CHAPTER 7

Understanding the Brand

In this chapter you will learn about:

- How marketers define a brand
- Why the brand is important, and the role it plays in building marketing and generating revenue
- The elements that go into a brand, and how they come together to create a compelling case for consumers to make purchases
- How the Web is different from other marketing tools and the added value it can provide to marketers in developing brands

Social media tools are great. They give users increased opportunities to communicate with each other as well as the companies from whom they buy products and services. For marketers, however, tools are only a means to an end in an effort that begins with developing and promoting the brand. To promote the brand, marketers first must understand it—what it is, how it works, and why it is important.

Breaking Down the Brand

Understanding the brand is vital to the success of any marketing campaign, whether online or offline. In fact, the brand is the foundation upon which marketing programs are developed. What exactly is a brand? The answer often depends on who you ask and the context in which you are asking. The best way to arrive at a comprehensive definition, for marketing purposes, is to break the word down, starting from the beginning.

Visit any cattle farm and you are likely to see cows with letters or icons burnt into their hides with a branding iron. These burn marks help farmers determine which cows belong to which farm, should herds become intermingled while grazing. This topic might seem like a strange introduction to a marketing discussion, but the practice of marking animals is at the very root of branding. Because cows pretty much all look alike, farmers needed a way to tell which cows belong to which farmer. To solve this problem, farmers started to burn a mark on their cattle, so that they could tell them apart. The mark (brand) helps to tell one cow (product) from another. Therefore, one definition of a brand is:

Brand: An icon or mark (logo) that helps distinguish one product from another.

So then, is the brand a product? By this definition, no—the brand *represents* the product. Pepsi Cola is carbonated water, sugar, and caramel flavoring. The brand is the red, white, and blue circle, the Pepsi name, and the distinctive lettering used. When you see it on the shelf, you immediately know it is different from the bright red and white Coca-Cola bottle on the shelf next to it.

However, there is a slight disconnect with this definition. Let's revisit the farmer. The farmer brands his cows to prove ownership—not so that you, the consumer, can pick out his cows from those of another farmer. By the time his cow ends up on your plate, you are thinking far less about which farm it came from than you are about whether you will still have room for dessert. That is a very different scenario than the one in which a consumer is choosing to drink Pepsi instead of Coke. For many people, the choice comes down to taste, which is more than just the basic ingredients. Taste is a feature of each product that makes it unique. That brings us to a different definition:

Brand: A specific characteristic or unique quality that distinguishes one product from another.

The Pepsi logo lets you know that inside that particular bottle is the specific taste you are looking for. What if every time you opened a bottle of Pepsi, it tasted different? What if sometimes it was bitter and other times it was sweet? Chances are you would stop buying it. The red, white, and blue logo, the specific typeface, and the product name would no longer mean anything. As a consumer, if you see a bottle with the Pepsi logo on it, you know exactly how it is going to taste, whether you are in New York, Boston, Los Angeles, or any one of a million other towns. This brings us to the single most important definition of a brand from the perspective of a marketer:

Brand: The sum total of all user experiences with a particular product or service, building both reputation and future expectations of benefit.

From a marketer's standpoint, this is the definition that really matters. Notice that in breaking down the word, we have taken the brand from being tangible (an icon) to being intangible (reputation). We have also taken it from being a one-way communication (this icon tells you what the brand is), to a two-way relationship with the consumer (based on reputation, we expect something of the brand). If something seems familiar here, it should. Involving consumers directly in a brand is something we have discussed in the Social Media sections of this book. Blogs, online consumer reviews, and other social media tools allow consumers to take a more hands-on approach to a brand. However, the fact that brands and consumers are inextricably linked is nothing new; it is, in fact, inherent in the very definition of a brand.

Distinguishing the Brand from the Company

Before we go any further, we should discuss the question of whether or not there is a separation between the company and the brand. It is a fine line, and there is not always a clear answer. Our last definition of a brand referred to "*the sum total of all user experiences with a particular product or service.*" It is not unusual, however, for companies to have different audiences than their products. Take Disney, for example. Anything with the Disney name associated with it, such as the Disney World and Epcot Center theme parks, movies like *Finding Nemo* and *High School Musical*, and TV shows like *Hannah Montana* and *That's So Raven*, all help to confirm the Disney consumer brand as kid-friendly and family-oriented. However, there is another Disney that rarely gets seen by most consumers—that is the corporate side of the company, the side that makes the big money deals, negotiates contracts and copyrights, and handles the inner workings of the business that make the consumer products come to life. That side of Disney has its own reputation among its market of vendors, producers, and talent as an extraordinarily tough negotiator and often difficult business partner. The corporate side of Disney is a brand unto itself, with a reputation for being extremely demanding, while the customer-facing properties work to bolster the family-friendly brand image.

Any one brand can have multiple sub-brands associated with it that are separate but whose reputations can impact the family brand. In the Disney example, nagging rumors of subliminal sexual messages hidden in the cartoon movie *Aladdin* threatened to tarnish Disney's squeaky clean brand image, as did racy photos taken in 2008 of Miley Cyrus—the 15-year-old star of *Hannah Montana*, a multi-billion dollar Disney property and successful brand in her own right.

In other instances, brands within a brand family do not always reflect the parent brand. Along with family-oriented sub-brands, Disney also owns Miramax Films, which produces R-rated feature films, as well as ESPN, which is dedicated to sports and sports-related news. It is hard to conceive how these sub-brands could injure the family-friendly reputation of the parent brand, because their audiences are very different and the sub-brands are not closely identified with Disney.

The Importance of Branding

Brand building is such an important element to success that most large companies hire people with the title of Brand Manager, as well as look to outside agencies for help building brands. Successful brand building involves paying constant attention to user enjoyment of a given product or service, setting sufficient budgets for marketing, and evolving the brand over time as markets and opinions change.

Companies invest in building and marketing their brands for a number of reasons, including:

- Increasing recognition
- Establishing trust
- Building brand loyalty

This last point, brand loyalty, is of particular importance, and worth looking into further. **Brand loyalty** is achieved when consumers stay faithful to a given brand and, whenever possible, take pains to continue their use of that brand. We will explore this concept later in this section.

Consumer behavior dictates how important brands are to driving increased corporate revenues. According to the Grocery Manufacturers of America, which studies consumer trends in grocery stores, half of all consumers consider the brand to be either the first or second most important element when deciding which product to buy (other important factors include nutritional information, cost, and nostalgia for products they remember using from childhood).[1] In addition, 13% first try a brand because it was recommended to them by someone they trust—further establishing the importance of brands in building a loyal following of customers willing to pass the word on to others.[2]

Brand Loyalty

Marketers do not expect consumers to spend time consciously contemplating their brands. However, they do know that strong branding helps forge emotional connections between their brands and the targeted consumer. Marketers hope the brand association will translate into brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is a consumer's commitment to a brand, and it occurs when a consumer will go out of his or her way to buy specific brands that they trust, even if they are harder to find or more expensive than other available options. After brand loyalty has been established, it can be difficult for competitors to sway that consumer from his or her preferred brand.

A good example of brand loyalty can be seen with some computer users, especially proponents of Macintosh computers. Although the Mac has significantly less market share than its Microsoft Windows counterpart, Mac has managed to build such brand loyalty among some members of its core market that dedication to these computers sometimes reaches a cult-like status. Focus groups run by competing computer manufacturers have shown that if a new Windows-based computer were introduced that ran twice as fast as the focus group's current computer and was priced competitively, Windows users would quickly switch to the faster one. Of the Mac users, almost none agreed to make the switch. When the Mac users were offered the faster Windows-based system for half the price of their Macs, they still refused to switch, a trend that continued regardless of how low the price for the PC dropped. Mac enthusiasts have such a strong emotional connection to the brand that convincing them to switch to a different brand can be an extraordinarily steep, uphill battle.

The Mac example is an extreme illustration of brand loyalty; however, the example does underscore how strong an emotional connection can be between a brand and its consumer. For a competing Brand X to win over a consumer who is enamored with Brand Y, it may take a combination of giveaways, enticing promotional offers, rave reviews of Brand X by trusted friends and family, and a prolonged marketing effort to get the consumer to even try the product. Even then, there is no guarantee that the consumer will make the switch and make it permanent.

Attachment to a brand is built through a number of factors, including overall benefit to the consumer, relative value versus price, accessibility, and emotional connection. Each of these variables, when changed, can positively or negatively affect how a consumer relates to a brand.

Brand loyalty is the jewel in the marketing crown; however, there are several levels of commitment that consumers can make to brands. In their relationship with brands, consumers can fall into one of the following categories:

- **Brand loyal**: Consumers who are committed to one brand, so much so that they will travel out of their way to get it. Very little will take them away from a brand that they trust, and these consumers are typically eager to tell other people about their favorite brands. In the Grocery Manufacturers of America study, 76% of all shoppers said that they would leave the store and shop elsewhere or live without the product until their next shopping trip if their favorite brands were not available, rather than buy a competing brand.[3]
- **Brand preferred**: These shoppers prefer certain brands over others and will go a bit—but not far—out of their way to get them. Slight price differentials or reduced accessibility are not enough to make them change brands, but significant changes in either variable may cause them to convert.
- **Brand aware**: These shoppers may like one brand over another—enough to recommend that brand to others—but they would not go out of their way for it. Slight differentials in price or accessibility compared to competing brands might sway their purchasing decisions.
- **Brand conscious**: These shoppers do not have a preference of one brand over another, and they would not go out of their way for any one brand. Price and accessibility are often the determining factors in deciding which products to buy. These shoppers still prefer to choose among brands that they know or about which they have formed an opinion (either through direct use or reputation). They stay away from brands that they don't know and avoid generic, unbranded products.
- **Brand indifferent:** Shoppers who base their decisions strictly on price and convenience. They are open to brands that they do not know and are also open to generic, unbranded products.

