

1.

Title Card

2.

Coming up in this module, we'll be taking a step back from our assumptions on brand and look briefly at how it has evolved, before diving into an analysis of your organisation's brand, and how your network fits into it. We'll break down some of the more typical components of brand creation, with examples from other networks, and see how that eventually manifests as appropriately branded actions in the real world, for impact with intention. Finally, we'll apply all this thinking to your personal brand. As ever you have worksheets and further reading in your materials tab.

3.

The word brand comes from old english meaning "burning", and came to mean the verb "mark with hot iron" in Middle English. By the mid 17th century that came to denote ownership by branding. Imagine cattle ranchers used branding irons to indicate which animals were theirs, then as the cattle moved across the plains it was easy to determine which ranches they were from because each head of cattle was branded differently.

Technically the oldest non-cattle brand logo I can find is Twinings tea which was created in 1787, but it was with the rise of packaged goods in the 19th century, that producers put their mark on a widening array of products—cough drops, flour, sugar, beer—to indicate their source. In the late 1880s, for example, as the Coca-Cola Company was getting started, there were many drinks producers in every market. Before Coca-Cola could get a customer to reach for a Coke, it needed to be sure the customer could distinguish it from all the other fizzy caramel-colored beverages out there.

In the first sense of the word, then, a brand is simply the non-generic name for a product that tells us the source of the product. In earlier times, we referred to these non-generic names as "brand names." The problem is, the shorthand suggests there's no difference between a brand name and a brand. But, in contemporary marketing, there is.

Beginning in the later part of the 20th century, marketers began to grasp there was more to the perception of distinctive products and services than their names—something David Ogilvy described as "the intangible sum of a product's attributes." Marketers realized that they could create a specific perception in customers' minds concerning the qualities and attributes of each non-generic product or service. They took to calling this perception "the brand."

Put simply, your "brand" is what your user or customer thinks of when they hear your brand name - both factual and emotional. Your brand name exists objectively;

people can see it. It's fixed. But your brand exists only in someone's mind.

You might also think of this as Kurt Koffka's gestalt theory – the whole is other than the sum of its parts. All this means is that brand is not only who you are and what you do, but also the way others perceive you.

4.

So when you think about what you want your brand perception to be remember your brand promise is your values, what do you stand for? Your brand differentiation, your identity, is what sets you apart from others. You should already have some thoughts on these from your strategy module. And your brand image, what impression do you want to give, is something we'll explore now and look at how that can be controlled with a communications strategy in a future module.

5.

Jean-Noël Kapferer, professor of marketing strategy at the HEC Graduate School of Management in France, developed the Brand Identity Prism and published it in his book, "**Strategic Brand Management**." I've put a link to a free pdf of it in your further reading on the materials tab.

The Brand Identity Prism offers six key elements that you should consider when building your brand, and crucially this includes your customers' own experiences and ideas about how your brand will make them feel if they buy into it.

As we go through each of these sections I want you to bear in mind the task that will await you in your worksheet. And that's to address each section as it pertains to your organisation's brand. And then to go back through with your employee network hat on and consider how your strategy either reflects or challenges that brand identity.

First of all we have physique. These are the impressions that are evoked by your organisation's output. For example a high-end tech product might make you think of modern design, sharp images, high status. A service based organisation might offer images of exciting experiences, or reliability and efficiency.

Look at the products or services within your organisation. What do they look like? What images and emotions do they conjure? And are they what you want for the brand?

Next is relationship, which can be between the customer and the organisation. For example a customer needs to have a trusting relationship with their bank. Or it can be a relationship inspired by the product, like a wedding events company that wants to evoke love and

commitment among its users.

So note down what kind of relationship is built between your customers and your organisation. How much of that is natural, and what are you actively working on through communications and brand efforts?

Reflection is about how customers want to see themselves when they engage with your brand. It usually encompasses something aspirational like if I have an expensive watch it means I'm successful, or if I join this gym I'm be seen as fit and healthy. Of course that's not necessarily who your users are. This can be used to advantage in brand development by showing customers how you can help them achieve their aims. How does your organisation do this now?

Self-image is the reality of who they are, which can also inform their choice of brand alignment. For example someone who is environmentally conscious may feel more affinity to plant-based foods and household products. Identifying the way people actually behave and what they really value is great for audience segmentation when you plan marketing, or for innovating your product and service to meet those needs. How does your organisation do this?

