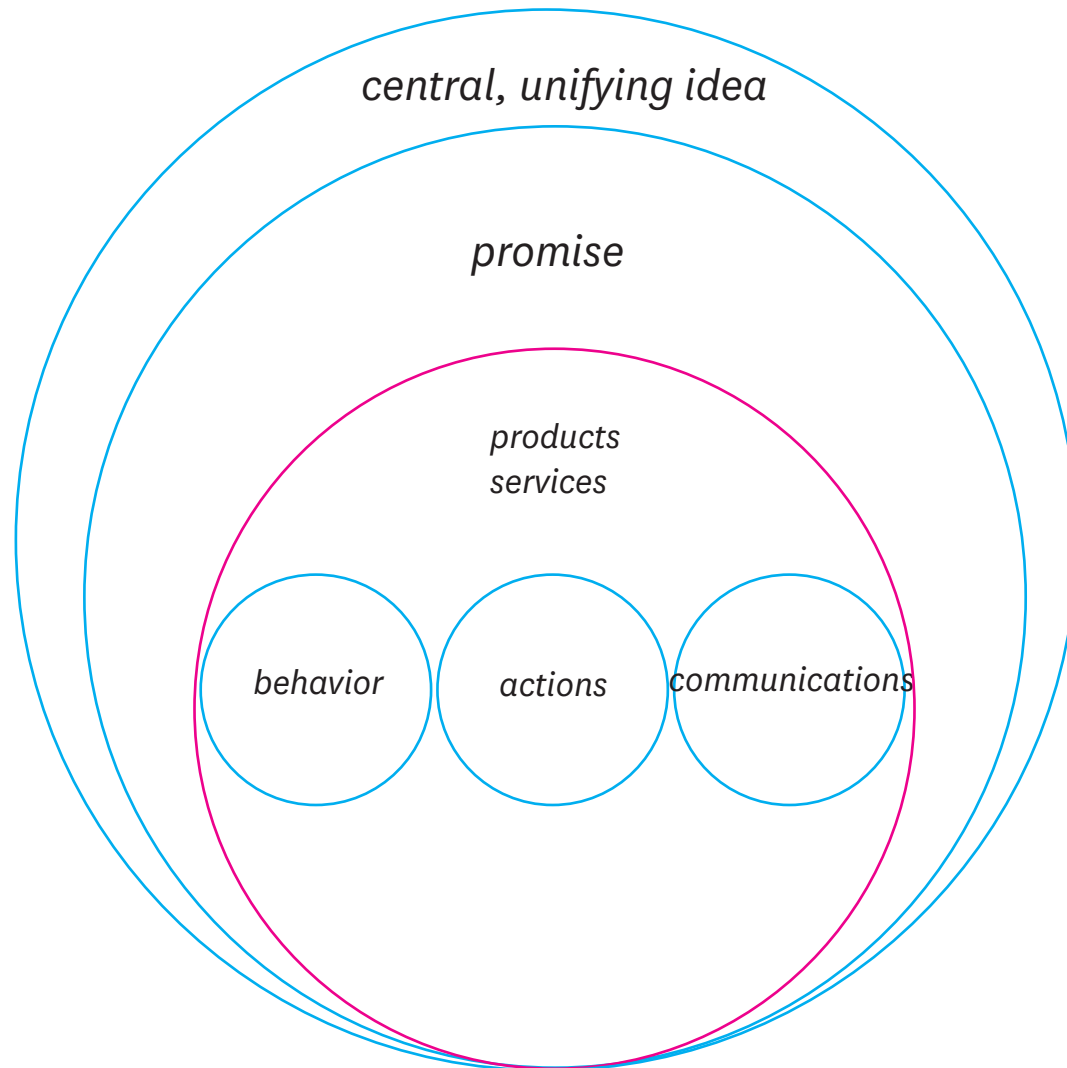


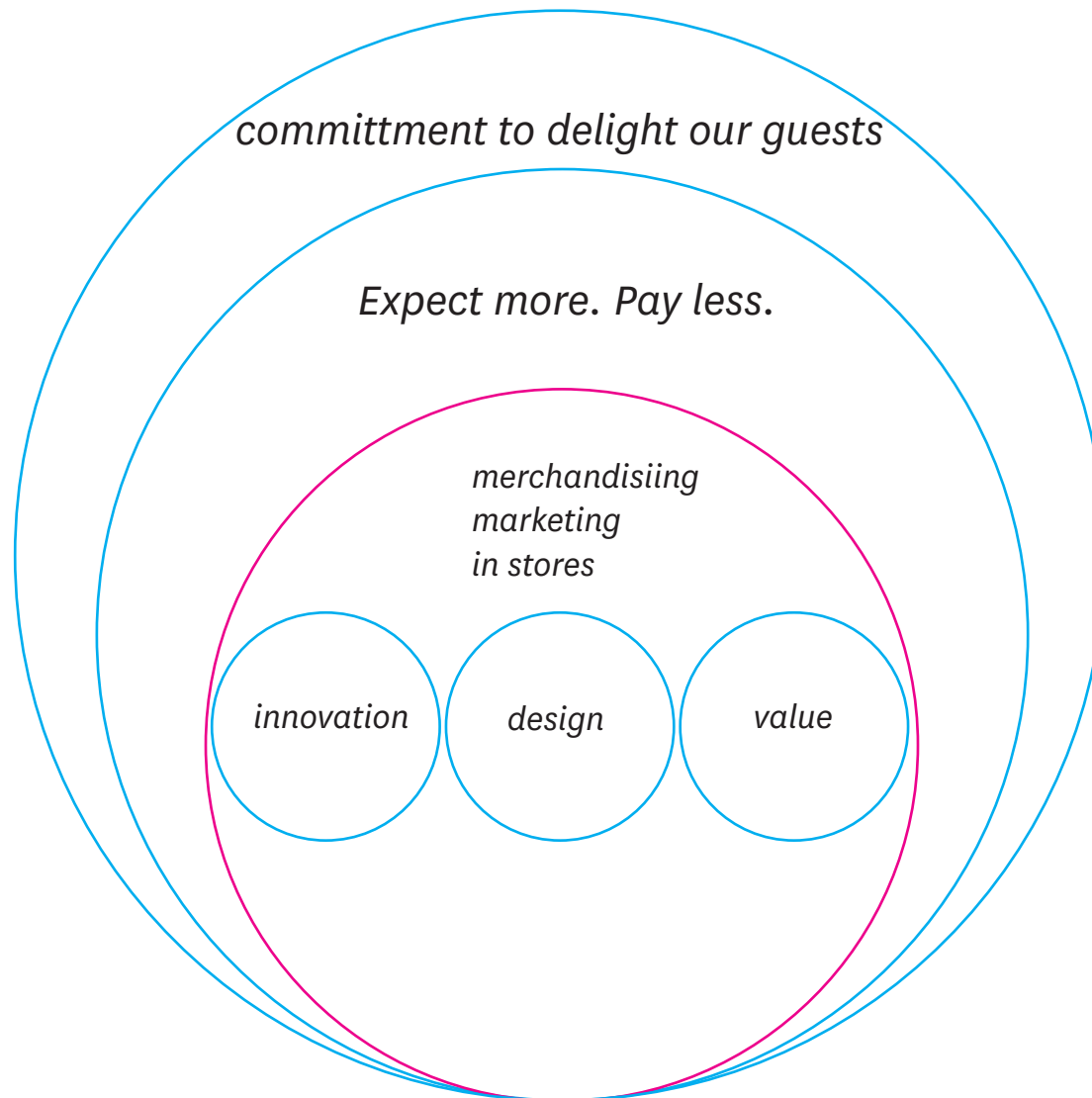
Brand Strategy

Effective brand strategy provides a central, unifying idea around which all behavior, actions, and communications are aligned. It works across products and services, and is effective over time.



