

The 'Brand & Beyond' Equation



We've all heard about branding. Corporate branding. Employer branding. Personal branding. What branding is. What it isn't. What it should be. Can all this branding thought and activity be distilled into a clear and concise math (algebraic) equation? Why, yes — yes it can. And this is coming from a longtime ad creative who clearly is not a mathematician.

Let's begin with where the brand first comes from.

It starts with your purpose. The reason your company, service or product exists. Ask yourself "why am I doing this?" The answer should be simple at its core. Very simple.

For example, the reason Nike exists is to empower the physical champion we all have inside us. It's that basic. For Amazon, it's to innovate the consumer buying experience through technology. That's the kernel of the concept.

So, the first part of our equation is "p" for purpose.

After you've found and defined your purpose (yes, I know that's not easy), the next step is to decide how to demonstrate that purpose. Nike could just have easily chosen to open and franchise a chain of gyms. Amazon could have started and ended with a simple shopping app.

But in demonstrating their respective purposes, these companies capitalized on their most unique attributes...on their strongest talents and abilities. That's the key.

Phil Knight, founder of Nike, leveraged his passion as a middle distance runner in college and his entrepreneurial training at Stanford Graduate School of Business. Jeff

Bezos blended his training in computer science at Princeton, his job experience building international sales networks, and his Wall Street financial background.

The second part of our equation is “d” for demonstration. So, it follows that:

p (purpose) + d (demonstration) = brand.

Oh, but it doesn't stop there.

This is where the ‘beyond brand’ element comes in. So, you know your purpose (why you are doing something) and how you are going to demonstrate it (how you are going to make it real). Now what? You have the most noble, exciting purpose in the world. And you have the best business plan in the universe. But nobody knows about either. Technically, you do have a brand. But it's a brand in a vacuum, impacting few people if anyone.

Let's add something to our equation. It's “c” for communication. This is where you market and advertise your brand. That means creating the proper messaging that conveys your brand...that stays true to your original purpose and method of demonstration.

The more powerful and ‘brand-true’ your marketing and advertising are, the more you will make an impact on those who appreciate your purpose and passion. You will reach those who are devotees...an audience that will serve as ambassadors in spreading the word about your brand.

In communicating your brand, we talk about delivering on your brand promise. That promise is one you make as an organization to provide a certain type of experience to customers and employees. The execution of that promise is where the brand flourishes.

Recent research from McKinsey & Company
found that companies with strong brands
outperformed weak brands by 20 percent.

[Entrepreneur Media, <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/243704>]

One of the most important elements that all brands share is how their communication (marketing and advertising) makes people feel. The objective is to connect with your audience by invoking certain thoughts, perceptions and emotions that are distinctive to you. If an organization makes you feel ‘good’ through communication that is genuine and authentic, you are likely to buy from it or invest your career in it. In essence, the brand has made a measurable impact on you.

This step in the brand communication process — the creative expression of your brand — is largely best left to marketing professionals such as account directors, media buyers, graphic designers and copywriters.

To compete as a great brand, your marketing efforts must consist of creating positive experiences for both consumers and prospective employees — audiences that could well be one and the same.

www.recruiting.com/blog/the-intersection-of-your-consumer-brand-your-employer-brand

Our algebraic treatise has indeed gone beyond the brand.

Here are the final (final?) equations.

p (purpose) + d (demonstration) = b (brand)

Going beyond:

b (brand [p + d]) + c (communication) = i (impact)

A word about brand quality.

Plugging in to this math model will elicit a brand. But the quality of your brand is up to you. There are a lot of ineffectual brands out there. To be a truly effective brand, you must put real thought and effort into each element of the equation. You must work to 'out purpose,' 'out demonstrate' and 'out communicate' those who are similar to you. Or at least strive to be different.

If you follow these equations, chances are you will not generate enough impact to become the next Nike or Amazon. (Then again, you may.) But there is some solace. And it's this: The next time someone asks "what is the math behind your brand," you can smile — confidently and knowingly.

That's my say. I'm sticking to it.



About the author:

Dan Stech has more than 20 years of ad agency experience — serving as an award-winning copywriter, copy chief and creative director. Now as principal and owner of danwillwrite, Dan provides copy, concepts and content to a wide variety of clients. He also eats a healthy breakfast every day and regularly cleans his room.

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