

# Branding essay

[Business](#), [Company](#)



BRANDING ESSAY Subject: The brand as an aspirational and cultural agent  
14/03/2013 According to Philip J. Kotler “ a brand is a name, term, sign symbol or design, or a combination of them to identify the goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers and to identify them from the competitors”. This definition expresses the brand as the sum of the representations that we have, however, the brand is also a cultural agent. To remain permanently in the mind of the consumer brands must build a recognizable brand and offer their cultural role models to their customers.

Thus it is necessary to include this cultural aspect to the marketing strategy of the brand. After explaining how this cultural and aspirational aspect is characterized in the minds of consumers and brands, it will be interesting to know its origins and consequences, finally understand why and how a brand builds a culture and a strong identity. The success of a brand depends not only on the functional value it offers to consumers, its reputation and good health depends heavily on the emotional value it adds through its products.

And the brands gain momentum in today's culture, they seek to become mirrors of our personalities and that is why it is indispensable to build a distinctive brand image. The brand positioning is to place an image in the mind of the consumer. The success of the brand in the consumer's opinion is fundamentally dependent on its desire to appropriate the brand and express it as a part of his personality. This cultural dimension of the brand had been discussed by Jean-Noel Kapferer (French expert of brands) in his book " Les marques, capital de l'entreprise" in 1990. He expresses the cultural facet of the brand as a key element of brand identity.

In the same vein he argues that brands around the products and services sold, build aspirational universe in order to stand out and sell their products. This universe consists of all intangible assets acting as symbols, references, lifestyles, emotions etc. ... feature of the brand. This set forms a specific imaginary that illustrates the values and the brand positioning to form a unique cultural heritage (Jean-Noel Kapferer et Vincent Bastien, *Luxe Oblige*, 2008) This heritage must be expressed and transmitted to the consumer to feel the desire to join and share.

Even if this has a great value in brand equity, it is not enough to form a brand culture. The cornerstone of its creation is a major concept; which is distinct to the brand and based on an innovative aspect (e. g. Nike and culture transcendence). In this case there is a set of communications shared by a class of consumers relaying the brand culture. This research of brand culture is becoming more and more important, especially because consumers search meaning in their consumption and they need to be involved in this consumer society that is constantly evolving.

Similarly, the development of the media and especially the internet makes it fertile ground for the development of this cultural facet. We are part of a brands cultural bath influencing us in all our acts of consumption. The brand is a center of social identification of the individual, our consumption reflects our identity. Especially for brands that operate as social signs (car brands, clothing, food, telephone, etc. ... ). And brands have become cultural facts, when we consume we do not consume only the product but also the brand. Every act of consumption is symbolic and cultural; there is no longer a pure commercial consumption. The brand becomes a symbol, a materiel

embodiment of the myth. So as customers drink, drive or wear the product, they experience a bit of the myth. ” (Douglas B. How Brands Become Holt in Icons, The Principles of Cultural Branding, 2004). He explains this behavior like this: “ Customers use iconic brands as symbolic salves. They grab hold of the myth as they use the product as a means to lessen their identity burdens”. It means that the brand through its culture must convey specific models to achieve the desires and soothe the anxieties of consumers.

The purpose of brands is to create moments of recognition that put images, sounds, feelings, on the deep desires of customers. Holt adds that a strong brand identity and a clearly identifiable culture have a positive effect on the brand and business: “ When a brand delivers a powerful myth that customers find useful in cementing their identities, this identity value casts a halo on other aspects of the brand. Great myths enhance the brand’s quality reputation, distinctive benefits, and status value. ” This halo effect shows brands cannot underestimate their cultural influence.

The essential idea in this concept of culture is that it is an integral part of the brand, but she is not defined consistently. It is universal and timeless at the same time it must keep its customers at every change of generation. The success of a brand lies in its ability to adapt to a given society, to know how to react when tensions and desires of consumers mutate. Or that Accordance must match the brand identity. Success comes once the brand has articulated the brand identity with market expectations through the establishment of a strong brand culture.

For example Nike in its infancy based its marketing strategy on its philosophy of self-transcendence, a value in accordance with an aspiration

of American society in the post-prosperity when the logic of the American dream seemed to have lost its splendor. The socio-economic changes constantly and attitudes of societies are transformed. Thus it is essential that brand can find what, in its identity, can meet the expectations of customers in the generational change. The consumer's desire is not focused on a specific good or service, this desire is by cluster (Gilles Deleuze, French philosopher, *Anti-Oedipus*, 1977).

This means that when the customer is considering purchasing, the choice is not just the object itself but to all cultural, symbolic or historic associations attached to them. For example when I want this dress that is behind the showcase, I do not just want this dress, but the shoes that go with the silhouette, the style, the man, the romantic dinner and almost the lifestyle that goes with this dress. And brands need to rethink their communication model to know the consumer interest in all that associations of the product.

They can no longer base their identity on customer insights; it must do so on a strong culture. The brand identity is not an element to be overlooked in a marketing strategy because the cultural and aspirational aspect it reveals is becoming increasingly important in the consumer's decision. Brands must know how to create interest and special recognition in his mind through communicating their values ?? and their major concept. The customers' expectations continually evolving, that is why it is important for brands to adapt through the establishment of a strong and sustainable brand culture. I hope you understand that as an Erasmus student I used for my research French theories to support my arguments. Well I apologize for any mistakes in English that I could commit. ) Bibliography \* Jean-Noel Kapferer, *Les*

marques, capital de l'entreprise (1990) \* Jean-Noel Kapferer et Vincent Bastien, Luxe Oblige, Paris, Eyrolles (2008) \* Douglas B. Holt, How Brands Become Icons, The Principles Of Cultural Branding, HarvardBusiness School Press (2004) \* Gilles Deleuze et Felix Guattari, Anti- OEdipe, Editions de Minuit, 1977.