



IGNITE YOUR BRAND

Your guide to igniting a remarkable brand.

Your business needs to be authentically remarkable to survive in today's economy. Literally remarkable- where people talk about it with their friends and co-workers. Companies must do or say things that get prospects talking about them or they'll lose their business to competitors that do. Brands like Apple, Aviation Gin, GoDaddy, Nike and Maverik have discovered their Brand Spark and have crafted the visual and verbal language to highlight that difference in a remarkable way to the type of people who truly appreciate that difference.

This booklet will guide you through the process of identifying your company's most interesting and compelling attributes that make your business stand apart from your competition. It will help you identify the type of person who is most likely to care about and pay for that special difference so that you don't waste time and money on those who aren't. It will help you articulate the core belief that drives you and explain how to use it to create zealous followers. It will lead you through the process of establishing definitions of your brand that will inform the visual and verbal language you choose to employ to express it. It will serve as the foundation for a brand bible and brand lens that will ensure that your amazing brand will grow stronger and increase its focus with every decision you make.

Let's ignite your remarkable brand!

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Igniting a Remarkable Brand

1. Describe Your Brand Spark

The heart of your brand is what makes it unique. It sparks the ideas to create the visual and verbal language to communicate that difference to your customers.

Use some of these questions to help you discover what makes you different. Draft 1 sentence to capture your Brand Spark.

1. What makes your business unique to your target customers?
2. What do you want to be known for that you can deliver on at a high level?
3. Why do your current customers buy from you?
4. What do customers love about your business?
5. What do you want to be known for?
6. What do your competitors envy about you or what would you like your competitors to envy about you?
7. What do you want your core customer to say as they walk out your door or after seeing an ad, or interacting with it in any way?
8. Is there something in your history that is compelling?
9. Is there a process you use that is unique or different from your competitors in a remarkable way?

2. Define Your Target Customer



Not all customers are created equal. Identifying your most valuable customers will allow you to craft an image that will get their attention and the language that will resonate with them. Your branding should be focused to your most profitable customer type.

Organizations that are unwilling to identify a highly specific customer target won't have the focus and discipline to fashion a brand image and voice enticing and different enough to cut through the incessant fog of advertising to penetrate the hearts of their customers.

Identify customer types using age, gender, hobbies, income, social status, ethnicity, education, beliefs, interests, etc.. Then establish a value on each group based on their purchase frequency and transaction size so you can identify which customer segment you'll focus on.

Good Examples: Mothers with children under 12 years of age. Chihuahua owners. Endurance race enthusiasts.

Bad Examples: People who drive cars. Women. People who eat food.

1. What demographic and psychographic attributes are shared by your best customers?
2. What type of person shares your company's personality and values? What are the common attributes of a person that is most likely to purchase your product or service?



3. Define Your Core Belief

A brand isn't something your company puts on, it's something inside. Your brand is grounded on what your business believes about why it's in business. The core belief you have about your company's role in the world will influence the language, tone and the visual elements you will choose in advertising and marketing to convey your Brand Spark in a very authentic to your target customers.

Your Core Belief should be condensed into a simple, easy to remember sentence.

Use these questions to guide you.

1. Does your leadership have a mantra they frequently reference or repeat?
2. What do you believe about your industry or about your role in your industry that drives you?
3. Why do you think your brand spark (Step 1) is so important to your customer?
4. Why would anyone care about what makes your company special?
 - Apple believes people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are those that do and develop products to empower creative people.
 - Coke believes joys in life are centered around family and fun and creates messages that reinforce it.
 - Maverik believes adventure elevates life and invests in an adventurous experience.
 - Four Seasons believes in the Golden Rule and creates processes and systems to train their people to be the best at it.

4. Describe Your Vision

What do you envision your company to become if all your dreams came true? This vision should be just beyond the reach of reality but will inspire the tactical decisions you make.

To help you articulate your vision ask yourself and other employees, "Of all the places you can utilize your skill, talent and experience, why do you work here?" "What is special about this organization?"

It's very likely that you will find a common thread of vision that will assist you in drafting your vision statement. Your authentic vision statement will catalyze your employees and offer them a shared purpose.

