



# Have Brand – Will Travel

Insider Secrets from HiveMind Studios

*create stuff that matters.*  
HIVEMIND STUDIOS

# We're the *Creative Agency* You've Been Searching for

## WE'RE FEARLESS.

We're not afraid of big ideas; you shouldn't be either. These are the game changers. It takes a little more work to sell them up the ladder, but it's worth it.

## WE'RE FRESH.

We have stylish and sophisticated tastes. We take great pride in being storytellers, solving problems, and making ideas work—beautifully. We push creative ideas to the limit to break through the noise and engage a new breed of consumer.

## WE'RE FUN.

Advertising is supposed to be a little bit fun. Creating exciting concepts, running campaigns, building websites...what's not to love?

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# 1. A Blank Canvas

# Starting with a **Blank** Canvas

**W**hether you're rebranding a bricks and mortar retail store, or simply adding ecommerce to the mix, most companies marketing to multiple audiences need to rethink their brands from time to time.

If you're very lucky, you can start at the beginning and reevaluate the name of your company or product line. The right name and the right tagline can be a game changer.

Establishing relationships with strangers (to your brand) means understanding that they have immediate access to the Internet and can read all about your competitors or stores at which they've had good or bad experiences. And when they look at your website, store signage, packaging, and even presales support, they are mentally tallying whether you're going to make their short list.

Rebranding involves establishing who you are, why you're different, what's unique about you, and what's your personality. When you're marketing your product and services to customers and potential customers, you need to develop a clear elevator pitch that quickly communicates your message and value

Companies are always looking for agencies with strong experience in their own brand category. And that's not completely unreasonable. One hopes to get an agency that understands the vernacular and maybe the "secrets" of the industry. But the truth of the matter is that all clients are very different and it's unlikely that a solution that works for one company will work for another. The idea of "best practices" assumes that one solution applies across the board. And that's a false assumption.



An agency with strong experience in a brand has as many disadvantages as advantages.

- Their rebranding process might not try new approaches, but settle for what worked in the past.
- They might recirculate old ideas, that worked for baby-boomers, without accounting for how much the millennial market has changed.

# Going Back to the Drawing Board

- They might favor old media channels just as new media becomes established.

These are all reasons why the first step with your rebranding project should be a Discovery Phase. This is where the fresh perspective of a new agency can learn and reveal new truths about your brand. They need to know everything you know about your product lines, your future plans, your past reputation, what's worked, what didn't work, and more.

Some agencies relegate this to a questionnaire but at HiveMind, we find that answers to questions don't provide enough context for solid rebranding. It's okay for facts and figures, but not for generating an accurate assessment of your situation. We rely on information-gathering meetings guided by our general knowledge of your brand based on initial online research. We sit down with you and your team and simply start asking questions. That's our baseline, our reference point.



Next, still in the Discovery Phase, we supplement this rebranding Q&A with research, including online website research of competitors, as well as phone calls to customers, partners, and key staff. Now we're getting a more complete, well-rounded picture of your brand, including its strong and weak attributes. We learn what's been done so far, how decisions have been made with regard to product and company naming,

positioning lines, messaging, and more.

The challenge at this point is to identify opportunities that will strengthen your position in a crowded marketing. That's our specialty. We understand what it takes to build a comprehensive brand experience and develop custom-fit creative solutions that make everything from your business cards and POS displays to your website and display advertising more exciting, dramatic, engaging, and clear.



2. Get Off the Merry-Go-Round

# Get off the Merry Go Round

Brand Positioning, as its name implies, involves describing the competitive context of your brand. It's a marketing strategy that was introduced in 1969 and made famous by Jack Trout of Ries & Trout. And we think it's an essential ingredient for good branding. Brand Positioning helps establish the unique benefits of your brand (rather than its features) within the context of the market. It's about defining with great specificity who you are, what you do well, and why anyone should care.

Invariably, many companies come to us assuming that they have no competitors. They're convinced they have created a new category of product with performance and features that can't be matched.

But this isn't the correct mindset for grabbing market share with a new product. We immediately want to know: "Who are the people who are buying the inferior or cheaper version of your product right now? Why

are they buying this version? Can this new product establish it's own market?" Without strategic brand positioning, you risk diluting any and all further branding and marketing tactics. Customers will struggle to understand your product and its benefits, and won't buy what you're selling.

