

Building a Purpose Driven Brand. The Central Narrative Checklist

Brand Purpose

First, we need agreement on why we exist and why others should care.

“Why” engages our entire team and creates a meaningful connection with all of our stakeholders. It should have an emotional hook that conveys our authentic purpose. When our brand has a clear purpose, it will help us:

1. Attract and retain exceptional talent
2. Create an engaged community of followers
3. Protect our core values
4. Establish a foundation for financial stability and growth

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Brand Vision

A clear Brand Vision is the roadmap to where our brand will continue to grow, continue to be relevant and win in the future marketplace.

Having a clear vision helps us determine our growth goals and will directly influence our business decisions. A bold vision should challenge and motivate but must be realistic and attainable. A compelling vision helps us:

1. Dream big (but realistically) and inspire
2. Make meaningful business decisions
3. Stay “on brand”

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Brand Values

What we believe, what we stand for, and, if necessary, fight for to protect. The “How” to Purpose’s “Why.”

These core values will help us create and maintain a culture that is a true reflection of our brand. In action, they comprise the heart and soul of our authentic brand reputation. As with Purpose and Vision, Brand Values are central to guiding our brand internally

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Target Audiences

Identifying our audiences (or stakeholders), is easy. Understanding what motivates and influences them is the key because they, not us, are the keepers of our brand. Knowing them well gives us the best opportunity to address their problems and needs with relevant solutions.

Arguably the most important stakeholders are our Brand Ambassadors, those groups and individuals who have the most influence on our reputation.

Understanding our target audiences, their relationship to our brand (or lack of) is fundamental to establishing and positioning our brand in their hearts and minds. We must be as targeted in our research - and subsequent outreach - as resources will allow.

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Brand Promise

A brand promise is the core problem we aim to solve for our target audience. It’s the sense of trust and connection we want people to feel when they think about our brand. To put it simply, a brand promise is what we want to be known for.

This is how we infuse meaning into our branding. Make a promise to our target audiences and deliver on it, consistently. It’s how we establish trust.

Good branding emphasizes the value and satisfaction people from experiencing our brand.

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Brand Positioning

Armed with the above (what makes us compelling and special), now we must identify gaps and unmet needs in the marketplace. This isn't guesswork. These opportunities are fact-based and uncovered by studying our competitive landscape. What aspects of our service offering provides a higher value and are objectively better than our competitors?

Analyzing the marketplace will help us differentiate our brand from the pack. We may also uncover uncontested opportunities.

Brand positioning ties together our brand promise and differentiation.

Positioning is how we define our place in the market. We can't be generalists. We must do the hard work to figure out how our business is uniquely positioned to deliver the right solution to the right audience(s). .

What makes us stand out? What are we doing that direct competitors aren't? How can we go a step further to make the customer experience special and memorable?

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Goals & Measurement/OKRs

A purpose driven growth strategy is achieved by reaching our goals. Transformation occurs when we surpass them. This requires a planning and measurement system. We recommend the OKR (Objectives and Key Results) methodology for establishing clear, measurable steps for achieving our planned goals.

OKRs:

- Inspire confidence that everyone is working together
- Measure progress that is clear and unambiguous
- Focus everyone on the important, not the urgent
- Allow for a transparent view of what everyone is working on
- Are the same for a brand, a team or individuals



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Brand Personality and Voice

Both should flow authentically from our brand values and culture. A Brand Personality is a fundamental requirement only for start-ups or dead brands in need of an overhaul.

It is a way to overtly humanize a brand in order to establish a connection with audiences, so above all, it must be a genuine reflection of a brand's essence.

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Strapline

The single, memorable line that summarizes our brand purpose, culture and experience to our key stakeholders

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The Central Brand Narrative

Our master document. Our North Star. The Central Brand Narrative is exactly what it sounds like — the story that shapes our values and differentiation. Storytelling and messaging that helps us connect with our audiences on a deeper level and motivates them to stay engaged.

Why and who are we? What makes us unique? What has and continues to inspire us? How do we live our values? What obstacles and victories made us who we are today?

Good brand stories include a call to action that is tailored to our target audiences. Stories employ the right perspective to get a positive reaction. All our other brand elements expand and reinforce this story, so we can build lasting relationships and true engagement.