



Branding in 7 Steps

Brand marketers often ask, “How do we go to market?” or “Where do we begin?” As with everything in life, there’s a process for building and marketing a brand, whether it’s a giant, international brand or a local, hometown brand.

If you understand the basic process, you’re more likely to have a more successful outcome. Here is the basic process, outlined in seven steps.

Step 1: Properly assess the marketplace potential for your idea.

Assuming you’ve developed a business plan for your new venture, you’ve probably examined this thoroughly. Otherwise, it’s difficult to get funding in the first place. But as you’re developing a marketing plan, you’ll need to re-evaluate the potential for your brand through the lens of a marketer. Look carefully at your current and potential competition.

Step 2: Identify your best position in the marketplace.

You may think you can succeed in one place, but you may do far better in another. It becomes the serendipitous match up of the “gap” which may exist in the marketplace and your strengths. Research can play an important role by providing hard evidence that will indicate directionally where to take your brand.

Step 3: Articulate your differentiation.

What separates brands from commodities are the tangible and intangible values that brands bring to their consumers that commodities don’t have and can’t. Brands succeed against other brands in their ability to express their value as differences (ex. consumer advantages) in a compelling, believable manner. We call this the “Why” of the brand.

Step 4: Brand identify your product or service.

The problem that many brand marketers have is that they want to jump to this step as the first step. It’s perfectly fine to have an idea in mind early on of what the ultimate brand identity will be – in fact it may be a simple extension of an existing brand. And, you may want to make these ideas part of your research (Step 2).

Step 5: Create a strategy to take your brand to market.

There is no “one size fits all” strategy because every situation is different. However, brand marketing does follow an “awareness – consideration – trial – loyalty – advocacy” pathway called an inverted marketing pyramid or “sales funnel” that you’ll need to consider in your planning.

Step 6: Develop and implement a campaign to carry out the strategy.

This is where you need to bring in your best creative minds. But not just art directors and copywriters. How about creative media strategists? Or creative social media teams? Or creative public relations people? We all agree that sound strategy is absolutely essential. But great creative makes all the difference.

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Step 7: Measure and evaluate your brand campaign performance.

Every marketing plan should determine, up front, what success looks like. Goals should have consensus, be reasonable and, of course, measurable. Depending on the tactic, measurement and analysis may be an ongoing part throughout the campaign. But whether it occurs hourly or at the end of a 13-week flight, accountability keeps everyone sharper, smarter and more profitable.

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