

Key Marketing Terms and Phrases – What Do They Mean?

Q: The terms and phrases used in branding confuse me. Help - what do they all mean?

In my 25 years as a brander and a marketer, I have seen a lot of confusion around what the various elements of branding and marketing mean. So, don't worry – you're far from alone!

As we kick off this new column on branding, it's my hope to clear up a lot of confusion as we talk about many different aspects of brands. I want to help you unleash the power of branding and to learn how to use that power to advance both your business and your career. But first, to answer your question, here's my take on the most common branding terms.

What is a “brand”? You may think a brand is a “product” or a “trademark.” But it isn't that easy! A brand goes beyond the mere physical attributes of a product or trademark. In fact, a brand is actually *intangible* – you can smell the aroma of a Starbucks cup of coffee, you can taste the flavor of a chewy Mentos, you can see the golden arches of McDonalds – but you cannot *touch* a “brand.” A brand has both rational and emotional appeal, so it provides a total *experience* enjoyed by customers. That, in turn, helps the brand create a perception of added value, leading to customer loyalty.

What is “brand positioning”? Brand positioning is the way you want your customers to perceive, think, and feel about your brand versus competition. The best managers take time to carefully define the six fundamental elements that make up a positioning: Target, Need, Competitive Framework, Benefits, Reasons Why, and Brand Character. Put those six into a one-page statement that then serves as a foundation – a compass - for everything that brand does, and that's how to reach a specific, desired position in the marketplace. *Every* brand – whether B2C or B2B, and no matter what industry it is in – should have a clearly-defined positioning statement in order to achieve success faster.

So then, is “branding” different? Yes! “Branding” most often refers to the design elements that a brand uses to identify itself, like logos, icons, colors, and layout schemes that are used consistently wherever the brand name or product appears. Those elements may even be legally protected to make sure they are only associated with that one brand and no other.

Got it... so, then, what is “marketing”? Once the branding has been defined, it's time to market the brand. Marketing includes all the activities aimed at uncovering, then satisfying, that brand's customers *better* than competition. After the target market has been determined, marketing is all about *communicating consistently* to that target market how and why the brand will fill their wants and needs.

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Ok, so how are “marketing” and “sales” different? Sales refers to the actual transaction that takes place when a customer chooses to purchase one brand over another. Brand positioning, branding, and marketing are activities that all lead up to that sale.

So while brand positioning, branding, and marketing all have the same goal of creating sales – and revenue - each one plays a different role in the process.

Different Types of Brands

As this column continues, we’ll uncover different types of brands and how each one can play an important role in your success, both personally and professionally.

Intrigued? I hope so! I look forward to sharing with you in future columns how mastering your business and personal brands can bring you greater success and workplace satisfaction.

Brenda S. Bence is an internationally-recognized branding expert, Certified Executive Coach, dynamic trainer and Certified Speaking Professional, and the author of several award-winning books, including the *How YOU™ Are Like Shampoo* personal branding series. Her book, *Smarter Branding Without Breaking the Bank: Five Proven Marketing Strategies You Can Use Right Now to Build Your Business at Little or No Cost*, shows small and medium-sized businesses how to leverage five branding assets that they already have, unleashing a treasure chest of tips, tools, and techniques to catapult their brands and increase revenues immediately, at low cost – or no cost at all.



With an MBA from Harvard Business School, Brenda’s career has spanned more than two decades and has included developing mega brands for Procter & Gamble and Bristol-Myers Squibb across four continents and 50 countries. Now, as President of Brand Development Associates (BDA) International, she travels the world speaking, training, and coaching individuals and companies to greater success through creative, yet practical, corporate and personal brand development.

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