For example, if you're a new fast food brand introducing a new hamburger to the fast food market, you'll need to first understand how McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, etc., present their burgers and brands to the public.



This means developing buyer personas for all your perspective customers and why they prefer one brand over another. It's a process of evaluating the benefits of buying a hamburger from McDonald's versus buying a hamburger from Wendy's. McDonald's might offer a cheaper quarter pounder while Wendy's quarter pounder is more expensive but includes bacon. These are just two different, but important differentiators that will influence consumer choice.

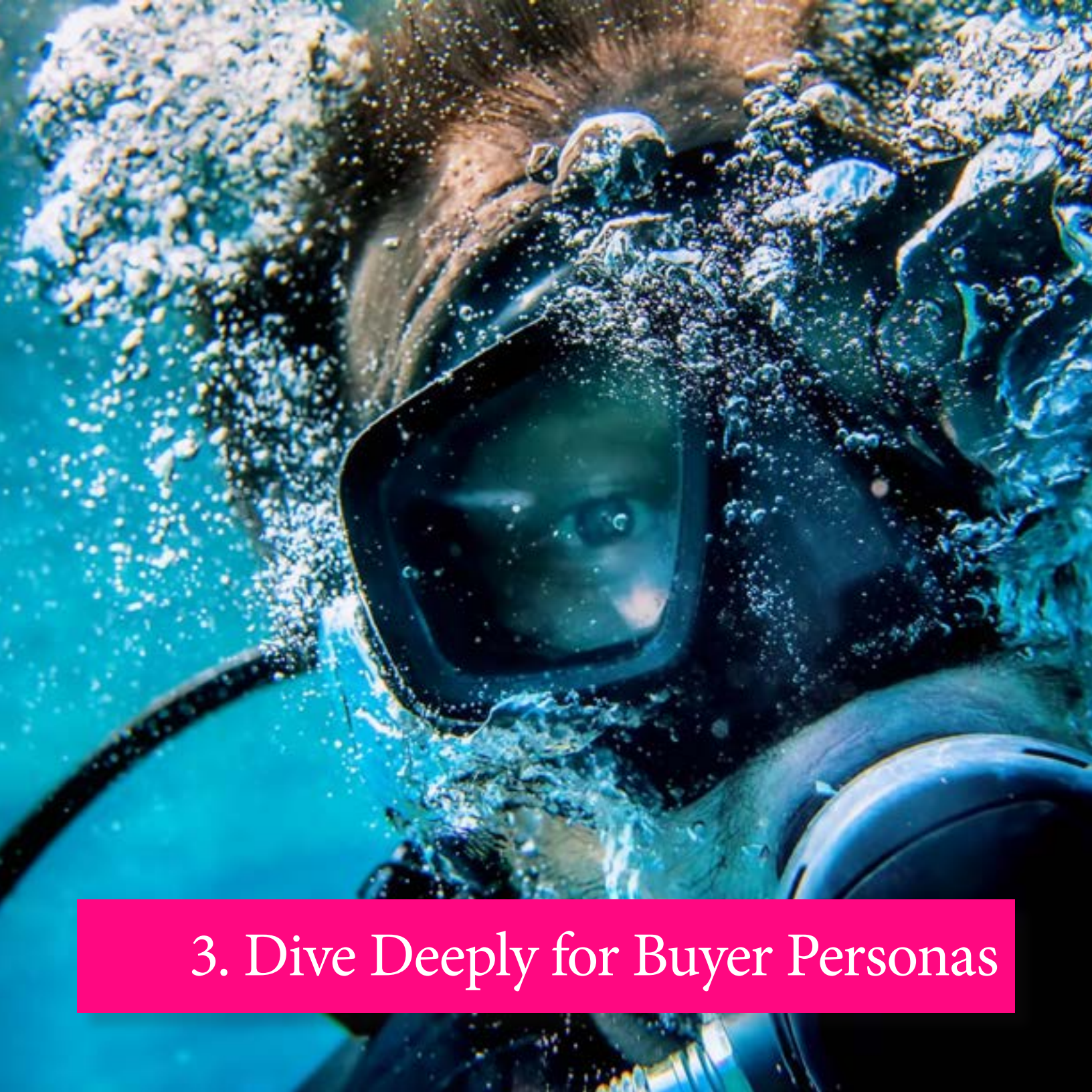
“ Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is the definition of insanity.



