

BRAND TRANSFORMATION

101

EVERY BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BRANDING
AND ITS TRANSFORMATION

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

#3

BRANDING: IMPORTANCE & REASONS

#4

THE BRANDING PROCESS

#11

TRANSFORMING A BRAND

#19

CONCLUSION

#24

SOURCES

#25

OVERVIEW

Every business comes to a turning point where its brand image requires a bend in its strategic approaches and goal procession. That is where the process of brand transformation steps in and makes it easy for the business to take the smooth turn and avoid an accident. Whether your sales dropped or the market pace outran your strategic plans, transforming your brand can only be the best option to take back the lead.

Before we jump right at brand transformation, it is important to discuss what brand and branding actually are. In order to gain the competitive edge in your market, you must determine the importance of your branding process. Every marketing professional is aware of the terms related to brand and branding, such as brand identity, brand image, brand strategy, and so on. All these terms deliver the same message, i.e. the brand's vision, and its identity visualization.

Brand transformation or brand metamorphosis is something which can be considered as the reincarnation of a business and its brand image. Brands today need to understand how they must transform themselves in order to maintain their pace with the trending market and meet the consumer expectations. Let's

consider an example, an average housewife undergoes some serious makeover. What you see afterward is a 10-year younger version of the same woman. If a complete makeover can transform the visual identity of people, what makes you think your brand can't become young and energetic again?

However, here's the key point: developing the understanding of brand transformation is highly crucial for any business. A new approach as such helps in acquiring new customers and delivers a whole new notion of perceptiveness. Transforming the brand also helps delineate the concepts and ideas encapsulated in the term 'branding', entail its importance, deliver the brand message, affirm business credibility, connect with target prospects, and attract loyal clients at the same time.

Brand Transformation 101 aims to deliver the fundamental principles and concepts of branding. You might consider it a beginner's guide to branding as it provides a detailed understanding of why branding is necessary and how it works. Once you've grasped the idea of branding, you'll learn about brand transformation, its steps, and the reasons for brand transformation in order to achieve success.

BRANDING: IMPORTANCE & REASONS

When we talk about a business, we must also talk about branding and how it works. Branding encompasses every aspect of your business, whether be it business strategies, customer experience, your website, logo, products and services, social media postings, and even the interaction with your customers on the phone.

Branding mainly defines the way your customers perceive your business. Your brand reflects consumer responsiveness and behavior. For example, it's the color of your product packaging or your tagline that they remember most about your business. What influences these customers is the creativity, words, and other elements surrounding your brand. Branding isn't only about excelling the market competition; it's also about making your prospects realize your creative approach to a certain problem.

What makes branding so important? And what should a brand do to maintain that importance? Branding is a strategic way to market your brand and business. It consists of complex processes that are involved in carrying out the fundamental functions and operations crucial to your business. Whereas, a brand is something different from branding. It guides the consumer perception and helps them understand the business's core message and values. When you execute your brand using effective branding strategies, you can leverage potential gains as well as attract your target audience.

When it comes to B2C marketing, one-third of the consumers think about a brand when they're going to make purchases and about **77% of the consumers buy products based on name-brand preference**. For instance, if we want to buy tissues, we would name a brand we're familiar with, say Kleenex. With time and effective marketing, a brand name actually transforms itself into the service or the product which is proof enough that it has made its place among the consumers. If it's a brand, we'd buy it!

However, the importance of branding parallels the propelling consumerism in today's world. This notion demands arduous work on the part of the businesses, who would want to come up with productive ideas about building a strong brand identity and create consumer loyalty.

THE REASONS

The significance of branding cannot be emphasized enough as this is the only way a business can put itself forward in the market and make itself known. Here are the top reasons why it is necessary for businesses to take some time out and develop their brands if they want to make their place in the competitive market and get recognized for the distinctive service they offer.

QUICK PEEK-A-BOOK

In
his book,
Sticky Branding:
12.5 Principles to Stand Out,
Attract Customers, and Grow
an Incredible Brand, Jeremy Miller
takes a deep dive into what makes
companies like Apple, Nike, and
Starbucks renowned and famous.
He also shares some tried and
tested strategies for building
an extraordinary brand.

Branding Encourages Identification

When people stretch their hands towards a certain brand on the market shelf, they not only want to use the product but also want to see how this product from the X brand performs. That is where effective branding comes into action. If your brand is consistent in its approach and uses emotional branding techniques to make itself easily recognizable, people can develop a sense of ease and familiarity with your product.

