



BRAND BASICS:

7 KEYS YOU CAN'T GROW WITHOUT



BRAND: THE NOUN

A brand (noun) is the emotional perception of a product, service, company or organization that lives in the mind of a stakeholder. It's the sum of the cumulative experiences an individual has had with a brand. Put yet another way, a brand (noun) is the gut feeling someone has about a given product.

A brand is not a logo. A brand is not the name of a product or company.

To you, the business owner, your brand lives in the mind of your customer. You don't own it, you don't control it—what you can do is attempt to influence it. That's called branding (verb).

BRANDING: THE VERB



Branding (verb) is the process of bringing all aspects of business operations in alignment with the established core concept. This requires organization wide, cross-functional integration that leaves no area of business operations untouched.

While a brand (noun) is the emotional perception of a given product, company or organization, branding (verb) is the effort of a company to influence and develop stakeholder perceptions.

Affixing a company logo to chotchkies, printed materials or other business collateral is NOT branding.

Branding (verb) is work that happens at the deepest levels of the organization in systematic and methodical approaches.

Branding begins by understanding the company's core concept (core beliefs and brand values) and moves into work with leadership and management, creative communications like websites and graphic identities and finally into the way the organization communicates with its stakeholders.

BRAND ANATOMY



When the quadrants of a brand work together, the brand comes to life in a powerful story stakeholders are able to join, participate and further create.

CORE CONCEPT

The one thing, what you stand for why audiences should take note.

CULTURE

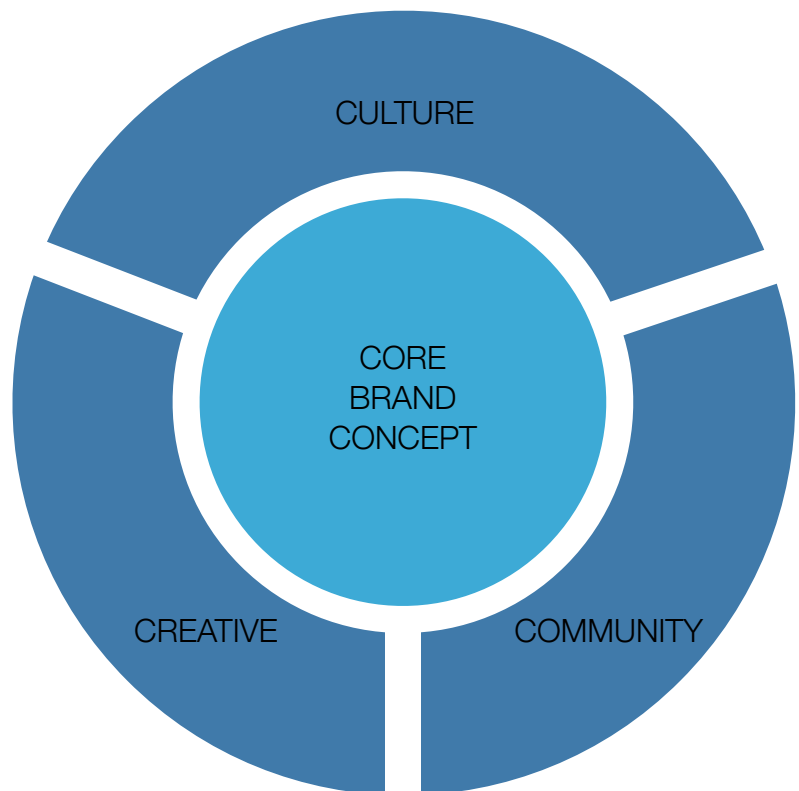
How vision, ambition, mission, core beliefs are demonstrated by leadership and developed by management.

CREATIVE

Visual and interactive media used to communicate with stakeholders.

COMMUNITY

The marketing efforts that rally stakeholders around the brand.





BRAND PROMISE

What can your company offer your customers day in and day out?

Brands (noun) are built up as emotional memory banks in the minds of customers based on whether an interaction or experience with the product lived up to expectations—or, it's promise. With each interaction: advertisement, transaction at the point of sale, store environment or customer service experience, the company or product is telling you how you can expect to interact with it the next time you encounter the brand.

Organizations win when they understand their brand promise and make intentional effort to communicate it to stakeholders and align behaviors behind it. Your brand is only as good as the last interaction a stakeholder had with your customer service department.

Moving your brand from the board room to the break room means getting the core brand concept to the fingertips of the company. Each team member—no matter how senior or how junior—should understand their role in delivering the brand promise to stakeholders: Day in. Day out.



GENUINE V LOGICAL

What business are you in, really?

We know Starbucks is in the business of coffee. Office Port is in the business of shared office space. FedEx is in the business of parcel delivery. Those are logical and self-evident.

But the logical brand is rarely enough for success because it limits companies to competing based on the features and benefits of their products. When organizations are able to move above the commoditization and organize from the point of their genuine brand, the likelihood of success increases exponentially.

If Starbucks is logically in the business of coffee, it's genuinely in the business of "being the third place:" not home, not the office, but Starbucks. Office Port is in the business of "community," and FedEx, "don't worry about it."

Using genuine brand as the single most important organizing principle in an organization brings all other aspects and functions into alignment to create a unique market position.

RESPONSIBILITY V PURPOSE



Your existence as a business is based on the premise of capitalistic concepts. You are in business to make money. That's a business owner's responsibility. A business owner has a responsibility to their employees. Corporations have a responsibility to customers to create the best product according to expressed needs.

Consumers, however, aren't moved by responsibility. Stakeholders are motivated by a reason for existence. In a post-information revolution era, information is a commodity and audiences make assumptions and simply require more for motivation.

Nevertheless, corporate responsibility should not be tossed aside or forgotten. After all, good business is good business. But what's more, is the organization that can stand on its responsibility as a platform and communicate from a place of purpose.

Purpose is a powerful force in bringing the brand quadrants together to invite stakeholders to become part of a unique and compelling brand story.



BRAND TRIGGERS

Understanding how stakeholders will respond to a brand happens on two separate, yet related levels: Emotional and Logical triggers.

Although the branding (verb) process begins within the organization, it's ultimately about the people outside of the organization. Consumers engage brands for psycho-social reasons beyond the basic transactional level. Once a corporation has a command of it's brand and has been successful in integrating beliefs and values into the cultural behavior, understanding what drives audiences to engage is paramount.

Capturing stakeholder's emotional and logical triggers enables the company to market (create community) in a way the resonates and moves audiences to action.

ABOUT FIREBONE



Firebone is a best in class social brand consultancy leading the industry in a unique approach that brings left-brained business strategy and right-brand marketing initiatives together to create brand-building growth strategies.

Firebone's approach includes services in brand development, leadership and management consulting, web and print design/development and traditional and social media marketing.

thefirebone.com

The *BYOB* Show



ABOUT THE BYOB SHOW

The BYOB Show is the premier business show exploring issues at the forefront of management and branding in the age of social media. Tune into the BYOB Show every Saturday night at 6pm on AM560 Chicago/Milwaukee and worldwide via netcast.

Every show includes expert insight into management and branding by the show's hosts and nationally recognized authors and speakers.

BYOBshow.com