

Brand Management

How to become a brand hero

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

Since our establishment in 1998, we have in our relations with our customers and marketing trends acquired substantial experience and know-how within the topic of Marketing- and Brand Management. This paper is based on long-time operations within the field of expertise and created to provide you with some basic insight and advices for your Brand Management.

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Raising the bar of Brand Management

Brand building is a well-known term for all marketers and recognized as an important mission for any company. Brand building has however, often been a side task included in the daily marketing activities, rather than a separate focus area recognised as Brand Management. Sounds familiar? Well, you are not alone. Keeping up with new technology, executing activities, producing material, keeping your organization up-to-date, analysing your performance and so on - It takes time and for most marketers, finding the time to engage in proper Brand Management seems unreachable.

Branding can according to Wikipedia be traced back to pre-historic times. And not surprisingly, the advancement from then until now is enormous. Although it might have started with the need to separate one product from another, we know what it involves today. Who knows what tomorrow brings?

As any other marketing task, brand building demands focus and dedication. And it is time for every company, large or small, to embrace Brand Management and recognize the importance of how proper Brand Management will benefit your brand and company today and in the future.

In a world where buying- and decision processes are completed before your customers arrive in your store or send you an inquiry (81% of shoppers conduct online research before buying²), Brand Management is more important than ever. And there is no reason assuming it will flatten out.

Establishing appropriate Brand Management in any company demands resources, both manpower and budgets and the brand strategy must be anchored with management. Furthermore, recognizing that internal Brand Management is equally important as the external processes.

This paper takes you through some important aspects of Brand Management, what to evaluate in your process and how to succeed with Brand Management in your company.



Research shows that inconsistent brands loose out on revenue and fall behind their competitors as the preferred brand^①.

The questions in Brand Management

Building a brand is a demanding task and marketers deal with many of the same circumstances that leads to both success and failure. The larger your brand is, the more employees or other stakeholders you must reach, the more extensive your communication and associated assets will be. Even so, the more complex target groups you have, the more challenging it is to manage activities and tasks. Consequently, not being able to manage your brand as intended may result in compromising your brand and brand strategy.

The list of questions are many. Dealing with them in the right manner, will most likely save you time and resources. And leave you in control of your brand.

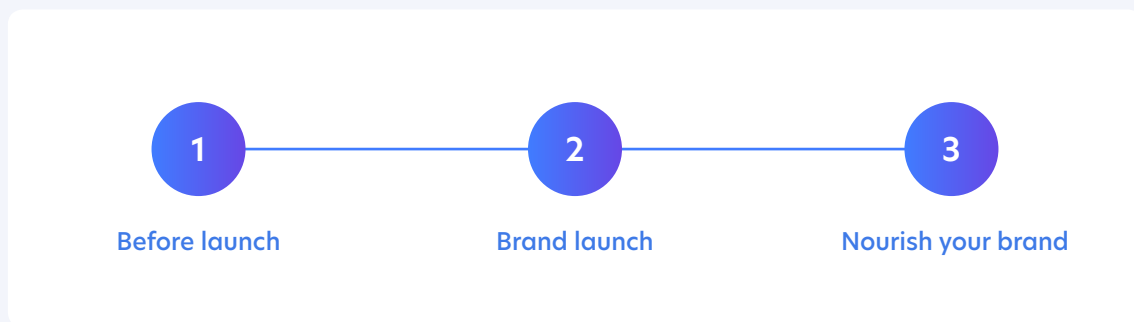


[Illustration] Brand Management challenges.

What is Brand Management?

Regardless of the scale and depth in how your company and marketing department manage your brand, all tasks are related to Brand Management. How this is dealt with, is individual.

Once brand identity and market perception are shaped, and the brand package is created, Brand Management involves the processes of maintaining, improving and upholding a brand to affect positive results. From an overall perspective, you can distinguish Brand Management between prior to brand launch, the actual launch before maintaining your brand and drive sales.



[Illustration] The stages of Brand Management.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BRAND MANAGEMENT

The main goal for marketers is to ensure brand recognition and create positive associations that boost increased sales and usage of your services or products. Implementing the right structure and proper strategies will secure your processes and drive your Brand Management towards your end-goals more efficient and precise.

