

# Essential Marketing Vision Workout

## **Brand**

### *Identify the Identity*

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### *Marketing Hawks*



*Essential Marketing Vision for Small Business*

# Introduction

A core principle of Marketing Hawks is the understanding that our clients know their businesses better than we ever will. This is so important to us it is our Business Philosophy Rule #1. This being said, many business owners and marketing managers need help in clarifying and clearly stating their own company Brand. This Workout is rich in methods designed to help you do just that.

## Brand

Brand forms the base of our triangle. Brand is the foundation your business is built upon in the mind of the customer. When you put a heavy load on a weak foundation, a crooked and cracked house is the inevitable outcome. It's no different when building your business.

**Brand is really your company's identity.** Do you think your customers pick up your company's identity by osmosis? Or, by that latest brilliant advertising slogan? Sometimes. But, like most small businesses, chances are that new customers learn of your brand from another customer or from one of your employees.

So, weaving a Brand Banner that customers and employees can carry around and wave at just the right moment—for you, unsolicited—is an ultra-effective way for your small business to advertise. This Brand Banner must be easy to repeat and memorable.

Your advocates will bear your Brand Banner because of the natural human inclination we all have to share helpful information with other people.

### ***Just Remember***

*If you let that Brand Banner get soiled, ripped or grimy, then that's the message that will be out there flying for your business. Not the impression you'll want to make.*

Brand isn't your company logo, latest advertising slogan or catchy jingle any more than the clothes you wear are you. Your clothes can improve your image, but even casual acquaintances will still recognize the *you* underneath.

Brand is similar to integrity—if you've got it, you can make errors along the way and still be very successful. Without it, you can look great and sound slick, but still fail in the long haul because you are essentially anchored to nothing more solid than shifting sand.

Before we go any further we need to introduce a concept that is especially important. We call it **Brand Drift**. If you've been on any size boat, whether on the ocean or just a small lake, you know that if you just leave your oar or sail alone the current will take you where it wants to. This can be quite pleasurable



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on a carefree Sunday afternoon if you've nothing better to do. You can just go along for the ride.

Just like your boat, the currents of business change constantly buffet your brand. If you don't compensate, your brand will drift away from its current position.

### Brand Drift happens in two ways:

1. Customer moves away from Company, due to technology shifts or customer changes.
2. Company moves away from original intent, due to internal forces.

### **Believe it or not, #2 is tougher to deal with and be on guard for.**

First, let's look at #1. Most brands solve problems. They provide a solution to a customer with a need. Most brands, especially the most successful brands in the world, didn't start out as examples of branding genius. They started out as mere vehicles to make their owners money.

Over time, successful brands continue to solve customers' problems, even as conditions in the market change. Sometimes it is a *change in technology* that creates the marketplace change, or sometimes it is a result of shifts in the customer base in either outlook or in general makeup. Often it is a mix of both. Let's look quickly at two brands: IBM and Coke.

IBM has successfully adapted its technology over several decades while solving customers' business technology problems. For most of this time, the IBM brand has survived and thrived and maintained its reputation for reliability. The technology has been transformed, but overall, the brand hasn't really drifted that much. IBM is still viewed as a reliable company that can solve many business problems. For a company like IBM, breakthroughs in technology constantly cause changes in the marketplace.

Coca-Cola has needed to react to similar forces in the marketplace. Bottling technology has changed. Aluminum and plastic have now almost entirely replaced the glass bottles that Coke used for 75% of the company's lifespan.

Yet, the more significant technological change Coke had to react to was artificial sweeteners. The advent of artificial sweeteners, coupled with a consumer shift toward diet drinks and weight-consciousness, has forced product redesigns and brand adjustments for Coca-Cola. If Coke hadn't shifted with the times and embraced the diet drinker and just tried to defend the original Real Thing the company would lag far behind Pepsi today.



