BRAND NOW
HOW TO STAND OUT IN A CROWDED, DISTRACTED WORLD
WORKBOOK
Ready to Brand Now?

First and foremost, thank you for your interest in Brand Now. As an educator at heart, I couldn’t resist creating a handy, little workbook to help bring the ideas of this approach to life.

Brand Now breaks down the seven dynamics for building a standout brand in our crowded, distracted world. For each of these dynamics, I’ve put together a list of prompts to help you work through these ideas further. This workbook can also serve as a resource for you and your team. I’ve also included several complete, full-page diagrams and resources as well.

As a reminder, the seven Brand Now Dynamics are:

- Meaning
- Structure
- Story
- Content
- Community
- Clarity
- Experience

I hope you enjoy both the book Brand Now and this companion workbook. If you have any questions along the way, feel free to email at nick@branddrivendigital.com.

Let’s get started. Let’s brand now.

Nick Westergaard
PART ONE

DIGGING INTO THE DYNAMICS
1. MEANING

Create a persona for your ideal customer. Go beyond demographics. What do they care about? What matters most to them?

Have some fun. Can you create a unique name for your customers like BarkBox did with their “dog parents”?

Take a page from Amazon. Try leaving an empty chair or another symbolic reminder for your customers in your next meeting. Did anything interesting come from it?

Based on what you learn about your customers, what is your brand’s spark? What is your reason for doing what you do? Remember, it’s not necessarily the business you’re in: it’s something bigger. If you need help, remember the different ways to appeal to their head and heart.
Is there a social or political movement that matters to your audience? Does your brand belong there, taking a stand alongside them?

Try an extraction by filling in the blanks. We are the ________________ (insert aspirational brand from outside your echo chamber) of ________________ (insert your industry).

Based on all of this, define the following for your brand:

BRAND SPARK

____________________________________________________________

BRAND PROMISE

____________________________________________________________
2. Structure

To stand out, your brand has to be unique at every level. Using your spark (your why) and brand promise (what you do for whom), determine which touchpoints are most important.

**Scrappy Reminder:** Think dimmer switches (fade some things up and others down), as opposed to falling prey to a generic checklist approach.

Start a list of your brand touchpoints with the table below. Now, using a scale of 1 to 5, rate them in order of relevance to your brand promise—1 is most relevant, 5 is least relevant. Look at your top three most relevant touchpoints. What can you do to amplify these touchpoints even further?

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<tr>
<th>TOUCHPOINT</th>
<th>RATING</th>
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Try flipping this the other way. Are there traditional brand touchpoints others in your industry use that you could turn down or off entirely on your dimmer switches? Can you stand out by zigging where others are zagging?

Take a look at the brand touchpoints that you’ve mapped. Are there recognizable patterns? How can you reinforce them to make them even more recognizable?

**Scrappy Reminder:** Be sure to check out the Scrappy Brand Blueprint template on page 20 of this workbook.
3. STORY

What is your brand’s core story? Think of the common story plots we looked at—overcoming the monster, rags to riches, the quest, voyage and return, and rebirth. Does one of these fit your brand?

Still stuck? Try answering this question: If your brand was a movie, which movie would it be? What type of movie or genre is it? What kind of plot does it have? (Tip: Have a few people answer this question internally—you should start to see themes emerge.)

Do you have a distinct brand voice? Try Ann Handley’s cover-the-logo test. Does this sound like you and you alone, or could it be anyone?
Need another brand-voice tip? If money wasn’t an object and you were to cast any actor, athlete, or public figure to do a voice-over for your brand, who would it be? What does this choice tell you about the qualities of your brand voice?

How can you share your story and voice internally? Again, Uberflip has a great style guide that’s online for everyone to see.

**Scrappy Reminder:** Be sure to check out the Common Story Shapes and examples on page 21 of this workbook.
4. CONTENT

THERE’S TOO MUCH CONTENT! What kind of content can your brand create that no one else can?

Where in the buyer’s journey is there a problem? A disconnect? Can you create content to help alleviate that?

Are there questions your customers have that you can be answering with your content?

Are you creating too much content? Try focusing on one piece of content and seeing if you can add levels for “skimmers, swimmers, and divers.”
Do you have a plan in place for editing your content? If not, where could you start?

If there were no other factors involved, what kind of content would you most like to create? How can you build on that?
Think of the concentric circles-of-community approach. What would your circles look like?

Draw the circles and sketch in who’s sitting in each circle. What can you do for them? Is there content that you can create to help them meet their needs?

Can you help those in your outer customer circles move toward the center—closer to being raving fans?

**Scrappy Reminder:** Be sure to check out the larger Circles of Community diagram on page 22 of this workbook.
How can you ensure that your employees get a “big dose of culture”? Can you create a culture book or a brand camp?

How can you empower your brand ambassadors? Could you develop a structured program like Maker’s Mark?

