



Essential Business Branding

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Introduction

When you think of a brand the first thing that probably comes to mind is a brand on livestock. Branding of a product should be viewed as the same thing. When you have a successful brand, it sets your product apart from your competition. You want your brand to be able to expand your customer base and increase your market share. The larger your customer base and market share the more powerful your brand will become.

There are many factors that go into making a brand successful and there are even more that go into keeping your brand successful. By learning the basic steps, you will be able to put your brand on the best possible path to success. You will find that marketing and branding go hand in hand. A good brand will help your marketing and strong marketing will help build a strong brand. It is up to you to do your homework to ensure that you make the right decisions to help your company build a strong brand.

Your goal is to build a brand that is the recognized leader in a given category. This makes the consumer want to be aligned with your brand and will seek it out at the store. It will give them the satisfaction that they have made the correct decision for themselves and their family when they purchase your brand.

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With the explosion of the Internet, now more than ever, companies have the chance to go global and increase their sales and profits. By following the steps that are outlined here, you will have the information that you need to make your brand successful and have the ability to go global both on the Internet and with a brick and mortar store.

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Expand the Brand

When you have a company that has products on the market, you have to decide if you want to expand the brand or keep it at an even level. Expanding your brand can be a delicate decision because you do not want to do any harm to your brand by expanding too quickly.

Some companies decide to expand their brand quickly in order to benefit in the short term, while others look for long-term success. To look at how brand expansion can weaken your brand you only have to look at car manufacturers. At one time the big three automakers were untouchable, consumers would be proud to state they drove a Ford, Chevrolet, or Chrysler. However, as the automakers introduced more and more models, there brands were weakened. Consumers no longer stated that they drove a Ford, Chevrolet, or Chrysler; they said they drove an Escort, Cavalier, or a New Yorker. This ultimately saturated the market, weakened their brand, and lessened their market share allowing competition the opportunity to move in to their territory.

That is not to say that weakening your brand is a bad thing or will not allow your company to increase profits. If you are in an industry that has weak or no competition, weakening your brand through expansion will open it up to a larger market share allowing you to increase sales and make a larger profit.

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On the other hand, you have to keep in mind the consumers that want to buy your product or want to be aligned with your brand. Having a brand that is everywhere and open to everyone might not be what the consumers are looking for. Think about the exclusivity of some brands like Rolex, not everyone can afford a watch of that caliber, and that is why the brand is strong with those consumers who can afford to buy the watch. Being exclusive does have its benefits as well as being available to the population at large.

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Contract the Brand

Having a brand that is associated with doing one or just a few things well will help you to build a strong brand. If you want to open a business, it is okay to sell just a few items or if you want to open a restaurant focus on being great with just a few dishes. Think of all the specialty stores that are out there that specialize in selling one thing or focus on a genre. Toy stores, for example, fit into this niche. Although they sell a variety of products, they are all geared to toys. Girls toys, boys toys it does not matter, when you are going into a toy store you know exactly what you are going to see and you know why you are there. This increases their brand, whether it is a well known toy store such as Toys “R” Us, or a neighborhood toy store.

The same goes for restaurants. If you want to open an Italian restaurant, do not include dishes that do not fit within the scope of your business. Focus on doing Italian dishes right and you will build a well respected brand for doing it well. There are certain rules you should follow to ensure that your brand benefits if you want to specialize or contract. First, make sure that whatever business that you want to be involved in you keep it simple and narrow. Second, you will want to keep the supply of your product full at all times. Third, when dealing with wholesalers, you want to strike the best possible price so you will be able to sell your product at inexpensive prices. Finally, you have to make

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sure that you are the best in whatever you choose to do so that you will be the leader in the industry giving you a good brand identity.

Think of the large companies in the world that dominate in their category by focusing on one product. Coca Cola, for example, is the worldwide leader by far when it comes to selling cola drinks. Recent studies have shown that their share of the worldwide market in the neighborhood of seventy percent. Pundits should not even refer to Coca Cola and Pepsi as cola wars because there is a clear winner in the category. McDonald's and Burger King are the same way; they are successful because they focus on making hamburgers. While they have expanded their menus to include chicken, they remained focused on being good at just a few items.

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Publicity is a Good Thing

If you are looking to get a new brand off the ground, perhaps the best way to go about it is to generate as much publicity as you can. While advertising is another option, publicity is much better at getting a new product or brand going and unlike advertising, garnering publicity is a lot cheaper. Think about what you want your brand to stand for, if it is something that is going to be used by people that spend time outdoors or is relatable to being outdoors you can go around the country spreading the message of your new product at outdoor festivals, and country fairs. Show up at outdoor sporting events, such as the X-Games and action sports events, pass out fliers, and give free samples of your product to start creating a buzz among the consumers that you want to purchase your brand.

