



# Healthy Brand Blueprint

2nd Edition



# WHAT MAKES A BRAND HEALTHY?

Here's what my Healthy Brands Podcast guests say about it ([www.howiechan.com/podcast](http://www.howiechan.com/podcast))



A healthy brand has energy, a favorable image, and a loyal customer base who is engaged.

David Aaker  
Vice Chairman, Prophet



A healthy brand is being true to their purpose and showing up as authentically as they can

Abenaa Hayes  
Founder/ DEI Architect, Elysee Consulting



You have a healthy brand when people don't just wanna buy you, they wanna be you.

Stephanie Ouyoumjian  
CEO, Revel8 Global



## Healthy Brands with Howie Chan

The only podcast at the intersection of health care and branding. Check it out!

[howiechan.com/podcast](http://howiechan.com/podcast)





# WELCOME

Congratulations on getting your hands on the **Healthy Brand Blueprint 2nd Edition!** I've put together the key elements to building health care brands from my experience as a brand strategist over the years working with start ups, Fortune 500 companies and everyone in between. The purpose of this guide is not to make you an expert brand strategist, but it will give you an understanding of what it takes to create a brand from the ground up and add to your toolkit as a marketer, communicator and business leader. There are certain nuances when we think about company brands vs. product brands and brands that are actually both. I will spell them out throughout the guide.

This guide also assumes you have a base-level understanding of branding and it's associated terms. If not, it's ok! Go get a free copy of "**Healthy Brand 101**" and it will give you a full glossary of all the necessary terms you encounter in this guide. ([howiechan.com/freeguides](http://howiechan.com/freeguides))

Enjoy going through this guide and don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions. I will do my best to answer them. [in](#) [t](#) [i](#)

**Time to build the healthiest brands on the planet!**

*Howie*





# THE MANY FACETS OF BRANDING IN HEALTHCARE

## Sub-categories matter

Healthcare is a broad category and after almost two-decades working in the industry, I can say that the nuances in each sub-category is extremely important. I've been lucky enough to work across numerous sub-categories (see below). While I've tried to be as comprehensive as possible in this guide, there are too many nuances to include based on my experiences, so take what you feel is relevant and leave the rest out. Check out [www.healthybrandconsulting.com](http://www.healthybrandconsulting.com) if you feel you need some expert help.

BIOTECH	DIGITAL HEALTH	PAYER
CONSUMER HEALTH	MED TECH	PHARMA
DIAGNOSTICS	NON-PROFIT	PROVIDER

## Some things to keep in mind

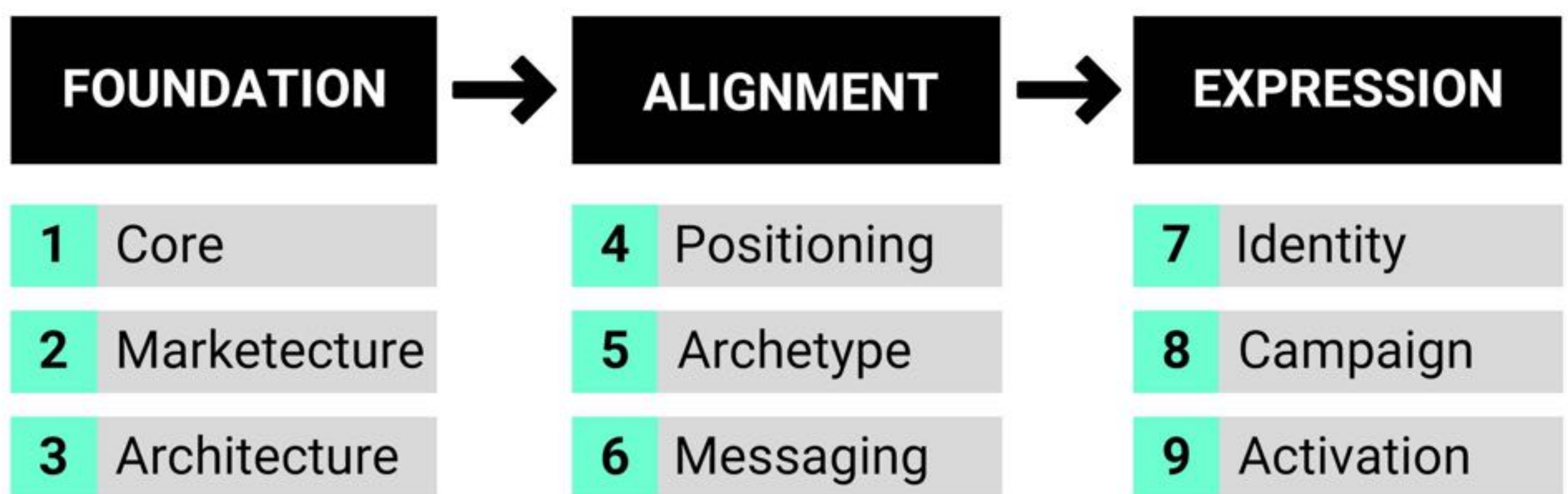
- 1** There is no "right" way, only what's right for your brand and your situation  
Marketers and brand strategists have introduced different tools along the way and sometimes it may be irrelevant to your situation, so use what you need.
- 2** Branding involves both the rational and emotional  
It's important to use your intuition and creativity as much as your analytical skills when building a brand. Data will bring you only so far, then you need take a leap.
- 3** Your brand strategy needs to be the face of your business strategy  
You need to have a business strategy in place in order to start putting together the brand strategy. It can then inform business decisions moving forward.





