HOW TO DELIVER A DIFFERENTIATED VALUE PROPOSITION

Defining your company's positioning structure

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ABOUT US

At Shikatani Lacroix Design, we design compelling brand experiences using our Think Blink philosophy and strategic design approach. Everything we do is geared to providing an immersive brand moment. Our firm has a well-earned reputation for designing integrated brand experiences that effectively connect brands with customers to drive measurable results for clients.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
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When it comes to the design industry, President Jean-Pierre Lacroix is always one step ahead in the branding and design game. A visionary design thinker, author and speaker, JP maintains an unwavering focus on the latest and emerging trends. Driven to produce measurable results through strategic insights, he is committed to helping brands own the consumers' "at-purchase moment."

JP's past industry involvement as a board member with the Packaging Association of Canada, Design Industry Advisory Committee, Retail Council of Canada, the Canadian Marketing Association, Signs Canada, the Society for Environmental Graphic Design, and the Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario has enabled him to assist clients in identifying the leading packaging, retail and digital trends that affect their branding initiatives.

Since opening the Shikatani Lacroix Design doors more than 25 years ago, JP has grown this company into one of the most respected and sought after multidisciplinary strategic design agencies in the world. Along the way, he has developed a reputation as a true innovator and first-rate problem-solver, with expertise in providing clients with unique, results-driven solutions for their product and service needs.

DELIVERING A DIFFERENTIATED VALUE PROPOSITION

The majority of brand transformation programs require a redefinition of their value proposition and overall brand position. This worksheet will help link the brand card structure to a series of steps leading to a finely crafted new value proposition. It consists of a series of questions the working team should complete as part of a one to two-day vision session. The working group should start by compiling the information on either side of the core brand card questions in order to provide rich context. On the left side of the worksheet, help define the customer needs and aspirations while on the opposite side we provide a similar set of questions for the company. Ideally the session should be moderated by the team leader or an outside consultant. Effectively answering the questions should get the group very close to a final brand card.

The left side of the worksheet identifies how customers define value for the brand by reviewing the definition, value and needs of the core target group. The insights derived from answering these questions ladder up to defining the brand essence answering the critical "why?" question for customers.

- **Customer Definition:** It's important to understand who are the core target group for your brand and what defines them and their behavior. Information derived from these questions will guide defining the brand position statement and key personality traits.

- **Customer Value:** By identifying the most important challenge the customer is trying to overcome we can derive a value proposition that is meaningful to them.

- **Customer Needs:** Defining the customer needs both emotionally and functionally helps support and guide both identifying the value proposition, the company vision and mission statement in addition to the brand position.

The right side of the positioning worksheet explores the needs and priorities of the company helping to frame the vision, mission, equities and brand pillars that will ensure

DEFINE YOUR CUSTOMER'S NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS

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the organization lives the brand promise consistently. The questions help to link the company's core equities and define how they will deliver value for customers, while supporting strong differentiation.

- **Company Brand Pillars:** The positioning process needs to effectively identify the core company attributes leveraging the insights from the SWOT analysis. The brand pillars are the timeless challenges both the company and the customer share that, when resolved, creates strong loyalty and desire for the brand.

- **Company Value Proposition:** Leveraging the core equities of the brand which are ownable and distinctive from competitors helps set the framework for how the company can deliver value when it aligns to the needs of customers.

- **Company Vision:** Through the insights derived from the value proposition and brand personality while building on bold and audacious goals, a company vision emerges.

The net result is the creation of a brand card summarizing all of the key points on a single sheet. The process should be iterative as some of the questions supporting identifying the various dimensions of the brand card are aligned.

ESTABLISH THE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF YOUR COMPANY

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Defining the Positioning Structure

To succeed, the positioning exercise must define its reason for existing and its longterm aspirational goal. To ensure a coherent and consistent implementation of the brand, we have identified two main factors; namely, the long-term direction and how it needs to behave in delivering its promise.
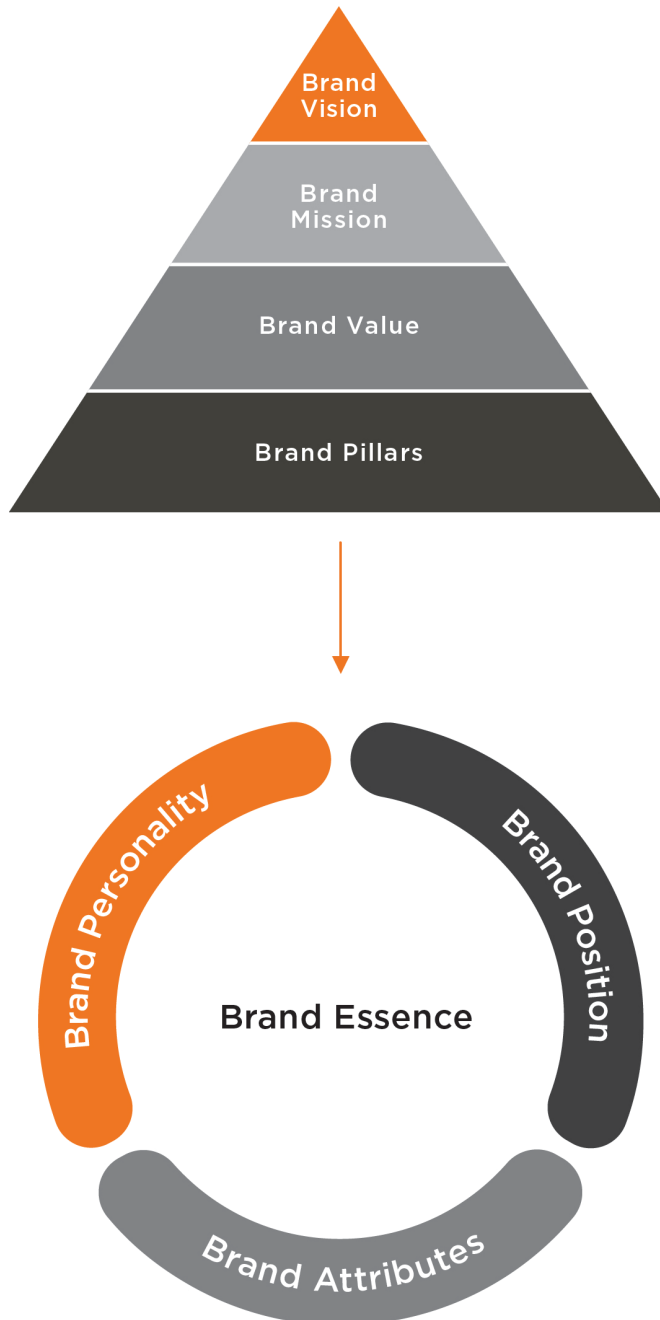
Defining the Brand Direction

