours depending on your team size. **Since you've chosen to tackle this one module, you're already taking this route!**
- 03 THE DEEP DIVE (FULL COURSE):** Want to get the biggest bang for your buck? Set aside an entire day and bring in a few key people to help you brainstorm; building a brand is not a one-person job. Each module builds on each other so it's helpful to do them all in a consolidated time frame.

Tips for success

If you can, **print this module**. We find it's helpful to complete these worksheets and write your findings down on paper, so they're not just in your head.

We suggest going through these exercises with **no more than five people**, using the same five people each time for ease and consistency. When you've completed the exercises, **share your team's results** more broadly for feedback. It's best to get to a place of agreement within your small group first so you don't bring too many cooks into the kitchen.

By the end of the full course, you'll have a concrete idea of what your brand is, how it acts, how it sounds, and how to integrate your brand into your operations. It's best to **do the course in order**, as each section and exercise builds off the ones previous. **However, each module can also be completed on it's own, as you've chosen to do here.**

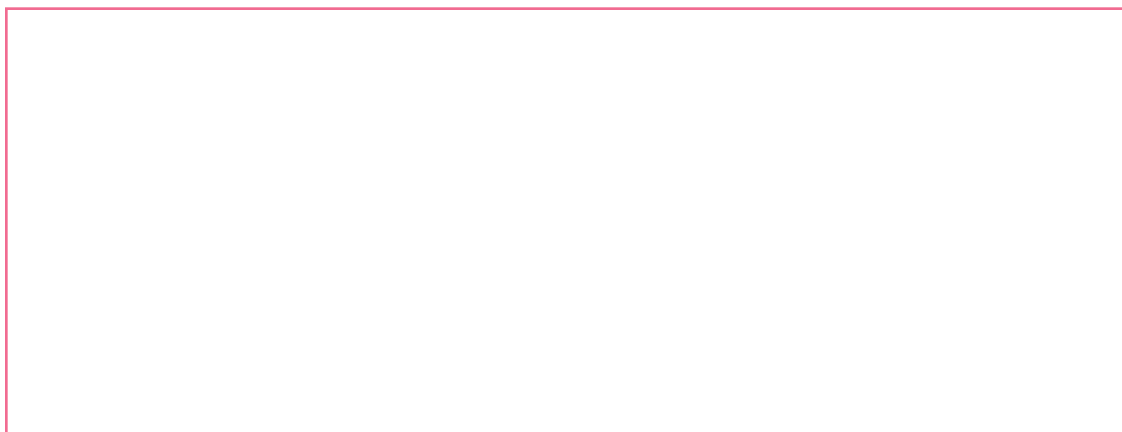
If you have questions along the way, we're always happy to hear from you. Reach out to us at hello@resoundcreative.com.

Now let's get onto the good stuff and get you on your way to a remarkable, compelling brand!

First—let's get subjective

Before we get into the nuts and bolts of brands, let's do a quick exercise to set our minds on the right path.

In the box below, draw a funky picture. Give yourself 15 seconds to draw that funky picture. We'll wait here.



Finished? Looks nice. Now think about this: Who defined “funky”?

You did.

Now consider whether your customer would agree that your picture is funky. If not, did you fail?

No, because you defined it. Just as you defined “funky,” so will you define your brand. If your customers agree with how you define your brand, they’ll tell you. How? Well they might literally tell you but more likely they’ll tell you by buying your products and services and becoming loyal fans.

But what if they don’t agree with your definition and become loyal fans? There are likely two reasons for that:

- 01** You’re not communicating and behaving in alignment with your brand definition (or at least, not well enough).
- 02** Your customers are the wrong fit, likely because your brand definition is, perhaps, different than what you thought it was.

So what happens when you find your true brand and start communicating according to its definition?

When you correctly define your brand

Let’s look at a real-life example of the power behind a correctly-defined brand. Back in 1987, Nike found itself a distant third in the sneaker market, trailing behind Adidas and Reebok. Why? Because up until that point, their brand centered almost entirely around professional athletes. They engineered and sold shoes for pros, and only the pros. Those of us who were recreational athletes, serious hobbyists, or occasional walkers were not part of Nike’s brand story audience.



So would you find it surprising to learn that non-professional athletes didn’t consider Nike when they were looking for sneakers?