Any one shopper can fall into more than one—or even all—of the categories. A consumer who is brand loyal to BMW cars, for example, may not care one way or another about what brand of dish soap he or she buys. A consumer's reaction to certain brands is not always such a conscious decision—a shopper in a grocery store might look for Tropicana brand orange juice, for example, and not even bother looking at the price. To that shopper, nothing can substitute for the Tropicana brand. If the store is out of it, he or she might not buy any orange juice. That shopper is brand loyal to Tropicana, but he or she might not even realize it. Brand loyalty does not always involve the same fanaticism that we discussed earlier with Macintosh computers; few people wander the streets thinking longingly about their choice of orange juice.

INTERVIEW WITH...

Mike Hand: The Hershey Company

Mike Hand began his career with BMW North America in 1994, helping to build one of the industry's premier automotive and motorcycle brands. Since that time, he has gone on to lead integrated marketing teams at some of the world's most recognized brand building organizations including M&M Mars, General Motors, and the Miller Brewing Company, where he was named by industry publications as one of the top ten most influential people to watch in retail activation.

Most recently, Mike has taken over the role of Director of Consumer Promotions, Hispanic and Sports Marketing at The Hershey Company, developing initiatives for brands such as Reese's®, Hershey's Kisses®, Kit Kat®, and Twizzlers®. He currently leads a team that has partnered with major sports leagues, motion picture/entertainment properties, and top selling musical acts to connect with consumers. As a well-established professional with significant experience, Mike shared with me his thoughts on brand building and the importance of "the brand" in terms of building a market.

Jason: In your words, what is a "brand" and how does it contribute to growth?

Mike: The word brand is so hard to define; everybody has some unique way of serving it up and communicating what it is. I guess to me a brand is "a product with a unique identity." Anybody can make products, and some are certainly better than others, but it is the company/individual who creates an emotional connection and establishes an identity for that product that ultimately wins with the consumer. For example, I am an extremely passionate sports fan and love to look at the athletic shoe category for inspiration—on a personal and professional level. When I was in middle school, I was a dedicated Nike kid. At the time I had no idea what a special inner sole technology would do for me or how motion controlled sensors would stabilize my ankles; I simply loved the "Just Do It" campaign. The advertising and slogan spoke to me on a personal level. Reebok made good products—I guess. Converse made good products—I guess. But nobody could give me the emotional boost that Nike could give me. I trusted they made great shoes, not just because Bo Jackson wore them, but because everywhere I looked "athletes" were wearing them. I literally thought I could run faster, jump higher, whatever I needed when those shoes were on my feet. Looking back I know I was somewhat foolish, but as I begged my Mom to save more money for sneakers, it was clear that they had won me over. I even ran for Student Council President with "Just Do It" as my campaign slogan (Side note: I lost by seventeen votes—what's up with that?). I know that I wasn't the only kid in America watching Michael Jordan dunk or in later years watching Brandi Chastain tear off her uniform jersey to reveal a Nike sports bra for U.S. Women's Soccer—and watching Lance Armstrong overcome things a lot more intense than brand positioning issues.

The interesting thing about this example is that I am no longer a Nike guy. Past my college football playing days and likely done with my marathon running, as well—I've found that certain aspects of what I need can be found in other manufacturers' products. I still have a soft spot for the Nike brand and the attitude they bring to the table, but brands like Under Armour are fast becoming the "Nike of the next generation." I have a new-found respect for taking on a goliath head-on, and I think it will be interesting to see the results as UA gets deeper into footwear and cleats for athletes. This proves that brand contributes to growth, but also that you need to keep your brand fresh with consumers or you will not be able to sustain the growth. You can never forget that brands live in the heart of "individuals"; they don't live in a focus group and they certainly don't live in a conference room. The reasons brand contributes to growth is because simply seeing that trademark/logo can inspire consumers to purchase and repeat purchase. Brand becomes a symbol of a promise that something will deliver consistently and be something you can trust.

Jason: How have your personal experiences shaped your brand philosophy, and your ideas of how a brand contributes to value in an organization?

Mike: While working at Miller we did more head-to-head consumer taste tests than I can remember of Miller Lite versus Bud Light. Bud Light remains the top selling beer in America despite the majority of consumers sampling both products and liking the taste of the Miller product more. Talk with those consumers and they admit that it's crazy, but the Bud umbrella of products is who they identify with on a personal level. Even when confronted with "sub-standard" product they would not switch brands. That's brand value. Don't get me wrong—Miller Lite did chip into the market share lead, but the fact that people admit their favorite brand is not as good but still stick behind it is quite impressive.

Jason: What are some of the specific challenges marketers have to be aware of as they grow and evolve a brand?

Mike: The biggest thing marketers need to acknowledge is that the world is an ever-changing place. When you are evolving a brand you need to grow and adapt with it. Brands fail when they get complacent and aren't ready to adjust when the market conditions demands it. Brands also need to recognize and monitor their core user base. For example, if today's current buyer is a 20-year-old male, do you really expect to keep offering him the identical product experience as he grows up, or do you need to find another 20-year-old male to fill that void as he moves on? At the same time do you have an offering for that former 20-year-old male to grow into? And when looking at changes in the market, never take your eye off of what your key competitor is doing. However, be aware that it is very easy to become reactive instead of proactive in the marketplace when you are looking over your shoulder. Finally, you need to be very careful how you extend the brand into additional products. The biggest consumer companies in the world have become infatuated with creating 20 different flavor varieties and an additional 20 different package sizes of every leading product.

Jason: As a branding expert, what variables do you look at on a regular basis when managing a brand?

Mike: Most marketers tend to fall into one of two buckets, you tend to be either a "creative driven" guy who leans into instinct and reading people for marketplace dynamics or you are an "analytical driven" guy who lets the numbers tell the story. As the world goes "green," I guess you could call me a bit of a hybrid. I tend to go more on gut feeling, but I always like to have some sense of the numbers to make sure. I like to focus on brand health measures. I want to know where I rank in top-of-mind consideration, top-of-mind awareness. I want to monitor the demographics of my core users to see where my brand has the most room to grow. When you have limited budgets you can't afford to fragment and try to mean something to everybody. You need to drill down with a laser and win. Budget is an interesting thing. I feel too many people get hung up on having big budgets. Some folks believe you need lots of money to find success. I disagree. Smart decisions with clear business objectives will win over a bigger budget 99% of the time. One thing that I do prefer to isolate is return on investment where/when I can. If I know that I spent $X on a sponsorship and the associated costs, how much can I assume I sold as a direct result? I like results. Show me actual transactional data when you can and you've found a way to my heart. This is still the area with the most opportunity for growth—showing clear returns.

Jason: Has the Internet changed the way you think about building a brand?

Mike: Absolutely. The Internet has changed a ton of things about building a brand. It's changed the dynamic of how you interact and deliver your brand experience. So many consumers today are not just running into a store to buy a big ticket item and simply asking the salesperson a few questions to make that decision. They almost always go online first and start the homework process. The world of the Internet has shifted the buy/sell relationship power completely to the consumer. They can get reviews of the product online and hear what millions of people think and feel about it. Consumers are also much more aware of the wealth of options they have across product categories. People are no longer walking into car dealer "A" and saying, "My Dad drove a Cadillac so show me a Cadillac please." They are looking at 20 options across trucks, cars, hybrids, and others while listening to what their peers have to say. They can also visit any number of Web sites to gather expert opinions on areas that range from gas mileage to average cost of ownership. All of these things change the way your brand is perceived.

The Internet has also become a place where consumers can watch your ads again and again to relive a moment—whenever they want. Or better yet, they can create their own ads for you and post them on your Web site. The world of "user-generated content" making it all the way into Super Bowl ads [during a 2007 Doritos campaign] tells you something about the role the Internet continues to play in marketing programs. As you develop brand plans now, the Internet is not an outside extension that you reluctantly add to your plan. The Internet market gets a seat at the big kids' table, and it plays a critical role in planning and decision-making. It is not just banners and buttons, and it has to be more than just a Web page with basic information. The Web has become the home of very unique material that enables the customer to engage your brand in a more intimate way.

Every promotional effort that is run these days on my teams gets a strong interactive component. For example, say we're running a contest. The Web component can range from the simple—placement of full contest rules and entry pages—to the more complex—developing a promotional prize structure based on Web activity. It can even include custom Web items like screensavers, wallpapers, ring tones, and MySpace elements. As far as I'm concerned, we've only just scratched the surface on the role the Web will continue to play in brand building.

Jason: What brand efforts do you admire? Which do you think have failed?

Mike: It pains me to say it in my current job at Hershey, but I've always been a fan of M&M's work. For the past 15 years, they have stayed true to who the brand characters are. You can envision Red or Yellow walking in a room and being that guy you see from TV ads.

They would have that same wit and sarcasm; they would be somebody you would identify with. They deliver it in the various seasons. They deliver it at retail. They deliver it at the race track. They deliver it at their retail stores. This is hard to do in a big organization, but they continue to be successful. It makes you feel like a kid every time you see it.

I also admire the work of Mountain Dew. It wasn't long ago that colas ruled the world and flavored soda was an afterthought. It is hard to walk anywhere today and not see a green bottle, especially with the under-20 set. They have made that brand very cool but not to the point of being unapproachable to the mainstream guy. The recent addition of [race car driver] Dale Earnhardt Jr. to the marketing stable only adds more cache to the brand. Not cool for the sake of cool, but again a little bit of confidence and swagger that feels fun.