At the heart of the strategy is our commitment to delight our guests by consistently delivering the right combination of innovation, design, and value in our merchandising, in our marketing, and in our stores. This is the essence of our “Expect more. Pay less.” brand promise.

Bob Ulrich ~ Chairman and CEO of Target



Brand Strategy

Brand strategy builds on a **vision**, is aligned with **business strategy**, emerges from a company's **values** and **culture**, and reflects an in-depth understanding of the **customer's needs** and **perceptions**. It defines **positioning**, differentiation, the competitive advantage, and a unique value proposition. It is a road map that guides **marketing**.

Who Does It?

No one comes up with it alone unless you are a visionary like Steve Jobs. It is usually a result of an extended dialogue with the **CEO, marketing, sales, advertising, public relations, operations, and distribution**.

Brand strategists are sometimes brought in, they can be independent thinkers and authorities, strategic marketing firms, and brand consultants. Sometimes companies just need help articulating what is already there.

Various Approaches

Setting strategy is all about understanding what you have to say and to whom you have to say it:

If a company wants to base strategy on **price**, it should say it is the best **value**, and it should say it to people for whom value is the most important selling point.

Another strategy is to emphasize **unique qualities** that make a brand **desirable**, regardless of price.

Classic brand strategy engages the consumer thought process by designing **emotional benefits** into brands. Brand strategy can then meet the consumer's emotional requirements while leaving price, availability, purpose, and other features and benefits to satisfy rational needs.

Brand Ideals

Ideals are essential to a responsible creative process regardless of the size of a company or the nature of a business.



Vision

A compelling vision by an effective, articulate, and passionate leader is the foundation and the inspiration for the best brands.

Meaning

The best brands stand for something—a big idea, a strategic position, a defined set of values, a voice that stands apart.

Authenticity

Authenticity is not possible without an organization having clarity about its market, positioning, value proposition, and competitive difference.

Differentiation

Brands always compete with each other within their business category, and at some level, compete with all brands that want our attention, our loyalty, and our money.

Sustainability

Sustainability is the ability to have longevity in a world in constant flux, characterized by future permutations that no one can predict.

Coherence

Whenever a customer experiences a brand, it must feel familiar and have the desired effect. Consistency does not need to be rigid or limiting in order to feel like one company.

Flexibility

An effective brand identity positions a company for change and growth in the future. It supports an evolving marketing strategy.

Commitment

Organizations need to actively manage their assets, including the brand name, the trademarks, the integrated sales and marketing systems, and the standards.

Value

Building awareness, increasing recognition, communicating uniqueness and quality, and expressing a competitive difference create measurable results.

Staying on Message (coherence)

Stay on message is the brand mantra. The best brands speak with one distinctive voice. On the web, in a tweet, in conversations with a salesperson, in a speech given by the president, the company needs to project the same unified message. It must be memorable, identifiable, and centered on the customer.

Integrated communications require that **content and design work together** to differentiate the brand.

Nomenclature

company name, taglines, descriptors, product names, service names, division names

Brand Essence

mission statements, vision statements, value propositions, key messages, guiding principles

Communications

voice, tone, headline style, punctuation, emphasis, accuracy, clarity, consistency

Information

content, call to action, URLs, email signatures, voicemail, abbreviations, titles, directions

Touchpoints

websites, news releases, FAQs, press kits, brochures, ad campaigns, signage, apps

Positioning (differentiation)

Positioning is a process to identify what boldly differentiates a brand in the mind of a customer. Customers are overwhelmed with choices. Positioning has the potential to create new openings in an oversaturated, continually changing marketplace. The best positioning builds on a deep understanding of customer needs and aspirations, the competition, the strengths, and weaknesses of a brand, changes in demographics, technology, and trends.