Culture is a broad spectrum, but encompasses much of the work you'll have done on values. It's a mix of how the organisation treats people, their pattern of behaviour across product and marketing, and demonstrating how they act on their values. It might all add up to your organisation's USP. For example a sports brand that is committed to health, activity and empowerment. Think now about your organisation's values and whether these are fairly played out in your culture and brand.

Finally personality is how you would envision your organisation if it were a person. Maybe what they look like, how they speak, how they dress, who are their friends, what's their favourite book? You can go on and on building a persona like this, and this it's a useful shortcut to asking yourself whether a proposed action is consistent with how you view your organisation as a person.

So a reminder to now go through this prism again and note down how your network reflects and challenges what you've just described about your organisation.

6.

Now that we've explored the perception of brand, I want to make sure we're not completely ignoring some of the more typical elements you might think of when it comes to brand design, like logo, colours, typography and photography or illustrations.

But my first tip is: use your designers! I think most of you will have some kind of access to comms, whether internal or external, and they will probably have some guidelines that you need to follow, both in terms of policy – legal for example – but also in terms of visual branding. If you don't have that, or they don't have capacity to help you – think about whether you have any members who are designers, or if you don't have any members, ask for their allyship – it's a really tangible way they can support the network as an ally.

Logo: It should be clear what you are – both in terms of your network, and the organization you are a part of. You might be tempted to slightly alter your organization's logo to achieve this, but be aware that this often infringes your own trademark – so be careful about being "too aligned".

Colours: use your organisation's colour palette, of course, but that doesn't necessarily mean you have to use the same logo colours – you probably have secondary and tertiary colours at hand. Also think about the meaning for your network – it's fairly obvious for LGBT+ groups to use the Gilbert Baker-designed rainbow flag. And also think about potential backlash – using pink for a women's group for example, might not be the most progressive idea.

7.

Typography: thankfully gone are the days of WordArt. Your organization will have a set typography you should align to – and you can probably find this in your brand guidelines. It should be clear, above all else. Don't sacrifice readability for fancy scrawl.

Photography/Illustrations; Don't steal things from the internet! There are rules around fair usage. Use Creative Commons if you must, or better, ask if your organisation has an image library. If you take photos of members or events, that's a great idea because it shows the real, human side of what you do, but make sure you get explicit permission from anyone, because often these groups are sensitive and can require privacy.

While we're talking about images it's a great excuse to mention this inclusive campaign by Dove and Getty Images. Dove's brand reputation for a long time has been about "real people" which they show through their marketing. With Project Show Us they've taken this beyond their own campaigns and offered a library of diverse images for general use. This started as a smaller free library and has now turned into a business opportunity with Getty. They also make clear their manifesto – their brand values – that the images should be powered by women in front of and behind the camera, feature real diversity, and no staged sets or artificial scenarios, free from digital distortion.

8.

I also want to mention a couple of things that aren't visual, but more aligned with voice.

Slogan or tagline: You may have chosen a name for your network (like REACH for example, from Diageo) which needs clarifying with a tagline (here it stands for Race, Ethnicity, and Cultural Heritage). You may also want to enlist a copywriter from your organization to come up with some snappy slogans that would engage people in your comms.

Character: You may even choose a character to define the network. This may or may not take a visible form, but it can be a useful tool to create one or more personas which reflect your membership and their challenges. When you form your strategy and put out comms or organize events, it can help you to think about the real people you're doing this for, and prevent it from becoming too much of a process for the business as a faceless entity. It's a tool I've used often as a user experience designer to create new products and services that are based around real situations.

Voice/Tone: Your network should ideally speak with one voice – because that represents your values, but you will vary the tone depending on who you're talking to, and what you're trying to achieve. For example you want a casual and inclusive tone at events, but a clear and professional approach when asking for budget.

9.

Here we have a few more examples of brand assets from GLEE, who are part of Zurich Insurance. The first thing you should know is that the co-chair of GLEE at the time, was also a graphic designer – which is super handy for their network, and I know won't be the case for everyone – but recruiting to your core team, or allies, based on the skills you need, is something to bare in mind.