The brand I am most concerned about today is Starbucks. Years ago I read the book "Pour Your Heart into It" by Howard Schultz, the founder of Starbucks, and I fell in love with the brand. The more I knew, the more I liked it, and the funny thing is I don't drink coffee. I loved their idea of employee benefits and the magical allure of stopping by your local coffee any time of day. Before I knew it, a store was on every single corner, and nothing felt special. I was being sold CDs and full meals while simply trying to order a hot chocolate with whipped cream (I forget the fancy name). They stopped smiling and being nice. They started barking instructions to a barista and then going to the next person in line while asking me if I wanted to add a gift card to my order. What is the deal with that? I hope Mr. Schultz getting involved again will return them to the roots that made them famous. Underneath it all, the DNA is still there and the employee care is still around. They need to feel the love for coffee again before every other small coffee shop in America steals it back. More companies also need to do a better job of rewarding loyalty—consumers have too many choices today. You need to grab hold of your user and never give them an opportunity to leave.

Jason: You've always been good for a few parting thoughts on topics I didn't cover. What do you have for me?

Mike: I might have a few things I can add. One of the best ways to really understand the emotional impact a brand has is to make a list for yourself. List three to five brands that you think best describe who you are and ask some friends to do the same. It's amazing that people can provide detailed context on why they chose a certain brand. For example, my buddy is a BMW, Apple, New Balance guy—what does that say about him? He says he likes BMW for the sense of technology and precision in engineering he feels when he drives the car (note he does not own one, but has a girlfriend who does). He likes Apple because he thinks they simplify his life with products that are tech-advanced but easy to use. He is a runner and lives for New Balance—they just feel right and he knows they will last forever. Do you think these brands have formed an emotional connection and moved from being a simple "product" to having a unique identity? Damn right they have. The question to ask yourself as a marketer is how to you get your brand into that conversation. Your goal should be to create a passionate following for your brand that could sell out a concert tour strictly on the promise of showing up—because consumers know you won't deliver crap. It doesn't happen overnight, but that, my friend, is a solid brand foundation.

Elements of the Brand

Brands are complex entities that are made up of both tangible and intangible ingredients, all of which play an important role in speaking to the consumer, communicating a message, and building an audience. Brand managers are responsible for building trust, communicating a message, and forging an emotional connection with their market. All of that takes the careful fostering of promise, personality, unique qualities, and representative icons and elements. Figure 7-1 shows the major elements of a brand, and the part each plays in the development of a successful brand.

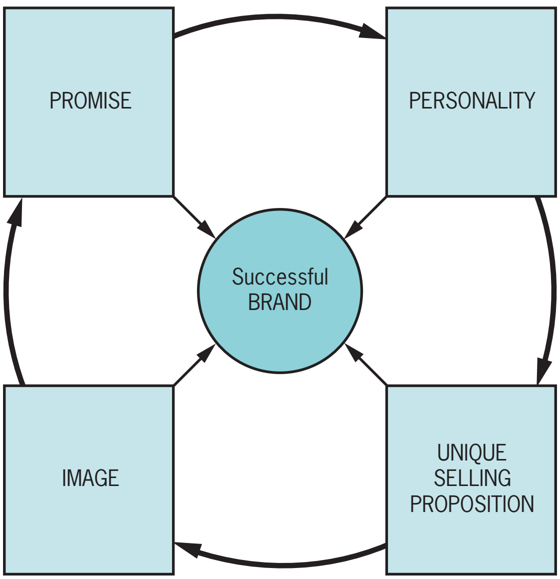


Figure 7-1 The elements that make up a brand.

The Brand Promise

If most marketers were forced to designate one element as the most important part of the brand, it would likely be the promise. Simply stated, the **brand promise** is the benefit the brand will deliver to consumers, and fulfilling that promise is one of the most important actions a company can take.

Suppose you visit a Web site that provides travel information. According to the site, they can give you more comprehensive information on remote destinations than any other travel site on the Web. So you search through the site to help you as you plan your upcoming vacation. After searching for a while, you settle on the island of St. Maarten in the Caribbean. The site details the exciting night life, a championship golf course, and award winning restaurants that make St. Maarten one of the most highly rated island destinations. You're sold! You book your flight, pack your bags and head out, anxious to play a round of golf and dance the night away.

There's only one problem—the Web site forgot to mention that a hurricane that hit the island over three years ago destroyed the golf course, which was never rebuilt. They also left out the fact that the night life consists of bars and clubs that are only open during specific months of the year, and they are all closed during the time that you're there. So much for "comprehensive information."

The site did not do what it promised. It promised you comprehensive information, but the information it actually provided was old and incomplete. The next time you are planning to take a trip, it's highly doubtful you will return to this site for information.

Fulfilling the brand promise is key to building trust for the brand. Initially, the consumer can only go by what the brand promises and assume that that promise will be fulfilled. If the promise is fulfilled, the brand is strengthened. A positive reputation has begun, and the expectation of positive returns during future use is increased, making it likely that the consumer will use that brand again. Break the promise, and the brand has been breached, raising doubt and diminishing trust. While trust can be difficult to build, losing it can be fairly easy. Regaining trust is often impossible, regardless of how much money is spent on advertising.

Do consumers really give the brand only one chance to fail? It depends on the brand in question; it often comes down to longevity and history. Nike makes sneakers; the sneakers are their product. Their brand reputation is for delivering high quality products that will enhance athletic performance with a stylish design. When a consumer purchases a pair of Nike's the expectation is that they will be comfortable and last a long time, even after aggressive use. For decades, Nike has fulfilled that brand promise and met consumer expectations. Now, suppose a consumer purchases a new pair of Nike's and they fall apart just two days later in the middle of a basketball game. That consumer will be annoyed, but their confidence in the Nike brand won't have taken too much of a hit. Chances are it was just one bad pair of sneakers off the assembly line. Nike has built enough trust equity to overcome a single bad experience. So, the consumer goes back and buys a new pair of Nike's. A few days later, his ankles hurt while playing tennis; the sneakers aren't proving the proper support. Will this consumer buy another pair of Nikes? Maybe, but his trust in the brand has been shaken, and he just may look at a pair of Reebok's the next time. Sometime in the future, when enough time has passed, the consumer will likely write-off these negative experiences and buy the Nike brand again, but there is no question that on some level, damage will have been done.

Unfortunately, most brands do not have the time, money, or exposure that Nike has to overcome isolated negative experiences. Brands must be careful to fulfill their promises each and every time in order to develop the trust necessary for gaining and retaining consumer loyalty.

While the brand promise often has to do with the quality of a product or service, that is not always the case. McDonald's does not try to claim that eating there is akin to dining in a five-star restaurant. Their promise is to provide you a quick meal that is inexpensive and tastes good. Women don't buy products from Juicy Couture because of their promised high quality. The promise (and promises are often subliminal, rather than expressly stated) is that if you own Juicy products, you will be part of an elite, fashionable crowd. The promise in this case is a promise of lifestyle rather than product-related factors, such as speed or quality.

The Brand Personality

When we think about personalities, we think about the people we come in contact with everyday and not so much about the brands we use. In reality, personalities in the brands we buy have an impact similar to the personalities of people that we meet.

Think about the people you meet on a daily basis. Some are super funny. Some are really good listeners. Some tend to be more serious. Still others are terrific conversationalists or have a depth of thought that makes them unique. Some people are obnoxious. Others are shy. Some are depressing, and some are generally upbeat. Chances are the people that you gravitate toward are people with whom you share similar personality traits.

It is likely that you will gravitate toward brands that have personalities similar to your own, as well. Like people, brands have their own personalities, and they use that personality to relate to a market that shares similar traits. Volkswagen, for example, comes off as fun and irreverent, while Lexus comes off as serious and elegant. Each brand has developed a personality meant to attract a specific audience.

Often times, consumers judge personality by first impression, usually based on aesthetic presentation. Go to any crowded place that attracts all different types of people, such as a mall. Find a bench, sit back, relax, and observe. Watch the people walking by. See the woman with the heavy make-up, pink hat, and loud pink pants? What do you think her personality is like? What about that guy with the comb-over, wearing the sweater vest, and walking timidly behind his wife, his head down and his hands deep in his pocket? How about the teenager riding the escalator, with the black Metallica t-shirt, baggy jeans, and half of his hair shaved off?

Right or wrong, people often make an immediate assumption about an individual's personality just by the way he or she looks, the colors that they wear, the style of clothes they choose, and other visual elements. Brands are no different. Brand personalities are often immediately judged by how they present themselves to the public through visual elements (discussed later in the chapter) and marketing efforts.

Brand personalities are vital to forging an emotional bond between brands and consumers. Customers who believe that a brand understands them and their lifestyle, and provides products and services with those understandings in mind, will feel a stronger bond to that brand. To create this emotional connection, a brand needs to carefully balance how it looks and acts so that everything is in synch. Think back to the guy with the comb-over and sweater vest. What did you assume about him from how he looked and acted? How would your image of him change if you later saw him in the music store, jamming away on an electric guitar? What if you saw the kid in the black Metallica t-shirt sipping a cappuccino while discussing the economic ramifications of further European Union expansion?

Chances are your assumptions about their personalities have changed a bit. You may not know what to think, because their image and actions contrast with each other. When it comes to judging people, this type of contrast may be little more than a mild curiosity. However, when it comes to brand, a disconnect between aesthetics and action can be the difference between brand loyalty and brand indifference.

