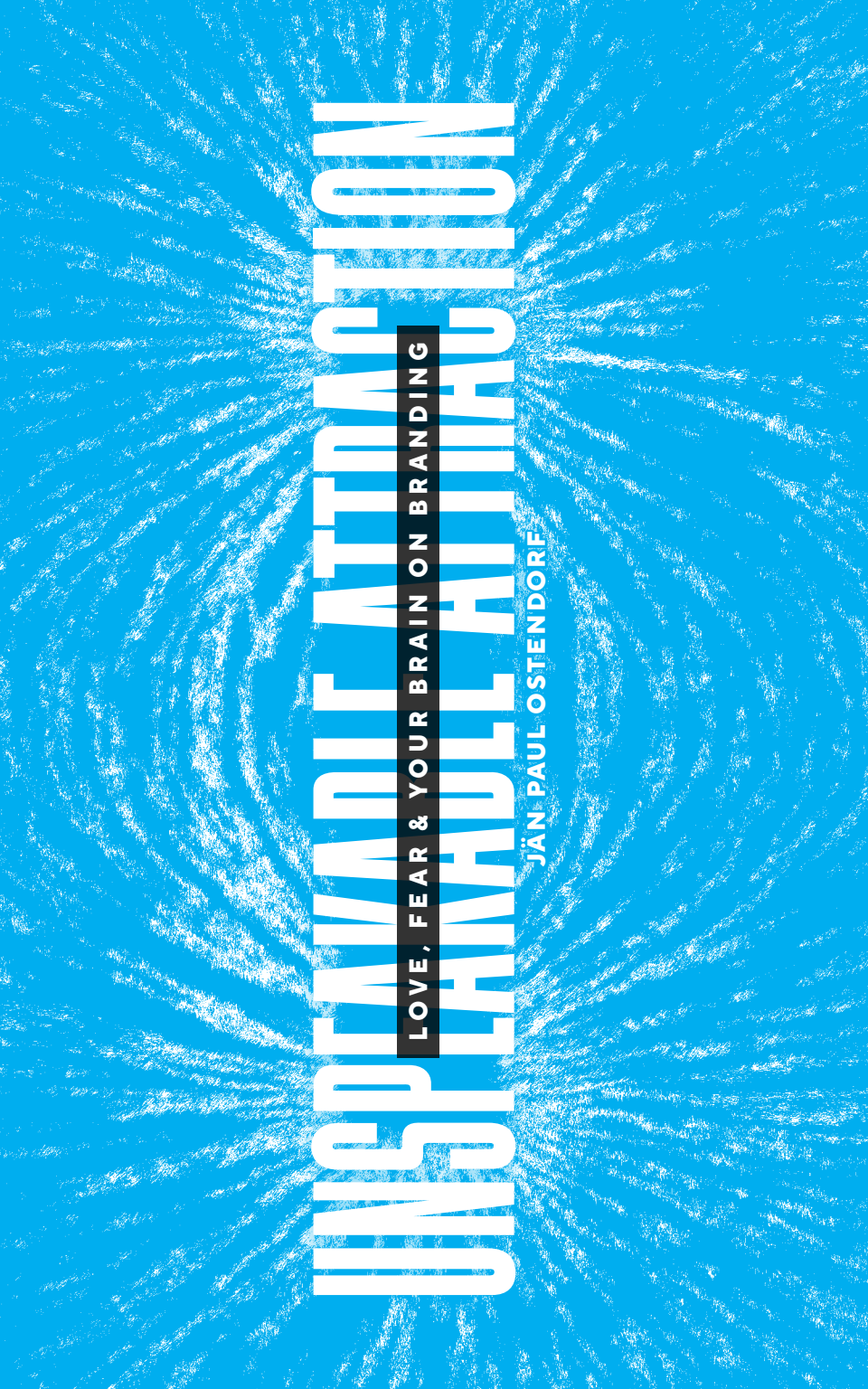




UNSPRAGMATIC ATTENTION

LOVE, FEAR & YOUR BRAIN ON BRANDING

JÄN PAUL OSTENDORF

Unspeakable Attraction: Love, Fear & Your Brain on Branding

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, write to Purpose Branding LLC., www.brandsonpurpose.com

ISBN: 979-8-9860440-9-5

Text copyright and Illustrations copyright
© 2025 by Jän Paul Ostendorf.
Book layout & design by Jän Paul Ostendorf

All rights reserved. Published by Purpose Branding LLC.

Printed in the U.S.A.
First printing, August 2025

**PURPOSE
BRANDING**

www.brandsonpurpose.com

LOVE, FEAR & YOUR BRAIN ON BRANDING

JÄN PAUL OSTENDORF

INTRODUCTION

1

**EVOLUTIONARY
INSTINCTS**

11

**BIOLOGICAL
REACTIONS**

41

**EMOTIONAL
DRIVERS**

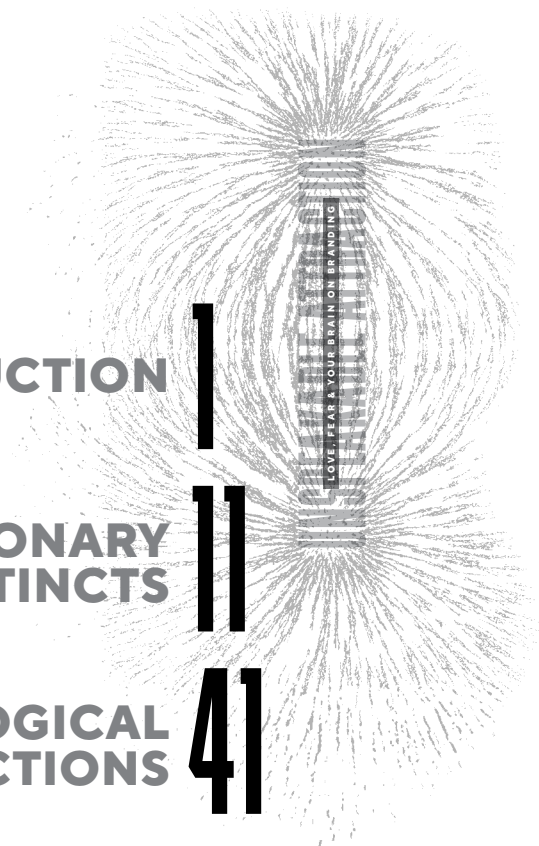
53

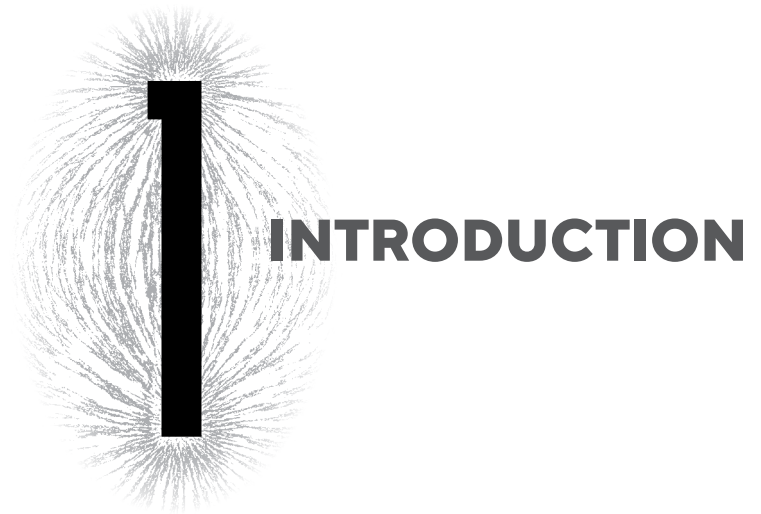
**PURSUIT OF
PURPOSE**

77

**PRINCIPLES
TO BRAND BY**

101





1 INTRODUCTION

The conception of this book was born from digesting the results of a neuromarketing buyer behavior study that was conducted from 2004 to 2007. At the time, it was not only the largest — seven million dollars and over 2000 participants from US, UK, Germany, Japan, and China — it was one of the first to use fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) brain scans rather than focus group interviews. Focus groups have had a history of being hit or miss. Accurate to some degree,

but no one would consider highly reliable. They wanted to change that by using fMRI to measure the participant's blood flow to particular parts of their brain when questions were asked or when they experienced the product for the first time. The study demonstrated the subconscious factors driving consumer behavior and that what the participants said was opposite of how their physiology reacted. What they saw on the fMRI display provided great insights to how our brains, not just our conscious minds, dictate purchasing decisions.

Five Factors

As I read about the study and its results, I couldn't help but apply these factors and principles to branding and brand communication. I distilled the factors down to five categories: evolutionary, biological,

emotional, purpose-driven, and intellectual. For this book, the definitions of these factors are as follows:

Evolutionary factors: Instinct and survival

Biological factors: Stimuli that a living organism responds to

Emotional factors: Our emotions, biochemistry, and emotional ties to our perception of truth

Purpose-driven factors: Finding meaning in life and events, not limited to only altruistic, charity, or religious endeavors.

Intellectual factors: Personal growth in understanding (learning for pleasure) and pursuing creativity.

Even though I listed Intellectual Factors as one of the five driving human behavior, I will not dedicate a chapter to this factor because it is extremely hard to measure and determine why someone who is primarily driven this way

would decide to switch or choose a brand. They may do it just for the experience alone or a raw curiosity. This personality type is estimated to be between one and five percent of the population.

We will be looking into how and why these four factors, evolutionary, biological, emotional, and purpose, contribute to a person being attracted to a brand. And the converse, what happens inside our minds when distrust is developed for a brand.

Purpose in Business?

I find these four factors intriguing, especially the intangible (somewhat elusive) factor of purpose. When I read a book by Jim Collins called "Good to Great," he connected the dots for me. His research brought to light a common thread among companies that grew from being good to great. He concluded, "Companies need

to exist for a higher purpose than mere profit generation to transcend the category of merely good." Why is that? What does "higher purpose" have to do with running a successful business?

Man's Search for Meaning

A portion of the answer lies in Viktor Frankl's philosophy found in his book "Man's Search for Meaning." As a Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist, he famously stated that "Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in life". He believed that finding meaning, not survival of the fittest, is the core driving force behind human existence.

In this book, I aim to prove that great brands (and businesses) connect with people through shared values and a connection to meaning. This has happened through an unconscious connection and trust through the intertwined

dance of their emotions, instincts, biology, and reasoning. We may have a hard time explaining why we love the things we do. Why we may have a quick connection to someone we meet for the first time, and some we don't. Most of the time, it's an immediate response.

