Brand Architecture
Corporate Identity Structure

Brand architecture refers to the hierarchy of brands within a single company. It is the interrelationship of the parent company, subsidiary companies, products, and services, and should mirror the marketing strategy. It is important to bring consistency, visual and verbal order, thought, and intention to disparate elements to help a company grow and market more effectively.

As companies merge with others and acquire new companies and products, the branding, nomenclature, and marketing decisions become exceedingly complex. Decision makers examine marketing, cost, time, and legal implications.

The need for brand architecture is not limited Fortune 100 companies or for-profit companies. Any company or institution that is growing needs to evaluate which brand architecture strategy will support future growth. Most large companies that sell products and services have a mixture of strategies.

The type of corporate identity will determine the characteristics that link the product to its company or brand.

FedEx is a global logistics powerhouse with a broad portfolio of shipping, ecommerce, and business services. Each operating unit has its own wordmark.

Strategic Questions

What are the benefits of leveraging the name of the parent company?

Does the positioning of our new entity require that we distance it from the parent?

Will co-branding confuse consumers?

Do we change the name or build on existing equity even though it was owned by a competitor?

Should we ensure that the parent company is always visible in a secondary position?

How do we brand this new acquisition?

Google

iGoogle	Chrome
Google Images	Android
Google Maps	YouTube
Google Translate	Picasa
Google Play	Android
Google Earth	DoubleClick
Google +	AdMob
Gmail	Feedburner
Google Docs	
Google Alerts	
Google Calendar	
Google Translate	

Types of Brand Architecture

Monolithic

Characterized by a strong, single master brand. Customers make choices based on brand loyalty. Features and benefits matter less to the consumer than the brand promise and persona. Brand extensions use the parent's identity and generic descriptors. The whole company uses one visual style and that the consistency between the corporate identity and the product identity is very strong, the product reflecting the corporation directly.

Types of Brand Architecture

Endorsed

Characterized by marketing synergy between the product or division and the parent. The product or division has a clearly defined market presence, and benefits from the association, endorsement, and visibility of the parent. Subsidiary companies (brands) have their own style, but the parent company remains recognizable in the background. In this case, the link between the corporation and its different brands may take the shape of a common factor, tying the different brands together.

Types of Brand Architecture

Pluralistic (also called 'branded')

Characterized by a series of well-known consumer brands. The name of the parent may be either invisible or inconsequential to the consumer, and known only to the investment community. Many parent companies develop a system for corporate endorsement that is tertiary. All the same, a strong general corporate identity remains of great importance, as it defines the guidelines and strategies of the subordinate brands. Therefore the identities of the products of each brand are consistent with the main corporate identity and values.