And to reiterate, their name GLEE would probably not be understood straight away, so they have a tagline – Gay, Lesbian and Everyone Else – which I think is a nice way to show they're opening up to the whole spectrum and allies – conversations about what acronyms to use can take a long time, so it's worth thinking about what has longevity and inclusivity.

They've also got a slogan – taking our place in the rainbow – now obviously rainbows is an easy visual choice for an LGBT+ group, but if you look at what they've done – they've used their corporate approved blue as the blue in the pride flag colours – which is a little twist on the Gilbert Baker design. I think that's a good visual design choice.

In terms of their communications, they keep the branding consistent across digital and as you can see here, print like these posters and banners..

But also magazines which they used to profile role models (if you have print opportunity it's good to go with long-form content as people will often take time to read through it over lunch or on a coffee break. Their intranet content has the most informal tone, in order to appeal to a different audience with the kind of content they might normally interact with on

social media. There are lots of touchpoints there for all sorts of occasions and audiences.

10.

Let's pause for a moment. I want you to consider When defining your employee network brand, what is most important to you? I've given five options for you to think about (or you can create your own if you like). Pause now to reflect then I'll talk through those options.

So when we ask employee networks this question, the top answer is usually making the right impact. Admittedly, this comes right after the module on measuring impact, and if we can't check our own bias, who are we. But I do agree that making actual change is more important than the impression that you've done it. These two are not mutually exclusive. The ethical work of brand is to give the accurate impression that we have made an impact as a network.

Likewise being seen as an influencer is about showing the credibility of what you do, and that's only achieved by making impact too. Don't be distracted by the term being co-opted by YouTubers and shoddy Ted Talks. Skills of influence are important in leading change and avoiding conflict. Luckily we'll explore that in a future module.

Being different from other networks usually gets nothing in our live vote, because why would that be important? Hopefully you have aligned strategies with your fellow networks. Well yes, but we also put it there because we're talking about branding, and in the marketing world you want to communicate your USP so people choose you. You may think that potential members have no other option - there aren't two competing mental health networks in your organisation. But you are competing for the time and attention of potential members, who can just as well disengage completely if they don't see the point in their involvement. And that's before we even consider the intersectional pull of people with multiple protected characteristics.

Feeling proud: This usually comes in second place in our vote, and I think it is an important part of an employee network's brand to show that they are proud of what they do, so that members feel inspired and confident to join in with your activities. Although you want to solve challenges and be strategic, the seriousness and effort involved with running a network can be off-putting to people who are less at-ease with having a voice in the workplace and making decisions that they will be accountable for.

11.

We all want to promote equality and eliminate bias. And sometimes, even with success, this story can be lost in a world of generic D&I efforts, rather than relate specifically to your organisation. For example, better reporting of gender pay-gaps, or more accessible working practices, which could and should relate to any company. So look to demonstrate the unique ways in which your brand as an organisation and a network have made an impact, which relates specifically to the product or service that you offer.

In June 2020, we saw businesses respond to the killing of George Floyd, Black Lives Matter, and Blackout Tuesday with a variety of statements, hashtags and black profile photos. You'll probably have witnessed that some of them faced backlash for not explaining exactly what their role is in making things better. And we'll park Virtue Signalling for now, to come back to it next time.

The initiative of Blackout Tuesday was started by Atlantic Records marketing executives Brianna Agyemang and Jamila Thomas, calling for "a day to disconnect from work and reconnect with our community" and "an urgent step of action to provoke accountability and change".

They said: "The music industry is a multi-billion dollar industry. An industry that has profited predominantly from Black art. Our mission is to hold the industry at large, including major corporations + their partners who benefit from the efforts, struggles and successes of black people accountable."

They have subsequently posted several calls to action, including a reading list called **Anti-Racism Resources** and links to community action groups, which I've incidentally added to your further reading.

Some people responded even to this with: "I have no interest in supporting major label record executive white guilt day."

However, Agyemang and Thomas have stressed the blackout is just the beginning of a larger campaign. They wrote. "We are and will be in this fight for the long haul. A plan of action will be announced." And this is so important for employee networks. If you get attention and momentum, then make sure you're ready to announce your longer term strategy for success so that you can prove you're not just a moment.