Other benefits might include food quality, uniqueness of the menu, family orientation, or number of health-conscious choices.

When we dig deeper into the fast food market, we also have to consider a broader list of fast food providers, such as Taco Bell, Domino's, Pizza Hut, and Popeyes, and decide what percentage of the total fast food market this new brand has the potential to capture. After the research has been gathered and completed, we begin

the process of sifting through the impressions, personal statements, and documented competitive information. Our objective is to define the realities and opportunities for differentiation in the marketplace. We're looking for differences that are important to customer engagement and purchase. The end result is a "brand positioning statement" that clearly defines who you are and the benefits behind your brand of burger.



### 3. Dive Deeply for Buyer Personas

# Dive Deeply for Buyer Personas

I'm sure you've seen the term "Buyer Personas" before, but have you seen many companies that do a good job in this area? Whether we're working on branding campaigns for millennials or baby-boomers, buyer personas have become more important than ever.

Using a combination of raw data and educated guesses, buyer personas provide a touchstone for creating fresh creative concepts and fabulous content. Building personas for your core audience

can help improve the way you solve problems for your customers.

Businesses can be more strategic in catering to each audience and relating to their personal interests.

Diving deep into personas can be the catalyst that turns a crude sketch into a true portrait.

Personas can also help you find

previously undetected tactical opportunities for your brand, product, or service. Where does your product or service intersect with what your persona does or cares about? Once uncovered, these are valuable insights.

## The Basic Marketing Persona Template

Start by putting together an informational sketch of a key audience you want to reach. You might include information for a corporate customer (and maybe a few additional personal tastes and aspirations in a millennial persona).

To help your persona take shape, you must cast a wide net, from the tiny details logged away in your site analytics to actual conversations with real-life customers. Here are some places to look:

### Take a closer look at your site analytics.

Inside your analytics, you can see where your visitors came from, what keywords they used to find you, and how long they spent once they arrived. Enlist the help of your webmaster to uncover the ever-expanding bits and pieces available here.

“Diving deep into personas can be the catalyst that turns a crude sketch into a true portrait.”

### **Involve your team in creating profiles.**

Put a team together that includes not only marketing, but also customer service, sales reps, tech support, and product managers. These people interact directly with your customers and often have pools of data they can share on what makes your customers tick.

### **Social media research**

Research social media. It's grown way beyond the big four. Millennials, who share more frequently than other groups, have their favorite apps. And images are more important than ever to take the place of a thousand words. Once you've identified preferred channels, listen in to hear potential customers asking questions or airing problems.

### **Ask your audience questions.**

Whether you use telephone interviews or surveys, you can find out a lot by talking to customers. They know why they bought your product. And it might be totally different than what you're communicating in your marketing. Interviews are the best, because you can respond to their answers and gain further insight into their values, pain points, aspirations, and goals.



**Ask questions that dig deeper into your customers' goals and challenges. For example:**

- What's important to them now and in the future?
- What's impeding or speeding their need to change?
- What do they need to know to embrace change?
- Who do they turn to for advice or information?
- What's the value they visualize once they make a decision?
- What could cause the need for this change to lose priority?

## Buyer Persona Cheat Sheet

### Basics

- Name of the persona
- Job title
- Key company information (size, type, etc.)
- Details about their role

### Demographics

- Age
- Gender
- Household income
- Urban / suburban / rural
- Education
- Family

### Goals and challenges

- Primary goal
- Secondary goal
- How you help achieve these goals
- Primary challenge
- Secondary challenge
- How you help solve these problems

### Values / fears

- Common objections during sales process
- Your marketing message
- Your Elevator pitch

### Hobbies

- Real quotes from customer interviews
- Computer literacy
- Where they get their news?
- Social Channels they prefer

# Buyer Persona *Cheat* Sheet: Part 2

## **A Couple of Pointers:**

### **Start by giving each persona a name**

This is more important than you think. You want the persona to feel like a real person. And you want this person to react to what you're doing from their particular and very specific vantage point.