Knowing what you know now about Nike, you may be surprised to learn that the Nike engineering teams were happy with the state of things. But co-founder Phil Knight wasn’t—this wasn’t how he had envisioned the end of the story. Nike was founded on the principle of helping people achieve victory in their athletic lives. This principle had never changed, but not everyone saw that they could do this for other people beyond pro runners. So Knight worked with his new advertising leader Scott Bedbury and a new agency, Weiden & Kennedy, to change the story. [Read Bedbury’s book, **“A New Brand World”** for more of the story.]

Just Do It

That's how the now-famous "Just Do It" tagline was born. Nike's new brand story targeted everyone—weekend warriors, new moms, middle-aged mid-level managers who wanted to get fit—not just the pro athletes. The new narrative was that we **all** can achieve victory at our respective levels as long as we have Nikes on our feet.

The "Just Do It" tagline started as a simple campaign slogan meant to last a mere 18 months. But because it so perfectly embodied the purpose and values of Nike, it has lived on even to this day.

As you can see, there is immense power in a well-crafted, compelling brand story built on the foundation of a brand's true purpose and values.

With this course, you will have the tools you need to start building your own brand that, just like Nike's, can stand the test of time. This course will challenge what you think a brand is and is not, help you define your authentic brand, and start building on what makes your brand truly remarkable.

There is immense power in a well-crafted, compelling brand story built on the foundation of a brand's true purpose and values.

You are
Remarkable



MODULE 1

What is a brand and why does it matter?

What's in a name?

We humans spend a lot of time pondering what to call something. Naming a baby, a stuffed animal, a digital assistant. Even Juliet muses on the importance of a name in “Romeo and Juliet”:

*What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.*

When we think about the essence of a brand, often the first thing we think of is the name of a company or a product. There are many products that we call by a trademarked, registered brand name, even if they're not actually from that brand, like Popsicles, Frisbees, Kleenex, and Jacuzzis.

But is a tissue, which you call a Kleenex, a *brand* itself? Is just that name—Kleenex—the essence of the brand? Does its brand soul live in just that name? Not really.

The logo dimension

Maybe that essence needs another dimension, like a logo. Surely you can identify at least some brands by their logos:



Is a swoosh a brand? Well, it's a trademarked **representation** of a brand, but it's not a brand itself. So we're not quite there yet. If we add a "Just do it" tagline, does that complete it?

The brand equation

If you answered no to that last question, you're on the right track; when it comes to a brand, the sum of the parts just doesn't make the whole. Even if you think back on the greatest advertisements you've ever seen, or the best Super Bowl commercials of all time, or the times when a brand's social stance made you feel an emotion, *is that the brand?*

Let's see:

$$\text{Nike} + \text{Nike Swoosh} + \text{"Just do it"} + \text{COOL AD} = \text{Brand?}$$

Nope—that brand arithmetic just doesn't add up. So let's add the product itself to the equation; maybe a brand's excellent service, or superior product or experience will complete the formula?

$$\text{Apple} + \text{Apple Logo} + \text{Think different} + \text{COOL AD} + \text{Apple Watch} = \text{Brand?}$$

Or are we looking at something perhaps a bit less tangible? Maybe a lot less tangible, because your brand is in fact your *identity*. It's like asking if



That equation doesn't add up to *you*. You're way more than those things. It's about *who* you are—your essence—and that's a deep concept.

SUMMARY:

A brand is far more than a logo or a product. A brand is an organization's essence—the intrinsic qualities that make it more than just a logo or company name and different from every other organization.

GO DEEPER:

- 01** Think about some of your favorite brands. How would you describe them?
- 02** What do you think is the most important part of a brand?
- 03** If you're looking for more in-depth thoughts on your brand, you can survey your customers and staff and ask them for raw feedback about your brand. Who do they think you are?

Where does “brand” even come from?

Let's take a short trip into history and etymology. “Brand” comes from the old Norse term *brandr*, which means “to burn,” as in “gather some twigs and light them on fire.” That quickly developed into the term for using a hot iron to mark something, like livestock, as yours. That way, you could keep track of your cows and not worry that they were mixed in with your neighbor's cows and then get in a disagreement about it that might start a war. (Told you branding is serious stuff.)

