We usually associate the term ‘brand’ with a product that has a unique, consistent and well-recognised character (i.e. Coca-Cola, BMW). These brands conjure up images in the minds of consumers. Large organisations work hard to raise the power and status of their brands and guard them carefully against unlicensed use or unfair imitation.

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as a ‘name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers.’

Therefore, it makes sense to understand that branding is not about getting your target market to choose you over the competition, but it is about getting your prospects to see you as the only one that provides a solution to their problem. Looking out into the world today, it is easy to see why brands are more important now than at any time in the past 100 years. Brands are psychology and science brought together as a promise mark, as opposed to a trademark. Products have life cycles. Brands outlive products. Brands convey a uniform quality, credibility and experience. Brands are valuable. Many companies put the value of their brand on their balance sheet.

Why? Well you do not have to look very far. In today’s world, branding is more important than ever. But you cannot simply build a brand like they did in the old days. You need a cultural movement strategy to achieve kinetic growth for your brand. With that, only the sky’s the limit. What sells Chanel when it produces a cosmetic? A cream or a dream of beauty? What does the Perugina brand sell when it produces the ‘Bacio’? A chocolate or a feeling? What sells Ferrari when it produces the 458? Car or social status? What sells Starbucks when opening its stores? A coffee or a third place between home and work? The list goes on with many examples. Branding is fundamental. Branding is basic. Branding is essential. Building brands builds incredible value for companies and corporations.
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If you are still not convinced, let me give you another example. The dollar is a world brand. In essence it is simply a piece of paper. But branding has made it valuable. All the tools of marketing and brand building have been used to create its value. On the front you will find the owner of the brand: the Federal Reserve. There is a testimonial from the first President of the United States, George Washington. There is a simple user’s guide: ‘This note is legal tender for debts public and private’. And if you are still not convinced, the owner has added the all-important emotional message: ‘In God We Trust’. The dollar is a world brand. It confers a uniform value globally. But, as I said, it is really just a piece of paper. Branding has made it worth something.

I mentioned earlier that brands are more important today than in the past. There are a few reasons for this. Firstly, the world has come online and there are many new markets and a growing middle class in places such as India, China, Brazil, Russia, South Africa, Nigeria, Indonesia and in many more places. These consumers buy brands. They buy premium brands. The best branding today is based on a strong idea. The best brands have remarkable creativity in advertising to help them break through people’s wall of indifference to create brand heat and product lust. A case in point is the recent turnaround of Chrysler and its reliance on marketing and advertising. Or look at the reinvention of Levi’s. A final example is a campaign by my own agency, which has helped reenergise one of America’s great iconic brands—Jim Beam.

Developing a corporate brand is important because a positive brand image will give consumers, and other interested stakeholders, confidence about the full range of products and activities associated with a particular company.

- **Essence**: A single, energising central idea; it is the heartbeat of the organisation.
- **Values**: What the organisation believes in and stands for.
- **Personality**: The traits and qualities that distinguish your organisation as being different.
- **Behaviour**: The actions associated with values and personality.
- **Relationships**: The internal and external rules of engagement.
- **Value Proposition**: The offer that is made to customers, the point of difference and why it matters.

The sophisticated strategy is a cultural movement strategy. I believe that building brands now requires a cultural movement strategy as opposed to simply a brand building strategy. A cultural movement strategy can accelerate your brand’s rise to dominance. Once you have cultural movement, you can do anything in a fragmenting media environment, maximising the power of social media and technology. The world has changed. We are now living in the age of uprisings and movements. I have written about how to build a brand in this new age in my new book *Uprising*. These days, building brands has become a lot less expensive and smart brands can take advantage of new tools and rocket up there globally, very fast. A common interpretation is that a brand is the promise that is made to customers. Or, the brand is not what you say it is, but what your customers say it is. While these views are legitimate ways of helping to understand a brand, an actively-managed approach makes a brand more tangible and provides it with structure. Company branding is the most efficient way to show potential customers what your business is about. It is reflected visually via the logo and company design elements, as well as through verbiage in marketing materials, slogans and informational copy. According to Fast Company magazine, ‘The brand is a promise of the value you’ll receive’.

In the face of the current economic challenges, it is worth noting that brands do better in tough times compared to unbranded products. Brands outlive product cycles. And in these challenging times, there are still great brands being built. Brand owners still recognise opportunity and their brands will thrive in the years ahead.

No branding, no differentiation. No differentiation, no long-term profitability. People do not have relationships with products, they are loyal to brands. In a movement strategy, brands have a purpose that people can get behind. Brands can inspire millions of people to join a community. Brands can rally people for or against something. Products are one dimensional in a social media enabled world, brands are Russian dolls, with many layers, tenets and beliefs that can create great followings of people who find them relevant. Brands can activate a passionate group of people to do something like changing the world. Products cannot really do that.

