



Designing Brand Identity

third edition

Alina Wheeler

an essential guide for the whole branding team

Designing Brand Identity

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Alina Wheeler

Designing Brand Identity

an essential guide for the entire branding team



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No one does it alone.

Hello

No one does it alone (in branding and in life). This is a resource for the whole branding team—from the CEO to the creative director to the designer and brand strategist. I want to make it easy to quickly grasp the fundamentals and be inspired by best practices; I want to make it easy to seize every opportunity to delight customers and attract prospects; and I want to make it easy to build brand equity.

The tools have changed. The fundamentals have not. The questions are the same whether you're on Facebook or in Shanghai: Who are you? Who needs to know? How will they find out?

Why should they care? The process to achieve remarkable results is the same whether you are an entrepreneur with an audacious big idea, or a global company with hundreds of brands and thousands of employees.

Books, like brands, are built over time. Creating this resource has been my personal Mount Everest. Love, indeed, does conquer all. My husband Eddy's boundless energy and laughter always make the impossible possible. Tessa and Tearson are my shooting stars. Skylight is my Shangri-la.



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colleagues who shared
their time + wisdom

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3rd Edition

Thank you for your creativity
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Perpetual gratitude

My publishing team
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My brother who asked when
the film is coming out
All Wheelers
Suzanne Young
Lissa Reidel
Marty Neumeier
Dennis Alter
Tomasz Fryzel
Stephen Shackelford
Richard Cress
Mark Wills
Amy Grove Bigham
Stellarvisions
Gretchen Dykstra
Cathy Jooste
Marc Goldberg
Heather Norcini
Liz Merrill
My favorite cousin
Quest sisters
Sullivan

Part 1 presents the fundamental concepts needed to jumpstart the brand identity process and create a shared vocabulary for the entire team.

Designing Brand Identity is a quick reference guide. All subject matter is organized by spread for ease of access in the blinding speed of business and life. No power source needed—just your desire and passion to be the best.

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Part 2 presents a universal brand identity process regardless of the project's scope and nature. This section answers the question "Why does it take so long?"

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**Image and perception help drive value;
without an image there is no perception.**

Scott M. Davis
Brand Asset Management

1 Basics

Part 1 illuminates the difference between brand and brand identity, and what it takes to be the best. Don't bypass the fundamentals in the speed of a new project. Establish a shared vocabulary for the entire branding team.

Brand basics

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What is brand?

As competition creates infinite choices, companies look for ways to connect emotionally with customers, become irreplaceable, and create lifelong relationships. A strong brand stands out in a densely crowded marketplace. People fall in love with brands, trust them, and believe in their superiority. How a brand is perceived affects its success, regardless of whether it's a start-up, a nonprofit, or a product.

A brand is a person's gut feeling about a product, service, or company.

Marty Neumeier
The Brand Gap

Who are you? Who needs to know?
How will they find out? Why should they care?

Brands have three primary functions*

Navigation

Brands help consumers choose from a bewildering array of choices.

Reassurance

Brands communicate the intrinsic quality of the product or service and reassure customers that they have made the right choice.

Engagement

Brands use distinctive imagery, language, and associations to encourage customers to identify with the brand.

*David Haigh, CEO, Brand Finance

It is never too late to be what you could have been.

George Eliot

Brand touchpoints

Each touchpoint is an opportunity to increase awareness and build customer loyalty.



The best brands marry intelligence and insight with imagination and craft.

Connie Birdsall
Creative Director, Lippincott



What is brand identity?

Brand identity is tangible and appeals to the senses. You can see it, touch it, hold it, hear it, watch it move. Brand identity fuels recognition, amplifies differentiation, and makes big ideas and meaning accessible. Brand identity takes disparate elements and unifies them into whole systems.



One eye sees. The other feels.

Paul Klee



Design plays an essential role in creating and building brands. Design differentiates and embodies the intangibles—emotion, context, and essence—that matter most to consumers.

Moira Cullen
Senior Director, Global Design
The Hershey Company



Trademarks are the shortest, fastest, most ubiquitous form of communication available.



Brand identity implies an asset. Corporate identity sounds too much like an expense. This is an important distinction.

On an average day consumers are exposed to six thousand advertisements and, each year, to more than twenty-five thousand new products... Brands help consumers cut through the proliferation of choices available in every product and service category.

