

Five signs your brand positioning and messaging is off base and how to fix it



Why aren't we hitting our numbers?



All marketers have been there. The day-to-day hustle of marketing tactics. So many activities, yet they never quite seem to deliver the desired results. While there may be many reasons for this, it's likely the main problem is that your brand positioning, and associated messaging, simply aren't resonating.

So, all that expensive content, campaigns, events, and sales enablement efforts will continue to miss the mark until the core issue is fixed.

But how do you know if your brand strategy is off base? Below are the five key signs and what you can do to fix it.

Sign 1: Low engagement with content

In a study of 222 CMOs conducted by Brandigo, only 20% believed that the content their team is creating effectively addresses the needs of their target audience. And only 24% believe their messaging is differentiated from their competitors.

If your core messaging doesn't align with what your prospects most

value, pumping more and more of it out isn't going to make it better. In fact, it might do the opposite—if prospects associate your brand with things they simply don't value, you likely will be taken out of the consideration set.



The Fix

The only way to truly understand what your prospects value most is to ask them. Doing qualitative research that gets into their heads and hearts will tell you what you most need to focus on, and even more importantly what you need to avoid because it isn't important to them.

Often called Value Driver and Messaging Prioritization research, the insights they uncover do one more important thing that can be a game changer for you versus your competitors: it gives you secret knowledge into what actually motivates your buyers to action versus what they say does. It most often is not the

same thing, and this is where brands miss the mark. They focus on the wrong set of buyer motivators that aren't really what's driving their decision to buy.

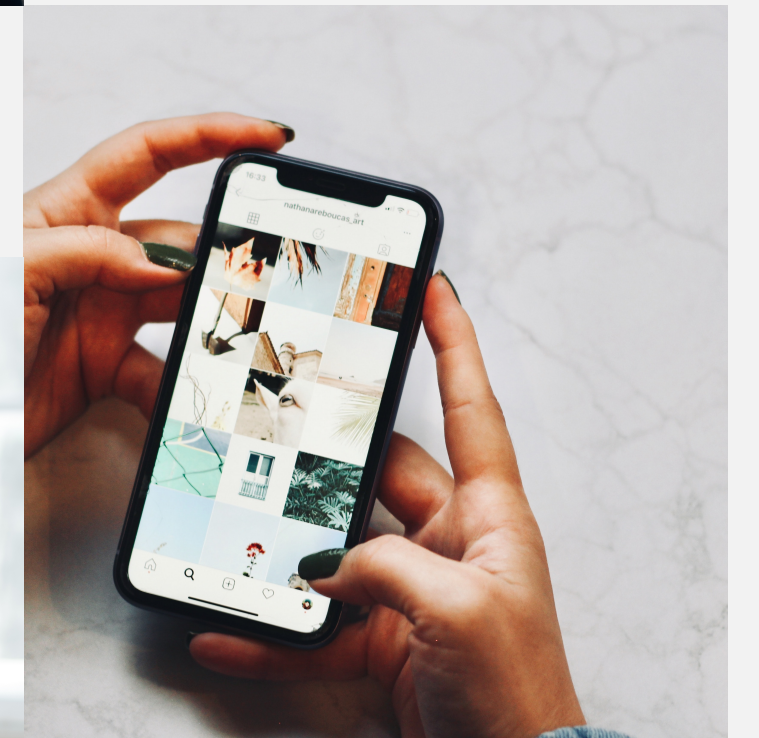
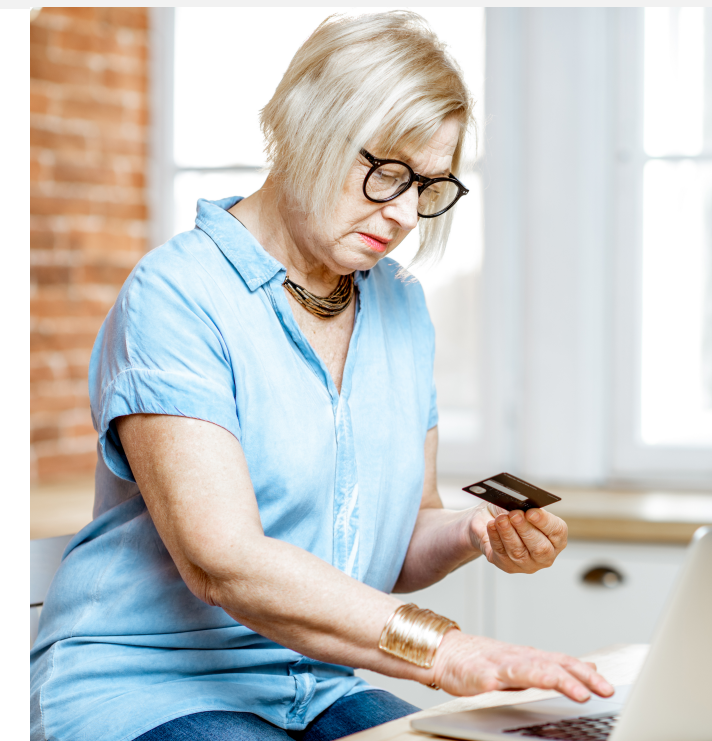
Conducting this research will vastly improve your brand's engagement because it will resonate with your prospects emotionally while tapping into their primary motivators.

