



# BRAND 101

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**Leke Alder**

Principal, Alder Consulting

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **BRAND 101**

First, let me thank Pastor Odutola for inviting me to take this lecture. It's particularly gratifying a church is organizing business seminar.

I've always held the belief the church must respond to context. This is a proper response to the needs of the moment, especially the youths.

Jesus held several seminars himself. He taught spiritual principles with business case studies. The Parable of Talents is a venture capital case study. Paul wrote something rather interesting about Jesus in Colossians 2:3. He said Jesus is the embodiment of all knowledge. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In other words, I can access both spiritual and secular knowledge from Jesus. I can access knowledge about salvation and deliverance; but I can also access information about quantum mechanics, governance, business development and engineering. In Him are hid ALL the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

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The subject I've been given is right up my professional alley. I specialize in strategic branding.

Our topic today is Brand 101.

This I understand to mean introductory lecture to branding. It implies I must simplify the lecture and not imagine I'm talking to Fortune 500 CEOs. We're going to be dealing with brand fundamentals. Of course, we can't cover all the fundamentals in 45 minutes.

To maximize this lecture therefore I'm going to go topical. I've therefore selected a few headers for our discussion. Let's see how far we can go.

Now, one thing we're not going to do is take a theoretical approach. And so we're not going to answer such questions as what is branding, or discuss the history of branding. The reason is simple. These are not real-world issues. They're of no use in real-world scenarios.

No client is going to ask you to define branding. It's an academic question that is of no practical significance. It's like when Jesus was asked to give the dictionary definition of a "neighbor". He rather gave a real-world narrative, telling the story about a man travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho. The man was unfortunately robbed on the freeway. Three people had opportunity to save the man's life. Two were religious folks and they refused to offer help. The guy who eventually saved the man's life was a successful racially profiled minority immigrant. He took the man to hospital and paid the fees. Jesus in essence said figure out the definition of neighbor from this story.

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### 3 MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT BRANDING

Let's clear a few misconceptions about branding. There are misconceptions about branding.

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1. The first misconception is the idea branding is logo design.

This is why some people think they have created a brand just because they designed a logo for their business. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Creating a brand takes more than that.

To be sure branding incorporates logo design but that you designed a logo doesn't mean you created a brand. When we're talking branding, we're talking about strategic alignment of several items including human resources, communication and visual identity. The logo is at the core of visual identity but it is not the brand. The brand is the corporation behind the logo.

The critical thing to bear in mind is that these factors must never fight each other. The advertisement for example can't be at variance with customer service. You can't say one thing in your advertisement and your staff do the opposite. You'll damage your reputation. Which leads us to the second misconception.

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2. The second misconception is the idea branding is all about advertising.

Truth is, in strategic branding advertising is actually at the tail end of the program. Before you advertise you have to make sure you can live up to the promises. You have to build internal capacity.

Besides, not all brands advertise. For a very long time **Red Bull** never advertised. The brand was propagated through events.

Some brands sell mystique. Private banks are noted for this. They're generally quiet.

Now, that's not saying you don't need advertising for your business. You do. Especially when you're young and unknown. Advertising plays a major role in branding. It embeds the brand message into popular consciousness.

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3. The third misconception about branding is the idea branding is a creative endeavor not an economic activity.

Branding is an exploration of the laws of demand and supply. In economics there's something called commoditization. In essence it means there's not much differentiation among several offerings of in the marketplace. Everyone is basically selling the same thing. This affects pricing. What branding does is help organizations escape the commoditization trap through differentiation. In so doing it creates economic value.

But that's not the only reason for branding your business. Let's look at why you need to brand.