If you think of how Coca-Cola did it, you might find your answer. Coca-Cola has been delivering quality beverages for more than 130 years and yet has maintained consistency in its branding and marketing advances. Although it spends about **\$4.3 billion on advertisement and marketing**, its iconic image of the cola bottle reserves the mark of consumer trust and identification. Speaking of recognition, colors play a crucial role in determining brand identification. **Using a specific theme color increases brand identification by 80%.**

According to Reuters, **82% marketers believe** that brand recognition and its strength are becoming their guide for making better investment choices. The better a brand name is recognized, the more it will sell; the best example here would be that of Michelin, the tire company that etched its logo '**Michelin Man**' into the consumers' minds since its introduction in 1894 (Fig. 1).

Look around yourself and you'll find so many brands that you'll recognize in an instant and wonder how they keep selling it and sustain their market potential.



Fig. 1. The Early Michelin Man

Branding Boosts Referrals

You must've noticed people posting photos of the products they love and recommend others to approach that brand. This is their way of telling that this product from Brand Z works well and others must also be using it. Strong branding is the sole reason behind these recommendations due to the deliverance of better services and customer care.

However, recommendations are extremely important in this age of social media. Most of the consumers turn to Yelp or Amazon to get reviews and ratings before they make a purchase

as nobody wants to pay for product or service that is not rated highly. Statistics show that **84% of consumers** mostly buy on personal recommendations which shows how effective branding can play a key role in increasing consumers (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Picture-perfect Example Of Customer Reviews On Amazon

Social media platforms have made it very easy for companies and consumers to come together where they can satisfy each other most efficiently. When brand creativity and out-of-the-box productivity collides with social media, branding can skyrocket beyond the horizon. For example, incorporating the research that **60% people watch the TV at an angle of 60°**, LG designed the Nano Cell Super Match, the video of which scored more than **21 million views in 2017**. Moreover, in the same year, Apple's animoji – the combination of animals and emojis mimicking the user expression – videos on YouTube got **more than 12 million views**.

Branding Adds Value

A brand that is strong and consistent keeps adding value to the business and helps expand its assets. Statista reveals that the global value of Coca-Cola amounted up to **\$78.14 billion in 2017**, after generating a revenue of about **\$41.86 billion in 2016 (Fig. 3)**.



Fig. 3. Screenshot From Statista Showing Coca-cola Brand Value

Other famous examples include Apple, Microsoft, and Facebook that have asserted their brand value despite the arising global controversies. The equipment, products, and services acquired by these companies only represent an aspect, while the brand alone speaks out for value addition. Moreover, it's the consumer perception that shapes brand value, since it is an important factor that empowers a brand.

Branding Imparts Credibility

With a strong and consistent brand identity, it is easy to add credibility to businesses. Consumers know exactly what to expect when they connect with it. A professional appearance and well-designed logo lends credibility and trust to the brand and makes it appear more legitimate, helping consumers associate with it in a positive manner.

Brands that transform with time are more likely to stay in the consumers' mind because consumers are smart and they can notice the brands' efforts to attract them. Most of the popular and well-established automobile logos today are the best examples, as the brands behind them have earned credibility with consumers and continue to thrive their business in the global market.

QUICK PEEK-A-BOOK

In his book, **The Artist's Guide to Selecting Color**, Michael Wilcox discusses the significance of using appropriate colors. He attempts to explain the individuality and nature of every color and mentions the unsuitability or suitability of pigments that a designer needs to keep in mind. Brand designers and logo developers need to understand all about the right use of colors that stand out for better impact on the consumers.

THE

The notion of brand starts with the imagination followed by a pragmatic approach towards the construction of a brand image. Branding is a set of complex processes that are involved in bringing the holistic brand image to life.

BRANDING PROCESS



STEP #1: DEFINING THE BRAND

When it comes to the branding process, defining your brand is the first step. A brand can be defined well with a name, which states its mission and vision. In some cases, a tagline also puts forward the mission and vision statement and helps the consumers understand what the brand is all about.

There are several popular brands that have done it very successfully. Throughout the years they have been attracting consumers and ruling the market with a strong brand name and a tagline that says it all. McDonald's logo and its tagline 'I'm lovin' it' is a credible example worth mentioning. The golden arches along with the catchy tagline foster the brand message and deliver it in the perfect manner. Similarly, BMW is another great example as its tagline tell you that it's 'The Ultimate Driving Machine'. These brands have come to be recognized for what they are and provide consumers a chance to understand what they are offering in just a few words.

