

A close-up photograph of a cow's face, showing its white and black fur. A large, stylized letter 'R' is visible on its forehead. The background is dark.

**BRAND & DELIVER.**

**MAKING THE MOST OF  
YOUR INTANGIBLE ASSETS**

  
milestone

## Milestone Brand & Deliver

Brand and deliver is about getting under the skin of brands. It boldly goes to the heart of the beast that is 'branding' to find out how brands work. It's written for brand sceptics as much as brand fans and challenges us to take a closer look at our brands and businesses – to see where we can deliver greater value.

The term 'brand' was originally about ownership. Applied to the rear end of a cow using hot metal, a brand said, "These are my

cows". Brands are still about ownership. And, the best brands make their employees and customers feel they have a stake in its success. Since the late 19th century the word has been taken up by everything from soft drinks to sports personalities.

Now, everything and everybody can be seen as a brand. As Amazon founder Jeff Bezos says "your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room".

getting under the skin of

# BRANDS



The thing that separates a brand from a bog-standard product or service is the promise of something special – an experience that goes beyond basic requirements to the highest levels on Maslow's famous hierarchy of human needs – self esteem. Successful brands do more than just make promises.

They deliver them as well.

Whatever they are, brands do tend to come beautifully packaged. It's part of the promise. But, what's inside is where it really counts – what it stands for and why it's different. The great thing about having a brand is that it can be the driving force at the heart of the whole organisation.

Let's play a little recognition game...

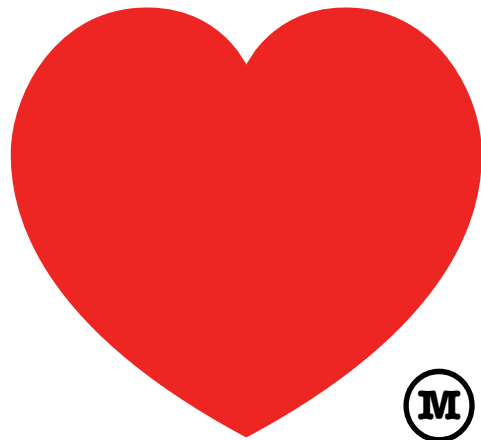


**A BRAND IS A PROMISE,**

**DELIVERED.**

Milestone [Brand & Deliver](#)

WE



BRANDS

Brands are all a bit like Marmite. Some we love and others we don't. Brands that make us feel good about ourselves get our loyalty and hard earned cash. We fall in love with brands because they make our lives easier. They are the language of shopping and our means of navigating the daunting world of consumer decision making. Every purchase we make, from baked beans to jeans and even photocopiers gives us the opportunity to question the brand. How does it make us feel – rationally, emotionally, socially?

There is naturally some scepticism towards the business of brands. But this is more to do with concerns about globalisation and mass consumerism. The art of branding does not necessarily have anything to do with either of these issues.

It's a fact that many of the world's most successful businesses now rank their brand as their number-one asset. And some super-brands are worth more than whole economies.

“I don't like brands, I buy Marks and Spencers.”

A lady once said this to me at a business event. It neatly sums up my belief in brands. We just like different ones.

**Some brands are easy to  
recognise from just their  
typeface and colour.**

Like this.

The best identities own a simple  
set of branding cues...

FOR EXAMPLE

ORGANIC  

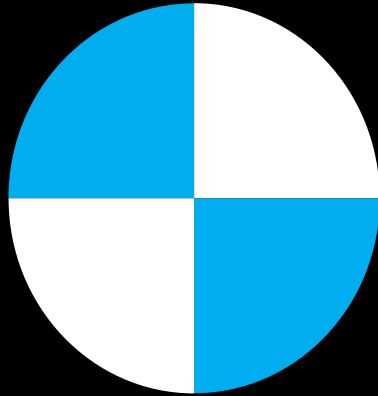
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& DELICIOUS

AND TH>RE'S MORE >



*Symbols are another brand element*



And even in their most basic form, trigger instant emotions connected with the brand.

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極度乾燥(しなさい)  
**Superbrand.**

Or when everyone else is using symbols it pays to think differently.

