

Develop Your Brand Architecture

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Note – This is one from a sequence of exercises from the Brand Strategy subject outlined in the Strategic Marketing Process eBook. Download the free e-book www.growthpanel.com/marketing-tools/index.html and subscribe to this subject at www.growthpanel.com/versions/get-started.html to download from Growth Panel’s Intelligent Marketing Platform.

Some of the graphics in this PDF might not display properly.

Brands that tap into our emotions are far more powerful than brands that don’t. Connecting with human emotions is an inexact science at best---it’s more an art, and it’s the main thrust of consumer marketing.

Studies have shown that business brands can stimulate the human mind and emotions in the same manner as consumer brands. You may be able to accomplish this if you **develop your brand strategy around the emotional benefits from using** your product/service.

In this exercise you will

- ▶ List the features and benefits of your product / service. A feature is an attribute – a color, a configuration; a benefit is what that feature does for the customer.
- ▶ Determine which benefits are most important to each of your customer segments.
- ▶ Identify which benefits are emotional – the most powerful brand strategies tap into emotions, even among business buyers.
- ▶ Look at the emotional benefits and boil them down to what your brand should truly mean to your customers.

Summary

EXERCISE SUMMARY	
When to Address	After you’ve confirmed your value proposition and explored brand themes
Who Should Participate	Business leaders: company founders, owners, presidents and vice presidents Marketing and sales leaders
Where to Use the	Your brand architecture will define the structure for your brand strategy.

Results	
Why it's Important	Tapping into human emotions is powerful, even with business brands. If your brand is able to do it, you will have a significant advantage over your competitors that don't.
What Builds Upon it	Your final brand strategy
Timeframe to Completion	A few hours to a few days, depending on your situation
Potential Business Impact	High – for all Brand Strategy exercises
Deliverable	You'll define your brand architecture
Next Steps	Define your brand strategy

Target Completion Date	
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PARTICIPANTS

TASKS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE

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Notes

What to Complete

1. DETERMINE VALUE OF YOUR FEATURES AND BENEFITS
2. CHART YOUR EMOTIONAL BENEFITS
3. DETERMINE WHAT YOUR BRAND MEANS

Where it Fits in Brand Strategy

Summarize Your Brand
Audit Your Brand Internally
Audit Your Brand Externally
Analyze Audit Results
Choose Brand Type
Confirm Your Value Proposition
Select a Brand Theme



Determine Value of Your Features & Benefits
Chart Your Emotional Benefits
Determine What Your Brand Means



Create Your Brand Personality Traits
Create Your Brand Promise
Define Your Brand Strategy
Create Your Brand Positioning Statements
Write Your Brand Story
Select Brand Visual Requirements
Match Visual Requirements to Existing Brand
Define Brand Operational Requirements
Match Operational Requirements to Existing Brand

1. DETERMINE VALUE OF YOUR FEATURES AND BENEFITS

Not all of your features and benefits resonate with your market. Build your brand around the most powerful benefits to connect with human emotions.

A **feature** is an element of what something does or is. It's usually a noun. For example, a car's features may include a ski rack and upgraded stereo system. A **benefit** is a positive result that the feature delivers.

There are two types of benefits:

TYPE OF BENEFIT	EXPLANATION
FUNCTIONAL	Directly related to the functionality of the feature. An upgraded stereo provides higher-quality sound.
EMOTIONAL	Benefits the user feels . An upgraded stereo may make the user feel like a rock star.

Start by listing the features of your product/service. Then identify the benefit(s) that each feature provides. Finally, choose whether a benefit is functional or emotional.

A feature often has multiple benefits, and sometimes the emotional benefits are less obvious. For each functional benefit you identify, think about the emotional impact that benefit can have on your buyer. Then add these new emotional benefits to your list.

STEP 1: List your features	STEP 2: What's the benefit of this feature?	STEP 3: What type of benefit is it?
		<input type="checkbox"/> Functional <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional
		<input type="checkbox"/> Functional <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional
		<input type="checkbox"/> Functional <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional
		<input type="checkbox"/> Functional <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional
		<input type="checkbox"/> Functional <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional
		<input type="checkbox"/> Functional <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional
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		<input type="checkbox"/> Functional <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional
		<input type="checkbox"/> Functional <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional

		<input type="checkbox"/> Functional <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional
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Now determine how important each feature and benefit is to your customers. There are three “levels of importance:”

LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE	EXPLANATION
EXPECTED	Basic and expected; a customer won't buy without this feature or benefit. Every product/service in the category must offer it.
ADDS VALUE	Adds value but most customers probably won't purchase on this factor alone. Still, it helps differentiate your product/service from your competitors.
WILL BUY	Customers will definitely choose you over your competitors for this feature/benefit alone – it's that valuable.

