



The Barbecue Test



How do you fare?

You're at a barbecue. Not an ordinary barbecue, but an upscale Grange sipping, salmon nibbling affair with guests you'd kill to have as customers. A distinguished gentleman inquires about your company. Could you describe the essence of your business and what makes it special in 30 seconds? If yes, you probably have a well branded company. If not, here's some ideas to get you on the way.

What is a brand?

The esteemed chap at the barbecue may have known the definition of a brand name, but do you? Interbrand, a leading branding consultancy, defines a brand name as 'A mixture of tangible and intangible attributes symbolised in a trademark, which creates influence and generates value'. The Oxford Dictionary defines a brand as *an iron stamp used red hot to leave an indelible mark*. Needless to say, corporate branding is an extremely important tool for any size of company, but can be quite daunting.

Rob Thom from Salt Creative suggests some pointers. For Rob, branding is about connecting emotionally to your target audience and having that audience subliminally 'know' the story of your business and how it can help them. 'Branding is the perception that the average person has about a company, what they think of when they hear a name or a jingle or see a logo', and adds that branding represents the personality of a company. Try thinking, 'What would my company look like if it was a person?'

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What does your business look like?

What would your brand look like? Are you the chubby and jolly Michelin man? Or perhaps you're Mr Sheen, the smiling rosy cheeked balding man that is instantly recognisable to the majority of Australians and is currently the producer of the most successful cleaning products? While it might come as a surprise to some, Mr Sheen was actually modelled on a company employee, and his image represents the core values of the brand: friendly, trustworthy and reliable.

A brand name has the ability to conjure up many images and perceptions, and this brand *personality* contributes to the success of a company or product. So how do you build a successful brand? Marketing lecturer, Professor David Jobber, lists seven factors that are important to a brand's success.



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Steps to success

1

Quality

Core benefits that consumers expect should be delivered well and consistently. A kitchen knife that is as sharp as a wet tissue will not develop brand equity.

2

Positioning

A brand must occupy a position in the market. Say you want to enter the bottled water market, using recycled water as your product. Offering bottled water that is physically different (i.e. the product comes in reflective glass bottles) and has a witty name ('I can't believe it's not water!') could prove successful.

3

Repositioning

McDonald's inclusion of healthier alternatives to appeal to consumers that are concerned with the obesity epidemic is an example of repositioning.

4

Communications

A successful brand is 'delivered through every possible medium that the organisation can utilise – from names and logos to leaders and buildings, products and services to advertising and brochures, colours and packaging to uniforms and interiors, culture and behaviours to training and rewards'. *Peter Fisk, Author of Marketing Genius*

5

First mover advantage

This is the advantage the first successful brand in the market has to create a clear position in consumer's minds before competitors enter the market. However, this does not guarantee success, as other brands can move in with more alluring features and take over.

6

Long term perspective

You must invest long term in your brand – communicating the brand message, building awareness and creating loyalty. The reward for your effort is the automatic customer – when a customer automatically chooses a product due to the brand.

7

Internal marketing

A brand should be marketed within the company as well as externally. The employee drinking Coke in a Pepsi boardroom is not being internally marketed (or likely to be employed for long).