One great way to generate publicity for your brand is to be the first at something. News people love to break news and be the first on the scene of a new story. With media now being connected across the world, it will cost next to nothing and the news media will do the job for you. With the advent of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, you can create your own buzz about your brand free of charge.

You should not worry about trying to come up with a catchy slogan for your brand when you are trying to launch it. Stay focused on building as much publicity for your brand as

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possible. This will cut down the initial costs of launching your new brand so you can use your budgeted funds in other areas that will help make the brand a success. When thinking of strategies to increase your brand awareness try to approach it as how you can get the most publicity for the lowest cost.

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Advertising the Brand

Once you have launched your brand through publicity, the next step is to keep the brand name in the minds of consumers, which is done through advertising. Advertising can be an expensive proposition, so it has to be approached carefully and with a well thought out plan. The message that you put forth through advertising is important. You will have to figure out the image you want to portray for your company and brand. However, if you have successfully positioned your brand through publicity and have become a leader in your industry the best way to advertise is to advertise why your brand is the best.

This can be done a number of ways. You can build an advertising campaign around your brand being the best in your market. Additionally, you could build an advertising campaign about how your brand is the leader in quality when it comes to products in your market. Consumers want to be associated with the best and when you advertise about how your brand is an industry leader, you will find that consumers will be attracted to your brand.

In order to make your advertising campaign a success it is best to do some research before you get started. Hold some surveys and focus groups to get consumer feedback on your product so you know how it is perceived before you get started. By doing this you will be better prepared to construct a message that will resonate with consumers and en-

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tice them to try your brand for the first time or keep consumers coming back as repeat customers.

When you have a successful brand one of the things that you can strive for is when consumers hear the name of your brand, it puts an image or word into their minds. For example, if you have a brand that caters to high-end clientele, when consumers hear the name of the brand you want the first thing that comes to their minds is quality or perhaps exclusivity. Once your brand has achieved this status, the sky is the limit. Your brand will become the unmitigated leader in the marketplace and will drive out competition because it will cost them too much to break into the market. One important thing to remember is that once you have achieved becoming a word or image in the minds of consumers do not get cocky and try to expand. This will undo all the work that you have put in to become a successful brand.

Think about successful brands in the marketplace right now. When consumers go out to a restaurant and ask for a soda to drink what do they say? They say I will have a Coke. They do not say I want a Pepsi, or a RC. This shows the dominance that Coca Cola has in their market. The same can be said for copiers. When someone says they are going to the copier machine, they say they are getting some Xerox copies. Nobody says that they are going to get some Kyocera copies. No matter what the machine is that they are using, Xerox is the dominant brand because when consumers hear the word copy, Xerox comes to mind. Finally, think about when you have a cold and need to blow your nose. What

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do you ask for? Kleenex right. No matter the brand of tissues that you have at your home when it comes time to wipe your nose you will ask for a Kleenex. This is one more example of a brand being so dominant that its brand name becomes the generic word for all items that are in competition with it.

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Be Authentic

Consumers are people, and people are guarded by nature so no matter how well you try to get your message across through advertising, consumers will naturally question some of the claims that you make. This is why the claims that you make in your advertising message have to be true and be able to be backed up. This will bring your brand the credibility that is needed to reassure consumers that your brand does what it says and is of the quality that the advertisement says it is. Once you have established this with consumers, they will be more apt to tell other consumers about your brand and how it backs up its claims. This could very well lead to your brand expanding in the marketplace leading to higher revenues and profits. Remember, expanding in the marketplace is a good thing; it is not the same as expanding the brand.

Being authentic in your advertising and being able to back it up will help your brand maintain leadership in the marketplace. In addition, it can also bring you free publicity. Being an industry leader and with good brand recognition, media outlets will be more likely to come to your company to do a story about your industry. This allows your brand to become a spokesperson for the industry, which will lead to your brand becoming more recognized. Consumers, seeing your brand being featured in a news story will give it more credibility, thereby increasing the chances of your brand being able to expand in the marketplace.

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Being able to gain the leadership with your brand is the most important thing that you can do as a business owner. Companies and products whose brand is the leader in the market have a hard time being replaced. In fact, a recent study of companies that were leaders in the marketplace in the 1940's showed out of the twenty brands that were researched only three were not in the leadership position today. Leadership means long-term success, so strive to be on top.

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Its not all about Quality

Having the best quality in a brand or product does not necessarily mean that is destined to be number one. There are many brands that you can point to make this point. Just because a consumer paid a lot more for their Tag Heuer watch does not mean that it will work better or tell the time more accurately than a Seiko. Additionally, paying thousands of dollars more for a BMW over a Toyota does not mean that the BMW will have less mechanical problems than the Toyota. Paying more for a designer t-shirt does not mean that it will have longer wear time than a t-shirt purchased at a discount store. In almost every industry, the leader in quality does not translate as the leader in sales.