The Unique Selling Proposition

Consumers make purchases based on need, desire, or both. Brands can make all sorts of promises and exude tons of personality; however, each brand still needs to offer a **unique selling proposition (USP)**—something that can differentiate the brand from their competitors—or brand loyalty will be impossible to achieve.

Assume that every bar of soap on a grocery store shelf looked exactly the same. Each was a plain white bar in a colorful box, with each box saying that this particular soap was guaranteed to get you clean. That is pretty much what soap is supposed to do, so it doesn't really tell you very much. Beyond that, the only thing that separates one product from another is the name and the logo. If the prices were exactly the same across all products, there wouldn't really be much of a choice to make. You could grab any bar of soap and feel relatively confident that it would do just as good of a job as any other bar.

Brands must look for ways to distinguish themselves from one another—to give consumers a reason to gravitate toward them. Maybe one brand adds the scent of exotic flowers to their soap, another develops a unique formula that gets users even cleaner, and still another shapes their soap in fancy designs. In doing so, they distinguish themselves from one another, giving consumers added reason to choose their product over competing products.

It is possible, of course, that competing brands will base their unique selling proposition on the same claim—a statement which might seem to be counter to the idea that the selling proposition is "unique." Coke and Pepsi each base their unique selling proposition on the taste of their product—similar claims, but each taste is unique in its own right. Jolt Cola differentiates itself by providing increased energy with "twice the sugar and twice the caffeine." Advertising agencies often differentiate themselves to potential clients by claiming to be the most creative. Again these are similar claims, but drastically different unique selling propositions; a quick portfolio review will show that each agency has its own creative approach, leaving it up to potential clients to decide which style is the best fit for their brand.

If there is no unique selling proposition, and a brand cannot find a way to distinguish itself from competitors, then that brand must determine whether there is really room for it in the market. With the growth and popularity of YouTube, numerous video sharing sites such as Heavy.com and others began appearing, anxious to cash in on Web users' sudden interest in online video. The unique selling proposition for most of these, however, appears negligible, and as of the writing of this book, none have found a YouTube.com level of success. According to Nick MacShane, founder of Progress Partners, a business consultancy that helps companies develop their business plans and attract investors, "Investors are starting taking a 'wait and see' attitude to business plans involving video-sharing, to judge how the most recent crop of sites performs. Everyone and his brother are submitting a business plan now to launch new video sharing sites, and there's not a lot to differentiate them from each other."[4]

Image

While intangible features such as the promise and personality live at the heart of the brand, consumers need a visual way to identify, distinguish, and recall these messages. Image elements such as logos, taglines, and colors and fonts lend tangible and visual elements to intangible concepts, giving consumers an easier means of mentally categorizing each brand.

Logos

Like the burn mark on the farmer's cow discussed earlier, the **logo** is a unique, visual means by which people can instantly recognize a company and understand its product, promise, and personality.

Typically, logos are designed to be relatively simple, made up of no more than a couple of colors and lacking fine detail. There are a number of reasons to maintain simplicity in a logo, including:

- Simpler logos allow for easier and quicker audience recognition.
- Less detail makes a logo easier to replicate at smaller sizes such as on business cards or embroidered on shirts.
- Fewer colors are less expensive to reproduce.

Figure 7-2 shows a number of highly recognizable logos. Along with striving for audience recognition, companies will often try to develop a logo that tells something about them, even if it's a subtle, more subconscious inclusion. The Nike "Swoosh," for example, gives the impression of speed and activity. The CBS "Eye" logo represents CBS looking at the world.

Perhaps one of the most interesting logo stories revolves around one of the more boring corporate logos. FedEx's logo is well known and instantly recognized for its big, bold, colorful letters (Figure 7-3). What makes it so interesting is the "hidden" icon in the logo—the subtle arrow that's formed when the "E" and the "x" are put together. According to Lindon Leader, who created the logo:

Figure 7-2 A sample of recognizable logos.

Figure 7-3 The FedEx logo at the top as it appears in general marketing. The logo at the bottom outlines the subliminal arrow that many people never notice.

"If you put a lower-case 'x' to the right of a capital 'E' (Ex) you can begin to see a hint of an arrow, though it is clumsy and extremely abstract. I thought that, if I could develop this concept of an "arrow" it could be promoted as a symbol for speed and precision, both FedEx communicative attributes.

An arrow, in and of itself, is one of the most mundane graphic devices in visual communications. Truly, there is nothing unique or particularly strategic (marketing-wise) in using an arrow as a brand identifier.

"The power of the hidden arrow is simply that it is a 'hidden bonus.' It is a positive-reverse optical kind of thing: either you see it or you don't. Importantly, not 'getting the punch line' by not seeing the arrow does not reduce the impact of the logo's essential communication. The power of the logo and the FedEx marketing supporting the logo is strong enough to convey clearly FedEx brand positioning. On the other hand, if you do see the arrow, or someone points it out to you, you won't forget it."[5]

Leader's words not only provide an insight into this particular logo, they provide a glimpse of how much thought and consideration can go into the development of a logo, its look and feel, and ultimately, its meaning.

Taglines

The **tagline** is a brief statement used by most brands to send a quick message of brand promise or core competency summation to the audience. Typically, the tagline is closely associated with the logo, and they appear together on everything from business cards and letterheads to advertising and marketing campaigns.

Developing the right tagline for a brand can be an arduous task, and because it is the one line of copy that audiences will most closely associate with a brand, its importance cannot be overstated. Effective taglines typically serve one of six primary functions:

- **They serve as a call to action**: With just a few words, a strong tagline can inspire its audience to take some sort of action, while also telling you something important about the brand. Consider Apple Computer's famous two word tagline, "Think Different." The line suggests to people that they should change their way of thinking and open their minds to less traditional ideas, but it also establishes Apple as a company whose ideas, technology, and products are more innovative than their competitors'.
- **They relay the benefits of the brand**: As discussed earlier in this chapter, for a brand to be successful, it must provide some benefit to their target market; a brand needs to improve or enhance their life in some way. Without this benefit, there's virtually no reason for consumers to make a purchase. These taglines, like Miller Light's old but famous "Great Taste . . . Less Filling," take a direct approach and tell their market quickly and simply what benefits their brand will provide to customers.

- **They reconfirm the promise**: The promise is one of the most important elements of a brand; it lets consumers know what they can expect from their involvement with a brand. Taglines, such as Geico's "15 Minutes Could Save You 15% or More" or UPS' "We Deliver For You," reinforce the promise in succinct and memorable fashion by wrapping it into the tagline.
- **They associate their product or service with an intangible need or idea**: These taglines tend to be more vague and less communicative, establishing the value or importance of a brand by linking it to an intangible concept. Outback Steakhouse's tagline, "No Rules. Just Right," positions the brand as serving quality meals in a fun environment through an intangible tagline.
- **They point out the risk of not using their brand**: In order to make their product or service seem more like a necessity, brands will often use their tagline to make audiences consider the negative results of not using their brand. Ireland's (yes, countries are brands, too) 2008 U.S. travel campaign used the tagline, "Can You Afford Not to Go?" to highlight the value packages they offer in the face of the weakening dollar.
- **They link the tagline to their logo**: Because the tagline and the logo are usually closely associated, many taglines are written in such a way that they form a close association with the logo. Allstate Insurance's tagline, "You're in Good Hands with Allstate," reinforces their logo of two open hands, while still stating a promise to take good care of their customers.

Logos tend to go through minor evolutions and sometimes dramatic changes over time. Taglines get changed a bit more frequently in order to keep pace with changing times and market environments and changes in core competencies. Taglines also need updating to maintain a fresh, young feeling about the brand.

Colors and Fonts

Color plays an enormous role in the decisions we make as consumers and in how we feel about everything from companies and products to colleges and sports teams. Different colors hold different power and meanings for people, and entire sciences have been dedicated to studying how colors can affect both individuals and audiences, en masse. In the U.S., for example, colors have some very definitive associations, such as:

- **Black**: Dignified, sophisticated, powerful
- **White**: Innocent, optimistic

- **Gray**: Steady, stable, disciplined
- **Blue**: Loyal, responsible, conservative (blue is the most popular color for brands, and is considered a relatively safe choice)
- **Red**: Exciting, passionate, aggressive
- **Green**: Natural, balanced, healthy
- **Yellow**: Happy, warm, alert
- **Purple**: Regal, wise, celebratory
- **Orange**: Vibrant, energetic, playful

The feelings that colors elicit in people, and the reactions they can cause (hospitals dress nurses in light blues and pinks because patients relax more around these soothing, calming colors), are taken seriously by companies establishing and marketing their brands.[6] The colors used will resonate and create a strong association with the brand. The orange and green of every Crayola crayon box and the red and white of Coca-Cola are standout examples of the way colors play a role in consumer brand recognition. A turquoise gift box with a white ribbon lets a person know immediately that the gift is from Tiffany & Co.

The Web can put a wrinkle in the association of colors for a brand, because of the possibility of enormous reach. The earlier list of colors and the feelings associated with them is at best very general; colors are often interpreted differently depending upon culture, class, age, gender, and other demographic categories. For example, while white symbolizes purity and innocence in Western cultures, some Eastern cultures associate white with death and funerals. Younger audiences are drawn to brighter colors, while muted and pastel colors are more likely to attract the attention of adults. Men tend to be drawn to cooler colors like blues and greens, while women often appreciate warmer colors like reds and oranges. Because the Web gives companies access to larger audiences, there is a higher likelihood that the colors they have chosen will turn off some visitors or be ineffective.