In the mercantile period, the 1500, 1600, and 1700s, England, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands sailed the world over trading teas, spices, and other wares. International goods were loaded and unloaded by the wooden box-full, and traders quickly realized that their jobs would be a lot easier if the outsides of these boxes indicated what was inside.



Someone smart at a company like the East India Company realized they needed a mark to help workers in ports know which boxes went to which shops. So like their agricultural fellows, they burned a brand on their boxes with the company name and product on the outside of the box. Then patrons would see boxes delivered to their stores, or see it come off the boat in a port, and associate the tea they drank with East India Company.

Then patrons could ask a shop if it had East India Company tea, and if they couldn't remember the name, they could describe the packaging. That's part of the origin of a brand in the sense of an identifiable mark that signifies ownership, the product, and the experience.

SUMMARY:

Brands have long been useful and memorable.

GO DEEPER:

What's the oldest brand you can think of? What makes it memorable?

Logos are cool, but not the point

In these modern times, loyalty to a brand has evolved past simple recognition. Now, brands tell people something about themselves. Apple was one of the first companies to make their earbuds white. The white stands out and **indicates to others** that the wearer has certain standards of cool, is interested in music, and is willing to spend a certain amount of money to show their brand preference. Apple knew that if people recognized friends and strangers using them, they **might** also invest in Apple earbuds.

There is a social impact or construct around how we purchase things. We purchase something not just because we are looking to solve a certain problem or fulfill a certain physiological need, but because we *want to be identified with a certain group of people*. The white headphones in a sea of cheaper, just-as-good black ones immediately show that you are *an Apple person*.

And here is something interesting: This didn't just work for Apple because their earbuds were white. Any brand could do that. It worked because they were white AND they could then be associated with Apple. These customers wanted to be identified with the Apple brand as a whole, not just the white earbuds!

Creating a brand isn't about creating a logo people recognize or even a stellar product (though those things are important); a brand is about creating a tribe and allowing customers to join because they identify with the brand's *essence* and others who associate with it. But the beginning of that tribe should not start with what your company or organization *wants* to be or what you think your customers want you to be.

It starts from one important question: Who *are* you as a brand?

A brand is about creating a tribe and allowing customers to join because they identify with the brand's essence and others who associate with it.

SUMMARY

A brand is about creating loyalty and attracting a like-minded group of people.

GO DEEPER

- 01** Can you describe *an Apple person*? What do they value? Who are they?
- 02** List three brands you like, and three brands you don't. Can you pinpoint why you have a positive or negative association with them?
- 03** Think about your brand's best customers—what do they value? Are there any patterns that emerge about these customers' values?

Get in touch with your organization's self

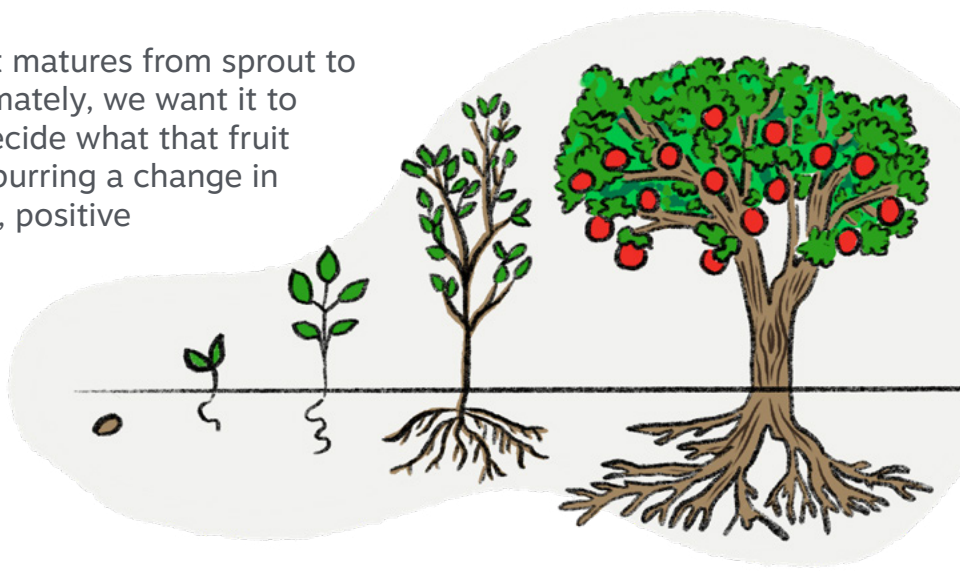
It's not a simple thing to determine *who* your organization or company is. You have to ask tough questions, get deep, and unpack a lot of complexities. If a brand is a reflection of identity, you have to take a frank, discerning look at your reflection in the branding mirror and make sure you see what's really there and who you really are.

