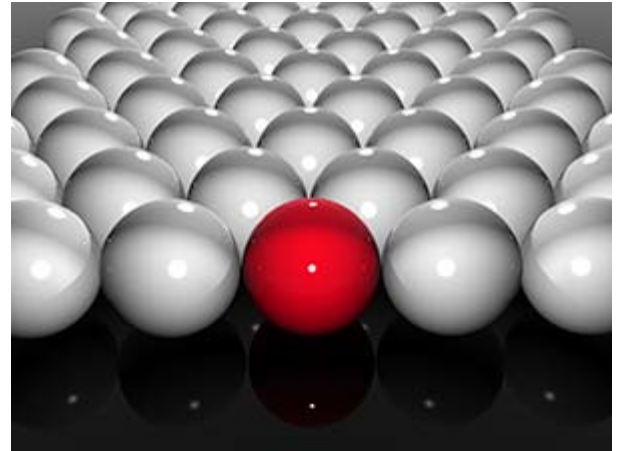


# Brand Value Plan - Brand Identity Guru

By Scott D. White

Developing brand value is critical to every organization and when professionally executed, delivers a clear and measurable competitive advantage to your firm. It does so by helping you establish a positive connection and value-relationship with your customer, which, over time, will build brand equity and increase brand value.

Once this value-relationship is established, both internally and externally, it can be measured, monitored and enhanced periodically, as needed, to strengthen your brand's effectiveness and increase your bottom line. Whether you're building a new brand or energizing an existing one, developing brand value maximizes the value-relationship between corporate profitability and the perception of your brand.



## The Assessment

The first step in the fine art of branding

Customers factor brands into every purchase. The stronger the brand, meaning the clearer the position it occupies in their minds, the more value it has and the more likely they are to choose it -- again and again. The goal is to get them to choose your brand over your competitions. And that's where a strong brand value can help.

I recommend an in-depth assessment, a strategic survey used to determine the state of your company's brand. It helps you discover key elements important to satisfying your customer base utilizing brand research findings. The assessment provides a foundation upon which to develop the best model for customizing your brand communications master plan.

The Assessment allows you to accurately measure the present effectiveness and value of your brand. It establishes brand value as a benchmark for future enhancement. How? By zeroing in on which qualities and attributes of your products, services and company make you different from your competition. And, how well they are perceived in the market. It helps you modify and align products, positioning messages and communications with laser point accuracy on your customers' specific needs and wants.

The Assessment is really a personality profile of your brand. It describes your good points, but more importantly, highlights where you are weak. It does so by using a system of inter-related measurements to gauge brand perceptions and effectiveness.

Using a grading scale of 1-10, the assessment can test vital aspects of your brand as it relates to:

- o Products or services
- o Target markets
- o Messaging
- o Communications.

An assessment conducts interviews with management, marketing, sales and other key employees. It will uncover segments of company operations that can do more to nourish the brand, helping you pinpoint areas ripe for improvement. The external research of an assessment includes surveys with clients, prospects, vendors and key industry personnel. It will conduct a "competitive analysis" which tells you how targeted audiences see you, your products or services and how you stack up against the competition.

After your assessment is complete tabulate the results and ask for a customized Brand Analysis Report. These are usually very informative. Often revealing. Only after analyzing all the essential components of the branding assessment can information be provided. This detailed document shows exactly where you can improve.

## The Brand Plan

How your brand can become a work of art

Your brand is your company's power base, its number one asset. Developing a Brand Plan is designed to ensure that your company delivers on its brand promise. It provides companies with a guidebook for continually building, measuring and enhancing brand value and helps you achieve clarity of branding focus and direction.

First, I recommend an Assessment to find your brand's present position and value. Then I recommend developing The Brand Plan, an in-depth master Brand Plan that defines the strategies, which can strengthen and improve your brand's performance and market position by establishing a connection and value-relationship with your customer.

Unlike The Assessment, the picture that is painted is not a snapshot of what you are today. The Brand Plan helps you redefine brand personality in the marketplace. It's how your company will be tomorrow, how it will be seen and perceived by customers, potential customers, your managers, employees and vendors. When managed properly, The Brand Plan increases financial security, growth and earnings potential. It will establish a clearly defined brand vision for employees and management. Both their motivation and commitment to the delivery of the brand promise will greatly increase.

The Brand Plan is a strategic master Brand Plan that will contain specific internal and external strategies and tactics, all with the goal of turning your brand into a work of art. It's a brandmaster action Brand Plan that encompasses:

- o Brand objectives
- o Brand positioning, the promise of the brand
- o Brand strategy & tactics

The Brand Plan aligns products, services, and communications for uniform delivery of the brand promise throughout your enterprise. Everything is spelled out, integrated, and ready for execution. This vital tool empowers every person in your company to show the true colors of your brand. It gives form and unity to communications that differentiate your brand in the marketplace. It provides a rallying point for employees and provides a cornerstone document of all corporate resources to support brand core competencies.

As people understand the defined objectives, more ideas blossom, making the brand grow even stronger. After all, the true test of any Brand Plan is for it to appreciate over time. The Brand Plan is not a static document to be hung in some dusty museum. It's a living, breathing, dynamic statement of change based on proven scientific testing, data analysis and measurable results.

Capture more mindshare with a Brand Value Plan... your palette for branding success.

Scott White is President of [Brand Identity Guru](#), a leading Corporate Branding and Branding Research firm in Boston, MA.

Brand Identity Guru specializes in creating corporate and product brands that increase sales, market share, customer loyalty, and brand valuation.

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Over the course of his 15-year branding career, Scott White has worked in a wide variety of industries: high-tech, manufacturing, computer hardware and software, telecommunications, banking, restaurants, fashion, healthcare, Internet, retail, and service businesses, as well as numerous non-profit organizations.

Brand Identity Guru clients include: Sun Life Financial, Coca Cola, HP, Sun, Nordstrom, American Federal Mortgage, Franklin Sports and many others, including numerous emerging growth companies.