

Creating Harmony Instead of Cacophony

Orchestrating a Successful Brand Identity

Managing a brand identity is somewhat akin to conducting a symphony orchestra. The audience's expectations of quality and selection must be clearly understood. Gifted musicians, trained to excel as individuals, need to perform as a team, executing their parts flawlessly under the watchful direction of a skilled conductor. While behind the scenes, scores of support personnel—sound technicians, lighting directors, stage managers and others—provide ambient and technical assistance. Artfully crafted and expertly rehearsed, the performance should culminate in thunderous applause—or, in the case of a brand, bullish marketplace enthusiasm.



Like running an orchestra well, managing a brand requires discipline, practice and performance. Whether your company's brand is focused nationally or operates globally, a memorable brand presentation is always desirable. Keeping these few rules top-of-mind will help protect you from a cacophonous market experience.

Since a company's brand identity should be a reflection of corporate strategy and culture:

- Confirm buy-in from senior management that they will function as the brand's "conductor," providing leadership, setting direction and nurturing development.
- Create a small interdisciplinary task force accountable for managing the brand identity.
- Clarify, identify and concentrate on the most important audiences—those on which your brand will make the strongest impression.
- Set realistic project budgets based on a detailed audit of existing materials, target audiences, marketing, public relations and advertising requirements, and anticipated implementation support.
- Determine a pragmatic timetable, including adequate time for decision making, management endorsement and a smooth rollout process.
- Develop a clear brand identity strategy, communications plan and comprehensive design system.
- Build internal interest and excitement throughout the process by communicating the relationship of the brand identity to your business, offering periodic progress reports and demonstrating tangible benefits.
- Provide guidelines and standards to clearly and succinctly illustrate the tone, manner and look of the brand identity.
- Invest in companywide training (practice sessions) to ensure that everyone supports the idea of a cohesive brand identity and is equipped to execute their part appropriately.
- Finally, because brand management can be time-consuming and involve hundreds of minute

details, consider hiring an expert to help ensure that the "score" you arrange for your company results in a standing ovation.