



Data Conscious Brand Strategy

Brand Strategy Demands Rigor, Research, and Imagination. Anything Less is No Strategy at All.

brandigo

Most marketing fails because agencies and in-house teams don't invest in understanding the authentic desires of customers. So, the expensive messaging and content they produce runs wild with irrelevance, often damaging a brand's health.

Data-conscious strategy solves this problem using a deep blend of primary research and creative vision that ensures brands consistently and powerfully speak to what customers care about most.

There are no shortcuts. Speaking with hundreds of customers in tailor-made studies, you can uncover the true emotional value a brand's products and services deliver, as well as the gap between what customers say and what actually drives their buying decisions.

The results shift paradigms. Data-conscious strategy elevates brands above the competition and inspires entire organizations. It cultivates equity—the kind investors, entrepreneurs, and the C-suite fawns over. The kind that leads to real revenue gains and lasting legacies.

Brands like this don't come around very often, but you can create one and this ebook will help you learn how. In the following pages we are going to cover:

- **Why it's time we shifted the paradigm and moved away from the old-fashioned way of developing brand strategy**
- **A full breakdown of what constitutes a data-conscious brand strategy and why it works**
- **How measuring the health of your brand is the first step on the journey towards a data-conscious brand strategy**
- **The importance of value drivers and how to get to the essence of your customers wants and needs**
- **How to bring all that valuable data to life**
- **The road map to a data-conscious brand strategy for your business**

The Path to Truly Seeing Your Customer is Increasingly Foggy. It Shouldn't Be.

Every agency and most in-house teams say they 'do' brand strategy. Clients increasingly expect this, so they'd be nuts to say otherwise.

But very few actually, well, do.

What they call 'strategy' is often a grab bag of semi-educated guesses, lazy attempts to replicate another brand's wins, and generic 'insights' pulled from ubiquitous 3rd party market reports.

Oftentimes real data doesn't even enter the conversation, yet 'strategy' is still neatly packaged with a hope you won't notice there's no 'there' there. That money evaporated for no good reason.

Agency smoke and mirrors are understandable, to an extent. Selling you on execution alone is a losing bet, especially when visionary 15-year-olds on TikTok can draw more eyes than expensive campaigns by fusty creatives. And in-house teams—despite being pulled in a thousand directions at once—often need to justify their existence.

But success doesn't care why you have a bad strategy—or no real strategy at all. Success simply walks the other way while clients wonder why their downstream marketing efforts have negligible impact.

Websites, podcasts, videos, virtual reality, and name your latest content vehicle—they're ineffective resource drains without a strong brand strategy to guide them. Without messaging that deeply resonates in real hearts and minds.

Unfocused brands become forgettable. Destined to fall behind in an era of constant innovation and splintering customer tastes. Destined to lose customers, prospects, and employees. Destined, ultimately, for obsolescence.

There's another way, though. A surer way.
One that's built from the best of us.

Left Brain Meet Right Brain. Brand Meet Equity.

Great brand strategies only surface when deep, proprietary research meets flourishing creative vision. When the left and right brains meet in a tête-à-tête that produces messaging, personas, and positioning that no marketing automation or sales enablement tool could dream of envisioning.

There are no shortcuts. Brandigo doesn't start molding what we've coined data-conscious brand strategy until speaking to hundreds of your potential customers. We don't rest until we're in their psyches, gathering rich feedback in studies designed specifically for each client. We focus not on the tactical delivery of your products and services or customer satisfaction metrics for your brand, but on the needs of your customers and the emotional value that your products and services deliver. We use this research to create meaningful, audience-specific value narratives for your brand.

Our research-based personas are built around rigorous qualitative and quantitative data – not just a handful of conversations. We know that your prospects respond best when you tell them how you'll make their lives better. We make it emotional.

First, primary data is a critical piece of this answer. Why?

1. It's unique. Proprietary, primary data that you have commissioned isn't available to anyone else. That means unlike market reports and analyst data, you have access to insights that no one else does, and this gives you an advantage when it comes to positioning your brand. When brands use the same reports to build strategy, everyone starts to sound the same. Makes sense, right? If everyone is building their brands from the same 3rd party information, you would expect the same conclusions to be drawn when it comes to what prospects want.