# THE 9 STEP PROCESS

When you are building a company and/or product brand, you are creating a space, an environment, a world for your employees, your customers and anyone who interacts with the company and/or product. It's worth celebrating, but also worth acknowledging how important it is to create a brand that helps people feel a sense of belonging and community, so your brand become the best parts of their day.





# FOUNDATION

The first order of business is to look internally and seek to understand the reasons why the brand exists, how it operates and how it should relate with other brands.



# 1. CORE

In this section we explore and establish what's the inner drive of the brand, its contribution, and how it plans to make that impact.

**What problem are you solving?**

**Why does it matter? To the company, to the market?**

**What does utopia look like when the problem is solved?**

**What needs to happen everyday if we were to get to utopia someday?**

The answers to these questions set the stage for putting together the purpose, the vision and the mission of the brand. For a company brand, these are corner stones for why employees get up everyday to come to work, it allows for a strong culture to build and develop over time.

For product brands, you may not need/ want to have formal statements such as a purpose statement or mission or vision, but the answers to these questions will help set the direction and tone for the brand.

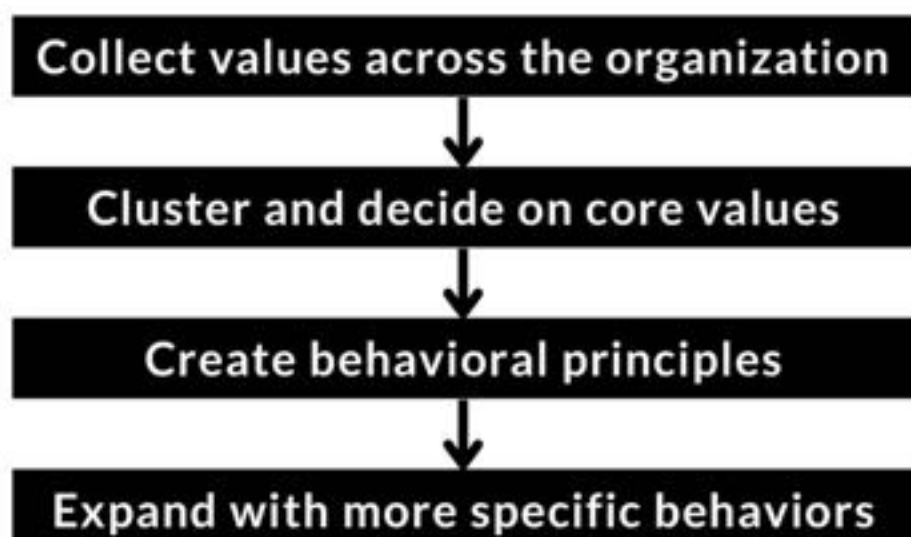
## Potential deliverables

- Purpose statement
- Vision statement
- Mission statement
- Values and behaviors

**What do employees need to embody in order to deliver on its mission and vision?**

**What are the implicit values and underlying behaviors today?**

After having a clear understanding of why the brand exists (purpose), what is the eventual outcome (vision) and how it plans to get there (mission), it would be essential for company brands to establish principles for how employees should behave. Additional elements (rituals, artifacts, lore, systems etc.) can help create an aligned culture.



### Example:

**Value:** Passion

**Behavioral Principle:** Bring your fire

**Specific Behaviors:**

- Share your spark openly so it spreads brightly
- Remember your why when things get tough
- Inspire others to live their why



# 2. MARKETECTURE

Market what? A marketecture is a framework that shows the entire offering. It is especially important when delivering an experience that is beyond a pill. Platform? Technology? Customer support?

What are customers buying? vs. What you are selling?