Move the features, functional benefits and emotional benefits into the chart below. Then for each feature or benefit, choose a single “level of importance.” (You'll use the gray number in the final step.)

FEATURES (from list above)	Choose one level of importance		
	Expected	Adds value	Will buy
	<input type="checkbox"/> [1]	<input type="checkbox"/> [2]	<input type="checkbox"/> [3]
	<input type="checkbox"/> [1]	<input type="checkbox"/> [2]	<input type="checkbox"/> [3]
	<input type="checkbox"/> [1]	<input type="checkbox"/> [2]	<input type="checkbox"/> [3]
	<input type="checkbox"/> [1]	<input type="checkbox"/> [2]	<input type="checkbox"/> [3]
	<input type="checkbox"/> [1]	<input type="checkbox"/> [2]	<input type="checkbox"/> [3]
	<input type="checkbox"/> [1]	<input type="checkbox"/> [2]	<input type="checkbox"/> [3]
	<input type="checkbox"/> [1]	<input type="checkbox"/> [2]	<input type="checkbox"/> [3]
	<input type="checkbox"/> [1]	<input type="checkbox"/> [2]	<input type="checkbox"/> [3]
	<input type="checkbox"/> [1]	<input type="checkbox"/> [2]	<input type="checkbox"/> [3]
	<input type="checkbox"/> [1]	<input type="checkbox"/> [2]	<input type="checkbox"/> [3]
	<input type="checkbox"/> [1]	<input type="checkbox"/> [2]	<input type="checkbox"/> [3]
FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS (from list above)	Expected	Adds value	Will buy
	<input type="checkbox"/> [4]	<input type="checkbox"/> [5]	<input type="checkbox"/> [6]

	FEATURES	FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS	EMOTIONAL BENEFITS
Customers will choose you because of these features & benefits	▶	▶	▶
ADDS VALUE	BOX 2	BOX 5	BOX 8
These features or benefits are “nice to have” and differentiate your product/ service, but the customer probably won’t buy just for these items alone.	▶	▶	▶
EXPECTED	BOX 1	BOX 4	BOX 7
These features/ benefits are expected from all competitors in the category.	▶	▶	▶
→ → → → IMPORTANCE → → → →			

Use this chart to validate your final brand strategy and refer to it as you start writing your messages. The more detailed it is, the easier it will be to develop those messages.

REASONS TO BUY

Now that you have a potential focus for your brand, battle-test it for each of your customer segments.

[Competitive Positioning can help you identify your segments.]

Why should each customer segment buy from you instead of your competitors? Make sure each reason is compelling and clearly stated.

CUSTOMER SEGMENT	PROBLEM THIS SEGMENT FACES	REASON TO BUY FROM YOU RATHER THAN YOUR COMPETITORS

CUSTOMER SEGMENT	PROBLEM THIS SEGMENT FACES	REASON TO BUY FROM YOU RATHER THAN YOUR COMPETITORS

How consistent are these reasons with the brand positioning in Box 9? If they're not consistent, you may need to tweak the grid or your reasons to buy; they should match.

CONSISTENCY		NOTES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Very consistent	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately consistent	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not consistent	

3. DETERMINE WHAT YOUR BRAND MEANS

Now translate these reasons into three compelling statements that your brand should mean to your customers.

You're looking for the answers if you asked your customers *What does this brand mean?* or *What do you want them to say?*

Think of as many statements as you can, then mark the best three. At least two should be directly related to your first value proposition.

Beware of generic adjectives and ideas! The more specific, unique, and powerful the phrase, the better your prospects and customers will understand it. If you can apply the phrase to any of your competitors, then it's not good enough.

To our customers, our brand means:	Consistent with which value proposition?	Choose your top 3
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> neither	<input type="checkbox"/> Top 3
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> neither	<input type="checkbox"/> Top 3
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> neither	<input type="checkbox"/> Top 3
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> neither	<input type="checkbox"/> Top 3
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> neither	<input type="checkbox"/> Top 3
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	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> neither	<input type="checkbox"/> Top 3
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> neither	<input type="checkbox"/> Top 3

Now you have the foundation to define your brand strategy.