

ANSWER TO THE ULTIMATE MARKETING QUESTION: ARE YOU REALLY A BRAND?

New brand research provides ultimate answer: Are a Human Brand, 21st Century Brand, Category Placeholder, Label, or Commodity? Today It Matters Big Time!

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, US, July 13, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- 'Are you really a brand?' is the ultimate question for marketers today, according to [Brand Keys](https://www.brandkeys.com), the New York-based brand engagement and customer loyalty research consultancy (brandkeys.com).



Not Everything Is A Brand

“Brands have extraordinary marketplace power. But the reality is everyone is not a brand and everything is not a brand. People and things may be known, even well-known, but that doesn’t make them brands. Calling yourself a 'brand' doesn’t make you a brand. Calling everything a 'brand' is both problematic and simplistic. Creating a real brand is never simplistic, so why would people think it was?” asked Robert Passikoff, president of Brand Keys.



'Everything-is-a-brand' plays well in classrooms and Tweets and on refrigerator magnets. In the real marketplace the only opinion that counts is the consumer's!"

Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys founder and president

Commodity-to-Human Brand Continuum®.

This is not a new question. In 2005 Brand Keys conducted a U.S./U.K. survey examining 1,700 B2C and B2B products and services to determine what degree they were brands. “We measured three things absolutely necessary to be adjudged a brand,” note Passikoff. Those included 1) the degree to which products and services were imbued with meaning, 2) whether they were differentiated from the competition, and 3) the degree to which they were

emotionally engaging to consumers. “Sure, you have to be out there and known, but that’s the marketing part of ‘brand marketing.’ First you actually have to be a brand,” said Passikoff.

2021 Version 2.0: Nearly-Post Pandemic

Consumers, the competition, the marketplace, and category and customer values have not been frozen in place for the past 16 years. “Everything changed, true before the pandemic, which only further-confused an already-muddled brandscape,” observed Passikoff. “To provide clarification we conducted an expanded version of the study to identify what it means to be a ‘brand’ today, and revised and restructured the continuum.” The Brand Keys version 2.0, was again conducted in the U.S. and U.K., this time it included 1,994 products and services in 128 B2C, B2B, and D2C categories. The methodology – independently validated to correlate highly (0.08+) with consumer behavior and brand success – uncovered a series of loci along which products and services could be placed, thus identifying the degree to which products and services were actual brands. The new analysis, by more accurately situating products and services, allows marketers to more effectively and strategically differentiate, engage, and meaningfully market on the basis of a product’s or service’s real status.

How to Read The Continuum

The degree of “brandness” (and consumer emotional engagement potency) escalates as one migrates from left to right on the continuum. As brand differentiation increases, the sector rises. “While we readily acknowledge one can be profitable as a ‘label,’ and fortunes have been amassed in ‘commodities,’ they still do not qualify as brands,” noted Passikoff. The continuum includes the following:

Commodity: Products and services so basic they are not differentiated in the minds of the consumer. Always interchangeable with goods of the same type, usually sold on price.

Labels: The name of a retail store or manufacturer identifying goods. Often providing information about the product.

Category Placeholder: Products or services with universally strong awareness. Known but not known for anything in particular other than occupying a space in a category. Has values so basic and undifferentiated they do not emotionally engage consumers. Products or services that at one time were brands, but are no longer brands as 21st Century consumers define them.

21st Century Brand: A name, term, and/or symbol identifying goods and services of one seller versus another. Strongly imbued with values and articulated meaning as to be easily and strongly differentiated from the competition, taking on an identity by itself and engendering high consumer emotional engagement.

Human Brand: A nomenclature created by Brand Keys in 1991 describing living human beings representing 100% of the values of the products or service to which their names are attached. This designation represents the highest level of imbued meaning and differentiation as living embodiments of particular value sets (“owned” by the human being), which can be seamlessly, successfully, and profitably transferred to products and services.

Famous People Are Not Brands!

"All those famous people online and on TV aren't brands," said Passikoff "They're 'celebrities.'" Being a celebrity does not QED a 'brand' make." Models in fragrance or cosmetic ads are not brands, but a subset of celebrities. Eminent or legendary businessmen are not brands. Elon Musk and Richard Branson are not brands. They're entrepreneurs who created brands like Tesla and Virgin. There are business people who founded brands like Proctor & Gamble or Henry Ford or Coco Chanel. And how they've been managed over time ultimately determines whether they are now 'Category Placeholders' like Coca-Cola and McDonald's, or are '21st Century Brands, like Amazon and Ford.

"Everything-is-a-brand" Plays Well On Refrigerator Magnets

In the real marketplace today's product and service managers must be able to accurately pinpoint their products' and services' brand bona fides. "By doing so they can more effectively and strategically plan, promote, market – even price – on the basis of a products' real status as a 'brand,' advised Passikoff.

Because where you fall on the Commodity-to-Human Brand Continuum determines the answer to the ultimate question, "Are you really a brand?"

For information about the brand status of your product or service, contact Leigh Benatar at leighb@brandkeys.com

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