## Introduction

So, your company has to adjust with tech change. Today technological changes are usually thought of in terms of computers or the internet, but that is merely what is most prominent in the media. In your own industry you are acutely aware of other technological changes that are or soon will be affecting your bottom line.

Technology change is only one force affecting the brand. A second, external force affecting the brand is *changes in your customer base*. Customers can move away from you in many ways. They might do so physically, by actually moving farther from where your store is located, or they may do so in terms of aging and literally dying off, or they may move away from you psychographically. Your customers may simply start liking other products better. We don't want to confuse brand with successful merchandising, but there is no way any brand, no matter how strong, can keep the same product mix for generations without suffering significant brand drift.

The brands which have most successfully endured over the centuries are, of course, the world's religions. However, one can easily see how even religions have changed their product mix to react to changes in the customer base.

For small businesses the problem is tough. Small businesses don't have the huge marketing department of Coca-Cola or IBM. Small businesses have a founder, and it is usually the founder that has the vision. The founder passes the company on to his children or sells it. Within a generation or two, the company becomes so set in its ways that its brand may seem old fashioned and somewhat out of step with some of its customers.

**Here is the second and more insidious form of Brand Drift. It is a form of inner company dry-rot;** a particularly nasty mildew that happens in the folded-up creases of the company nobody sees for a long time. Then, one day, you go to look and discover that huge chunks of the company profits are gone and wonder why.

Brand drift isn't limited to older, established small businesses. A start-up business also needs to make sure it doesn't drift away from the owner's intent. One way this can happen is if the owner sets out to sell Line A, then finds out that selling Line B is far more profitable. Naturally the entrepreneur goes all out on selling B. No problem. But, if the customer base shifts at the same time, make sure your identity shifts along with it. This is where the overall idea of Brand can actually help you guide your company. Don't let the concept of Brand stand in the way of profits, but just make sure that you don't sacrifice your long-term identity for short-term gain.

Maybe you're blessed and do not have any brand drift at your company. If you are just starting out, then you probably don't. Yet. As your business matures it will be vital for you to be aware and watch for this phenomenon.



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**Here is an example of a real-life company that has experienced brand drift and yet managed to stay in business.** We've changed a few dates slightly, but overall this is how the history happened.

<b>1900</b>	Company founded as a wholesale supplier to small businesses in niche market.
<b>1923</b>	Son of founder asks niche market what they want. Answer: a new type of shelter.
<b>1926</b>	Company manufactures new shelter. Widely adopted.
<b>1930's</b>	Company exits wholesale supply business, becomes a manufacturer. Achieves over 60% market share.
<b>1950's</b>	First lower-priced competitor enters market.
<b>1970-90</b>	Several other manufactures enter market. Market share dwindles to 20%.
<b>2000</b>	After 50 years of declining market share, company decides to enter market with lower-priced model of its own.

Brand drift occurred twice for this company. Once, it was very positive. The company was also a wholesale supplier in the early 1900s. While its Brand was one of reliability, it had no advantage over the other players in the market. Once it became a manufacturer, it shifted its customer base and its distribution channel, yet because it was within the same industry, it still could keep its original brand image of integrity and reliability. However, now it had a first-mover advantage in that its shelter product was truly revolutionary. Additionally, there were high barriers to entry. Competitors couldn't attack its product head-on and this gave the company a huge head start.

However, the second time the brand drifted away from its customer base meant a decades-long slide. The company went from the market leader back into a position as a well-established player, but with a dramatically reduced market share. The brand drifted away from what had made it successful in the first place: it forgot to listen to its customers. These customers saw value in the shelter, but wanted a product a little less durable and a little lower priced. Rather than introducing a new model to meet the competition head-on, the company chose to deal with the threat by trying to convince the market of the superiority of the original product.

But, the market knew what it wanted. Large sections of the market were willing to settle for something a bit cheaper, and a bit less durable. Similar to the Apple and Microsoft saga of many decades later, the shelter saga continued for several years. If your company has experienced brand drift, and most companies have, then the urgent need is to re-establish a Brand connection with consumers. And the first step—the entire purpose behind this Workout—is to identify your identity. Onward to the timeline and then some actions.