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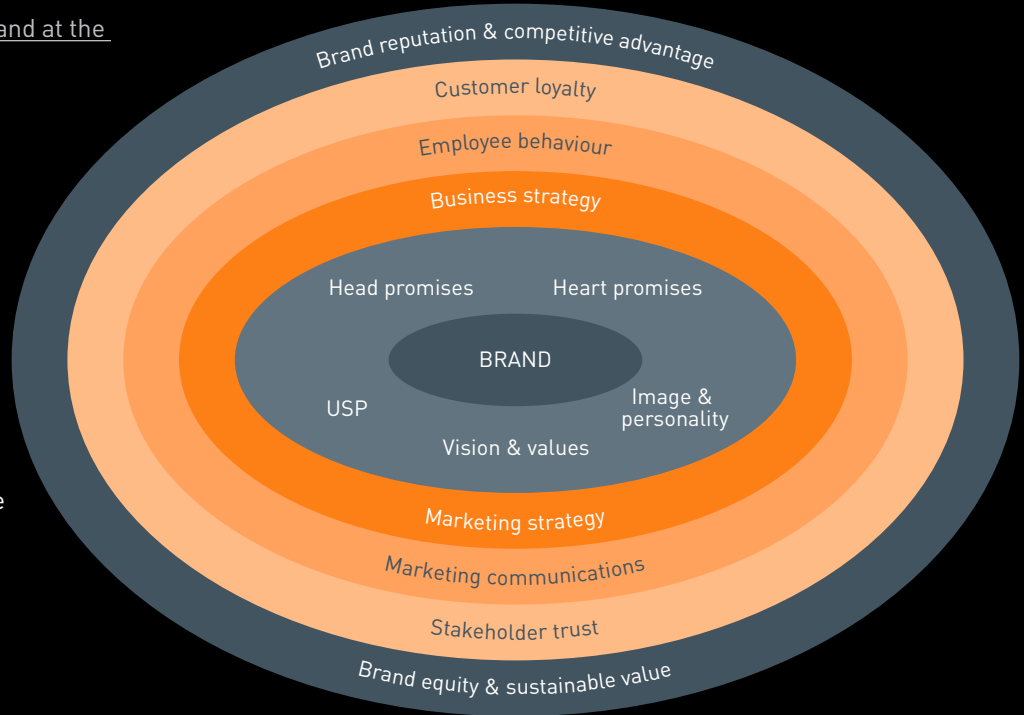
You don't have  
to be an Economist  
to understand the  
value of brands.

# BRAND LEADERSHIP

Brand leadership is about putting the brand at the heart of the organisation. Why?

Because a strong brand means:

- / Awareness
- / Buzz and word of mouth
- / Publicity
- / An aura of uniqueness
- / Loyal customers
- / Advocates and referrals
- / Price insensitivity
- / Premium pricing
- / Increased market share
- / A platform for growth beyond current products and markets
- / Attracting and retaining talented people
- / Clarity for budgeting and investment decisions
- / Increased sales
- / Greater profit margins
- / Higher share price
- / Better valuation





Hopefully you have guessed the brands in our visual challenge. But, distinctive icons such as the spiral symbol, shown here, have been around for thousands of years. It is the most ancient human symbol, found on every civilised continent. Its meaning is attributed to things like life, growth and community, although who knows what it really meant to our ancestors.

It's my theory that brands tap into an ancient human ability to attach meaning and value to decorative symbols. Perhaps we have we learnt the art of branding from our tribal ancestors in hunter gatherer groups.

We may also read brands like faces – making sense of simple combinations of dots and squiggles that our eyes instinctively focus on from birth.

Although brands are about much more than just logos, these simple marks are the visual shorthand for the brand and extremely powerful memory triggers.

# LOGOS

[NOT ACTUALLY A RECENT IDEA]

Timidity.

**Branding.**

Gregariousness.

Repose.

Love of Family.

Patriotism.

Love of Home.

**Friendship.**

Parental Love.

Courage.

Sociability.

Modesty.

Marriage

Conjugal Love

Scientific studies have shown that brands can light up the emotional areas in our brains. That's why we remember them much more strongly than just words, pictures or objects. It's a fact that memory loss patients commonly recall their favourite brands, while unable to remember their own name and address.

Brands make us think and behave differently too. Coca Cola only really tastes like "the real thing" when it comes out of the right packaging.

Recent studies of the human brain indicate that much of our decision-making is a subconscious activity. Our conscious mind is used for planning and managing what we do, but the millions of minor tasks we do every day are performed, to a large extent, unconsciously. Next time you arrive somewhere in your car, not really remembering the journey, you'll be aware of what your subconscious can achieve.

