

# Delivering the Brand Experience

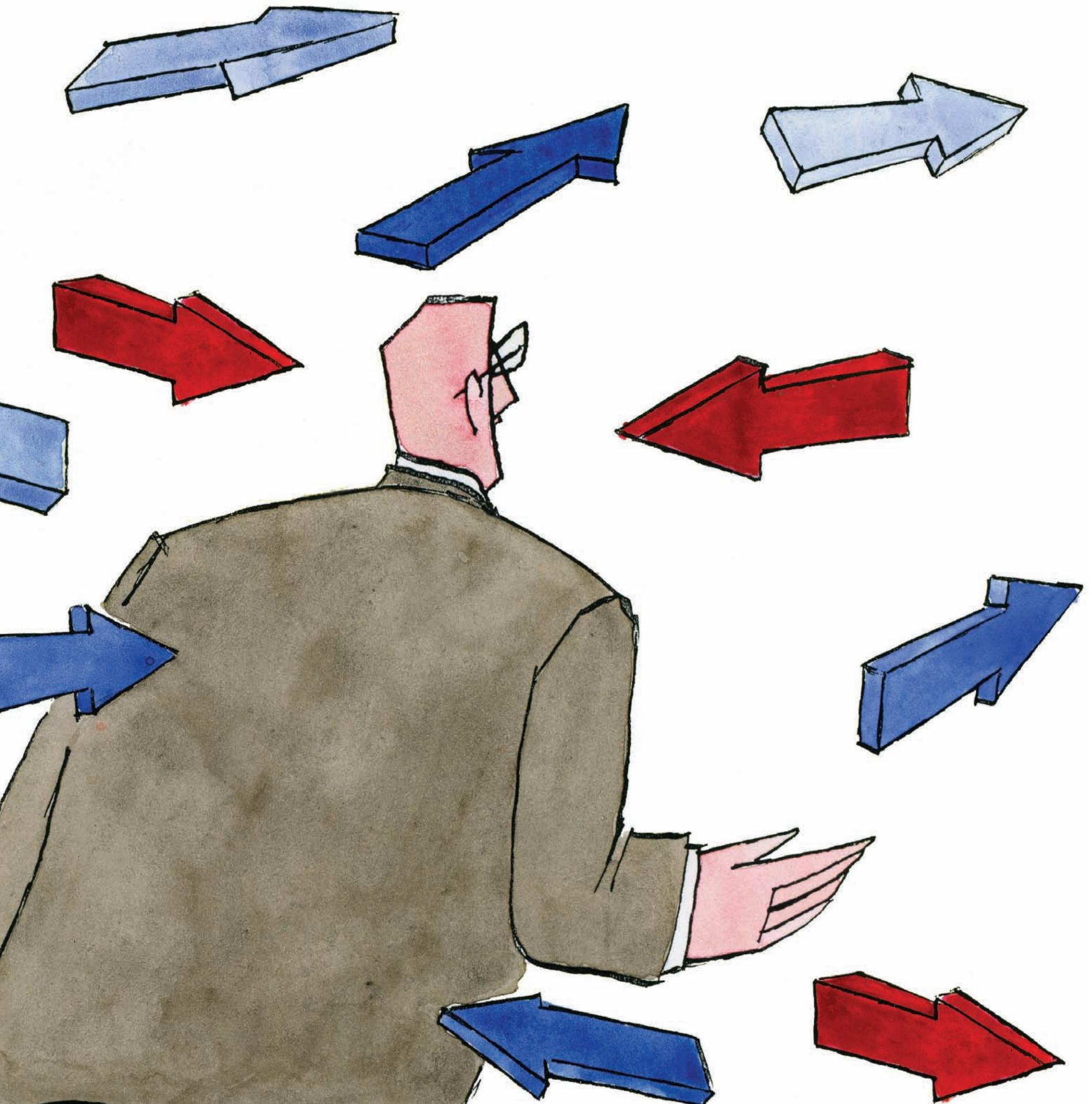
Is your organization aligned to meet its promises to customers?

Creating and managing brand value™

Interbrand

Brand Stimulus Series

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## Interbrand Brand Stimulus Series

In this series, you'll learn how we've developed branding solutions that have stimulated growth for some remarkable businesses around the world.