What’s a combination of story, content, and community that you can use to create brand gravity like American Express’s Open Forum?

COMMUNITY BUILDS STANDOUT BRANDS FROM THE INSIDE OUT
6. CLARITY

TRANSPARENCY

How transparent is your brand? Are there any gaps between what you say and what you do?

SIMPLICITY

Are there elements of your brand—who you are, what you say, etc.—that you can subtract to amplify your meaning and stand out?

What can you “why to death” when it comes to extra elements that complicate your brand?
Here are some idea starters for places you can simplify your brand:

- Brand name: think Simplisafe and Basecamp
- Brand promise: don’t over-slogan your brand
- Products and services: don’t overextend
- Brand names for your products and services: don’t over-brand
- Website navigation: seriously, look at your site navigation
- Content strategy: don’t produce more than you have to; avoid content that looks and sounds like everyone else’s

Who can you ask from “outside of your fish bowl” to help you gain clarity?

**CLARITY TELLS US THAT TRANSPARENT, SIMPLE BRANDS STAND OUT**
7. EXPERIENCE

Complete the touchpoint map using the three concentric circles discussed. (There's a large diagram for you on page 23 of this workbook.) Once you’re done, what are your three most important touchpoints? How could you do more with these moments in your customer experience?

Can your brand create unexpected experiences like Cisco did on Valentine’s Day? Or using other touchpoints along the way?

Remember my trip to the SPAM Museum? Is there some amazing, unexpected immersive experience you could offer your fans to celebrate their love of your brand?
Again, how can you make your brand—who you are and what you stand for—a part of your company’s culture? Is there something you can do when you onboard new employees?

Is there a presentation you can give or a booklet you can leave them with, like Maker’s Mark and Coldwell Banker? Is there some small reminder or totem you can create, like the Buffer sticker?

Who would be on your internal brand brain trust? Remember, you want people at various levels throughout the organization (not just the marketing department).
PART TWO

TOOLS & RESOURCES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT’S YOUR BRAND SPARK &amp; PROMISE?</th>
<th>WHAT ARE YOUR TOUCHPOINT MVPS?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHAT ARE YOUR STORY SPECS? SHAPE, CONFLICT, VOICE, ETC.?</td>
<td>WHAT CONTENT CAN YOU &amp; YOU ALONE CREATE?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR VARIOUS CIRCLES?</td>
<td>IS THERE DAYLIGHT IN WHAT YOU SAY AND DO? CAN YOU SIMPLIFY?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT DO YOUR CIRCLES OF EXPERIENCE LOOK LIKE?</td>
<td>WHERE ARE YOU NOW? WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE?</td>
</tr>
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</table>
# Common Story Shapes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story Shape</th>
<th>Overview</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Brands</th>
<th>How to Use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming the Monster</td>
<td>The protagonist sets out to defeat an antagonistic force (often evil), which threatens the protagonist and/or protagonist's homeland.</td>
<td>Star Wars: A New Hope, the Harry Potter books and movies, and the James Bond franchise</td>
<td>Mac vs. PC, Dollar Shave Club</td>
<td>This story is dependent on having an antagonist. Who or what are you fighting against?</td>
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<td>Rags to Riches</td>
<td>The poor protagonist acquires things such as power, wealth, and a mate, before losing it all and gaining it back upon growing as a person.</td>
<td>Cinderella, Rocky, and Aladdin</td>
<td>Paul Mitchell, Wendy’s/Dave Thomas</td>
<td>The dynamic of “before and after” along with overall growth is key for this type of story. Where did you come from?</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Quest</td>
<td>The protagonist and some companions set out to acquire an important object or to get to a location, facing many obstacles and temptations along the way.</td>
<td>Lord of the Rings, Indiana Jones, and Harold &amp; Kumar Go to White Castle</td>
<td>Salesforce, Axe Body Spray</td>
<td>An ideal that you are striving toward is key to implementing this archetype. What do you believe in? What are you and you alone on a quest to achieve?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voyage &amp; Return</td>
<td>The protagonist goes to a strange land and, after overcoming the threats it poses to him or her, returns with experience.</td>
<td>The Wizard of Oz, Apollo 13, and Finding Nemo.</td>
<td>Starbucks (Howard Schultz’s trip to Europe), MagicLeap</td>
<td>What unique experience informs your enlightened perspective? Where have you been, and what has it taught you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebirth</td>
<td>During the course of the story, an important event forces the main characters to change their ways, often making them better people.</td>
<td>A Christmas Carol, How the Grinch Stole Christmas, and the Doctor Who series (the Doctor regenerates as a new actor every few seasons)</td>
<td>Vidal Sassoon, Vanity Fair, Warby Parker</td>
<td>Has your brand been born again? Have you undergone a reboot? How does this inform your brand's story?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CIRCLES OF COMMUNITY
I hope you enjoyed this Brand Now workbook. Again, if you have any questions, please feel free to email me at nick@branddrivendigital.com.