2. It gives you a competitive advantage. Proprietary data allows you to measure the health of your brand versus a set of competitors. Using these insights, you can identify competitive advantages in key value driver areas in the eyes of the market. You can then use this information to develop messaging points that clearly articulate your value proposition, but also where your brand outperforms your competition.

3. 99% of the time, it's data you don't already have. Customer satisfaction metrics can be great. Your Net Promoter Score is a nice talking point. But when it comes to data for building a clearly differentiated brand, you need to understand the value drivers of the market – the critical drivers and delighters that are most likely to drive a purchase decision.

How well do you really know your customers?

As part of the data-conscious brand strategy process, we help clients understand the difference between the most important drivers of purchase decisions (values) and the types of messages that are most likely to inspire prospects to take a closer look at your brand.

Next, the shopping behaviors of humans can be a tricky thing. What they say is important is often much different from what their actions show us. By looking at the difference between their stated importance (what they say) and their derived importance (what they actually do), Brandigo is able to build positioning and messaging strategies that tap into both the conscious and subconscious needs of your customers and prospects.

This isn't as easy as pulling out a data point and calling it a value proposition. It takes a creative approach to interpret your data in order to craft a unique story that ties back to your brand's most important value drivers. Brandigo delivers the left-brained expertise of a seasoned research firm with the right-brained creativity of an inspired strategy and communications agency.



The bottom line.

At the end of the day, you want your brand to be, not just different, but valuable to your target audiences.

Find your unique place in the market and the value you deliver to customers and build a creative strategy for messaging it and create a visual identity that sets you apart in your market.

$$\text{(primary data) + (strategic insights) + (creative inspiration)} \\ = \text{brand differentiation}$$

This is the essence of data conscious brand strategy.

It's how you are able to turn those singular insights—ones your competition won't have access to—into clear-eyed articulations of what sets you apart.

It's how you uncover the emotional value your products and services deliver, as well as the gap between what customers say and what actually drives their buying decisions.

And it's how you measure and elevate your brand's health, a rigorous set of metrics that guides your marketing spend as prospects move from awareness to familiarity to consideration to maturing into a customer.

Data-driven strategy won't lead you there. It'll conjure a misguided or wrong understanding of human behavior and waste your time, energy, and resources.

Data-conscious strategy, however, will earn your brand fervent, warm-fuzzies devotion. And equity. The kind investors, entrepreneurs, and the C-suite fawn over. The kind that leads to real revenue gains.

Data-conscious strategy is rooted and nuanced. It becomes the lingua franca of your entire organization, instilling pride, confidence, and vision. It reveals the best about your brand and gives teams the fluency to spotlight those qualities at every turn.

They feel because they believe.



Walking with giants

Apple. Disney. Ikea. Patagonia. These brands are memorable because they make consumers feel. And they feel because they believe. And they believe because, more often than not, these brands deliver on their promises.

- Apple thinks differently.
- Disney creates magic.
- Ikea democratizes great design.
- Patagonia saves the planet.

These brands—valuable in every sense of the word—make real human lives better. They make people more hopeful. More spirited.

Data-conscious brand strategy empowers you to do the same with your brand.

Why your brand needs a health check

Measuring brand health helps us to understand exactly how a brand is perceived in the minds of stakeholders, be that customers, employees, competitors, and so on. It goes beyond simply asking if they know of your brand and looks in more detail as to whether or not they know of your brand, and if so, are they compelled to make a purchase for example. It also represents the starting point for developing a truly data-conscious brand strategy.