The stages of Brand Management

Brand Management prior to the brand launch

First off, you need to do thorough analysis to establish the footprints of your future brand. Like building a house, you need to start with solid groundwork before further actions can be implemented.

Know your market | Who are your customers and your competitors? What is already present and what is triggering your potential prospects? Compare yourself to your competition, be familiar with your challenges and know where you can differentiate your brand and your offerings.

Understand your customers | What do your potential customers need? Not knowing makes it impossible to know what to offer and how to position your brand. Once you know, you can proceed to shaping your brand identity in the form of a person, an organisation, a product or a symbol. Followed by pointing out your brand position.

Package your brand | When you know to whom, your brand identity and position, your brand is ready for a visual identity.

At this point, it is usually necessary to include external stakeholders; photographers, designers, copywriters and more in the Brand Management processes. By this means, the complexity of Brand Management increases.

In the Brand Management process it is important that the marketing department and company management settle and agree upon the final brand strategy. A strategy that is understood, approved and anchored in management before brand execution ensures an uncomplicated brand launch. Your marketing department needs to have the authorisation to execute Brand Management on behalf of the company.

Launch your brand

A brand launch is the birth of your brand, and you are about to see the results of your Brand Management decisions in the initial phase. The quality of your early analysis and your chosen brand strategy is about to provide you feedback that allows you to measure your success. Did your brand make a powerful first impression?

Plan your launch | Make sure you have all details in front of you and organize thoroughly. Establish timelines and goals.

Finalize your brand assets | Together with your designers and based on the decided packaging, outline what brand assets are necessary. Include everything and avoid last minute surprises. Formats, sizes, colours, fonts, local needs, alternatives and more. Do not rush this, your brand assets are the face of your brand and requires consistency.

Align your colleagues and necessary stakeholders | Do not forget to include your internal and external stakeholders in your launch timeline. It is an absolute necessity that everyone knows your brand inside out and are considered an important factor of your brand launch at an early stage.

Ensure availability | Make sure your brand and its assets are available and functional. Eliminate local creatives or old assets in circulation. Establish brand consistency from day one.

Stick to your plan | With your brand strategy anchored with management, you prevent last minute changes, interference or other hold-ups. Instead you have room for after analysis and conclusions for future strategies.



Preserve, protect and drive your brand

Your brand is introduced, and management is satisfied. Nonetheless, the changing markets and the speed of how fast marketing trends, global outlooks, targets, markets and more are progressing, forces you to keep track and adapt accordingly.

Your brand is a dynamic object and needs nurturing and care. It needs to evolve and stay up-to-date with market trends and customer needs - both internally and externally.

Align your brand with all stakeholders | Make sure everyone always knows everything about your brand and associated assets. Are your brand assets available and valid? Make sure your brand is never compromised in any way.

Establish proper communication practises | Are your messages read? With proper communication flows you can reach your audience, internally and externally, with one tone-of-voice and precision. Knowing that your messages are read by whom and when, allows you to enhance and adjust when needed.

Engage with other departments | Include your colleagues and necessary stakeholders in your Brand Management, collaborate to make sure everyone follows the same strategy and understands what is next. Work together to create the best brand and achieve your goals.

Analyse your performance | Control and review your performance on a regularly basis. Not knowing how you perform affects your brand strategy and your goals. It is necessary to know where you are succeeding and where you need to adjust.

Well established Brand Management push positive effects throughout your organization. When you have reliable routines and workflows, the likelihood that your brand is used as intended is higher than if you do not have reliable Brand Management processes.

BRAND CONSISTENCY IS KEY TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

Without a recognized brand with positive and desired associations, it is difficult to be a preferred choice. Thus, profitability in the long run becomes challenging.

Timing is everything

Spend your time on value added activities

Allocating enough time to perform Brand Management as required, always staying aligned with market- and technology changes, being on top of your brand assets, responding to individual requests etc. is time consuming. Sounds familiar? Many marketers will recognize the fact that it is easy to fall behind.



[Illustration] Allocate your time.



When response time for customized marketing material exceeds one week, 60 % of marketers reports they experience brand inconsistency⁽¹⁾.