Scott M. Davis
Brand Asset Management



My cell phone is my life. Tessa Wheeler



© Ed Wheeler Photography

What is branding?

Branding is a disciplined process used to build awareness and extend customer loyalty. It requires a mandate from the top and readiness to invest in the future.

Branding is about seizing every opportunity to express why people should choose one brand over another. A desire to lead, outpace the competition, and give employees the best tools to reach customers are the reasons why companies leverage branding.

Types of branding

Co-branding: partnering with another brand to achieve reach

Digital branding: web, social media, search engine optimization, driving commerce on the web

Personal branding: the way an individual builds their reputation

Cause branding: aligning your brand with a charitable cause; or corporate social responsibility

Country branding: efforts to attract tourists and businesses

Victory belongs to the most persevering.

Napoleon Bonaparte

We continue to invest in our core strengths. First, we don't skimp on understanding the consumer. Second is innovation... And third is branding... We're delivering more messages to our consumers.

A. G. Lafley
CEO, P&G
Business Week, 2009

Emotional branding is a dynamic cocktail of anthropology, imagination, sensory experiences, and visionary approach to change.

Marc Gobé
Emotional Branding



When to start the process

New company, new product

I'm starting a new business. I need a business card and a website.

We've developed a new product and it needs a name and a logo yesterday.

We need to raise millions of dollars. The campaign needs to have its own identity.

We're going public in the fall.

We need to raise venture capital, even though we do not have our first customer.

Name change

Our name no longer fits who we are and the businesses we are in.

We need to change our name because of a trademark conflict.

Our name has negative connotations in the new markets we are serving.

Our name misleads customers.

We merged.

Revitalize a brand

We want to reposition and renew the global brand.

We're no longer in the business we were in when we founded our company.

We need to communicate more clearly about who we are.

We're going global—we need help to enter new world markets.

No one knows who we are.

Our stock is devalued.

We want to appeal to a new and more affluent market.

Revitalize a brand identity

We are a great company with cutting-edge products. We look behind the times.

Will our identity work on the web?

Our identity does not position us shoulder to shoulder with our competitors.

We have 80 divisions and inconsistent nomenclature.

I am embarrassed when I give out my business card.

Everyone in the world recognizes our icon, but admit it—she needs a face-lift.

We love our symbol—it is known by our market. The problem is you cannot read our logotype.

Create an integrated system

We do not present a consistent face to our customers.

We lack visual consistency and we need a new brand architecture to deal with acquisitions.

Our packaging is not distinctive. Our competitors look better than we do, and their sales are going up.

All of our marketing looks like it comes from different companies.

We need to look strong and communicate that we are one global company.

Every division does its own thing when marketing. This is inefficient, frustrating, and not cost-effective. Everyone is reinventing the wheel.

When companies merge

We want to send a clear message to our stakeholders that this is a merger of equals.

We want to communicate that $1 + 1 = 4$.

We want to build on the brand equity of the merging companies.

We need to send a strong signal to the world that we are the new industry leader.

We need a new name.

How do we evaluate our acquisition's brand and fold it into our brand architecture?

Two industry leaders are merging. How do we manage our new identity?

4 : creating touchpoints

5 : managing assets

Who are stakeholders?

Seizing every opportunity to build brand champions requires identifying the constituencies that affect success. Reputation and goodwill extend far beyond a brand's target customers. Employees are now called "internal customers" because their power is far reaching. Gaining insight into stakeholder characteristics, behavior, needs, and perceptions yields a high return.

Brand is not what you say it is.
It's what they say it is.

Marty Neumeier
The Brand Gap

A tribe is a group of people connected to one another, connected to a leader, and connected to an idea... People want connection and growth and something new.

Seth Godin
Tribes

Gen X or Gen Y?

Market researchers use the same terms for classifying generation gaps, but don't agree on the dates.

Generation	Born
Seniors	before 1946
Boomers	1946-1965
Gen X	1966-1980
Gen Y	1981-1995

People need emotional navigation.