Branding seems to be hard-wired into our brains. Perhaps that's why they are so easy to buy.

# BRANDS & BRAINS

Could you recognise  
your favourite brand of soft  
drink if the can was blank?  
Would it actually taste the same?



CAFE

New

Piccadilly

RESTAURANT

EATS

WANTED

The most powerful and memorable customer experiences are usually multi-sensory, involving a combination of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. If you think about where you show the most loyalty to a business, it's often your favourite pub or restaurant. Here, the brand is often little to do with slick marketing but all about individuality and customer service.

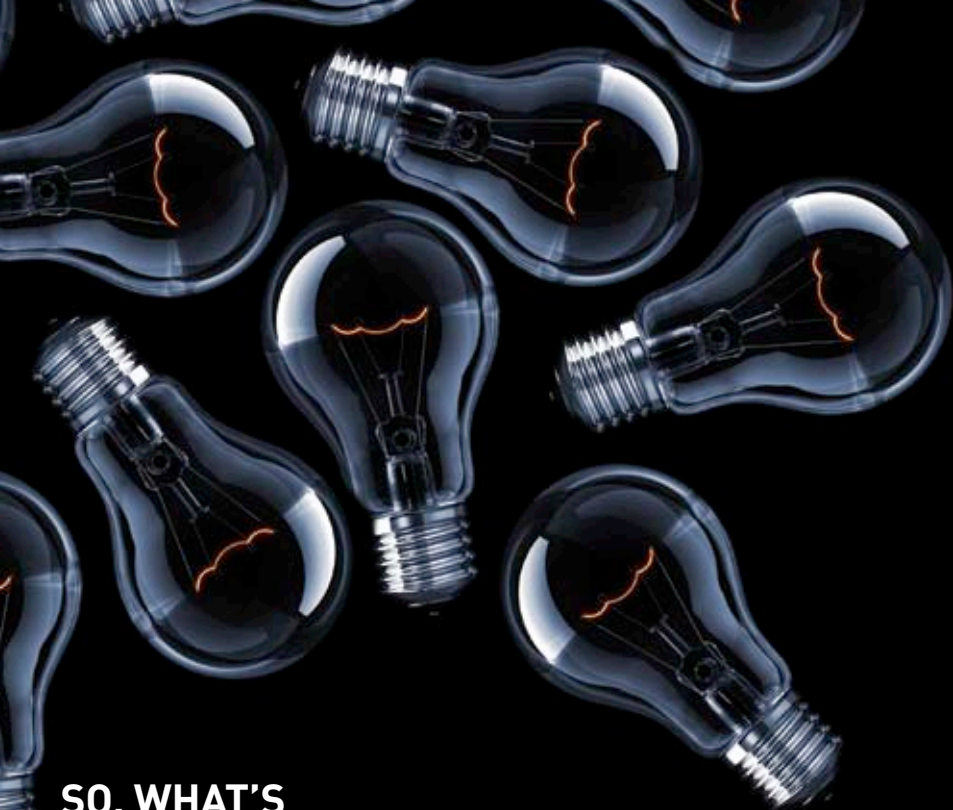
The people and attitude are essential ingredients in the brand and are often undersold. Think about the benefits of personal service and being made to feel a special, valued customer.

What is it about your favourite restaurant and what makes it special? How does going there make you feel? How can you apply this magic to your own brand experience?



Left: The New Piccadilly café in London – one of the sadly lost original Italian owned 'greasy spoons'.

# YOUR FAVOURITE RESTAURANT



# SO, WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

All brands start with a product and an idea. The idea then becomes a strategy which manifests itself to customers through every possible touch point: products and services; employee's attitude and behaviours; office and shops and all communications. In the mind of the customer, it becomes a brand.

With all that stuff to consider, there's a lot of room for dilution and confusion if you're not careful. That's why, the bigger and stronger the idea, the better.

Most brands rarely re-invent their original concept. But, because people get bored quite quickly, brands keep coming up with new ideas to stay fresh.

What fresh ideas have you come up with recently?



# BRANDING BEGINS AT HOME

People love to feel a sense of ownership of the company they work for. The 'employer brand' can be a powerful attractor, motivator and retainer of staff. A confident brand with a strong internal culture provides a reason to believe in the success of the business.

Brands always rely on people to deliver some, or all of the brand experience to customers. Therefore, having your people on board is the first and last step in the process.

How could you improve the way your brand is seen as an employer?

