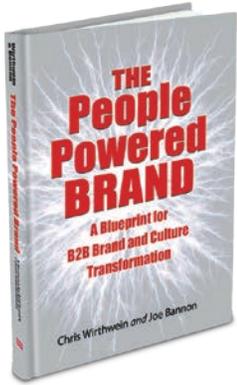


The 10 qualities of a big idea

Characteristics to help develop and evaluate innovative ideas



*"The 10 qualities of a big idea" is adapted from the new book, **The People Powered Brand: A Blueprint for B2B Brand and Culture Transformation.** It provides a step-by-step process for bringing together the untapped resources of employee engagement and customer insights to create B2B brands with the power to win.*

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Businesses in B2B can succeed with ideas of all sizes. But unquestionably, big ideas make an impression in the marketplace and can help build powerful brands.

In their new book *The People Powered Brand*, co-authors Chris Wirthwein and Joe Bannon share 10 qualities that characterize big ideas. This list can be put to work not only to help you develop big ideas, but also to evaluate competing ideas on their merit.

An idea can be considered big without possessing all 10 of the criteria below, but any big idea should absolutely meet these first three criteria. The more criteria your idea fits, the better it will be.



1) Transformation: Can the idea change attitudes, beliefs and behaviors? Open up new ways of seeing and thinking? Alter the course of customers, markets and companies and be a "game-changer" on a grand scale? The transformation caused by the idea should affect the market (customers, prospects, competitors, influencers). As a result, it will necessarily transform the company and its people.



2) "Ownability": How tightly can the idea be linked to your brand and *only* to your brand? In other words, can you own it, or can it be easily copied? The basic idea behind ownability is: "only from us...only for you." Ownability is where the majority of potential big ideas fall down.



3) Simplicity: When we remove the excess and simplify, the "I get it" factor emerges. No truly big idea can survive the blemish of being misunderstood. Truly creative ideas never confuse. Rather, they clarify, reveal and illuminate.

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10 qualities of a big idea, continued



4) Originality: We human beings are programmed to be captivated by newness and originality. Brand marketers, questing for big ideas, should always be on the lookout for ways to harness this powerful, universal truth.



5) Surprise: Think of surprise as a cousin of originality. The concept here is to create an unexpected, good surprise—the kind that makes a customer or employee feel appreciated and cared for. Good surprises make people feel special. And that’s the kind of impact a surprising big idea can create for your brand.



6) Magnetism: Certain big ideas have an allure, an attraction, an appeal that pulls people toward them. It’s hard to invent or engineer a magnetic idea; rather, you will often stumble into one. How? Pay attention when you’re “on location” with customers and prospects at their office, business setting, factory or job site. You may spot a pattern of what’s attractive to these customers, and be able to use it to spark a big idea.



7) Infectiousness: Ever had an idea grab you to the point where you simply can’t forget it? Maybe it’s a song, a color, a taste, a smell, a nifty solution to a problem—perhaps it’s just a feeling. Some concepts seem to stick in our consciousness and never leave. That’s infectiousness.



8) Contagiousness: An idea becomes even more powerful when it spreads to others. Whether you call it virality or “buzzi-ness,” big ideas can compel people to tell others. And that’s what you’re after for your brand.



9) Egocentricity: People have an instinctive interest and fascination with...themselves! Understanding what appeals to your audiences is key to running a good business and building a great brand. When you address a person’s self-interest, you establish yourself and your brand on a common and comfortable footing with your audience.



10) Likability: In the study of advertising communications, one factor contributes to effectiveness more than any other does: likability. One study included around 300,000 observations of nearly 3,000 print advertising campaigns. The purpose of the study was to identify factors that account for an ad being effective. By “effective” the study meant the ad achieved higher scores on two measures: recognition and attribution. Eighty percent of the variation in recognition and more than 50 percent of the variation in attribution could be linked to ad-liking.¹

While very few big ideas meet all 10 of these qualities, by using this list to help develop and evaluate concepts, you can improve your chances of developing an idea that’s big enough to truly differentiate your brand.