**Companies are asking a lot of themselves today. Leaders are asking tough questions about the kinds of choices they need to make to compete and win in a challenging economy. As economic conditions continue to change, and as customers continuously evaluate the merits of what they're being offered, companies worry that any small error or misjudgment about their customers will have adverse affects on their business.**

Never before have customers been so diverse, wise, fickle and demanding. Customers want brand experiences that are relevant and appropriate – not just at a point in time, but on an ongoing basis, and customized to their liking. Rather than weigh business decisions against a multitude of external factors and an ever-changing economy, companies that use brand as a decision filter act with confidence that they'll deliver what their customers desire.

This creates a strong imperative for organizations to expand responsibility for brand management beyond the marketing department and use it to guide decision making across functions and geographies. No longer just a driver for communications, a strong, well-considered brand strategy enables you to execute on your business strategy. Brand can guide more than what you say as a company – it informs what you do, and how you do it.

Many companies have made efforts to focus their attention on the desired customer experience, enabling them to make changes based on what's critical, and avoid time and effort spent on what's not. An investigation of the customer experience should uncover needs based on an understanding of what exists today, which provides a critical starting point for experience improvements. But to be successful, an organization must empower all employees to deliver on that experience through individual decisions and actions, which can be modified over time to ensure ongoing relevance.

Brand can be a compass for how the organization adapts to best serve its customers' needs. Organizations must provide the conditions for employees to engage with customers regularly and meaningfully, during which they learn about changing desires and how to use the brand to continuously exceed expectations. Of course, it's not as easy as it sounds – engagement must happen at the affective, cognitive and behavioral level. Put simply, employees need to think, feel and act with the brand in mind.

Many brands engage people at an affective level. They inspire through feeling. Brand campaigns are developed to reach people at an emotional level, driving both excitement and expectations about what the brand will deliver.

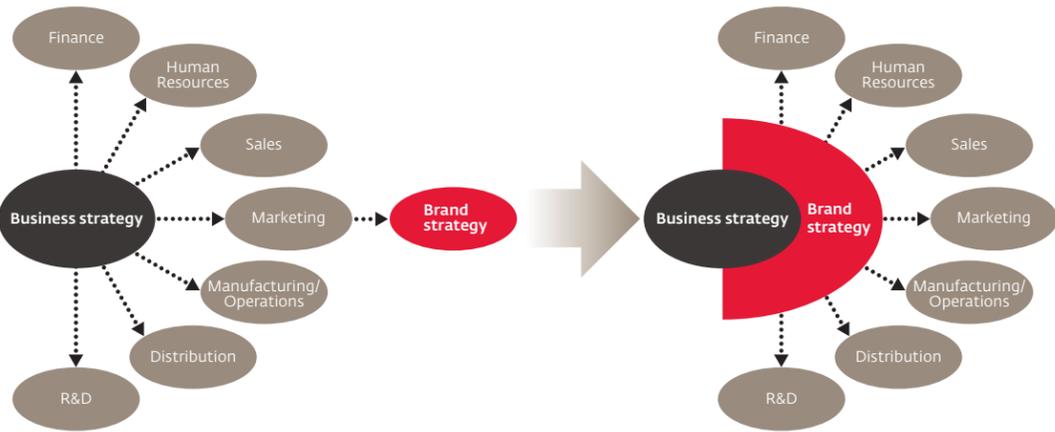
Employees in any organization build up expectations of a brand just as customers do. In fact, their expectations may even rival those of customers. As purchasers of an experience, people invest a significant amount of time in the debate about their careers, whether as job seekers or while employed.

How does an organization empower people to think and act differently? It begins with making the most of communications and events by infusing them with the brand, and creating modular learning sessions that can be woven into key functional activities. But brands need to influence more than communications and training. Newsletter updates might inspire employees to believe in the brand with a powerful business case, but they don't create change at a personal level. Training sessions provide communications and marketing employees with the tools to manage brand expression, but as critical as these tools are to brand consistency, they won't help change behavior.

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Never before have customers been so diverse, wise, fickle and demanding. Delivering a powerful experience means trusting every employee to make the right decisions and actions. How are you preparing them?

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These components of brand implementation do not provide the employee with an opportunity to understand what's different between the present state (current way of doing things) and the future state (brand-driven, customer-focused success). The employee might see a visual or verbal representation of what the future looks like, but they can't see why the behaviors required in the future model will be better for them, how much and what kind of effort it will take to change, how long it will take, and what the benefits will be.

Employees need to be empowered to make smart choices that support your promise every day. If your future success depends on managing critical interactions, are you prepared to do what it takes to exceed customer expectations to make it through the challenges ahead?