One personal example was the first time I walked into my first home. It was a neglected dump that had been on the market for over a year. It was the byproduct of a nasty divorce. They both left what they no longer wanted, which included food, and a basement and garage full of junk. Five truckloads of junk. Behind the garage was full of trash. The neglected and overgrown backyard had a broken-down Snoopy doghouse with half a fuselage on top. In one corner, a sandbox with the bottom half of a mannequin. Creepy! The house was within hours of foreclosure and

wasn't even being represented by a Realtor. Our Realtor tracked down the bank president and was able to secure the keys so we could see inside. My wife and I took two steps into the front room for the first time. We were greeted with nicotine-stained yellow walls with a matching smell. We were standing on old, nasty, stained, and sun-bleached 1970s carpet and turned to our Realtor and said, "We love it! We'll take it. How much should we offer?"

Let me fill in the backstory a little. We had been looking at houses for six months or more. We didn't like any of them. None of them "felt" like home. This house was in a historic neighborhood that was very sought after, and we never thought we could get into, when we drove into the small driveway and walked up the small curvy brick walk under a huge 100-year-old pine tree to the old historic porch. We were

in love with it. Yeah, not the chalky-white and dented aluminum siding. Not the wood on the porch that needed to be replaced. Not the replacement plexiglass window in the front door. But for some reason, we loved it almost at first sight.

So why did we both arrive at the same conclusion immediately? I don't know. Maybe it was the twelve-foot ceilings. Maybe it was the old wood trim and pocket doors — the historic “charm.” Maybe the small dormer on the second story added to the Cape Cod look. Maybe it was because it was the underdog of the neighborhood.

For some reason, we could look past all the decaying food, unidentifiable putrid smells and we saw a gem. We saw a home. I don't think we've regretted it a single day of the

twenty-seven years we've lived here. Why did we both just know so quickly? We didn't even need to talk it over or rationalize it to ourselves or each other. We didn't even know the price. We had never renovated a home before. However, we both just knew. We couldn't explain it. We felt comfortable immediately. It felt like home. There's no rational explanation for this. It just feels right. Is it one thing? Is it all the things? We are receiving something by way of our subconscious that we like or need — an unspeakable attraction — something we are not able to put into words.

This book takes an investigative journey into the profound insights gained from that groundbreaking neuromarketing study and applies the principles learned to the subject of branding. Brand attraction often defies rational explanation, arising from an intricate interplay

of instincts, emotions, and biology. The following chapters will delve into the mysterious workings of the mind, unraveling why we form immediate, unspoken bonds with certain brands and how these connections influence our choices in ways we may never fully articulate. The bedrock foundation is that exceptional brands forge deep connections with people through shared values and purpose.



The evolutionary response of staying alive and injury-free, increasing our chances of survival, is a powerful driving force. Survival is an evolutionary and biological response that is baked into our DNA. Our need to stay alive is one of those subconscious responses that affects everything we do and every choice we make without us acknowledging it, but how does it relate to choosing a brand?

Our bodies or nervous systems are constantly receiving and reacting in milliseconds to our surroundings and experiences. This happens at interactions with businesses, salespeople, websites, and everything a person senses and receives, whether subconscious or conscious. What we are aiming for in branding and communication is to create a congruency between the message and reality so that the nervous system determines there is no confusion and no reason to mistrust the information we are receiving.

Your mind does not like confusion unless it can determine it as a threat. It frankly does not have time for things that just don't make sense. It will kick it out as unimportant for learning. Surprises are a little different because they immediately break the norm and then deliver a clever twist

on reality. Humor is similar. Many designers and creative professionals will try to use surprise or humor to their advantage. It can and does work. However, the surprise needs to be delightful, not frightful. Then it needs to make sense in context and a connection to the brand.

Delightful will be remembered. Delightful, combined with congruency with the purpose of usefulness, you have a positive and significant somatic marker. One that will not easily be changed. Businesses want to be known for what they want to be known for. Yes, that's a tautology. It sounds so simple and commonsensical that it's almost stupid. However, how many times have you read a website headline, a company's name, tagline, and still not know what they do? Oftentimes, there is a disconnect with what the business says and the experience

received — a break between the message and reality. That is a large mental chasm to overcome, taking time to explain that most potential customers may not want to invest.

Survival within Community

Survival instinct also extends to our place in society, community, and belonging. Before countries, nationalities, boundaries, and borders, we had tribes, clans, and families. We would survive if we could surround ourselves with those whom we could trust.

One old, yet current example of this is the Masai African Tribe rite of passage — it marks the coming of age of Masai boys who are 12–25 years old. The ceremony takes two months to plan and complete. First, the boys must give away everything that they own. Then, on the day of the ceremony, the boys shave their heads and paint their faces with white chalk. They put

on black cloaks and ostrich feather headdresses. Then, the village elders perform the initiation rights on each boy inside a small tent, where they are circumcised. The final stage of the ritual is where the group of boys (future tribe leaders) go hunt a lion. After this ritual is performed, the boys are now considered to be warriors. These now warriors will be in charge of the security of their society.

During the hunting phase of this ritual, community is built, future roles in society are determined by who you can trust when your life depends on it. Naturally, you will be drawn to those that believe what you believe. A true leader will naturally rise to the occasion to lead the group. The greater the trust the greater your rate of survival. Your very life depends on honing the skill of discerning who you can trust and what you can trust them with.

So, that innate ability to be attracted to those people or groups that will not disappoint has been hardwired into our brains. Whether those entities are companies, products, services, or people, we don't like to be disappointed. We need to find those we can trust to deliver what they promise.

Trust creates attachment, and when you're a brand, you want attachment. Here's an interesting way of looking at how your brain works regarding trust and attachment. Dr. Karl D. Lehman, M.D., explains the structure of our brains in terms of Levels of Attachment.

Level 1: Basal Ganglia & the Thalamus

- Lacks the capacity for language
- Operates below the level of conscious awareness
- Managing attachment, sensory input, and motor responses
- Influences how we form emotional bonds
- Contributes to procedural learning, habits, and skills

Level 2: Amygdala

- Lacks the capacity for language
- Operates below the level of conscious awareness
- Moderates emotional responses to experiences
- Influences fear, pleasure, and memory formation
- Contributes to rapid threat detection and survival instincts

Level 3: Right-sided Cingulate Cortex

- Processing language is limited
- Begins to integrate conscious awareness
- Operates with some conscious and voluntary control
- Moderates relational connections to others
- Influences emotional regulation and social behavior
- Contributes to empathy, intuition, and assessing relationships

Level 4: Right-sided Prefrontal Cortex

- Processing language is limited
- Supports conscious awareness
- Operates with conscious and voluntary control
- Serves as the source of discernment and decision-making
- Influences creativity, imagination, and holistic thinking
- Contributes to planning, problem-solving, and emotional insight

Level 5: Left-sided Prefrontal Cortex

- Possesses capacity for language processing and articulation
- Operates with conscious and voluntary control
- Helps make sense of experiences and interpret their meaning
- Influences logical reasoning, analysis, and self-reflection
- Contributes to organizing thoughts, verbal expression, and goal-directed behavior

Levels 1 and 2 are unconscious and involuntary and are immediately available at birth. Levels 3 through 5 are conscious and voluntary. Trained from infancy. Level 3 is trained chiefly during childhood, with levels 4 and 5 trained later in childhood and throughout life.

Here's the kicker: the availability of both structure and function progresses from lower levels to higher levels. The brain operates in layers, with each level building on the ones below it. This means that the brain's physical

components and their abilities emerge in a bottom-up order: starting with basic, instinctive systems that are ready at birth, and gradually unlocking more advanced, conscious, and voluntary functions as the brain develops over time. The lower levels provide the foundation, while the higher levels — like language and reasoning — build on them and become available later in life.

So take a moment to let that sink in. We start every thought process at the (Level 1) attachment level. How attached are we to something? How much does this interaction with a product or company remind us of another attachment we have that is also favorable? This area of our brain has no capacity for rational thought or language, yet determines what we are attracted to and attached to; it provides

the unspeakable attraction we have to certain people, places, or things.

This brain-level framework intuitively applies to brand attraction. When a brand communicates shared values and aligns with a person's sense of purpose, it taps into those lower, unconscious levels of the brain:

Level 1 (Basal Ganglia & Thalamus): The brand might trigger a sense of attachment or familiarity through consistent sensory cues — like a logo, jingle, or vibe — that feel “right” without needing explanation. It's like an instinctive pull, hardwired and wordless.

Level 2 (Amygdala): The brand evokes positive emotions — comfort, trust, or excitement — because it resonates with something meaningful, like belonging or safety. This

happens fast and unconsciously, tagging the brand as “good.”

Level 3 (Right-sided Cingulate Cortex): The relational connection kicks in, subtly reinforcing that this brand fits with “my people” or “my tribe” based on shared values. It's a gut-level sense of alignment, not a reasoned one.

At these levels, there's no language or conscious analysis involved — just a feeling. The person “just knows” they like it because the attraction happens below awareness. They might say, “It feels like home,” like I did with my first house purchase, without pinning down why. The higher levels (4 and 5) might later rationalize it (“Oh, it's because they care about sustainability like I do”), but the initial draw doesn't need that — it's visceral. An unspeakable attraction.

Why This Happens

The lower levels (1-3) dominate the first impression because they're fast, automatic, and don't need conscious processing. Shared values and purpose hit those survival instincts — trust, belonging, meaning — that Dr. Karl Lehman ties to Viktor Frankl's ideas about meaning being life's driving force. If a brand nails that alignment, it's a yes; if it misses, it's a no. The person feels it before they think it, and since Levels 1-3 lack language, they might never fully explain it unless Level 5 (Left-sided Prefrontal Cortex) steps in to analyze later.

Societal Acceptance

It's a well-known fact in the world of market research that the intent to buy and making a purchase don't often correlate. People say one thing and do another. Just like the fact that people make decisions emotionally and justify

it rationally, people's true behavior is often driven by deep-seated emotions and forgotten memories, even though they have given a rational (a politically correct, non-offensive or expected) answer during a focus group session. What we don't know is what is going on inside their brains upon initial contact with a product or service. Is it activating their pleasure or pain centers? What do they believe about it, and do they trust what you are saying? Remember, their survival depends upon it.

I know it's just one small item or purchase, but mentally it comes down to a personal sense of success or failure, value or loss, or true or false. It becomes a record in our minds if we've made the right choice. Does this choice reinforce my beliefs about myself, about what I believe about the world I live in? We need security. We need trust, and when that trust is broken, our world

falls apart just a little. And who likes their world falling apart? No one.

A good association with a brand (tribe or clan) or a good purchase (decision) reinforces our belief about our ability to survive, contribute to society and be good stewards over what we have. As a living organism, we are either benefiting from our decisions or losing ground.

The need for long-term alliances and relationships for survival and prosperity encourages attachment to reliable and consistent brands. This is seen in "Safety Through Alliance (Survival Instinct)," where shared values mimic a protective tribal bond, where consistency builds dependability, resulting in peace of mind. This evolutionary drive for stability mirrors our ancestral need for dependable allies. The resistance of facing discomfort from disconnection discourages

switching brands. For example, under a healthy connection, loyalty grows. It is evolutionarily advantageous when loyalty maintains established, beneficial relationships without the need for expending energy on finding new relationships.