How can you involve staff more effectively in the delivery of your brand?

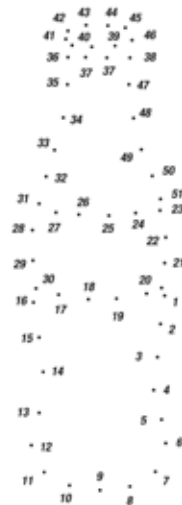
Having a brand means having a plan. This plan usually consists of a clear set of goals, guidelines and ways of doing things. When the plan comes together in a clear vision that all staff, customers, distributors, media can buy into it can create brand equity (value) way in excess of the company's assets.

Brands that have an unfocused or unclear sense of purpose tend to have a scattered perception, that delivers low on brand value.

Those that have a joined-up, fully focused and well communicated proposition reap much larger rewards.

[Can you better line-up the perception of your brand amongst the key audiences and boost brand equity?](#)

[Do you have a clear positioning strategy?](#)



**JOIN THE**  
**DOTS**

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Corporate cup cakes always go down well with employees and customers alike.

Every purchase has a customer journey with a number of brand touch points. For high value goods and services it might be an epic voyage of ups and downs before the final decision is made.

Often, it's the little things, that surprise and delight us, that make the biggest difference.

Look at every step in your customer journey and analyse it against your brand promises.

Is every brand touch point up to scratch?  
Where can you best deliver surprise and delight?

**SURPRISE  
& DELIGHT**

## Milestone Brand & Deliver

Own brands shout value at us from the shelves.

The paired-down packaging treatment simply oozes economy. But, despite feeling that we're making a budget choice, we're still strongly reassured by the master-brand's name on the label. When times are tough, many more customers trade down to own brands.

A stripped-down design approach can also work in many other applications other than food.

Are you over-branding your products or services?

# OWN BRANDS



CUSTOMER FOCUSED

WORKING TOGETHER

WE HAVE INTEGRITY

DRIVING INNOVATION

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

SHARING INFORMATION

PURSuing EXCELLENCE

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY  
& ENVIRONMENT

WE'RE PIONEERING

YAWN...



Sound familiar? Many organisations have a set of core values including some of these classics. That's fine. It's certainly better than nothing. But values should help to create a point of difference. Their job is to represent something that the whole company can live and breathe. Values ought to underpin an ethos that demonstrates a confident, winning attitude.

Rather than picking from the standard list, values are more powerful, the more individual they are. Better still is when they are used in a dynamic way that shows a business continually striving to be something better.

[How passionate are you about your values?](#)

[Does everyone in your organisation know them inside out and put them into practice?](#)

ADDED

**VALUES**

Brands inspire customer loyalty and advocacy by getting them to walk the walk and talk the talk. Neurologists know that the best way to remember words is to associate them with symbols. Brand owners also know this – hence the practice of logos and straplines.

Psychological studies have proven that words and statements are powerful motivators and influencers of human behaviour.

Straplines, tag lines and end lines can help encapsulate the brand's personality, attitude and, of course, its point of difference.

The best are original, fun, intelligent and reassuring. The worst are confusing, patronising or just down right cheesy.

You decide.

**EVERY LITTLE HELPS  
THE ULTIMATE DRIVING MACHINE  
THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE AIRLINE  
WE TRY HARDER  
VORSPRUNG DURCH TECHNIK  
BECAUSE YOU'RE WORTH IT  
BEANZ MEANZ HEINZ  
A NEW TOY EVERY DAY  
THE DRIVING PEOPLE**

**“TALK THE  
TALK”**

## Milestone Brand & Deliver

As well as simple straplines, brands generate whole stories to engage their customers' hearts and minds. Because we all love a good story, we're happy to pass them on to our friends and colleagues. Story telling is an essential part of creating a buzz about your brand. And positive word of mouth is the holy grail of advertising.

Sometimes the stories are true, others may be based on myth and legend.

In the 1980s a story rippled across school playgrounds about the origins of the Adidas name that was quite wrong. It's actually made up from the name of founder Adi Dasler, the German

running shoe pioneer. No-one can be sure of the origin of the rumour but at the time it was great playground currency and the essential brand to be seen with.

Viral marketing today, on social media websites like YouTube, Facebook and Twitter is big business. Like a giant school playground, the internet is the perfect platform for spreading the word about your brand.  
Just make sure it's good.

