

BRAND NOW SUMMARY

A Digital Extra from Nick Westergaard

Thanks for ordering my book *Brand Now: How to Stand Out in a Crowded, Distracted World*. To give you a head-start on the concepts contained in the book, enjoy this concise summary.

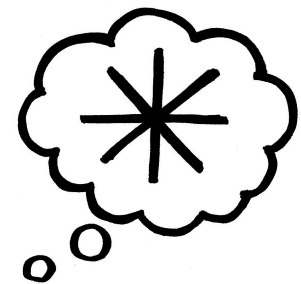
Introduction

- ▶ Technology has changed the world around us—how we obtain information and make decisions about what to buy and what to support.
- ▶ While traditional brand advertising in the form of logos and 30-second ads isn't as powerful as it once was, brand-building still matters.
- ▶ To build brands, we need to embrace pattern recognition. To build a brand that stands out, we need to employ the seven dynamics of meaning, structure, story, content, community, clarity, and experience.



Meaning

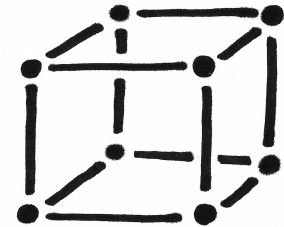
- ▶ In today's distracted digital world, people are looking for meaning more than ever.
- ▶ Understanding who your brand is, and what you stand for, starts with understanding your people. Go beyond the standard persona and develop a rich quantitative and qualitative customer profile to tease out what matters most to those you serve.
- ▶ To create meaning, you can appeal to your customers':
 - Head: Logical appeals like safety, flexibility, and simplicity.



- Heart: Emotional appeals like belonging, style, and nostalgia.
- ▶ Historically, taking a stand socially and politically has been controversial. That's less and less the case. Don't be afraid to take bold stands as a brand if it aligns with your audience's core beliefs.

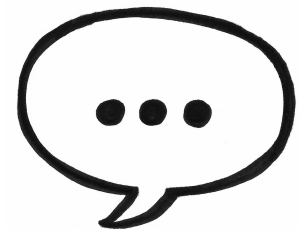
Structure

- ▶ We're no longer branding at people, with logos and commercials. We are brand-building with our customers and communities.
- ▶ Brand DNA, as we understand it, has been re-sequenced. It's important for you to understand your brand's spark (why you're here) and promise (what you do and for whom).
- ▶ Think of your brand as a dimmer switch with dials that you can turn up and down for the various channels and touchpoints. Your job is to determine what is most important for your brand and, ultimately, those you serve.
- ▶ In some cases, you may turn the dimmer switches way down and be an alternative brand that stands out by what you choose not to do.
- ▶ Your brand is more than your logo, but visuals still matter. You can use visuals to reinforce the patterns of your brand.



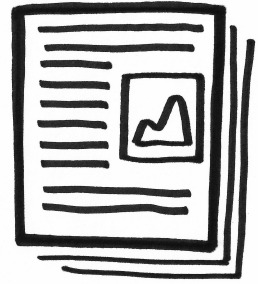
Story

- ▶ Stories are how we make sense of the world around us. Stories are patterns your brand can employ for communicating who you are and what you stand for.
- ▶ Vonnegut called them story shapes. Booker identified the seven plots that you can boil most stories down to, including overcoming the monster, rags to riches, the quest, voyage and return, and rebirth. You can employ archetypes in your brand story to trigger patterns your audience already has an understanding of.
- ▶ Other story principles that matter: The main character isn't you—it's your customer; conflict is good—it drives the story forward; and your brand has to have a distinct voice to stand out.



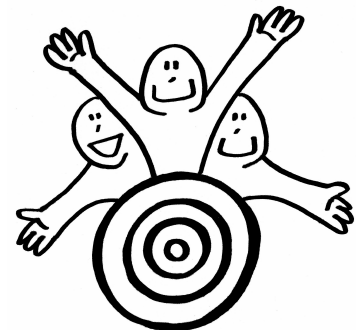
Content

- ▶ The best way for moving your brand's story in today's distracted, digital world is with content. While this is a great tool . . .
- ▶ Caution: Everyone else knows this. That's why we're overwhelmed with content. Don't just create content because the other players in your industry do. Create content that's on brand—that conveys your meaning and tells your story as boldly as possible.
- ▶ Effective, standout content is both business-centric and customer-aware. Understand why you're creating this and who you're creating it for. Empathy is critical in creating customer-focused standout content.
- ▶ Create layers of content for various levels of customers: the skimmers, swimmers, and divers.



Community

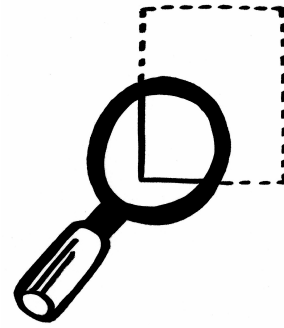
- ▶ When brands have meaning to the audience that they serve, people want to be a part of them. Belonging is one of the biggest needs out there.
- ▶ Get your arms around your brand's community by sorting them into concentric circles:
 - Inner circle: your employees.
 - Middle circle: vendors, partners, and anyone in between an employee and a customer.
 - Outer circles: your customers, starting with your best customers first. This is the inner circle of your outer circle. Your rabid fans are followed by your more transactional customers. Finally, you have your prospects and the general public.
- ▶ Start from the inside out. You should have a plan for engaging each group.



Clarity

- ▶ Transparent, simple brands move faster than the opaque, complex alternatives.
- ▶ Transparency is a requirement when people have access to an unprecedented amount of information. There can be no disconnect between what your brand says and what it does.

- ▶ Simplicity is a powerful tool for communicating your brand's meaning and story. Improving your brand isn't always making it more complex. Look for areas where you can amplify by simplifying.



Experience

- ▶ Experience is your brand promise delivered.
- ▶ Concentric circles can also guide you in mapping your brand's experience. Again, start with the inner circle and work outward (consult the map diagram at the end of this toolbox):
 - Core Brand DNA: touchpoints include your spark, name, logo, brand promise, and core story.
 - Product/Service Experience: touchpoints include your product or service itself, its packaging, and how it's taken to market (your website, your store, etc.).
 - Marketing/Communications Experience: touchpoints here come in two categories—your static-analog touchpoints (broadcast media, direct mail, etc.), and interactive-digital touchpoints.
- ▶ Focus less on brand consistency (making sure everything looks the same) and more on brand coherence (making sure everything is saying the same thing, providing the same unifying meaning).
- ▶ One of the most powerful tools in building a standout brand is organizational culture. Look for ways to make your brand's meaning and story a part of the culture your employees are taught.