How are they thinking about the problems they are trying to solve?

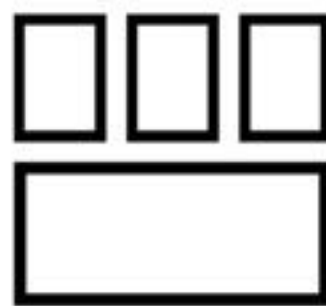
How does your offering come into their consideration set?

What is the best way to show the relationship between the different components of your offering?

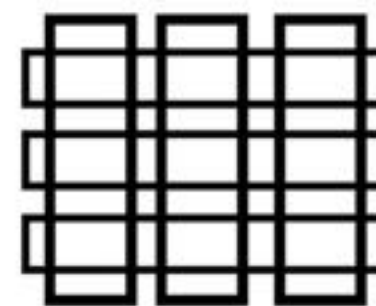
Examples



LAYER



PLATFORM



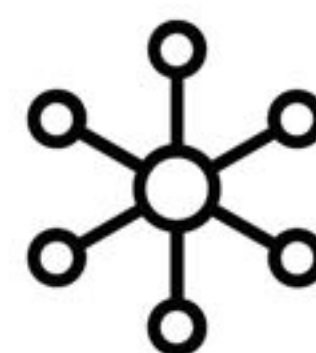
MATRIX



CYCLE



CORE



HUB

Lay out all the parts and pieces of the offering in a way the customer can easily understand. Help them access various components of the offering and see how  $1+1=3$ . The marketecture provides a scalable structure for storytelling and is critical for clarity.

Once you have the structure, align on lexicon.

As simple as possible

Experts vs.  
Strategic customer consultants

On the same dimension

Experts and Technology vs.  
Experts and Real-time Analysis



# 3. ARCHITECTURE

Brand architecture is one of the most under-valued and under-appreciated tools in brand strategy. It has tremendous implications on where you spend your resources and how brands relate with one another. This is especially important when building company brands from scratch and managing a portfolio of products.

Every brand is a mouth to feed

- Howie

Everyone loves to launch brands. New names, new logos, new colors, new campaigns... But the consequences are lasting. Brands won't thrive without resources and resources are limited. That's where brand architecture comes in.

Is the company story very different from the product story?

Do you serve customer segments who are so different that they demand entirely different offerings and experiences?

Do you have resources to support one or multiple brands?

Brand architecture is a spectrum between a **branded house**, where all resources is channeled into one brand or a **house of brands**, where the company brand is entirely invisible from its products and each product is its own distinct brand.



**FedEx**

TOYOTA  
**PRIUS**

COURTYARD  
Marriott

Unilever  
Dove

Medtech and Healthtech companies typically have a branded house and sub-brands approach, where the core brand is the company brand (eg. Medtronic, Abbott). Sub-brands are introduced at the product level, but don't generate much equity as they are replaced every ~18 months or so to have something fresh in the market.

Endorsed brands are typically leveraged when a company brand has been acquired. The challenge here is that sometimes acquired brands stay stuck as an endorsed brand.

The world of Pharma and Biotech typically use the house of brands approach, where each drug is its own brand, much like the CPG world, where each product has its unique identity.