# Timeline

## Week 1:

Complete Questions 1-3

Complete Exercise 1

## Week 2:

Distribute employee survey

## Week 3:

Collect employee survey

Distribute customer survey

## Week 4:

Collect customer survey

Tally answers from both surveys.

Complete Action Step 1.

## Week 5:

Meet with Achievers in Action Step 3.



## Questions

### 1. Who do you think you are?

In the space below, use 98 words or less to describe who your company is.

### 2. Do your customers agree?

Now, again remember this isn't a test, so be honest in answering.

What % of your *customers* would say the same thing about your business? (If you don't know, please just go ahead and tell us your best, honest guess.)

\_\_\_\_\_ less than 5%      \_\_\_\_\_ 5-25%      \_\_\_\_\_ 26-50%  
\_\_\_\_\_ 51-75%      \_\_\_\_\_ 75% or more

### 3. Do your employees agree?

Another tough one. Remember, nothing but gut-level honesty will do, here.

What % of your *employees* would say the same thing about your business?

\_\_\_\_\_ less than 5%      \_\_\_\_\_ 5-25%      \_\_\_\_\_ 26-50%  
\_\_\_\_\_ 51-75%      \_\_\_\_\_ 75% or more



## Exercises

### 1. Your Favorite Brands.

Before we move forward, let's go through one quick brand experiment. Try this. It'll just take a couple minutes. First, list five of your favorite brands that you remember from before you were 10. It doesn't matter if it's a national brand like McDonald's or a local brand. Just list them:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Now, why did you pick these brands all these years later? Chances are you didn't write down the name of the electric company that supplied power to your parent's house, or the brand of paint your parents used when they painted your room, or the name of the plumbing company that replaced your family's water heater or fixed a broken pipe in the basement.

No, the brands you listed are all probably brands that you have some *emotional* attachment to. They have touched you in a certain way and made you feel good somehow, causing you to remember them after all these years.

**Every one of your clients has emotional ties to the brands they grew up with.** A typical boy's favorite brands might include Disney, GI Joe, Atari or Converse. A typical girl's might include Barbie, My Little Pony, Easy-Bake, or Strawberry Shortcake.

Yet, at the same time, each of these customers carries around a super-savvy buying computer inside. They *aren't* kids any more; they are hard-nosed, dollars-and-sense conscious consumers. But...

.... each of your clients is also a human, toting around that little kid inside. And, you can use this emotional level to help you bring your brand to a height beyond your competition.





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Can you start to see how building your company's brand goes way beyond classic "features and benefits" selling, here? Knowing your product's features, and being able to skillfully translate them into benefits is a critical *sales* skill that you'll always need to use *when you're talking to prospects*. But Features/Benefits alone are not something your clients are going to buy on. There's just not enough of an emotional charge attached.

This is one of the few times we mentioned "Features and Benefits" selling. So many of the entrepreneur types that start companies are good salespeople, and have been trained in classic Features and Benefits selling.

**Don't get us wrong—features and benefits selling is hugely important when it comes time to make a sale.** If you are preparing some collateral material like a print ad or a brochure, then by all means make sure you let the clients know the benefits associated with your product's features.

But just remember all your competition is probably doing the same thing. This is what makes Brand so important. How many times do consumers simply go with the name they know? Or, the name somebody recommends to them; somebody that they trust? Most people who refer you to a company don't reiterate a laundry list of all the features and benefits of that shop or product. Instead, they simply tell you something like: "Just take your car to Joe's garage; they do a good job for me." That's waving the Brand Banner for Joe's garage.

We want to make sure your brand banner is **memorable** and **easy to repeat**.