Brands Bring Balance

We, as living organisms, are constantly striving for a state of homeostasis — The the natural tendency toward a stable state of equilibrium both biologically and mentally. The mind seeks to maintain a stable, low-risk, and low-effort state, much like the body maintains physical balance. Brands can aid our pursuit of homeostasis. We are at our optimal efficiency when we reach it, which in turn, gives us the best possible chance at staying healthy and alive. Think of it like running at a constant rate of speed down a level highway. The car is at peak

efficiency getting the most out of every drop of gasoline or the energy in your batteries.

Reaching homeostasis in our thoughts requires getting to a place where our brains can operate functions and activities without expending much energy. Expending energy means you are burning calories. If you're burning calories, you are creating oxidative stress.

Inflammation is created when you use oxygen to burn calories. Inflammation, an initial response to injury or infection, precedes and supports cellular repair. Your body has learned it wants to reduce oxidative stress. In doing so, it would generally promote well-being by calming an overactive response, while its occurrence stems from the body's hardwired reaction to threats, real or perceived.

One branding example of aspiring and pursuing a feeling of homeostasis is Delta's Business

Elite Sky Club. It provides a waiting area that simulates our living room. They understand that traveling can be very stressful, even when everything goes well. When we go to another city, we are keenly aware of all the environmental differences and the lack of familiar faces — it wears us out. When you are in familiar surroundings, it is calming and takes less mental processing and less energy.

Another example is driving to a destination, like driving home from work. You can do it while you sleep. Now go somewhere (that same distance) through a city you've never been before; it seems to take twice as long and ten times the energy. Your brain conserves energy and processing wherever it can. It tunes out all the noise it doesn't need to do its job. Companies capitalize on this need for downtime. A few that come to mind are "take a cigarette break,"

putting a lime in the neck of a Corona bottle, or getting your Venti-sized morning double-shot espresso with non-fat soy milk and two pumps of hazelnut. So what's going on here? Why do we settle in and create these routines?

Once we find products, services, or experiences we find favorable, we rinse and repeat. So we like our coffee made a certain way in the morning, what's the big deal? No big deal, really, yet psychologically it's a really big deal. When we create habits, it feeds into the need for active homeostasis, but it also allows us to create a sense of control. Routines and habits help us control or at least feel like we are in control of this life that, for the most part, we have no real control over. Starting your day with that coffee just the way you like it and drinking it in the place you enjoy drinking it helps counteract the demands waiting for you at the office. Not to

mention all the other stuff that gets added to your schedule that you don't know about yet. Habitual behavior and enjoying the brands that cater to a sense of peace provide a false sense of being able to control our lives. It helps us have some mental downtime. Something you can count on that's not taxing.

The average Starbucks barista does not understand that they are helping us reach homeostasis, conserve energy, and serve up a sense of control in our lives every time they serve up our drink. But man, if they screw up, watch out. They will realize through our attitude that our world has just crashed. We don't need to start our day being late for work, compounded with the feeling of being out of control. It only takes a few times before that trust is broken and the damage is done. We will go elsewhere.

Watching sports and, more specifically watching the habits developed while people watching sporting events, is a good place to see companies promoting rituals with the use of their products. From clothing to food, it's everywhere. It's hard not to watch a football game and not see many ads for pizza and beer. The Super Bowl is the apex of this behavior, where we feel the need to go to a party and have chicken wings, beer, nachos, and guacamole. Companies know they have a customer for life when they have become part of a cultural ritual.

Visual Stimuli and Homeostasis

"The way we approach design is by trying to achieve the most with the very least. We are absolutely consumed by trying to develop a solution that is very simple, because as human beings we understand clarity." – Jonathan Ive, Apple VP of Design

Everything we see contributes to or hinders homeostasis. The brain needs to make sense of the world around us, taking in information. They call this the Cognitive Unconscious: How our brain processes information, even information we are unconsciously unaware of is still being received. When that information makes sense, it is accepted more readily. When it does not make sense, it is either discarded or creates confusion.

The Gestalt Visual Laws were created in the 1920s and provide an understanding of how we visually receive information and make sense of it. They are also known as Gestalt principles or laws of perceptual organization, and are a set of rules describing how humans perceive and organize visual elements into coherent wholes. These principles, such as proximity, similarity, closure, continuity, figure/ground, and symmetry & order

(also known as prägnanz), have significantly influenced fields like psychology, design, and art. Gestalt is a German word for “form” or “shape-essence.” It refers to the concept of wholeness. The principle maintains that the human eye sees objects in their entirety before perceiving their individual parts. Suggesting the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Another definition is the output of the neuronal system is greater than the input. This can happen with both verbal and visual.

Gestalt Visual Laws

1. **Law of Proximity:** Elements that are close together are perceived as a unified group or pattern.
2. **Law of Similarity:** Items that share visual characteristics (e.g., shape, color, size) are seen as belonging together.

3. **Law of Closure:** The mind fills in missing parts to perceive a complete, familiar shape rather than fragmented elements.
4. **Law of Continuity:** Elements aligned along a smooth, continuous path (like a line or curve) are perceived as connected.
5. **Law of Figure-Ground:** The mind separates a visual field into a foreground (figure) and background (ground), prioritizing one over the other.
6. **Law of Symmetry:** Symmetrical or simple patterns are preferred, as the brain seeks order and balance (part of the broader "Law of Prägnanz," meaning "good form").
7. **Law of Common Fate:** Elements moving in the same direction or sharing a common motion are perceived as a group.

Language is fairly straightforward and easy to grasp. As you are reading this, your eyes are assembling groups of letters into words. Each word is more than the group of letters; it has meaning and represents something to you.

Your brain has learned to see the whole rather than the parts. It even works if you close your eyes and I say the word “shoe,” an image of a shoe will appear in your mind.

Your brain is constantly taking in visual information, determining whether anything is relevant or important. At the core, it tries to make sense of the world it sees. Look at the human form. What we have one of is in the center of the body, and what we have two of is on either side — Gestalt Law of Symmetry. And, the Law of Proximity states that elements that are close together are perceived as a unified group or pattern.

So why is any of this important?

When developing a visual brand, all the elements you use will build a larger holistic

message. Also, the colors, textures, patterns, shapes, and styles you use when creating a brand style guide are just as important as the brandmark design. The brand voice, tone, and writing style stay congruent with the brand archetype build and reinforce the brand purpose.

Where you place your logo and what other logos are seen with it (in advertising or event sponsorship) will affect your brand. There is a reason why Mercedes-Benz has television ads and sponsorships during tennis and golf championships and not during NASCAR. People will connect the brand to what the brand associates itself with. Our brains are always making associations and trying to organize what we see.

Design principles help us intuitively make sense of the world and the information around us. If you can tap into the natural laws your brain uses to organize information, the quicker and more efficiently your brain will accept, interpret, and retain the information. For most cases, branding professionals are very concerned with what surrounds the brand, making it congruent with the message they are trying to send. Sometimes you can grab attention by breaking the pattern or creating a visual surprise. This may be appropriate for an entertainment company and not for a data security company — one wants you to be surprised, and the other wants to eliminate it.

Breaking a pattern can be risky. Sometimes the verbal or visual irony may not hit the way you intended. The laws can be broken when you are

looking to evoke emotion, grab attention or express a message with its contradiction. I would be careful and leave those who are well versed in those theories and have a sound working knowledge of design to use those breaks.

Pablo Picasso is well known for breaking the rules. What is not that well known is how proficient he was in classical art early in his career. Some of his early works, like the Study of a Torso, look as if it was drawn by Michelangelo, the master of human form. He was well versed in classical art forms and could accurately represent the human form at the age of twelve. It was much later in his life when he pushed the boundaries of art, the human form, techniques in medium, and accepted theories and ideas. However, as he moved into the more

experimental side, the more he lost the average viewer. Communication was lost, and an emotional reaction was gained. The difference between art and design. Design has a purpose — form follows function — whereas art expresses emotion and requires individual interpretation. Take design to its most rudimentary and the least ornamental, and you will get symbols and signs.

“The best designers sometimes disregard the principles of design. When they do so, there is usually some compensating merit attained at the cost of the violation. Unless you are certain of doing as well, it is best to abide by the principles.” William Lidwell paraphrasing William Strunk’s famous admonition in the book “Universal Principles of Design”.

Grounded in evolutionary responses, our minds seek congruency between a brand’s message and reality to foster trust and avoid confusion, which the brain instinctively rejects. By exploring how delightful surprises can enhance memory and how trust drives attachment, rooted in unconscious brain processes like those in the basal ganglia and amygdala, this discussion reveals why brands that align with our innate need for reliability and community can create lasting, positive impressions. Ultimately, it sets the stage for understanding how these primal mechanisms influence our attraction to brands and shape our societal connections.



Seeking Pleasure. Avoiding Pain.

Human attraction to or repulsion from brands is deeply rooted in our biology, driven by the fundamental programming of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. This instinctual mechanism, hardwired into organisms over millions of years of evolution, shapes how we respond to the world around us — including the products

and symbols we encounter. Biologically, the brain's reward system, particularly involving structures like the dopamine-releasing nucleus accumbens, activates when we associate a brand with pleasure, such as comfort, status, or satisfaction. Conversely, the amygdala, attuned to detect threats, triggers avoidance when a brand signals pain, be it through poor quality, negative associations, or discomfort. These responses, often subconscious, reflect an ancient survival strategy repurposed in modern consumer behavior, where brands become proxies for biological cues of safety or reward.

Somatic Markers

In the book "A Whole New Mind," Daniel Pink states, "how cerebral hemispheres operate yields a powerful metaphor for how individuals and organizations navigate." When it comes to

lifestyles, buying behaviors, and brand loyalty, people do what works for them. They do what has rendered them the result they had desired. I know this is a very simplistic view; nonetheless, for the most part, people have learned what works for them. How they have learned is linked to a somatic marker. A repeated action is linked to a positive somatic marker and eliminating behaviors (avoidance) to negative somatic markers.

Somatic markers are like command keys or shortcuts your brain has developed so that it doesn't need to go through the whole process of decision-making every time. They are guideposts or breadcrumbs that allow us to navigate complex situations by making leaps between things we have already learned. One of your brain's jobs is to use your energy as

efficiently as possible. This leads to a higher rate of survival, and the body is all about self-preservation.

As you go through an experience, in this case a brand experience, your mind is creating somatic markers. Last year, I had a terrible experience at a car dealership when I was trying to purchase a car. I loved the car. Hated the buying experience. I would never go back and never recommend that dealership to others. That experience created a somatic marker the size of Dallas. Somatic markers are usually connected to an emotion — pain, pleasure, confusion, fear, joy, abandonment, and so on. Sometimes they are created after deliberating, researching, and reasoning out a decision in the past that worked to your advantage. Still, the result was a positive emotion. Your brain is creating these in the background all the time without you even

knowing it, with the intent of efficiently using the least amount of energy and avoiding pain — this is how we learn to survive and avoid injury.