What are the positive stories about your brand that are worth passing on? How can you feed them to your customers and media?



all day i dream about sex

# A BRAND IS FOR LIFE

What's your earliest memory of branding? When I looked back at my childhood to consider what my earliest brand recollections were, it was interesting what sprung to mind. It was the image of a brilliant cobalt blue beach ball from Nivea. I got a warm feeling as it brought back early memories of family Mediterranean holidays. And guess what brand is always in my bathroom today?

The beach ball was first given away by global skin care company Nivea during the 60s as part of a strategy to align the brand with sport, health, family and fun. It was one of the first instances of pure brand marketing that didn't feature the main product.

My Mum passed on her love of Nivea to me.

[How do you help your customers pass on their brand loyalty to others? How do you align your brand with powerful, positive feelings?](#)



Marketers love to pigeonhole customers by demographic groups, job titles or broad categories such as business and consumer. The more canny brands develop a far more personal dialogue with the individuals that buy their products.

Specific roles that we have, at home and at work can exert an influence on how we choose brands. For example, an accountant may buy budget brands for himself, to save money. But when he's at work there's nothing to stop him moving more up-market if his budget allows. As a parent he may buy the best available for his kids.

It's why Tesco always sells 'good, better and best' ranges.

Central to the function of marketing is the ability to understand customers.

Brands are never bland. Humans love interesting things. Even accountants.

How well do you really know your customer? What is the effect of role (e.g. parent, senior manager, purchasing professional) on your customer's choice of brand?

# ANOTHER BORING ACCOUNTANT?



# BRAND IT LIKE BECKHAM



Media and sports personalities are some of branding's biggest hitters – or kickers in this case. By behaving like a brand, they've found that they can massively increase their marketable value. Just like product branding, it's about having a clear and consistent way of doing things. You'll notice that David Beckham is always true to a simple brand essence: Football, fashion, family.

How could you develop your own personal brand to help achieve your own goals?

Thankfully green business is now big business. Climate change has resulted in consumer change and all brands can benefit from going a shade greener, at least. There's massive scope for innovation and positive communication in this field.

The idea of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been steadily moving up the business agenda of late. It's about time too. Sensible brands now understand their role in wider society and do their bit to help.

Today's super-savvy consumer can see straight through purely skin-deep brands. Consumers have more choice than ever before. They are better informed and can voice their views and opinions on line to directly influence the success of brands.

[Why not create a 'green blueprint' for your brand that positions you as a leader in this crusade?](#)

[Are you using the social revolution of new media to spread positive stories about your brand?](#)



BRAND  
**RESPONSIBILITY**

## Milestone Brand & Deliver



It was the lack of interest in the UK market, by Swiss chocolate manufacturer Lindt, that prompted Craig Sams to start his own chocolate brand with partner Josephine Fairley in 1991.

Green & Black's is of course now one of the UK's best-loved food brands and pioneer of ethical, organic produce. In 2005 it was Britain's fastest growing confectionery brand and was promptly gobbled up by Cadbury's for an estimated £20 million. Green & Black's has shown the world that sustainable, fair-trade principles can be premium, luxury and very popular.

Getting it off the ground was never about big budgets and mass marketing. Instead the brand established a loyal following by giving away free samples at events. Hence the little known company motto.

**“THE FIRST BAR IS FREE”**

**GREEN AND BLACK'S**

Apple has taken on IBM, Microsoft, the music and telecoms industries through its restless spirit of remarkable design and innovation. In 2008, the year of the credit crunch, Apple sold over three million iPods per month. In the same year its computers out-sold Dell and the iPhone was a success, beyond all expectations. By consistently challenging convention and being a true customer champion Apple has developed unparalleled levels of brand loyalty.

Its original logo from the 1980s has evolved many times. When created it was iconic for several reasons: it picked a potent religious symbol 'the forbidden fruit' as its icon; when most logos used one or two colours, it was multi-coloured; it omitted one colour from the spectrum, indigo – the colour of its rival at the time, IBM.



Think different.

## Milestone Brand & Deliver



Jimmy Choo, the luxury shoe and accessories brand was founded in 1996 by the ex-accessories editor at Vogue UK, Tamara Mellon. Mr Jimmy Choo, a couture shoemaker based in the East End of London was approached by Tamara Mellon who had seen a gap in the market for a 'high-end' shoe brand for all occasions.