### **2. One Brand per Market, Please.**

Here is an area that needs to be thought through before you go on to Exercise 3 below. Please don't skip this. Some businesses operate multiple brands. We aren't talking about multiple product lines, here. A great furniture store with a very unified brand message may sell dozens of separate lines of couches and recliners and dining sets and bedroom sets. The same can be true for an auto dealer with a strong brand selling three or four different lines of cars. A brand that's clearly understood by the customer can sell thousands of products. Just look at Wal-Mart.

However, let's say the furniture store decides to dip their toe into the outdoor furniture market, selling patio furniture. The new line becomes popular, and margins are good. The furniture store decides to further diversify into outdoor patio rooms installed at the customer's home. Now it is really extending itself way beyond its original focus. The outdoor furniture was an expansion that could easily be wrapped inside the original



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brand. It was furniture, after all. However, with the incursion into the patio room, the furniture store is crossing into the home improvement arena. This may be a great way for the company to increase sales. The existing customer base may support the initial expansion into the new product line; however at some point the furniture store is probably going to need to create a separate brand to really move the outdoor patio rooms. This shouldn't be feared or sidestepped: this is the normal result of business success.

## Determine Market Focus

If you already operate in multiple markets under multiple brands, then whichever brand you focus on needs to be an 80/20 decision on your part. You need to determine what market is most important for your company to examine first. If you initially decide to attack a market where your profits are small, that's fine as long as you clearly understand that's what you are doing.

Here is a chart which will help you to determine which of your markets you should focus on first. Remember that this is only a guide. The real goal is to help build the most long term profits for your company.

	<b>Your Brand's Name</b>	<b>Market the Brand Competes In</b>	<b>% of Your Overall Bottom-Line Profits</b>	<b>Your Brand's% of Market Share</b>
Your Brand #1				
Your Brand #2				
Your Brand #3				

**The reason we ask about market share is to *determine if there is room for you to grow the market or grow your company share in the market.*** You need to decide this. If there isn't any room to grow the overall market, and you already have a well-established brand, then you may want to try and first explore a market where there is some room for growth.

If your brand isn't well-established in a market, but you reasonably think you can take market share away from a weaker competitor, then that may be the market to attack first.

Alternatively, if your core brand is mature and is the largest contributor to your profits, you may want to make sure you are doing all you can to defend your current position. The core brand may be what you want to tackle, first, even if it is not going to grow much.



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It is really your decision. You just need to make sure that you are applying your valuable time—and the time of your Achievers—to the market you really find attractive and essential for your business's future. Note that we aren't mentioning gross sales in column three. Percentage of profits is important to keep an eye on; it helps us align our marketing efforts with our bottom-line results. Why put 50% of your marketing time into a brand that only contributes 5% of profits?

Some small businesses have difficulty determining market share. Don't feel bad—big publicly traded companies have lots of auditors examining each other's financial figures. Plus, they have the marketing money to undertake focus groups and samplings to find out how well they are doing in the market share area.

We need to get an idea what your market share is. If you have two distinctly different groups of customers, please calculate your market share for each.

Here you are looking for an estimate; just get in the ballpark. If you have the actual data available or belong to a trade association that can give you the total size of your market, that's super. Here are a couple easy calculations:

$$\text{Market Share (by customer)} = \frac{\text{\# of Current Customers}}{\text{Total\# of Possible Customers}}$$

**But, this assumes that all customers are equal. We know that they're not.** Some customers simply contribute more than others. Here's a formula that takes this into account:

$$\text{Market Share (by sales)} = \frac{\text{Total Current Sales \$}}{\text{Total Current Sales \$ in Your Market}}$$

Again, your trade association may be able to help you find out the total dollars spent on your service in your market. If you need to, take your industry's average amount spent per customer, estimate the total number of customers in your area, and use that figure to come up with the Total Current Sales \$ in Your Market.

Take whatever answer you get times 100, and that is your percent of market share.

My market share is \_\_\_\_\_.

**Again, let's look at the 80/20 rule.** Focus on getting 80% of the results, in 20% of the time. Don't spend 2 hours on this trying to nail it to the nearest 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1%. Get close, and get on with the rest of this Workout.