At Brandigo we use our brand health metrics to measure the awareness (aided and unaided), familiarity, consideration, and usage of a brand, as well as exploring loyalty. And we define each benchmark as follows:

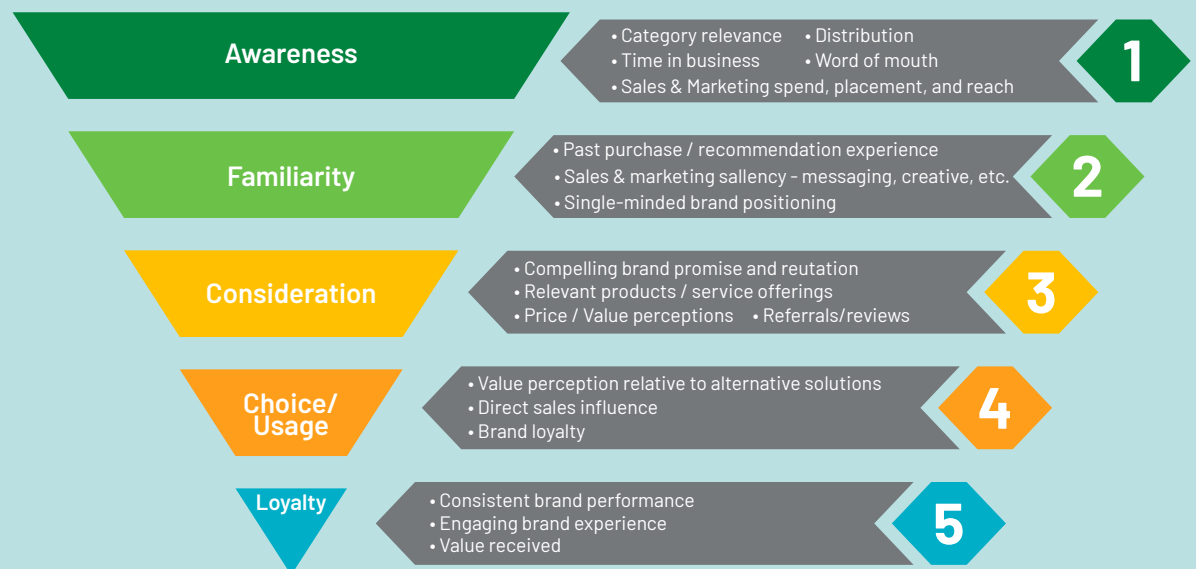
- **Awareness** – has the respondent heard of your brand before?
- **Familiarity** – if they have heard of it, do they know anything about the brand beyond just the name?
- **Consideration** – if they are familiar with your brand, will they consider using you if they are looking for a supplier of your products or services?
- **Usage** – is the respondent currently, or have they ever been, a customer of your brand?
- **Loyalty** – how likely is the respondent to recommend your brand?



How does the health check help formulate a data-conscious brand strategy?

Once you have an idea of how aware, familiar, etc., your stakeholders are of your brand, you can then start to make informed decisions about where to focus your marketing resources.

Let's say your brand health research has uncovered that although your brand has high awareness and familiarity amongst stakeholders, your consideration metrics are low. As you can see in the graphic below, this data would suggest that your strategy should include a focus on developing a compelling brand promise and communicating this effectively to the market. You might also want to examine how your pricing strategy relates to the perceived value your brand is projecting.



Contributing factors to a fall in the consideration brand health metric can include:

- A lack of a singular and/or compelling brand promise
- A perceived drop in relevance of service offerings
- Ineffective messaging or sales saliency
- Off-balance price / value perception
- Negative PR, product failures, poor reviews or referrals

What this demonstrates is that just by taking the first step towards data-conscious brand strategy development with a robust brand health analysis, marketing leaders can identify 5 potential points of focus that will genuinely impact on their offer and ultimately their business growth.

What exactly do your customers value?