Having the perception that the brand is quality is what you want in the minds of consumers. You can do this by becoming a brand that specializes in the market. If consumers see that the brand is focused on just one area of a problem, the brand will be perceived as having more knowledge about the problem and therefore a more quality brand. Another way of having a brand have the perception of quality is if it is more expensive than its competition. This gives the consumer the psychological contentment that they brought the best quality brand because of the price tag. It also speaks to a consumer's status. Consumers do not simply buy a more expensive brand for themselves; it is to show the people that they come in contact with that they can afford it.

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When offering your brand for a higher price than one of your competitors it is best that when the brand first come to market it already has the higher price. This gives the consumer the impression that your brand is superior to the others based on price alone. Introducing the brand at a competitive price and then raising it makes it look as your trying to price gouge consumers. However, when you do offer a brand at a higher price than your competitors you must ensure that there is something with the brand that gives it that extra quality. It could be as simple as having better packaging than your competition, but something has to justify the higher price. Remember, having brand quality means that you have to specialize in a given marketplace so your brand will have the most recognized name and you will be able to charge more for it.

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Category over Brand

You have already read that by specializing in a market you will be able to increase brand awareness. Now try to think even further. You should try to narrow your focus until you are able to create your own category. This has happen many times in the business world. When Apple introduced the iPad, a new category was formed for handheld devices. The same can be said for Atari, when they introduced the Atari 2600 they put into motion a completely new category of home gaming that continues to thrive.

To be able to create your own brand category there are some steps that you will need to accomplish. First, when you bring the brand to the marketplace you must do it in a way that makes it appear that yours is the first brand to do what it is you want to do. This gives your brand the perception of being the leading authority in this area. Second, it is up to you to advance this new category in the eyes of the consumer. Here it will be a greater benefit to your brand to promote the category and not the brand. Promoting the category will promote the brand at the same time.

When you have created the new category and it is successful, there will be competitors that will come racing into the marketplace trying to profit from your foresight. Do not concern yourself too much with them, do not try to diversify your brand to counter act their coming into your territory. Continue with what has worked for you and promote the

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category over your brand. By being first into the category, your brand will remain to be seen as the most knowledgeable, with the best quality and your brand will dominate the marketplace. Go back to the example of the iPad, while other companies have entered the category, iPad is the clear leader and more consumers choose to purchase them over their nearest competitors.

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The Importance of a Name

It might be the most important decision that you make when you bring your brand to market, what the name of the product going to be. In the long run that is what branding comes down to is the name. Having long-term stability is the most important factor of the name. This is because after the initial push to get the brand to market and then the inevitable appearance of competition the name will be what sets your product apart from them.

This goes back to being the first brand in your category. Your brands name will have a higher recognition value than your competition. Giving your brands name the ability to be seen as the leader in the category that it is in as well as being an authority in its given category. If this is the case, when they return to the store they will look specifically for your product avoiding your competition.

When you are thinking of names for the brand, you need to take into account what the product does, the age range of the target market. The name should be kept as straightforward as possible so that it is simple for consumers to remember. Stay away from names that could be perceived as negative, the name should evoke something positive in the mind of consumers when they hear it or read it. By doing this the consumer will want to be identified with your brand and your product. In the best case scenario, being seen as a

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quality product and brand will increase your products market share leading to more sales and greater profits.

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Keep it Simple

Keep focused on keeping your brand special and limited. The easiest way to devastate a brand is to broaden the product line too far. More and more manufacturers are extending their product line and weakening their brands. However, not only does this weaken their brands but it takes power away from the manufacturers and gives it to retailers. This is because retailers have a limited amount of shelf space and with many manufacturers extending their product line retailers can charge more money to the manufacturers for that space.

For a prime example of this visit your local supermarket and go to the aisle that sells beer. Is there really enough demand on the planet to have over five variations of Miller Beer? You would think that regular and light would do the trick. Having more varieties of the same brand of beer does not increase sales or consumption it just leads to more production and distribution costs. How many times have you as a consumer been in front of a shelf looking for a specific product where there were so many choices that it was difficult to make up your mind? This is the whole point about keeping your brand focused and specialized.

When consumers see over five varieties of a product line of one brand but then see that there is just one of yours for the same thing they will know that your brand is not trying

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to be all things to all people and be more likely to choose yours. This is a pitfall that you have to try to avoid with your brand. Many companies believe that when they see their initial brand do well it gives them carte blanche to expand their product line as quickly as possible to cash in. While this might boost sales and revenue in the short term, it will destroy your brand over the long haul because you have weakened it too much. Additionally, by expanding your product line it weakens the first product that brought you success in the first place. This is not a winning proposition, therefore keep it simple and specialize and your brand will be able to successful for many years.