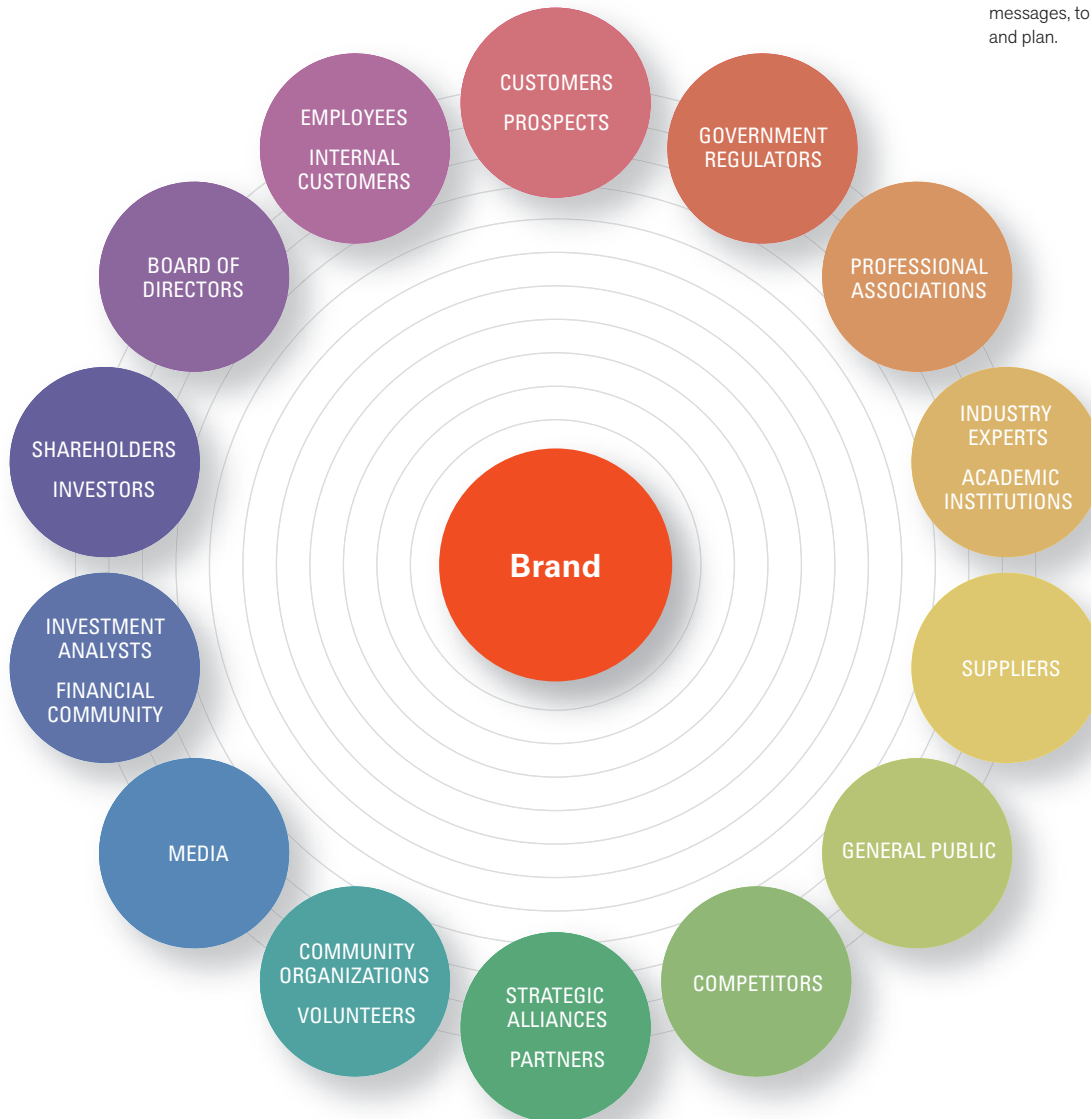
Colin Drummond
Crispin Porter + Bogusky

The fundamentals of brand building, from listening to and learning from customers, to relevantly meeting their needs, have been magnified in a world of digital communications and consumer empowerment.

Allen Adamson
Brand Digital

Key stakeholders

As the branding process unfolds, research about stakeholders will inform a broad range of solutions from positioning to the tilt of brand messages, to the launch strategy and plan.



Evangelism means convincing people to believe in your product or ideas as much as you do, by using fervor, zeal, guts, and cunning to mobilize your customers and staff into becoming as passionate about a cause as you are.

Guy Kawasaki

A lot of companies sabotage themselves by failing to consider the far-reaching impact of their stakeholders.

Lissa Reidel
Marketing Consultant

Why invest?