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After you've determined your market share, you can focus more clearly on a single brand. Don't be afraid to reach out to your Mentors here, or even the Achiever base. Once you've determined which brand you are going to invest your time in, let's see what your customers and your employees think of your company.

### 3. A Brand Check-Up

Below are 15 words. Please list the top 3 that describe your business.

- |          |           |            |            |
|----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1. _____ | Quality   | Caring     | Value      |
| 2. _____ | Speed     | Cheap      | Fair       |
| 3. _____ | Good      | Fast       | Dependable |
|          | Expensive | Friendly   | Loyal      |
|          | On-Time   | Convenient | Honest     |

You can modify this list, of course. You can add some words that better fit your industry. If you wish, you can add an "other comments" section at the bottom for survey participants to fill in. But, make sure that everyone fills out the same survey. This will be important later on.

After you list your top three, please keep it to yourself until we finish the rest of the exercise. We want you to take one week and distribute this to five or ten or twenty of your employees. Please don't limit participation to just the Achievers in your company. You'll want to be as inclusive as possible. If you have more than forty employees, we recommend you create a random sampling so that you don't have to sift through too many of the completed surveys.

**Please include staff other than management and supervisors. You'll want to get as complete a picture as possible. Results won't be accurate if you only circulate it among sales and customer service employees.** Make sure you get this survey in the hands of some of your staff who don't typically have front-line customer contact. In a very real sense these people are ultimately responsible for customer satisfaction, because somehow they help create your company's end product or service.

Get your Brand Check-Up in the hands of the man that sweeps your floors and the



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woman that cleans your bathroom. If you outsource these functions it will be doubly important to put this tool in their hands. Give it to the person that manages the accounts and handles the bookkeeping. Put your Brand Check-Up in the hands of the person who locks up every night.

Ask them not to compare notes with each other. Let them know their input, as individuals, is important and that there are no right or wrong answers.

Gather these completed surveys and tally up your scores. There's no right or wrong score here either; no hidden agenda. Just see what your employees and maybe even some of your vendors think about your company. If you do ask your vendors to participate, we suggest you include their answers in with your employees' answers.

Right now, we are just observing. There's no need to share with the Achievers or the rest of the company, yet. We suggest that you take a week to gather the employees' surveys together. You don't have to tally them up right away. We suggest you gather the employees together, and then move on to the customers.

Why? Because you will need to leave the customer surveys out where they can be exposed to several customers. You might distribute the surveys on a counter, or have your sales force hand them out, or mail them out. If you choose the latter, make sure you have some randomness built in and don't just survey your best customers. You'll want to survey some of your "non-best" customers, too.

If you have a database of your customers, then you could even email to them. This survey is short enough that many of them would be willing to fill it out, as long as they are assured it won't be shared with individuals within your company. One idea is to have the responses go to the owner or president or somebody else that isn't in frequent contact with your customers.

We are trying to achieve a bit of anonymity, so that the answers will be as honest as possible.



## Exercises

### Employees' Survey Results

Total # of Employees Participating \_\_\_\_\_

X 3 Responses Per Employee = \_\_\_\_\_ This is the sum of total possible answers.

Please add up your math to double-check the accuracy of your tally.

_____ Quality	_____ Caring	_____ Value
_____ Speed	_____ Cheap	_____ Fair
_____ Good	_____ Fast	_____ Dependable
_____ Expensive	_____ Friendly	_____ Loyal
_____ On-Time	_____ Convenient	_____ Honest

Next, get this survey in front of twenty or thirty or forty of your customers. Try and get a random sampling, but the main thing is to just to make sure you do it.

Give your customers a week to tackle the survey. If filled-in surveys aren't exactly pouring in, you may have to involve a few of your Achiever staff and have them actively solicit customers at the counter. You don't want to be overly aggressive and drive any customers away from your business; but for many people a gentle request will get them to take two minutes to fill out a single piece of paper.



