



criteria for brand essence™

WHAT EVERY PROFESSIONAL SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BRANDING

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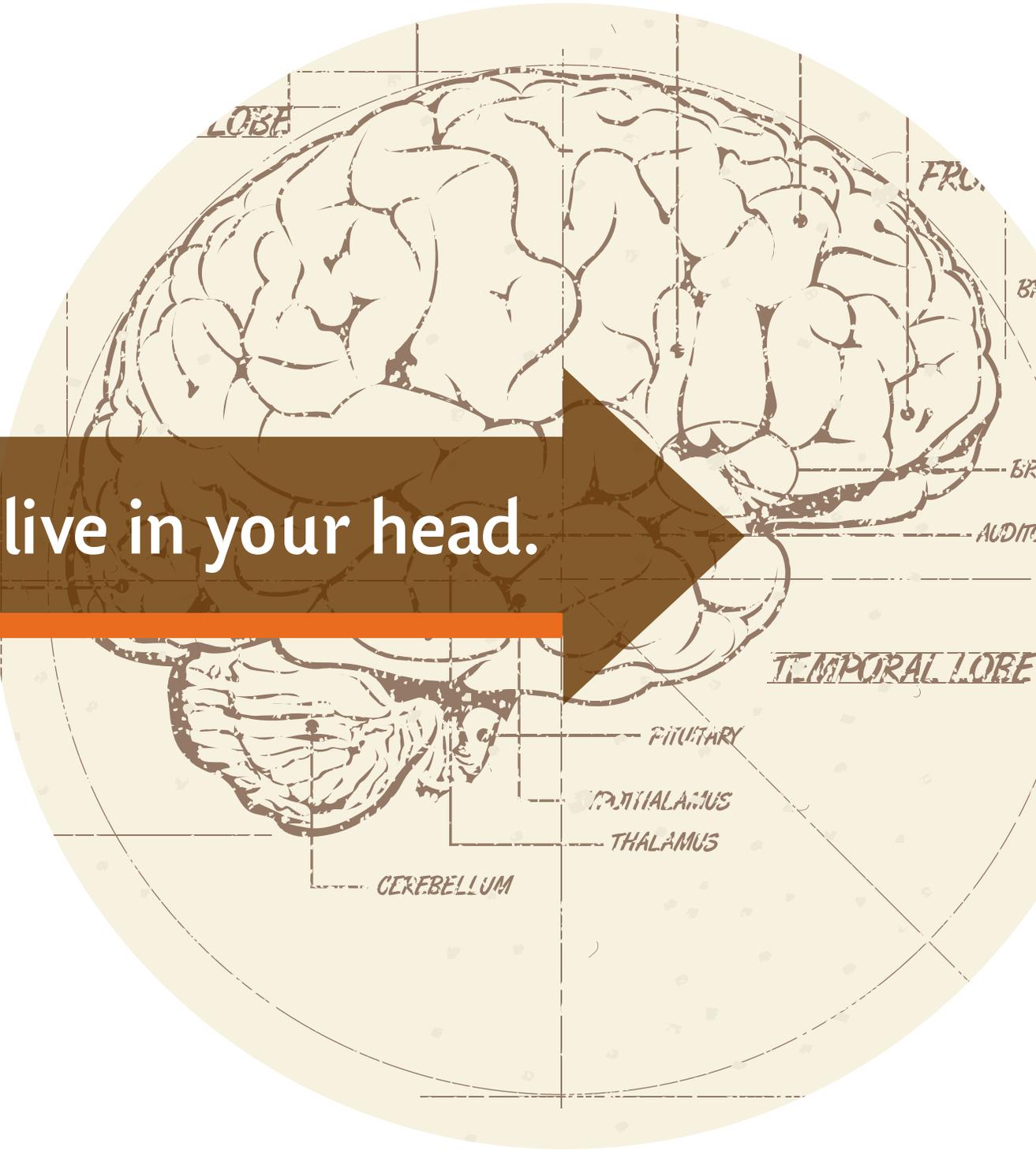
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For starters, brands live in your head.



How you *think + feel* about
a brand **is** the brand.

The image features the word "Kellogg's" in a large, bold, red cursive font. The letters are thick and rounded, with a white outline that gives them a 3D, sticker-like appearance. The logo is positioned in the lower half of the frame, overlapping the white background.

A brand is not

a name, trademark, logo
package, or product.

A brand is a
collection of your *thoughts + feelings*
about your experiences with it.

Thoughts and feelings
are intangibles.

As compared to tangibles...

WHICH YOU CAN

see hear touch
taste or smell



Intangibles you just ...
feel



“What you make people *feel* is just as important as what you make.”

~BMW

Riding a Harley-Davidson
motorcycle

feels liberating.

Sending an important package
via FedEx

feels safe.