However, defining a brand is the most important of all tasks and can be the toughest because it is necessary to come up with an image, an idea or a concept that completely describes it and helps consumers associate the given service or product with it.

“
Scientific studies have determined that
human mind can recognize images
correctly if seen for
100 MILLISECONDS
at the least.”

Most of the companies prefer to include glyphs or visuals in their logo because they will be easily recalled. It is easy to define a brand with a meaningful and colorful logo along with a tagline, which states its mission and becomes its vision statement too.

STEP #2:

BUILDING A BRAND WITH A VISUAL LANGUAGE

The second step of the branding process involves coming up with the right color scheme, font or typesetting, and a visual style to build a visible language that consumers can understand and can relate to.

When creating a new brand, it is necessary to take steps that are simple and logical. In this manner, a strong and meaningful brand can be conceptualized that serves its purpose more effectively, renders its services, and targets the audience efficaciously. Coming up with a strong brand requires thought, strategy, research, and planning. It is necessary to identify the business purpose, its aims, and its goals in order to come up with the right product.

Before getting to know anything about a brand, consumers see the visual first. If they like it and connect with it, half the work is done then and there. The meaning of a brand is best conveyed with the right selection of colors, font/typesetting, and the way it is presented.

COLOR

Color is one of the biggest factors that marketers and designers must consider when dealing with branding. Color perception can change on the basis of consumers' age, gender, personality, and income along with other factors, which make it necessary for businesses to understand their target audience. Colors can trigger emotions in people, which is why the right choice of color is very important (Fig. 4).

VISUAL

The visual style is a set of attributes that form a recognizable and associative level of perception for brand communication. It helps to distinguish the brand from its competitors and associated products effectively. It is necessary to ensure that a visual style is original, engaging, and unique so that it makes its place in the market and helps consumers develop a connection (Fig. 5).

FONT

Understanding fonts and typesetting is the key to developing a brand identity. Fonts/typesetting communicate the right brand message and set it apart from others offering similar service or product. Choosing the perfect font or typesetting is all about coming up with a unique and authentic font that helps the brand to stand out in the market and attract consumers (Fig. 6).

STEP #3: DEVELOPING BRANDING GUIDELINES

When one is establishing a new brand, it is important to develop branding guidelines at first and then using these guidelines to achieve more effective results. Defining the branding guidelines is a way to declutter and organize your ideas and thoughts so that the message becomes transparent and communicative.

Brand guidelines are a set of rules that explain how a brand works, as they contain the fundamental information about it. They are necessary because they ensure brand consistency when the brand is used, be it a website, advertisement, stationery, and packaging among other means of communication.

The main purpose of a brand is to enable consumers to connect with the business as soon as they see it and that is only possible when the branding guidelines are properly followed. Thus, it is important that the brand message maintains its efficacy and resonates rapidly when recalled.

Branding guidelines channelize the branding process in the right direction. These also involve the logo design, which should reflect the business personality and mark its identity as a reliable entity. Before setting and following a guide, it is important to know the brand well and understand its mission, vision, target audience, brand personality, and core values as they play a key role in establishing the brand identity.

Branding guidelines come into play when they are used for product packaging, promotion, and brand message communication. These rules of thumb help one understand how logo, font, and the overall design should be used to deliver a concrete message.

“ IT TAKES CONSUMERS ONLY 10 SECONDS
TO FORM THE FIRST IMPRESSION OF A
BRAND’S LOGO. ”

ESSENTIAL POINTS FOR BRAND GUIDELINES



Brand's mission, vision, character, and core values



Brand message or mission statement



Right use of logo, its placement, and its size



Right use of colors for print, screen, and web



Use of specific font that will be used for branding



Use of business cards, letterhead designs etc.

STEP #4: ADAPTING TO GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

A brand is a set of expectations, memories, stories, and relationships that help develop consumer choices and shape their behavior. This can only be done when a brand uses the best visual devices to attract consumers. Hence, brands need to understand that they must adapt and grow with time. There is always room and time for improvement. Businesses need to understand that if they want to keep their consumers engaged and retained, they must come up with ways to keep up with the latest trends and evolve when needed.

A logo is the most noticeable visual image that helps the consumers understand, share, and recall a brand. Most of the times, brands are represented by an icon, symbol, or a logo. The emblem makes brand recognition easy and helps people recognize it printed on banners, cards, websites, and social media platforms. What's more, it enables consumers to connect with it emotionally too. Most of the popular and recognized brands today are those that were smart enough to adapt, evolve, and grow with the passage of time and have kept up with the new trends (Fig. 7).

