



**CAPTURE THE MINDSHARE AND THE MARKET SHARE WILL FOLLOW: The Art and Science of Building Brands**

**By Libby Gill**

**Special Bonus Excerpt**

***CLARIFY: Discovering Your Emotional Assignment***

For nearly a hundred years, All Souls College at Oxford gave applicants what was considered to be one of the most arduous entrance exams in academia: three hours to write an essay based on a single noun. The purpose of the assignment was clear - to showcase one's knowledge and mental agility using a word like water or harmony as a linguistic springboard. Yet the seemingly simple assignment left plenty to the imagination of the aspirant. It was up to them to creatively connect the dots between the word itself and their value as a graduate candidate. More specifically, to *capture the mindshare* - that is, the heads and hearts - of the judging panel that would deem them worthy (or not) of admission.

For some, this essay-as-application presented an unbelievably daunting challenge in how to sum up the history and significance of just one word while at the same time qualifying oneself for admission. For others, it provided an opportunity to highlight their strategic thinking and communication skills, delivering a thoughtful brief based on a specific, and often narrow, topic. For all, it demanded a clarity of strategy and language compelling enough to smoke the competition.

Your brand deserves no less. In this chapter, we'll explore why *clarity* - of purpose, value and promise - is the foundation of all great brands and why the failure

to clearly articulate that message, for yourself as well as others, can spell disaster for entrepreneurs and executives, for-profit and non-profit organizations.

### ***DO I REALLY NEED A BRAND?***

That's a question that, even in this era of shameless hype, I still get asked on a regular basis. Why, if I consistently offer great value to customers and clients, do I need to think about having a brand, let alone actually taking the time to craft one? Why, indeed.

First, it seems only fair for me to give you my definition of branding, which I don't believe needs to be as overcomplicated or over-simplified as it often is. Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon.com, reportedly said, "Your brand is what people say about you when you leave the room." Not a bad definition, actually. Your brand *is* what people say, think and feel about you and your company. But more than that, your brand is, or should be, a promise of value artfully articulated across multiple platforms. It's obvious, particularly in today's world where we are bombarded with hundreds, if not thousands, of daily branding messages that your brand is much more than a logo, name, billboard, marketing campaign, sales sheet or website. All of those things are, in fact, expressions of your brand and a critical means of connecting and communicating with your customers, but they are only part of the brand story.

Above all, your brand is a promise of value and the most successful brands - the ones I call *Mindshare Brands* - are those that consistently deliver or over-deliver on that value promise over time. Think Coca-Cola. Think Mercedes. Think Apple. Think any brand about which you feel an emotional connection and that you count on to deliver what you want every single time - or pretty darn close to that. Even the big guys slip occasionally, though mistakes well handled can actually be terrific branding opportunities.

So why do you have to define your brand? Isn't it obvious what you do through the actual doing or delivering of it? Won't your ideal clients and customers find you if you're doing a good job? And doesn't your team inherently understand your internal culture and external brand just by working alongside you? You'd think so, wouldn't you? But we've all known that great neighborhood cafe or web designer or even airline that simply couldn't attract enough, or the right, customers to stay in business without an easily recognizable set of attributes.

If you don't define your brand, the world will simply assign one to you. Even if you are fortunate enough to get "discovered" by your ideal customers, letting them define your brand limits you to their perceptions. And which would you rather have? A brand that is carefully, thoughtfully, strategically crafted and carried out based on your core beliefs and authentic value? Or one that the world has deemed is who you are and what you are capable of providing to others? Your brand is your destiny and if you fail to define, refine and manage it, you do so at your peril.

### ***PURPOSE, PREMISE AND PROMISE***

It's important first to drill down to the core purpose of your business. Some marketers call this statement of purpose your "value proposition." I prefer to go a little deeper. So ask yourself: Why are you in business in the first place? What is it you actually do? What have you accomplished so far? Even if your business is complex and layered, there's still a core purpose. Amazon.com, so named by Bezos because he wanted a company as vast as the Amazon River, delivers a vast array of items ordered online. It used to be known for books, including those that your local bookstore never seemed to have in stock though Amazon always did. Now, its expanded core purpose is to provide the customer with a wide-ranging selection of products from flat-screen TVs to natural foods to camera equipment, all of which can be researched, ordered and paid for on their user-friendly website.

