

The Brand Approach to Marketing

Owning a space in the consumer's mind

Every shop, company, product, person, location and government has an "image". A favourable image allows you to attract new markets or sell at a higher price. An unfavourable image makes you unpopular, making it difficult to attract business or sales. A brand strategy is a tool that allows you to manage your image in a way that contributes positively to your reputation and therefore your business.

What is the difference between a product and a brand?

- A product is something made in a factory. A brand is something bought by consumers.
- A product can be copied by a competitor. A brand is unique.
- A product is an object. A brand has a personality that can own a space in the consumer's mind.

What is the difference between a product or service brand and a corporate brand?

In basic terms, a corporate brand is about people, whereas a product brand is about attributes. The fast pace of technological change makes it harder and harder to achieve sustainable competitive advantage on the basis of functional product brand attributes, as competitors can easily replicate areas of added value. This is where the company itself may be a powerful source of vital competitive advantage. Reputation, culture and personality are key discriminators and the corporate brand provides the source of such values.

Corporate brand is a mix of the visible (shopfront, logo, uniforms, etc.), the perceived (external perception of your advertising, promotions and communication), the experience (external interaction with employees), the heritage and culture, and the product brands.

Stephen King puts it succinctly: "...increasingly the company [corporate] brand itself will act as the main discriminator. That is, consumers' choice will depend less on an evaluation of the functional benefits to them of a product or service, more on an assessment of the people behind it – their skills, attitudes, integrity, behaviour, style, responsiveness, greenism, language: the whole company culture, in fact." (*King S. 'Tomorrow's Research'. Admap, September 1991.*)

Customer Segmentation: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

These questions are asked to help breakdown a market into identifiable segments, each of which may have its own special product requirements and each of which is likely to exhibit various habits affecting its exposure to your communication. Other factors likely to vary between each segment are price, performance, design, service, usage, benefits and personality.

Brand Positioning: What do the customers need? What is the company capable of? What are the competitors offering?

Mapping helps determine key purchase motivators for specific customer segments. It helps you understand where the brand is now (versus the competition) and where it could be in the future. Brand positioning relates brand benefits to customer needs and defines the brand's competitive advantage in relation to the competition.

Competitive Advantage:

This is NOT about quality or value: all products have a 'quality' and as soon as someone purchases a product it has a 'value'. It's about the ability to meet customer requirements in a superior manner to competitors. The combination of attributes (added value) given to a brand must reflect customer requirements and set the brand apart from the competition.

The Creative Territory Approach: Giving your "brand" a personality

The best brands make an emotional connection with the audience.

Think about Cadbury Chocolate, named by a recent *Readers Digest* poll as Australia's most trusted brand. Cadbury doesn't try to sell you chocolate. It doesn't even try to sell you a feature or benefit of chocolate. It sells you a whole experience. Let's face it, wouldn't it be nice if the world really WAS Cadburys?

The best brands have a distinct personality that the consumer can touch and feel. They don't sell a "thing" but impart a special value that is desired by the audience.

At Creative Territory we treat your brand like a personality to help you uncover the other personalities that matter to your brand – the personalities of your audience, of your company/ product/ service, of your competitors and of the brand itself.

Desk Research: We start by having a long, hard look at you and your brand. Is it new or has it been around for a while? Does it stand for anything? Does it have a personality? Does the promise match the delivery? Who are its competitors? Who else is in its family (or should be)? This first task is generally undertaken through desk research and helps us gain a picture of what your brand is now.

New Primary Research: If required, we commission new primary research. This may include interviews with existing customers and potential new ones, suppliers, people who have stopped being customers. Telephone surveys can also be undertaken if required.

Brand Attributes: The next stage is to ask you and as many others as possible to use a tool we have developed to help gather together all the attributes of your brand. We start by giving you a list of 100 or so words which you need to rate according to how closely they are (or should be) associated with your brand. It's important that you don't think too hard about your answers – we truly are trying to get a "gut dump". It should take each participant less than 2 minutes to complete this task. We then collate all the answers ready for the next stage.