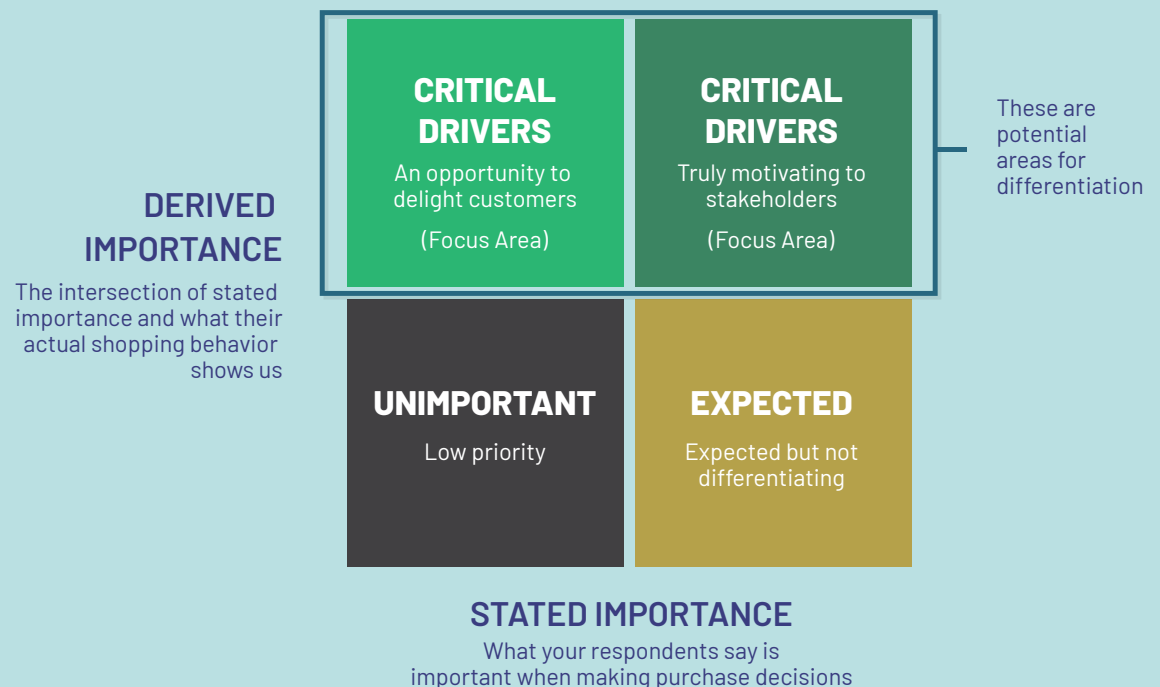
For value driver analysis, you are seeking to determine what purchase decision motivators your customers view as important – both consciously and sub-consciously. What are the values that a brand represents that truly impact a purchasing decision? It's the reasons why your customers choose to buy your products or services over those of the competition. Once you understand which value drivers have the biggest impact on your customers and in your market, and on which your brand performs best in the eyes of the market, you have the foundations for a brand strategy that will really speak to your customers' wants and needs.

How is it done?

Value driver analysis is based on statistically robust data gleaned from a detailed market survey. Based on this data, you can identify a series of category dimensions that drive the reputation of companies in your space. So, for example, let's say you are in the car manufacturing industry, these category dimensions could be something like:

- Performance
- Design
- Economy
- After-sales care
- Environmental impact

The next step in the process is determining the importance of each category dimension and to group them in one of four sets as shown in the diagram below:



These category dimensions naturally fall into their categories based on the index ratings assigned to them by the collective study respondents. Dimensions that fall within the 'Delighter' and 'Critical Driver' set will start to give you an idea of the value drivers you can focus on to develop your brand strategy.

Continuing with our car manufacturer example, the data might show that economy is unimportant to our target market and that good after-sales care is expected. However, environmental impact is a delighter and design and performance are critical drivers. So, the foundation of our brand strategy could be positioning the brand as an environmentally friendly vehicle without compromising performance or design.

This anecdotal example is just the tip of the iceberg, and Brandigo's experienced brand strategists will go deeper into the data using advanced statistical methods combined with creative thinking.

Another benefit of this methodology is that it gives you the ability to assess how your 'delighters' and 'critical drivers' resonate with different stakeholders, geographic regions, specific buyer roles, etc.. Using this data, you are able to then create brand positioning scenarios that are focused on consumer wants and needs and genuinely differentiated from your competitors because you are not relying on third-party data or analyst insights that are readily available to anyone. This approach results in positioning strategies that are unique, authentic, and validated by data.

We've just scratched the surface here in what is possible when you conduct powerful value driver research. Studies within different industries will uncover unique, often unexpected critical drivers and delighters. Equally important is that you may be surprised as to what the market views as "expected" or "unimportant." Sometimes those revelations allow you to reallocate marketing and operational resources to ensure you are achieving the greatest impact by building upon the things that really matter to the market.