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# 6 REASONS FOR BRANDING

## Why brand?

There are many advantages to branding your business:

1. Branding makes it easy for consumers to choose your product. It makes your product stand out. Choice determines purchase. Branding narrows down purchase options and makes choice easier. The more notable your brand the easier the choice.
2. Branding gives you ownership of the customer. Truth is humans don't really like change. Once they decide on a brand they stick with the brand. And that can be for decades. If a brand is able to make that generational that's ownership of a family.
3. Brands have the advantage when it comes to choice of staff. People will rather work in a branded entity than in a non-branded business. A good corporate brand suggests proper organization. It suggests things are well run and there are rules and procedures. It also suggests career path. Besides, brands add something to us. They give us self-esteem. If you doubt buy a designer bag. Working in a brand also boosts CV.
4. Branding guarantees cashflow. Where there's brand loyalty cashflow is guaranteed. Cashflow creates corporate stability. Projections become easier. When you really think about it, we distribute our salaries to brands we trust.
5. Branding invariably saves a company marketing costs. Less effort is required to persuade new customers if your product or company is already a brand. Let me give an illustration.

6. We had employed a fresh crop of junior consultants at Alder Consulting. For many of them that was their first employment and so they needed to open a salary account. To our surprise they all opened an account at one particular bank. That bank never marketed them, never solicited their custom, yet they all opened an account at that bank. There were other banks doing sales promotion yet these associates never patronized them. The cost of acquiring customers for that bank is therefore lower than that of competitors.
  
7. In a difficult economic scenario like what we're experiencing now people will not experiment with their money. They'll rather stick with the brands they know. Brands have the advantage because brands are given priority when money is tight.

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## 3 BRAND PROMISES

Whether we realize it or not every brand makes a set of promises and those promises must be fulfilled consistently. Without consistency there can be no branding. It's consistency that makes the consumer come to rely on the brand. He knows the promises will be kept. Every time you buy a branded product or service you're buying into a set of promises.

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There are three promises in a brand.

There's the promise of quality, the promise of tribal identity and declared promise.

### 1. Promise of quality

The number one promise in a brand is quality. Quality is assumed in brands. It's intrinsic. You cannot have a brand without quality. You don't buy an iPhone, switch it on at home and encounter a glitch. The iPhone quality even extends to the packaging. If a product is good but the packaging is bad the brand will suffer loss. The corollary is equally true. If the product is bad but the packaging is fantastic the brand will suffer loss as well.

### 2. The promise of tribal identity

The second promise in a brand is the promise of tribal identity. Paracetamols as a tribe of analgesics relive aches and pains.

If your brand of paracetamol cannot relieve aches and pains, it cannot be paracetamol. Analgesics must relieve pain. Pain relief is intrinsic to analgesics.

3. The third promise is declared promise.

Brands make promises in their adverts and on their packaging. If you state your brand of paracetamol cures headache FAST that's a declared promise. Your paracetamol had better cure headache fast or you have a failed promise. Declared promises is often how companies distinguish their brand from others. It's what creates value.

Identify the promises in your brand. Make sure you fulfill them. If you don't your brand will suffer.

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# 10 TIPS TO NAMING YOUR BRAND

There are what we call brand assets. Two obvious examples are the name and trademark of a corporation. They're called brand assets because they have economic value. The Coca-Cola logo is worth tens of billions of dollars. In building a brand therefore it's important you choose an appropriate name for your brand. A wrong name can kill your business even before it starts.

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Here are tips to naming your brand.

1. Don't force a name on your business just because it sounds good. If it's misleading or it will confuse the market, it's not an appropriate name. A name can be poetic and funky but be wrong for your business.
2. Religious names tend to be a dime a dozen. There are too many Christian businesses for example with the name Rehoboth. Some words in the Hebrew Bible have deep resonance. Everyone seems drawn to them. Bible reference names are also all over the place. There are many John 3 Vs 16s. Be mindful of the fact a name with too much religious connotation can put off a segment of the market. The exception is cultural appropriateness.
3. If your market is not native, or you're marketing nativity think twice about very native names. One of my very senior friends had named his business Jekoyemikale Oluwa Enterprises. It's a very prayerful name. It suggests retention of glory and honour till death. But he soon changed the name. As he

became more and more successful and did business with foreign partners it became very obvious he had to change the name. Native names are often difficult to pronounce outside native markets. If you must use a native name, make sure it can be pronounced by other cultures. The less convoluted, the better. Two syllables are preferable. Three can stretch things a bit.