Think about brand as the DNA of an organization. Actual biological DNA defines much of who we are. Science has shown that when we come down to nature versus nurture, nature (aka our DNA) has a strong edge. And you can't really fiddle too much with DNA, because it quickly falls apart or results in serious mutations. Likewise, once you have a brand, you don't want to continuously noodle and quibble over it, otherwise it all unravels and things get ugly.

A brand grows over time

If a brand starts as a seed, it matures from sprout to sprig to sapling to tree. Ultimately, we want it to yield fruit, and you get to decide what that fruit will be—more customers? Spurring a change in the world? Leaving a lasting, positive legacy?

In establishing your brand, you must think not of what the sprig might look like, but of the fruit you want to bear.



Brand is the soul

Here's another comparison of what a brand is: If your company were a person, your brand wouldn't be its body—it would be its soul. Even if that body changes over time, the soul remains the same. That soul is a core set of values and a unique view of the world. At an organization, a brand helps its people come together for a common purpose and strive toward a collective vision based on a shared set of values.

At an organization, a brand helps its people come together for a common purpose and strive toward a collective vision based on a shared set of values.

SUMMARY

Build a brand with the longer-term future in mind. Will your work now pave the way for what you want in five years? It should, because a brand isn't something you tinker with every year; it's an established foundation that gives life to and fuels your growth.

GO DEEPER

Think about the future—what do you see? Knowing your long-term goals will help you develop a brand that supports those goals.

Product ≠ Brand

There is something absolutely critical that we must agree on right now:

Your product is **not** your brand.

It's easy to fall back into thinking that your product is your brand. But the specific item or service you provide is *functional*. It's an expression of your brand, an output of your brand. Sear this into your brain: Your product is not your brand.

When we think about a product, we break it down into things like:

- Features and benefits
- The problem it solves
- Target market

But when you break down a *brand*, that's a lot harder. That's why we start the concept of a brand from the bottom up, and from inside out. Starting from the outside starts with your product, and remember, **your product is not your brand**. If you start from your product, you'll never get into your brand's foundation, which is made up of:

- Why your brand exists
- Your brand's purpose
- Your brand's future goals

- Your brand's purpose in the world
- The core values that unify your team, partners, vendors, and customers

Your brand holds everything together

Your customers might get excited about your product, or even the pretty design of your website, but your brand is the foundation that holds those up. To understand why this matters, let's do a thought experiment:

You need a minivan. (Yes, a minivan. Just roll with this uncouth minivan fantasy.) Through shopping and research, you narrow your choices down to two options:



Which would you choose?

Most people in our branding workshops choose Volkswagen and throw out reasons like “German engineering” or “safety” or “will run well.” There’s a lot associated with the Volkswagen brand.

If you do a little automotive history homework, you’ll learn that when you take off the exterior and look at what actually runs these minivans, everything is the same. Chassis, engine, drivetrain: it’s all the same.

Why?

Chrysler made both the minivans. Chrysler built the original model, and Volkswagen licensed it from them, stuck on their own body design and decals, and sold it as a Volkswagen.

Now guess which one sells for \$10,000 more?