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Don't be a Stuck Up Brand

If your brand gets to the point of being a leader in the marketplace, do not be afraid of other companies getting into the market to give your brand some competition. In fact, it is good for brands that are leaders in their market to welcome the competition. One of the good things about competition is that consumers like to have the ability to choose a product. McDonald's would not be where they are today if it was not for Burger King and Wendy's. The same can be said for Coca Cola. The brand would not be the same without Pepsi. One more example would be pharmacies. How often do you drive down the street, see a Walgreens, and no more than a block later see a CVS. They are basically the same store yet there they are right next to each other, it does not matter what town you are in they are always next to each other. If there is no competition in your category consumers may look at your brand with doubt and pass on the opportunity to purchase it, which is why competition is important.

When the competition does come, you have to fight against the impulse to expand your brand in order to protect your market share. However, you do not want too much competition. This is because when there is too much competition it is equal to too many choices, which consumers will find confusing and sales will actually decrease across the whole category. This is why it is good to have a few select competitors in the same category as your brand, to ensure that the marketplace will thrive. Do not forget that it behooves

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your brand to be the first in the category so your brand will be seen as the leader. That way you will be able to maintain your dominance in the category and you will be receiving help to stay the leader because of the competition.

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A Second Thought on Naming

As you previously read, coming up with a name for your product is perhaps the most important decision you can make for the brand. There are some important factors to remember when you are choosing a name for your brand or product. First of all, you do not want to give your brand or product an ordinary name. Stay away from naming your product or brand national this or general that. There are so many products and brands that start with general or national that it will not give your product or brand the individuality it needs to leave a mark in the minds of consumers. When products have what are essentially a generic sounding name it will hinder their chance of becoming the major brand in their category.

Second, pay more attention to how the name sounds to how it looks when it is written down. Consumers will more likely hear the name of your product or brand before they read about it. One of the most successful ways to name a product or brand is to use an everyday word and use it out of context. Take Best Buy for example, if the electronics store was only called Best or Buy it would not have the same impact on consumers when they hear the words Best Buy. This gives the consumer the notion that they are going to find what they are looking for in the store and will be getting it for the best price. The name Best Buy is simple and easy to remember and gives the consumer a positive image in their head just from the name. Circuit City on the other hand did not fair so well with

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basically the same business. When a consumer hears the words Circuit City, they might know what they are selling but it lacks the positivity of going to Best Buy to purchase the same product or brand. Is the consumer going to get the best buy at Best Buy, maybe, maybe not, but they will feel better about themselves and the purchase in part of the name of the store.

Here is where not over extending the brand can come into play. As long as Best Buy continues to focus on electronics and home appliances they should be able to maintain their place in the market. However, if you start to see Super Best Buy stores popping up that include supermarkets they will be in trouble. It is one thing to go to a Super Walmart or Super Target for groceries but to do that at an electronics store would be too far out of the ordinary and their place in the market would quickly disappear.

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Keep Brand Names and Company Names Separate

Brand names should always take priority over the company name. When consumers go shopping, they go looking for brands they do not go looking for companies. Think about when you are at the supermarket. How many company names do you see on a product? Most likely, you do not even notice it even though it might be there. As consumers, we have been well trained to look for the brand name. If you decide to put your company name on a product, make sure that the font size is smaller than that of the brand name. Never forget that you are selling a brand first.

While you will be the head of your company, it is important for you to remember that consumers do not see things the same as you. While you have to try to make the company as successful as possible and that is your main concern, consumers are more worried about the brand name. Nobody says they are going to go to the supermarket to buy some Procter & Gamble laundry soap, they say that they are going to buy Tide. However, to help build your brand include the company name somewhere on the packaging.

A problem can arise if consumers start using both your company name and the brand name to identify your product. This is a failure of your branding strategy. For whatever reason, the brand name has not stuck with consumers and they are having a hard time fig-

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uring out what the message was that your company was trying to convey. For example, look at the success of home gaming systems. When you hear the brand name Playstation, you know two things right off the bat, it is a video game system and that is made by Sony. You never hear it referred to as a Sony Playstation in advertisements. Sony has successfully put the brand name first and it has become recognized by consumers as a brand, yet they also know it is made by Sony. This is further demonstrated with a consumer goes to purchase the product. They do not ask the sales associate where the Sony Playstation is, they just say Playstation.

Conversely, Microsoft takes a different approach to branding than Proctor & Gamble and Sony. Their company name is displayed prominently on their software packaging. They use their company name to try to help their brands. When you are looking for software you will find Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, or Microsoft Office, but something different happens to the Microsoft that does not happen to many other company names, consumers will act like the company name is not even there. How many times have you been asked if you are proficient in some computer programs and if you are familiar with pc's you answer with just Word, Excel or Office. Microsoft can get by with this because consumers have done the work for them, instead of having a cumbersome brand names consumers have shortened them to easily recognizable and memorable brand names by only using Word, Excel, and Office.

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Beware of Subbranding

Trying to build upon your brand by launching subbrands can be a trick proposition. Just because consumers are buying your brand does not mean they are looking for more options from it. For example, Best Western Hotels have different varieties of hotels, yet the name Best Western is displayed prominently on all of their different class of hotels.