1. Good Example: Amazon- "Our vision is to be earth's most customer centric company; to build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online."
2. Good Example: Ducks Unlimited- "Wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever."
3. Good Example- Maverik- "Bring adventure to everyday life."
4. Bad Example- "The XYZ Company will inspire its employees to be the best they can be. We will engage in sustainable practices and anticipate the needs of our customers. We will maximize return to the stockholders while still maintaining quality in our products." (This is generic and doesn't inspire anyone!)

5. Describe Your Brand

Your brand descriptors will help you choose the colors, textures, patterns, images, and define the tone, language, and personality that should be used in your advertising and marketing materials.

1. List brands outside of your industry that you aspire to be like. Next to each brand list 3-7 adjectives to describe them that would be challenging to apply to another brand in the same industry.
2. Circle all the adjectives that you want your company to embody. Next, review and come to a consensus on the definition for each circled adjective.

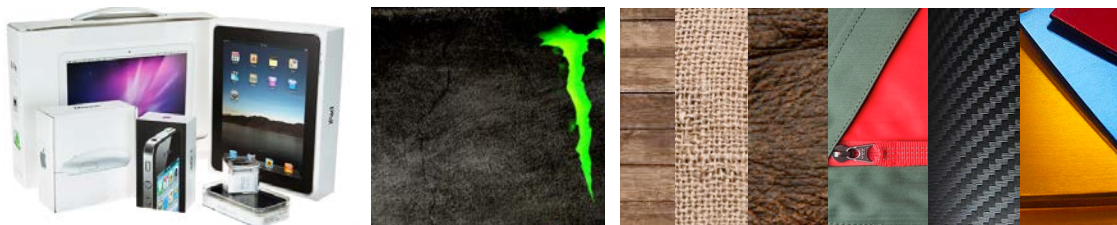


3. Some Examples
 1. Apple- Intuitive, Beautiful, Innovative, Designy
 2. Coke- Bold, Exciting, Happy, Connected
 3. Maverik- Exciting, Extreme, Attitude, Off the beaten path, Outdoorsy

Once the first 5 steps have been clearly defined and have been approved by your executive leadership, write them down and call it your Brand Strategy. Armed with the Brand Strategy you are prepared for steps 6 and 7 with a capable designer.

6. Select Design Elements That Reinforce Your Brand

1. **Colors/ Textures**- Colors have inherent emotional associations so select the colors, textures and patterns to convey the feelings and personality you defined in your Brand Strategy.
 1. Apple places colorful product photos on a large field of white or black to keep the focus on the beautifully engineered product while being simply sophisticated.
 2. Monster Energy uses glow-green on distressed black with wildly imaginative compositions.
 3. Maverik uses colors and textures associated with outdoor adventure and equipment. Wood, bark, stone, anodized aluminum, carbon fiber, raw steel, black, and red. Red is their primary color because it's bold, high-energy and exciting. (See 5.3.3)



2. **Image**-How will you represent your brand through visual language in a way that's going to get the attention of your core customers you defined in step 2? What style of photography or illustration? What subject matter will you use? Hint- creating emotion and attention should be your primary objectives.
 1. Carls Jr uses provocative models and messy burgers.
 2. Maverik- uses photographs of attractive, fit people on adventures with Maverik products. They try to incorporate adventure gear or materials in their product photo settings. They use illustrations to create larger than life landscapes and extreme perspectives of adventurers for their store interiors.
 3. Monster Energy uses their colors and textures with wildly imaginative compositions.



3. **Font-** Typeface styles also express personality and emotion. What typeface reinforces your brand personality? When someone sees your ad or message in the context of your industry, will they recognize you? Does it feel right? If your brand is rough and tumble, a flowery type face will look out of place as a hot dogs in ice cream.
 1. Chick-fil-A uses lettering that looks like it was written by cows on a self preservation campaign.
 2. Maverik uses fonts that are heavy and bold. Some are clean and some are distressed and weathered.



4. **Vocabulary-** What words or phrases will you use in your advertising and messaging that will strengthen your brand?
 1. Maverik uses words and phrases that connote a feeling of attitude and adventure: Trail, Climb, Extreme, Alpine, Summit, Camp, Peak, Amp'd, and Nitro. They also use unique phrases and spellings like Monster Trakker, LumberJack'd, and Krank'd.
 2. If you have a golf-inspired brand you'd likely use words like par, fairway, caddy, rough, eagle, hole-in-one, swing, club, etc. in your messaging.