The best identity programs embody and advance the company's brand by supporting desired perceptions. Identity expresses itself in every touchpoint of the brand and becomes intrinsic to a company's culture—a constant symbol of its core values and its heritage.

Brands now appear regularly on balance sheets in many companies. The intangible value of the brand is often much greater than the corporation's tangible assets.

Wally Olins
The Brand Book

Steady investment in design is rewarded by lasting competitiveness.

Design Council UK

When you affect behavior, you can impact performance.



In *Brand Leadership* by David A. Aaker and Erich Joachimsthaler, the authors build a case that "when a high level of perceived quality has been (or can be) created, raising the price not only provides margin dollars but also aids perceptions." Their basic premise is that "strong brands command a price premium."

Reasons to invest in brand identity

Make it easy for the customer to buy

Compelling brand identity presents any company, any size, anywhere with an immediately recognizable, distinctive professional image that positions it for success. An identity helps manage the perception of a company and differentiates it from its competitors. A smart system conveys respect for the customer and makes it easy to understand features and benefits. A new product design or a better environment can delight a customer and create loyalty. An effective identity encompasses such elements as a name that is easy to remember or a distinctive package design for a product.

Make it easy for the sales force to sell

Whether it is the CEO of a global conglomerate communicating a new vision to the board, a first-time entrepreneur pitching to venture capital firms, or a financial advisor creating a need for investment products, everyone is selling. Nonprofits, whether fundraising or soliciting new volunteers, are continually selling. Strategic brand identity works across diverse audiences and cultures to build an awareness and understanding of a company and its strengths. By making intelligence visible, effective identity seeks to clearly communicate a company's unique value proposition. The coherence of communications across various media sends a strong signal to the customer about the laserlike focus of a company.

Make it easy to build brand equity

The goal of all public companies is to increase shareholder value. A brand, or a company's reputation, is considered to be one of the most valuable company assets. Small companies and nonprofits also need to build brand equity. Their future success is dependent on building public awareness, preserving their reputations, and upholding their value. A strong brand identity will help build brand equity through increased recognition, awareness, and customer loyalty, which in turn helps make a company more successful. Managers who seize every opportunity to communicate their company's brand value and what the brand stands for sleep better at night. They are building a precious asset.

Branding imperatives

Acknowledge that we live in a branded world.

Seize every opportunity to position your company in your customers' minds.

Communicate a strong brand idea over and over again.

Go beyond declaring a competitive advantage. Demonstrate it!

Understand the customers. Build on their perceptions, preferences, dreams, values, and lifestyles.

Identify touchpoints—places in which customers interface with the product or service.

Use brand identity to create sensory magnets to attract and retain customers.

Brands are intangible assets and account for, on average 75% of the value of a company.

Blake Deutsch

Brand strategy

Effective brand strategy provides a central unifying idea around which all behavior, actions, and communications are aligned. It works across products and services, and is effective over time. The best brand strategies are so differentiated and powerful that they deflect the competition. They are easy to talk about, whether you are the CEO or an employee.

Brand strategy builds on a vision, is aligned with business strategy, emerges from a company's values and culture, and reflects an in-depth understanding of the customer's needs and perceptions. Brand strategy defines positioning, differentiation, the competitive advantage, and a unique value proposition.

Brand strategy needs to resonate with all stakeholders: external customers, the media, and internal customers (e.g., employees, the board, core suppliers). Brand strategy is a road map that guides marketing, makes it easier for the sales force to sell more, and provides clarity, context, and inspiration to employees.

The best brand strategy is developed as a creative partnership between the client, the strategist, and the designer.

Connie Birdsall, Creative Director
Lippincott



Aligning an organization's vision with its customers' experience is the goal of brand strategy.

Who develops brand strategy?

It is usually a team of people; no one does it alone. It is a result of an extended dialogue among the CEO, marketing, sales, advertising, public relations, operations, and distribution. Global companies frequently bring in brand strategists: independent thinkers and authorities, strategic marketing firms, and brand consultants. It often takes someone from the outside who is an experienced strategic and creative thinker to help a company articulate what is already there.

Sometimes a brand strategy is born at the inception of a company by a visionary, such as Steve Jobs, Jeff Bezos, or Anita Roddick. Sometimes it takes a visionary leader, such as Lou Gerstner, former CEO of IBM, to redefine brand strategy. Companies frequently survive and prosper because they have a clear brand strategy. Companies falter because they do not have one.

