



IDEA ENGINEERING ON THE **BRANDING PROCESS**

Your Brand exists solely in the mind of your customer. Whatever your customer believes, that in fact is your Brand.

A powerful Brand effectively communicates your meaning, values and promises in a fashion that leads the consumer to know your Brand as you wish them to know it. However, in the end, the consumer decides if your Brand is what you hoped it would be.

That is why we put considerable effort into developing and evaluating all dimensions of a Brand. The language and wording, the feelings evoked by its visual and spoken expressions, and even the Brand's allegorical potential are all evaluated and carefully thought out. We take great care in planning how the Brand is expressed visually, verbally and behaviorally. We believe that how your Brand expression is delivered and where it can be found, become an integral part of your Brand.

The reward for this effort is that a strong brand has the power to create business value. It can impact much more than revenues and profit margins. A strong brand creates competitive advantages by commanding a price premium and decreases the cost of entry into new markets and categories. A strong brand reduces business risk and helps attract and retain talented staff.

The process we have adopted has been in existence for over 60 years and has remained fundamentally unchanged. The four basic steps in the process are: Discovery & Analysis, Constructing Brand Meaning and a Brand Platform, Identity Development and Execution, Brand Audit and Refinement. What have changed are the tools and methodologies that can be deployed in each phase. Of course, the final outcome is greatly shaped by the talent, passion and instincts of the branding team.

Idea Engineering has great respect for the uniqueness of every client, and every brand initiative. How we work through each phase of the process is driven by what you need. Industry and product experience, product lifecycles, product category, management expertise and a host of other variables are critical determinants in defining the specific steps required in each phase.

Here are the purpose, objective and outcomes you can expect from each step of the process as Idea Engineering brings your brand to life.

DISCOVERY & ANALYSIS

First we talk. Actually, you do most of the talking. We listen.

We want to hear from everyone with a stake in this venture. Tell us about your business vision, your brand hopes, your values, and your *raison d'être*.

Then we research.

We work to uncover as much readily available and relevant secondary research that exists on the market, the consumer, and the competition. If deemed appropriate, we will conduct primary research to augment the

findings and intelligence discovered from our review of secondary research, which may include, but is not be limited to: focus groups, intercept studies, surveys, and competitive analyses.

Then we analyze.

Based on the knowledge gathered from the previous steps, we work to define target consumers, identify competitive strengths and opportunities, isolate brand differentiators, begin planning the customer experience and the initial behavioral protocols.

Then we think.

This final step is when we establish the Brand's DNA and the essence of the Brand is known and understood. The Brand's promises become clearer and the Brand story can begin.

Then we act.

CONSTRUCTING BRAND MEANING & BRAND PLATFORM

We believe that constructing brand meaning and building a platform for a Brand is creating a *Brand Story*. To us, every product, every service and every idea is a story.

During this stage we develop the Brand's story, the invitation to dialogue with the consumer, and formulate plans for delivery of that story. Through this story we communicate the Brand Meaning and begin to make promises, or covenants, to our market. Unique and concise, the Brand Story makes a bid for share of mind — the only place a Brand actually exists. The process of crafting the Story is central to our approach. The Story provides strategic direction for development of a powerful brand manifestation and identifies the individual planks or attributes, that when bundled, establish the Brand Platform. The Story also provides direction for an effective Brand messaging delivery system.

An action plan can now be developed to bring the Brand to life. In this plan we identify the key deliverables that will best express the Brand Story and the applications that will carry that story.

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT & EXECUTION

With the Story in place and a clear understanding of the Brand's bundled attributes determined, we can begin creative exploration of an overall core identity and brand style. Deliverables such as brand or product names, naming conventions, graphic identity (iconography), color palette, typographic styles, visual and verbal language guides and brand positioning/descriptor copy are prepared for deployment across all prescribed media. This may include packaging, ads, online initiatives, broadcast initiatives, stationery systems, brochures, environmental design, and more. The guides and rules ensure that as the Brand propagates it stays "on message".

AUDITING & REFINING

Branding is the process of telling a story. Consistent storytelling gives a Brand power. But consistency is more than simple repetition. A Brand's meaning must remain relevant. As with all things alive, change may be necessary and the story may need to evolve, so it must be dynamic. Together we will devise protocols, audit tactics and strategies that will ensure the Brand story is consistently told and when necessary, fine-tuned.

The final result is a powerful, dynamic, relevant expression of what your company/product promises to deliver to its customers, employees and society.