### **Identify the persona's job, role, and company**

If your customer base is larger companies, you want to include their job title, company size and type of business. Surveys are a great way to take a quick sampling of your existing customer base to establish the validity of this information.

On the other hand, if your customers are buying with personal funds, it's more important to identify aspects of their personal lives. You still might use income ranges, but you might also include family information, education, aspirations, and viewpoints. You can get additional info from Google Analytics, such as age, gender, affinity and technology.

### **Details, details, details**

The more specifics you gather, the more valuable each persona becomes to facilitate genuine understanding of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of your customers.

## **Use Your Intuition**

Try to put yourself in the shoes of your customer and approach the solution with empathy. What common objections arise for them during the sales process? What might keep this customer from buying? You and a small team can then brainstorm solutions.

## **Marketing message and elevator pitch**

While not yet engaging in the creative process, you can begin to build messaging that is useful. Determine the best ways to meet the needs of each persona you create. How would you describe your product to this particular type of person. Then distill that message into an elevator pitch that strikes home.

## **How Many Is Enough**

So how many of these personas do you need to create? Many companies use three to five personas to represent their audience. This number needs to be big enough to cover the majority of your customers yet small enough to embrace specificity. Whatever your time and energy can build, the results will be a better experience for the customer and a more engaged customer for your business.



## 4. Adding Creativity to the Mix

# Adding Creativity to the Mix

The next step of our branding process involves creative. It's time to turn all the positioning, insights, analytics, and interviews into creative branding ideas that can serve as the background for a fresh brand experience.

So first, let's talk about why Big Creative Ideas are so important. Realize that this is where the magic happens, where people get nervous as well as excited, where some people try to squash ideas before they can grow into a concept that is beautiful, edgy, or startling.



For example, many left-brained marketing consultants warn not to put too much faith in creative ideas. Just state your product's benefits clearly, they advise. Make sure you have your keywords identified. Keep messages plain and simple. Google's robots don't understand creative ideas. Test one (mediocre) idea against another for success. Well we're here to tell you that you shouldn't believe them.

## **Marry Creative Ideas with Strong Positioning**

We all know that the real marketing battles take place in your prospects' minds. The key to reaching your audience, before your competitors, is...you guessed it...creativity.

The creative branding ideas you develop have to not only capture and maintain a presence in your audience's mind, but also present a compelling message, a memorable, consistent personality, voice and point of view — all creative issues.

## **The World is Flat**

We don't want to burst anyone's bubble, but no matter what you do strategically, you still have to compete with a zillion other messages.

And you have only two choices: You can repeat messages over and over and over again until they

finally sink in. Or you communicate your message in such a fresh, new, surprising and relevant way that people can't forget them. The latter approach is more effective and costs less.

### **Frequency is Maddeningly Slow**

Without creative impact, your message is relegated to the slow drip of frequency. Time is spent waiting for your search rankings to improve, and for the number of your twitter followers to grow. You wait patiently for nature to take its course and for your selling points to eventually sink in. If they get in at all. Nowadays, it simply takes too long.

In the meantime, a competitor can zip past you into your audience's head with a new idea or benefit. Or even take a position or attribute or key differentiator away from you. All they need is the right strategy and the powerful engine of creative impact.

### **Creativity Delivers Impact**

Rather than sending out interruptive, self-centered messages that tell people what they should believe about your products, send them something impactful. Impact is a direct result of how original, surprising and relevant your creative is. Despite the tremendous media clutter out there, people will always stop, notice and connect with a message that's fresh and direct and engaging and human.

Always.

### **It's Not for the Timid**

Creating bold ideas like this means running risks.

If an email campaign, microsite, or product promotion is provocative, interesting and intriguing, it will create an adverse comment or two along the way — especially inside your company. That's when you know you're got on to something.

In fact, if the idea doesn't make some company executive sweat a little, than you're probably not saying anything worth saying.

### **The Process**

Now that you understand the importance of creativity, let's talk about the process for coming up with great creative branding ideas. Some people



imagine that a creative genius sits in a room and brainstorms concepts, until she/he gets what they want. Other times, we imagine someone sitting down and solving a problem with a flash of inspiration. Some actors use the Stanislavsky technique for immersing themselves in their roles. This has been successfully adapted to coming up with marketing and advertising ideas.

