WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

== ABOUT == BRANDING

BY AUTUMN SCOTT

In this document you will read about the importance of branding. Branding is how people identify your company and come to know and trust it. Bulding a brand can be difficult, but it's essential for a company to be successful. As a business leader, it's your job to educate yourself on the importance of branding so that you can use it to better your company. You will never learn to respect the art of branding, if you don't come to understand how it can work for, or against you. Below you will come across accounts of both good and bad branding. I have listed some tips to help you take on the challenge of branding, in hopes that it will help your business succeed.

"Your brand

is what other

people say about

your company

when you're not

in the room."

nvesting in good branding can do wonders for a company. People want to feel like they know who they're buying from. They need

to know that they'll be taken care of when they give a company

their business. This is why
the consumer is more
likely to do business
with a company that has
made a good reputation
for themselves. That's
exactly what a brand is, a
reputation. The wise owner
of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, once
said, "Your brand is what
other people say about
your company when you're
not in the room." Have
you ever thought about
how a company comes

about their reputation? Companies create reputations for themselves through "brand image" (4). Brand image is the meaning

that the consumer identifies the product with. Brand image can be thought of as the "emotional and aesthetic impressions that occur in the consumers about the product" (4). Imagine you're a thirteen year old kid

> again. Would you rather wear a pair of Nikes or a pair of tennishoes from Walmart. Nikes! Of course! Nike has identified themselves so well, that a person can just say their name and you will automatically have a clear picture of their branding in your head. Notice how when I referred to Nike above. I never mentioned the word shoe. That's because I didn't have to. When someone uses the phrase "Nikes," you already know they're

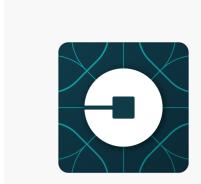
referring to a pair of shoes. Of course Nike sells other products, but they are the most well known for their quality athletic shoes.





These two shoes are virtually the same; both in style and color. Yet, there's only one pair that a middle-schooler would be proud to grace the halls in. Why? One pair is from Nike, the other from Walmart. This is 100% due to branding.

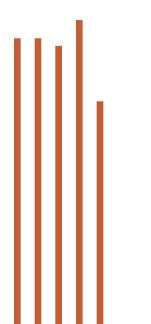
DON'T CUT CORNERS



ImageSource: Fast Company

Uber's logo released in 2016. Don't be like Uber. Don't cut corners. So where do you start when building a brand? For starters, higher a professional. It is crucial that a company highers someone who knows what they're doing when it comes to creating a brand. After all, your brand is the face of the company, would you higher someone you didn't trust to do work on your face? No. You would find the most qualified person out there. The same goes for the face of a business. Don't try to cut corners or pinch pennies. The money you spend on good quality branding will make up for itself. One company who tried to cut corners with their logo received a lot of lashback upon their release in 2016. According to Fast Company, "Uber was widely ridiculed" after putting a newly designed icon out into public use (7). Users said "it looked like PacMan" as well as parts of the human anatomy that shouldn't be repeated. Uber's logo was the "butt" of the jokes on social media for weeks. See what i did there. Uber CEO, Travis Kalanick explained that "he kept the design in-house because he didn't trust anyone else to do it for him" (7). Overall, that move didn't work out real well for him. This situation shows the importance of taking your time to find a qualified professional to handle your branding.

BE CONSISTENT



Once a company has established a brand, it's important to be consistent. If a brand is being very loosely used, it will begin to lack authenticity and customers will begin to question the brand. How can someone trust a company whose values are so flighty? Social Media Today warns business owners about the dangers of being inconsistent with their branding. On their website they stated that "If your branding isn't consistent it is harder for people to verify the authenticity of your communications, making them less likely to convert as a direct result" (3). Logos are meant to be constant. They are not to be changed. If a company changes the way they use their logo it comes off as unprofessional and can negatively effect sales. It is important to make sure your logo goes unchanged so that customers can build recognition with your company. Rebrands are also guite risky and should never take place unless it's absolutely necessary. Rebrands can

completely change the identity of a company, making it difficult for current customers to see any sign of security in the brand. Time and time again we've seen companies attempt to give their brands a face lift in efforts to make a more contemporary brand. They want to change their look to adhere with the times in hopes that they'll make more money. Yet the end result is almost always the opposite. For example, when Gap tried to redesign their logo a few years back, it was disastrous. They changed their logo from the nicely kerned serif font that we all know and love, to a sans serif font with an awkwardly placed square on it (see the diagram below).