### Leveraging brand to drive change

A global manufacturing services company with more than 40,000 employees operates in 30 global facilities over three continents. After several years of poor financial results and restructuring, it was in need of a brand positioning that would help it retain existing customers, attract the right new business, and inspire its employees to deliver a new brand experience to customers.

Research findings uncovered key areas in which the company had to make changes related to its systems, processes and people – gaps they needed to close between the current and desired customer experience. They acknowledged that every location had different strengths and challenges, and that it would require regional adaptability for the brand to be relevant to its diverse and complex audiences. Interbrand helped the company determine that the only direction forward was to rally its employees to embrace the challenges ahead.

Determined to deliver on a relevant, competitive new positioning and eager to empower its people to make it happen, the company began a strategic, long-term program to involve the right employees, at the right time, in the right way.

To develop a customized experience for each of its high-priority, core customers, the company developed a detailed picture of what a customer-centric experience required. They conducted their first customer experience audit with a key current customer, ran the analysis to find pain points, and prioritized changes. After a successful pilot, the company then replicated the process with each priority customer, empowering experience teams to act on the findings.

### Inspiring employees with an ambitious brand mandate

How did the company use the experience findings in a meaningful way? And what did it take to inspire employees to do things differently? The new brand positioning – and the experience it was promising – was ambitious enough to appeal to customers and differentiate the company in a competitive environment. To engage employees, they needed to prove that individual efforts would be worthwhile.

The company developed an exciting, actionable mandate to close business gaps internally so that external brand experiences were successful.

In partnership with Interbrand, the company engaged senior leaders and influential managers in learning sessions, and focused on how to bring brand-driven experiences to customers. Building on the research about what customers valued the most, these leaders focused on aligning their teams to deliver flexible solutions, adapting to changing conditions and partnering internally for success.

### Developing a personal case for change

When the brand can provide employees with a filter for meaningful decision making with the customer in mind, it takes on a new role – not just as a point of inspiration, but also as a powerful tool for business change.

### Key takeaways

- Your brand has to be ambitious enough to incite change and motivate employees to stretch and challenge themselves.
- Employees need the opportunity to see the value of delivering on the brand. It has to be clear at a personal level, but mapped to business results.
- When you acknowledge the barriers to your ability to deliver a branded customer experience, you can empower teams to make changes and harness that momentum for deep engagement.

For the manufacturing services company, teaching all employees how brand-driven decision making and behavioral change could impact business performance was central to success. Many branding programs involve leaders and customer-facing teams as key conduits for the brand experience. This company learned that to deliver satisfying experiences to customers externally, they had to help employees recognize that every one of them had customers. They mapped non-customer facing employees to their internal customers and to the end customer, proving that the organization as a whole needed to make decisions that aligned with the brand promise.

The company worked with Interbrand to design learning sessions in which new behaviors were applied to real business situations. The learning sessions had real outcomes for the customer, proving to employees that brand plays a critical role in their personal success, and impacts business performance.

What does it take to create a brand-aligned organization? It requires a commitment to making changes internally, the knowledge that change takes time, and the dedication and commitment to follow through. By providing every employee with an opportunity to create a personal case for change, the company inspired its people to close business gaps relating to their processes, systems and people. The efforts became part of the culture, rather than a short-term brand “initiative”.

Today, employees know that their efforts make a difference to the business: success stories have emerged about teams that are delivering on the brand promise and reaping the rewards in improved business results.

### Read the entire Brand Stimulus Series

1. **Do you know what customers value now? Profiting from shifting consumer behaviors.**
2. **Brand portfolio management: Now is the time to prune and grow.**
3. **Delivering the brand experience. Is your organization aligned to meet its promises to customers?**
4. **Is your marketing measurement just good enough? Getting better information to optimize your marketing mix.**

**We can stimulate business growth in ways you might never have considered.**

**What kind of stimulus will help you get the most value out of your brand?**

Interbrand started in 1974 when the world still thought of brands as just another word for logo.

We have changed the world's view of branding and brand management by creating and managing brands as valuable business assets.

We now have nearly 40 offices and are the world's largest brand consultancy.

We bring together a diverse range of insightful thinkers making our business both rigorously analytical and highly creative.

Interbrand has the broadest geographical presence – offering more people, more disciplines, and more knowledge tailored to our clients. Our work goes deeper and further.

We create and manage brand value by making the brand central to the business's strategic aims. We're not interested in simply being the world's biggest brand consultancy. We want to be the most valued.