The company, with over 60 stores worldwide, has made a massive success of selling distinctive, aspirational shoes. A big celebrity following has propelled the brand's growth, whilst limited distribution has maintained the high demand and the feeling of exclusivity.

In February 2007, Jimmy Choo was acquired by venture capital firm Towerbrook Hill, a deal which valued the company at £225 million. With little tangible assets included in this figure the deal illustrates how much clout the City places on brand. In 2011 Jimmy Choo was consequently bought by Labelux for £525 million.

JIMMY CHOO  
**A SNIP AT £525 MILLION**

# GIVING IT SOME WELLY

They're not just for farmers and fishermen. Some brands manage to extend their reach into lucrative new markets without upsetting their original customers. Just look at what brand of wellington boot celebs at Glastonbury turn to, when the weather inevitably turns nasty.



Founded in Scotland in 1856, Hunter boots are much loved because of their comfort, functional design and quality. The original 'green welly' is also available in contemporary colours to broaden its appeal beyond the country set.

The company is always keen to promote its history and heritage but with a timeless and authentic sense of style.



# TOTALLY INNOCENT

There's always a great story to tell about Innocent. Like the way they started in 1998 – three Cambridge graduates with a stall at a music festival with a sign asking punters to choose if they should carry on making smoothies or go back to their day jobs. Or, the mini-bobble hats they get people to knit each winter for charity, the quest for 100% recycled packaging, the 'banana phone' in their office...

When lots of brands talk about their brand promise in their boardroom, Innocent puts it on its pack.



No wonder, they are the UK's number one smoothie brand with a market share of 68% and turnover of £100 million. Next step Europe, then the world...

[How could your brand benefit from being more friendly, passionate and down to earth?](#)



It might sound ghastly, but it's one of the most in-demand dishes in the world. And, it's delicious of course.

Heston Blumenthal's The Fat Duck restaurant in Bray, Berkshire has three Michelin Stars and has been voted the best restaurant in the world. Since opening his restaurant in 1995, the self-taught chef has become pre-eminent in his field of 'molecular gastronomy'.

Best selling American business writer Seth Godin published 'The Purple Cow' in 2003 claiming that 'being safe in business was now too risky'. The book urges companies to be

much more creative and remarkable, if they want to connect with customers in over-saturated markets.

The tasting menu at The Fat Duck is one of the ultimate 'Purple Cow' experiences. And incredibly it is actually better than the hype.

What does your business do that's as remarkable as snail porridge?



ANYONE FOR  
**SNAIL PORRIDGE?**

The Fat Duck  
heston blumenthal

Some brands just go beyond their sell-by date. One day they are sitting on the shelf looking a bit sad and un-loved. And the next day they are history.

But, there are brands that go bad in a much more spectacular way. They confuse and upset their admirers by breaking away from their usual sphere of activity. British Airways, Abbey National and The Post Office spring immediately to mind. The controversial 2012 London Olympics logo didn't go down too well either.



Poor Rover, once a much loved British car marque that lost its way during the British Leyland years and could never quite catch up with more dynamic rivals. And with it went MG, a true sporting legend of the automotive industry that paid the price of 'badge engineering' – proving that a brand is much more than just a badge.

Changing markets might be the cause of some brands' downfalls. How many could predict the sudden financial crisis of recent times? Equally, how many could have invested in new ideas to stay out of trouble?

What is the sphere of operation for your brand?  
Could you push it further? What would be a step too far?

**WHEN BRANDS GO**

**BAD**

# THE SUBTLE ART OF REBRANDING

When out shopping, brands feel like consistent, reassuring entities in a rapidly changing world. However, the fact is that most brands evolve and change with the times.

Re-branding programmes now regularly make the headlines, increasingly attracting negative media and public reaction. Is it because they misjudge people's attitudes? Or is it because they seem to be unnecessarily expensive? Both, probably. Although cost-wise, they are invariably mis-quoted in the press.

Re-brands that fail are usually the result of not being in-touch with customers – or, attempting a wholesale revolution instead of a subtle evolution.

The truth is: brands have to change. Change is negative. Therefore brands have to change carefully and positively.

Another question is timing.

[Unless a brand is forced to change, due to major organisational upheaval, when should it take the plunge?](#)

Some brands wait until they're doing badly. Wiser ones tend to evolve every 4 or 5 years to stay ahead of the pack.

Buzby, British Telecom's animated mascot from the seventies demonstrates just how much a brand can change and still keep in touch with its customers.



