



UNIT 2

Personal Branding Strategies

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Define what a brand is (particularly a strong brand) and what branding is about
- ✓ Define various types of brand architecture and brand extension
- ✓ Identify your brand's products, the features of those products, and their values
- ✓ Write a mission, vision, and style statement for a brand

stand? If you want a certain style of shoes, will Nike's trademark swoosh help to make the decision a little easier?

What's in a Brand?

Your brand can include:

- A catchy name
- A logo (an image) or logotype (words associated with an image)
- Trademark colors
- Characters
- A particular style, look, and feel
- An attitude
- A set of feelings and values
- Anything you want it to!

What is Branding, Then?

The word **branding** encompasses the entire process of creating, managing, and evaluating that brand. It's how you build relationships with people through the image that the brand gives out. Your brand should therefore always be integrated into all facets of your organization.

Why Branding is the Most Important Investment a Company Can Make

Branding can be a costly project and a big investment. Many business owners are reluctant to invest their time and money in a full branding project, particularly since branding and graphic design experts can come with a hefty price tag.

For one, branding doesn't have to cost a lot of money. If you know what questions to ask, you can work through the process yourself. (That's what we'll focus on in this course.) Then, you can work with a graphic designer to bring your vision to life. (Although we can't make you a graphic designer in this course, we will give you some tips on choosing a graphic designer, as well as a primer on graphic design elements.)

What advantages might come from having a strong brand?

Characteristics of a Strong Brand

Name some brands that you are familiar with.

What makes these brands stand out?

What Are You All About?

Identifying Your Products and Features

Before you begin, you must know what you're branding. If possible, keep your product (or a sample or picture of it – this works particularly well if it's a service) near you as you work through the branding process. **You also want to understand what your product does, what it offers customers, and what you want it to mean.** Let's begin by identifying its features and benefits.

Products and Features

To keep you grounded, take a blank sheet of paper. Write a few short lines about what your product or service is, what it does, and what benefits it brings to customers. You want to focus on the things that are key to your business.

Example: Acme Widgets Inc.

- We sell four types of widgets and provide widget repair service.
- Three of our widgets are for home use.
 - The base model provides basic cleaning services and saves customers about one hour each day.
 - The middle model provides better cleaning services as well as laundry duties. It saves customers about two hours each day, plus all maintenance fees are waived for three years.
 - The top-end model performs all services of a traditional butler. It saves customers at least four hours each day, plus all maintenance fees are waived for its lifetime.
- Our industrial widget is custom-built and is designed to integrate with any assembly line. On average, businesses save \$1,500 per day in labor costs by using our widgets.

Identifying Your Values

Now that we know what our product is, let's explore what we want it to stand for. Earlier, we learned that brand is about meaning, so let's see what meaning you want to have for your brand.

Step One: Brainstorming

To start, draw a grid on a sheet of paper, or a group of circles. You want to have 50 to 60 individual spaces that are all equal.

Now, write one value that you would like your brand to represent in each box or circle. Think of words you would want guiding decisions for your brand. Be as creative as you like – there are no rules; just stick to words that represent values.

Tip: If you're having a hard time getting started, think of a brand that you would not want to be like and describe their values. Write the opposite down for your brand.

Here are some ideas:

- Accountability
- Achievement
- Adventure
- Affection
- Authority
- Change
- Commitment
- Community
- Competence
- Cooperation
- Creativity
- Decisiveness
- Democracy
- Ecological awareness
- Effectiveness
- Efficient
- Ethical
- Excellence
- Excitement
- Expertise
- Fame
- Freedom
- Friendships
- Growth
- Honesty
- Independence
- Influential
- Inner harmony
- Integrity
- Intellectual
- Involvement
- Knowledge
- Leadership
- Meaningful
- Merit
- Money
- Nature
- Order
- Power
- Public service
- Purity
- Quality
- Responsibility
- Security
- Self-respect
- Serenity
- Sophistication
- Stability
- Status
- Sustainable
- Tranquility
- Truth
- Variety
- Wisdom

Step Two: Narrowing It Down

Now, a values statement that is this broad just doesn't make sense. Our next task is to narrow it down to just a handful of values; even one is great! (**Wal-Mart** has three: respect, service, and excellence. **HP** has five: passion, respect, honesty, diversity, and teamwork.)