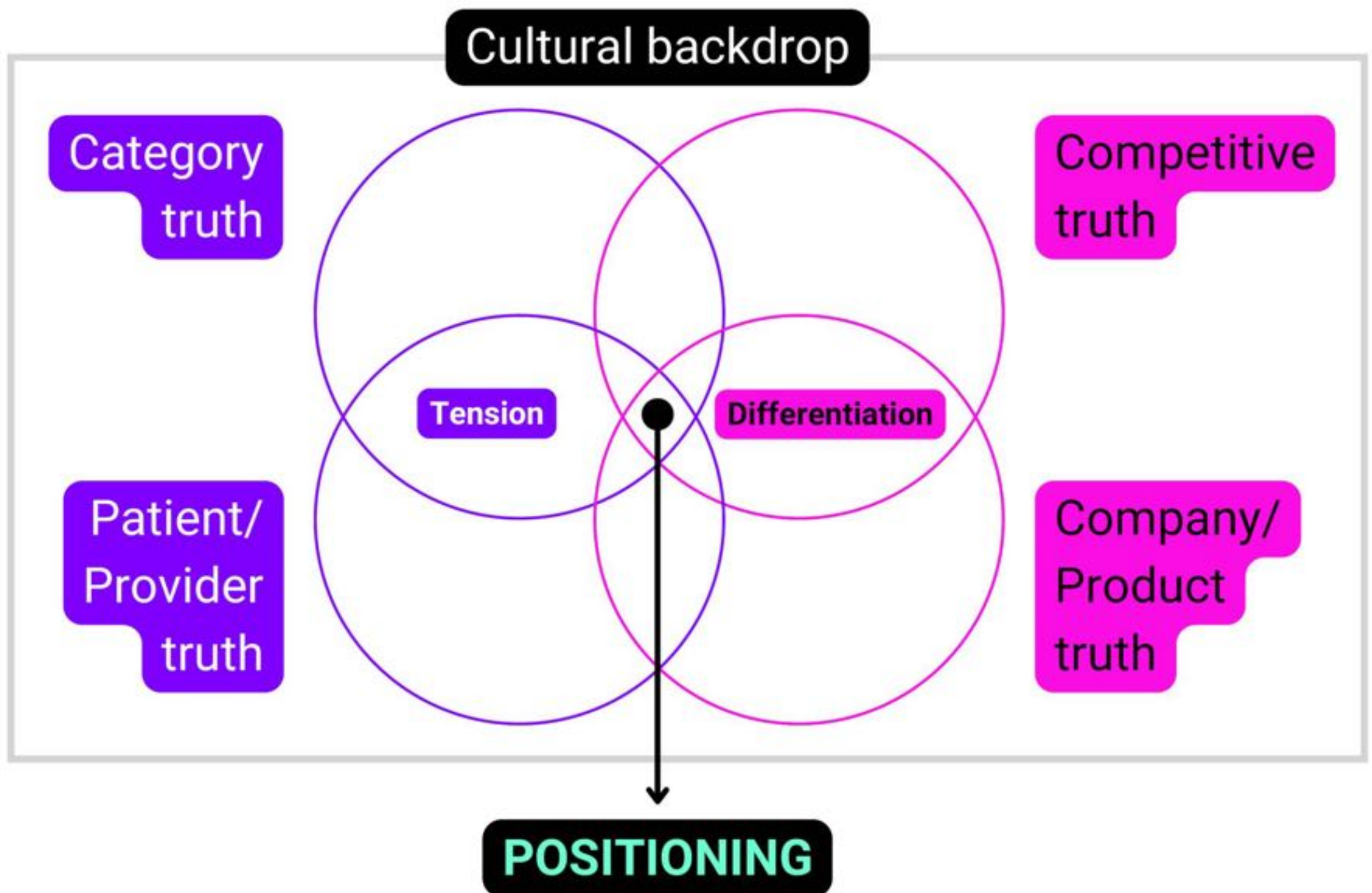
# ALIGNMENT

Next, we need to find the internal/external fit. How do we match up who the brand is internally to the outside world? Most importantly, to those we are trying to influence?



# 4. POSITIONING

Positioning is one of the most important components of brand strategy. Without a positioning strategy, nothing you create will be compelling.



A good positioning is relevant, different and sustainable. It tells you specifically the type of customers you are serving. It points to the most important problem your company and product can uniquely solve.

## ! IMPORTANT NOTE:

While it may work in the consumer packaged goods world to position a brand purely based on the look and feel of the brand, health care positioning is typically wrapped around a unique proposition, especially when it involves regulatory approvals, reimbursement, and clinical evidence.

What is something that patients/ providers struggle to overcome today?

What is the company/ product unique super power that no one can reproduce easily?

What are the top reasons-to-believe for company/ product?

There are many different flavors of positioning statements. While I do not stick to a specific format, any positioning statement needs to communicate the unique benefit, secret sauce, and the impact the brands is making for a specific target audience segment.

## Example:

**For:** Who is your target segment?

**Brand is:** What is it? How do you describe the brand?

**That:** What is the unique value proposition and benefit it delivers?

**By:** What is the secret sauce? How does the brand do what it does?

**In order to:** What is the overarching purpose and transformation?



# 5. ARCHETYPE

We personify the brand using brand archetypes and personality attributes. If you need a refresher on the 12 brand archetypes, please download **Healthy Brand 101** from [www.howiechan.com/freeguides](http://www.howiechan.com/freeguides).

For company brands, the brand archetype not only needs to reflect who the target audience wants to be, it also needs to reflect the culture and the employees of the company. Ultimately in the world of health care, there are a few brand archetypes that are typical, narrowing down the field from 12 to 6.

## Independence & Fulfillment

### SAGE

"Find the truth"

Eg. A digital health brand who are in the business of selling insights and data

### EXPLORER

"Freedom"

Eg. A clinical research brand that enables customers to perform trials more efficiently

## Stability & Control

### CAREGIVER

"Help others"

NOTE: This is a typical healthcare archetype, use attributes to add color.