The role of the consultant in developing brand strategy is to facilitate the process: asking the right questions, providing relevant input and ideas, getting key issues to surface, and achieving resolution.

Erich Sippel
President
Erich Sippel & Company

The importance of brand strategy and the cost of building brand identity should be understood at the highest levels of an organization and across functional areas—not just sales and marketing—but in legal, finance, operations, and human resources as well.

Sally Hudson
Marketing Consultant

Every senior leader in an organization must be focused and accountable for translating the brand strategy.

Betty Nelson
Group Director, Global Communications
IMS Health



©David Arkly Photography

Wana is Morocco's new full-service global telecom company offering fixed line, mobile, and internet services. With the core idea of putting the customer in control, Wana revolutionized the telecom market in Morocco by delivering on this promise at every touchpoint from name through design and product experience and offering. The name Wana means close to you. The Wana symbol, a dynamic star, references the Moroccan flag and connects with the Moroccan spirit.

Wana: Lippincott

Positioning

Supporting every effective brand is a positioning strategy that drives planning, marketing, and sales. Positioning evolves to create openings in a market that is continually changing, a market in which consumers are saturated with products and messages. Positioning takes advantage of changes in demographics, technology, marketing cycles, consumer trends, and gaps in the market to find new ways of appealing to the public.

Positioning is a revolutionary branding concept developed by Al Ries and Jack Trout in 1981. They defined positioning as the scaffolding on which companies build their brands, strategize their planning, and extend their relationships with customers. Positioning takes into account the mix of price, product, promotion, and place—the four dimensions that affect sales.

Ries and Trout were convinced that each company must determine its position in the customer's mind, considering the needs of the customer, the strengths and weaknesses of that company, and the competitive landscape. This concept continues to be a fundamental precept in all marketing communications, branding, and advertising.

Henry Ford said customers could have any color they wanted as long as it was black. General Motors came along with five colors and stole the show.

Positioning breaks through barriers of oversaturated markets to create new opportunities.

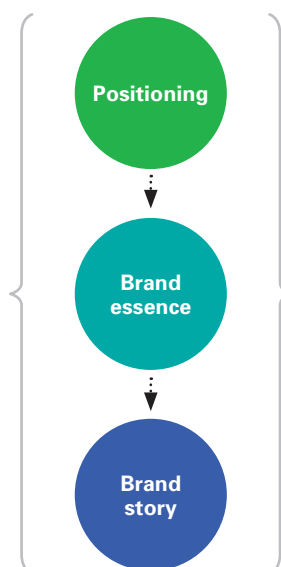
Lissa Reidel
Marketing Consultant

Brand positioning

Developed by Brand Engine

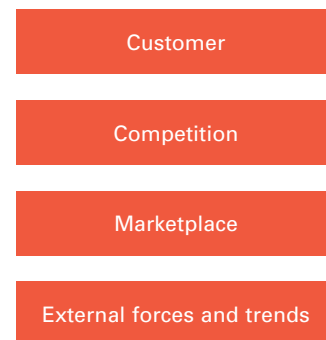
Internal

what you can control



External

what you cannot control



If you can't say that you are the only, you need to fix **your** business, not your brand. Start with a solid platform to effectively articulate your brand's value.

Will Burke
CEO
Brand Engine.

Repositioning history

Sneakers

In the 1950s, everyone had one pair of white tennis sneakers. Then sneakers were redesigned and repositioned in consumers' minds. They became endowed with celebrity status and were transformed into symbols of empowerment in the mid-1970s, when Nike and Reebok picked up on the increased interest in health, changed the perception, and raised the price. Today, sneakers have brand status, and everyone needs more than one pair.

Water

Until the 1980s, tap water tasted good. If consumers thought about water at all, it was only that they should have eight glasses a day. Health trends coincided with the water supply becoming less than the dependable utility it had always been. The three-martini lunch was no longer hip, yet people still wanted something with cachet to drink. Presto: bottled water reassured people that they were drinking something healthy and ordering something trendy. And now, tap water has regained its sustainable cache. Plastic begone.