In the two examples I've pictured there is some relevant action relating to the service on offer. Twitter changed their profile like many other people to blackout and add the hashtag, but it came off the back of their controversial amendments to Donald Trump's tweets, where they added fact checking notes, and censored calls for violence. Actions which have repercussions for their longer term strategy as a business. To tone it down a bit, Spotify redesigned their most popular playlists to be blacked out, but also added new playlists to promote the musical cultural significance of black lives matter in a way that feels relevant to

what they also offer as a business.

Another example I can offer of using what your company does to create relevant activities and branding opportunities would be in the recent work of Wagamama. On their website they tell you about the work they do in mental health and sustainability, even before you get down the list to information about the company itself. But it's their work on LGBTQ+ that I want to highlight now, because they thought about how they can use their restaurant space as a meeting point for mentoring relationships and pride marches, so that particularly for people who are alone, they can get support from Wagamama staff who would also be marching, or offering their skills as a mentor, in collaboration with charity The Albert Kennedy Trust. The restaurants are filled with messages of inclusion from employees, branded with the progressive pride flag, and they consulted with their groups to bring in gender neutral bathrooms too. It's worth a look on their site to see how they communicate the relevance of their various inclusion efforts, to everything else the brand stands for.

12.

To recap: **Identity** is the summation of your statements and actions.

- Why, how, what, where
- Are these formalised?
- Proof of impact lends authenticity to this identity
- Strong identities support sustainable networks

You may recognise some of these questions from the previous modules, and hopefully the broader picture is becoming clearer for you now.

Brand is how all those are perceived by others.

- What do stakeholders and members think about you?
- How do you gather this feedback?
- Does your brand fairly reflect your identity?
- Brand is determined by communication

We have future modules on communication and stakeholders, so as ever, return and reflect on these questions throughout the course. But before we go, I want to finish on personal brand.

13.

We can also use this thinking on brand and identity to extend the work we began in the leadership module, by applying it to your personal brand. By thinking about your core values and your leadership style, you can understand your identity. And from that, you can examine how other people are perceiving you, which is your brand. By understanding your current brand, you can create an action plan to develop it further. Don't forget employee networks, while excellent for the organisation, its employees and customers, is also your opportunity to develop career-boosting skills and networks.

So here are some things you'll want to assess when defining and developing your personal

brand.

Your identity:

This is the truth behind your brand. How are you fairly representing that to others, in how you communicate, in how conscientious or reliable you are, in how you present an individual voice, in how you listen to others, and in how you look. Not all of the interpretations that people have of your identity will be fair or accurate. And we probably know this well because we're all trying to promote a more equal and less bias workplace. But understanding the prevailing image people have of you can be useful in taking control of your brand strategically.

Your USP:

Your unique selling point is not a single unchanging quality you were born with, it's an evolving powerful statement of what you have achieved through your hard work and your personal strengths. How did you reach success, show initiative, lead a team, and do all this by being uniquely you.

Your audience:

As you're developing your personal brand with specific actions to develop skills or communications or networks, be aware that your brand doesn't exist without an audience. This means you can tailor your efforts to specific audiences for greater effect. Are you intent on showing how your network activities have developed your abilities to manage a team? In which case you need to consider your line manager as a key audience and show them how that has manifested. Or do you want to be a leader in this space across industries? In which case you'd need to consider what kind of external communications you're pushing out to establish your credentials.

Your channels:

Which leads us on to your channels. You'll want a space that's about you in order to develop your personal brand. It's usually LinkedIn, or blogs, or a website. Be aware of the amount of effort involved in maintaining each of these. As I was developing I largely relied on live event hosting and word of mouth - which came with the added bonus that any mistakes I'd made didn't live online forever. So be cautious about what you publish, particularly in the contentious and retaliatory online world of corporate D&I. But writing, speaking and teaching is a great way to cement what you know, and find your voice as a leader.

And finally, when forming the strategy of your personal brand, you'll probably find that you need to make decisions about whether an action is authentically aligned with your values or not. For example, is it fair to change your appearance so that people judge you differently? Many business guidelines would suggest there's a certain way to dress to show you can be taken seriously. But what if that's not really you? Why isn't it you? To what extent can you realistically expect people to drop their biases? What if it means you suffer? This is all a matter for authenticity, and it's such a thinker that we're going to tackle it alone in the next module, with some help from the philosophers...