What you can see from this is how this aspect of a data-conscious brand strategy uncovers genuine opportunities for differentiation for your brand in a way that resonates with its customers.

Bringing all your data to life

The next step is to take all the insights gleaned from the research and develop a brand platform that is fully supported by the data. This means taking the value driver category that gives your brand the best opportunity to differentiate itself from your competition based on the needs of your market and your brand's performance in said category.

You will be looking at the value drivers that sit in the 'delighter' or 'critical driver' categories for this, coupled with what you know your brand does better than the competition. And as we mentioned previously, this methodology can go deeper to help you identify the value drivers that resonate with different stakeholders, geographic regions, age groups, and so on. You are not relying on third-party data or analyst insights that are readily available to everyone, so this approach results in positioning strategies that are unique, authentic, and validated by data.

Then it's time to distill this down into your Brand Essence. The essence of your brand, usually expressed in a two or three-word statement, is a guiding principle that is instantly recognizable by your stakeholders. It describes the number one emotional reason that your customers choose you and your products or services. And more importantly, remain loyal.

Make it Your Manifesto

Once you have your Brand Essence distilled, you now want to put together your brand's manifesto, and just as the definition states, this will be your public declaration of your values and aims.

This manifesto is a new kind of mission statement – it's a content vehicle for outreach, but it's also valuable internally as a brand rallying cry.

Your brand manifesto can be used in various ways. It can be kept internal, or you can display it on your website. It can be used as a form of employee engagement. It can be created with a typography treatment and placed on your social media channels as an image. Or they can be given to communication partners as a roadmap for developing communication strategies. The bottom line is that it announces to the world what your brand is all about. The reason it exists and what it seeks to achieve. Make it emotional, make it something you and your stakeholders care about and are proud to stand behind.



Hold Your Position

Finally, it's time for you to create your brand position. The simple sentence that completely encapsulates why your customers should choose your brand.

Your brand position statement should include 3 key elements:

- What your company does
- Who you do it for
- Why your audiences should choose you over your competitors

Shaping Your Narrative

Finally, it's time to create your own narrative and brand position.

Your brand narrative is a detailed description of who you are as an organization. It incorporates the new brand platform that is based on statistically robust data and truly differentiated from your competition. And it will also speak to the needs of your market. It will be evident across your website, your press releases, social media content, and much much more.