Pain is not just a motivator; it is also an instrument of how we learn. Have you read Aesop's fable about the old woman and the wine jar?

"You must know that sometimes old women like a glass of wine. One of this sort once found a wine-jar lying in the road, and eagerly went up to it, hoping to find it full. But when she took it up, she found that all the wine had been drunk out of it. Still, she took a long sniff at the mouth of the jar. 'Ah,' she cried, 'what memories cling 'round the instruments of our pleasure.'"

We don't just avoid pain, we seek pleasure to reinforce our beliefs and sometimes escape our present pain. When it comes to learning, a lot

goes back to our memories collected during childhood. We employ specific techniques to get what we want, while still seeking to achieve pleasure. Those techniques can be very wrong, but they work, and until someone corrects us, we have no idea that we are being manipulative, rude, and selfish. In the same way, we buy certain brands because of what they reinforce about what we believe about ourselves. Every decision and action we make proves what we believe. It will either draw or repel people. Every action, design, product experience, website, advertisement, customer interaction, etc., that someone has with a brand should prove what the company believes. When it doesn't, trust is degraded and expectations broken. What is your emotional level of attachment to your favorite brand?

According to the work Martin Linstrom has done and written in the book "Buyology," we decide to purchase something in a millisecond after holding it. During the fMRI study he conducted, the nucleus accumbens is activated when someone has an iPhone in their hand. It created a "feel-good" response that will encourage you to repeat this action in the future. The nucleus accumbens primary function is to process and reinforce rewarding experiences by releasing and responding to dopamine, a neurotransmitter tied to pleasure, motivation, and learning. During his experiment, the area of the nucleus accumbens (a small region in the brain's basal forebrain known as the pleasure center) would light up, showing increased brain activity immediately upon interaction with the product. Remember,

this is involuntary and unconscious. You can not control it. It just happens. The brain's biology is making judgment calls automatically before the rational, voluntary, and conscious parts of your brain have a chance to reason.

The brain's preference for familiarity and habituation makes staying with a known brand more comfortable than seeking new options. This is inferred from the text's emphasis on avoiding pain from unpredictability (e.g., "Predictability and Reliability" notes unpredictable brands risk disappointment) and pursuing pleasure from reliability. Over time, habituation to positive experiences reduces stress and promotes loyalty by making deviations feel uncomfortable due to disrupted neural patterns.

Emotions can Overtake Reason

It is the main reason why people have a very over-irrational or illogical response to a mild present-day experience. In the book "The Naked Brain," Dr. Richard Restak puts it like this: "Affect displaces cognition." The present-day experience is triggering the past somatic marker telling you to run! Depending on how severe and how young you were at the time, your body can bury these emotional experiences when it doesn't have the reasoning capacity to fully deal with them. Those are severe emotional circumstances, but your mind's process is still the same, whether it's severe or mild, and it does so automatically in the background without us controlling it. I would hope a brand doesn't cause severe emotional trauma, but sometimes they do. Like the McDonald's

coffee case in 1994, where a woman received third-degree burns on her inner thighs. I doubt she buys coffee from any drive-thru, especially McDonald's. What about those who experienced a jammed accelerator? Do you think they still drive Toyotas? And in early 2007, nine JetBlue flights at JFK airport were delayed for up to 11 hours. Do you think they still fly JetBlue?

Those are all fairly dramatic, but the media doesn't write news articles on the average bad experiences. For the most part, it doesn't take something that dramatic to get someone to choose to try another brand. Like the straw that breaks the camel's back, each little harmful experience compounds. Likewise, each good experience compounds and builds confidence and brand loyalty.

Congruency is Key

For the branding professional, this information on avoiding pain and seeking pleasure will provide an understanding of the minds of their consumers that behind what seems to be irrational reactions may have a very legitimate reason. Moving into increasingly subtle and intangible biological responses, it starts with the name of the brand. Is the brand name congruent with the experience, benefit, or what is delivered? If it is not, that will be the first straw of mistrust or confusion added to the camel's back. The more accurate the identity and brand, the more cognitive trust you gain from the start. It's the first step in winning over a customer and turning them into a loyal fan.

Human attraction to or repulsion from brands is deeply rooted in our biology, hardwired into

humans through time and generations.

It shapes how we respond to our environment, including the brands we encounter. Biologically, when brand congruency is achieved, who you say you are aligns with the customer experience, and the brain's reward system activates. At its core, brand communication in all its forms, both verbally and visually, should eliminate all mental hurdles and get to the "I understand you and what you can do for me" moment. This type of response, often happening in our mental RAM, rewards our brains with a hit of dopamine and reinforces the message "here's a company you can count on."



"We are not necessarily thinking machines.
We are feeling machines that think." —
Antonio Damasio

We will be looking into how and why emotions cause a person to be attracted to a brand. And the converse, what happens inside our minds when distrust is developed for a brand through negative emotions.

The Emotion Wins over Logic

No matter how emotionally or irrationally people behave, they have a very good and rational reason for doing so. Our actions are always our solution, our “what works” for us, reinforcing our beliefs about ourselves and the world we live in.

If a customer expects a certain level of service or quality and does not receive it, their reaction could be more about their past negative experiences than the current one. It could be about reinforcing a fear that they believe they are not good at making decisions.

The functions of motivation, emotion, learning, and memory are all intertwined. Beliefs come from what we are taught or experience. Once someone has an experience (good or bad), it creates a somatic marker — a feeling. Once

that has been created, it is almost impossible to change someone’s beliefs about that experience or their perception of that experience. Here is an example — a very traumatic one, but it gets the idea across well.

If a child gets bitten by a dog at an early age, he or she will be very frightened by dogs for years. Every time they are around a dog they will immediately jump into fight or flight mode; their heart rate will spike, adrenaline will flood the circulatory system, etc. No matter what you tell the child about the dog through intellectual education or rational reasoning, you can’t change their emotional reaction. You’re trying to overcome an emotional response with data which will not change their reaction. Once experienced, a person’s reaction is all automatic. It creates

a somatic marker that has degrees of amplitude depending on the severity of the experience.

Let's look at what's going on here. They are superimposing their beliefs about the dog that bit them onto all dogs. To the child, all dogs will hurt them. It feels like the truth to them, whether it's true or not. Because of what that child experienced, they believe all dogs will bite them. They are believing an untruth, but their mind and body act like it is truth. They automatically live in this reality every time they see a dog. They see the world through that lens. What we believe is shaped by the limbic system, which processes the emotions tied to your beliefs, working with the neocortex, which evaluates their logic. The limbic system amplifies how you feel about a belief, but doesn't determine its accuracy, whether it is true or false.

When Attraction gets Unhealthy

An unexpected result of attraction may be an "unhealthy" one. People are trying to fill identity gaps by aligning with brands they're not connected to because it isn't a true reflection of self, but a reflection they would like others to believe is who they are. This adds complexity to the subject of brand attraction, but attraction isn't always positive or authentic. Let's look into how our beliefs change what we are attracted to and how we identify ourselves.

Several years ago, I became very sick, depressed, lethargic, and had a heavy, ringing noise constantly clanging in my ears. I went to several doctors and had no confirmed diagnosis. One Doctor said something to me that rang in my ears more than the tinnitus; he said "You've gone through a very stressful season in your

life, and I believe your immune system has been compromised, but nothing is broken yet.” He went on to say, “What concerns me more than how you have been feeling these last few months is what you’re identifying with. Do not identify yourself with how you are feeling.” After questioning what he meant, he elaborated, “When my patients start saying, ‘I’m a diabetic,’ it is almost impossible to lead them down a path of wellness and recovery. They have started to associate their sickness with who they are.”

Wow, I had already begun the process of doing this in my daily conversation with friends and family. You always hear of those who have beaten cancer and how they believed they would someday live without it. In Simon Sinek’s book, “Start with Why,” he states, “Every decision and action we make [or words we speak] proves what we believe.”

The way we learn provides some insight into how we believe. One way we learn experientially is by avoiding pain. When we are learning to walk and we bump into a sharp edge, we learn to either avoid the sharp edges or go back to crawling. The same thing is applied to relationships. We get hurt in a relationship, so we avoid signs of the same possible upcoming pain in a relationship by staying distant.

You could say we learn to avoid pain, or we will self-medicate. Same for companies or brands we have been burned by, we avoid. Self-medication applies when we use the reputation of a brand to supply what we wish we were or what we want others to think we are.

Belief About Self

Fast Company wrote an article on a study from the Journal of Consumer Research titled “Got to Get You Into My Life: Do Brand Personalities

Rub Off on Consumers?” It shows how brands affect our self-perception.

The Fast Co. article states, “In the study, women were given bags to carry around a mall for an hour. Some carried Victoria's Secret bags, others carried plain pink shopping bags. Women who were given Victoria's Secret bags revealed that they felt more feminine, glamorous, and good-looking than those with the pink shopping bags, just by carrying the bag.”

“One of the most fascinating parts of the study,” according to the authors Ji Kyung Park and Deborah Roedder John, was that “the people who were most affected by the study seemed to see brands as the path to self-improvement. These people were less sure about their worth and hoped to signal their positive qualities to other people through brand association.”

“It's sometimes hard to admit, but we've all imagined ourselves owning a particular car, suit, or watch that appeals to our senses, but we can't exactly explain why. According to this research, this feeling could be the brand at work, redefining our perceptions with what we believe to be true about that brand — and ourselves.”

I couldn't have said it better myself. Owning, associating with, or being around certain brands reinforces our beliefs about ourselves. We do what we believe, and what we do is buy things that reflect what we believe.

Emotion Overpowers Reason

We are driven by our emotions. I'm mainly addressing emotions that reside in memories, not emotions that come solely from a present experience, although sometimes it's hard for us to distinguish between the two. Some of the

reasons that emotions have so much power are that they reside in the subconscious. They are on autopilot. That's why it's hard for someone to stop feeling something just because someone else says to stop feeling that way. Combine that with the fact that the subconscious can process more information faster than the conscious mind. The conscious mind is somewhat at a disadvantage.

Craig Federighi, the Senior Vice President of Software Engineering for Apple, made a statement during an interview and I almost fell out of my chair when I read it. It was as if I had interviewed him for this chapter. "OK, I'm a technology freak," Federighi said, "but I think probably if someone mapped my brain, you would find that there were moments when I lit up the love pattern in my neurons in association with our products. I mean, literally, there is love,

and I think that is true of many of our customers. I think when we build something we love, and that others love, then we have done our job."

I'm sure Craig Federighi believes himself to be highly rational, and by all accounts, he is. But we know emotion overpowers your ability to reason. People fall in love with a product and will find some way to purchase it. It's no wonder consumer spending comprises 71% of the total U.S. economy. No matter how you would like to picture yourself, rational or emotional, specific biological influences can't be ignored or dismissed. Sure, we can, as Dr. Ed M. Smith puts it, "Be miserably victorious." We can will ourselves by overpowering our emotions to do things we know we need to do or don't want to do. Our civil society depends on us having ethics and social filters. But for those everyday

actions like picking a food item at the grocery store or selecting an ice cream flavor, we most often run on autopilot or don't have much of a rational argument to support our selection. Just "I like it" or "I feel like chocolate today." Sometimes we just look for the quick validation words "Natural" or "Organic" on the product.

