

Brand Alignment is Important and Here is Why

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“Your brand is what other people say about you when you’re not in the room” – Jeff Bezos

Brand consistency is key to every brand's story; the question is will your brand's story be a success story, or how you succeed in destroying your customers' confidence in you? Expectation versus reality. A lot of the times brands have left a lot to be desired, what they promise consumers and what customers receive in turn, is unsatisfactory, to say the least. Brand misalignment is the reason some brands like Kodak failed to innovate further, deliver their promise to consumers, and inevitably sunk into oblivion.

Staying Consistent Internally

Sticking to your brand internally is crucial to how you're presented to clients and prospective clients. Your employees are your brand ambassadors, as they will be communicating with clients daily; you need to be sure your employees understand how your brand should be represented. In this regard, your internal brand guidelines should be straightforward and easy to understand. One great way to ensure brand consistency is to create a set of guidelines. Have a document that can be shared internally that outlines your mission and values and how your imagery and messaging will follow them.

One key factor to maintaining consistency is making sure your employees feel appreciated. Happy workers are much more likely to adhere to your brand promise than those who feel unappreciated by the business. Show them that their hard work does not go unnoticed and that you are elated to have them as part of the team. This will encourage them to be a part of the brand's success as a whole.

Inconsistent branding is a huge problem for clients and prospects. Clients are more likely to notice when you dis-align from your brand than when you maintain consistency. This reads as inauthentic as well as careless and unprofessional. An example of a brand that has maintained this consistency is Adidas. Across the world, every Adidas brand is easily identifiable because of its signature three stripes. If Adidas were to produce a brand without the signature known to consumers, people would be quick to think twice before shopping there; maybe even considering the store was fake.

In short, you want to be sure your audience knows your brand promise. Without a consistent brand, clients and prospects may not recognize your business properly. You will have multiple levels of communication with your audience, and you need to be sure each message is delivered with consistency, you need to be sure that each image and communication is presented consistently. Everything from your logo, down to your photography style needs to reinforce your brand and adhere to your values.

Clients are much more likely to act if they feel a connection to your brand. You want them to feel invested in your story as if they are an integral part of it. The better your clients can verbalize your brand promise, the better they can share it with others. You also want to be sure that you are targeting the

correct audience. Find the group that you believe identifies with your purpose, market to them appropriately, and that will in turn help excel your brand. At a basic level, a brand promise is a declaration of assurance. It's you, telling your customers what they can expect when they purchase your products and services.

A good way to look at it is as an extension of your company positioning statement. While your brand positioning statement gives context to your organization and explains why you exist to your customers, your promise is how your clients can differentiate you from your competition. A promise makes you inherently more desirable, and relatable too.

A brand promise can be spelled out to the public through website pages and your corporate story. However, the best brand promise definition will always be one that infuses the guiding values of your organization into everything you do and say. After all, a conflict between your brand promise and the way your business behaves can quickly cause problems for your company.

We've all seen companies that struggle with establishing a strong, and credible brand promise. Customers know a genuine promise when they see one. Your company's pledge should be borne from your brand purpose, connected to your values, inspired by your mission, and delivered in every interaction you have with your clients.

Brand promise definition: Choosing vows with value

Like many aspects of the branding journey, a brand promise is one of the components a company can use to develop connections with their target audience. If you want to stand out in an increasingly competitive marketplace, your customers will expect certain things from your business as standard, and your promise needs to go beyond what they already take for granted. The easiest way to find your brand promise is to go into your strategy and think about how you can combine your mission, personality, values, and story into a deliverable concept for your customers.

A brand promise often begins as a written statement, but it's far more than just a piece of paper. A promise is a way of life for a brand, and a convenient way to help you filter your decision-making process. Below are the 2 key steps of building a brand promise:

Step 1: Deliver your brand promise

Once you've answered the question "What is a brand promise?" for you and your company, you'll need to think of ways that you can implement your vows into the way you run your business. Keeping a brand promise is the responsibility of everyone in your company – not just the customer-facing employees. If you want your customers to trust you, then you'll need to make sure that you don't cut any corners on the path to success.

If you promise to always put your customer's needs first, that doesn't just mean that you add service-based keywords and phrases to your marketing plan. It means sitting down with your shareholders, studying your buyer personas, and thinking about how you can deliver the experience your clients are

looking for. For example, do they need next-day delivery on emergency items? Could you offer better service if you add an instant messaging app to your website? Do you have someone available to respond to social media questions and complaints?

As the marketplace changes, you may eventually decide that it's time to change your market promise. If that happens, it's important to remain transparent, keeping colleagues and customers involved along the way.

Step 2: Track your performance and adjust

A lot of the branding experience for today's companies is a mixture of art and science. While you need creative aspects like an emotional marketing campaign and a strong logo, you also need a strategy in place that will help you to make sure that your strategies are working. Tracking your brand reputation and engagement metrics will help you to determine whether your brand promise is resonating well with your audience, or whether you need to rethink your approach.

A great way to find out whether you're making the right promises to your clients is with customer surveys and polls. Send questionnaires to your most loyal customers asking them what they think about your mission statements. Do your customers consider your company to be credible, appealing, and unique? Or do they think you sound the same as your competitors?

If your clients aren't happy with the commitments you're making, ask them what they'd rather see from a company like yours. Sometimes, when clients have a chance to help shape the brands they work with, they begin to feel more devoted to those companies, which helps to drive greater loyalty.

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