

Making Everything Easier!™

2nd Edition

Branding

FOR
DUMMIES[®]
A Wiley Brand

Learn to:

- Understand the meaning and process of branding
- Get clear about the difference between branding and marketing
- Create and keep loyal brand customers
- Manage and protect your brand

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Branding and marketing experts





by
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Barbara Findlay Schenck**

FOR
DUMMIES
A Wiley Brand

Branding For Dummies®, 2nd Edition

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Branding For Dummies®, 2nd Edition

Visit

www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/branding to view this book's cheat sheet.

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Introduction

Congratulations! You're about to take control of your brand.

If you're thinking, "I don't even have a brand," then this book is definitely for you. It's also for anyone who wants to build a better brand, repair a broken brand, extend the power of a valuable brand, or start from scratch and create a brand-new brand.

Branding is a red-hot topic (pardon the pun) that keeps increasing in importance for good reason: Brands pave the way for marketing success.

When people hear your organization's name — or your personal name, in the case of personal brands — thoughts pop up that influence what they believe and how they buy. Those thoughts, held in the minds of others, are the basis of your brand. They may be the result of direct associations with you or your organization, but chances are even greater that they're the result of web searches, online reviews, word-of-mouth comments, or other impressions that you're making even when you're nowhere in sight.

This book is all about defining the vision and idea of your desired brand image and then making sure that the impressions you're making lead to the positive set of thoughts you want people to have, trust, and believe about who you are and what you stand for.

Count on this book to guide you through the branding process and to lead you to a better, stronger brand that can compete successfully in the big, branded world around you.

About This Book

When the publisher *For Dummies* books, one of the world's most recognized book brands, first asked us to write a book on branding, we knew we were looking at a tall order and sky-high standards to live up to. Since the original edition of this book was published in 2006, *Branding For Dummies* has been read by thousands upon thousands of readers, translated into multiple languages, and excerpted in hundreds of other books and sites. Now, eight years later, we're happy to introduce this heavily updated second edition.

Branding For Dummies, 2nd Edition, is still the only plain English, do-it-yourself guide to branding we've seen, and we've looked high and low. What's changed is that this second edition includes new chapters on personal branding and one-person business brands, digital communications, and social media, which has emerged at rapid speed to become today's all-important brand-communication channel. Plus nearly every page of this book has been brought up-to-date with current advice, examples, and step-by-step instructions to follow.

As with all *For Dummies* books, this one can be used as a reference, so you can jump around and still make sense of the information, even if you haven't read all the chapters that precede it. Sidebars, the shaded boxes of text, cover bonus content that's interesting but not essential, so you can skip them if you're in a hurry.

Here's our pledge: You don't need an MBA or even a marketing or business background to make sense of this book. All you need is an interest in the topic of branding and a curiosity about what it is and how to do it. We take care of the rest.

You probably already know that branding works. This book shows you how to make it work for you.

Foolish Assumptions

First things first: Anyone smart enough to want to know more about branding is no fool. Thanks for entrusting us with your interest. We've done back flips to make sure that this book includes everything you need to know about branding, all presented with easy-to-understand translations for every technical term.

In writing this book, we made a few assumptions about you and the many others we hope will use this book.

- ✓ You're not a marketing professional — or if you are, you're looking for a branding refresher course for yourself or to share with those you work with. To make this book useful to every reader, we gear our explanations and advice to those who are charting new territory as they enter the branding arena.
- ✓ You're interested in building or strengthening a brand — for your company, for a nonprofit organization, for your new business, for a campaign (fundraising, political, social, you name it ...), or for yourself by making your name into a respected resource, a local personality, or a small-scale celebrity. Regardless of your branding objective, we're guessing that you're not expecting to become the next Nike or Apple, but we think it's a safe bet that you'd like to acquire some of their branding strength. Who wouldn't!
- ✓ You're willing to invest effort to achieve the returns that result from a good branding program. To help, we include worksheets, charts, and sets of how-to instructions to guide the research, planning,

positioning, design, implementation, and management involved in fueling your success with the power of a great brand.

Icons Used in This Book

This book wouldn't live up to the *For Dummies* brand promise without the symbols that sit in the outer margin alerting you to valuable information and advice. Watch for these icons:



The bull's-eye marks tried-and-true approaches that will save you time, money, and trouble as you build your branding program.



It's one thing to read advice and steps to follow. It's a whole other thing to read a true story of how an actual business tackled an issue topic successfully. This icon flags great branding examples and lessons.



