



Some definitions and implications

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What is a brand?

By J. Spell

To some a brand is a product, a product's name or its logo. And while a brand does include all of these elements, it actually involves much greater significance than that.

DEFINITIONS: a good place to begin

The book "More Than A Name" by Melissa Davis describes it this way:

Brands today represent more than a product, service or brand identity (the name and logo, design and voice of the brand). A brand is synonymous with the business and the style behind the product or service; it encompasses the people working for the company and a philosophy and spirit that sustain it. Brands offer a set of values, a vision and an attitude.



The website brandchannel.com published this description:

A brand is a combination of attributes, communicated through a name or a symbol, that influences a thought-process in the mind of an audience and creates value. ...The value of a brand resides, for the audience, in the promise that the product or service will deliver.

Another book, "Brand Warfare" by David Dalessandro, defines it this way:

"Brand" is whatever the consumer thinks of when he or she hears your company's name.

In a similar idea, we sometimes refer to a brand as a product's *Marketplace Reputation*. The benefit, information or solution people expect from you.

And we could list hundreds more, but the point is a brand is more than just the tangible things we can see related to a product or service: the colors, the packaging, the trademark, the store design, the uniforms, etc.



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IMPLICATIONS: a powerful business development tool

A brand also includes emotional feelings like significance, confidence, safety and satisfaction. It can represent a lifestyle, a status and an empowerment. But a brand can also evoke negative feeling if experiences with it are disappointing.

A brand can be introduced with communications, but it's given life and value through experience. Day after day, transaction after transaction, person after person, the promise of a brand and its actual delivery against that promise become a legacy that makes it more or less valuable with time.

Finally, some type of brand reputation, whether positive or negative, is created for every brand by default. Competitors, the general business environment and sometimes past customers communicate ideas that reflect on a brand. Even if a brand simply blends into the background of others in the industry, that's a circumstance unlikely to benefit its ultimate success.

The bottom line is brands are powerful business growth tools, difference makers, and their development should not be left to chance.

Isn't it time you started defining your difference?