Similarly, fonts are important in establishing the brand. Like colors, fonts may be compromised due to the Web. Fonts can help promote the brand personality, as each one of the thousands of fonts available has its own unique way of evoking an emotion and can speak volumes about the brand simply in the way the letters are formed.

It is important to understand the five basic styles of fonts and what type of feeling or mood each portrays:

- **Serif**: Serif fonts are fonts with non-structural details or ornaments on the ends of the some letter strokes. These fonts have a pretty serious look to them, and can be used to denote strength, sophistication, and establishment.

- **Sans serif**: Sans serif fonts are fonts without the non-structural details. They look much more sleek and are considered more modern and youthful. While they are not as serious as serif fonts, they are not necessarily frivolous, either.

- **Script**: Script fonts are exactly what you would expect them to be. Some are simple script; others are very fancy and ornate. They can denote class and sophistication, but can be difficult to read if not used properly.
- **Handwriting**: Handwriting fonts look like handwriting.
- **Artistic**: Artistic fonts range from the understated to unreadable. There is a wide variety of artistic fonts on the market, and they can be valuable in establishing a particularly whimsical, playful, or edgy brand personality.

Figure 7-4 provides a sample of each of these fonts.

Figure 7-4 Samples of different font styles.

Brand developers should be aware, however, that on the Web, only fonts that reside on the Web viewer's computer can be seen in their browser. Exotic fonts that might not be widely available will not be seen. In these cases, the viewer's computer will substitute the desired font with a font already loaded into its system, which can cause unanticipated layout issues. One way that brands get around this problem is to provide their copy in graphic format, rather than HTML text. This approach is not recommended as it can make future editing difficult and diminish the chances of the copy being found through natural searches on most search engines. Typically, copy on sites is presented in either Times, Arial, or Verdana fonts, which come pre-installed on most computers. Brand developers, in deciding the font faces for their logos, taglines, and other marketing material, must develop these with the forethought that very specific font styles are likely to be used on their Web sites.

Consistency

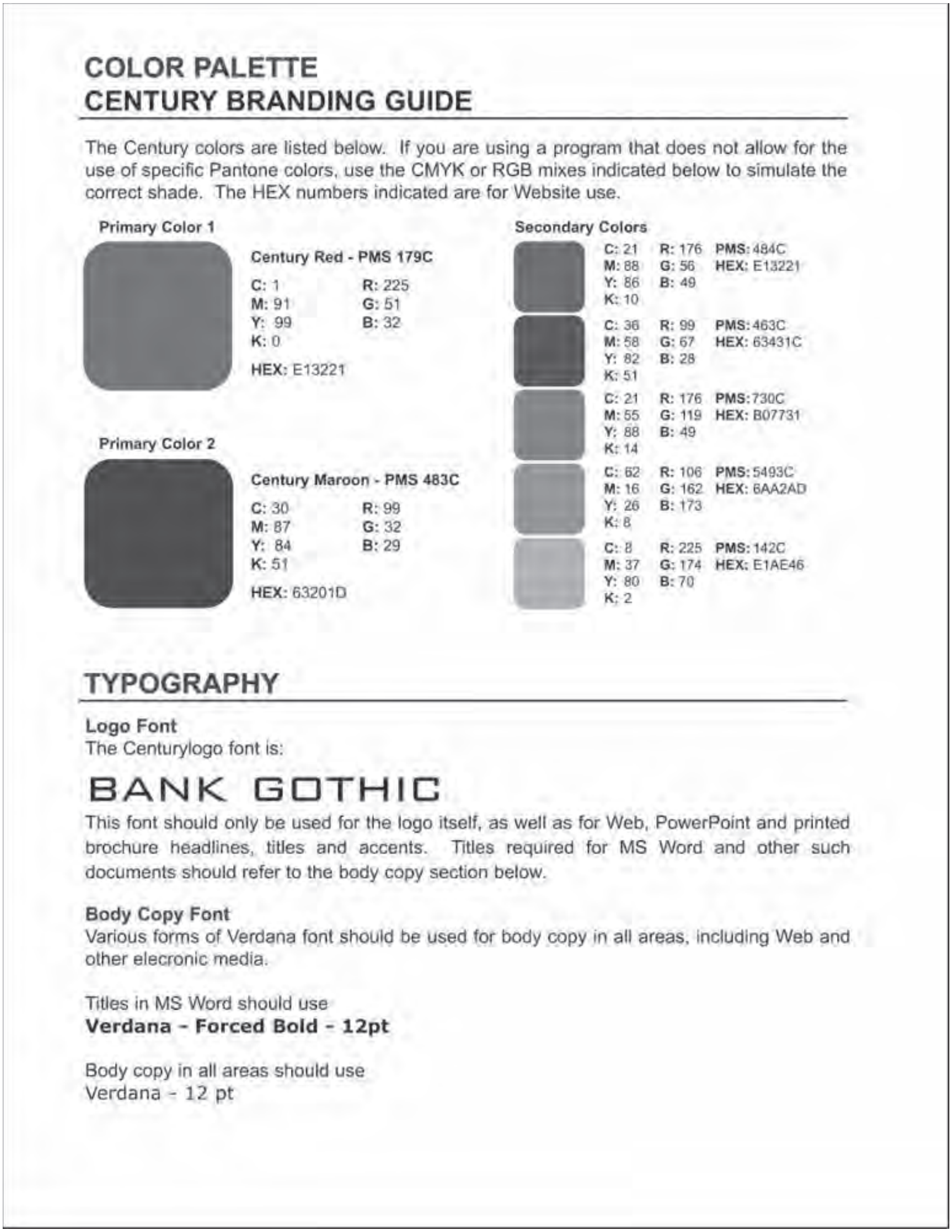
When it comes to marketing the brand, the most important rule is to remain consistent. Companies may spend a good part of their marketing budgets on **brand management** (efforts to promote a brand and ensure it is being used properly and effectively) to make sure that the integrity of the brand is upheld throughout all forms of public dissemination. The larger the company, the harder it is to maintain consistency because larger companies tend to have a global reach, use multiple marketing and promotional agencies, and be involved in a large number of promotional efforts at any one time.

Consider the following scenario. Someone who visits a B2B Web site immediately gets a sense of that company's brand from the layout, navigation, and copy of the site. If he or she is interested in what the company has to offer, the visitor might e-mail a request for more literature. When it arrives, the colors used in the materials are different from the colors used on the Web site. In addition, the Web site uses photographic imagery in dark backgrounds, while the printed pieces have cartoon-style illustrations against stark white backgrounds. The tagline "Build it Better. Build it With Us," which appears on the site, is nowhere to be found on the literature. Potential consumers might not notice the discrepancies, but from the company's perspective, an opportunity to drive the brand message home has been lost. If the difference is noticed, the company could appear disorganized or not well-established.

Without consistency between materials and messages, no brand message can be established, and the company becomes just another in a sea of competitors. Sure, there's a logo, but there's hardly a brand because the message hasn't been properly communicated.

Remaining consistent throughout each medium a company utilizes is vital to ensuring strong penetration of the brand into the minds of its target market. In every aspect of life, from training a dog to learning to fly an airplane, consistency and repetition affect our behavior and help us form associations. The same is true for brands. Messages have to be repeated often and sustained without wavering. This means that if your company's logo is a specific shade of blue, it should appear in that shade on everything you do to promote your company. If the message is "We give great service" in radio commercials, the basic message should remain the same in the TV commercials. If the design style used in the print campaign is light and airy, it should be light and airy on the Web site. With the abundance of information that is constantly available, repetition is a key factor in reinforcing the message. It's the reason why you know that when you see a restaurant with a big red roof, it's a Pizza Hut, and you know the taste will be the same whether you eat in one in Paramus, New Jersey or Pasadena, California. Consistency. Whether customers love you or hate you, at least they will know that you exist, and they will know what you stand for.

Maintaining consistency in a brand is not an activity best left to chance. Brands consist of both tangible and intangible elements, each of which can be heavily dissected into considerably smaller parts. Because there are so many media that may be used to communicate the brand, each of these elements needs to be carefully detailed and recorded so that over time the brand doesn't lose its focus or sense of organization. Companies that understand the value of the brand and the importance of maintaining consistency do so by developing a **brand guide**, sometimes called a **style guide**. The brand guide is a book that details all of the elements of a brand, and can vary in length from just one or two pages for a small company, to hundreds of pages for large, multinational brands. Information found within the guide includes brand colors and how those colors break down into CMYK, RGB, and HEX values, font styles, how not to use the logo and more. Figures 7-5 and 7-6 show samples of two pages that would be found in most brand guides. These guides become more important as more people are responsible for handling the brand, including printers, designers, and Web developers. The potential for errors increases as more people become involved. As a general rule, brand guides are meant to be a strict rule of law to people outside of a company's core marketing group, such as sales people and vendors. The guides are meant to act as a guideline for people inside the core marketing group, who have greater insights to the brand and may be able to know better where and when liberties can be taken.



COLOR PALETTE
CENTURY BRANDING GUIDE

The Century colors are listed below. If you are using a program that does not allow for the use of specific Pantone colors, use the CMYK or RGB mixes indicated below to simulate the correct shade. The HEX numbers indicated are for Website use.