We take in large amounts of information that affect us emotionally, but we are totally unaware of it. It is quickly processed by our subconscious, affecting our emotions, thoughts, and decisions. According to Dr. LeDoux, "It takes you two milliseconds (ms) to react to something visual. It would take 500 ms — 250 times longer for you to consciously recognize what you've seen." The subconscious mind can process 500,000 times more information than the conscious mind can. According to *The Biology of Belief* by Dr. Bruce Lipton,

"It is as if roughly 10,000 cinema films are actually going on in the brain all at once, while we are only consciously aware of one of them. Another take: only about 0.01% of all the brain's activity is experienced consciously." We have no idea of all the information that is being processed behind the scenes. They call this cognitive unconscious. The subconscious mind can process 20,000,000 bits of info per second. The conscious mind can only process 40 bits of info/sec. According to a May 8, 2009, podcast, Dr. Chris Frith, a neuropsychologist, says, "Something like 90% of the brain activity never reaches consciousness at all." Our unconscious mind drives a good bit of our behavior without us even knowing it.

So what about those who seem not to be emotional people? Even those who are more rational people, emotion drives behavior. Let

me explain how. Most of the time, those who would categorize themselves as rational are pursuing a sense of control in their lives. Control allows them to avoid the pain that comes from realizing a majority of things that happen in our lives are beyond our control; believing that can avoid uncomfortable feelings of fear. There is good reason why we get our society's architects, inventors, scientists, leaders, and engineers from this group of people. Most are driven to control or understand the world around them. Society benefits greatly from that motivation.

Whether we like to admit it or not, we are emotional creatures. Sure, we can supersede our desires with rational, logical, and ethical thought, but that's just it. They need to be superseded. The emotion arises first, the rational second. When we make small decisions every day, we are driven by the emotion of that decision and don't even realize it.

We do know that we instinctively try to avoid harmful or hurtful situations. Our very survival depends on it. When we perceive danger, whether it's real or not, we need to act fast. We don't have time to reason. Our fight or flight mode kicks in, and we act. Most of the time, those are based on what we've experienced in the past and come from our limbic system. Once the perceived threat has been realized to be something other than what we thought, we start explaining our actions. "Wow, I thought that stick was a snake!" These things are happening in your brain at a rate of a few hundred milliseconds and can only be detected by an fMRI scan.

Actions Display Beliefs

Our actions and emotions are the best evidence and accurate indicators of our beliefs. Unfortunately, when people conduct market

research, they try to determine our actions without investigating or measuring our emotions. Saying we will do something and actually doing it are two very different things. People will sit in a friend's brand-new car and say, "I want one," but the thought of going through the purchasing process at a dealership and the five years of monthly payments will slow them down considerably.

You can see evidence of this disconnect between emotional and rational in marketing blunders driven by focus groups. There could be a multitude of reasons the results of the focus groups were wrong, such as asking the wrong questions to the wrong people or offering a reward at the end of the study, which influenced people to answer what they thought the facilitators wanted to hear. Many cases have shown that the information people tell you is not always correct.

Let's look at what happened in Toyota's case during the development of Scion. In 1999, Toyota launched Project Genesis, an effort to bring younger buyers to the Toyota marque in the United States. A Los Angeles-based digital design company, Fresh Machine, was retained by Toyota to develop the brand, logo, and website. This project became referred to as what we now know as Scion. To advertise Scion, Toyota began a new campaign for it using a form of guerrilla marketing, using posters and ads in movie theaters and on TV to point potential consumers to its "want2bsquare" websites. Aimed at the hearts and wallets of America's youth (18-24 year-olds). The word scion literally means descendant, usually the child of a wealthy or important family. Considering those semantics, the company's target demographic was the children of Toyota owners. After the

first year of sales, only 10% of the buyers were under 21 years old. Five years later (in 2007), the median age of a Scion owner was 39 (targeting 23 to 29) years old, and 90% had never owned a Toyota before.

So what happened? They targeted a specific audience, they did their research, listened to the focus groups, developed a great strategic plan, and had a great creative and marketing. Were the participants not telling the truth? Maybe they were telling the facilitators what they thought they wanted to hear. Or maybe, 18-year-olds who now drive their Mom's van all say they love the Scion? I'm sure they had all positive emotions when they sat in the new car, driving around in new edgy paint colors and cool styling, listening to the latest tunes through its new booming sound system. But when you exclude the normal experience of shopping for

a car without the pain of parting with your hard-earned cash, who wouldn't say they would "most likely" purchase it?

In a November 2012 Advertising Age article titled "Oh, Grow Up! Scion Veers to Older Target with New Campaign," and subtitled, "Toyota Brand Concedes Its Ads Skewed Too Young; Goes For More Mature Pitch," Scion VP Doug Murtha said, "Even though we're talking to people we thought were in our age wheelhouse, in their minds we're often their younger brother or sister's car. We probably marketed too young to them." Scion's new (October 2012) "What Moves You" advertising campaign is more serious, more emotional, gender-neutral, and far more mature." It "will use real stories and real people."

It's interesting they spoke with the phrase, "the campaign will use real stories and real people." That's definitely the right direction. When it comes to branding, I believe large, expensive focus groups are totally unnecessary. I believe you can get very valuable information from a discussion with a few internal employees and external customers. Companies spend millions on focus groups and strategically planning to target an audience with a new product, or align a new product to an intended audience, to no avail. Manufactured and contrived brands don't work either. I like Simon Sinek's thoughts on this: "Companies ask people to tell them how they should be. It's like an acquaintance asking someone they know, 'What would you like me to say, and what should I wear so you will become my friend and have a long-lasting relationship?' It's absolutely ridiculous. We're

going to do market research to find out how we should be, so we can be more authentic. That's hilarious!"

Conscious Questions about Subconscious Actions

Another reason why marketing surveys and focus groups are not an accurate representation of purchasing motivation is because of unconscious behavior. When someone has selected a particular brand many times over a long period of time, overtime they go to the store, it becomes routine (non-conscious). When an action becomes routine, the consumer has forgotten "the why" they chose that product or service. They may purchase it because their grandma always used it to clean her house, and they love the memory of the smell. When that has happened, that consumer is not good at answering conscious questions about why they

purchase that product or why they wouldn't choose another product over yours. While being questioned during an unnatural situation like a focus group, they might tell you they will buy your product only to be faced with the emotional connection and comfortable routine of buying their old brand in their daily lives. That emotional connection is strong and hard to overcome. It's the very reason why consumers get pissed when a retailer changes their product or the way they do things. Think New Coke. People get irrational when their expectations (their usual interaction with a brand) are not met. Remember, "affect displaces cognition, emotion overpowers reasoning."

Neurologist Antonio Damasio (University of Southern California) and Joseph LeDoux demonstrated that emotions and cognition are inextricably linked and that our emotional

systems are the substrate of much of our ability to reason. These scientists have solidified the theory that decisions are contingent on emotion.

Right People for the Right Reasons

What does this have to do with branding. If you really want to attract the right people for the right reasons, the foundation of your identity and brand should be built on purpose. The shortest distance between Point A (potential customer) and Point B (first-time customer) has no communication hurdles that need to be overcome. Who you are and who you say you are, is crystal clear. People can decide to get on the bus (whether that is a new employee or a new customer) for the right reasons. If they become part of the team for something other than the purpose of the company, it will rise to the top and become their reason for parting ways.

Having a purpose statement that all business efforts can use as a guidepost and measuring stick provides the clarity and motivation everyone needs to be successful. At that point, it becomes easier to say yes to the right things, people, or opportunities and no to the wrong.



The Hidden Motivation

Great relationships consistently deliver on expectations. Expectations, sometimes nonverbal, sometimes explicitly communicated, are built on intentions from both parties. Brands codify that relationship in a symbolic form. Great businesses and brands have no anomalies between the intention and the

reality experienced — most of the time, great businesses are known for over-delivering on that expectation. The seed of a brand is intention and purpose. The seed of a business is an idea. Starts with an idea, a purpose, with a belief in a better way. That better way is a vision of the future. A mission created to carry out that vision. A culture is developed as people are added to the business. Over time, an identity or brand is developed by the accumulation of all those parts. The sum, the brand, is greater than its parts.

All companies started from an idea, a belief in a better way — a new way of doing things. They are driven by a purpose. Sometimes those things develop into a service, product, or method, but in the beginning, it was just an idea. The founder is motivated by the notion that

there is something others will value. Something others will believe in, too. Something that will make their life and the lives of others better. They see it in their mind's eye. So much so that they devote time away from their loved ones, money from their savings, and energy from their daily lives to pour into their endeavor. This belief is so powerful that it allows the founder and those who are founders to push through all obstacles to make it a reality. And for the most part, that's the only reason some ideas become reality — because someone believed it enough to push through the pain of development. They believed they were the only ones who could bring such an idea to life, and if they didn't, the world would be missing out on it. The world needs to know, needs to experience, needs to benefit.

At the core, in the conception of every business is a vision waiting to be born. That vision starts with one person, maybe two. From that vision, it spreads from person to person. Along the way, that vision attracts those who believe what they believe, strive for what they strive for, and dedicate energy to making it a reality. Those who are onboard with the vision are willing to invest sweat, blood, and tears to make it a success. Not necessarily just financial. Positive financial gain is a result of what they believe. A success in terms of spreading it out to the world and sharing this thing, which is now a physical form of their beliefs, to as many people that want what they are offering. At the start, the vision builders get much more excitement and enjoyment when another person loves their product than they do from a paycheck. Capturing the hearts of people becomes

contagious, whether it's a nonprofit, for-profit product, or service.

Canadian entrepreneur Kevin O'Leary provides this advice. "If you enter entrepreneurship for the greater money you will fail one hundred percent of the time. You're focusing on the wrong thing. You must have a tremendous amount of passion for your business idea or market you are trying to solve for. You really have to love the solution you are bringing to the market, believe in it and authentic about why you are doing it."

Don't Assume Everyone "Gets it"

Whether that company believes in branding or not, it creates a brand. It's well known that brands provide many of the same biological and emotional benefits as religions. Brands are an extension of the vision. Many savvy

entrepreneurs and startups today are realizing that the name of the company, the name of the product, and the branding need to be congruent and authentic, embodying the essence of their belief.

CEOs and presidents often need help revealing and articulating their brand. It's in them. They own it; it's just been buried in the storage room somewhere because it got messy on the front lines of the day-to-day business. Spending time rediscovering the passion, vision, and beliefs they had when they started the company is essential. Crafting it into a visually and verbally congruent persona allows it to sit on that foundation.

