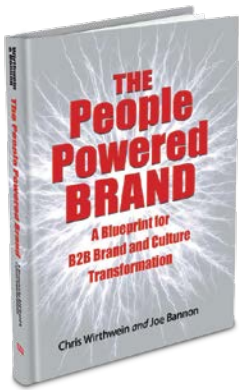


Corporate brands are more important than ever

Why corporate brands merit time, attention and investment



Many companies consider the corporate brand a standalone tactical discipline, apart from the company's big strategic issues and not a core function of the business. The corporate brand is rarely seen as a vital business concern deserving of high level strategic thought, planning and resourcing. But this is a mistake because brands deal in perception, and perceptions contribute to customer creation. This makes corporate brands central to the basic purpose of every business (creating customers) and worthy of attention. In particular, corporate B2B brands must take precedence over product brands for several reasons, which are discussed below.

"Corporate brands are more important than ever" is adapted from the 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.

Available at
paramountbooks.com
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4 reasons the corporate brand should take precedence

- 1) **Corporate brand affects the entire enterprise:** all its people, products, services, customers and stakeholders. On the other hand, most product brands mainly touch subsets. The corporate brand speaks to how you do things. In many cases, the corporate brand serves as a *de facto* guarantee that your product brands and your people will do what they say they will do. What other asset can do this much for the enterprise?



Strong brands are powered by linked and aligned strategies

Weak brands: result when Brand strategy is separated or ignored altogether.

Strong brands: develop when the three key strategies are linked.



4 reasons the corporate brand should take precedence (cont.)

- 2) **In many companies, product brands receive hyper-emphasis.** Compared to talking about products, it can be difficult to express the virtues and values of the company. But product brands come and go. The enduring company brand is the one all its people and customers have in common—the asset with the greatest number of touch points inside and outside the enterprise.
- 3) **Copying products has never been easier** — and it's bound to get even easier. But it's nearly impossible to copy a company's brand, culture and essence. Differentiating and branding at the corporate level is a good long-term business proposition because, when executed properly, it can create lasting competitive advantage in the marketplace.
- 4) **For some companies, the corporate brand may be their only brand.** In other words, the company brand and what they sell are essentially one in the same. For example, with service brands, no tangible goods change hands between buyer and seller. Therefore, their people's ability to communicate what the company stands for *through their behaviors* becomes all-important.

Three keys to creating a powerful company brand

At the highest level, in order to create a powerful company brand, at the very least, you must do these three things:

1. **Understand the current state of the brand** — inside and outside of the company.
2. **Develop a “future state” brand** — create a strategy, position and message that's consistent, credible, desirable, unique and “doable” (achievable) by your organization over a long period of time.
3. **Get your people (and your marketing) on board** — align what your people do and say (their behaviors) and your marketing with the “future state” brand you envision.

Conclusion

A strong corporate brand presents the opportunity to shape perceptions in the minds of customers and employees over the long-term, providing a persistent touch point that represents all you do and stand for. This provides staying power beyond what can be accomplished with the brand for any individual product. The *People Powered Brand* approach develops and sustains strong corporate brands that align the behaviors and perceptions of employees and customers.