The point is that great ideas have been fashioned in all sorts of ways. There's no right or wrong way to do it.


But in our experience, it is difficult to consistently generate great ideas using a random, wait-for-my-muse, methodology. More likely is the scenario where many people get together and brainstorm. This is still an unfettered, no-holds barred creative discussion, where all ideas are considered, recorded, evaluated.

If things are too rigid, or there are too many distractions, or a left-brained leader is killing fresh ideas because they don't yet make sense, then you need to change your surroundings.

Phase 1 involves immersing yourself in all the analytics, personas, positioning, and product awareness you can. This might mean wearing the product (shoes, purses, cosmetics) living inside the product (cars), demoing the product (fly fishing rods and reels, FitBit, Google Glasses), or even eating the product (got milk).

Phase II involves looking at the problem from another angle. Maybe you need to spin your head around, walk through the door backwards, do whatever it takes to transform your reality just enough to put you in a different frame of mind (probably where that phrase originated). Maybe for you, it takes a walk around the park, a stay at home day, a shower, or an off-site meeting.

Whatever strategy you choose, we'll bet that you discover that your ideas have more force, more energy, more interest, and more human connection. Once we reach this stage everyone feeds off that energy. It's not a question of finding one idea, it's a question of choosing the best of several great ideas. And that's not a bad problem to have.





## 5. Bulding New Brand Experiences

# Building New Brand Experiences

## Execution and Brand Extension

The last part of our branding methodology covers extension, execution, and alignment. Brands can only come to life when they are pervasive and consistent. So use the positioning and the creative everywhere you can.

This goes far beyond corporate identity. For a restaurant, it might extend to menus, napkins, take out order bags, signage, wall colors, and of course every communication with the customer — from voicemail, digital ads, shared images, customer reminders, and social posts.

The creative doesn't stop here. You have the idea, the color, the look and feel, and the theme. Now you need to be creative in how these elements are implemented. Look around for opportunities. If you're a B2B company, what does your lobby look like. Is the furniture aligned with your branding? What music do you have playing in the lobby? Is there a way to jazz it up, add a sign, poster, or even redesign the space to accentuate the branding. Every part of your brand is an opportunity to differentiate and define who you are.

If you're a B2C company, look long and hard at anything that comes in contact with your customers. I don't mean simply kiosks or counter

cards. What does your packaging look like? What does your shipping container look like? Are you adding a Thank You note to each order or another reminder of your branding?

This is what is meant by creating a customer experience. Every touchpoint should be considered another opportunity for reinforcement.

Harry's Razors is a good example. They are promoting the idea that razors don't need to be so expensive. And that you certainly don't need the batteries and rotating heads and 5 blades of the market leader to get a good shave. Their branding is



minimalist. You order razor blades, and they come in a light brown cardboard box. The razor itself is styled to look more old fashioned. And they sell shaving cream and the brush to apply it, the way it was done in barbershops 50 years ago. Their name is on everything; their colors are consistent, their communications are low-key. They anticipate when you might be running out blades, cream, after-shave, and other supplies. One of their messages is: “We were surprised when we discovered how inexpensively you can make a good razor blade.” This doesn’t directly shame the competition, but it targets people who are tired of buying razor blades for \$3-\$5 each.

### **Brand Alignment In Action: Madewell**

Another brand that’s hitting a creative branding home run is Madewell. Part of the J.Crew family, Madewell opened its doors in 2006 with the branding philosophy, Good Days Start with Great Jeans. With the dream of becoming the Levi’s for the millennial market, Madewell goes the extra mile to ensure a good fit, a beautiful brand experience and a happy, loyal customer. Let’s break down how this brand does an excellent job with brand alignment, execution, and extension.

### **The Company Name: Madewell**

As we mentioned earlier in our branding process, if you have the opportunity to re-name your

company, this can be a big brand advantage. Madewell, for example, communicates quality and craftsmanship. It’s a name that speaks to both the DIY-ers and burgeoning Etsy community as well as advocates of the Maker Movement (a millennial movement that values craftsmanship, hand-made products and an artisanal-style, small batch approach to manufacturing.)