Try using these guideline:.

- First, go through and cross out any values that just don't seem to represent the brand, or to be something that you would want the brand to represent.
- Next, cross out any values you don't think the business could embody. For example, if you own a fast-food burger franchise, you probably shouldn't aim for sophistication.
- Now it gets a little tougher. Cross out anything that won't compel employees or have meaning for customers.
- Hopefully your list is a little bit shorter now! Now, cross off any values that won't help make you unique, or that are not sustainable.
- Finally, is this value easy to communicate?

You should now be down to a handful of values, or perhaps you've reached the powerful number of one. If you still have a lot of values on your list, or none at all, try running through the guidelines again. Remember, look at your values as a lifelong playbook for how your brand will behave.

Step Three: Add Some Polish

Bring the three values together, and add a statement about what it means to you. For example, **Wal-Mart** has expanded their three values into these statements:

- Respect for the individual
- Service to our customers
- Striving for excellence

(Source: <http://walmartstores.com/aboutus/321.aspx>)

Creating a Mission

What a Mission Statement is All About

A mission statement is where you can express your big dreams for your product. This is where big ideas live. Having this bigger sense of purpose will be a big help when creating the public-facing elements of your brand. So don't be hesitant, and don't worry if you'll ever get there – write down your biggest hopes and dreams for your product or service.

The best mission statements are short and simple. Here are some examples to help inspire you.

- **3M:** To solve unsolved problems innovatively.
- **ADM:** To unlock the potential of nature to improve the quality of life.
- **Bristol-Myers Squibb:** To discover, develop, and deliver innovative medicines that help patients prevail over serious diseases.
- **Conoco Phillips:** Use our pioneering spirit to responsibly deliver energy to the world.
- **CSX:** To be the safest, most progressive North American railroad, relentless in the pursuit of customer and employee excellence.
- **CVS:** We will be the easiest pharmacy retailer for customers to use.
- **Darden** restaurant chain (including Red Lobster, Olive Garden, and Bahama Breeze): To nourish and delight everyone we serve.
- **Dow Chemicals:** To constantly improve what is essential to human progress by mastering science and technology.
- **Erie Insurance:** To provide our policyholders with as near perfect protection, as near perfect service as is humanly possible, and to do so at the lowest possible cost.
- **Ford Motor Company:** We are a global family with a proud heritage, passionately committed to providing personal mobility for people around the world.
- **H&R Block:** To help our clients achieve their financial objectives by serving as their tax and financial partner.
- **Harley-Davidson:** Fulfill dreams through the experience of motorcycling.
- **Levi Strauss:** People love our clothes and trust our company. We will market the most appealing and widely worn casual clothing in the world. We will clothe the world.
- **Microsoft:** Help people and businesses throughout the world realize their full potential.
- **Nike:** To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world.
- **OmniCare:** Our business is pharmaceutical care. Our mission is positive outcomes.
- **Walt Disney:** To be one of the world's leading producers and providers of entertainment and information.

One Year

Our household widgets will be in the top ten of Innovation Magazine's annual Time-Saving Devices list. Our sales focus will remain in North America, although we will begin expanding to Europe at the end of the year. During this process, we will ensure that the product lives up to its current high standards of efficiency and saving customers' time.

Three Years

We will expand our industrial widgets line to two standard models, while keeping the custom model option. We will continue to sell three types of household widgets. We will establish a strong market presence in Europe and begin establishing contacts in Asia. During this process, we will ensure that the product lives up to its current high standards of efficiency and saving customers time. We will expand the focus to include money-saving options, such as our lifetime service plan.

Five Years

We will focus on improving our product line through customer feedback, industry studies, and intensive research in development. These efforts will support strengthening our global presence and make the anticipated line of four household widgets and three industrial widgets the preferred brand worldwide.

Further Reading:

- ✓ Anselmo, Donna. *Marketing Demystified*. McGraw-Hill, 2010.
- ✓ Godin, Seth. *All Marketers are Liars*. Portfolio Hardcover, 2009.
- ✓ Halligan, Brian, and David Meerman Scott. *Marketing Lessons from the Grateful Dead*. Wiley, 2010.