7. Build Branding Materials

Sharing the first 6 steps with a capable designer, design agency or online design service will give you a tremendous boost in the right direction when producing your branded marketing elements.

1. **Logo Design-** While it's best to capture the essence of your brand while showcasing your company's name it's more important that it is well designed and easy to read. One of my favorite resources is logotournament.com for crowdsourcing your logo design. You'll get dozens of excellent designs for a few hundred bucks. It's awesome!!
2. **Tagline-** The tagline is should be focused on a consumer benefit not another way to tell people what you do. Use only a few words (2-4 words is a good goal). A tagline can be semi-permanent or can come and go with your advertising campaigns. Wether you choose choose to use it in any of your advertising or not should be determined on a case by case basis but it will be an essential guide to the advertising and marketing decisions you make.
 1. Apple- Think Different
 2. McDonalds- I'm Lovin' It
 3. Nike- Just Do It
 4. Maverik- Adventure's First Stop
3. **Graphic Design-** Use the description you made of your design elements in step 6 to create your print and digital designs. Measure the concepts against the first 5 steps to see that they stay true to the brand.



1. Apple uses simplistic white or black packaging with shiny, clean photos of products printed on the exterior. Their package assembly is as engineered as their products.
2. Coca-Cola uses attractive people smiling and laughing while holding bottles or cans of their products.
4. **Interior/ Exterior Design-** If you have a brick and mortar location, what can you do to the interior and exterior design of your stores to reinforce your brand image and personality? The same thing applies to virtual store fronts and social media headings.
 1. Apple- Uses simple furniture that's uncluttered. They use white paint and glass material to create a relaxed, uncomplicated atmosphere which makes their products stand out.
 2. Maverik - Exterior should look and feel like a contemporary lodge. (Use wood beams, iron fasteners, rib steel roofing.) Inside design should immerse customers into an outdoor or lodge atmosphere by using murals, wood flooring, blue sky ceilings, wood cabinetry and no hanging or wall mounted signs.
5. **Develop Your Own Definitions-** Create names for your teams and departments that reinforce the brand. This will bring the brand into the daily lives of your employees. However, don't get so crazy and creative that you confuse people.
 1. Apples associates are called- Geniuses
 2. Maverik uses-
 1. Headquarters= Maverik Base Camp
 2. CEO= Chief Adventure Guide
 3. Soft Drink Station= Fountain Falls
 4. Store Employees= Adventure Guides
6. **Uniforms/ Dress Code-** Wear clothing that reinforces your brand. If your brand is all about adventure would you wear slacks, leather shoes and golf shirts? If your business is premium and sophisticated would t-shirts and jeans be an appropriate reflection? Maybe if they were Gucci or Armani.
 1. Apple uses bright colored t-shirts and a simple logo on the front so their "geniuses" look friendly and approachable in Apple Stores.
 2. Maverik Adventure Guide uniforms were inspired by technical athletic clothing brands like K hl and Patagonia. Clean blue jeans were eventually adopted because they are synonymous with outdoor adventure. Maverik branded hats and jackets are also acceptable.



7. **Strategize Your Ad Campaigns-** Develop advertising campaigns that highlight your unique selling proposition guided by the tone and personality described in your Brand Descriptors and design elements.
 1. Carls Jr. uses sexy women and large messy burgers to connect with their young male target market.
 2. Apple uses clever, simple, and intuitive designs and messaging to connect to their creative independent-minded customers.



3. Maverik uses outdoor adventure and outrageous scenarios to connect to their 18-45 year old male target market.
8. **Charities-** Select Charities that will reinforce your corporate values, brand personality, and will engender good vibes with your target customer.

Ideas that are helpful to remember:

- Brand integrity is hard. It takes discipline.
- Be patient. Do what you can, when you can.
- Don't compromise. Even if alternative is cheaper or more convenient.
- Always ask yourself, "Does this sharpen our brand and bring it into greater focus?" If not, don't do it.
- This guide is challenging to do on your own. Hiring a consultant like an ad agency executive or branding expert will be well worth the investment.

Stuck? Call me!

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