Superior Competitive Positioning:

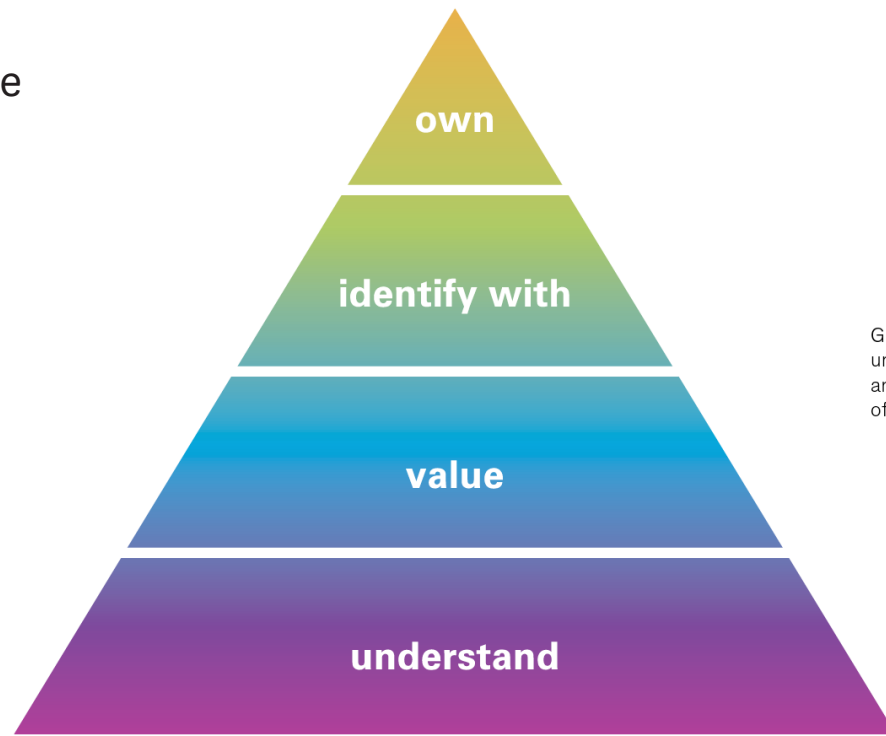
Determine competitive frames of reference

Develop unique brand points-of-difference

Establish shared brand points-of-parity

Create a brand mantra:

short, 3 to 5-word phrases that capture key points of difference and essence



Great positioning helps people understand, value, identify with, and ultimately take ownership of the brand.

Positioning (differentiation)

Imperatives for the branding process:

It matters what everyone thinks about the brand, not just the customers

Empower as many people as possible to speak on behalf of the brand

Bring the community in and allow the brand out

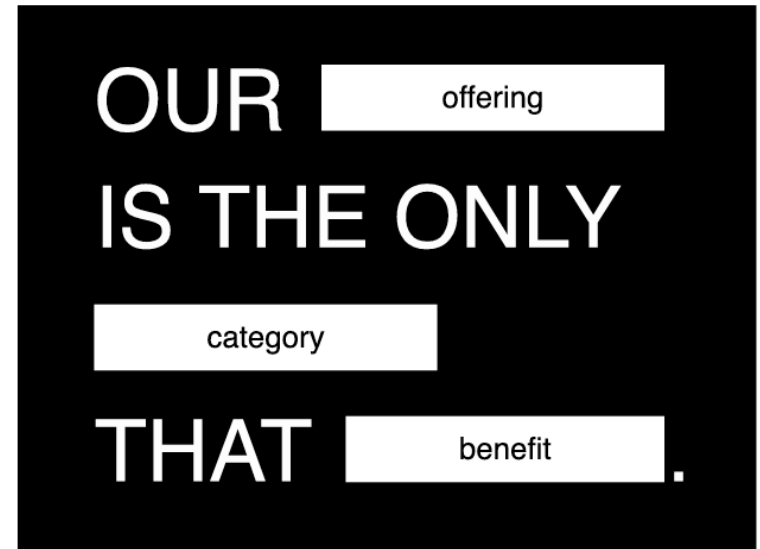
Encourage people to live the brand

Achieve results with a collaborative and engaging process

Signal the brand is an ongoing conversation and work in progress

Building a brand in a digital and connected world is about guiding, influencing, and being, not telling