Big-box stores

Target created a new position for itself as a big-box store with products that were designed by some of the best designers in the world. Target's positioning is dramatically different from that of Walmart, the biggest store on earth. While Walmart is about the lowest price, Target's positioning is created around appeal (design), as well as necessity and price. Target has built recognition of its brand to the degree that some ad campaigns feature the Target logo in audacious applications, including fabric patterns and spots on a dog, without mentioning the company name.

The difference between sales and marketing

Sales and marketing use similar approaches. In a sales campaign, the focus is the product. A company that is market-driven focuses on consumers. The product is defined and finite, but in the minds of clients there are infinite possibilities. Marketing penetrates into the psyches of customers. The company that markets has its finger on the pulse of consumers.

The onliness statement

Developed by Marty Neumeier, ZAG

- What:** The only (category)
How: that (differentiation characteristic)
Who: for (customer)
Where: in (market geography)
Why: who (need state)
When: during (underlying trend).

Example: Harley Davidson is...

- What:** The only motorcycle manufacturer
How: that makes big, loud motorcycles
Who: for macho guys (and "macho wannabees")
Where: mostly in the United States
Why: who want to join a gang of cowboys
When: in an era of decreasing personal freedom.

Big idea

A big idea functions as an organizational totem pole around which strategy, behavior, actions, and communications are aligned. These simply worded statements are used internally as a beacon of a distinctive culture and externally as a competitive advantage that helps consumers make choices.

Big ideas are a springboard for responsible creative work (thinking, designing, naming) and a litmus test for measuring success.

The simplicity of the language is deceptive because the process of getting there is difficult. It requires extensive dialogue, patience, and the courage to say less. A skilled facilitator,

experienced in building consensus, is usually needed to ask the right questions and to achieve closure. The result of this work is a critical component in the realization of a compelling brand strategy and a differentiated brand identity.

A brand becomes stronger when you narrow the focus.

Al Ries and Laura Ries
The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding

For GE, imagination at work is more than a slogan or a tagline. It is a reason for being.

Jeffrey R. Immelt, CEO
GE

Vision
Values
Mission
Value proposition
Culture
Target market
Segments
Stakeholder perceptions
Services
Products
Infrastructure

Understanding

Marketing strategy
Competition
Trends
Pricing
Distribution
Research
Environment
Economics
Sociopolitics
Strengths/weaknesses
Opportunities
Threats

Less is more

Apple

Think different

Target

Expect more. Pay less.

eBay

The world's online marketplace

Unilever

Adding vitality to life

Volvo

Safety

FedEx

The world on time

Harley Davidson

Rider passion

Disney

Make people happy

Virgin Mobile

Live without a plan

GE

Imagination at work

Method

People against dirty

Coca-Cola

Happiness in a bottle

Mini Cooper

Let's motor.

At the heart of the strategy is our commitment to delight our guests by consistently delivering the right combination of innovation, design, and value in our merchandising, in our marketing, and in our stores. This is the essence of our 'Expect more. Pay less.' brand promise.

Bob Ulrich
Chairman and CEO
Target

Core values
Brand attributes

Differentiation
Value proposition

Central idea
Unifying concept

Clarifying

Positioning

Brand Essence

Competitive advantage
Brand strategy

Business category

Key messages
Voice and tone

Big idea

Customer experience

It is essential for the branding team to look up from the desktop and see the world through the eyes of the customer. Shopping has become a subset to being engaged and entertained. The next disciplinary seismic shift in branding is customer experience: building loyalty and lifelong relationships at each point of contact.

The vast amount of purchasing choices is inspiring companies to enhance the brand experience to lure and keep customers. Every customer contact provides an opportunity to enhance an emotional connection. A good experience generates positive buzz; a bad experience becomes a lost opportunity sabotaging the brand.

The customer goes to the Genius Bar at the Apple Store for education, the American Girl Place for afternoon tea, and the sushi bar at Whole Foods for a free taste of something new.

Even the most mundane transactions can be turned into memorable experiences.

B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore
The Experience Economy



Sip, surf, and save is the value proposition at ING Direct's hip wireless cafés. The coffee is good and the shopping for cool orange stuff is fun. Since 2000, the company has signed more than 3.2 million customers. Cafés are in key urban locations.

Our orange ING Direct cafés welcome the public to buy a cup of coffee, experience our brand, and learn about the great deals we offer to anyone who wants to save money, simply and easily.

Arkadi Kuhlmann
President and CEO
ING Direct