Sign 2: Uncertainty of brand performance versus competition at each stage of the funnel

A brand is only as strong as its weakest point in the funnel. It's easy to make assumptions and believe, for example, your brand's main challenge is awareness when in reality it's a consideration problem.

Not knowing the nuanced difference can lead your marketing team and agency to focus on the

wrong areas of the funnel using tactics that will not improve overall conversion performance. Not having data insight into the real funnel challenges greatly impacts budget allocation as well, turning the marketing strategy into a misaligned and missed opportunity.



The Fix

To improve your funnel performance, you have to first understand what your weaknesses are. If, for example, you discover that a high percentage of your target audience is familiar with your brand but a low percentage will consider you a viable option, that's where your team needs to focus. Without understanding this, your brand will have a difficult time meeting KPIs.

A quantitative funnel performance study with at least 200 of your prospects will give you insights and guidance on exactly where to allocate your budget and team's efforts. This study, often called a Brand Health study, is like getting an MRI on what's really going on

with your brand versus your competitors based on real data. No more assumptions, just insights that give you the confidence to create brand positioning, messaging and marketing strategy you know will work.

This can also be exceptionally insightful across your personas to understand their perceptions and how they differ at the different funnel levels. Do influencer personas have a high consideration value for your brand but decision makers don't? Or geographically, is your funnel performance different across personas in Germany than it is in the US? These are valuable and highly actionable insights.

Sign 3: Inability to articulate a clear and differentiated value proposition

According to Brandigo’s study of 222 CMOs, 60% stated that their company does not have a differentiated value proposition from the competition. Another study, by SiriusDecisions, found that the number one reason sales executives are unable to close a deal is because of their inability to clearly articulate a differentiated value proposition.

If there is a core problem that needs fixing, this is it. Your brand positioning is your value proposition, yet many companies think of these as two discrete things. And herein lies the problem—if you don’t have a clear company value prop, you don’t have a clear brand positioning either.



The Fix

At the core of every brand positioning strategy is a clear value proposition that is based on what your prospects most value when choosing a solution that your company offers.

Your value prop ultimately answers the question ‘why choose us?’ If you are unable to answer that in a way that is both highly valued by your prospects and meaningfully differentiated from your competitors, you have a foundational problem that needs to be addressed.

Conducting a quantitative study to understand what your prospective buyers value most will guide you in creating a value prop that should also become the core positioning and messaging of your brand.

And your sales team will have confidence knowing that the new value prop is based on outside-in data, not a biased internal perspective.

Sign 4: Lack of clarity on how your target personas have evolved, what they value and how they make decisions

In Brandigo's CMO study, 72% stated they have little to no confidence that their organization understands the unique pain points of their target audience. Diving in a bit deeper it's easy to understand why: only 12% of the CMOs stated that their personas were created using researched data. This leads to toothless, and useless, personas.

Personas and ideal customer profiles (ICPs) evolve over time due to all sorts of macro and micro factors that are out of any brand's control. If your personas are not

based on your research to understand this evolution, you really don't know your target customers, how they make decisions and what each of them most value when choosing a product or service like yours.

And personas often contain "fluff" data that doesn't provide useful direction and insight. A major missed opportunity.



The Fix

According to Marketing Insider Group, 93% of companies which exceed lead and revenue goals segment their database by buyer persona. The only way to truly get inside your prospects minds and hearts is through segmented persona research. A deep-dive persona quantitative study will provide your brand proprietary insights that your competitors won't have. This is gold to your marketing team because it enables them to create campaigns that are aligned with confidence across personas and geographies.

This is especially valuable for Account Based Marketing (ABM) efforts—understanding how, and who, drives internal decision making and what resources your personas turn to when researching for a solution such as yours.

The impact this can have on the efficacy of your marketing budget allocation can be significant.

Turning proprietary persona data into a customer-centric, digital customer education portal for all employees can be one of the best investments any company can make. It transforms old, static personas into living, three-dimensional human beings that transcend their usefulness from just the marketing team to informing product development, R&D and the onboarding of new hires. As your personas evolve over time, the portal more easily evolves than its static counterpart to provide the most up-to-date data.

One final word of caution about persona creation: using third party data that is also available to your competitors will only provide shared, overlapped insights and not actionable knowledge specific to your brand.

Sign 5: An employee base that doesn't understand the company's vision, purpose or brand strategy

Employees know when their company's vision, purpose and brand don't align. Or, more likely, they don't even know what any of the three are. A study by Harvard University found that 95% of employees do not know or are unaware of their company's strategy. This means there are a lot of employees being kept in the dark.

Vision and purpose development is often treated as a tick-off-the-box exercise, resulting in an outcome that is neither a vision nor a reason for being. True vision and purpose statements are both guides and guardrails. They should be used every day to help direct the hundreds of small

and big decisions made by employees every day by asking the question, 'does this decision I'm about to make align with our purpose and help move our vision forward?'