What brought Best Western to be successful is they were a good hotel at a reasonable price. The challenge that faces Best Western is they are going to have to change the view of the company in the eyes of the consumer. Consumers might think that they are paying too much to stay at a Best Western even though it is supposed to be a luxury Best Western; consumers will still equate the name Best Western with a better valued hotel.

The category that has used subbranding the most is the auto industry. Just by watching television you are bound to notice the plethora of models that are available from all of the car manufacturers, foreign and domestic. This was one of the problems that lead to the failure of the big three automakers in the United States. Consumers no longer equated the names Ford, Chevrolet, or Chrysler with the product with so many choices the models became the focus, but as we know extending the brand hurts the company and the brand in the long run. Things got so bad for the automakers that General Motors and Chrysler had to be bailed out by the government to stay in business. One of the first

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things that they did was cut production on automobiles so there are fewer choices giving their brand more value.

That is not to say that all subbranding attempts have led to poor results for companies. Many high-end companies have had success introducing lower priced subbrands that have attracted consumers that could not afford their high-end brand. Companies like Ralph Lauren and Waterford Crystal have been successful in introducing more affordable subbrands while being able to maintain their high-end status and not hurting the main brand. However, companies like these are the exception to the rule so if your company decides to go this route be sure that you do it thoughtfully and do not over do it. Remember that it has to be the consumer that comes first in your decision making and subbranding is first and foremost a company decision, not a consumer one so be careful.

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Can You Ever Extend the Brand?

You could well be under the impression from what you have been reading that you will never be able to expand your brand and will be stuck selling the same item for eternity. You will be happy to know that is not the case. You just have to do it properly and keep the all of the brands under the same family umbrella.

To be successful when creating a second brand under the same company umbrella you must give the new brands an identity of their own. Even though the brands will be under your company control, they must seem as though they are different and acting independently of the parent company. Take Darden Restaurants as an example, they first opened Red Lobster in 1968, when they wanted to introduce a second brand under their company umbrella they did not open a restaurant call Red Lobster 2 or Red Lobster Livestock, they gave their restaurants entirely different names and themes. Darden Restaurants now has 1,800 restaurants that serve over 180,000 customers per year. Their restaurants include Red Lobster, Olive Garden, The Capital Grille, Bahama Breeze, and Seasons 52. Chances are you have eaten at more then one of these establishments and did not know they were owned by the same parent company.

Again, this is what did in the big three automakers. Originally, the different makes or brands from General Motors, Chevrolet, Buick, Pontiac, Cadillac, and Oldsmobile were

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all distinguishable from each other. However, over time the different makes and models started to look so similar that consumers could not recognize what the make was. This led to consumers losing interest in what General Motors had to offer and before General Motors realized what they were doing to their brand it was too late. Japanese automakers were smart and chose a different strategy. Nissan and Toyota both released new brands of luxury automobiles but were adept enough not to call them Nissan Plus or Toyota Prime. They called their new brands Infiniti and Lexus, respectively. This separated the luxury brand from what most consumers see of Nissan and Toyota as automobile companies that sell moderately priced cars and trucks but it remained under the respective company's umbrella.

When you make the decision to introduce another brand under your company umbrella there are some steps that you can take that will help you succeed. First, make sure that you keep it simple, whatever category your product is in, stay in the same category and build upon the success that you have already had. Second, pick one attribute for the new brand and stick with it. Look back at Darden Restaurants, all they did was change the theme. It was still in the restaurant business, the restaurants cater to the same market, and there are minimal price differences between their establishments. Third, make sure that the new brand is distinctive and can stand alone. Finally, make sure that the parent company maintains control over any new brands that are introduced to the market. This will negate any rivalry between the parent company and the new brand and with the par-

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ent company in control; they will be able to make sure that the brands stay distinctive of each other.

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The Importance of the Logo

Logo's come in all shapes and sizes and it is up to you to pick one that will help your brand become a leader in its category. While you might think that going with a logo that is unconventional looking and that will catch a consumers eye will be the best way to go you would be mistaken. Studies have shown that the most effective logos are horizontal in shape. This is because of how consumers read. The vast population of the world reads from top to bottom, left to right, there is no reason to get fancy and try to change how consumers read.

Not only is the shape of the logo important to the brands success, so is the font that you choose for the brands name. Anyone who has used a computer knows that there are literally hundreds of different fonts from which you can choose. Different fonts can project different meanings about your brand. Just by switching the font you can make your brand appear masculine, feminine, modern, antique, just to name a few. It is up to you to know your brand inside and out so you choose the proper font to convey the message that you want to send to consumers. When it comes to choosing the font for your logo make sure that you choose something that is legible. You do not want consumers looking for your brand and not be able to read it on the package because you wanted to get too clever.