Image Source: Bing Images

Gap's logo redesign in 2010. Gap made efforts to try to send their company in a new direction and received major criticism for it.

"Thousands of critical comments greeted the new version of Gap's logo when it was launched on the company's website" (10.) Gap had already made a name for themselves, yes they may have needed a push for their business, but redefining their look was not the push they needed. According to fortune. com, a Gap company spokesperson said that Gap was making efforts "to recast its image from "classic, American design to modern, sexy, cool" (6). Gap was a classic, familiar store to nearly everyone, and suddenly, it was no longer classic or familiar. The rebrand was confusing for the customer's that gap already had. When customer's no longer feel that sense of recognition of a brand, it drives sales down. "The Gap rebrand was estimated to have cost them \$100 mil-

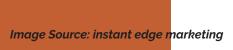


lion" (11). Gap was "forced to scrap an expensive new logo days after its launch following an online backlash from consumers" (10). Gap had one of the fastest return rates ever to be seen in history after quickly changing their logo back within just a few days. The editorial team from 1st Websitedesigner also did not take nicely to the new logo design, saying that the "logo takes the classical flavor that is gap, and degrades it to that of some common store you see in the plaza of your local supermarket (7)." Not quite the feedback you're looking for when reconstructing a company's brand.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

When establishing a brand identity for a small business, it's important to keep the audience in mind. After all, they are the customers that

will be spending money at your establishment. Don't let personal preferences influence marketing decisions. You are not your audience. As said in an article about marketing featured on cbsnews, "Everybody has an opinion, everybody wants to have a say and everybody thinks their "focus group of one" is more important than the actual target audience"



(5). Make sure you're not making our own opinions more important than the actua target audience. Building relationships with the audience is important. You want to appeal to those who are interested in your company's values and products. As the *Huffington Post* says, logos "have to build meaningful"

relationships with their customers" (9). This directly corrolates to the "brand promise." The brand promise is the promise a company makes to the customer that tells the customer whats to expect when

doing business with that company. In an article over *The Effect of Brand on Consumer Behavior*, featured on *The Houston Chronicle at Chron*, the author mentions that "companies must develop a strong

develop a strong brand promise to let consumers know what the company stands for, what makes it unique and why they

should choose it over its competitors"
(1). In order to develop a strong brand promise and build these relationships with the consumer, you first have to know

who it is you're building a relationship with. Who are you targeting? You need to understand what makes your customers buy your products. Do your research! What demograhic do you sell the most products to? What

colors are they the most drawn to? What values does that particular demographic value? These are all things you should be thinking of before even considering designing a logo. Color alone can have a huge impact on your audience. For example, the color red "gives people a sense of urgency." The

color "blue evokes trust and security" (12). What is it you're trying to get across to your customers about your brand? Keep color in mind when trying to send your message.

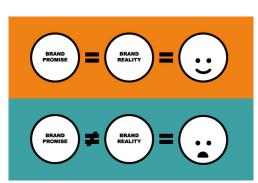
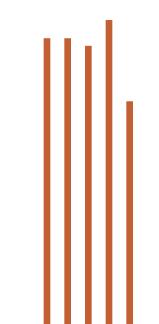


Image Source: www.integrity.co.uk

QUALITY

Once again we arrive at the issue of quality. We already discussed how cutting corners can have a negative effect on your business, so let's talk about what quality design will do for it. Brands that have been constructed by professionals, who settle for nothing less than the utmost quality, are instantly recognizeable. As the *Huffington Post* says, the most recognizeable brands "have a style and design that is unique, that evokes emotion, and that is relevant to their niche market." With every single piece of marketing you release, you should have the mentality



that you will settle for nothing less than perfect. Every bit of marketing that is released to the public will serve as an association with your brand to some person. "Brand image appears in the mind of the consumer through perceptions of brand that emerge by means of the brand associations kept in memory" (4). An example of a company who does a magnificent job of making their brand memorable is apple. When someone talkes about apple, you instantly have a mental picture of their logo. Their shiny chrome products are sleek, modern, sophisticated and forwardthinking. As Forbes says, "Only Apple, thanks to its hard-core fan base, could get away with pricing a phone at \$999 and proceed to sell 29 million of them in less than two months" (13). That's solely due to branding. Apple is the most valuable brand in the world sitting at a value of \$182.8 billion. When a company has quality branding and is successful in campaigning to their particular niche, people will begin to pay more for the brand than the product itself.