Primary Color 1

Century Red - PMS 179C

C: 1	**R:** 225
M: 91	**G:** 51
Y: 99	**B:** 32
K: 0	

HEX: E13221

Primary Color 2

Century Maroon - PMS 483C

C: 30	**R:** 99
M: 87	**G:** 32
Y: 84	**B:** 29
K: 51	

HEX: 63201D

Secondary Colors

CMYK	RGB	PMS / HEX
C: 21 **M:** 88 **Y:** 86 **K:** 10	**R:** 176 **G:** 56 **B:** 49	**PMS:** 484C **HEX:** E13221
C: 36 **M:** 58 **Y:** 82 **K:** 51	**R:** 99 **G:** 67 **B:** 28	**PMS:** 463C **HEX:** 63431C
C: 21 **M:** 55 **Y:** 88 **K:** 14	**R:** 176 **G:** 119 **B:** 49	**PMS:** 730C **HEX:** B07731
C: 62 **M:** 16 **Y:** 26 **K:** 8	**R:** 106 **G:** 162 **B:** 173	**PMS:** 5493C **HEX:** 6AA2AD
C: 8 **M:** 37 **Y:** 80 **K:** 2	**R:** 225 **G:** 174 **B:** 70	**PMS:** 142C **HEX:** E1AE46

TYPOGRAPHY

Logo Font
The Centurylogo font is:

BANK GOTHIC

This font should only be used for the logo itself, as well as for Web, PowerPoint and printed brochure headlines, titles and accents. Titles required for MS Word and other such documents should refer to the body copy section below.

Body Copy Font
Various forms of Verdana font should be used for body copy in all areas, including Web and other elecronic media.

Titles in MS Word should use
Verdana - Forced Bold - 12pt

Body copy in all areas should use
Verdana - 12 pt

Figure 7-5 A page from a style guide that details the color breakdown and the font styles of this particular brand.

LOGO USAGE
CENTURY BRANDING GUIDE

Size

Two versions of the logo have been created for use at different sizes. The larger version should be used when it will be greater than 4." The smaller version should be used when space is restricted and the size is less than 4." The logo should never be less than one inch in width when produced.

1.00"

Formats

Please refer to the charts below for correct resolution and format usage. Logos should never be scaled up in size - this will compromise the integrity of the logo.

	Lo-Res	Hi-Res
Print		X
Electronic	X	

	Print	Web	MS Word	Excel & PPT
JPG		X	X	X
TIF	X			

Isolation Area

Keeping a minimum amount of clear space around the logo, separating it from headlines, text, imagery, or the outside edge of a document is key to preserving its presence and legibility.

The isolation area is equal to half the width of the symbol. This is a universal proportional measuring system that applies to all sizes.

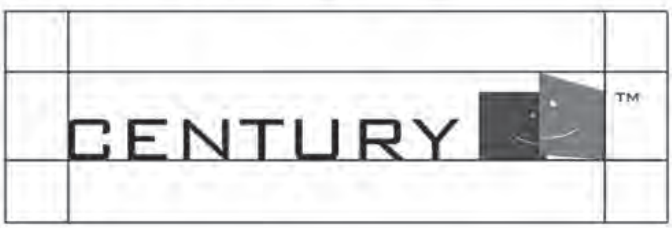


Figure 7-6 This page from the same style guide shows the sizes and formats of the logo, and how they should be used.

INTERVIEW WITH...

Tony Meola

Although it later took a serious hit, during the early to mid-2000s, the U.S. housing market was booming. Mortgage banks across the country were in fierce competition for borrowers, anxious to cash in on a housing craze that, at the time, seemed limitless. During those years, my agency, PFS Marketwyse, developed internal marketing campaigns for Washington Mutual to help motivate their sales force to reach quarterly sales goals.

Tony Meola was Washington Mutual's Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing during those years. Having worked closely with Tony on the development of these campaigns, I came to respect him as having a very unique understanding of branding and the importance of aligning internal operations with the external brand. I caught up with Tony, now the CEO of Saxon Mortgage, the mortgage arm of Morgan Stanley, and asked him to discuss his thoughts on branding with me.

Jason: Tony, you've had a good deal of experience doing internal marketing and branding within large organizations. Have you been able to see these efforts impact external sales and influence audiences?

Tony: Absolutely. I would say as an operator, productivity is your first indication that the brand is successful. Employees are more productive because they're working for an image and a reputation that becomes their own. When I was with Citibank, the slogan that we built our brand around was 'The Citi Never Sleeps.' It was more than a tagline—we really wove it into our operation through our providing of 24-hour coverage. Every time we thought about access from a customer, we thought about it in terms of 24 hours. Employees are much more productive when their environment and the brand are in alignment, because they produce to support the environment and the environment is conducive to productivity.

Jason: So, at Citibank, the tagline really summed up the brand and the corporate environment. You also had a pretty powerful brand and tagline when you were with Washington Mutual. Talk to me a little about that.

Tony: At Washington Mutual we branded the mortgage business around 'The Power of Yes.' When we thought about loans, we thought about how to make that loan from each constituent's point of view: borrowers, shareholders, and regulators. We thought about how to say 'yes' in all of those worlds, and we really did a phenomenal job of bringing that brand to life internally and externally. It was successful because it was more than just a tagline. With most mortgage lenders, the mortgage application is filled out and the lender tries to assess whether or not you give that borrower money by asking a lot of follow-up questions, and going back and forth. With 'The Power of Yes,' our only question was, 'what would this loan have to look like for it to be approved?' We brought that information back to the borrower and would say "yes, we'll give a loan, if you give us this documentation"—a much different concept than anything in the industry, and a much more efficient process for everyone involved. Washington Mutual was one of the best examples I've seen of how the brand really influences an organization and vice versa.

Jason: It sounds a lot less like a tagline than a corporate philosophy.

Tony: I think that the great company brands reflect their values. For a brand to be strong, a company can't just arbitrarily decide what the brand is. For the Washington Mutuals, the Citibanks, and companies like those, their brand is who they are, their value system.

Going back to 'The Power of Yes' line that we used at Washington Mutual, the brand was born from the fact that we had a very sales and market-share focused company. We knew that the only way to generate sales and profitability was to give quality loans to people faster than other companies. I believe the values that drive the organization and its competencies come first and out of that, comes the brand.

Jason: When my agency worked with Washington Mutual, our work reflected the brand personality. Washington Mutual's personality was different than Citibank's, which is different from Morgan Stanley, where you currently work. How does the personality of each brand affect the way you approach your job and marketing efforts and sales efforts?

Tony: I think it's huge. I really think the values of a company dictate their operating environment. With Washington Mutual, part of their value statement is to get things done and to have fun doing them—fun that comes from expertise and teamwork and helping people. They pride themselves in the fact that they create an environment where employees enjoy what they're doing. Washington Mutual's brand is a brand that kids itself about the industry it's in and its approach. It does it, though, with a certain swagger that says they can perform better than the competition. It takes a knock at the industry because it has a lot of self pride as an innovative company. And that personality permeates into external marketing efforts as well as the internal culture.

Jason: Talk to me a little bit about the promise of a brand, and its place in influencing audiences.

Tony: If you don't have a promise, you don't have a brand, and if you can't keep your promise, you can't maintain consumer trust. The worst thing that could happen to a company is when their brand doesn't connect with their operating mechanisms. What happens then is that you can't fulfill the brand promise, and that's key to a consumer. People look at McDonalds with reverence because they've delivered a consumer reliable experience consistently throughout the world. When you go into a McDonalds, just look at all of the equipment in the kitchen that's designed for speed and efficiency; that's who they are. Now look at any company that's gone downhill, and you can usually trace it back to a brand that made promises it can't deliver. 'Ford Tough' isn't reflective of their record, so they're not tough. Once you break a consumer promise, it's very difficult to get that trust back. At some point, Panasonic ceased to "slightly ahead of our time."

Jason: On that note then, how is a brand affected when the market environment changes? You're in the mortgage industry, which has gone from extraordinary highs to crippling lows. Earlier, we discussed how part of Washington Mutual's brand personality is to have fun. It's easy to have fun when you're riding the bubble up, but how do you have fun when the industry is in a state of disaster? Or does the brand change to reflect the market environment?

Tony: I think that's a great question and frankly one they are struggling with. When the external environment changes, organizations have to tap strengths that they use differently in those types of environments. With the state that the mortgage industry is in today, the market doesn't want fun. Even if it did, it would be hard for Washington Mutual to maintain that attitude when "fun" isn't something their internal environment is feeling right now. So they tap into other values and competencies and use the power of advertising to send a different message. They no longer communicate their brand as 'The Power of Yes,' but rather promote a message that they are there for their customers in troubled times and that knowledgeable representatives can be reached by phone to discuss delinquencies and other issues. And Washington Mutual employees do take pride in helping people, so as the internal environment reflects that feeling, so does the external brand.

Companies need to be in tune with the marketplace around them, stay malleable, and be able to change to reflect the needs and sensitivity of that marketplace. Look at the rise and fall of Krispy Krème [donut chain]. People would go into a Krispy Krème store because they'd see the donuts coming off the conveyor. It was a lively, fun place to get a donut, but then Krispy Krème got smacked by a health craze that kept people from eating their donuts. They missed the boat on the coffee craze, which helped build Dunkin' Donuts into a gigantic brand. Krispy Krème didn't see the market changes, and so they didn't evolve their brand in time.

The external factors of a market are supply and demand. So companies have to look at the demand side of the equation and ask themselves if what they are supplying the market is still in demand. If it's not, what do they have to supply that will fit in with their core competencies. If you alter the brand in such a way that it's outside of your core competencies, then we're back to the earlier problem of not fulfilling the promise.

Jason: So what you're saying is that the brand and operations really rely on each other.