The premise takes the idea of core purpose a step further. What pain or problem do you solve in the marketplace? In Amazon's case, it makes one-stop shopping easy, no matter where you live or what stores you have access to. Maybe you save people's lives by inventing drugs that treat hereditary diseases, like pharmaceutical company Regeneron. Or maybe you help busy people get fit and healthy with time-efficient training and nutrition regimens like my client (and personal trainer) [MonicaNelsonFitness.com](http://MonicaNelsonFitness.com).

Finally, and this may be the most important factor of all, what is the promise of change that you give your end-user? This goes for internal customers, like your staff or management, as well as external consumers. What is the outcome they can expect from their relationship with you, your services or your products? What specific results can you promise them because of your expertise and skill? Take Monica, for example. Her purpose is to help people look and feel healthier. Her premise is that she can provide exercise efficiency and easy nutrition for busy professional people who can't (or won't) spend a lot of time working out or making healthy meals. And her promise - your anticipated outcome - is that you will lose weight, gain muscle mass, look more toned and feel more energetic.

How you prove that three-pronged hypothesis to your potential customers is a critical part of building your *Credibility Story*. For now, let's stay focused on your purpose, premise and promise.

***MINDSHARE MINUTE*** - Throughout *Capture the Mindshare*, you'll find strategies to help you capture the mindshare in mere moments. Go online now to [www.LibbyGill.com](http://www.LibbyGill.com) and download loads of free resources.

***Here's a worksheet you can start on right now. You'll find more downloadable tools, resources, and worksheets on [www.LibbyGill.com](http://www.LibbyGill.com) and in my new book *Capture the Mindshare!****

## ***WORKSHEET: DEVELOP YOUR PURPOSE, PREMISE, AND PROMISE***

Before you can effectively capture the mindshare, you need a full and complete understanding of the core purpose of your business, or your “value proposition.”

How do you make your company’s value proposition come to life? By learning how to develop your purpose, premise, and promise. Use the worksheet below to walk through this process step by step.

### **Statement of Purpose**

Every business, no matter how complex and layered, has a core purpose. But it’s not always easy to identify that purpose. The key to doing so is to ask yourself the following three questions:

- *Why* did you start your business?
- *What* does your business actually aim to do?
- *Which* business goals have you accomplished so far?

Don’t just gloss over these questions—take the time to really reflect on your answers, and write them down in detail. Analyze your answers for clues to your company’s purpose.

Did you start your business to provide a service in a way that no one else has succeeded in doing before? That vision should be part of your purpose. Does your business aim to use technology to provide speed and selection to your customers? Be sure to state these aims in your statement of purpose. Even your current accomplishments hold insights about the

core purpose of your business. What you're focusing on getting done today reveals what you value in the future.

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### **Premise of Problem-Solving**

Once you've started to understand what's behind your core purpose, you can take it a step further and delve into your company's premise. To do so, simply ask yourself:

- What *pain or problem* do you solve in the marketplace?

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Understanding the premise of your business requires that you first understand your customers and their needs. If you're a personal trainer, you're helping your customers solve the challenge of how to get fit on a limited time schedule. If you're a drug manufacturer, you're helping to improve quality of life, or save lives, of patients who have certain health conditions. Whatever problem you help solve leads you directly to your company's premise.

## Promise of Change

Purpose and premise are crucial to your value proposition, but the promise of change that you offer to your end user may be the most important factor of all to your three-pronged hypothesis. To determine what that promise might be, ask yourself these questions:

- What is the *outcome* that your customers can expect from their relationship with you, your services, or your products?

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- What *specific results* can you promise them because of your expertise and skills?

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Be sure to think about internal customers (like staff and management) as well as external customers when you consider outcome and results in this way. For example, the promise of change for a nutritionist might be to help customers reach and maintain a healthy weight, feel more energetic, and improve their quality of life.

Proving purpose, premise, and promise to your potential customers is critical to building and reinforcing your company's credibility. So take the time you need to work through these three "Ps" and fully develop your value proposition.

*I hope you liked this excerpt. If you have any questions, feel free to email me directly at [Libby@LibbyGill.com](mailto:Libby@LibbyGill.com).*

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