### RULER

"Control"

Eg. A clinical research brand that enables customers to perform trials more efficiently

## Risk & Mastery

### HERO

"Mastery to make the world better"

Eg. A biotech brand with a technology platform that can deliver curative medicines

### MAGICIAN

"Make dreams come true"

Eg. An implantable device brand that can immediately remove debilitating back pain.

Be who they  
want to become

- Howie

By understanding who the brand serves, land on a brand archetype that your audiences see themselves becoming.

Who do your patients and physicians want to become?

What can your customers do differently now that they have your brand?

How do your employees see themselves on their best day?

What are the top five personality attributes if your brand was a person?

By establishing a brand archetype and corresponding personality attributes, you can be consistent in your visual, verbal and experiential aspects of the brand, continuously etching it in the mind of your target audience.



# 6. MESSAGING

Before writing begins, create a tone of voice document that brings the brand personality to life. How would this person speak? Conversational? Warm? Direct? Use the tone of voice to guide messaging. Depending on whether your brand is a product or company or both, below are some messages you should develop.

## Company Messaging

### Core

- Mission, vision and purpose statements (you don't need all three)
- Company description
- Company narrative
- Employer value proposition

### Communication pillars

- Key pillar messages
- Sub-messages within each pillar
- Reasons-to-believe (RTBs)

## Product Messaging

### Core

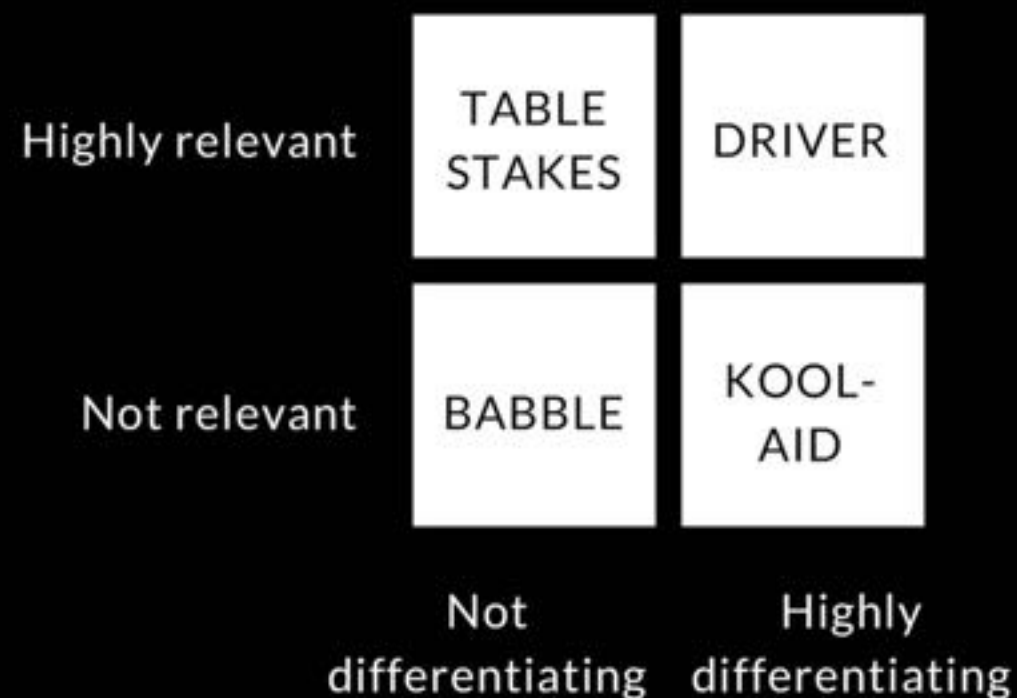
- Unique value proposition
- Product description

### Communication pillars

- Key pillar messages
- Sub-messages within each pillar
  - Emotional benefits
  - Functional benefits
  - Product features
  - Proof points/ product claims

## How do you develop communication pillar messaging?

1. Write down everything the brand wants to say on a 2x2 matrix →
2. Cluster DRIVERS into pillars
3. Reduce to 3-5 pillars
4. Write messages for each pillar with corresponding RTBs and proof points



Once you have the key messages written up, craft stories for each of your audiences, tweaking them so they are directly resonant with each segment.

A basic storytelling framework adapts the Hero's Journey as a way to lead the "Hero", the audience and customer in this case to overcome their challenges with your help and arrive at a different, more utopian world.

Where is our audience starting the conversation?

How do we create gaps in the storyline that our audience wants to see filled?

