

Brands are built, not designed

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Recently, I was asked to design a brand.

I responded with a question. "Are you looking to build a brand or design a logo?"

"What's the difference?" you may be asking.

The elements of a brand - the visuals - are designed. But the actual brand must be built.

There is often confusion when it comes to the word "brand." Understanding what a brand is and the building-block elements that create that brand will give important context when creating your corporate brand.

Brand elements

Every brand has the same fundamental, essential elements.

The first is, of course, the actual name of your business, organization or product.

Second, your logo - that stylized graphic or wordmark used to represent your brand name in a visual and memorable way.

These two elements, along with things like your retail space, marketing collateral, advertising, website, slogan or package design, are all essential elements of your brand. And these brand building blocks require strategic thinking and good design to build a strong brand.

Beyond the visual

When we talk about the "brand," we are also talking about a broader and more valuable asset that is built over time.

Your brand is what your customers, clients, stakeholders and employees think or feel when they think of your company, see your logo, or view your package design.

Your brand is everything the public knows and feels about your company.

What's the difference?

The elements of your brand exist literally. They are seen. Your brand, however, is something that exists only in people's minds.

The value of your brand elements is measured by their ability to convey your "brand promise." Your brand promise is the imagined value and emotional connection people have with your brand. Its value is measured by its degree of positive influence and perception in the minds of your audiences.

Why does it matter?

Brand building is about crafting a "promise of an experience" and delivering it consistently. Your brand promise should invoke emotion. The more your audience relates to the experience, the stronger the brand connection and loyalty will be.

Brands are built over time by consistently delivering well-designed brand elements that convey your brand promise across all points of contact. Clear and consistent promotion of a straightforward and relevant brand promise embeds your brand in the minds of your target audiences, your customers.

Brand success is accomplished when engagement with any single brand element, say just your logo, invokes an involuntary, positive emotional reaction, giving your audience a short cut to choice.

Happy brand building.