4. Make sure the name of your business can travel across geographical boundaries, especially if you have a vision to go international. If the name can only be appreciated within your local market, it's a demonstration of limitation of vision. Don't limit yourself, don't work against your interest.
5. Don't steal someone else's name, especially the name of a well-known brand. First, you open yourself to the possibility of legal troubles if your business succeeds. They're going to come after you and you can't afford the legal expense. They'll deliberately make the battle expensive for you, bury you in legalese. It's part of the legal strategy. You don't have the resources. If you're forced to change the name of your brand it's going to be very expensive for you. You have to inform the market you're now operating under a different name. You have to change letterhead, change packages, signboards... Be original.
6. Test the name before you put it out there. Have a focus group session for example. What does the name mean to potential customers? How does it sound? Check the phonetical resolution - how does it sound over the phone? What does the name communicate?
7. Don't go whimsical if you're not a creative agency or a technology company. By their very nature those industries can afford to be whimsical.

8. Whatever name you choose make sure it's not offensive to other cultures, especially in the markets you're targeting. There are cultural and religious sensibilities to consider. And that's one more reason to test the name of your brand. Do extensive research on it. A naming mistake can be very costly.
9. As much as possible avoid alphabet soups. Alphabet soups are names composed entirely of alphabets – ABC, BBC, etc. Young companies struggle with such names. They're somehow lost to human consciousness. You need a certain heft to maintain identity as alphabet soup.

But what about companies like GE or IBM? Well, they weren't originally alphabet soups. They became alphabet to accommodate growth and change in business environment. IBM was International Business Machines. As the companies grew beyond those scopes and diversified, they changed their names, becoming alphabet soups to retain the equity in original names.

In the age of typewriters, International Business Machines was okay. But in the age of computers it's anachronistic. It suggests an organization out of touch with modernity. GE was General Electric. General Electric can't accommodate the scope and diversity of the business. GE is into oil and gas, finance, power, water, insurance, AND consumer electronics. "General Electric" can't cut it. But the distinguishing thing about these alphabet soups is that they were well known brands BEFORE the change of name. They transferred existing equity into the new names by making sure they didn't stray too far from the original names.

10. If you must name your organization or your brand after yourself, note that you carry a moral burden. You can't do as

you please. Your actions will affect the brand. The brand must not suffer on account of your conduct. It took a lot of effort to get Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia back on track after Martha Stewart went to jail for securities related fraud. There was a comeback campaign.

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# 10 BRAND MARKETING TIPS

Now, let's look at brand marketing.

I want to start with a quote from Ted Turner, the founder of CNN: "Early to bed, early to rise, work like hell and advertise."

A significant chunk of branding activity is brand marketing. You've got to sell your brand; you've got to communicate your brand essence. You have to connect with the customer, relate to the public. Every brand has a public.

There are many forms of brand marketing but the commonest is of course advertising. Big corporations of course have huge advertising budgets. But brand marketing need not be expensive.

Social media provides much cheaper options. With creativity you can achieve an awful lot on a shoestring. And the thing about social media is that it's measurable. If you tweet you can know how many times people saw your tweet, how many times your profile was clicked, how many people went to your website... You can see your likes and how many times people viewed details of your tweets. Besides, there are analytic tools. You can promote your tweets as well.

But let me give you an illustration of creative marketing from the analogue age.

Many, many years ago two young men walked into my office. They had imported Brother typewriters and didn't have any budget for marketing. They were young entrepreneurs. This was their first major foray into business. They explained their predicament to me and asked for my help. I told them to give me a week and come back. When they came back, I told them I had an idea – a very simple idea that was inexpensive. What I did was design a new

business card for them. On one side of the business card I put these words (in interesting design):

“If Brother typewriters had existed at the time of Moses, Moses would have used it to write the Ten Commandments.”

It was a provocative and thought arresting copy. It was witty and attention-grabbing. Makes you wonder if indeed Moses would have used Brother Typewriter to type out the Ten Commandments. The subtle message was, important people use Brother typewriters. The typewriter is used for monumental stuff.

On the flip side of the card I put their contact details. Within a month those typewriters sold out. The entire marketing cost was the cost of printing business cards!

It's not the amount of money you spend that makes marketing effective, it's the creativity you deploy and how you connect emotionally with the market.

