

Building a Solid Brand Platform

Long-term success requires more than creative tactics. It requires a strong brand. Whether B2B, consumer or non-profit, a multi-billion dollar company or small business, the fact is that the strength of a brand is directly related to a company's success.

Strong brands have a story to tell, are ingrained within employees, have powerful icons and are delivered upon. They also have a solid platform. At Pepper Group, we often start with a competitive and market analysis; the identification of strengths, resources and competitive advantages, the segmenting and targeting of audiences; an understanding of their pain points, the creation of strong value propositions; the selection of the personality, tone and style that is the best match; and a number of other components based on the unique needs of the organization.

We then boil it down into some key elements that offer clear guidance for the marketing and PR tactics. These elements drive the communication messages and give employees something to rally behind.

- » **A mission statement** is written for an external audience to describe why the organization exists. Mission statements are ideal for companies that serve a higher purpose. We don't recommend forcing an altruistic-sounding mission statement, however, if it doesn't really fit the organization.
- » **The brand essence** describes the heart and soul of a brand and is the mantra for employees to live by. Customers form their impressions of a brand from their experience with the organization's employees. It's critical that everyone is on the same page.
- » **A positioning statement** is meant to identify the unique functional and emotional benefits of a brand. It is the way the company would like to be perceived in the minds of its market so that it can be meaningfully differentiated from its competitors. It is a critical component and the backbone from which all messaging is developed.
- » **An elevator pitch** is a term based on the challenge of delivering a company overview within the duration of an average elevator ride. It must encapsulate the brand's unique positioning and be compelling enough for the listener to want to learn more.
- » **A tagline** is a memorable, short, often pithy slogan that will appear on marketing communications and help express the unique position in the marketplace.

There are a number of reasons to evaluate your brand platform. If you're serious about winning in the next year, we'd strongly recommend it. If you'd like to talk about your unique needs, feel free to give us a call.