## The Industry: Denim

Madewell has done an excellent job of positioning themselves as denim's "new normal." Finding a unique market niche is a great way to build a brand and earn consumer trust. The power of great positioning helps identify the unique problem that your product or company solves. In the minds of Americans, for example, denim is synonymous with apple pie. It's a "true blue" wardrobe staple we can always count on. Madewell's initial brand proposition says:

Look, we do this one thing really, really well. Try our denim first. Discover how great it is.

By staying incredibly focused on denim and craftsmanship, Madewell cements itself as a brand committed to selling great denim. And it builds the integrity of the brand over time. Earning customer trust is everything. Earn that and you open the floodgates to building out other successful merchandise categories.

## The Audience: Millennials

Creating a memorable brand experience starts with identifying who your customers are and then building an experience around their interests, motivations and values. In Madewell's case, the audience is predominantly Millennials (people between the ages of 18-34). Millennials are a new breed of shopper. They're set to overtake the Baby Boomers as the largest living generation this year. They've cut their teeth on technology, and

**DO WELL**

### GIVE YOUR OLD JEANS A SECOND LIFE

**Step 1**  
Bring your old jeans into your local Madewell store. (You know, the ones that haven't seen the light of day in way too long!)

**Step 2**  
They'll be sent to our friends at Blue Jeans Go Green™ and turned into housing insulation.

**Step 3**  
You'll get \$20 off a new pair of jeans—our way of saying thanks for participating.\*

P.S. To date, you've helped us collect over 21,000 pairs of jeans and ship to homes nationwide, from South Carolina to California.

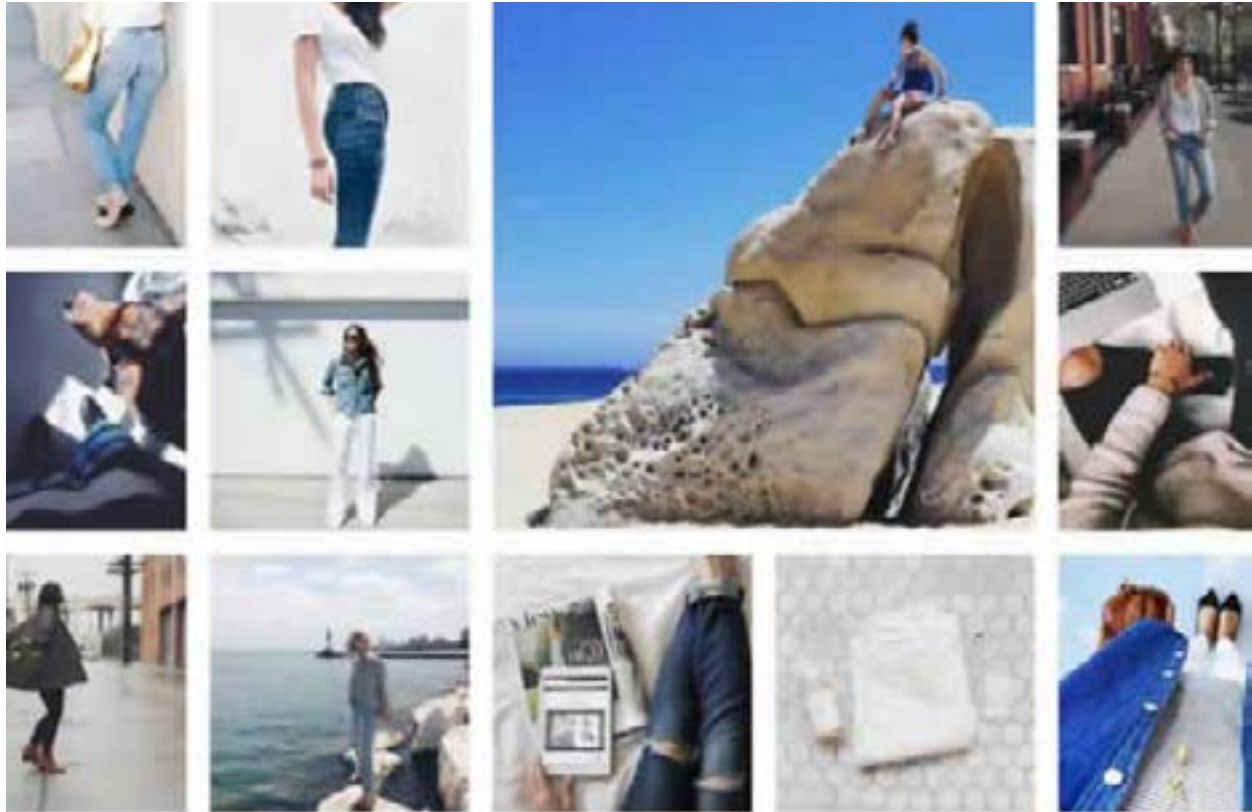
**HOW THIS WHOLE "JEANS TO HOUSE" THING HAPPENS?  
ON THE BLOG >**