How to succeed with Brand Management

A brand is the identity of your products and services, it is what makes your products and services unique. A successful brand engages consumers and inspire loyalty that drives sales and revenue. A brand that deliver as promised is more likely to convey loyal customer over time. Equally important, you need the ability to attract new customers. Without increasing your customer portfolio over time, your revenue will ease out.

A profitable brand today is not necessarily a profitable brand tomorrow. Keeping your brand position, staying ahead of your competitors and being the preferred brand amongst your consumers takes effort and determination.

There are many aspects and factors that influence how well you execute Brand Management and define your success.

Reduce the risk of brand dilution

- a. Your brand needs ownership – Brand Management requires dedication and determination. A dedicated person must have the authority to act as brand police, drive the entire processes from a-z and make sure Brand Management is always aligned with the brand strategy. Your brand should be nourished every day!
- b. Identify your brand challenges, where do you fail today?
- c. Identify your working infrastructure, what is the ideal workflow for you and your organization?
- d. You need to ensure your brand strategy and assets are known and available. If no one can locate your material or are familiar with how to use it, you are sure to fail. Your stakeholders will find other ways to retrieve brand assets.
- e. Be updated – when you deliver your brand with excellence, you'll become the brand hero. Your organization and stakeholders will trust you and use your brand as you intended, and brand consistency is attained.
- f. When your brand expands across borders, make sure you educate local brand ambassadors and establish a brand pool with dedicated brand ambassadors that are aligned.

Automate your Brand Management

Dealing with requests, driving your brand strategy while looking forward is difficult without a proper system to organize your Brand Management. Fortunately, there are tools created to facilitate and automate your processes - releasing your valuable time to perform value added Brand Management activities.

Marketing Resource Management (MRM) occurred in early 2000's and has gradually been adapted by companies worldwide. Over time, providers have emerged and today there is a vast variety of vendors to choose from. The terminology MRM has also changed over time, for many, Brand Management {solution} or Marketing Management {solution} is equal to MRM.

{software; system; platform}

The tools and functionality provided by the various suppliers are variable. To find the most suitable solution for your brand, you need to start by mapping your existing Brand Management and what tasks you foresee in the future and how you imagine resolving these tasks.

Capabilities with automation

Automating Brand Management is a life saver for marketers, it empowers marketers to have central control with local execution. It ensures strategy structure and creates dynamic and seamless workflows while always staying on top of your brand.

Some key highlights

- a. Make assets and material available for adjustments by pre-setting available filetypes, formats, content changes and make it both accessible and downloadable to e.g. high-resolution files or send directly to print or publishing.
- b. One place for all ensures you are always on top of your assets; always available - always updated.
- c. Automatic Brand Management provides the control you need to avoid quick fixes and time consuming local tasks. Your organization will process themselves and you can rest assure your brand is always aligned with brand guidelines



Brand Center



Template Technology



Campaign Manager



Media Bank (DAM)



Marketing Shop



Web-to-Print



Web Ads



E-mail Marketing



Mobile Marketing



Social Media Integrations



Google Ads



Invitation & Event



Survey & Questionnaires



Budget & Spend Management



Integrations



Statistics & Reporting

[Illustration] Marketing Toolbox

Benefits of a Brand Management solution

Sometimes marketers identify the need for a proper Brand Management solution before lead management. Investing in a solution needs careful consideration. Analysis⁽³⁾ conducted shows that even though it increases marketing costs in the short-run, the long-term benefits are indisputable.

25% shorter time-to-market

30% lower costs of production

27% less reworking

13% lower agency expenses

71% reduced project management time consumption

27% faster project approvals

Checklist

1. Find an experienced provider - with experience you can benefit from other solutions created and your provider can advise you to achieve the most suitable solution for you.
2. Find a provider that has the resources to evolve aligned with technology development - makes sure that what you choose today also functions tomorrow and is aligned with technology trends.
3. Address your future needs - even if you start small, your future needs might change, choosing a vendor that has more than you need, is something to consider. Often the needs in a Brand Management solution change. Settle both short-term and long-term goals before you start. Create a roadmap and vision your brand management in the long run.