# PROTECT YOUR P®OPERTY

We're back to the subject of ownership again. Brands give the owner the ability to register his or her trade mark and protect this intellectual property (IP) by using an officially registered symbol '®'.

Brand owners can also enjoy the illusion of protection by using the Trade Mark symbol 'TM' next to their logo or strapline. This carries no official protection but implies that the owner may be in the process of applying for a registered trade mark.

Registering a trade mark can include name, logo and strapline and is carried out in the UK by the Patent Office.

Remember, not everything can be trade marked: Thankfully Victoria Beckham failed to register 'Posh' as her own. Some things are just part of common language.

If you have something worth holding on to, get in there quick, before someone else does.

# TM





“It was the strength of the brand that immediately caught the eye of the wine writers – despite the fact that I’d been in the business for over twenty years”

**Mark Hughes, MD, The Real Wine Company**

The Real Wine Company is a recent start-up success story. Its driving principle is to supply authentic, individual wines from small producers. It champions character and craft it considers lacking in the mass-produced wine brands that have become so ubiquitous.

Founder, Mark Hughes knew that creating a strong brand identity for his venture was a wise investment. But, he was still surprised at its major positive impact.

Authenticity is in. So are challenger brands, fighting a cause for the consumer.

What is genuinely authentic about your brand? How do your customers find out about it? What should you challenge or champion in your market?

THE  
REAL DEAL



# WHAT'S IN YOUR BRAND TOOLKIT?

Most brands have a guidelines document to help keep them on track. They vary from a simple set of size, colour and spacing rules for the logo to a massive tome of grids and layouts covering everything from ads to corporate umbrellas.

There was a time when only graphic designers and typographers ever leafed through their ring-bound pages. But now, with so many stakeholders taking a role in delivering the brand there's a lot more people that are potentially taking a look.

Enlightened organisations are now seeing these documents as toolkits rather than straight rule books. Generally viewed online, they often come with resource libraries containing graphics, images and templates ready to download and start playing with.

The emphasis is also shifting from a role of pure policing to an inspiring one as well. Making these documents more accessible and relevant for the different audiences is a start. Imaginatively communicating the vision and essence of the brand is another step forward. Sometimes workshops sessions are useful to get the message across internally.

Along with explaining the brand's visual identity we're also talking about tone of voice. With so many 'comms' taking place in the form of words it makes sense to articulate what is your own house style.

Language can be a great differentiator too. It can define your personality and encourage your brand to have an intimate conversation with customers through all kinds of media.

[Does your brand guidelines talk to all your brand's stakeholders?](#)

[Is it an inspiring read?](#)

[Would it help someone to write your blog?](#)





## BRAND FUTURE

Individual brands and styles of branding go in and out of fashion. The word 'brand' itself may go out of favour – it's already overused. Post 'credit crunch' we may see new types of brands take over from some of the established favourites.

Whatever happens, the principle of crafting original, rationally and emotionally satisfying products and services is likely to stick around.

Every good brand has a well-defined proposition at its heart. But, its longer-term success may be determined by its ability to change with the times.

Who knows what's around the next corner?

## A FINAL WORD.

Above all else, brands work because they embody this simple inspiring force. Whether it's the passion of an individual or thousands of employees, when it comes across, it seduces us. It's almost that simple.

*Passion*

### Spot the brands

Easy Jet/Orange/Green & Blacks/  
More Than/Nurofen/BMW/  
Superdry/The Economist

### Straplines

Every little helps/Tesco  
The ultimate driving machine/BMW  
The world's favourite airline/BA  
We try harder/Avis  
Vorsprung durch technik/Audi  
Because you're worth it/L'Oréal  
Beanz meanz Heinz/Heinz  
A new toy every day/Lego (1970s)  
The driving people/RAC

### About Milestone

Milestone is a brand communications agency with keen interest in the psychology behind successful branding. Since 1995, Milestone has supported organisations from start-ups to global companies including many household names.

The Milestone team enjoys inspiring, refreshing and energising businesses to make them more successful, better brands to own and to work for.

### Author

Brand & deliver was written by Milestone Director, Ian Sutton.

### Brand & Deliver for you

Milestone is happy to present Brand & Deliver to small or large groups in organisations of all kinds. Specific examples and case studies can be created for your audience.

For more information call Ian Sutton on 01494 676436.

Based on an original presentation  
from 2004. Last updated 2011.

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