### Storytelling framework

<b>CONNECT</b>	What is their current state? What is a problem they are facing?
<b>VISION</b>	What could a new and different world be like?
<b>CHALLENGE</b>	What will it take to get there? What are the challenges to overcome?
<b>GUIDE</b>	Who will help them tackle these challenges? (Your Brand)
<b>PLAN</b>	What are the steps your audience needs to take to reach their goal?
<b>CALL-TO-ACTION</b>	What do you want the audience to do? What's at stake if they don't?



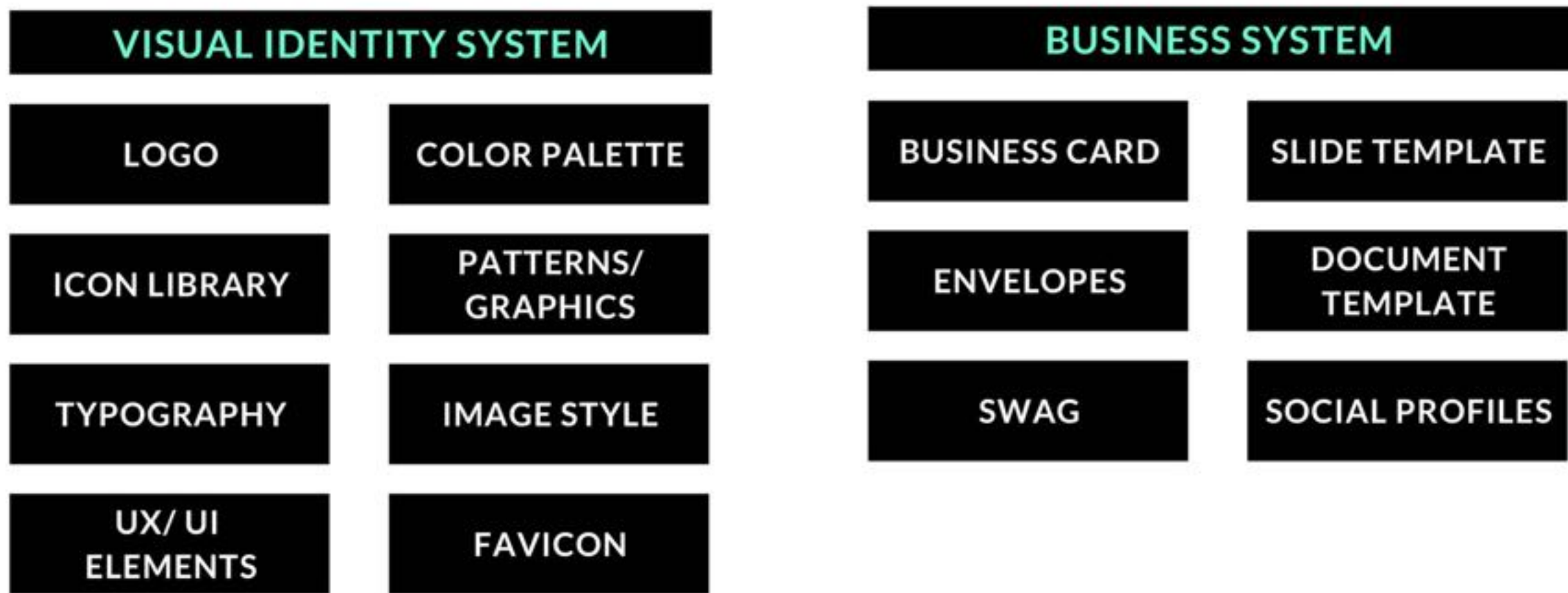
# EXPRESSION

In this last section, we get into designing what the look, feel and experience needs to be in order to create that desired feeling and perceived value.



# 7. IDENTITY

Your identity system consists of a variety of assets that can be used across digital and print medium. In the Web 3.0 world, you may also consider assets that can be used virtually as well. Your brand identity system forms the visual foundation of the brand and should remain consistent for years. As opposed to campaigns which usually have a far shorter lifespan. Here are some items your brand will need.



## ! IMPORTANT NOTE:

Logos are but one component of how you tell your brand story. Its main purpose is to be memorable. It is a way for the mind to imprint all the experiences a person has with the brand, allowing recall and reliving those emotions and experiences. It need not tell the whole story, it needs to help you remember the story.

Remember that your identity system is but one component of how you bring your brand to life. Make sure the creative delivers on the positioning, the structure, and the personality of the brand. How might you judge the identity?

Is the logo memorable?

Does it tell a story or make a point?

Is there an element of delight or surprise?

Does the visual identity system stand apart from the competition?

