

## ATTRIBUTES

## TRADITIONAL BRANDING



Grows out of your company's core values	Possibly. Requires extreme discipline and discernment.	Naturally and always. It is your story.
Informs/inspires employees and focuses their energies	Rarely. Most employees don't connect to brand.	Yes. It provides a dramatic role to perform.
Provides customers with a meaningful role	Brand focuses on your company/product/service—and then hopes to attract your customer by appealing to his needs.	YVBStory focuses on your customer and tells him a story of how your company/product/service can serve him best.
Initial cost	High. Can require huge investment over a long period before any ROI is realized—if any ever is.	Modest and pay-as-you-go. ROI is incremental and begins almost at once.
Maintenance and cost of ownership	Brand is a leaking bucket—you must constantly pour in more money to refill brand "awareness."	No leaky bucket. Just a living mosaic of story that grows stronger with every investment.
Ease of application	Requires training; still may not resolve conflict about brand and its proper use.	There is a universal, near-"DNA level" understanding of story.
Leads to the organization's next great aspirations	No. Provides an attractive snapshot of where the organization is today.	Yes. Leads to creating the next chapter your audiences want to hear.
Focuses marketing investments	Neutral. Maintaining focus requires constant vigilance.	Intrinsically, yes. Your audiences call forth specific market tactics.
It's magic	Some brands unleash creative power—but try to predict which, how much, where or when.	Undoubtedly. Stories have transformed people's beliefs and behaviors for eons.



Marketing Dramatically Amplified.

## Putting Your Brand To The Test

It seems like every business magazine has a story of a company experiencing extraordinary brand success—success which we’re somehow supposed to learn from and emulate.

But here’s the catch. Most readers will never experience that kind of success with their brands. They’ll repeatedly undertake branding programs, hire expensive consultants, read the latest book—and still be disappointed. So they assume the fault is theirs—that they’re doing something wrong. Now, turn the tables for a moment: what if the fault lies with brand itself? What if these “one-in-a-hundred” success stories are simply a testimony to brand’s 99% failure rate?

One way to answer that question for yourself is to take the following 5-minute quiz, designed to help you examine whether your brand is working as hard for your company as you’ve been working for your brand.

Evaluate the truth of the following statements about your brand using the following rating guidelines:

- 1 = No
- 2 = Weakly
- 3 = Somewhat
- 4 = Usually
- 5 = Yes

## **Your Brand—Company Booster Or Dead Weight?**

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If you, your executive peers, and your ad agency team each defined the terms “brand,” “positioning,” and “identity,” your definitions would generally match. All the members of the executive team of your company understand brand—any one of them could deliver a 10-minute impromptu primer on branding.

Your brand reflects what your company does—that is, someone can learn about your company’s core business by understanding your brand.

Your brand accurately reflects what YOU do in your company.

In an instance of high-profile negative media exposure, smear or scandal, your brand would act as a shield, buffer and advocate for your company.

All key players in your company support your brand.

## **If Your Employees Don’t Get It, No One Will**

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Your frontline employee can articulate and explain the brand positioning statement for your company, products and services.

Your frontline employee can articulate the benefits, brand personality, associations and visual identity, symbols associated with your brand.

Your employees generally perceive themselves to have created your brand(s).

Your employees generally perceive themselves to own your brand(s).

Your employees know how to behave “on brand” and to perform your brand.

Your employees can draw a one-to-one correspondence between your brand values and your company values.

## **Paying The Way Or Coasting?**

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You know your branding budget is sufficient both in absolute terms and as a percentage of your marketing budget.

You measure ROI on those branding expenditures.

Focus groups have given you the number of impressions required to seat your positioning tagline.

If branding is the platform for your marketing efforts, your marketing efforts faithfully reflect your brand.

Your children can explain what you do for a living, and what your company does.

## **Brand And Your Marketing Department**

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Your materials consistently reflect your company's brand personality.

There is an irrationally superstitious obsession with “protecting the brand” rather than encouraging its use.

Guidelines for using your brand are clear, simple, complete and understood.

Your brand naturally promotes the development of communications materials that effortlessly reflect the corporate vision.

Your brand naturally promotes the development of a positioning strategy that allows your company to strongly differentiate.

### **Your Ambassador To The World—Do Customers Get It?**

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Your brand is well-known and understood by your prospects, customers, stakeholders, partners, the media and general public.

Any dozen of these stakeholders, asked describe the emotional connection between your brand, your company and themselves, could do so.

Your customers can articulate how they are served by your brand and by your brand-building.

You deliver on your brand promise, and your customers would evaluate their experience in terms of your brand as positive.

Your brand promotes an ongoing relationship with your customers.

Your customers know where they fit in your brand.

Your customers know where your brand fits into their lives.

If you asked a dozen stakeholders to “act out” the significance of your brand in 30 seconds without using words, they could do so.

Without even scoring, you've probably learned something about how well—or poorly—brand is working for you.

For those who like to keep score:

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**0-30** Welcome to the money pit.

**31-60** The military tries to make its bombers this invisible.

**61-90** You're still not breaking even, but at least there's something to show for your efforts.

**91-120** Maintain a feverish pace of investment, and your brand equity will grow. Slowly.

**121-150** The mythical mountaintop of shining brand success. Chance of ever seeing it? About 1 in 100.

**150 and up** *The power of Your Very Best Story starts where the best of brand leaves off.*

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