Tony: Absolutely. The question is often posed: is the brand born of the operation or is the operation born in the brand? As far as I'm concerned, it doesn't matter—they just have to be aligned. If you want to change the brand, you have to change your operations.

Jason: As students graduate and enter the workforce, what do you think the one skill is that they would need in order to be successful?

Tony: I would say communication. I think it's a skill set that is completely underrated. I don't mean communication from a standpoint of giving a speech, but from developing and delivering a message sent. What the intricacies of specific communication are, what's visual, what's audio, how does it work, what's the best remedy. There's a real entertainment value in all the commercials and advertisements and Web sites that is growing constantly. People want to be entertained now as they view advertising, and they want information as well. People want creativity and innovation, but it all comes down to knowing how to communicate, because there are also certain people that just want facts. A good marketer today knows how to communicate because the audiences will change. The definition of innovation will change. The definition of creativity will change, and all of it will be valued more or less depending upon the way the future changes. I think that something that's always going to be there for a marketer is the ability to communicate to an audience.

The Web's Place in Brand Building

Later in this book we will analyze how marketers communicate their messages through a variety of vehicles including television, radio, print advertising, direct mail, and roadside billboards. Each has pros and cons, including price, reach, and an ability or inability to be targeted to a specific audience. Marketers set their strategies by mixing and matching the marketing vehicles that they expect will be the most effective in communicating their brand to the desired audience for the budget they have available.

Despite the differences between traditional methods, most share two key similarities:

- Promotional efforts are finite; that is, their messages are in some way limited. A 30-second TV commercial can tell a story for only 30 seconds, an 8.5×11-inch print ad can say only as much as can be printed on the page.
- Promotional efforts speak to consumers as a group, not as individuals.

Neither of these characteristics is true of the Web because the Web is not just another traditional marketing tool. The Web is a hybrid medium, in that it is both something to advertise *for* (marketers will often use advertising to drive people to a site) as well as something to advertise *on* (sites, especially B2B sites, are often used as advertising vehicles in and of themselves, with companies using their pages to promote their products and services, etc.).

To understand how the Web plays into the branding picture, we must examine the Web as an isolated entity, offering both increased channels and challenges to the brand-building effort.

The Web's Hybrid Status

Advertising is used to promote a product or service, or increase awareness of a brand. It's a single-effect communication requiring the audience to take action themselves. A reader of a print ad, for example, cannot make a purchase from that print ad. He or she must take some sort of action, such as making a phone call or visiting a store in order to make a purchase. The ad promotes the brand, and the company or the store sells the product.

The Web, however, falls between the promotion and sales processes. A Web site can act in exactly the same way as an ad in a magazine, by promoting the brand and pushing consumers toward a product. In this sense, both the print ad and the Web site exist for the purposes of driving consumers to make a purchase (take action)—they each work to advertise a brand.

The Web is different from other marketing tools in that visiting a Web site is often the very action that other marketing tools want consumers to take. Rather than making the case to consumers to visit a store and purchase a product, a print ad may instead make the case to consumers to visit the brand's Web site and gather more information. In this sense, the Web is not only a means of advertising; it is also the subject that is being advertised. One marketing tool is, in a way, marketing another marketing tool.

The Web offers infinite room for providing information, promoting the brand personality, and offering e-commerce capabilities and social media tools that allow the brand to interact with its market. This offers a far richer experience than a 30-second commercial or one page print ad could possibly provide.

Individual Message Delivery

Traditional mass marketing tools and branding efforts address the audience as a single entity, regardless of how many people that might include. This approach offers no flexibility in speaking to individual members of a target market. It sends messages to large demographics based largely on assumptions made from the shows being watched. The investment firm Charles Schwab can take a calculated risk that they are more likely to reach people interested in their services by running their ads during *The Suze Orman Show* on CNBC than they would by advertising on *The Real World* on MTV. While individual shows can provide a more narrow audience demographic, the message is still sent to the audience as a whole; the commercial has no way of reaching out to a particular member of the audience and saying, "Hi, John. We saw that you've been looking around for tennis equipment lately. You might be interested in this brand."

Because of social media tools, the Web has the ability to speak to each member of a given audience on an individual basis through personalization. Sites like Amazon.com have perfected the art of promotion based on intuitive, one-to-one marketing. Figures 7-7 and 7-8 shows two iterations of Amazon.com—the first screen shot is the site upon initial arrival, as though I had never been there before. The second screen shot shows how the site looks the second time I visited it—after doing some searching on the site. Even though these visits were only a few minutes apart, Amazon changed the products on its home page to reflect what it thinks I would be interested in based on my previous search and/or purchasing history.

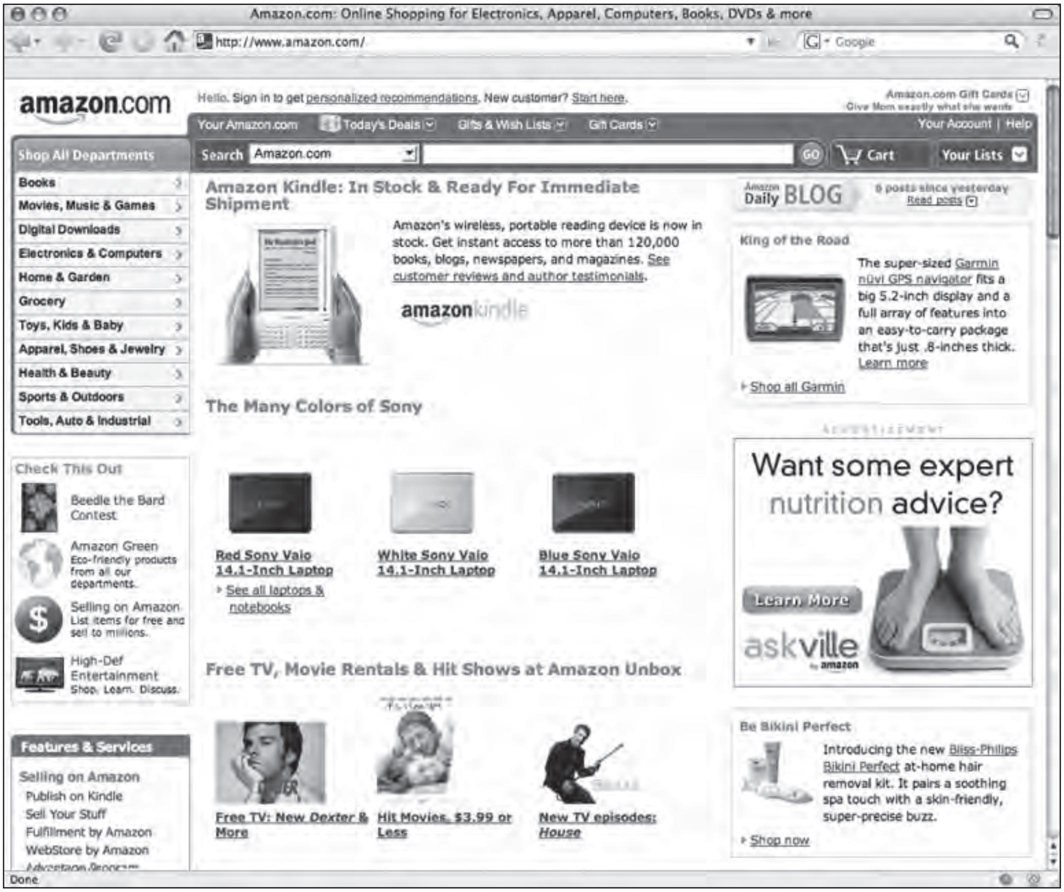


Figure 7-7 The Amazon home page as it looks when first visited, promoting a number of products including Sony laptops and movie rentals.

The ability to market to individuals based on previous buying behavior increases the potential for sales by making brands accessible to the people most likely to buy them. From a brand perspective, this creates significant opportunities for increased revenue and brand recognition from key markets.

Increased Markets

Traditional marketing can be expensive. One full-page print ad can cost anywhere between a few thousand dollars to a few hundred thousand dollars, depending on the publication. Television spots can be even more expensive. Thirty seconds of time can cost between a few hundred dollars to air in a single county on a relatively unpopular cable show, to nearly three million dollars to air during the Super Bowl. This can add up quickly, limiting reach and exposure.

Figure 7-8 The Amazon.com page during a second visit, a few minutes later. The home page now offers me products that other people have purchased after searching for that same item and other books Amazon recommends based on my search.

Technically, the Web's exposure is limitless and easily accessible to anyone, regardless of demographic or geographic boundaries. Of course, this doesn't mean that everyone *will* see it, just that everyone *can* see it. This opens up opportunities to marketers to increase the reach of their brands, by concentrating efforts on driving people to their sites through traditional marketing, word-of-mouth, and links shared between sites. By opening themselves up to new audiences, brands can generate increased exposure and sales.

Reinforcement of the Brand Message

Because the Web is so dynamic, it presents marketers with opportunities for reinforcing their brand image and promise, without the consumer even making a purchase. Pampers.com, shown in Figure 7-9, has developed its Web site specifically to enhance its promise as a brand that cares about kids. For decades, Pampers has been trusted by parents throughout the world, earning that trust by consistently marketing safe, reliable, and high-quality products specifically for babies—an area in which it can be particularly difficult to gain trust.

Figure 7-9 The Pampers Web site provides information for parents about how better to care for their children.

To reinforce parental trust in its products, Pampers uses its site less as a marketing tool and more as a parenting resource. The site presents helpful insights and information for parents regarding child development, growth, activities, expert advice, and more. Much of this information has little or nothing to do with the products it sells.