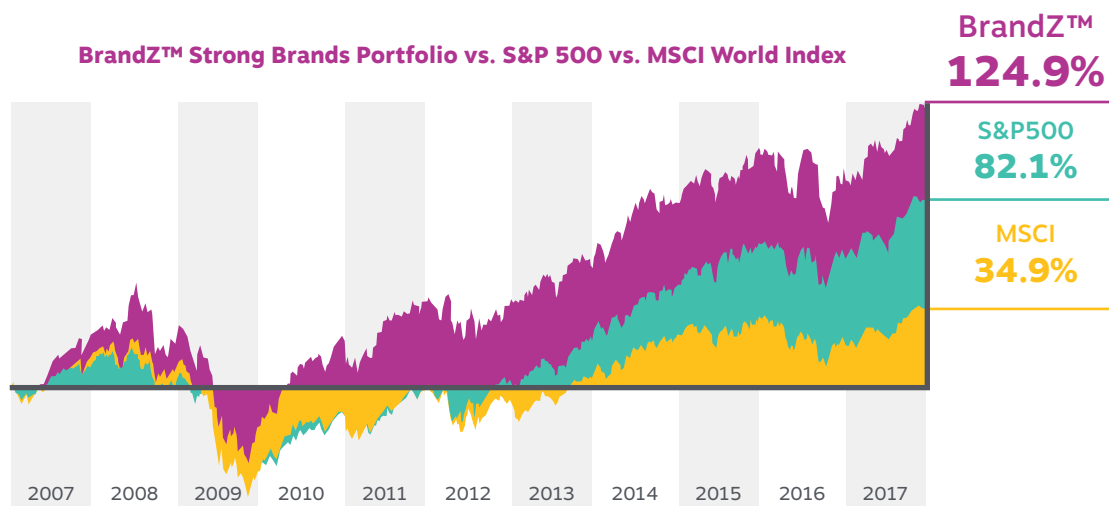
That’s right—Volkswagen.

Branding ROI

You can sell the same thing under two brands, and people will pay more for one brand than they will for the other. A brand can increase not only *perceived value*, but also *actual value*. People trust the Volkswagen brand, and paying for a brand they trust reassures them that they've made a good choice.

A solid brand also builds *loyalty* among your customers, and loyalty wins big for bottom line. The data confirms this:

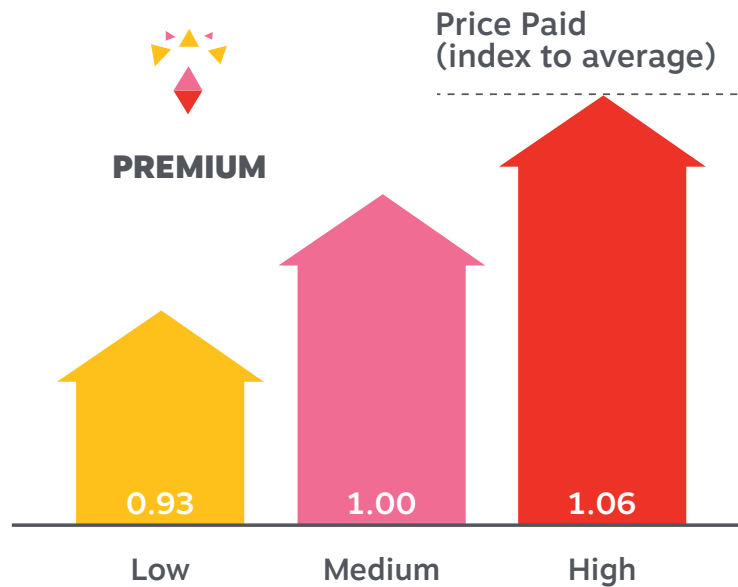
Strong brands *outperform the shareholder growth of the average company*. The value of BrandZ Strong Brands Portfolio **increased by 124.9%** from April 2006 to April 2017, out-performing both the S&P 500, which grew **82.1%**, and the MSCI World Index, which grew **34.9%**.



Source: Kantar Millward Brown, BrandZ, 2017

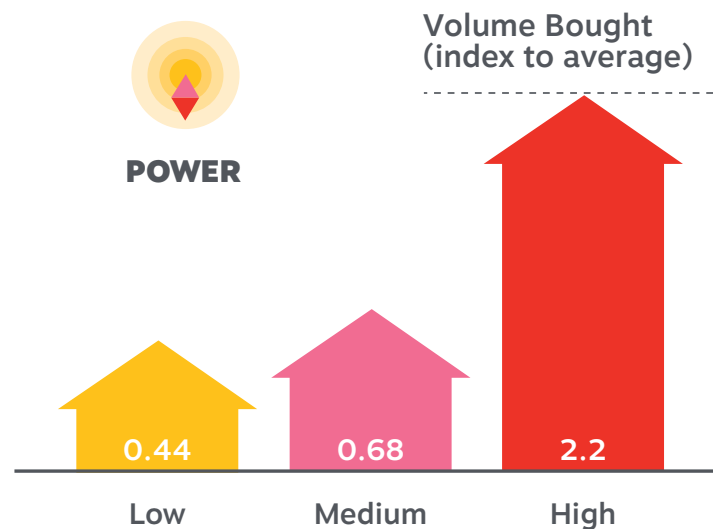
3x Sales Volume:

High-strength brands can command an average *price premium* **13% higher** than low-strength brands, and **6% higher** than medium-strength brands.



