

# 22 Immutable Laws of Branding

A look at the Title Pages and chapter examples in the book Al Ries and Laura Ries made famous back in 1998



# Expansion

- The power of a brand is inversely proportional to its slope.
- Chevrolet used to be the largest-selling automobile brand in America. In 1986, for example, the Chevrolet division of General Motors sold 1,718,839 cars. But trying to be all things to everyone undermined the power of the brand. Today Chevrolet sells less than a million cars per year and has fallen to second place in the market behind Ford.

# Contraction

- A brand becomes stronger when you narrow its focus.
- In a few short years, Starbucks has become one of America's best known and most popular brands. Narrowing one's focus is not the same as carrying a limited line. Starbucks offers thirty different types of coffee.

# Publicity

- The birth of a brand is achieved with publicity, not advertising.
- Anita Roddick created the Body Shop in 1976 around the concept of “natural” cosmetics, made of pure ingredients, not tested on animals, and kind to both the environment and the people indigenous to the communities in which the products originated. With virtually no advertising, but with massive amounts of publicity, the Body Shop has become a powerful global brand.

# Advertising

- Once born, a brand needs advertising to stay healthy.
- A consistent theme of Goodyear advertising over the years has been “#1 in tires.” So who makes the best tires? “It must be Goodyear,” thinks the consumer. “It’s the leader.”

# The Word

- A brand should strive to own a word in the mind of the consumer.
- Federal Express became successful by being the first air cargo carrier to narrow its focus to overnight delivery, thereby owning the word “overnight” in the mind of the air cargo user. FedEx has become synonymous with overnight delivery.

# Credentials

- The crucial ingredient in the success of any brand is its claim to authenticity.
- In 1942, Coca-Cola launched an advertising program called “the only thing like Coca-Cola is Coca-Cola itself. It’s the real thing.” In 1970, it reprised the “real thing” slogan for about a year.

# Quality

- Quality is important, but brands are not built by quality alone.
- Rolex has become the world's best-known and best-selling brand of expensive watch. Does quality have anything to do with its success? Probably not. Does Rolex make high-quality watches? Probably. Does it matter? Probably not.

# The Category

- A leading brand should promote the category, not the brand.
- EatZi's is the first brand in a new category which it calls "the meal-market." Jointly owned by Brinker International and Phil Romano, EatZi's focuses on restaurant-quality food primarily for takeout consumption.

# The Name

- In the long run a brand is nothing more than a name.
- One of the world's most powerful brands, Xerox demonstrates many of the most important laws of branding, including being the first in a new category (plain-paper copier) with a short, unique name. Yet when Xerox tried to put its powerful copier name on computers, the result was billions in losses.

# Extensions

- The easiest way to destroy a brand is to put its name on everything.
- With a powerful marketing program, Miller High Life was rapidly gaining on market leader Budweiser. (It got within 20 percent of the King of Beers.) Then Miller introduced a bevy of line-extension brands and stopped Miller High Life cold.

# Fellowship

- In order to build the category, a brand should welcome other brands.
- One of the best locations for a number-two brand is across the street from the leader. The best place for a Planet Hollywood is right across the street from its biggest competitor, Hard Rock Café. Both brands will benefit.

# Generic

- One of the fastest routes to failure is giving a brand a generic name.
- Blockbuster Video is a good brand name for a video rental store, while General Video Rental is not. Brands should avoid generic names like the plague. Yet wherever you look, you see a raft of generic names, especially in the retail area.

# Company

- Brands are brands. Companies are companies. There is a difference.
- Does the Tide brand need the corporate endorsement of the company name, Procter & Gamble? Probably not. Will a corporate endorsement hurt the brand? Probably not. Corporate endorsements are primarily for the trade, not for the enlightenment of the consumer.

# Subbrands

- What branding builds, subbranding can destroy.
- Holiday Inn has become a megabrand with the launch of subbrands like Holiday Inn Express, Holiday Inn Select, Holiday Inn SunSpree Resorts, and Holiday Inn Garden Court. This subbranding is eroding the power of the core brand.

# Siblings

- There is a time and a place to launch a second brand.
- When Honda wanted to introduce an expensive car, it didn't call the brand a Honda Plus or a Honda Ultra. It developed a new brand called Acura, which became a big success. As a matter of fact, Acura quickly became the largest-selling imported luxury car in America.

# Shape

- A brand's logotype should be designed to fit the eyes. Both eyes.
- A customer sees the world through two horizontally mounted eyes peering out of his or her head. It's like looking out the windshield of an automobile. For maximum visual impact, a logotype should have the same shape as a windshield, roughly two and one-fourth units wide and one unit high. The Avis logotype is almost the perfect shape. The Arby's logotype is much too vertical.

# Color

- A brand should use a color that is the opposite of its major competitor's.
- What color is a Tiffany box? It's that distinctive robin's-egg blue. All Tiffany boxes are blue. If Tiffany had used a variety of colors for its boxes, it would have lost a marvelous opportunity to reinforce the brand name with a distinctive color.

# Borders

- There are no barriers to global branding. A brand should know no borders.
- Heineken NV exports its brand to some 170 different countries. In most of these countries Heineken is the largest-selling high-priced beer. (Today Heineken brews its beer locally in some fifty countries.)

# Consistency

- A brand is not built overnight. Success is measured in decades, not years.
- BMW has been the ultimate driving machine for twenty-five years. What's even more remarkable is the fact that BMW retained its strategy even though the brand was driven through three separate advertising agencies. A change in agencies usually signals the end of a brand's consistency.

# Change

- Brands can be changed, but only infrequently and only very carefully.
- Citibank is in the process of changing from a corporate bank to a consumer bank. It plans to make Citibank the first global consumer bank. It will take awhile, but it can be done. So far, so good. But now comes the merger with Travelers Group, which threatens the entire branding process.

# Mortality

- No brand will live forever. Euthanasia is often the best solution.
- Film photography is slowly being replaced by digital photography. But Kodak refuses to face that reality. Instead it is trying to save its brand by using the Kodak name on its digital products.

# Singularity

- The most important aspect of a brand is its single-mindedness.
- Volvo has been selling safety for some thirty-five years. In the process, the brand has become the largest-selling European luxury car.

# The 22 Immutable Laws of BRANDING

- How to Build a Product or Service into a World-Class Brand
- Al Ries and Laura Ries
- 1998