

# A NEW BRAND WORLD

## 8 Principles for Achieving Brand Leadership in the 21st Century

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**MAIN IDEA**

Brand building is very much back in fashion. Why? Mainly because a clearly defined and broadly shared set of brand values provides a much more efficient organizing framework for a business enterprise than financial performance measures like market share, earnings-per-share or even the stock price. Financial targets don't tell how the organization will get to where it wants to be, but brand values do precisely that, because:

- Everyone is trying to differentiate themselves from their competitors – and brands do that better than anything else.
- Brands build trust over time and a sense of solidarity – because they suggest how a company will act and the quality it will deliver.
- Brands cannot be outsourced and in many cases are one of the most valuable assets of any company.

Thus, in the future, brands will become a company's conscience. They will be closely analyzed and scrutinized. Brand owners will be held accountable for the global impact of their brands. And building the brand will continue to be one of the most important and potentially most valuable of all business activities.

*"In the new brand world, there will be no shortage on competitors and no limit on the expectations that customers will place on corporations that have already become more powerful than some governments. The noise, static, and confusion have, particularly in the preceding decade, become amplified to an uneasy roar. But I sincerely believe that the challenge of being seen, heard and remembered – not to mention desired and respected – amid the evolving chaos of change will not just test but will bring out the best in every one of us. So, let's get to it."*

– Scott Bedbury

**8 Principles for Achieving Brand Leadership in the 21st Century**

**Principle #1 – Brands need to be more concerned about relevancy and resonance than awareness. . . . . Page 2**

Brand awareness and recognition are just superficial measures of any brand's effectiveness. More importantly, good brands build relationships with consumers. They are relevant to what consumers want and resonate with them.

**Principle #2 – A brand's history holds the key to how to grow it effectively in the future. . . . . Page 3**

Before you can find a good way to grow a brand, you have to understand its DNA – where it came from and what gives it strength. Only when you understand that can you find good ways to actually grow and enhance the brand in the future.

**Principle #3 – Just because you can expand a brand doesn't necessarily mean you should. . . . . Pages 3 - 4**

Brands have just one opportunity to make a first impression. Therefore, be careful when growing a brand. Make certain any attempts to broaden the brand – whether for increased revenues or for greater profits – are brand-positive in that they will strengthen rather than dilute the brand.

**Principle #4 – The key to becoming a great brand is to build an enduring customer relationship. . . . . Pages 4 - 5**

Great brands respect and meet the emotional needs of their customers. They form links to fundamental human emotions or profound cultural forces in ways that cannot be faked and cannot even be readily duplicated by rivals.

**Principle #5 – When it comes to building a brand, everything you do matters. . . . . Page 5**

Brands are like highly sensitive sponges – they absorb and reflect whatever is happening around them, positive or negative. Therefore, protect your brand and present it in the best possible light at all times.

**Principle #6 – Humans bring brands to life – and every good brand needs good long-term parents. . . . . Page 6**

Memorable brands reflect the values of the people who drive the company. Like raising children, there are no shortcuts to building a good brand. It is people who bring a brand to life, who reinvent them periodically, who manage them and ultimately who sustain them. And as such, every brand is only as strong as the weakest person within the organization.

**Principle #7 – The mark of greatness for any brand is when people and principles are placed before profits. . . . Page 7**

The more successful any brand becomes in the marketplace, the bigger it will become – and the bigger it becomes, the more likely it will be perceived as the Goliath of its industry and attacked for everything it does. The key to offset this problem is to find tangible ways and means the company can use its power to improve the quality of life for those who interact with it. Build a deep reservoir of good will well before it's needed.

**Principle #8 – Great brands are distinguished by relevance, simplicity and humanity – not technology. . . . . Page 8**

To build a brand, stick to the basics. Great and enduring brands are simple, highly relevant and warm. New technology may provide some additional tools with new capabilities, but building an enduring brand will first and foremost require delivering the core values people like.

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