Adding to this issue, brand strategies are often created separately from vision and purpose. This creates an obvious disconnect that is confusing to employees—giving them the impression of working for a company that doesn't have its act together.



The Fix

Organizations that have outdated or non-useful visions and purposes need to address this before focusing on the brand strategy. The best vision and purpose statements are derived from a broad section of the organization, not just the leadership team. To be effective, the resulting statements must be clear, directive and emotionally engaging. They are almost never effectively created in a single meeting but more likely over a series of smaller, input sessions that build upon each other.

For many companies, using an outside consultant or firm trained in vision and purpose development can be a highly efficient approach and can aid in the juggernaut of finding internal consensus. Additionally, this helps challenge the company to remove biases and think more expansively.

Once a vision and purpose has been created, as well as a research-based brand strategy, the next step of engaging employees in the alignment of all three is critical. Brandigo has a proprietary, employee engagement process called Strategy Fluency that is designed to do just that. Using science-based techniques on how adults learn, engage, and develop fluencies, Brandigo leads the internal teams through the journey of not only knowing the company's direction, but what their individual role is every day.

Investing in proprietary customer research has a significant ROI because it makes your marketing and sales teams more effective.

About Brandigo

Brandigo is a globally-focused brand research and strategy consultancy with offices in Newburyport, MA and Shanghai, China.

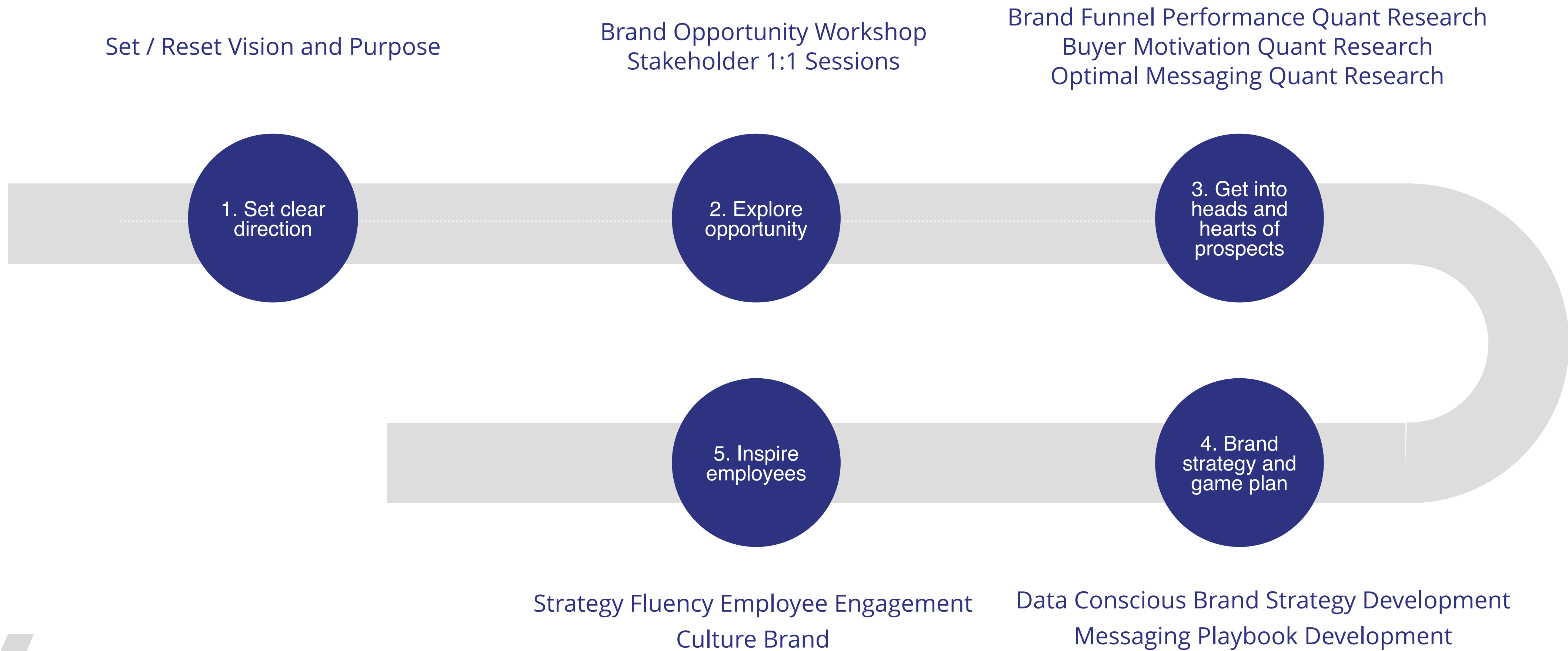
Since 1996, Brandigo has been solving the challenge of sales and marketing efforts that fail to produce their desired outcomes because their agencies and in-house teams haven't invested in understanding the authentic desires of customers.

We blend proprietary customer research, data science and creative thinking in what we call Data-Conscious Brand Strategy.

We align vision, mission and brand strategy in a way that creates genuine competitive advantage for our clients and sets up their in-house teams and agencies for proven success.



Brandigo Approach





To discuss how Data-Conscious Brand Strategy can help
your team be more successful, reach out

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