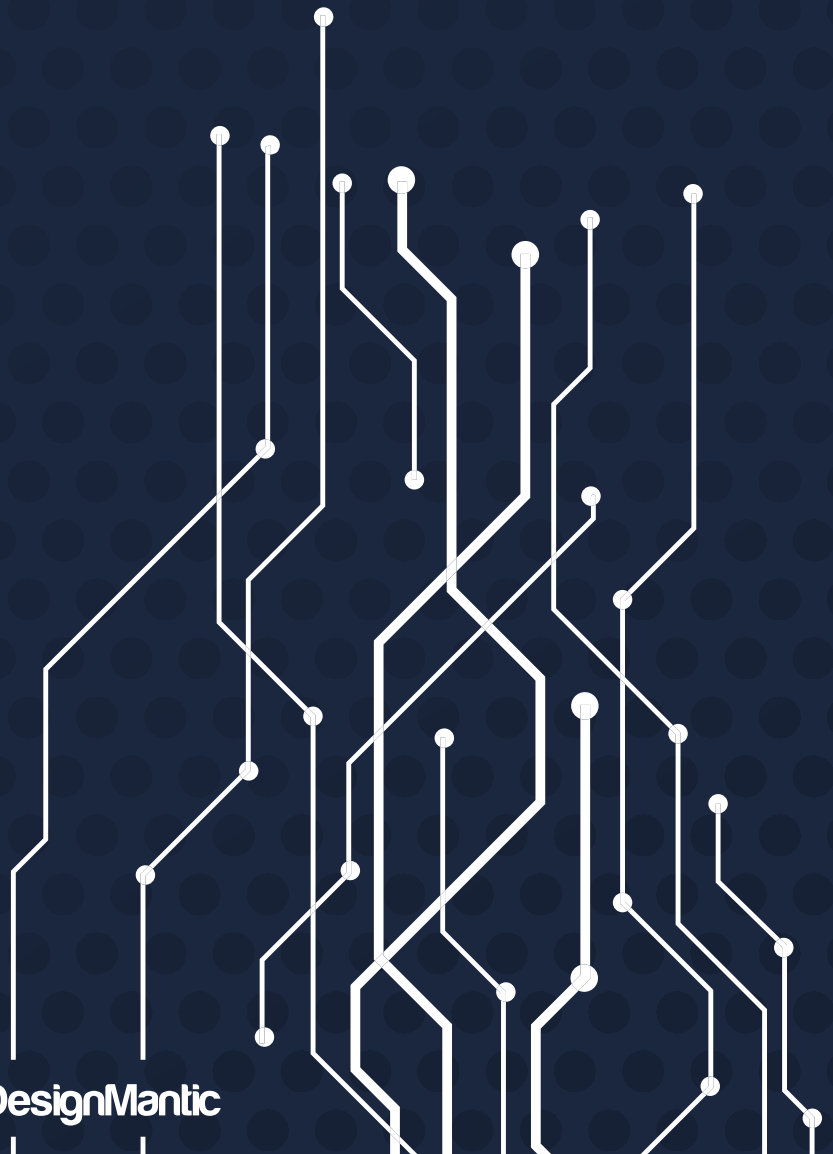


Fig. 7. Brands That Have Stood The Test Of Time

QUICK PEEK-A-BOOK

**The Seven
Brand-Building Principles
that Separate the Best from the Rest,**
by Denise Lee Yohn, is the best read for
entrepreneurs who want to know how
great brands are built. In this book, she
discusses the seven principles that have
been implemented by the world's best
brands and how they have been used
for continual success.

TRANSFORMING A BRAND



Now that you have an established brand right in front of you, you think that it's all you're going to need. That's not actually true. You need to watch out for potential hazards that could truncate your business in the times ahead. That is why the fourth step of brand transformation and the guidelines must include the element of metamorphosis. It isn't the caterpillars and the rocks that undergo metamorphosis, it's the businesses too.

The quality of a strong business is that it is always optimistic and pragmatic. When a business manages to fend off the damage from industrial economic losses, it might grow weak from continuous blows as such. The process of transformation or the rebranding process (when done correctly) keeps the business elements close and aligns them to form a brand that grows when it confronts challenges.

Moreover, the transformation should address the company's real-time problems and fix the issues hindering the brand progress. It shouldn't only be the aesthetics that should be polished; it should be everything connected to the business. For instance, instead of making your office interior showy and artistic, you can ponder over the aspect in which your business is lagging behind or muse about the quality of your work.