Test ideas with communities of prospects, partners, and contributors.



the onliness exercise

Brand Architecture *structure to help you reach your promise*

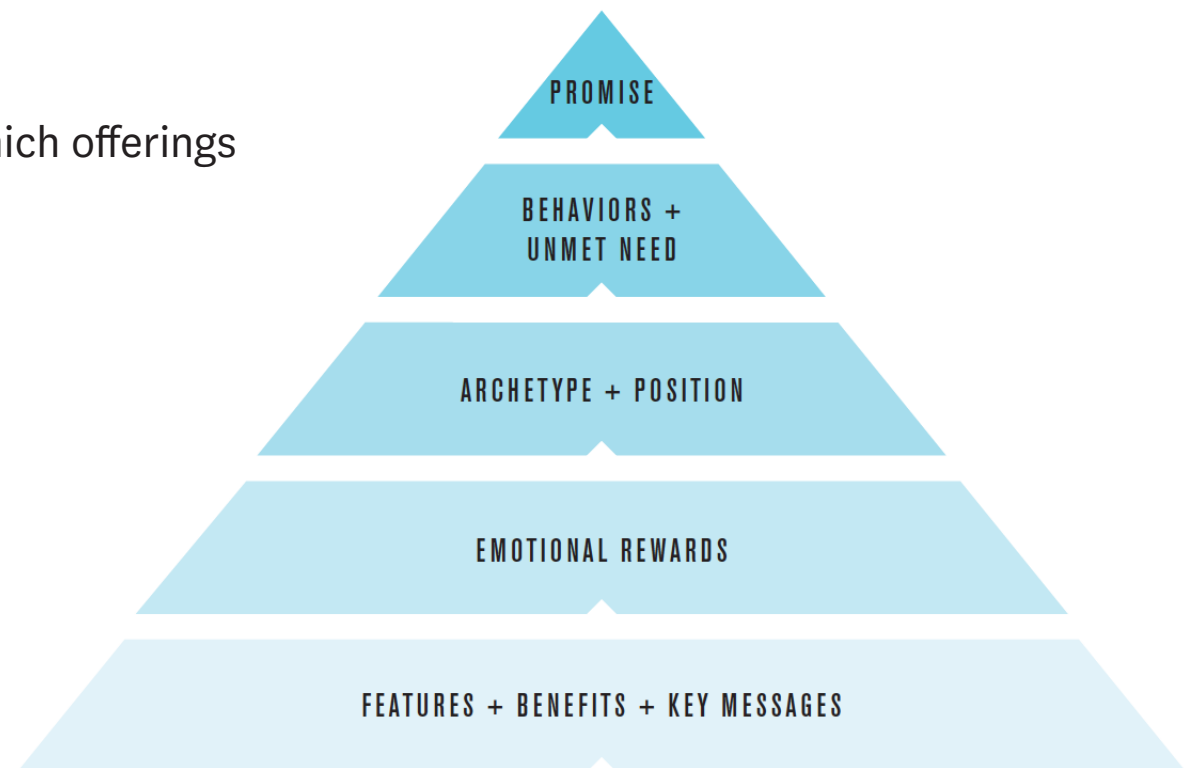
4 BASIC COMPONENTS: features, benefits, emotional rewards, and archetypes.
(look at toothpaste product as an example)

Features: describe the product or the brand itself, often in single words like “minty” and “whitening”

Benefits: tangible advantages individual consumers enjoy, such as, “fresh breath” or “whiter smile”

Emotional Rewards: psychological advantages that consumers take away, such as “confidence” and “attractiveness.”