Source: *The Meaningfully Different Framework*, Millward Brown, 2013. Shopcom data merged with equity survey scores. Based on comparing Brand 'Premium' scores to shopping habits of 1600 consumers. 65 brands in 4 categories.

High-strength brands affect customers' predisposition to choose a brand, and so deliver greater volume sales than medium or low-strength brands. Brands with high "power" scores capture **3x the sales volume** of the average brand.



Source: *The Meaningfully Different Framework*, Millward Brown, 2013. Based on comparing brand "power" scores to shopping habits of 1600 customers

SUMMARY

Your product is NOT your brand. A good brand will increase your perceived value, your actual value, and foster loyalty with your customers.

GO DEEPER

Sometimes people within an organization don't see the value in creating a brand, and don't understand how much goes into it. Think about a time when you were deciding between two brands. What were the reasons?

Exclude things like “The product provided less/more X” and instead think about things that are more intangible, like trust, your perception, if you knew people who used the brand, etc. Asking skeptics these same questions, as well as posing the Chrysler/Volkswagen scenario, can help you start to prove the value of building your brand.

All brand does is win, win, win in a crowded marketplace

Brand has another benefit: Differentiation.

Let's look at Uber and Lyft. Functionally, they do the same thing—you use your mobile phone to get someone to drive you from point A to point B in their own car.

Even though the apps may perform the same functions, drivers and riders have to make a choice: Uber or Lyft. The best way to help humans make a choice is to differentiate between the options. One is pink, one is black. Ergo, they are different.

Sometimes, a brand is simply differentiation: “We are us, they are them.”

Let's look at sports apparel. Is there a substantial functional difference between, say, Nike and Under Armour shorts? Probably not.



In fact, they're probably nearly identical, which brings us back to the Chrysler/Volkswagen scenario. Why choose Nike over Under Armour? Many consumers will have bought from one brand before, and if they have more familiarity and trust with Nike over Under Armour, they'll likely purchase Nike. Heck, if they're presented with two identical pairs of shorts, one with the Nike logo and one with no logo at all, there's a good chance they'll still pick Nike, even if it's twice the cost. Trust builds brand loyalty with its customers, allowing the brand to provide more opportunities to serve with more products and services.

Do your customers know?

This is why brand always wins in a crowded marketplace. Even if you've created something totally new and you're first to market, you must ask yourself: **Do your customers understand that you're different?**

Just because you *have* something different doesn't mean people *understand* that you're different.

You also must ask: Is your target market giving you any attention?

The reality is that every marketplace is crowded—even if you're creating a category from scratch. Your consumers must understand why they need to move from their existing category into another. They must be educated (by you!) about your new category and shown why you are different, and that means your category is crowded until you succeed in their education.

Consumers are full

Here's the harsh reality (for your brand) about consumers: Their lives and their brains are full. Practically every moment of the day they are pummeled with information and advertising, whether that information or advertising comes from a direct competitor of yours or not.

So when you come into the market, you must come thinking "I have to carve out a space for my brand." That space will not magically appear; your target consumers will not magically learn about you—you will have to do the work.

SUMMARY

Even if you think you're creating an entirely new space, you still have to educate people about that space. Your brand will help differentiate you and effectively provide that education.


Your brand must show consumers that you are different.

GO DEEPER

Think about two similar, competing brands. Here are some examples (and you can use your own!):

- McDonalds and Burger King
- Toyota and Honda
- Netflix and Hulu
- Coke and Pepsi
- Zara and H&M

Now spend some time thinking about the differences between one brand and the other. How do they differentiate themselves from each other? What differences do you perceive? How do you want your brand to be perceived against your competition?



Let's keep building!

Want to keep learning and building a deeper foundation for your brand?

Grab additional modules or the full course to unlock the rest of your remarkable brand!



Scan the QR code or visit remarkablebrand.com to purchase additional modules or the full course.



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We guide organizations
to unlock their authentic brands
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