Why would Pampers bother? After all, the company is in business to sell a product, not provide advice. The reason is the difference between the product (what Pampers *sells*) and the brand (what Pampers *promises*). The promise is the effort taken to show that the company is not just manufacturing diapers; it does, in fact, care about its customers before caring about profit. This is what builds trust. Trust in turn builds loyalty, and loyalty eventually translates to increased sales.

When translating your brand onto the Web, marketers need to ask themselves (or better yet, ask their customers), "what type of information can we provide beyond standard product information that can improve your lives?" The Web offers brands increased opportunities to provide value-added services over and above their product offerings and engage their market in far more personal ways, increasing trust and reinforcing their brand.

Heightened Consumer Interaction

Social media tools have dramatically changed the way people use the Web and the way they interact with the brands that they use. Unlike any other medium, the Web provides marketers with more than just the ability to market on a one-to-one basis; it also provides the ability to create a community of customers. Through blogs, Wikis, social networking, and other tools, brands can interact with consumers more closely than ever before. The Web lets brands learn from customers, gathering opinions, running more effective marketing and promotional campaigns, and giving consumers the opportunity to interact with each other. These efforts help to build trust and strengthen the emotional connection between brand and consumer, providing increased opportunities for the brand to more closely connect itself to its market.

Chapter Summary

- There are many ways to define a brand; however, the most important definition in the mind of the marketer is that that the brand is not a particular product or service, but rather is broken down as *"The sum total of all user experiences with a particular product or service, building both reputation and future expectations of benefit."* This definition positions the brand as intangible and interactive with its audience. While there is a clear distinction between brand and product, there is less distinction between brand and company. Often a company can be a brand unto itself that is perceived differently than its individual products.

- The importance of branding is to aid consumers in recognizing a product or service, and to build up trust and positive expectations of future use. The ideal for any company is to parlay that trust into brand loyalty, which occurs when consumers become so close to a brand that they will go out of their way to seek it out, avoid competing products, and tell other people about the brand, encouraging further use and purchase.
- Brands are made up of numerous elements, both tangible and intangible. These elements include the brand promise, which tell consumers what the brand intends to provide and how it will benefit the consumer; the brand personality, which forges an emotional connection with consumers; and the unique selling proposition, which is something that can differentiate the brand from its competitors. Other more tangible features of a brand include the logo, tagline, colors, and fonts, all of which are detailed in the brand's style guide—a book that houses the important information related to the communication of the brand for consistency purposes.
- In building the brand, the Web provides both increased opportunities and challenges. The Web is a hybrid marketing vehicle, speaking to consumers on a one-to-one basis, increasing geographic and demographic markets, reinforcing the brand promise and heightening consumer/brand interaction.

Key Terms

brand guide/style guide—A book that details all of the elements of a brand. It can vary in length from just one or two pages for a small company to several hundred pages.

brand loyalty—When consumers stay faithful to a given brand and take pains to continue their use of that brand.

brand management—Efforts to promote a brand and ensure it's being used properly and effectively.

brand personality—The aspects of a brand's character that help forge an emotional connection with consumers.

brand promise—The benefit the brand will deliver to consumers.

logo—A unique, visual means by which people can instantly recognize a company and understand its product, promise, and personality.

tagline—A brief statement used by most brands to send a quick message of brand promise or core competency summation to the audience.

unique selling proposition—The aspect of a brand that differentiates it from its competitors.

Review Questions

1. Which of the following is not a primary ingredient in the development of a successful brand?
   a. The brand promise
   b. A global presence
   c. An aspect that makes the brand unique from other brands
   d. Brand recognition

2. The most crucial element to brand success is a:
   a. High marketing budget
   b. History of brand promise fulfillment
   c. Logo that has an interesting story behind it
   d. Memorable tagline

3. Which of the following would best describe the personality of a particular brand?
   a. The brand is fun, lively, and meant to be enjoyed by people who love life.
   b. The branded product is of high quality and will last a very long time without breaking.
   c. The branded product is the top seller in its market.
   d. The brand has an interesting history and has been established over a number of decades.

4. Which of the following is the least likely to qualify as a viable unique selling proposition for a chain that services automobiles?
   a. "We fix cars."
   b. "We always use the best parts."
   c. "We have experience with older vehicles."
   d. "We work on all imports."

5. Ideally, a brand has success as a result of:
   a. Severe price breaks and ongoing promotional rebates
   b. Brand loyalty due to an emotional connection made between the brand and the audience
   c. The repetition of the brand message through exhaustive marketing efforts
   d. The collapse of competing brands
6. A "brand" and a "product" are interchangeable:
   a. Always
   b. Sometimes
   c. Never
7. A tagline can best be described as:
   a. A quick summation of the brand promise or core competency
   b. The most effective means of promoting the brand personality
   c. A marketing tool that has no real relevance to building the brand
   d. The subject line for brand e-mails
8. Consistency of a brand image has to happen:
   a. During the initial rollout of the brand, but may become more loose over time
   b. During the period of translation from traditional brand to online brand
   c. Throughout the life of the brand
   d. Internally for the benefit of brand employees
9. A company that manufactures hair care products could enhance the emotional connection between consumers and the brand by:
   a. Providing hair care tips and style guides for various occasions
   b. Providing a page of printable coupons for its products
   c. Providing a list of stores where the product is sold
   d. Providing biographies of celebrities who use the products

10. Nike is an example of a:
    a. Brand
    b. Company
    c. Both a and b

11. Colors can have an effect on the way people perceive the brand. True or False?

12. USP stands for:
    a. Unique site page
    b. Unique selling proposition
    c. Understated performance
    d. Upside potential

13. Which font style is most likely to come across as modern?
    a. Serif
    b. San Serif
    c. Script
    d. Artistic

14. Which category of consumers is most likely to try another brand should prices adversely change?
    a. Brand loyal
    b. Brand preferred
    c. Brand aware
    d. Brand conscious

15. The most likely reason that a brand site would include helpful tips unrelated to direct sales of the product is:
    a. To increase site traffic to sell more ad space
    b. To eventually sell the information in newsletter subscriptions
    c. To build consumer trust in their brand
    d. To keep people on their site longer—the more time spent on their site, the less time spent on competitors' sites

16. According to Tony Meola, brands should reflect the company's:
    a. Personality
    b. Experience
    c. Values
    d. Management

17. The style guide is meant to:
    a. Provide the details of the brand elements
    b. Give the history of the brand
    c. Provide information about the people who build the brand
    d. Outlines future marketing strategy

18. Which of the following is not a necessary element of the brand?
    a. Personality
    b. Promise
    c. Unique selling proposition
    d. Venture capital

19. Which color can make a brand seem balanced and healthy?
    a. Green
    b. Blue
    c. Orange
    d. Yellow

20. A Web is a hybrid marketing vehicle because:
    a. It can play both music and video
    b. It is a tool used for marketing, while at the same time it is a destination that is often the subject of other marketing tools
    c. Television advertisers can show their commercials on their Web site as well as on TV
    d. One site can include links to many different sites

Projects

1. Taglines help you form an immediate association between a brand and an idea. Below are taglines from famous brands:

   - Mmmm, Mmmm, Good
   - Just Do It
   - The Quicker Picker Upper
   - Snap, Crackle, Pop
   - We Bring Good Things to Life
   - I'm Lovin' It
   - When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best.

   a. Name the brands that are associated with these taglines. What do the taglines say about the brand?

   b. From your own knowledge of each company (either through use of their products or exposure to their marketing), what do you perceive each brand's promise to be? What about its unique selling proposition? Are they different?

   c. Based on their style and marketing, how would you describe the brand personalities?

2. Northeast Ski has decided to open an e-commerce Web site. The company sells all major brands of skis and ski accessories and has a client base that keeps coming back. Northeast is known for its service and the product knowledge of its salespeople. The shop also has a wide product selection and a great return policy. A fireplace in the center of all Northeast stores is a draw for its customers, who enjoy the lodge-style atmosphere when they shop at this particular retailer.

   a. On a Web site, how can Northeast maintain the warm, homey atmosphere that has been such a draw for its stores?

   b. What steps can the company take to provide online service similar to the service that customers appreciate in the stores?

   c. Using techniques that rely less on direct sales than its current strategy, how else can Northeast further enhance the brand?

d. What steps can the company take to convert non-skiers into skiers with its Web site?

e. Assume that this company does not have a name, established brand, or tagline. Come up with a name, brand promise, and tagline that will quickly let customers know what makes this particular chain different from its competitors.

3. In Chapter 2 of this book, we listed a number of sites that failed when the Web bubble of the late-1990s burst. Choose one of these companies and research the reasons why it failed. In a one-page paper, describe the reasons why it failed, referencing problems and consumer disconnects specifically in terms of its branding efforts.

4. Find five name brands around your home that you have purchased in the last few months. For each, explain which category of brand loyalty you fall into, and why. For those brands you are not brand loyal to, explain what it would take for those brands to gain your loyalty.

5. Take the "Mike Hand Challenge." Define your personality in terms of three to five brands. Which ones would you choose to describe you? Get three friends to describe your personality in terms three to five brands. What do their choices tell you about each person?

Endnotes

1. Scott Openshaw, Brian Kennedy, "New Survey Shows National Brand Loyalty High Among American Consumers." Grocery Manufacturers of America, 12 Jun 2002.
2 Ibid.
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5 "The Man Behind the FedEx Logo." The Sneeze <www.thesneeze.com> 14 Nov 2004.
6 Jennifer Kyrnin, "Color Symbolism." About.com <www.about.com> Sep 2008.