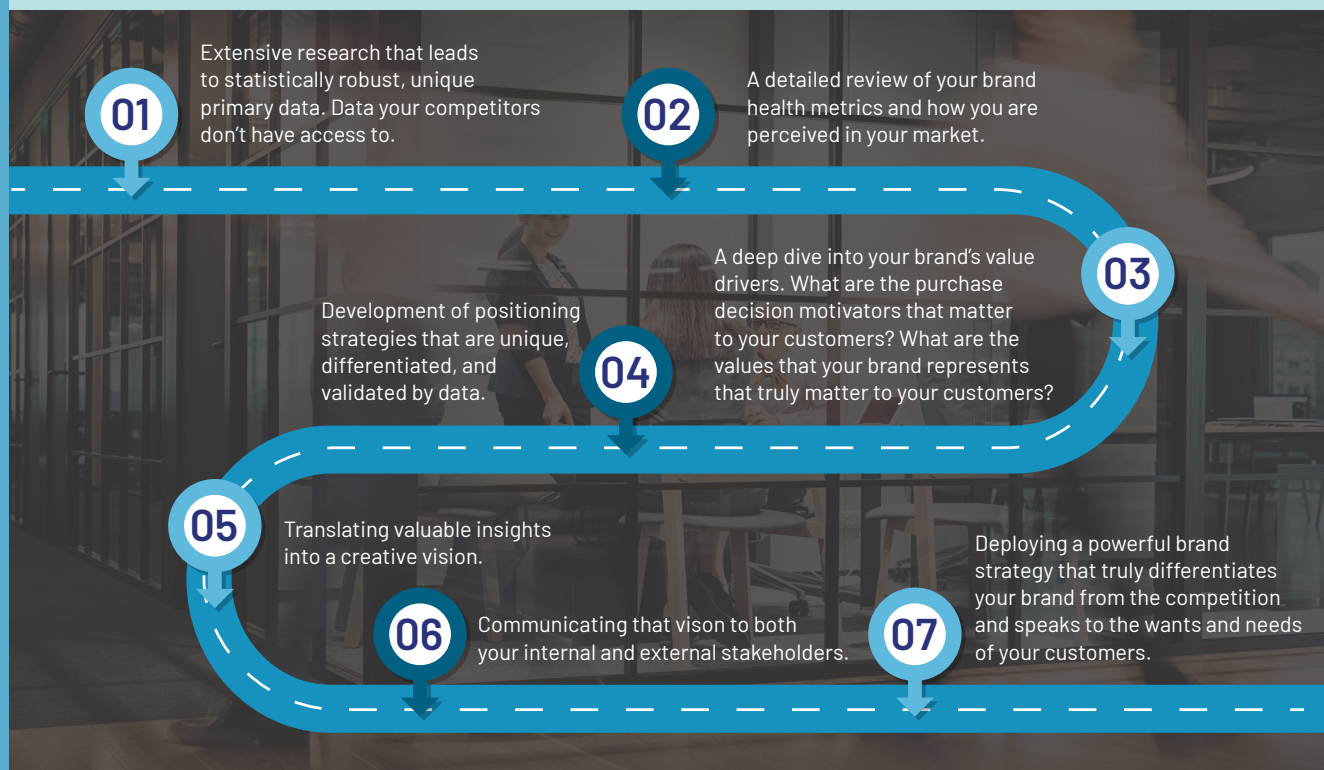
It has to be rooted in reality, otherwise, your stakeholders will see through it straight away. At the same time, it should be somewhat aspirational – giving your brand room to grow. But the beauty of a data-conscious brand strategy is you will have already identified your market's value drivers and in which aspects your brand is the strongest, empirically so via your own primary data.

Keep it simple. Yes – your brand narrative will be a long-form description of your brand but long doesn't mean complex. All the best stories are based on a simple premise. What is more, your customers and their perspective, their problems, and how you provide the solution, should be central to it. Make your customers the hero of your narrative and demonstrate how you helped them become so.

The roadmap to a data-conscious brand strategy

This guide was designed to give you and your business an overview as to how an effective data-conscious brand strategy is created. It is a valuable insight as to what the methodology is and why your business is losing out by not applying it to your brand, but we are still only taking a quick peek behind the curtain.

There is a pathway you can follow though, something we call the roadmap to data-conscious brand strategy, which we have outlined for you below.



"Data conscious brand strategy is a critical driver for moving your brand forward. The strategic direction delivered will serve as strategic guardrails for executive teams, sales, human resources, operations, R&D, and of course, marketing."

Chris Langathianos
Vice President of Brand Strategy
Brandigo

Brand strategy demands rigor, research, and imagination. Anything less is no strategy at all.

Most marketing fails because agencies and in-house teams don't invest in understanding the authentic desires of customers. So the expensive messaging and content they produce runs wild with irrelevance, often damaging a brand's health.

Brandigo's data-conscious approach to brand strategy solves this problem. Brands all over the globe are now seeing their business success accelerate thanks to the services we offer. Our services include:

- Brand Strategy Research (Brand Health, Value Drivers, Messaging Prioritization, Audience Needs Assessment, Concept Validation, Persona Development Studies)
- Organizational Vision, Mission, and Values Development
- Brand Positioning and Value Proposition Development
- Brand Architecture
- Comprehensive Messaging Platform Creation
- Employer Brand / Employee Engagement / Strategy Fluency
- Go-to-Market and Creative Execution

Some of the brands we've partnered with include:



To find out more about Brandigo's data-conscious approach to brand strategy, and to see the impact it has had on our clients' businesses, you can view our case studies and insightful resources by visiting our website:

www.brandigo.com

Or get in touch via email at:

Chris Langathianos, Global Vice President of Brand Strategy
chrisl@brandigo.com

Steven Proud, Global Marketing Director
sproud@brandigo.com



brandigo