

Research from IDG shows that for more complex technology products, 63% of purchasers state brand as the most important factor influencing their decision followed by price and then channel. As one example, in the PC market, the channel can often be the factor that swings decisions one way or another. Another example, in the corporate world, many an order has been lost at the point of purchase due to the inability of the supplier to service the needs of the customer.

The more often your prospective customers recognize and trust your organization, its products and services, the more likely they are to buy and continue to buy from you.

People do not make rational purchasing decisions. They first attach to a brand emotionally, then logically.

## Branding Introduction

**The definition of brand:** A brand is an identifiable entity that makes specific promises of value. In its simplest form, a brand is nothing more and nothing less than the promises of value you or your product make. These promises can be implied or explicitly stated.

**Brand image:** Consumers' perceptions when they think of your brand.

**Brand awareness:** When people recognize your brand as yours. It is recognition and identification of your brand.

Brand awareness is vitally important for all brands, but high brand awareness without an understanding of what sets you apart from the competition does you virtually no good. Many marketers experience confusion on this point.

**Brand recognition:** The ability of consumers to confirm that they have previously been exposed to your brand.

**Brand recall:** Reflects the ability of consumers to name your brand when given the product category, category need, or some other similar sign.

**Aided awareness:** When a person expresses familiarity with your brand after they hear or see it within a list of other brands.

**Top-of-mind awareness:** When you ask a person to name brands within a product category and your brand turns up first on the list.

**Strategic awareness:** When a person recognizes your brand, and also understands the distinctive qualities that make it better than the competition.

When you have differentiated your brand in the mind of your audience. This distinction as to why your brand is

unique in your category is also referred to as your Unique Selling Proposition or USP. Your USP tells your target market what differentiates you from all of your competitors.

**Points of parity:** Associations are often shared by competing brands. Consumers must view your product or service as measuring up on "minimum product expectation." Your brand must measure up well against the competition on expected criteria.

**Brand preference:** When consumers prefer your brand over competing brands. Consumers not only know your brand, but understand what is unique about your brand. They connect emotionally with your brand, and for some reason or a combination thereof, decide that your brand is superior to others.

**Brand Equity:** The total sum of all the different values people attach to the brand, or the whole value of the brand to its owner as a corporate asset.

Brand equity can include the monetary value or the amount of additional income expected from a branded product over and above what might be expected from an identical, but unbranded product. The indefinable value associated with the product that cannot be accounted for by price or features; and the perceived quality attributed to the product independent of its physical features.

A brand is nearly worthless unless it enjoys some equity in the marketplace. Without brand equity, you simply have a commodity product.

**Branding. Yes you need it!**  
**Branding gives a product or company its personality.**

Branding serves as a protection against a situation in which a company's products and services become perceived by buyers as being interchangeable with those of other companies. It is a great defense against the buying decision being made by the consideration of price alone. Branding is also a way to leverage success, expand market share, and fend off competition.

The value of branding—intelligent, relevant, branding that effectively differentiates you from your competition—has never been higher.

## The History of Branding

In order to keep one's cattle separate from another's, ranchers branded, or marked, their cattle so they could identify their herd as their own.

This concept was also practiced by craftsmen who wanted to mark their piece with an identifying symbol on their work without detracting from the piece. These craftsmen used their initials, a symbol, or another unique mark to identify their work. These were usually placed on the product in a low visibility place.

Not long afterwards, consumers began to identify the high quality products by particular symbols and marks. Consumers would actually seek out certain marks because they had associated those marks in their minds with better products. If a producer differentiated his product as superior in the mind of the consumer, then that producer's mark or brand came to represent a clear advantage in the marketplace.

The modern day branding concept grew out of the consumer packaged goods industry. More than just a way to identify a product or company, branding creates emotional attachments to products and companies. Branding efforts today create a sense of higher quality and value that surrounds the brand name, mark, or symbol.

## The Benefits of Branding

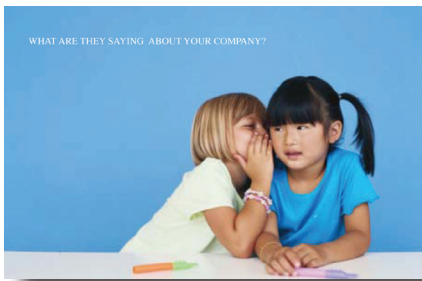
- Influences buying decisions and shapes perceptions held by your customers and prospects
- Creates trust and an emotional attachment to your product or company
- Creates a higher perceived value and higher price point
- Build customer loyalty through emotional involvement
- Makes purchasing decisions easier for your prospects
- Attracts talent and retains quality employees
- Will protect your customers from the competition and protect your market share while building mind share
- Builds name recognition for our company or product
- A strong brand can make actual product features virtually insignificant. A solid branding strategy communicates a strong, consistent message about the value of your company. A strong brand helps you sell value and intangibles that surround your products
- A strong brand signals that you are serious about building customer loyalty
- A strong brand signals that you will be around for a long period of time
- A brand will help you state your company's values

A brand also stands for the immediate image, emotions, or perceptions people experience when they think of a company or product. A brand represents all the tangible and intangible qualities and aspects of a product or service. It represents a collection of feelings and perceptions about quality, image, lifestyle, and status. Those intangible qualities often make the term brand hard to define. Intangible qualities, perceptions, and feelings are often hard to grasp and clearly describe.