Experiencing Disney World
with your children

feels magical.

every day

people make hundreds of decisions based more on how they feel than on logic.

Think about it -- clothes, cars, restaurants, entertainment -- business purchases too.

Examples of tangibles + intangibles

Tangible: Asics Gel-Bandito are *lightweight*.

Intangible: Asics Gel-Bandito *help me run faster*.



a formal definition

A brand is a product, service, cause or organization with *perceived* intangible attributes.

Intangible attributes must be *perceived*

Sounds obvious, but if you don't perceive the intangibles, it's not a brand.

Perception of intangibles is in the eye of the beholder. Depending on the brand, *some see 'em; some don't.*

When you don't perceive an intangible,
it's a *commodity* to you.

FOR EXAMPLE

You say, “tomato.”
I say, “Fox’s Fine Gourmet Ketchup.”

To you, ketchup is a commodity.

To me, there’s a difference
in ketchup brands.

And vice versa, depending
upon the category.

brand categories

Brand categories people care about most
(among 440 brands surveyed):

Luxury cosmetics

Kids' breakfast cereals

Wireless handsets

Luxury moisturizing skin care products

Discount retail stores

~Brand Keys, 2009 Loyalty Engagement Index

commodity categories

Brand categories people care about least
(among 440 brands surveyed):

Banks

Insurance

Soft drinks (regular)

Casual dining restaurants

Bottled water

~Brand Keys, 2009 Loyalty Engagement Index

commodity

a product, service, cause or organization with *no* perceived intangible attributes.



On Wall Street, commodities of the same type are *interchangeable* with each other.

Soybeans are soybeans.
(Unless you perceive a difference.)



brand vs commodity

Brands compete on their intangible attributes.

Commodities compete on price or convenience.



How do brands get inside your head?

Exposure

Through *exposure* to messages about the brand

Experiences

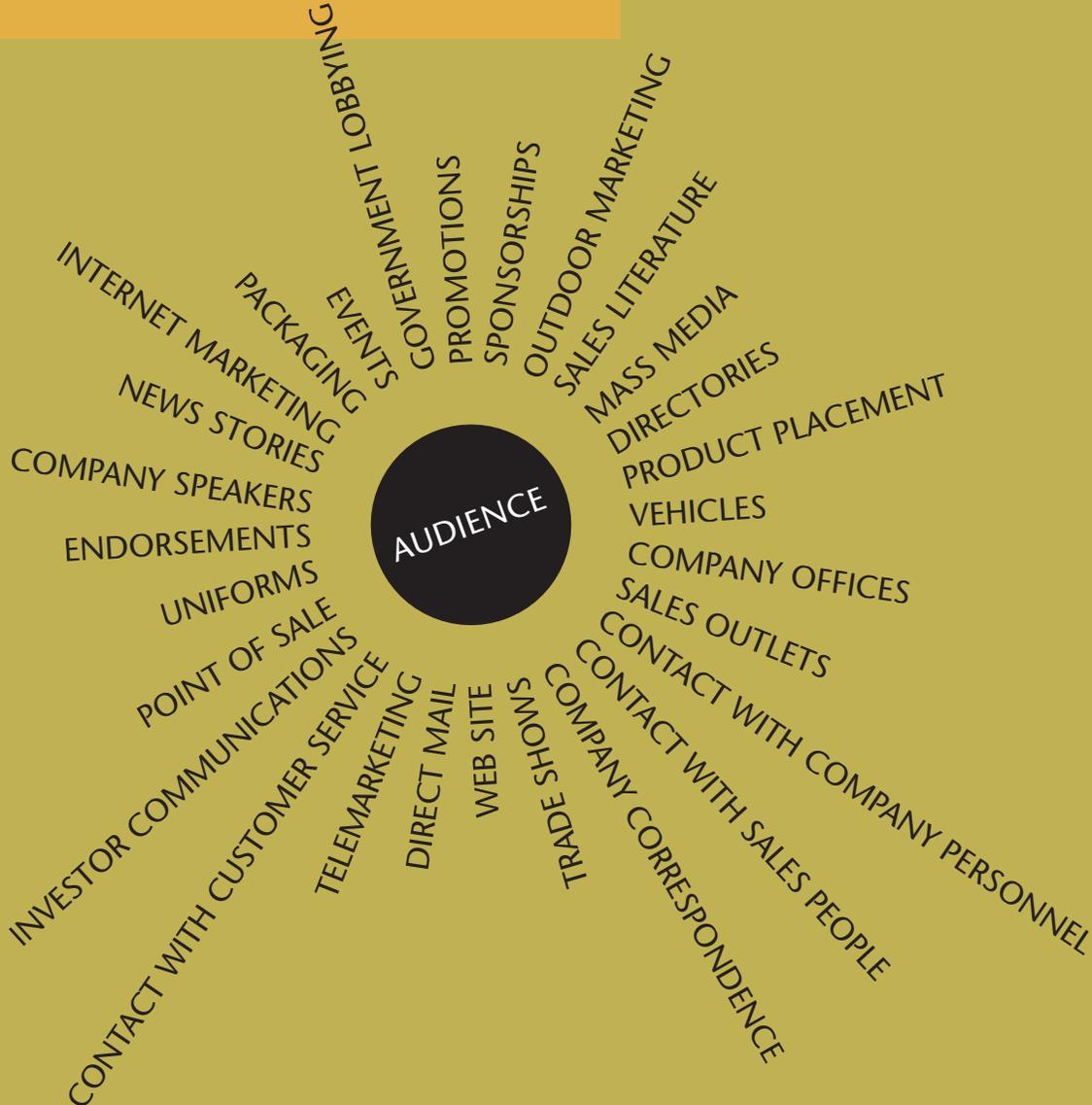
Through actual *experiences* with the brand