Behind the brand's silhouette, you can introduce changes and future instructions into the brand's latticework. As a result, the internal composition of your brand changes, and a new, definite form of the same brand emerges.

Since every process is based on a few steps, the brand transformation is no different. When you're transforming a brand, you need to pay close attention to the factors needed to differentiate your new brand image from the old one. The fundamental goal of the brand transformation process is the enhancement of the features, functions, services, and consumer relationship. Most companies rely on their part of the story, rarely bringing up the consumer part. In fact, brand metamorphosis is all about easing brand usage for customers. The focus should be oriented towards addressing customer needs, wants, and desires etc. Also, think about the unique value-adding priorities that your brand exposes your audience to. Here's an example: Nike doesn't boast about the top-drawer shoes they make, they aspire their audience to remain fit and show their athletic skills.

Here are a few things that should be considered carefully when carrying out the rebranding process.

EMPLOYING NEW TOOLS

If you want your brand to transform, you'll need to ditch the old PDF files and excel sheets. With new technology, new tools appear that can help you cope up with the market and fill the gap. The brand needs to be changed, that's why you need to introduce the brand's voice, visuals, and design components in a new way – using novel and improved tools.

Everything must be updated. If you're managing the brand on a digital platform, you need to execute new strategies to enhance the fluidity of your brand message, integrate the design anew, and maintain a consistent approach to deploy new and relevant content.

For instance, if you're relying on a chatbot to assist your customers online, you must make sure that it is programmed to remain up-to-date for improved responsiveness (Fig. 8). It should convey the brand voice clearly and must be able to adapt to the growing challenges and ways to tackle them. In case of the primitive PDF guide system, your business might shift to a digitized platform that incorporates a variety of software, tools, codes, updates, and other working ways.

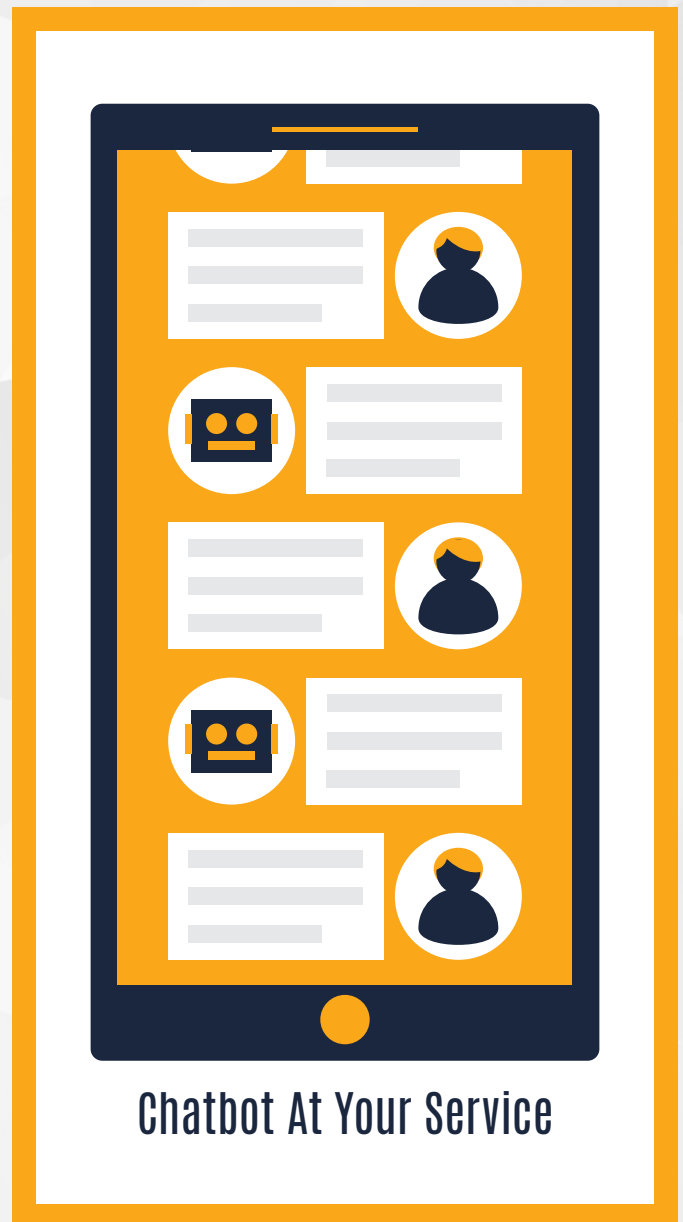


Fig. 8. Human-chatbot Social Media Action

DEFINING BRAND MEANS VS. BRAND MOTIVES

The definition of a brand and its branding process should be revised and broadened more than often. It should move from the articulation of brand motives to actionable set of policies that guide the brand's decision-making behaviors.