Is the logo replicable at small sizes?

Does it deliver on the brand strategy?



# 8 . CAMPAIGN ( 1 / 2 )

Brand campaigns can be magical, turning a brand iconic and generating notoriety when launched. Think about where Nike would be without Just Do It, where Apple would be without Think Different, and how we would think about milk without Got Milk.

This section is the bread and butter of advertising agencies. You might find that many brand strategy trainers and coaches are actually teaching "campaign strategy", helping strategists at traditional ad agencies. Whether you are a traditional ad agency strategist or a more business focused brand consultant, this section is equally important.

Campaigns need not always be about the company purpose. Sometimes, campaigns just need to hammer home a key benefit of a product or even a problem of the category. Whatever the case is, a campaign is typically short-lived, unless it becomes so well received it becomes a permanent fabric of the company (eg. Just Do it, where it became the company tagline). But before you get cranking on a brief, you need to have a clear STRATEGY - What you are solving (PROBLEM), how you are solving it (SOLUTION) and why it matters (GOAL).

## Develop a clear campaign strategy before crafting a creative brief

PROBLEM	<b>BUSINESS PROBLEM</b>	Market share loss? Revenue decline? New competitive entrant?
	<b>CUSTOMER PROBLEM</b>	Who is the decision maker? What is the human perception, belief, experience that is in the way?
SOLUTION	<b>INSIGHT</b>	What is the revelation that makes us look at the world in a different way? What is that "aha"?
	<b>SINGLE PROPOSITION</b>	What is the ONE thing we want to communicate? What is the tip of the spear?
GOAL	<b>CUSTOMER GOAL</b>	What are they trying to get to? Is it something internal? Something external? Both?
	<b>BUSINESS GOAL</b>	What is our remit? Be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound (SMART goal)

Is the campaign strategy clear on what we are doing and what we are NOT doing?

Is the campaign strategy trying to do too much? (Hint: it should not)



# 8 . CAMPAIGN ( 2 / 2 )

Once the campaign strategy is developed and approved, pull out components of the strategy into a brief. The GET/ WHO/ TO/ BY framework is certainly not the end all be all, but it can help the creative team have a very clear idea of what the campaign needs to deliver.

Understand that the creative brief is FOR CREATIVES. If you need to develop something more robust for clients, it should be a separate document.

## Brief Framework

<b>GET</b>	Who is the target customer segment?
<b>WHO</b>	What is the human problem that is in the way?
<b>TO</b>	What is the change in perception and beliefs you want that tackles the business problem?
<b>BY</b>	What is the single minded proposition?

### ! IMPORTANT NOTE:

A creative brief needs to be brief. By being hyper specific, it helps the creative team create the best possible campaign. Most creative teams welcome collaboration to develop a brief that can help them spring forward,

Does the headline of the campaign capture the audience's attention?

Does the campaign make the audience feel something?

Is the campaign memorable?

Is the campaign easy to "get"? Or is it too complicated?

Are the visuals different from the competition and compelling?

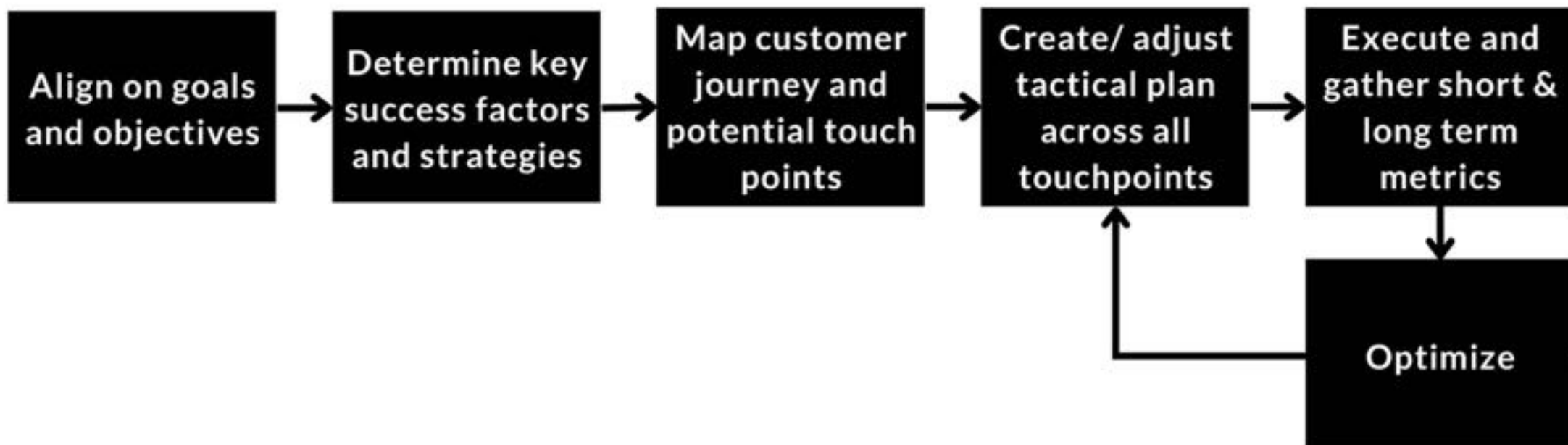
Is there an experiential component of the campaign?

