WBA

REVIEW OF WHOLE BRAIN BRANDING

Before we look at a few exercises that will give you some practical experience of applying the Whole Brain Model to Brands, let’s review the concept and remind ourselves of the process and how it ultimately leads to a Brand-on-a-page.

Let’s go module by module.

First, what is a brand?

Our definition is that a ‘Brand is a Promise, and a Product or Service is how you deliver that Promise to your target consumers’.

Products and Services can change, Advertising campaigns and slogans can change but that core brand Promise must remain unchanged if you are to win the long-term trust of your customers and clients.

Why have brands become more important than ever?

We’re living in an age of information overload. We are bombarded by advertising messages, most of which we’ve learned to tune out. Consistency is key to cutting through this noise and gaining recognition and recall. And while products and services are undermined by parity offerings, brands can own and retain a distinctive difference that gives them a competitive advantage.

Perhaps the most important attribute of your Brand is its ability to create an emotional bond with your audience. The eyes see, the heart buys. In a rapidly expanding, global market, this is the most powerful sales tool.

How does Whole Brain Thinking work?

It’s surprisingly simple. The Whole Brain Model combines two scientifically validated approaches to understanding our ‘thinking preferences’ and represents them in a circular, four-quadrant diagram.

On the left-hand side, it identifies in Blue those who like to think analytically in terms of facts and numbers and in Green those who like to think in terms of systems and process.

On the right-hand side, it identifies those who like to think creatively and experimentally in Yellow and those that like to think intuitively and instinctively in Red.

How can this model be applied to brands?

In the process of ‘humanising’ a brand, we look at it through the four filters of Whole Brain Thinking.

In the Green quadrant, we ask how does this brand operate, how does it bring value to the market, how does it work?

In the Bue quadrant, what makes this brand credible, what has it done that commands respect and loyalty?

In the Yellow quadrant, we ask why is this brand any different to others in its category, why is it special and have an interesting future?

In the Blue Quadrant, we ask who is this brand in human terms, in terms of its character, personality and tone of voice?

Four simple questions: How, What, Why and Who – each one closely associated with a thinking ‘style’ and quadrant.

Answering these questions gives us a Whole Brain picture of the brand, one that creates a point of relevance for everyone in a mass market audience.

How do we establish the ‘Rational’ relationship with the audience?

We synthesise the information from the Blue and Green quadrants.

How do we establish the ‘Emotional’ relationship with the audience?

We synthesise the information from the Yellow and Red quadrants.

What role does ‘Higher Purpose’ play?

Identifying the Brand’s ‘Why?’ forces us to look deeper into the relationship with the target audience. What bond is the brand creating beyond the transactional and utilitarian nature of its products?

How do we identify the Brand Promise?

This is a creative process that is stimulated by all the information in the four quadrants of the Whole Brain Brand analysis. Ideally, we’re looking for a promise that contains a tension that comes from opposing hemispheres of the brain – be it left and right or top and bottom.

What goes into a Brand-on-a-Page?

The Brand-on-a-page contains all the information we need for developing a Brand Strategy that has the broadest possible appeal. It identifies the category we’re operating in, the four perspectives through which consumers will view the brand, the rational relationship we are trying to create with them, the emotional relationship we are trying to create, the service drivers that will make this possible and the tone of voice we need to adopt. Further to that, this single page explores our highest ambitions and ideals and encapsulates our core message in a single sentiment.

What is Brand Symmetry?

This is the power of a well-crafted Brand Promise – one that is as inspiring to staff as it is to customers. Its symmetry comes from working equally well inside the organisation as it does in the marketplace.

Brand Symmetry seamlessly connects people, product and promotion leading to profit.

What are Brand Touchpoints?

These are the myriad of ways in which a brand interacts with people both inside and outside the organisation. Brand Touchpoints are not limited to marketing materials and communications. While many of them are neglected by marketing departments who tend to focus on mainstream and digital media, brand touchpoints nearly always represent an opportunity to communicate the Brand Promise in one way or another.

How do we use the workshop tools?

There are six tools in the modules for this course. Their purpose is to stimulate a structured conversation among stakeholders in the brand.

The tools have been organised so that they offer a ‘Whole Brained’ approach to investigating the Brand, ensuring that people with different thinking styles will feel fully engaged in the conversation. It doesn’t matter if you are a Green, Blue, Yellow or Red thinker, one of these tools will be a good fit with participants in the workshop.

The modules in this course have been structured and ordered for ease of comprehension.

However, in a working context, you’d use them in a different sequence.

Most likely, you’d decide to use some of the workshop tools to get as many ideas and as much information as you can about the brand.

You may add to this information with available data from existing research. (We’ll discuss Whole Brain Research in a different course.)

Once you have harvested as much useful information as is available, then you can compartmentalise it using the Whole Brain Branding model. On occasion, you may find some pieces of information appear in more than one quadrant. For example, it’s not unusual to find a Blue Quadrant piece of evidence also appearing in the Yellow Quadrant as a significant point of difference.

Once the four quadrants have been covered, you’re in a position to define the rational and emotional relationships, determine service drivers and tone of voice.

At this point, you may want to work on the Brand Promise.

But you may find that exploring the Higher Purpose of the Brand through the Why, How, What, stimulates your thinking.

It really doesn’t matter which you do first as long as you eventually hit on a Brand Promise that meets the following criteria:

1. No-one else owns it.

2. You can deliver it.

3. It’s meaningful and desirable to your customers and clients.

4. It’s a motivating ‘stretch’ target to your staff.

5. It has longevity.

You’ll then have the core of a differentiating, engaging, empowering, long-term brand strategy.

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