## Exercises

### Customers' Survey Results

Total # of Customers Participating \_\_\_\_\_

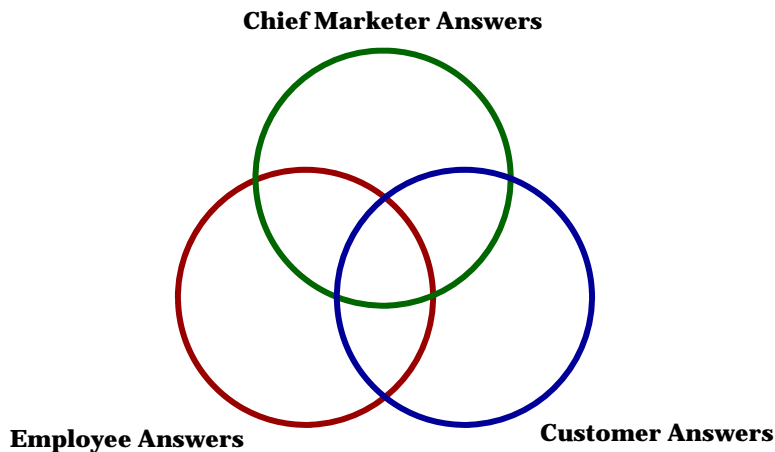
X 3 Responses Per Customer = \_\_\_\_\_ This is the sum of total possible answers.

Please add up your math to double-check the accuracy of your tally.

____ Quality	____ Caring	____ Value
____ Speed	____ Cheap	____ Fair
____ Good	____ Fast	____ Dependable
____ Expensive	____ Friendly	____ Loyal
____ On-Time	____ Convenient	____ Honest

After the customer surveys are gathered together, it's time to compare notes. Where do the customers seem to agree with each other? Where do they agree with your employees? Where do they disagree? Remember, this is only a start; a place you can build from. Like any good check-up, this will be part of an on-going process to keep your company healthy. You aren't trying to change anything, yet. Just observe.

There are not any hard and fast answers, here. You can create three overlapping circles to see where the most common answers are, like in the diagram below:



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You need to include your answers as a distinct “group”, along with the answers of your customers and employees. Why? Because whether you are the owner or the Chief Marketer for your company, you are driving the marketing process. You have to treat your own answers as a separate group, for now.

**Again, it’s not about right or wrong. It’s brand discovery.**

The goal isn’t to create an instant brand convergence between customers and employees and yourself. This entire Workout is centered around identifying your brand identity.

**Remember, that Brand Banner you want everybody to carry for you? Exercise 3 will provide a snapshot of what it looks like today.**





## Action Steps

### 1. Weave the Brand Banner.

Solitude time. Time for you to sit down and reflect. First, please review Questions 1, 2 and 3. These are your original ideas. Let's compare your ideas to the employees and customers.

**Caution: Just because this Action Step is short, doesn't mean it isn't vital.** As the Chief Marketer, you must have a clear vision for the direction of the company. If you don't, then how can you lead? Take your time and put thought into completing this step. It should take at least as long as tallying up the results from the employee and customer surveys did.

Simply place a check mark in the table below where the data you've collected seems to fall.

<b>Pair</b>	<b>Strongly Agree on Brand</b>	<b>Agree on Brand</b>	<b>Disagree on Brand</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree on Brand</b>
Chief Marketer & Employees				
Chief Marketer & Customers				
Employees & Customers				

Based on the above grid, would you change your answers to Questions 2 and 3? Or were your original answers right on?

Based on what you've learned from Exercise 1 and Exercise 3, please rewrite your answer to Question 1. Only rewrite your answer to Question 1, if you feel that your earlier answer is no longer accurate. If you don't need to alter or rewrite your answer, that's no problem. But, feel free to use the space below, if you wish.



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### 2. Address Multiple Brand Questions.