Defining and positioning the brand means before its motives can orient the brand elements to behave concretely as per branding guidelines. The brand employees are also included in this means vs. motives policies via which they can provide better services to their customers. For example, Coca Cola's tagline 'happiness within arm's reach' elicits the action from salespeople, commanding them to serve the brand within close reach.

Means vs. motives also envelop scientific data and particular codes, which are used by scientist and developers to enhance brand communication, including the branded stimuli and behaviors. The brand personnel can employ these means vs. motives approach to drive brand activation points. In this way, brands are revived without actually distorting any aspect of their identity or the aspect they're known for.

APPROACHING NEW AND SKILLED TALENT

Whenever it comes to hiring new and skilled talent, **65% of the employers** report that it is the biggest challenge they face. When the company is equipped with new tools and instruments, it should opt for new talent to broaden its skillset, whether it be brand managers, communication planners, PR, graphic designers, mobile engineers, system developers, and what not to mention.

HIRING POTENTIAL AND NEW TALENT LETS YOU GENERATE HIGHER REVENUE THAN BEFORE

For example, **Phillips 66 generated about \$1.3 million as average revenue per employee.** Another example is of the **UPS**, which geared its **90%** of the print budget to **97%** in social media during the span of **5 years.** They hired potential employees using Facebook and Twitter profiles and reduced their print budget from 600-700 dollars to 60-70 dollars per hire.

Hiring new talent and expanding the set of skills is mandatory when a brand is undergoing a transformation. It enables the brands to take a better control of their strategies and executes them for rebranding purpose. Moreover, the fresh talent brings new knowledge and behavioral skills that are necessary for the execution of novel brand behaviors and experiences. The in-house management of the brand recreates and reshapes the brand identity to fit in the new image with agility and smoothness.

ADDING FLEXIBILITY AND CREATING NEW CONNECTIONS

The rebranding/brand transformation process and the people behind the brand matter as much as the brand positioning and design itself. A brand should be able to respond to any challenges it goes through. It should embrace growth and connect with different industries to introduce a new product into the market.

Brand transformation parallels with flexibility in this aspect as it upgrades the managerial roles and activates branding operations. Of all the famous examples, you can consider the merger that took place between two famous brands, Disney and Pixar. Disney's animation along with Pixar's high-tech production gave rise to several masterpieces, such as Finding Nemo, The Incredibles, Mickey, to name a few.

A brand can only transform if it has the ability to accept the challenges induced by the new connections. Moreover, it is easier for a brand to transform if it has been incorporating flexibility from the start. Flexibility can be added if the brand is familiar with upgrading its system, using new technology, and combining the traditional and technological advances to respond to the consumer needs. Such pragmatic application can lead to potential insights into the business content, and hence bring growth to both the businesses.

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CONCLUSION

A brand is the most important part of the marketing communication. It helps businesses come up with ways and means to market their products and services and connect with potential customers. The need for a strong brand is escalating with every passing day. It is becoming necessary for brands to spend quality time in researching, defining, and building their identity. Addressing this need helps to build a better customer base and a stronger place in the industry.

A strong and sustaining brand becomes a guide for consumers and helps them understand the business objectives. It also enables the investors to develop a marketing plan and fulfill the purpose that they seek to satisfy. It is significant to know that branding not only leads to the congregation of loyal customers but also creates loyal employees; the employees have something bigger and greater to believe in and stand against time's tides. With a clear and defined brand, they understand the purpose of the business, are motivated to work hard and make it grow.

Businesses must ensure that their branding system does not feel outdated or lose its appeal; they have to make efforts to update and maintain their brand and transform it with time so that the customers can identify and relate with it most easily. It would not be wrong to say that brand transformation is not just a process but rather a means with which businesses can keep on reinventing their brand, retain their customers, and connect with something new and exciting every time.

Brand transformation 101 strives to explain the basics of how businesses need to work on their brand to keep themselves timeless and distinguished, offering consumers a reason to seek them out. This is especially useful for startups so that they can aim for deeper consumer connections and help their brand grow with the right strategies and marketing ideas to survive the cutthroat competition.

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