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On the other hand, perhaps you do not want your brand to have a name and you only want a symbol to signify the brand. A good example of a company that uses a shape to signify its brand is Nike. Nike's swoosh logo has become synonymous with the best sports equipment that consumers can buy. Many times Nike even leaves their name off their products and all you see is the swoosh logo. However, Nike is the exception to the rule; there are not many companies that have been successful by only using a symbol. Perhaps the only other company that has this type of success as Nike is Apple. The name Apple does not appear on the back on the iPad, iPod, or iPhone, there is just their logo, which is an apple. In this case, the logo and company name is the same so it has double meaning for the consumer.

The next time you go to your local mall or large shopping center take the time to look at the stores logos. You will notice that the vast majority of store logos are horizontal and easy to read. You will only see a few stores that have opted to use something different from the horizontal easily read option. Perhaps the most well known company to not use this format is Lord and Taylor who use a script style font, which makes it harder to read their name.

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The Importance of Color

Along with having a logo that is easy to read and attractive to consumers, another decision that you will have to make is what color to make the packaging. This is another way for your brand to stand out against the competition, so choose wisely. Just how fonts can portray different meanings for your brand, color can do the same thing. Red is a striking color that comes across bold and fierce. Blue can be interpreted as serene and soothing; yellow is considered a neutral color with the other primary colors orange and green falling in between red and blue.

One of the most common practices that companies do when choosing a color for their packaging is to choose the direct opposite color from their closest competitor. Just look at Coca Cola and Pepsi, Coca Cola is red Pepsi is blue, the direct opposite of each other. Some companies are so identified with a color you know what the product is just by seeing it. Ask anyone what the little blue box signifies and they will automatically tell you Tiffany's. If you show a picture of yellow arches to consumers, they will instantly know that it is McDonald's even without seeing the rest of the sign. Another example of a company that has made its brand synonymous with a color is UPS. They have even incorporated it into their advertising with the slogan "What can Brown do for you?" These are companies that have been able to make their brand synonymous with just one color.

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Other companies choose to use multiple colors in their logos. Companies like eBay, Google, and Microsoft all use multiple colors in their logos. For eBay, Google, they have chosen to give each letter a different color. This sets Google apart from its closest competitor, Yahoo that uses the color purple in their logo. Google has even gone to the length of letting its employees play around with their logo at certain times during the year. At holidays, significant historical events, or when it is a famous person's birthday people who go to Google's website to use their search engine will see a variation of the original logo into a something celebrating the event. This is almost unheard of with company logos, but Google being a web based company uses it to set themselves apart from other companies. This has actually been shown to increase traffic to their site on important occasion because people want to see what they did with the logo.

When you decide on the color that you want to use for your brand, make sure you use a color that is complementary to the product. If you are trying to sell a new brand of razor blades, you will probably want to stay away from the color red. To a consumer looking to buy razor blades the color red will conjure up thoughts of cutting themselves and bleeding, not what you want. You would be better off choosing a color that will put the consumer at ease like blue. When consumers shave, they use water, which also goes with blue. This way you have connected the brand and the product with what you want the consumer to feel when buying the product, at ease, and when they use the product, water.

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Think Globally

There is a limited amount of space for your brand to grow in your home country. Do not fall into the trap that many brands do and start expanding because your brand has reached a plateau in its category. You must think bigger than your home country think globally.

Think about being a consumer, how often has just the word imported made you take a second look at a brand. This happens so much that countries are known for certain products. Are not Swiss watches seen as the best or Japanese automobile seen as more reliable, and does not the best wine come from France and beer from Germany? This might not be the case, but when consumers hear these countries names and products it is what the majority of them believe.

Consumers would think the total opposite if you were trying to sell cars from El Salvador, wine from Zimbabwe, watches from Mongolia, and beer from Fiji. These countries have no history of producing quality products so consumers would look at those products as inferior and would likely stay away from them.

To be able to be successful in the global market, there are some factors that will help you get there. Ideally, your brand will be the first in its category to go global, giving you all the same advantages of being first into the category in your home country. You will also want your brand to be a fit into the countries into which you want to expand. This will

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take some time and research on your part, so it behooves you to get started right away once you know that your brand is a hit in your home country. If you are a company that makes winter clothing, you will not be successful if you try to expand into Jamaica, not a good fit.

Thinking globally should be in your mind when you are coming up with the name of your brand and product. English is the second most used language across the globe so it is best to use it for your product and logo. The most people speak Chinese, but most of them are in China. When thinking of the name for your product and brand it is important that you think about going globally, you do not want the name to mean one thing in English and another thing in another language, perhaps something that could be taken as offensive in a country that you are expanding into. Giving brands and product names in English as already been adopted by countries that do not even speak the language as their mother tongue. Diesel jeans come from Italy, and Red Bull, which sound like an all-American beverage comes from Austria.