Archetype: personality through which offerings are delivered



Brand Architecture

4 SUPPORTING ELEMENTS: key messages, position, promise, and one prominent unmet need
Supplement and reinforce the previous 4 basic components

Key messages: present the brand in digestible amounts: bite-sized sentences or phrases tailored to a variety of audiences

Position: identifies the brand's place in the minds of consumers and in the competitive battlefield

Promise: what a brand pledges to do for the individual. the promise is at the core of the brand and should manifest itself in anything that communicates something about the brand

These 3 elements can be inspired by the mission, vision, and values of the organization

Unmet Need: what unmet need does the product, service, experience, or business fulfill?



DRY™
SODA CO.:

Unmet Need: DrySoda is a sophisticated non-alcoholic drink that seeks to fulfill a perceived gap in the high-end beverage market. TURNSTYLE



Archetype: Fox River Socks' newly launched line of "shucking awesome" socks are woven from sustainable corn fiber. The globe logo, illustrated by a tattoo artist, fuses the brand's outlaw archetype with its responsible practices. CAPSULE



POLYTECH.MONS

Emotional Reward: Polytech.Mons' logo symbolizes the emotional rewards the institution offers students. These include personal and professional achievement, discovery, and higher knowledge. EX NIHILO

Brand Brief

Documenting fundamental rules of the brand is the most important task of clarifying strategy. It helps anyone who has the responsibility to execute the vision. The best briefs are succinct and strategic, simple and clear. They are a result of the best thinking and an ability to agree on brand attributes and positioning first, and the desired endpoint and criteria of the process second.

Succinct and strategic diagram

The actual document is most effective when it can be captured as a diagram on one 11”x17” page, otherwise people are tempted to keep changing it if it lives simply in a word doc.

Beyond being spare, design briefs must set direction and inspire design. The more focused, inspirational, and illustrative the language the better.

The brief is the bridge between the thought and the image, so it must be descriptive.

Brand Brief Components (Answer the who, what, how)

1. Big Idea/essence
2. Core purpose/mission
3. Vision
4. Value Proposition
5. Brand Attributes
6. Positioning statement
7. Services/products
8. Features/benefits/promises
9. Target audience
10. Key competitors
11. Context/touchpoints
12. Brand personality through language and image

Brand Brief Example

Brand Brief: 3rd Draft

Acru Brand Brief

This is the foundational document of the brand and should provide shared understanding and focus to all initiatives.



Core Purpose

To passionately invest in people, businesses, and communities everyday.

Vision

To change the way the world thinks about money.

Key Stakeholders

1. Customers
2. Employees
3. Shareholders

Attributes

Relevant
Community
Trustworthy
Innovative

Consultative
Clarity
Approachable
Wise

Key Services

Banking
Investments
Tax
Insurance
Planning



Similar Organizations

Bank of America
Wachovia
Suntrust
UCB Bank
ING Direct



Value Proposition

Acru provides personalized wisdom through a relevant experience that clarifies today and prepares for tomorrow.



Primary

James
Age: 35
Level-Headed Outsourcer

James is a level-headed small business owner who knows he needs a financial plan, is embarrassed he doesn't know enough to build the right one, and would love to find someone that he can trust to build a plan to fit his unique life. He doesn't believe that exists but is balancing too many life demands to start figuring it out on his own.

Secondary

Jim
Age: 50
High Net Worth Individual

Jim is looking for more than just comprehensive wealth management - he needs personalized wisdom to clarify several major life transitions - kids going to college, estate planning, and forming a succession plan for his business, to name a few. He and his wife need the finances for today and tomorrow to be one less stress in their life.

James D Cole

Acru is the only bank that actually understands this is about me.

Positioning

Audience Segments

- UNAWARE
- HOPEFUL
- OUTSOURCER
- OPTIMIZER
- SAVVY

Matchstic, in collaboration with Leader Enterprises, created this brand brief for Acru Wealth, a community bank with a holistic approach to money and life.