Before we move on to the last Action Step, let's review the issue of multiple brands. It's probably been several weeks since you looked at Exercise 2 and the issue of multiple brands. The Action Step we recommend here is one of our shortest. For right now, push forward on the core brand you are trying to improve on and try to stay focused on that.

You can attack a second brand, in about six months. That may seem like an eternity, but take six months to see how your Brand Banner results are working from your initial efforts.

If you are having success in identifying your current brand, then in six months you'll be ready to start afresh with your research into customer perceptions of your business. You'll be surveying a different group of employees and a different group of customers, and you'll no doubt have some slightly more refined survey methods after having been through it once already. However, don't try to take shortcuts, because it will still be the first time for most of the customers and employees you will survey.

**There is one red flag to all this: you might find there is pressure to overhaul multiple brands at once.** Maybe you are having success and you start putting internal pressure on yourself to do more, faster. Maybe your boss wants you to move quicker and build the second brand as fast as you're building the first. Your results might actually be causing you some problems, in this case.

#### **Remember**

***Weaving the brand banner will take some time. Better to make sure you are using strong thread, attractive colors and a durable fabric. You want your brand banner to last a long time.***

At this point, the best thing you can do if you are juggling multiple brands and don't have resources to do in-depth brand analysis on all of them is to make a simple features and benefits table for the secondary brand's *products*.

Next, do your best to get staff acquainted with the features and benefits. This won't do much for your word of mouth, because you haven't yet woven a strong Brand Banner for this second brand. But at least your employees will be able to explain features and benefits at the point of sale. Sometimes this is the best you can do, with limited resources. It's not as effective, long-run, as true brand-building but at least you are salvaging sales.

There are no shortcuts when investigating a brand. So much rests on people understanding what your brand is all about, that we absolutely feel it imperative you spend time on the



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elemental brand research we've outlined here.

### 3. Involve the Achievers.

The Achievers in your company are those employees who form the backbone of your business. Every business has them. Just remember, they aren't all in supervisory roles.

**You can use your achievers to:**

- Validate (your ideas and findings)
- Implement (your marketing strategy)
- Criticize (your ideas and findings)

The thinking behind brand identity is probably new to many of your best staff. However, your best staff will already know, better than anybody else, what the brand is about. Don't overlook this hidden resource.

Many of your achievers pride themselves on what they produce or their level of customer service. These people usually gain a true inner satisfaction from how well they perform their work. In many ways, these people are the true weavers of the brand banner. Their collective worth exceeds the value of all the other assets in many small companies.

In our **Package** Workout, we note how most companies try to constantly improve *employee* efficiency. However, trying to improve the *customer's* understanding of the brand as she moves through the sales process will be an important part of your store's future. By integrating the Achiever staff into the brand identity process, you are going to make sure they understand how important the brand really is—and they'll come up with ways for you to communicate the brand.

If you've completed other Essential Marketing Vision Workouts, please forgive us if we sound repetitive, below.

Remember too, that many of your *best* Achievers will only see this as a waste of time; pulling them away from their daily tasks. You need to persevere. Don't be rushed and don't be swayed from your purpose. You must be convinced that your shop's marketing needs some help; otherwise you wouldn't put all this time and effort in. Don't let your staff derail you at this point.

**The goal here is to begin dialogue, not just between staff, but within staff.** The ones that care about your business will already have some great ideas percolating inside about how to improve certain areas of the store. Make sure you acknowledge the importance of these ideas.



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Share what you've discovered. Share your answer to Question 1—in a modified, shortened form. Share the results from Action Step 1; let the Achievers know how your view was similar and different from the employees' view and customers' view.

**Get some feedback and encourage discussion.** This is the time for open-ended, probing questions. This is the time to get people to open up.

Once you have the Achievers gathered together, most of them will be willing to share their opinion. However, you probably know which one or two of them are holding back. Make sure when you pick your Achiever team not to just load it with the extroverts. One insightful yet somewhat shy person is worth having in every meeting, even if she never says a word. Get her alone sometime, and see what she has to say. If need be, encourage her to write you a note or send a quick email. "Still waters run deep," so the old saying goes, and you can use this to your business advantage.