The Land of Nod

One company and CEO I helped was The Land of Nod. Michelle Kohanzo seemed like the perfect person to ask about this subject

because she was the tenth employee at Land of Nod. I was hired right when they moved into their first corporate offices.

Michelle talked about why she was attracted and took a risky leap to a smaller company. "I wanted to work for Land of Nod because I was passionate about the company. Salary was not a driving factor. I was working for Crate&Barrel and I wanted to work for a smaller company — a place I could help build. I wanted a job where I could make a difference and felt like I was making an impact on the organization."

She went on to talk about both the personal and the professional ups and downs in her life, which led me to ask if she could have stayed there, even if she didn't have a passion for the brand. "There is no way I could have stayed. No, absolutely not. I'm 100% sure of that.

Looking back, I now see that one of the biggest challenges Land of Nod had as it matured was that the brand was never articulated at all. You either got it or you didn't. You either understood it or you didn't. Those who understood it were successful, and those who didn't were not. That became problematic the bigger we got. It's hard to gain momentum. It is absolutely critical that the CEO [or president] be the brand champion. I think that there is no way the brand can flourish if it doesn't start from the top. It needs to be a top priority 100%."

Communicating Purpose Attracts the Right People

When you start a company and it grows organically with the main dreamer (or dreamers like Ben & Jerry) in charge, and they hire each person personally, there is a passing on of the dream and passion with those who believe

in the same dream. They didn't sign on to become millionaires. They signed on to make something great. They feel connected because they are. The company is small and passionate. Passion is contagious. That company spirals up. It's authentic. They live their brand. It may not be refined and sophisticated, but they know their brand — they are their brand. They don't need to have a mission statement that everyone needs to memorize. They don't need commercials to tell them who they are. They are spiraling up, or as James Collins says in "Good to Great," everyone is on the same flywheel, moving it in the same direction with all of their being. Larry Ellison has stated that "Apple became the most valuable company on earth, and it wasn't one of Steve Jobs' goals. He was obsessed with the creative process and building something beautiful."

Brand Culture

During a presentation at Stanford School of Business, Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh offered a compelling account of his transformation from young Harvard student entrepreneur to the creator of a formidable online shoe brand.

Tony believed that company culture is the number one priority of his business. He said, "If you get the culture right, stuff like great customer service and building an enduring brand will happen naturally. The company's culture and the company's brand are two sides of the same coin. Every employee, whether you are in accounting or customer service, gets the very same training. We do this because if customer service is Zappos' brand, customer service is not a department; it's an attribute of the company as a whole. At the end of the employee training period, we offer all trainees

pay for their time plus a \$3000 bonus to walk away. We did this because we didn't want employees there just because of a paycheck. It makes those who do not take the offer ask themselves, 'Is this a company I believe in? Is this a company I want to be a part of? Before we hire someone, they must pass two interviews, one with the department and the second with the HR department, which screens applicants solely based on 'Will they fit our company culture?' If they don't fit, we pass on them as an employee, no matter how intelligent and talented they are and no matter how quickly they could contribute to our bottom line."

This is how Tony Hsieh tests the laws of attraction. What they do reinforces what they believe, about themselves and the brand. Purpose alignment attracts the right people for the right reasons.

Higher Purpose: Simple yet Elusive

The quote from Jim Collins was instrumental in helping me connect purpose to branding. “Companies need to exist for a higher purpose than mere profit generation in order to transcend the category of merely good” has become one of my favorites. Let’s look into why I think that is true and how it works.

When some people hear “higher purpose,” they may quickly conclude the organization needs to be philanthropic or altruistic. Higher purpose doesn’t mean you only provide humanitarian services. It needs to be higher than just making a profit or becoming wealthy. Could you imagine if making a profit were your sole mission? Your website homepage headline would read “We just want to make as much money as we can.”

Don’t get the wrong idea. Your purpose doesn’t need to save the world; it just needs to contribute positively to society and provide what others need. Think about your purpose as more about what others receive or feel when you provide your product or service than about the thing you do.

In Harmony with your Brand

Some businesses will tack on a percentage to a charity as “their purpose.” If charity has no relation to the nature of the business, it falls flat. There’s a disconnect between what the company does and who they are helping fund. As an example of how to get it right, I’ll share one of my clients’ brand-congruent ways to give back. They are a coffee roaster and retailer. They sell a blend of ethically sourced Honduran coffee, and one dollar per 12-ounce bag goes to the Heart of Honduras local mission

organization. Boston Stoker Coffee Company works with farmers from the village of Lomas Del Aguila to collectively improve the quality of the coffee and the lives of the people who produce it. Their purpose, brand, and support for the local coffee community all work in harmony.

Whatever your case may be, strive to align what the business offers, how it offers it, and why it offers it to reinforce and communicate your shared values and purpose.

People forge deep, lasting, and genuine connections with others and brands through an authentic alignment of purpose. Shared values create an immediate and long-lasting connection. The attraction is effortless. When it is done right, it is natural. It is much like the philosophy “form follows function” — the way

of thinking that espouses the design of an object should be determined by its intended purpose. Likewise, brands should follow purpose.

Brands Follow Purpose

It’s a natural belief that a hammer looks like the task it is designed to accomplish. It’s straightforward and natural. Another way to describe this is “user-friendly.” It is easy to see and understand that with an object or tool. However, with branding, the majority of the communication and reputation it gains is intangible and unwritten.

There are a few branding books that try to explain these psychological relationships with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs philosophy. It states that our first priority or drive in life is physiological — food, water, sex, and sleep. The next level of drive is for safety, love, esteem, and then self-actualization. I never took the time to

challenge its premise until I read the theories of internationally renowned psychiatrist and neurologist Viktor Frankl. They turned my preconceptions upside down. Or, maybe right side up.

One aspect I found so profound was his theories were learned, developed, and put into practice while he was being detained in Auschwitz — the Nazi concentration camp. His life experience immediately instilled a trust in his theories and philosophies. Nothing against Maslow, but it's hard to compete with someone who has tested his theories in what could arguably be the worst historical atrocity inflicted on people in the last century.

For you to understand, let me get you up to speed on his teachings. Dr. Frankl's philosophy is called Logotherapy. "Logos" is the Greek word for meaning. Logotherapy focuses

on the meaning of human existence as well as on man's search for such a meaning. The three pillars on which Logotherapy rests:

1. Life has meaning under all circumstances;
2. Everyone has a will toward meaning;
3. Human beings have freedom of choice, over attitudes, even if over nothing else.

Compared to Maslow, survival and self-preservation are not the core driving forces behind every human decision; the search for meaning is.

Who do we Believe?

There is a divide between Maslow's and Frankl's philosophies. How do we reconcile what we know about our instinct to seeking pleasure and pain in light of search for meaning? Our instinct is still a factor (an initial subconscious behavior), but not the primary force in our behavior. Searching for meaning

(instinct uniquely human) is how we learn and circumvent automatic biological responses. The old phrase "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me," describes how we often act out of instinct, automatic trusting nature, or lack of critical thinking. The second time we overrule our instinct of trusting nature with reasoning and critical thought. That's why staying focused or "on-purpose" often takes more effort and is not automatic.

In light of the principles and conclusions of Dr. Frankl, it has had a profound impact on how I look at branding. If our search for meaning is our primary motivation in life, then we must look for meaning in brands, not just for a product or service. We will be most attracted to those brands that have meaning, that communicate their meaning, and connect with their meaning.

I would then conclude that the strongest brands are those that are doing the best job at conveying their purpose with every communication device and live out their brand promise.

Branding is all about the search for meaning and purpose in a name, the voice, the customer experience, product design, and all visual imagery. From the use of colors, symbols, words, shapes, and interaction, meaning is built. All those individual signals are received and create a tapestry that becomes the brand. With one unraveling thread, the brand becomes marred and starts to erode the integrity of its wholeness. Enough unraveling threads, and the image is broken down to a point it's unrecognizable. At this point, it only provides confusion from the incoherent and incongruent message. The

bond becomes weak and is forgotten, and is easily replaced.

A Lesson in Misalignment

In 2014, when Olive Garden underwent a “brand renaissance”, it seems the only thing they got right was the use of the word renaissance. The word fits their brand archetype, yet their new logo didn’t. The internet and Twitter blew up with vicious criticism and hate for the new logo, but none of the articles talk about the reasons why the customer base was so unhappy. The new logo was the opposite of what Olive Garden wants to be known for. The new mark is more modern graphically, but it doesn’t reflect the attributes you can find on Olive Garden’s “About Us” page. “Italy is the inspiration behind our restaurants, from the ingredients we use to our award-winning wine list. Most of all, we are

inspired by the Italian culture – warmth, genuine hospitality and the importance placed on family.” The new logo communicates just the opposite. It communicates fast casual, modern, and cold. This is why I believe so many people are upset. Olive Garden has broken our perception of who they were. Olive Garden lost touch with their meaning, their purpose, and now their new identity is incongruent with the reputation they developed in their customers’ minds.

Driven by Purpose

The second principle of Logotherapy – we can choose not only what we are, but what we become – speaks to the entrepreneur, the dreamer, and the visionary. For an example, I turn back to Elon Musk who not only started the only car company in the United States in the last ninety years, he is the only person

(founder of the privately funded space transport company SpaceX) to have successfully launched a space first stage rocket booster into orbit and successfully brought it back. Who thinks they can start a space rocket company? Not his close friends and family. Elon Musk admits, "I had so many people try to talk me out of starting a rocket company, it was crazy." When Scott Pelley on CBS's 60 Minutes in 2014 asked why he started Tesla when every car startup in the last ninety years had failed. "If something's important enough, you should try. Even if the probable outcome is failure."

For those aspiring entrepreneurs wrestling with the choice of whether they should or shouldn't start acting on an idea they've had, remember the quote from Hillel. "If I don't do it, who will do it? If I don't do it now, when shall I do it? And

if I do it for myself, what am I?" Remember, you are unique, your story is unique, your ideas are unique, and your brand is unique. It may not be fully realized, but it is unique and waiting for you to tell it.



6 PRINCIPLES TO BRAND BY

Read through any branding book, and you will hear similar principles when creating a brand. The advice will consist of making sure your brand is different, memorable, authentic, consistent, appeals to your audience, and uses storytelling.

All those are true; however, they don't provide how to achieve them. There are millions of brands that are all those things, yet look and sound wildly different from each other. To overcome that dilemma, some clients start the project with a request: "I want to be the Mercedes of BBQ Grills." That direction does help or at least points the creative team in the right direction. Even with that type of direction, each designer will interpret that differently and will also add their design bias — what they think is cool or trending.

Everyone who participates in the branding process needs a framework, a guidebook, or a standard measuring stick to know what to aim for. The target should drive the process. The measuring stick is what every idea, word, and color is measured against — is this creative idea or this design hitting the mark and meeting

every criterion? That framework should consist of all the following: Purpose Statement, Business Goals & Objectives, Belief Statements, Vision & Mission statements, Company Values, Vision-caster's (the CEO) Personality Assessment, Positioning, Brand Archetype, Market Research, Competitive Brand Analysis, and Company Backstory.