Experiences = Touchpoints

Touchpoint is marketing jargon for a moment (time and place) when the brand comes in contact with the audience.

there are lots of them

Even more than you see here.



Who affects these moments of brand experience?

Every single person in the organization contributes to shaping the audience's experiences with the brand — even if they don't come in contact with the audience.

Likewise, every dollar spent
and every decision made ...

impacts the audience's experiences
with the brand.

```
graph TD; A[ ] --- B[For this reason, branding is not solely a marketing function. It is an organizational function.]; B --- C[ ]; B --- D[ ]; B --- E[ ]; B --- F[ ]
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For this reason, *branding* is not solely a marketing function. *It is an organizational function.*

A brand will not be strong unless the entire organization understands and embraces *branding*, starting at the top.

Every strong brand stands for
something — *one differentiating attribute.*
Some call it the brand essence.

Others call it
the brand...

soul
heart
mantra
promise
signature strength
core strength
core attribute
description
personality
differentiator
experience
connection
persona
life force
uniqueness
individuality
meaning
central nature
proposition

and so on ...

Don't worry about the semantics.
It's *the concept* that matters.

The brand essence is the *single* intangible attribute that differentiates the brand from competitive brands as perceived by the audience.

the

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I. Unique

The essence of a brand is how it is different from competitors in the same category.

FOR EXAMPLE

If Apple (and its products) are *friendly and approachable*, then it is claiming that its competitors (PCs, etc.) are not.



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I. Unique

People make decisions based upon
how things are **unique**,
not how they
are the same.

I. Unique

THINGS YOU WILL NEVER HEAR SOMEONE SAY:

“I picked it because it was exactly like
every other car I test-drove.”

“We bought it because it was exactly like
every other house on the street.”

“I married him because he was exactly like
every other guy I dated.”

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I. Unique

the essence...

gives the audience the primary reason to choose a brand over competitors' brands.

the **9** criteria for
brand essence™

I. Unique

be unique
Own a *single* idea.

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I. Unique

EXAMPLES OF BRAND ESSENCE:

Harley-Davidson = Liberating

3M = Innovative

Visa = Everywhere

Jeep = Adventurous



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I. Unique

Brand positioning is...
the relative differences
between brands as perceived
by the audience.

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I. Unique

EXAMPLES OF AUTOMOTIVE BRAND POSITIONS

Toyota Prius = Fuel-efficient

Hyundai = Affordable

Porsche = Sporty

Lexus = Luxury

Lamborghini = Exotic



2. Intangible

One is no more independent on a Harley-Davidson motorcycle than another brand, but somehow one *feels like it.*

Tap into what the audience feels.



3. Single-minded

One word to describe the essence is ideal. Maybe two. More than two words indicates that the brand has no focus.

Because a brand (by design) delivers a unique experience, having no focus makes for a weak brand.

3. Single-minded

“A brand becomes stronger ...
when you narrow its focus.”

~Ries & Ries, *The 22 Immutable Laws Of Branding*

4. Experiential

The essence captures what the audience feels during an experience with the brand.

EXAMPLE

“Driving a Volvo makes me feel that my family is *safe*.”



5. Meaningful

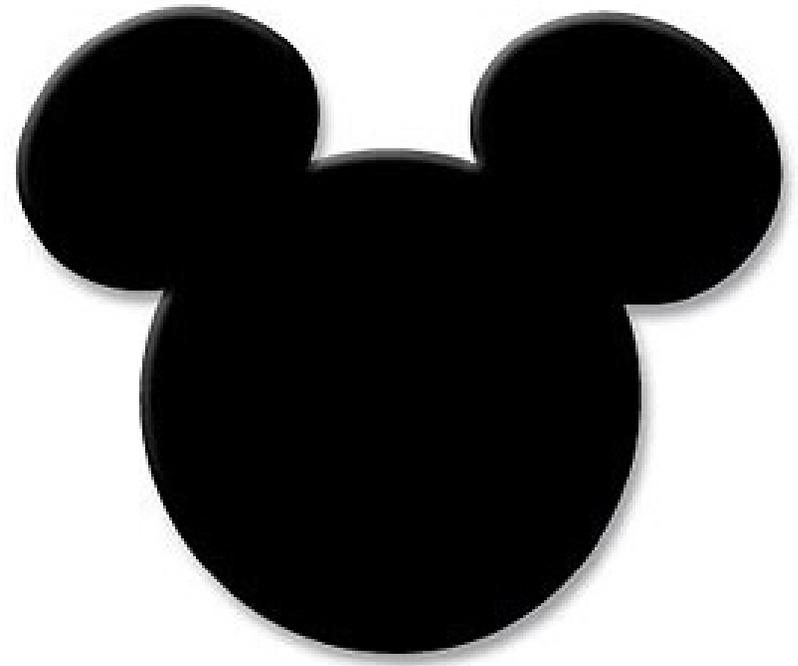
There is no point in identifying an essence that is irrelevant to the audience. Essences that don't connect are the reason behind many failed brands. Research it.