When there's a danger to avoid or just a bad idea to steer clear of, this icon sits in the margin like a flashing yellow light.



This icon points out branding's golden rules. Watch for them throughout the book.

Beyond the Book

In addition to what you'll find in this book's 300-plus pages, you can also access the *Branding For Dummies* Cheat Sheet at www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/branding. It contains at-a-glance guidance and additional information you can put to work as you develop your brand and branding program.

Plus, we've posted some more useful material at www.dummies.com/extras/branding, including a bonus Part of Tens list featuring traits common to the world's greatest global brands and articles that summarize important and easy-to-reference advice from each of the parts in this book.

Where to Go from Here

True to the *For Dummies* format, you can start this book on any page. Every portion of the book is a self-standing component, which means that you don't have to read sequentially from cover-to-cover to make sense of the content. (If you have time and the inclination to read every word on every page, start-to-finish, however, we'd love nothing more!)

If you're new to the field of branding, count on Chapter [1](#) for a good overview of the contents of the entire book as well as a crash-course on the topic, language, and process of branding. If you're in a hurry because you're facing a crucial branding issue or wrestling with a branding problem, the table of contents or index guides you straight to the advice you need. If you already have a branding program but want to polish the luster of your brand or even do some rapid brand repair, skip to Parts [IV](#) and [V](#).

For now, get started by using this book from start-to-finish or by cherry-picking the contents. So long as you

end up with a clear brand identity that you project consistently in your market, your approach will have worked. So turn the page — and start branding!

Part I
**Getting Started with
Branding**



For Dummies can help you get started with lots of subjects. Visit www.dummies.com to learn more and do more with *For Dummies*.

In this part ...

- ✓ Get clear about what brands are, why they're such a big deal, how they power success, and what it takes to build the brand image you want for your business, your product, your organization, or yourself.
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with clear-cut definitions of branding terminology and learn the differences between brands and commodities, including what it takes to move your offerings into the coveted brand category and far from the budget-breaking realm of generic contenders.
- ✓ Follow proven steps for building your brand from essence to esteem. Zero in on your brand vision, get real about your current brand identity and awareness level, assess your strongest brand assets, set your branding goals, make your branding to-do list, and assemble the resources you need build, manage and protect your brand — including your branding budget and your all-important brand-building team.
- ✓ Get the lowdown on how to power up your personal brand and — if you're a freelancer, consultant or one-person business owner — your solo-business brand as well.

Chapter 1

Putting Brands and Branding in Perspective

In This Chapter

- ▶ Orienting yourself to what brands are all about
 - ▶ Understanding the power of branding
 - ▶ Committing the necessary people, resources, and time to build a brand
-

Maybe you're gearing up to brand a new business or a product. Maybe you have an established brand and it's time to undertake some brand updates or brand extensions. Maybe your brand needs repair. Or maybe you're planning for a minor-to-major overhaul or the drastic move of a full-fledged rebranding.

Perhaps you simply want to come up to speed — in a hurry — on the whole topic of branding and how to do it best. Or, maybe you aren't quite sure whether or not you even *have* a brand, but you're pretty sure you need one and you want to know which steps you should take to end up with the brand you set out to build.

You've chosen the right book. Of the thousands of resources out there on the topics of brands and branding, you've opened the one that's branded with the *For Dummies* promise: *Making Everything Easier*.

The primary job of branding is to transform a complex message into simple and clear communication. This chapter gets you going with a simple and clear overview

of the reasons brands matter, branding steps to follow, and how the brand value you develop far exceeds the time and effort you invest.

Wake-Up Call: You Probably Have a Brand, Whether You Know It or Not

When people encounter your name, they conjure up impressions and memories that determine their beliefs about you. Their notions may be the result of direct dealings with you or your organization or they may stem from web-search results, good or bad publicity, word-of-mouth, online reviews and ratings, or any other mentions that plant thoughts about you in their minds.

People may have a deep well of perceptions about you, or your slate in their minds may be nearly clear of any impressions whatsoever. Regardless of whether the beliefs people hold about you are many or few, good or bad, or accurate or inaccurate, they comprise the image of your brand, influencing how customers think and buy. Branding is the route to making sure that your brand image in the minds of others is perfectly aligned with the brand image you want them to have.

What Are Brands, Anyway?