Workshop: With the homework complete we move on to a three-hour workshop with your team. During this workshop we will examine the results of your gut dump, find out more about your competitors, learn about the personalities of your target audiences and develop a common understanding of the personality of your brand. We usually undertake this workshop with your most senior management team as well as the person responsible for marketing in your organisation.

Workshop Outcomes: Following the workshop, Creative Territory will work with our design partner Sprout to develop strategic recommendations on your brand as well as some examples of the creative direction. Within 2-3 weeks of the workshop, we will be ready to present these findings back to your senior management team.

Development of a Marketing Strategy: The next stage is the development of a complete marketing strategy to take your brand and business forward. This will include the identification of strategies, tactics and tools that bring the brand to life for your new clients including media, advertising, web and new media strategies, point of sale strategies and direct marketing. Detailed costings for suggested strategies would be undertaken at this stage.

Creative Execution: With the strategy set, we are also able to provide a full agency creative service through our partnership with Sprout Creative (NT) Pty Ltd.

Creative Territory: The image and reputation builders

Creative Territory works with CEOs, management boards and executive teams to deliver image and reputation building strategies through brand strategy, marcomms, media management and crisis communication.

Managing Director Tracy Jones has 25 years experience in marketing, public relations and journalism. She has worked in newspapers, politics, university and government, including eight years in senior Executive roles.

Looking for the opportunity to apply her skills to new areas but not wanting to leave the great lifestyle of Darwin, Tracy resisted several offers to work as a strategist in large agencies in Sydney and Melbourne and established Creative Territory in early 2006.

Tracy has been responsible for building a number of brands including:

- Positioning the Northern Territory as a residential and investment location through “the territory: the difference is opportunity” brand in 2001, which won her a national Golden Target Award and Australian Marketing Institute state award for Marketing Leadership. She later ran a successful marketing strategy to position
- Rebranding of Charles Darwin University, formerly Northern Territory University, and marketing strategies which led to a subsequent increase in enrolments.

- Management of the branding of the Darwin City Waterfront and Convention Centre Project for the NT Government to coincide with financial close with the Darwin Cove Consortium.
- Tracy is presently working with Sprout Creative for Ogden IFC to develop a brand philosophy and marketing strategy for the new Darwin Convention Centre.

Tracy's skills extend to the ongoing building of image and reputation through marketing and communication skills. Examples of her work include:

- Recovery communication following a number of natural disasters including the 2006 Katherine Flood and the devastation of Cyclone Ingrid in 2005.
- Many local, national and international marketing campaigns including the 2005 Territory Skilled Worker campaign, which attracted a huge number of enquiries into living and working in the Territory and won two state Public Relations Institute Awards for Excellence.

Tracy has won two national Golden Target Awards, including the Gold Award for marketing excellence, five State Awards for Public Relations Excellence and a state Marketing Leadership Award from the Australian Marketing Institute.

She is an Associate Fellow of the Australian Marketing Institute, a Certified Practicing Marketer and a Member of the Australian Institute of Management.

Our Creative Partner: Sprout Creative (NT) Pty Ltd

Tracy's strategic brand experience is well matched by the creative design talents of Sprout Creative, the Territory's leading design agency.

Director Anya Lorimer has been working on communication strategies, campaigns, re-branding of major companies and maintaining corporate contracts for over 10 years.

Some of the Territory's brightest brands and campaigns enjoy the special touch that Sprout Creative gives to all of its projects. These include:

- The complete branding and marketing of Ausfuel, including the rollout of a new Territory-based rewards program.
- Creative direction and production of a range of TIO television advertising, including recent advertisements featuring old video around Darwin.
- The Nursing in the Territory campaign, which assisted in attracting new nurses to the Territory to fill massive skills gaps.

Sprout Creative is the only Northern Territory company to ever feature in Oz Graphics, the definitive guide to good design in Australia.