Image Source: pixabay



Image Source: pinmig



Image Source: Bing Images

WORLD'S MOST VALUABLE BRANDS 2017				
	2016		2017	
\$154.1 Bln	1	Apple	1	\$170 Bln
\$82.5 Bln	2	Google	2	\$101.8 Blr
\$75.2 Bln	3	Microsoft	3	\$87 Bln
\$52.6 Bln	5	Facebook	4	\$73.5 Bln
\$58.5 Bln	4	Coca-Cola	5	\$56.4 Bln
\$35.2 Bln	12	Amazon	6	\$54.1 Bln
\$39.5 Bln	8	Disney	7	\$43.9 Bln
\$42.1 Bln	6	Toyota	8	\$41.1 Bln
\$39.1 Bln	9	McDonald's	9	\$40.3 Bln
\$36.1 Bln	11	Samsung	10	\$38.2 Bln

Image Source: Bing Images

Diagram showing the most valuable brands of 2017

CONCLUSION

Hopefully throughout this document I have shed some light on the importance of branding. Although it seems like meaningless images and colors, it carries a huge weight on how the public perceives a brand. In a world that is dominated by the media, it is so crucial for a business to have solid branding to lean on. The odds are, potential customers are going to google you before they ever step foot into your store. Businesses no longer have the luxury of winning over their customers with outstanding customer service alone.

Branding is both a science and an art in itself. As said in Forbes, "Brands are psychology and science brought together as a promise mark as opposed to a trademark" (2). There's so much to know about branding that I couldn't possibly have shared everything with you. If you are interested in learning more about branding I recommend going to the *Digital Branding Institute* online. They offer a free ebook over branding and will point you to some extremely beneficial articles that will further educate you.



Sources

- 1. https://smallbusiness.chron.com/effect-brand-consumer-behavior-61767.html
- 2. https://www.forbes.com/sites/marketshare/2012/05/27/why-brand-building-is-important/#3a1e1fe03006
- 3. https://www.socialmediatoday.com/content/negative-impact-inconsistent-branding
- 4. http://www.academia.edu/1405362/The_Effects_of_Brand_Image_on_Consumers_Choice
- 5. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/10-companies-with-insanely-bad-marketing/
- 6. http://fortune.com/2014/07/21/branding-gone-wrong-when-bad-logos-strike-back/
- 7. https://www.fastcompany.com/3066401/the-best-and-worst-branding-of-2016
- 8. https://www.tivolipartners.com/makes-customers-loyal/
- 9. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/ian-mills/branding-your-small-business_b_5202809. html
- 10. https://www.theguardian.com/media/2010/oct/12/gap-logo-redesign
- 11. https://www.canny-creative.com/10-rebranding-failures-how-much-they-cost/
- 12. https://blog.vendhq.com/post/64901824540/retail-psychology-use-colors-shapes-convert-shoppers
- 13. https://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2018/05/23/the-worlds-most-valuable-brands-2018/#140c28b3610c

Images

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/6/6a/Gap_Inc..svg/1024px-Gap_Inc..svg.png

http://www.integrity.co.uk/images/Thought_Pieces/Customer_Journey/Infographic-BrandPromiseReality-CU-01-04-16.jpg

https://i.pinimg.com/originals/8f/a8/a3/8fa8a399d94868b4447dbb5de15404ad.jpg https://www.zeebiz.com/technology/news-apple-files-patent-for-foldable-iphone-report-32420

apple watch - Bing images

https://instantedgemarketing.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/audience-centered-image-large.jpg

https://www.fastcompany.com/3066401/the-best-and-worst-branding-of-2016