Branding is not just awareness; it is all about creating singular distinction, strategic awareness, and differentiation in the mind of your audience. Over time, you will begin building equity for your brand.

### Positive Impact on Customer Loyalty

Brands build a level of trust and confidence over time. The purchaser will return time and again when trust has been established. The fact that it is more expensive to create a new customer than to keep an existing one is a major issue. This is why a brand's strong role in sustaining customer loyalty and customer revenues is extremely important.



### The Effects on Financial Performance

Image and reputation build strong brands and drive sales. Brand equity - all those elements which constitute a brand's value - is of particular interest to the financial specialists in a company who are now including it in their company's balance sheets. The perceived quality of a brand is enabling companies to sustain price premiums, impact sales and a company's overall financial performance. It is a proven fact that people will pay more for a quality brand.

### What are People Saying About You?

Today with the multitude of blogs, chat rooms, social networking, and customer activity in advertising your reputation is a larger concern than before. Using effective branding gives you a greater amount of control.



### How to Define Your Brand

- Communicate a highly ranked customer need or want
- Be easily understood and remembered
- Not be owned already by a competitor in the industry
- Communicate relevant uniqueness
- Be credible and appealing

### Integrating Brand Strategy and Marketing Communications

Try this exercise. Gather together all your marketing communications materials, as well as corporate stationery and business documentation and lay them out on a wall or table. Does your logo or brand name stand out? Is your company's name consistently applied? Is your use of color, images, or graphics consistent? Or does each piece look as though it comes from a different company? It would be no surprise to learn that a lack of consistency applies.



Unless a set group of individuals is fully responsible for defining and supporting a company's individual or set of brands, it will appear confused and weak. The person to lead this team should be the Managing Director or CEO of the company itself since a company's culture and identity forms the basis upon which a brand is built.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS LAST FOREVER.



## Development and Management of the Use of Corporate Identity

Once a corporate identity has been defined, it is the job of the designer to express this as an image. An image that can be consistently applied across all forms of communications media, in color or black & white, in a variety of sizes or dimensions and possibly in multiple languages. Design is highly subjective and there are many examples of company logos, corporate colors, and product packaging that look great, but due to a lack of consistent application are overall confused and weak. The overall objective for incorporating brand into an integrated marketing communications strategy is to reach every market segment with a single unified message.

If a brand is successful in making a connection with people and communicating its distinct advantage, people will want to tell others about it and word-of-mouth advertising will develop naturally—not to mention writers in the press will want to write about the brand. Advertising can help maintain and shape the brand when that type of differentiation is recognized in the market's mind.

Developing and using a Corporate Identity & Style Guide as a means to communicate your company's brand identity for use by employees, distributors, and retailers is one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways of ensuring your company's brand is effectively managed and controlled. Special attention must be given to the use of trademarks and copyrights, particularly for those companies who license their brands for use by others. Defining fonts, styles and page layouts for promotional materials as well as standard business documentation, and the style or tone of voice for copy must be considered. In addition, how and when to use logos in color or black & white, the use of taglines and proximity of your company's brand to those of your competitors should be carefully reviewed.

## About Quikey Manufacturing

Derived the name from one of its earlier inventions, a key holder, Quikey Manufacturing, Inc. is a third generation family business located in Akron, Ohio established in 1946. After working with B.F. Goodrich to develop the original PVC formulations and the unique printing technique which provides a permanent imprint in the material, Ben Stiller founded the company to manufacture vinyl promotional items to carry unique imprints.

Quikey now offers an extensive and diverse product portfolio including its patented Original Quikoin™ coin holders, Sof-Touch™ Vinyl and Clear-Vu™ acrylic key tags; full color refrigerator magnets, including Picture Me Coloring™ picture frames ; ID and luggage tags; Quik-Zip™ zipper pulls; Towel Hound™ towel holder; Golf Ball Sleeve; Quik-Vu® pocket mirrors; Suspend-a-Pen™ pen holders; sirHoldalot™ desktop cradle; Arm Bandit™ awareness wristbands; laminated Memoboards, Bookmarks and Info cards. Physical advertising is exceptional for use in direct mail campaigns, branding, new product launches, company promotions, events and more.

For more information on Quikey Manufacturing Co., Inc. and distributor branding, please visit us at [www.physicaladvertising.com](http://www.physicaladvertising.com) or contact our Customer Service Team at 877-901-1200.

### Sources:

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