Brands are promises. More complete definitions follow, but as you venture into the world of branding, keep those three words and these three truths in mind:

- ✓ **You establish your brand by building trust in a one-of-a-kind promise.** Your promise conveys who you are, what you stand for, and what unique and meaningful benefits you deliver.
- ✓ **You build your brand by living up to your promise every time people come into contact with you, your name, your message, or your business.** It makes no difference whether that contact is through a web search, your website, social media, advertising, publicity, word of mouth, the buying experience, customer service, billings, returns, or any other form of communication. Every encounter affects how others perceive your brand.



- ✓ **You strengthen your brand by constantly reinforcing your brand promise.** If encounters with your brand aren't in line with what people expected, those experiences essentially break your promise, breaking your brand and risking your reputation as a result.

Building brands takes focus, passion, persistence, and diligence. Plus, brand building requires effort and commitment. The payoff, and it's a big one, is that strong brands power personal and business success. The following sections shed light on what brands do and why they're such a big deal.



It's about perception, not the logo

We want to clear up a branding misconception: A logo isn't a brand. A logo is a symbol that represents a brand. Your brand isn't how you look or what you say or even what you sell. Your brand is what people trust and believe you stand for. For example:

- ✓ Starbucks sells coffee and, increasingly, other beverages. It stands for daily inspiration.
- ✓ Apple sells computers. It stands for thinking differently.
- ✓ Disney sells animated and amusement-park family entertainment. It stands for imagination, wholesome fun, and making dreams come true.

Your brand lives in consumer minds. Branding is the process of developing consumer beliefs and perceptions that are accurate and in alignment with what you want your brand to be.

What brands do

Brands create consumer trust and emotional attachments. As a result, they foster relationships between consumers and products that withstand pricing wars, transcend offers from new competitors, and even overcome rare lapses in product or service excellence, as detailed in the next few sections.

Great brands aren't just known and trusted. They're loved.



For examples of brands that enjoy strong bonds with customers, the next time you're stuck in traffic, look at the logos posted in the windows of the cars around you. Each time you see a logo decal, try to think of that brand's chief competitor. Then ask yourself, "What's the chance that a buyer of the competing brand would display the brand's logo with such pride?" Only brands that strike deep emotional chords with customers make their way into hearts,

minds — and car windows. Chapters [13](#) and [14](#) provide a playbook to follow as you cultivate brand enthusiasts inside and outside your organization.

As you develop your brand and it gains strength and loyalty in your market area, look forward to reaping the following benefits.

Brands make selling easier

People prefer to buy from companies they feel they know and can trust. Brands put forth that assurance.



Whether you're selling products to consumers, investment opportunities to stockholders, job opportunities to applicants, freelance or consulting services to clients, or ideas to constituents, a brand paves the way for success by establishing positive awareness of your unique and meaningful promise before you ever present your sales proposition.

When people are aware of your brand and its unique and positive attributes, they understand what you stand for and what unique value they can count on you to deliver. As a result, when it comes time to make a sale, brand owners can concentrate on the wants and needs of the consumer because they don't need to explain themselves.

Without positive brand awareness, you have to build a case for the value you deliver every single time you get ready to make a sale. While brand owners are closing the deal, those without strong brands are still introducing themselves.

Brands prevail over no-name offerings

In the marketplace, you have either a one-of-a-kind brand or a one-is-as-good-as-any-other commodity.

- ✓ **Brands are products defined by and chosen for their unique distinguishing attributes and promise.** Consumers are willing to spend extra effort and money to obtain the brands they believe in.
- ✓ **Commodities are products that are easy to substitute and hard to differentiate.** Oil, coffee beans, wheat flour, and milk are commodities. Consumers buy commodities because they meet minimum standards and are available when and where they're needed and at the lowest price. Only commodity items that are distinguished by a unique attribute and promise — think of Pillsbury flour as an example — develop into strong brands.



As proof of how brands pave the way for positive decisions, imagine you're setting out to buy a computer and you see one emblazoned with a known logo — the face of a known brand. It's likely that your next step is to dive into a discussion with the salesperson of how much memory the particular model you're viewing contains, how the machine can be customized to your needs, what software is included, and other details that will move you to the purchase decision. On the other hand, if you see a no-name model — even at a dramatically lower price — you're likely to first try to assess the quality of the manufacturer. You may ask the salesperson where the computer was made, how long the manufacturer's been in business, whether the manufacturer is reliable, whether other customers have been satisfied, and other mind-calming questions about consumer satisfaction levels, warranties, and return programs that you wouldn't

raise when dealing with the known entity of an established brand.