6. Consistently delivered

If the proposed essence is not consistently experienced then it isn't the essence.

EXAMPLE

If *magical* is Disney's essence, then every trip to Disney World must deliver on that promise.



6. Consistently delivered

Consistency = “No Surprises”

~ People seek comfort, stability, and predictability.

~ The success of all chains is based upon consistency of experience.

(Think McDonald's.)

~ Consistency of experience is the basis for brand loyalty.



6. Consistently delivered

Former Holiday Inn tagline:
“The best surprise is no surprise”



6. Consistently delivered

Maintaining consistency ...
is a major challenge for most
organizations.

Can your organization deliver?

6. Consistently delivered

“One of the few things worse than no promise ... is a broken one.”

~Scott Davis, Brandweek

7. Authentic

The essence must be credible or the brand will be rejected. To find out what the audience believes about your brand, ask them.

(It's okay for the brand essence to be aspirational, but only if your audience believes you can deliver on the promise.)

8. Sustainable

A brand's essence is baked in.
It doesn't change.

Ever.

9. Scalable

Will the essence work for brand extensions?

Will it work as the brand's opportunity grows?

the

criteria for brand essence™

1. Unique
2. Intangible
3. Single-minded
4. Experiential
5. Meaningful
6. Consistently delivered
7. Authentic
8. Sustainable
9. Scalable

Branding, then, is...

defining, promising, and delivering
a unique brand experience consistently.
Branding distinguishes the brand from
its competitors and builds preference.

ROI of branding

Branding generates *trial + loyalty*.

Trial
(trying the brand) results
from being intrigued
by the promise of the
brand experience.

Loyalty
results from having
a series of consistent,
singular and favorable
brand experiences.

The ultimate goal of branding is *loyalty*.

A loyal audience seeks
repeat brand experiences.
And recommends the brand
to others.

brand loyalty

Brand loyalty drives up to 70% of all purchase decisions. ~ *Kuczmariski & Associates*

brand loyalty

Loyal customers, on average,
are willing to pay a 20%
premium for their brand
of choice.

~ Kuczmariski & Associates

Unlike branding, *promotion-based marketing* is often centered on pricing strategies and aims for short-term results.

Branding generates long-term results, but requires *commitment* to a long-term strategy.

“Brands are not built overnight. Success is measured in *decades*, not years.”

~Ries & Ries, *The 22 Immutable Laws Of Branding*

Brand Loyalty Marketing



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a strong brand is...

1. cost-effective to sustain

FOR EXAMPLE

Maytag's brand essence of dependability as symbolized by "the lonely repairman" campaign has been running for over 40 years.

a strong brand is...

2. a foundation for new launches

FOR EXAMPLE

- ~ Tide extended its brand within its category, adding Tide liquids, Tide To Go, etc.
- ~ The Gap spun off sub-brands to serve different audiences through babyGap, GapKids, etc.
- ~ Disney moved into new categories with Disney cruises, retail stores, Broadway shows, etc.

a strong brand is...

3. an ideal partner for co-branding opportunities

FOR EXAMPLE

- ~ Intel positioned itself as the preferred microchip for all brands of personal computers through its “Intel Inside” campaign.
- ~ One of Edie’s Loaded frozen dairy desserts features Nestlé Butterfinger candy pieces.

a strong brand is...

4. a barrier to competition

Owning a position in the minds of the audience often discourages competitors from head-on competition.

FOR EXAMPLE

~ Imagine the difficulty in trying to replace iPhone as the smartphone with the most applications.

the

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will help define the brand experience
your organization seeks to deliver to
your audience.



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