



THE FIVE FUNDAMENTALS OF OPTIMISED BRANDS

Drawn from our deep experience in helping brands position themselves to attain the greatest value from who they are, and what they do.

CHAPTER: 02

PROTOCOL

BRAND + COMMUNICATIONS

01

Get Your Value Proposition Right

It's the most clear and powerful way to express your point of difference and value.

WHAT A VALUE PROPOSITION REPRESENTS (WHAT IT IS & WHY YOU NEED ONE)

The first word says it all – ‘value’. The value proposition expresses the specific and quantifiable value you deliver; to your clients, customers, employees, investors or the wider community. And it’s called a proposition because you’re asking a customer to consider something they (ideally) want to agree to. This proposition must connect directly to the need you’re satisfying with a simple,

strong and easily validated statement that your audiences will immediately understand and transact around.

Their need might be tangible, practical, or emotional, unspoken or clearly expressed. The strength of the value proposition is its ability to tap into that need and create a definite customer preference.



“ brands that know what they stand for, and communicate that clearly, are the ones customers prefer and spend money with. ”



OUR EXPERIENCE

It's easy to assume that all you have to do is communicate your product and service offerings clearly, and the market will respond appropriately. In a simpler world, this may have been true. Now as markets are globalised and consumers can access goods and services from anywhere, any time, it's vital to avoid commoditisation and have something meaningful to say to the market.

Over many years advising businesses on their brands and marketing, we identified that brands that know what they stand for, and communicate that clearly, are the ones customers prefer; and spend money with.

You may have everything in place to drive business success – vision, drive, quality product and service offerings, a constructive culture, great people, loyal clients and even a well-known brand.

But without a value proposition that is clearly defined, simply expressed, and where the benefit is highly attractive, customers will find it difficult to identify the specific point of difference your brand represents, and the value they can expect derive from engaging with you.

No matter what sector you operate in, or the size, scale or reputation of your business, it's a world where the customer is firmly in control, and the ability to engage with relevance and resonance depends on the simple fact that a value proposition must be compelling.

Talking the time to investigate the core premise at the heart of your business, to uncover what it is you actually deliver that is of real value, can bring amazing results. The definition of 'discovery' is uncovering what's always been there. And in our experience when this happens there's a new sense of momentum in the business, a deeper connection with the business purpose and directed energy when everyone gets on board.

Not to mention the up-tick in engagement, advocacy and bottom-line results, which happen, when the transaction delivers value commensurate with the need.

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CLIENT EXAMPLE

A professional services client with a decade long successful business, and loyal client base needed to unlock new markets, drive growth and get the business to the next level.

Although they had a great story to tell, the value proposition was generic; instead of reflecting a distinctive brand they were positioned as a commodity.

Investigation and insight led to a simple, coherent and compelling expression of 'why we are different' (and always have been). As a direct result of this new clarity the 'conversation' with prospects shifted ground, and the client won significant new business. Articulating the value proposition and consistently communicating it at all touch-points can be a game-changer.

ASK YOURSELF:

- What is your brand / business's value proposition?
- Is it easily understood and relevant to your stakeholders: customers / staff / investors / the market?
- Can it be easily validated?
- Will the customer experience reinforce it – or not?

Most importantly does it express the customer need that is being satisfied, or is it 'all about us'?

DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP IF YOU HAVEN'T GOT IT RIGHT YET.

It's not easy, and most people can't simply articulate a compelling value proposition. Considering how important this is to your customers, and your business. A little time with experts to get it right could be the best investment you'll make.

02

Understand and Engage Your Audiences

So that your messages are relevant and resonant; make it about satisfying their need, not just what you do.

WHAT THIS MEANS

It's our brand and our business so we should tell the market what we do, right? The answer is yes... and no. We've all experienced the familiar cocktail party or networking event "bore"; the person who just won't stop talking about how interesting, clever and well connected they are. And how quickly we disengage and find a way to excuse ourselves at the earliest opportunity.

When a brand behaves like that, it misses out big time. Because the truth of it is, the customer wants their voice to be heard. They have a need, and they want it recognised. They want you to be interested in them and engaged around their concerns; to meet them where they are, and provide an experience that understands, respects and appreciates them. That's not so hard, but it's amazing how often this happens.





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OUR EXPERIENCE

Working with brands in key global markets we've recognised a pattern. Whether you're in Stockholm, London, Berlin, Shanghai, Tokyo or Sydney it's rare to see a brand that demonstrates how deeply it is connected with its audiences and their needs, rather than bragging about their own credentials. Yes we've heard of you...your telecom network, bank with a range of generic services, sports brand, property developer skills, insurance experience, food manufacturing... that's what you do. But that's not unique, so what makes me want to prefer you over all the others?

Because most goods and services are ubiquitous, it's tough for the consumer to decide who to place their trust, time and money in.

But when brands stop talking about themselves, and start focusing on the customer, things change – for the better.

The holy grail of loyal customers, brand advocates and 'raving fans' can be attained by focusing your thinking on the customer need; where and how they want to interact with you; and consistently engaging with high levels of insights into their needs and expectations.

CLIENT EXAMPLE

Defining and developing messaging to suit key audience personas was the trigger for a large services business to reorient its brand more directly to specific stakeholder needs. Understanding the influences at work on each persona enhanced the relevance and resonance of messaging. By aligning the personas with brand messaging the client's marketing team discovered they had a more robust, applicable and differentiated story to tell; over and extended period.

The first step is audience persona identification and the creation of a matrix of audience needs, influencing factors, the brand role, and value proposition – this will enable accurate and effective communications. If you haven't been through this exercise, engage the experts to assist. We know how to go beyond the parade of 'usual suspects' to develop personas that are deeply insightful; and inspire your sales, marketing and communications team to better outcomes.

ASK YOURSELF:

- How well do you know your customers?
- What are their rational and emotional needs, and motivations?
- In what ways can your brand deliver clear meaning and value to them?
- Can you align your messaging and user experience directly to each audience persona?

Which channels are best for each persona (note: it's not 'one size fits all'...)