Having this framework will remove everyone's personal preferences while simultaneously including everyone in the process, starting with purpose first. What are we trying to achieve? Why are we trying to achieve it?

Purpose First

A clearly defined and articulated purpose allows you to say yes to the right things and no to the wrong things. Even though purpose is first, it may be one of the last things you will be able

to clearly articulate. What do I mean? Purpose takes time to discover and refine. It may be only clear to you after you get through the following exercises in the framework. It should become clearer as you write down your thoughts and history on the following: Beliefs, Vision, Mission, Personality Assessment, and Backstory.

Simon Sinek says, "People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it." Professor Wayne Baker at Ross School of Business, University of Michigan drives deeper into the motivation behind purpose by saying, "There is a psychological need to contribute. People need to contribute. It is the reciprocity principle – the obligation to give, the obligation to receive, and the obligation to repay – its universal. It is a principle component of all moral codes. The principle is so fundamental that it defines

humanity. The need to contribute to others and to accept contributions from others is hard-wired into us as a species."

Purpose is the purpose of business. Every company has one. Purpose is found in the driving force of those who started the business. Usually, it resides in the minds and intentions of the company's leadership.

The clearer and more precise the company communicates its purpose (both visually and verbally – internally and externally), the stronger its brand, the greater its growth, and the more desirable its culture. It attracts the right employees and the right customers for the right reasons.

Purpose allows people to identify with the business in something other than the material product it provides. It makes them feel good

about supporting it and justifies sharing it with others, which is what all companies strive to achieve.

Do you remember the BASF commercials? “At BASF, we don’t make the toys, we make them tougher. We don’t make the blue jeans, we make them bluer. We don’t make the house, we make it warmer.” BASF focused on the beneficial outcome of the chemicals they sold that went into products. Chemicals are boring. A warmer house makes you feel safe. They didn’t sell chemicals. They didn’t sell them for the manufacturer’s products. They sold what their chemicals could do for the end consumer.

A car dealership doesn’t sell cars; they sell freedom. Software Companies don’t sell functionality, they sell productivity. It’s not about the “thing,” it’s about what

that “thing” provides — the emotional benefit of using that “thing.”

The mission is how you will achieve the thing, “the what,” or the tangible. The vision is a tangible result — what change are you making? The purpose is the driving force behind why you’re in business.

Answer these questions about purpose:

1. What excited you about the business?
2. What is it (psychological reward) about the “ideal client” or “ideal business transaction” that gives you energy?
3. What is the purpose of your business over and above making money?
4. What is it your customers receive other than a physical object or service?
5. What are you trying to change?
6. What pain are you eliminating?

Beliefs & Values

Writing belief statements can be a profitable exercise to uncover what the employees and the leaders believe are essential. These beliefs translate into “how” they conduct their lives and their businesses. The statements can give a peek inside the minds of business leaders, allowing their purpose, drive, and motivation to be uncovered. This personal internal motivation will show itself in why they started the company or why they work for this particular company as opposed to any other. What we are hoping is that all these exercises will combine to start developing a pattern that shows us the core purpose for being.

It’s also easier to apply this concept to startups rather than older, more mature businesses and organizations. But like charities, I believe it’s vital to tap into the belief system that started

the effort to uncover the purpose for the organization. That’s why I have the CEO write belief statements. I want to hear what motivated them to start the company or what motivated them to become the CEO. I imagine the CEO didn’t jump at the first offer and that they were more strategic about what companies they wanted to spend their time and energy with. All those decision-making thoughts and beliefs about why they are the CEO are essential to uncover.

There are other reasons as well. Writing belief statements makes people break away from marketing buzzwords and typical business speak. It keeps people from using industry terms and acronyms that carry no meaning to those outside the industry. It also promotes more emotional language that motivates. It makes people think what they believe

is really necessary about the existence of their company — why would anyone want to be a part of it?

As you go to write your belief statements, act like you're starting a movement, not a company. Imagine yourself at a crowded street corner, thirty minutes away from filling a bus full of people, and starting your company from scratch. You may also find that most of these sound like core values. You would be right. When trying to discover your "why" you will find many people start by writing down their core values. Core values are "the how" or "in what way" you will accomplish your "why." Some typical core values that may be used as a "why": integrity, quality, transparency, collaboration, responsibility, humility, honesty, etc. If your purpose was "I love to build things" you could add the core value in

as "how" you build e.g., build with efficiency (seat cushions on an airplane) or build with attention to detail no matter how long it takes to get it perfect (navigation system on an airplane).

Here are some questions you can ask yourself when accomplishing this task of writing your belief statements.

1. What are your belief statements that motivate you to provide your products or services?
2. What do you believe the world needs and deserves? Start each statement with "I believe everyone should have the opportunity to..."

Vision & Mission

Vision is the Why: The vision statement will be a tangible way people can measure your purpose. It should take years or decades to achieve. It shouldn't be affected by industry trends or disruption from technology. If it is, then it's too

specific and probably has “the how” written in. It should sound universal and could include almost any culture or any person.

I believe your vision statement should make you feel a little nervous. It may seem a bit over the top and unreachable. Don’t let fear dictate your actions. There are too many safe and predictable vision statements out there that inspire no one. The companies with these boring vision statements wonder why their company doesn’t foster innovation. Or they have trouble hiring or motivating their work force to put in extra effort without always expecting something in return.

A vision statement is what success looks like. It needs to be audacious. Something that makes you think, “I might not be able to pull this off”

or “It may take a lifetime to achieve.” It needs to make others think, “I want to be a part of this.” You want something that inspires others to believe what you believe. Just like Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I have a dream” speech or putting a man on the moon.

What’s your dream? People will be attracted to your hopes and dreams. Thomas Edison once said, “I start where the last man left off.” You need to claim the space where others don’t dare go. People will remember you. When you choose to stand for a vision that seems unsurmountable, you make yourself the underdog. There’s something inside every one of us that wants the underdog to win and conquer their foe.

Example: Service for the Homeless

PURPOSE: Love restoring people

VISION: End homelessness

Example: Rocket Company

PURPOSE: Extend humanity's ability to survive

VISION: Community on Mars

How would someone see you fulfilling your purpose?

If your company succeeds, what would the world be like?

The mission statement is “the how” of your vision.

How do you plan to implement your vision and make it a reality? How do you do things differently from your competitors? Some people call it a mini business plan. It should encapsulate “the what” and “the how” while being written in the spirit of “the why.” Keep it simple so everyone in your organization can remember it — or even better, paraphrase it in their own words.

Make it compelling, so people want to be a part of it. It would be great if you could measure it somehow so you could later assess if you're moving the needle. It also needs to be timeless and always relevant, so it doesn't get old or need to be frequently updated.

Just a few sentences, write “the what” and “the how you will achieve the what” of your vision.

Example: Service for the Homeless

PURPOSE: Love restoring people

VISION: End homelessness

MISSION: We will end homelessness in our local community by providing housing, services, advocacy, and education.

Example: Rocket Company

PURPOSE: Extend humanity's ability to survive

VISION: Community on Mars

MISSION: We will build rapidly reusable rockets to transfer 100s of people and cargo to Mars to make it inhabitable.

The mission statement should be written in a language that anyone can understand. Make it repeatable and easy to recall. Remember, it should be inspirational – make people want to get on the bus and help.

Storytelling and Brand Archetypes

When you think of branding, you immediately think of the symbols and logos that represent the brand. The communication extends to the story behind the brand (the brand backstory) and the story of the customer journey. There has been a resurgence of “storytelling” in branding following a simplified “hero’s journey” – the hero being the customer or client. The need for an archetype comes in when describing the mentor or guide of the story. That mentor (which is the business – someone that is an expert in their field and will guide those seeking help) can be an Archetype other than the

quintessential Sage like Obi-wan Kenobi. They can be the Archetype of a Jester, or as a Genie in Aladdin or the Creator as Q in the James Bond franchise.

Unspoken Purpose

How to communicate your purpose. Take, for instance, a healthcare professional such as a paramedic. Paramedics don’t show up and tell you, “I’ll make you feel safe and in good hands.” If they did, you would probably believe the opposite. Like when people say, “Trust me.” It makes you pause, and your subconscious says, “Why do they need to tell me that?” Telling someone to trust doesn’t create trust. However, their actions and words should be caring and reassuring, as well as being competent in handling a medical emergency. A paramedic fits the attributes of the archetype of a Caretaker and trust has already been established.

It is practically impossible to tell a story without some reference or hint of archetype use in character development, given the evolution of oral history and storytelling. Archetypes are deeply embedded in the human psyche, narrative structures, and audience expectations, making them nearly inescapable, especially in traditions that prioritize relatability and meaning. The historical reliance on archetypes in oral storytelling — seen in myths, epics, and folktales worldwide — further suggests their inevitability in narrative craft.

“Great companies are always deeply connected to the founder’s identity.” — Peter Theil

The CEO is guiding the direction of the company. He or she has the driving vision and mission of the company in their hands. They must lead or collaborate in the process,

especially in the beginning research and formation stages. The CEO needs to understand why the brand strategist and the internal team have arrived at certain conclusions. And the strategist and the internal team need to hear from the heart of the company’s vision-caster.

Storytelling helps people connect to the brand. Especially the story of how the company got started, what vision they had, what problem they were solving, and the passion that was driving them. These are all things people want to hear. The story of how the brand came to be, the story of the founder, and how the brand got its name. Hopefully, all the aforementioned items are consistent and congruent. People want to hear and believe in a story, not a corporation. People are interested in the people of the backstory. When the story is personal, there

is an immediate connection. We love to support a company we believe in while simultaneously receiving a good product or service when we purchase.

People make decisions emotionally and justify them rationally. The unconscious responds to the context or structure of a message, not just the actual content, and is aware of how the information is delivered and not just what it says. The best way to reach the unconscious mind involves embedding as a message in structural devices that evoke emotion and require internal, personal, and divergent interpretation. Becoming embedded within things such as, stories, poems, songs, jokes, pictures, symbols, characters, roles, and metaphors. They speak to that deep and powerful unconscious, the part of our decision-making process that we pay little to no attention to.

The archetype becomes the foundation of all communication, both visual and verbal, similar to an actor getting into character. It allows those writing marketing copy to get into the tone and voice of the brand. When a company stays true to its archetype, it outperforms its competition.

Did Jimmy Buffet need a customer loyalty program? Obviously no. Why? Not because he is estimated worth of one billion dollars. Not because he is good (not the greatest) singer/songwriter. It's because he does one thing really well. He portrays what comes natural – the brand archetype combination of the Everyman Hedonist Archetype attributes in his song lyrics. What working stiff who hates their job or is unhappy with their love partner relationship is not going to identify with getting drunk on margaritas on a beach? No one. His first album was called “Down to Earth” and don't we call

someone we can identify with, “down to earth”? His hit songs are “Cheeseburger in Paradise” and “Margaritaville.” What’s more “everyman” than a cheeseburger and what’s more escapism and pleasurable than “Paradise”?