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Branding and the Internet

When you are deciding to introduce a new brand to the marketplace, you have to decide whether it is going to be an online brand or a brick and mortar brand. To make your mark on the Internet you have to follow some of the same principles that would make your brand successful in the real world. You will want to be the first to do something and create your own category making your brand the leader and authority. Take YouTube for example, they have become the leader in the category of videos of all kinds on the Internet. This is an example of a web-based brand that has used the Internet to its advantage. Amazon is another company that is a web-based brand and they also dominate their category. Amazon has become the leading seller of books on the Internet, far outpacing brick and mortar stores like Barnes & Noble and Borders that have a presence online to sell books.

If you are thinking about starting a brand on the Internet, you need to ask yourself if your product or service will work online. This is important, because not everything does. You will have to decide on how you want to use the Internet. Are you going to use it as a home for your business or is it just going to be a way that consumers can also reach you besides brick and mortar stores. You will not be able to dominate both. Go back to the Amazon, Barnes & Noble example; Barnes & Noble is the most successful brick and mortar bookstore, far outselling their competition. Yet, on the Internet, it does not even

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come close to the same sales as Amazon. Amazon concentrated on being an Internet brand and dominates its category.

To get an idea if the Internet should be used as a place where you can start a brand or use it as a secondary source for customers to reach you there are a few factors that you can explore that will help you decide. First, think about what your brand is. Is it something that you can hold in your hand and touch or is it something that is more subtle? If your brand is something that consumers can touch or hold in their hand, then it is probably best that you use the Internet as a secondary source for consumers to get your brand. If your brand is something more subtle, perhaps a serviced based company like an insurance company or a travel agency, then Internet branding is the way to go. Esurance has done well by only offering insurance online and sites like Expedia and Travelocity have done well offering discounts on travel.

Second, ask yourself questions about the brand. Is the brand something that could be considered trendy or stylish? If so, then the brand would best to use the Internet as a secondary source for your consumers to reach you. You will find that a lot of clothing stores have websites online where consumers can buy their clothes but the vast majority of their income comes from their brick and mortar stores. If your brand is something that is not considered trendy or stylish then being an Internet brand will be the best place for you to go. Examples, of brands that are not considered trendy or stylish would be sporting

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equipment, computers, and books. These items could easily be Internet brands and sold exclusively online.

Third, think about how much diversity there is with the brand. If the brand is available in countless varieties then Internet branding is the right way to go. Again, this goes back to the example of Amazon and Barnes & Noble. With Barnes & Noble being primarily a brick and mortar store there is no way that they can keep the same amount to books in stock as Amazon can. Amazon will also be able to keep more obscure books available for consumers that will not be able to find them at Barnes & Noble. This is a limitation for brick and mortar stores, they have a lot less space to hold inventory and if they want to be successful, they will only stock products that sell. This directly affects the amount of variety that brick and mortar stores can offer customers.

Fourth, ask yourself if how much the brand costs and is that a major reason why consumers buy the product. If the brand is more likely to be purchased because the price is low then the Internet is probably the best way to go. The main reason for this is that there are many sites on the Internet allow consumers to instantly compare prices of many site at once. One advantage that online business have over their brick and mortar counterparts is that there is no tax on the Internet, which might not seem like a big deal, but the bigger the purchase the more the consumer is going to save. In addition, when consumers are able to save any amount of money they feel like they have won something, which can even make purchasing a brand at a low price feel even better.

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Lastly, if you are thinking about starting an Internet brand you must consider shipping costs. If your proposed Internet brand is going to incur expensive shipping costs when a consumer purchases your brand it is probably not a good idea to focus on the web and stay with the brick and mortar concept. However, if your Internet brand is subtle like Esurance, Expedia, or Travelocity your shipping cost are going to minimal. Most of their customers will have the opportunity to print out on their home computer all the paperwork that they will need. The biggest thing that you would have to ship, if that is what the consumer requests is paperwork and that is a lot cheaper than products and brands that have weight to them.

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Naming and the Internet

When it comes to the Internet, picking a good name is more important than picking a good name in the actual world. This is because on the Internet your name serves as the main reason consumers will go to your site. You will want to stay away from picking a name that sounds too generic. If generic names were the way to go Buy.com would be much bigger than Amazon.com and CheapTickets.com would be bigger than Expedia and Travelocity. Therefore, there are some steps that you can use in order to come up with a name that will give your Internet brand the best chance of succeeding.

First, keep the name short and simple. This makes it easier for consumers to remember and quicker and easier to type into their browser. Keeping the name simple and easy to spell is key for success on the Internet. To reach your website the consumer has to spell it correctly, one little mistake and they will be sent to a completely different site. If your brand is better known by a nickname with consumers keep that in mind when coming up with your name for the Internet. Many companies that have been around for a while have used this to their advantage. Consumers used FedEx rather than Federal Express so much that the company changed its name to FedEx. When was the last time someone asked you if you wanted to go to Kentucky Fried Chicken? The name does not appear on their signs anymore; it has been changed to KFC. KFC.com is much easier and simpler to spell than Kentuckyfriedchicken.com.