Brands have to contain:

- **Uniqueness**: utilise your branding to set yourself apart from your competitors. To do this, analyse what you do best and consider you target demographic. Use graphics and word choices that clearly reflect your business to your target audience, hence your brand. Use your branding to deliver clear messages.
- **Target Audience**: done correctly, your brand can assist you in getting a stronger foothold in your
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niche market. Define your unique selling position and consider methods to communicate key messages to your desired audience. Use specific images or phrases to encourage the feel of inclusivity. Let them know the reason your company exists and how it can fulfill their needs. This can connect you to your target audience, engage them and motivate them to buy.

*Emotional Connections:* according to a 2010 study conducted by the world’s largest public relations firm, Edelman, the Y Generation, also known as the Millennials, consider brand identification almost as important as religious preference and ethnic background when defining themselves online. The power of branding has successfully melded into that of personal identification and emotional connection.

*Message Delivery:* having strong branding can evoke trust from your niche market. This can translate to your newsletters, emails and advertisements garnering a greater response, hence increasing sales. As people will already be vested in your brand, they will be confident that they will receive value for time spent reading your messages or researching your product.

*Consistency:* focus on your long-term branding efforts to keep your business consistent. This consistency should transcend messages, product lines and audience appeal. It should enhance your business, adding depth to your company’s presence. This should allow you to grow and keep a loyal following.

Many small organisations and start-ups neglect spending necessary time thinking about their brand in this broad sense and the impact it has on their business. Let’s look at 10 reasons why digging into your brand is important:

- **Branding promotes recognition.** People tend to do business with companies they are familiar with. If your branding is consistent and easy to recognize, it can help people feel more at ease purchasing your products or services.

- **Your brand helps set you apart from the competition.** In today’s global market, it is critical to stand apart from the crowd. You are no longer competing on a local stage, your organisation now competes in the global economy. How do you stand out from the thousands or millions of similar organisations around the world?
Your brand tells people about your business DNA. Your full brand experience, from the visual elements like the logo to the way that your phones are answered, tell your customer about the kind of company that you are. Are all of these points of entry telling the right story?

Your brand provides motivation and direction for your staff. A clear brand strategy provides the clarity that your staff needs to be successful. It tells them how to act, how to win, and how to meet the organisation's goals.

A strong brand generates referrals. People love to tell others about the brands they like. People wear brands, eat brands, listen to brands, and they are constantly telling others about the brands they love. On the flip side, you cannot tell someone about a brand you cannot remember. A strong brand is critical to generating referrals or viral traffic.

A strong brand helps customers know what to expect. A brand that is consistent and clear puts the customer at ease, because they know exactly what to expect each and every time they experience the brand.

Your brand represents you and your promise to your customer. It is important to remember that your brand represents you: you are the brand, your staff is the brand, your marketing materials are the brand. What do they say about you, and what do they say about what you are going to deliver (promise) to the customer?

Your brand helps you create clarity and stay focused. It is very easy to wander around from idea to idea with nothing to guide you—it does not take long to be a long way from your original goals or plans. A clear brand strategy helps you stay focused on your mission and vision as an organisation. Your brand can help you be strategic and will guide your marketing efforts saving time and money.

Your brand helps you connect with your customers emotionally. A good brand connects with people at an emotional level, they feel good when they buy the brand. Purchasing is an emotional experience and having a strong brand helps people feel good at an emotional level when they engage with the company.

A strong brand provides your business value. A strong brand will provide value to your organisation well beyond your physical assets. Think about the brands that you purchase from (Coca-Cola, Wrangler, Apple, Perugina, Ferrari)—are these companies really worth their equipment, their products, their warehouses, or factories? No, these companies are worth much more than their physical assets; their brand has created a value that far exceeds their physical value.

Wrapping it up. The best branding is built on a strong idea, an idea that you and your staff can hold on to, can commit to, and can deliver upon. Your brand needs to permeate your entire organisation. When your organisation is clear on the brand and can deliver on the promise of the brand, you will see tremendous fruit while building brand loyalty among your customer base.

But what does a dentist actually sell? Therapies or trust? Improve the management of the dental office by increasing the management control, the Perceived Quality and Value Added, optimising costs, acquiring new patients and increasing the strategic positioning of professional success. Particular attention was dedicated to finding value in being able to offer new therapeutic solutions, especially in this economic, social and cultural ‘time of crisis’.

There are opportunities for growth in the dental business through increased perception of quality in presenting and managing the range of services in the sphere of performance, even aesthetic, not to mention the more traditional therapies. The professionalism of the team of front office and back office generate word of mouth and optimise all investments in communication. To transfer the Perceived Quality, needs new tools of communication personal and professional. Climate Analysis, Applied neuroscience, Web-Marketing and motivational communication, are just some of the methods....

Editorial note: This article is the first one from the four parts series. Part II will appear in CAD/CAM 2/2015.

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