Selling a no-name item is a costly route to a sale in a brick-and-mortar setting, and it's even a tougher proposition online, where no one is standing by to offer explanations, inspire confidence, counter resistance, or break down barriers for your consumers.

Flip to Chapter [2](#) for more on outselling budget-busting commodities with your brand.

Brands build equity

Brands that are preferred and valued by consumers deliver a long list of business benefits that translate to higher sales, higher profit margins, and higher owner value. Consider these brand advantages as proof:

- ✓ People are willing to pay more to buy brands that they believe deliver outstanding and desirable benefits. This is true for business brands, product brands, and personal brands, which are the focus of Chapter [4](#).
- ✓ Consumers stay loyal to brands, buying them more often, in greater volume, and without the need for promotional incentives.
- ✓ Retailers provide brands greater store visibility because they know that brands drive sales and result in higher store revenues.
- ✓ Brand owners can grow their businesses by leveraging their brands into product and line extensions rather than having to introduce new products from scratch.
- ✓ Brand owners find it easier to attract and retain good employees because applicants believe in the quality of

the workplace based on advance knowledge of the caliber of the brand.

- ✓ Brand owners run more efficient operations because they align decisions with the mission, vision, and values that underpin the brand promise.
- ✓ Brand owners benefit from increased market share, increased investor support, and increased company value.

Why brands are a big deal

With more new businesses and products than ever before, and with a competitive arena that — thanks to the Internet — stretches all the way around the world, brands are more necessary today than ever before. Here are a few of the reasons why:



- ✓ **Brands unlock profitability.** Today's marketplace is full of more products than ever before, and, overwhelmed by the selection, people choose and pay premium prices only for products they've heard of, trust, and believe deliver higher value than the others. If consumers think all products in a category are virtually the same and no offering is better or distinctly different from the others, they simply grab whichever one is available at the lowest price. That's a profit-squeezing reality that brand marketers gratefully avoid.
- ✓ **Brands prompt consumer selection.** For the first time in shopping history, consumers can shop and buy without any geographic limitation. The Internet and other at-home shopping options allow far-reaching access to any product, anywhere. With a few clicks or keystrokes, consumers find and select products with

names they know and promises they trust. In this boundless marketplace, brands rule and no-name products barely survive.

- ✓ **Brands build name awareness.** For good reason, new businesses and products increasingly go by invented names instead of by known words. For one thing, more than three million U.S. trademarks are already registered, so any marketer who wants to protect a new name practically needs to create a never-before seen word in order to succeed. For another, 99 percent of all words in the English dictionary are already reserved as Internet addresses and are therefore unavailable to new marketers. As a result, most new offerings are launched under invented names, and invented names require strong and diligent brand development in order to achieve consumer awareness, recall, and meaning. (Chapter [7](#) is full of advice for naming your brand.)
- ✓ **Brands increase the odds of business survival.** New businesses and new products are being launched at an unprecedented pace. Only those that ride into the market on the strength of an established brand or those that are capable of building a brand name in a hurry can seize consumer awareness, understanding, and preference fast enough to survive.

Brands have been around for centuries, as the sidebar "[The red-hot history of branding](#)" explains. But they've never been more important — or more essential to business success — than they are today.

Gaining Your Branding Bearings

People confuse branding with designing a logo. Or they think branding is a matter of creating a great website, great ads, and consistently great marketing messages. But branding is way more than any of that.

Deciphering branding lingo

Following are some need-to-know terms:

- ✓ **Brand:** The essence and idea of what you stand for. Your brand starts with a vision and grows into a promise about who you are and what you stand for that gets reinforced every time people come in contact with any facet of your business or organization.
- ✓ **Brand identity:** The name and visual marks that present your brand, usually in the form of a logo, symbol, or unique typestyle, as well as all other identifying elements including colors, package shape, even sounds and smells associated with your brand.
- ✓ **Brand image:** The beliefs about what your brand is and what it stands for that exist in the customer's mind as a result of all encounters, associations, and experiences with any aspect of your business or organization.
- ✓ **Branding:** The process of building positive perceptions in your customer's mind by consistently presenting the vision and idea of your brand so others understand and believe what you stand for and the promise you invariably make and keep.
- ✓ **Brand position:** How your brand fits in with and relates to various other brands within your competitive market.
- ✓ **Brand management:** Controlling the presentation of your brand identity, message, and promise across your entire organization and through all communication