

Branding Questionnaire

ANALYSIS

WHAT IS A BRAND?

What is a brand? Too often even marketing professionals don't have an answer, and too many have their 'own' answer. Which makes life very confusing! We've trawled through our resources to find some of the best definitions:

The Dictionary of Business and Management defines a brand as:

"a name, sign or symbol used to identify items or services of the seller(s) and to differentiate them from goods of competitors."

Signs and symbols are part of what a brand is, but to us this is a very incomplete definition. Walter Landor, one of the greats of the advertising industry, said:

"simply put, a brand is a promise. By identifying and authenticating a product or service it delivers a pledge of satisfaction and quality."

In his book, 'Building Strong Brands' David Aaker suggests the brand is a 'mental box' and gives a definition of brand equity as:

"a set of assets (or liabilities) linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service..."

This is an important point, brands are not necessarily positive!
Building from this idea of a 'mental box' a more poetic definition might be:

"A brand is the most valuable real-estate in the world, a corner of the consumer's mind".

These are all great definitions, but we believe the best is this:

"A brand is a collection of perceptions in the mind of the consumer".

Why is it best? Well, first of all it is easy to remember, which is always useful! But it is also best because it works to remind us of some key points:

- This definition makes it absolutely clear that a brand is very different from a product or service. A brand is intangible and exists in the mind of the consumer.
- This definition helps us understand the idea of brand loyalty and the 'loyalty ladder'. Different people have different perceptions of a product or service, which places them at different points on the loyalty ladder.
- This definition helps us to understand how advertising works. Advertising has to sell, and it achieves this by positively influencing people's perceptions of the product or service

thus **“Creating a First Impression to be a lasting Impression.”** Is a vital part of the branding process.

Every interaction the customer has with you, influences their perceptions. The product experience, customer service, slogans, ads, and even product manuals all contribute to the customer perception of your company or product. Your job is to cultivate, guard, and maintain a strong brand – the rewards, of which, are consistently loyal customers and a continual increase in customer preference.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD BRAND?

A good brand communicates a clear message about what it stands for and how it differs from competitors. It stems from your product positioning and customers understand and internalize the brand through its consistent use. Each touch point within your customers’ experience should seek to reinforce this same message.

With a well-crafted strategy, a good brand begins to look more like a belief system than anything else.

It takes on a vibrant life of its own, and customers will stand behind the brand, adopting its claims and evangelizing it to others.

Major national brands know this and use it to great effect. Coke has us believing it is “The real thing”. BMW owners believe they have the ‘Ultimate driving machine’, rather than just an ordinary, stuffy luxury car.

These brands and their promises have grown beyond mere slogans, evolving into living icons for the company and their believers.

PURPOSE OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

This analysis is designed to help us understand your current brand and the context surrounding it. This process may reveal a strong and vibrant brand – or it may illuminate missing areas and lack of focus. If the latter is the case, it opens the door for discussion on these points and will help you gain a razor sharp vision of what your brand represents.

Good direct marketing begins with good information. So take time to think about the following issues BEFORE you get into copy or design. And feel free to alter this list or add any other information you need. The more thorough you can be now, the more creative and effective your efforts will be later.

The series of questions listed below will help convey your thoughts & ideas to our design team and start the design process.

YOUR COMPANY BACKGROUND & CULTURE

GENERAL INFO:

Name: _____

Company Name: _____

Company Website: _____

Company Address: _____

Contact Phone #: _____

Fax # _____

Email Address: _____

What is the history of the Company?

Understanding how a brand started can be an important aspect to its story. Where did it come from? Who was behind it? Has it changed or evolved?

Describe your business?

Product(s)? Services? Record of growth.

Where is the brand going? What is the 5 year vision for the company and its products?

The future vision of a company is vital to understanding a brand. Where a company is going is the basis of how it should position itself now. Note: Avoid general statements such as the 'global leader', instead define specifics ways in which it will lead and how.

How would you describe your company culture?

How would you describe the personality/ philosophy of the company? What is the leadership like? How does the culture effect how you relate to customers?

Do you currently have a marketing plan?

If so describe in detail. Does this plan extend over a one year, two year or three or more years? Is it a part of your overall business plan?

What does your marketing plan cover?

(i.e. :Internet, Advertising, Sales Promotion, Direct Mail Marketing, Public Relations/Publicity, Trade Shows and so on.

Which one of your marketing plans has proven most successful in generating business?

Which one of your marketing plans has proven least successful in generating business?

Are you totally satisfied with your current marketing plan?

If not what do you see as your weakness? Is the key spokesperson a visible figure? Do you have a marketing director/service or advertising agency? If so, are you satisfied with their work?

Have you or the agency conducted consumer and/or media research programs?

If so what are the results?

The Customers and Market

What market are your products in?

Describe the industry and the market your products or services are in. What makes this group unique?

What are the values of your customers?

What are the most important issues to them as a whole? What do they value above all else in a purchasing decision? What are the unique advantages of the product?

What specifics are they looking for when they look for your type of product?

What are the values they look for in products such as yours? What are the 'top of mind questions' when you are first contacted? What concerns do they have before purchasing? What problem does the product solve for the consumer?

What is the decision-making process customer's use (rational or not) when they purchase your brand?

List the key decision points in sequential order. Is it price then quality? Do they choose product integration over price?

What ways do you market? How do you reach out to new customers?

How you market to customers helps us to understand the context in which potential customers will first meet your brand.

What does your brand stand for in the customers' mind?

How do customers perceive you? Who are you to them? Are you the industry leader or are you the up and coming innovator? How do they relate to you as opposed to your competition?

Why should they care about you?

How do your products impact them or their business? What is the bottom line value or resulting effect? Think in terms of real bottom-line value. *(Example: A BMW offers customers a feeling of driving a high performance machine, not just getting them from point A to B.)*

What are your key differentiators?

How does the above question differ from your competitors? Given your both selling a similar product, what makes yours worth the customer's money and not theirs?

How do you envision emphasizing those differentiators?

Note the ways in which you emphasize them. Does your marketing material revolve around your differentiators? What slogans have you used to highlight them? What key points do you market on?

What is your primary brand tagline?

What single statement embodies all of the above? *(Example: Visa claims "It's everywhere you want to be", Nike says "Just Do it", and Coke reminds us "It's the real thing.")* What promise does your brand claim?

What is your products competition and who are the competitors?

How does the product stand in relation to the competitors? Which competitors pose the greatest threat? Are there important differences between your product and the competition?

How do your competitors differ in their advertising and marketing strategies?

Ads, Pricing, etc.?

Target Market

Who will be buying the product?

Demographics. Who influences the buying?

Who will be actually using the product?

What type of emotional sell would help motivate them to buy your product?

Why wouldn't someone buy the product?

(i.e., price, lack or awareness')

Objectives

What are the objectives?

(i.e. lead generation, direct sales, awareness?)

How will you measure its success?

(Are there any promotions planned with this project?)

Budget:

What is the budget for this project? \$ _____

Does this budget include any Online Marketing? Yes No

After completing this form email to services@paragonmediadesign.com or contact us at **719-210-0704**.

We look forward to assisting you in this and many other projects you may have.