Does the campaign deliver on the brief and brand strategy?



# 9. ACTIVATION

When all is said and done, if you don't activate your brand, there is no equity to be built and no business to be had. Whether the goal is to increase your company brand reputation, or drive potential customers down a funnel for your product brand, the business goal drives the activation plan and the brand foundation is the vehicle to reach those goals.



What does success look like?

Are we spreading our activities too thin? If we could only achieve one goal, what would that be?

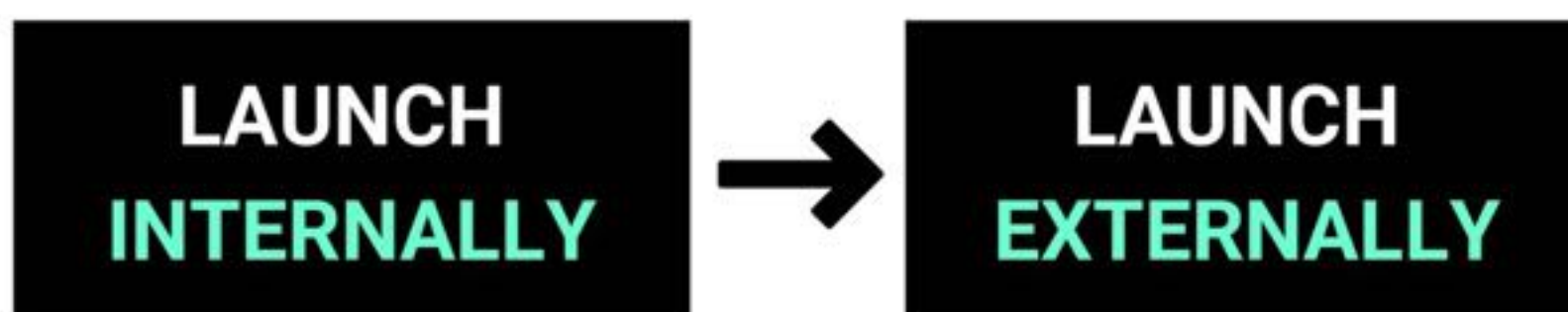
Do we have the technology required to support our activation?

Is there something that the brand HAS to do regardless of ROI or scalability?

What should we measure? Will we do anything different with the data?

Can this activation be a pilot to develop the right model?

Activation involves cross-functional execution. When you think about all the touch points the brand has with every audience and stakeholder, the interactions will span all functions, especially company brands. For any brand launch, it first needs to launch internally and then externally in order to create the strongest ambassadors (employees) before going to your potential and existing customers as well as other external stakeholders (investors, advocacy groups, professional organizations, industry peers etc.).





# CONCLUSION

Congratulations on finishing the blueprint! There is so much to unpack and dive deeper on, so reach out if you have questions and remember I'm here for you 😊.

There are many paths to building a brand that's loved. Yes, I believe that even health care brands have the ability to create true fans. Use this guide to help you build your brands, whether it's working with your agencies or you tackling it yourself with an internal team.

Here's to you building the healthiest brands on the planet!

♥ *Howie*

A healthy brand...

- 1 Is aligned internally and externally**  
The brand shows up consistently and delivers on its promise at every touch point with every stakeholder, regardless of function and geography.
- 2 Is self-aware**  
The brand knows how it is being perceived. It knows what it is doing great at and what it needs to improve on.
- 3 Acts authentically through it's purpose, vision and mission**  
Behaviors always match the intent of the brand. Acting only in ways to fulfill what it's here on earth to do.
- 4 Seeks to delight, even if it's something small**  
Sometimes let your heart guide your brand and make your customers smile. It doesn't have to be big budget, scalable, with a 7x ROI.
- 5 Means something to someone**  
Don't seek to make everyone fans, instead attract those who wish to be in your tribe.



**LET'S BUILD  
THE  
HEALTHIEST  
BRANDS  
ON THE  
PLANET**