Message, Voice & Tone

Having an archetype determined for you will help set a foundation for all creative and marketing endeavors. Much like an actor may portray a character, that actor can help the writer of the storyline determine if his or her lines are in character or out of character. Likewise, CEOs, Creative Directors, and Marketing Directors who are managing a brand that follows The Hero archetype can review a touchpoint and say to themselves, “Is this consistent with sounding, acting, or looking like a hero?” or “Would a superhero like Superman say or act this way?”

The brand voice is thought of as something verbal, but it can also be directly visual. If you were to ask someone in company leadership to get photographed, how would knowing the archetype change the photo shoot? We all know by looking at magazine ads and professional photographers' portraits that body language can say a multitude of things. How should you ask your CEO to stand, sit, or hold their arms? Knowing that their archetype is a Hero, you might want them to cross their arms and have a wide stance. If it’s a Sage, you might want to do a close-up on the face and focus on the eyes with a slight squint. If you were photographing a professional model, you could photograph them in numerous ways according to each archetype. Same person, different message being communicated.

When it comes to the verbal expression of the brand, the brand voice guides the copywriters from being pulled into the vortex of overused marketing speech, copy that's desperate, too slick and 'salesy', or trying to be funny just for the sake of being funny.

Writing copy that is attention-getting, original, intelligent, based on an archetype, and is done consistently across all touchpoints without being predictable is a daunting task. To illustrate, I took a fairly famous advertising slogan from Mercedes-Benz and rewrote it in the tone of each archetype.

The original Mercedes-Benz advertising slogan:

The Sage: Engineered to move the human spirit

**Rewritten in Different Voices
based on an Archetype**

The Caregiver: Engineered to cradle your every need

The Ruler: Command performance

The Creator: A living, moving, engineered experience

The Innocent: Driven to be free

The Explorer: Experience new ways to be moved

The Magician: Surprisingly engineered to move you

The Rebel: Engineered to push the human spirit forward

The Hero: Overcoming all odds to engineer greatness

The Comedian: You've never had a movement like this before

The Lover: Engineering passion at every turn

The Regular Guy: Everyone deserves to be moved by German engineering

Identity & Naming

Naming is the foundation of a brand. In the book “The Invisible Grail” by John Simmons, he sums up this point by quoting Ruth L. Oseki, “How can you say, ‘it’s just a name’? A name is the very first thing. A name is face to all the world.” Naming or renaming a product, service or company before you rebrand can be one of the most challenging tasks to accomplish. Even six of the top ten branding and identity firms worldwide have taken the path of least resistance. They named their company by employing one of the most default methods, most nondescript, unimaginative, and short-sided ways to name a company out there — using their last names.

World’s Top Ten Identity Firms

1. Chermayeff & Geismar
2. Landor Associates
3. Cato Purnell Partners
4. Wolff Olins
5. Pentagram
6. Chase Design
7. Total Identity
8. MetaDesign
9. QWER
10. Siegel+Gale

They didn’t take the time to research, craft, or develop a name that fits who they are and what they provide to the customer. These types of company names make it hard to sell, communicate, and remember. I wouldn’t recommend following what they do.

Visual Brand: Integrated, Living, & Pervasive

In Port-au-Prince, Haiti, there are buses called Tap Taps. They are brightly and wildly painted buses used as a for-pay transport, like a funky-looking large taxi. The bus owners spend up to double the average yearly Haitian income to have their buses painted. Does that sound like a waste of money for a business being run in such a poor culture? Maybe, but it isn't. Does that make business sense? Yes, and here's why.

Haitian Tap Tap Bus owner Patrick Telusma, a law school dropout who now drives an unpainted bus, stated his theory: "When your [bus] is painted, you get a good reputation."

NPR Frontline journalist Adam Davidson explained: "Fresh painting sends potential passengers a signal: Whoever owns this bus spends a lot of money taking care of it, at least

on the outside. That suggests he's taking care of the hidden stuff — the brakes, the transmission, that sort of thing. There aren't bus inspectors in Haiti. So passengers have to decide on their own which bus is likely to get them where they're going. The safest bet: Get on the one with all the fancy paintings."

Like it or not, there is a whole lot of branding going on without the help of Madison Avenue or any other heavy-weight branding agency. Branding makes sense in Haiti and makes sense in small-town USA. It translates into a message and directly reflects on the bottom line.

Back in 1915, soda bottles were almost precisely the same shape. They used labels to differentiate themselves, which was fine until the cold bottle started to sweat and the label slid off. Coca-Cola sponsored a design

competition among its bottle suppliers across the United States. The contest had only two requirements: the bottle had to be distinctive and had to fit existing equipment. I've heard that the distinctiveness needed to extend if broken into pieces on the ground. Coke still wanted you to know it was their product. Every piece still spoke of their identity. No small task. It was a concept of a fully integrated brand identifier even though that concept had not yet been coined.

There are only a few modern examples of this in operation that I can think of; Mini Cooper, Fiat 500, VW Beetle, and Apple Products. You sit in a Mini Cooper and you know you are not in any other car. Same with the Fiat 500 and the Beetle. Their design is carried throughout their product. It's distinctive at

every level. Apple products are much the same way in the last 10 to 15 years. You know an Apple product when you see one.

Great brands are moving toward what some are calling Brand Ecosystem, Functional Integration, Brand Universe, or creating a Living Brand. Let's take the analogy of a relationship even further. As you get to know someone new, you are introduced to their world: What they listen to, books they have read, where they eat, what coffee they drink. Sometimes you are able to enjoy many new experiences because of this new relationship. Functional Integration is much the same way. When people trust a brand, they are likely to try other products or services that are related and associated with the brand. It's important not to stretch it too far. Those other products or services need to relate to

the ecosphere much like that of Nike athletic products, shoes, Nike+, web app, iPhone app, SportWatch, and FuelBand.

A focused brand ecosystem leads to many benefits. There is a congruency between the persona and the experience leading to natural organic growth between products and services. Once this happens, brand loyalty develops and continues to grow. Millward Brown's research has concluded, when a consumer has bonded with the product, service, or brand they're willing to spend up to two-thirds of their budget in that category on that brand.

When a brand can support another social organization or cause they believe in as a practice, there is fulfillment that only comes from giving — giving without expecting anything in return. TOMS shoes is a good example this

practice. The pleasure of giving becomes synonymous with the brand experience. The products become symbols that communicate to others what they believe and what they believe is important.

Achieving Brand Congruency

“You escape competition through authenticity.”
— Naval Ravikant

Having all your verbal and visual brand communications congruent will provide an automatic trust on a subconscious level. It provides a level of discussion above the details and price. Brands that tap into and do the best job at communicating and delivering their “why” are the strongest. Their unspeakable attraction draws the right people for the right reasons. It's unmistakable. Unmatched.

Unspeakable Attraction Principles & Questions

1. Beliefs are the building blocks of both brands and culture.

What are your brand's beliefs and how are they building the culture of your company?

2. Mankind is driven by the pursuit of meaning. We are most attracted to those brands that have meaning, communicate their meaning, and connect people to their purpose.

What is your companies purpose?

3. The strongest brands yielding the highest returns are those that are doing the best job at conveying their purpose in their brand.

Is your company communicating it's purpose at every touchpoint?

4. Brands use the power and language of symbols as a vehicle to communicate their purpose. Their purpose draws in like-minded people and promotes attachment.

Is every brand touchpoint building your brand into the desired symbol?

5. Human communication is 7% message, 38% inflection, 55% body language. Brand communication is 100% message, voice and visual.

Is your brand being communicated accurately both visually and verbally?

6. We are emotional creatures. We make decisions emotionally and justify them rationally. Brands tap into our emotions and build trust.

What emotions does your brand deliver ...to the end consumer?

7. We are loyal to certain brands because they “work for us” — reinforcing our beliefs about ourselves and the world we live in. Our actions are evidence of what we believe. Consequently, we support brands that reflect what we believe.

What belief does your brand stand for?

8. Our cognitive unconscious is always taking in information trying to make sense of the world around us. Brand congruency is paramount.

Does your brand reflect what you say you are?

9. Company’s start with an idea. It’s the job of the CEO to communicate that vision and be the champion of the brand.

How well does everyone in the company know, live and communicate the brand?

Finding your authentic brand is a sole searching journey. Uncovering and defining it takes long thought and sometimes, intensive hours. Once you find it, keeping it can be just as difficult. Having someone manage your brand can provide direction, stabilization and the long view your company needs. Sometimes the long view can require small additions, revisions and alterations needed to stay current. Remember, the brand is a living entity that needs constant supervision and attention.

You may not know whether your brand is 100% congruency with your purpose, but here are a few telltale signs that it is NOT:

1. Customers have communicated that they have a hard time understanding what your company does or doesn't realize all that it offers

2. The market you are in is crowded, confusing, and you're not standing out
3. Your company is clearly different but you look and sound like everyone else
4. The benefits of using your company are intangible to the average person
5. When you have many products or services that need organizing and grouped into one unified family
6. When you lay all your communication pieces out on a table (and your website open on a laptop) and it looks schizophrenic – no consistent overarching visual or verbal message
7. The strategic direction of the business has changed
8. You are heading into a new market or rolling out a new product

9. The name of your company does not relate to the products, services, or what benefits you provide to the market

If you're dealing with any of these issues above, uncovering the purpose of your business, why it exists, and how to accurately articulate that purpose is the best way forward. Only the long view that purpose provides that can give clarity and direction forward. Having a clear and concise purpose statement will help you say "yes" to the right things and "no" to the wrong.

UNSPEAKABLE ATTRACTION

LOVE, FEAR & YOUR BRAIN ON BRANDING

Unspeakable Attraction explores the subconscious factors driving consumer behavior, focusing on biological, evolutionary, emotional, and purpose-driven factors. The book argues that these factors, revealed through neuromarketing studies, significantly influence brand attraction, loyalty and aversion. Investigating the psychology behind branding, the book provides a toolkit to most effectively attract the right people for the right reasons.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Brands connect deeply with people through shared values and a sense of meaning building trust and attachment at subconscious levels of the brain.

Survival instincts and biological responses to pleasure and pain play a significant role in brand attraction.

Emotional responses and personal beliefs heavily influence purchasing decisions, often overriding logic.

A strong brand purpose, clearly communicated and consistently delivered, is essential for building genuine connections with customers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jän was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio and studied Industrial Design at The Ohio State University. After 30 years of being a designer, inventor, and entrepreneur, he now runs his branding consultancy called Purpose Branding. His purpose is to help small, privately-held business owners clarify and align their purpose—both verbally and visually.

US \$24.95 Business Communication—Branding

PURPOSE
BRANDING

www.brandsonpurpose.com

ISBN 979-8-9860440-9-5



52495>