The overall **Brand Direction** consists of a pyramid which outlines the various key factors which influence the final destination, namely:

- **Brand Vision** answers the question "Where do we want the brand to go?" Brand Vision defines a broad, aspirational image of the future that a brand aims to achieve.

- **Brand Mission** defines a brand's purpose and primary objectives. The Brand Mission answers the question, "Why does this brand exist?"

- **Brand Value Proposition** is how the brand meets the needs of its customers by leveraging its core equities.

- **Brand Pillars** form the core or proprietary aspects of the brand. They are the indisputable truths of the brand.

Pyramid (top to bottom): Brand Vision, Brand Mission, Brand Value, Brand Pillars

Defining the Brand DNA

The Brand DNA provides a platform for how we want the desired brand to behave in the marketplace from an executional standpoint, and it consists of three overlapping factors which support a finely crafted brand essence:

- **Brand Essence** encapsulates the heart and soul of the brand. It reflects the brand's fundamental nature or quality. The brand's essence is the one constant across product categories and global markets.

- **Brand Position** defines the code by which the brand lives. It is the basis for what the organization believes is important for growth.

- **Brand Personality** defines the emotional connection an individual has with the brand in terms of human characteristics (e.g., serious, warm, light-hearted etc.). It characterizes the image, tone and manner of all touchpoints of the brand, both internal and external.

- **Brand Attributes** are the functional or emotional characteristics which define the brand. They can be both personality and product-driven (also known as the Brand Position).

Circle diagram: Brand Personality, Brand Position, Brand Attributes surrounding Brand Essence

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1. What is the timeless challenge we are trying to solve?

What are the target group's eight key needs and/or key motivators (what is driving or motivating their need to purchase)?

Need 1 _____

Need 2 _____

Need 3 _____

Need 4 _____

Need 5 _____

Need 6 _____

Need 7 _____

Need 8 _____

Customer Value:

Define the most important challenge the customer is trying to overcome:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Customer's Attribute

Who is your core growth target group and its behaviors?

_____

What are the defining motivations and demographics?

_____

What is the self-image of the core customer?

_____

What is the single trait that makes the key target group feel unique and valuable?

_____

What is the threat that will challenge the customer's self-image?

_____

What is the characteristic most threatening to the target group's self-image?

_____

Customer Definition:

Define the customer based on attributes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Company Attribute

Define three to four key brand attributes that are proprietary to the organization and that leverage the company's strengths, while helping overcome its weaknesses and threats.

Attribute 1:_____

Attribute 2:_____

Attribute 3:_____

Attribute 4:_____

Identify the one key strength, weakness, opportunity and threat to the organization.

Strength:_____

Weakness:_____

Opportunity:_____

Threat:_____

Company Brand Pillars:

Identify the five key challenges the company needs to overcome that aligns with the customer's needs:

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

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4. Company timeless challenge

Identify the top 10 timeless challenges for the brand:

1. _____   6. _____
2. _____   7. _____
3. _____   8. _____
4. _____   9. _____
5. _____   10. _____

Company Value Proposition:

Identify why customers would pay more for this brand versus competitors:

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. The key customer's identity

What is the key target group's buying preference (detailed understanding of brands and reasons for preference)?

_____

_____

Where and how does the target group buy (shopper missions and channel preference)?

_____

_____

When does the target group use the product (usage occasions and approach)?

_____

_____

Customer Needs:

Define the customer based on needs:

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Define the brand personality

The key traits of the brand best formulated by defining key attributes if the brand was:

An actor: _____

A friend: _____

A house: _____

A car: _____

An experience: _____

A movie: _____

Company vision:

Define the most audacious and ambitious goal for the company:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Company vision

Identify the top four bold and audacious goals of the company:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

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Brand Essence

The core DNA of the company that will drive growth and deliver on the value proposition:

_____

Brand Vision

The bold future-desired accomplishment of the organization:

_____

Brand Mission

The brand's purpose and primary objective. The Brand Mission answers the question: "Why does this brand exist?"

_____

Brand Position

Develop a position based on filling the blanks in this sentence:

For customers _____ who need _____

but (barriers to overcome) _____ our offering _____

that features _____ with benefits _____

since the brand's competitive differentiator is _____

Value Proposition

Who are the high group customers, their behaviors and the specific "job" that competitive offerings don't deliver?

_____

_____

Define the brand personality

Three to four words that define the personality of the brand:

1. _____   3. _____

2. _____   4. _____

Define the brand pillars

Three words that define the challenges the organization needs to overcome that align with the customer challenges:

1. _____   3. _____

2. _____

Define the brand equities

Three to four words that define the personality of the brand:

1. _____   3. _____

2. _____   4. _____

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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