



Article: Creating a Brand Identity: A guide for Designers Branding Basics by Catharine Slade-Brooking



1. Brand identity is a set of visual components that represents a company's ideas and allows customers to remember a brand and distinguish it from dozens of others. It helps shape consumers' perceptions about a company, build loyalty and trust, and make a brand memorable.
2. A brand is also far more than the name, logo or trademark. Brands seek to connect emotionally with their consumers, to ensure that they are always the first and only choice creating lifelong relationships.
3. Trust is one of the key reasons why we brand. As a result, it has become central to the marketing of almost all products and services used to build awareness and extend customer loyalty. Why we brand therefore goes beyond just a logo and encompasses the whole product concept, as well as the promise to deliver quality and predictability.
4. A successful brand uses its unique set of values to drive a successful business strategy to encourage consumers to choose it over its competitors. Therefore, a successful brand is one that achieves a high degree of recognition by consumers. However, this relationship is based upon reputation, so for a brand to retain its position, it must ensure that it continuously fulfils the customer's expectations.
5. Branding is about creating differentiation, making one product or service seem different from competitor products. Brand values are the core beliefs or philosophy that a brand upholds, and which differentiate it from its competitors.
6. Another way to characterizing a brand is by identifying its brand personality. One way of identifying this is by using social psychologist

Jennifer Aaker's "Dimensions of brand personality" framework, which uses a set of human characteristics to characterize a brand. These are grouped into five core dimensions:

- a. Sincerity: domestic, honest, genuine and cheerful
 - b. Excitement: spirited, imaginative, up to date
 - c. Competence: reliable, responsible, efficient
 - d. Sophistication: glamorous, pretentious, charming, romantic
 - e. Ruggedness: tough, strong, outdoorsy
7. This technique can be used to distinguish between brands that otherwise belong to a similar product category, for instance Land Rover falls into the rugged category, while Ferrari represents the sophisticated and is often used by design agencies to underpin the creation of unique brand values.
 8. If successful a branding strategy will create the perception in the mind of consumers that there is no other product or service on the market quite the same. A brand is ultimately a promise made to a customer to deliver consistently, branding is therefore the act of creating a physical set of attributes: a brand name, brand identity along with less tangible assets, such as the emotional benefits offered by the brand.
 9. To succeed in branding you must understand the needs and interests of your customers. Most design agencies start with research. The practical step-by-step processes involved in designing the final brand can be reduced to five key stages:
 - a. Customer research
 - b. Concept development
 - c. Design development
 - d. Design implementation
 - e. Testing
 10. Many branding agencies use this staged design method as it incorporates a holistic approach to developing an identity. For example, it considers the needs desires and aspirations of the target consumer, the current market and competitive products or services, and it ensures that the client is involved in making key decisions during the process.