After you've discussed *what* the current perception of the brand is, the next step is to brainstorm on *how* to better express the brand. Now is not the time to take any additional action. Don't launch the next marketing campaign based on what the staff does in this meeting. Remember, the purpose of this Workout is to Identify.

Use this time to introduce the idea of making the brand banner **memorable** and **easy to repeat**. You may get lucky and have somebody tell you just the right phrase to use in your marketing. We've seen instances where a customer who had been using the product for years and years gave us critical information on the product from a user's point of view that we never even suspected.

Have another staff member take notes. It's really tough to both facilitate and take notes at the same time. Don't commit to any decisions at the sharing session. Again, this is not an iron-clad rule: maybe there is an immediately "actionable item" that is so outstanding that just can't wait and there's unanimous agreement to implement it. Go for it.

The balance of this Essential Marketing Vision Workout has several suggestions as you implement the above suggestions in your business. Please don't hesitate to email us at [info@marketinghawks.com](mailto:info@marketinghawks.com) if there is something you need help on. We are always trying to improve the quality of these Workouts, and revise them based upon what our customers tell us.

### **Remember**

**Give your achiever base plenty of time and lots of positive encouragement to thoroughly validate, criticize and implement your marketing strategies. Use your achievers to help you succeed.**



## **Tips for the Chief Marketer: Staying on Track**

### **1. Enjoy marketing.**

*Marketing requires time and perseverance. If you don't enjoy what you are doing, you will lose your effectiveness and your work/creativity will suffer.*

### **2. Use your helpers.**

*It's tough to go it alone as a marketer. Make wise use of:*

- Customers
- Staff
- Others

See the Marketing Helpers chart to see where the people in your marketing world fit. Remember; use your helpers sparingly to achieve your marketing goals.

### **3. Tailor the timeline.**

*Each Essential Marketing Vision Workout's timeline is formatted specifically for its workout. No two timelines are the same. So, too, everybody's business situation is different. Two suggestions:*

- Make the timeline specific for your needs and goals
- Religiously use your daily planner, PDA or calendar to keep tasks and people moving forward. A little reminder just takes a few seconds to jot down.

### **4. Set goals and persevere.**

*There are some days of drudgery ahead for each of us; days we simply have to slug through the task at hand as best we can. But not all days should be like this. To stay creative and happy in our work we need to find ways to satisfy our desire for personal accomplishment. Goal-setting is one tool to help us achieve this.*

### **5. Make sure your goals are:**

- Attainable
- Both short-term and long-term
- Measurable



# Marketing Helpers



## Relevant Books

Marketing Hawks' ideas developed from our own experience and that of several excellent thinkers, doers and writers. Most of the authors mentioned below are in business themselves, so they don't write from a purely academic view. Each of these books is understandable, and all have influenced the creation of the survey you just completed. We have added our own experience as businesspeople, marketers, and consumers.

Beckwith, Harry. *The Invisible Touch*. New York: Warner Books, 2000.

Anybody in a service business should read Beckwith. This book has a good section on the importance of building a brand for a service business.

Bedbury, Scott. *A New Brand World*. New York: Penguin Books, 2002.

What do you do after you help both Nike and Starbucks become two of the world's great brands? If you're Scott Bedbury, you write a fantastic book to help the rest of us learn, that's what.

Koch, Richard. *The 80/20 Principle*. New York: Doubleday, 1999.

Anybody who wants to really, really learn how to effectively manage their time, energy, and other resources should learn Pareto's 80/20 concept...Koch explains it like nobody else.

Vincent, Laurence. *Legendary Brands*. 2002. Chicago: Dearborn, 2002.

This is a how-to manual for creating a "legendary" brand. Not a one or two evening read, this book has some very definite instructions on building your brand through the power of story.