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Second, the name you choose should be distinctive. This will help you be more memorable to consumers. Again, stay away from the use of the generic and make sure that the name you choose implies the category that you are in. If you want to sell dog food on the Internet, do not go with a generic name like Dogfood.com, think of something more dynamic that consumers will remember like Planetdogfood.com or Dogfooddepot.com. These names are going to be more interesting and memorable to consumers than the generic alternative.

The name you choose should also conjure a picture in the minds of consumers when they hear it. Go back to the example of the dog food. Which name brings a more interesting picture in your mind? Is it the generic sounding Dogfood.com or the more interesting Planetdogfood.com and Dogfooddepot.com? Not only do the names in the latter bring a more interesting picture to the minds of consumers they will also help the company that has these websites with advertising and design of the website. They offer so many more options all around than with something plain and lifeless.

Finally, the name you choose should be able to be spoken. You might think that is sounds silly, but just think about all the websites that are out there that addresses are only initials. This makes their websites infinitely harder to remember than one that has an easily speakable name. This brings up another point of naming for the Internet, mixing numbers with names. While using numbers for words when doing things like texting makes

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it faster and easier, it does not transfer to Internet naming. If you start a website with the name Good4you.com, you will either have to have an advertising campaign to tell prospective consumers how to spell your name or you will also have to pay the extra expense of owning two domain names, Good4you.com and Goodforyou.com. This is a cost that you do not need, so why pick a confusing name only to spend more money. Mixing numbers and letters is much harder to remember than just letters or even just numbers, so pick one and stick with it.

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Globalism and the Internet

Perhaps no other medium has more affect on the global economy than the Internet. It is something that is accessible from all parts of the world breaking down barriers that have long stood in the way of doing business across the world. Now a small company in a rural part of the country can do business with anyone, anywhere in the world. This is an exciting option when starting an Internet brand.

This is an important factor to remember when having your website designed. Have the website designed so that it can be translated into several different languages. This will help your brand become global. Some companies are already reaping the benefits of the globalism that is available through the Internet. Amazon, is based in the United States, is the largest seller of books in the United Kingdom, and more than twenty percent of their sales occur from purchases from outside of the United States.

Some Internet businesses choose to not allow the option on their website to be translated to other languages and go with an English only approach. Those companies choose to do this because they think that by going with an English only website gives it a more exclusive and luxury feel. In addition, English is the second most spoken language in the more and in used as the language of business, so spending the time and money to have the website being able to be translated into several languages might be a waste of money.

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Moreover, companies that are located in non-English speaking countries are naming their brands in English. You have already seen the examples of Red Bull that comes from Austria and Diesel jeans that come from Italy. These are just a couple of the products from non-English speaking countries that have been given English sounding names.

The opportunity to go global is another reason to stay away from a generic name. If you are trying to sell shoes on the Internet, naming the site Shoes.com is akin to shooting yourself in the foot. The word “shoes” does not mean the same thing in all languages so non-English speaking people will have no idea what you are selling and will not go to your site. This is way Nike is successful, if they called their company Athletic Gear, they would not have the success that they enjoy. Nike means the same thing to consumers across the globe. Athletic teams across the world wear Nike gear so when they are looking to buy some athletic equipment on the Internet typing in the word Nike into the computer is an easy thing to do and it is the first name that comes into consumer’s minds when they want to purchase athletic gear.

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Conclusion

As you have read, there is a lot that goes into making a brand a success. Do not let the steps intimidate you or cause you to second guess your goals. As long as you take your time and make informed decisions, you will be able to bring a new brand to market and make it a success. Remember that when you do make the decisions that will bring your brand to market you must try and think like a consumer. That is not an easy thing to do when you have a brand that you are excited about and are trying to make the company a success but it is important to remember that it is the consumer that is going to buy the brand, the company only makes it.

As a company, you have to make the brand or product the best it can be and you are in complete control of that part of your business. You can even control the image of what you want the brand to be and the message you send out to consumers. However, it is consumers that have the last word in if your brand become a success or not. This is why it is so important to make sure that you hold focus groups and take surveys, you will get information back directly from the people that you want to purchase your brand.

By following the steps that you have read, you will be able to build a brand that is a leader in the category that you choose. Consumers will want to be aligned with your brand and will seek it out at their local stores. Consumers will feel that they have made the best

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decision they could make for themselves and their family when they purchase your product. When customers feel this way about a product, they are bound to become repeat customers, which will give you a sustainable market for years to come. This will give your brand the jumpstart that it needs to garner the largest market share in its home country and give it the best chance to expand into the global market. Do not forget that when your brand reaches a leadership position, it is almost impossible for it to be replaced.

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