**FIND A STORE >**

**BLUE JEANS GO GREEN**  
A Madewell Initiative

come of age during global warming. They expect your brand to give back to the planet, to use their personal data for good, and they want to look incredible. Madewell uses this kind of information about their customers to drive their brand value proposition. They've developed a philanthropic business model and mindset that not only works hard to give back to the community, but that also reinforces their branding as a denim superstar. Case in point: They've partnered with the Blue

Jeans Go Green denim recycling program and offer \$20 off a full-priced pair of Madewell denim in exchange for a pair of your old jeans. (They quip: "You know, the ones that haven't seen the light of day for way too long?") Used denim is sent to Blue Jeans Go Green and turned into housing insulation. Pretty cool, right? Not only do customers get a hefty discount on a brand new pair of Madewell jeans, they also get an easy way to give back and feel good about themselves.



### **The Creative: Instagram, UGC**


Madewell has taken the time to develop a unique brand aesthetic that reinforces its commitment to great jeans, craftsmanship and cool-girl style. The simplicity of their brand aesthetic mirrors the simplicity of their brand position as steadfastly denim. Their website and social channels also communicate this aesthetic seamlessly. And in the interest of driving great UGC (user generated content), Madewell shares customer photos that reflect a similar look and feel on their social channels. It's important to recognize that Madewell takes no creative space for granted. Every post, snap, tweet and email can either strengthen or weaken a brand experience. Use your space (website, Instagram feed, Facebook Page) wisely.

### **The Experience: Brand Extension**

Madewell's brand extends through all its digital channels as well as throughout its retail locations. This includes what the receipt looks like when you purchase clothing or accessories. It includes how the store is laid out, what the fitting rooms look and feel like, how spacious the store feels, what's displayed in the window, whether or not they have a particular scent of candle burning and how their sales associates are dressed.

### **Final Thoughts**

We're showing you some of the best branding out there. Yours may not reach these heights right away. So don't be discouraged. Implement what you can the best that you can. Your brand can evolve over time to lead the market.





**Bonus: Branding for Millennials**

## #instagood Branding | Storytelling, Teen Speak, Transparency

How consumer brands reach Millennials is the question du jour. Recent research shows that, right now, this group represents 50% of the workforce and by 2020, they'll account for 75%. In response to these somewhat surprising findings, brands are working hard to remodel their marketing and advertising to reflect the interests, values and motivations of this younger generation. Some big brands are doing an excellent job (e.g. Taco Bell and Oreos), others are scrambling to keep up, and a few are missing the mark entirely.



Branding for Millennials might send you back to the drawing board to crack the millennial marketing code. Since Millennials know exactly what technology can deliver, they expect brands to give them personalized, authentic customer

experiences (they know you have your hands on their data and expect you to use it wisely). But they don't want your ads so much as they want to hear stories about your brand. Digital prophet, [David Shing](#) revealed in a recent [Adweek Editorial](#) that, for Millennials, "It's all about content. Nobody wants ads [...] 70 percent of people would rather read about a brand than be advertised to [...] They spend all their time in feeds, meaning news feeds, message feeds and photo feeds. And it's not that they don't like advertising – they don't like bad advertising."

Millennials are also holding their favorite brands to higher standards – they like knowing that you're giving back to the community, minimizing your carbon footprint and treating your employees well. Interestingly enough, despite being criticized as "selfie-obsessed," this is probably the most socially conscious group out there. In the Millennial mind, you shouldn't have to sacrifice style for quality and transparency. And on a personal level, Millennials want to be valued for their customer loyalty and given incentives to keep the good times going.

Several notable favorites and upstart brands that are doing an awesome job with Millennial branding and marketing, and giving back to the

community, include: **Tom's Shoes**, **Zady**, **Imogene + Willie**, and **Warby Parker**. Tom's Shoes donates a pair of shoes to a person in need for every pair sold. Zady identifies itself as a “lifestyle destination for conscious consumers” with a mission to “combat the fast-fashion craze by providing a platform for only those companies that care about timeless style and solid construction.” Imogene + Willie is



revitalizing the denim industry in United States utilizing old selvedge looms that add a distinctly hand-made touch to their product. And Warby Parker is the only eyewear company to go carbon neutral and they've made a commitment to donate a pair of glasses to someone in need for every pair purchased.

### **Millennial Messaging: Language is Key**

Mastering teen speak is an essential piece of the Millennial puzzle. A recent Forbes' article

reveals that, beyond being do-gooders, the brands (mentioned above) have taken the time to carefully craft “millennial messages” that ditch the “jargon of sustainability and even the word ‘sustainability’ itself. (It’s important to note that for consumers “who favor purpose-driven organizations” – “sustainability” can be a counterproductive term. It is disconnected and is often perceived to be at odds with what consumers want: well-designed, stylish products that make them look good and feel good.”) The trick is to communicate “sustainable practices in terms that connect with an audience’s values and motivations.” Rather than focusing on its commitment to “sustainable production,” for example, Warby Parker makes its “meticulous craftsmanship” a key selling point. And with branding phrases like, “Doing good is in our DNA,” sprinkled across its website, Warby Parker creates a brand experience that not only reinforces its commitment to philanthropy, but also extols the benefits of buying a product crafted with care.

### **Millennial Marketing: Creating Brand Ambassadors**

Millennials can be your brand’s best friend and best ambassador, if you know how to engage with and market to them on social media. Mary Meeker’s **latest trend report** names Instagram the king of social networks for this generation. The platform



other do-good brands to propel their own brand messages, style and philosophy a step further. Two great examples: Zady instagrammed about Fashion Revolution Day using the trending hashtag, #whomademyclothes, and Warby Parker teamed up with Barkbox for an event they named, Warby Barker (which still has its own [Instagram account](#) JUST for dogs wearing Warby Parker spectacles.)

This type of cross-industry, collaborative content is a smart mix of information, humor, style and entertainment – and it connects very sophisticated dots in the minds and eyes of an audience.

Tapping into several different values, interests and motivations at once (i.e. Warby Parker & BarkBox’s cute animals, great sunglasses, great cause, clever photography) tells a compelling story and builds a strategic brand matrix of devoted followers who are eager to participate and share this kind of multi-interest and multi-cause content. #instagood



content creates reasons for Millennials to engage with your brand. The result is a collaborative economy that dovetails nicely with a generation who sees the value in sharing and co-creating.

One of the things Millennials love most about social media is that these channels provide an unprecedented level of portability, immediacy and intimacy between people and brands. We’ll be the first to admit that it’s quite a rush when a big brand like Sephora favorites and retweets something we’ve shared. But it’s not just the affirmation and personal contact that’s exciting, it’s the accessibility to previously untouchable channels of communication that keeps us coming back for more.

There’s something pretty powerful about posting photos of “everyday people” using your products. Whether through contests or hashtags, empowering and connecting with consumers is a great way to inspire brand loyalty. When a brand




goes the extra mile to connect with us or thank us for our loyalty, for example, we're twice as likely to buy from them again. In addition, we're inspired to post and share fun, well-choreographed photos and videos with friends and followers of brands that we trust. User-generated content really is worth its weight in gold!

### **Thinking Beyond Product**

Branding for Millennials is as much about experience as it is about product. Beyond selling beautiful, well-crafted shirts, shoes or sunglasses, your brand needs to sell an experience. You must

ask and answer questions about your brand including: What does my brand feel like? What does my brand look like? What does it stand for? What value does it bring to my customer's lives? How is my brand different than the competition? What problem does my brand solve? How is my brand giving back? If someone knew how my product was made, would they still respect my business? Millennial marketing doesn't have to be scary or intimidating, but it does take additional time and preparations to understand what motivates, inspires and influences this new generation.



*create stuff that matters.*

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