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Let me give you a few marketing tips:

1. If the product is bad, no amount of creative marketing will sell it. The budget size becomes irrelevant. If at all it will hasten the demise of the product. You can only fool first round buyers – the innovators. And they're going to talk about their experience. There's going to be a backlash. You're going to have negative advertising.
2. Nothing sells a product like consumer evangelism. Testimonials are powerful. It's why you have product reviews on merchant sites like eBay. If the reviews are bad the product will suffer. But if the reviews are good the product will fare well. The buzz will substitute the marketing budget.

Build a referral system into your marketing plan.

Incentivize referrals.

3. To generate consumer loyalty, you may want to consider something in the nature of frequent flyer programs used by airlines. It keeps the customer locked in.
4. Build a feedback system into your marketing plan. Recycle the feedback into your product development. Feedback also helps in finetuning marketing campaigns.
5. Profile your customer. Don't just use economic profiling, use psychological profiling as well. How do they think? Purchase decisions are not always based on earning capacity or poor people won't buy expensive products or things out of their reach. Yeezy sneakers won't sell otherwise. Image plays a major factor in purchase decisions.
6. Ask yourself what exactly you're selling. What's the customer buying from you? Peace of mind? Dependability? Joy? Fun? What's the customer buying? When you know what you're selling you know what to market.
  - Virgin sells fun and sense of adventure.
  - Toyota sells reliability.
  - Tesla sells the spirit of possibilities.
  - Amazon sells humongous variety and choice.
  - Apple sells creativity and excellence.
  - Zenith Bank sells efficiency.
  - GTBank sells ease and creativity.
  - Volvo sells safety.
  - First Bank sells old fashioned reliability

What exactly are you selling? What are the customers buying from you? If you know then you know your unique selling proposition.

7. Knowing what to mention in your marketing message is as important as what not to mention. “Sexy” will be off-putting for family themed products and services for example.
8. Be specific with your use of media. Target your customers according to media. Know where the eyeballs of your customers congregate. Be very targeted. Even social media is not homogenous. Some people are YouTube, some are Instagram, some are Facebook, some are Twitter, some are WhatsApp. Even those who use all five have preferences. Where warranted, they use a combination of media to reach as many people as you can.
9. Don't let creativity drown out the message. Some adverts are so creative the message is lost. The message must not be lost in the design.
10. Be authentic. A good marketing campaign thrives on sincerity and authenticity.

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# LOGO AND CORPORATE IDENTITY

Now, let's talk about logos.

A logo is the visual marker of a brand. It's the graphical representation of the brand in the marketplace. The word "logo" comes from the Greek word, Logos. It's the same word used by Apostle John to describe Jesus – In the beginning was the word (Logos), and the word (Logos) was with God and the word (Logos) was God. (John 1:1). What John was saying was, Jesus is the logo of God. It's why Jesus is described as the express image of God, the very representation of his person. Now you understand why Jesus said, If you've seen me you've seen the father. (John 14:9). He is God's brand identity.

The design of logo, letterhead, business card and the like is known as visual identity design.

For branding to be effective you have to reinforce brand elements with brand elements. And so the letterhead must be visually relatable to the business card, which must be visually relatable to the invoice, which must be visually relatable to the website, which must be visually relatable to the signboard, such that there's a coherence. We achieve coherence through use of colors, shapes and typefaces.

The more coherent the visual identity the more the impression of coherent thought in the organization. It sends a message of dedication to excellence.

Well-designed visual identity plays a major role in corporate success. I remember one of our banking clients got a major account from a government department on the strength of the letterhead and logo design.

When visual identity is incoherent there's the impression you're dealing with a mediocre organization, one in which anything goes.

Present a coherent approach to your branding. Send a powerful message to potential clients about your vision and seriousness. I know that from personal experience.

It's advisable to use a branding professional for the design of your visual elements. A lot of things go into the design of a logo or letterhead.

What this lecture does is give you basic knowledge of visual identity design so you at least know what to watch out for. And so I'm going to tell you about colors and typefaces.

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# TYPEFACES

Typefaces create impressions and elicit emotions. It's important you use the right typeface for your business materials. A children's birthday party organizing business will of course use playful typeface, whereas a bank or government department will likely use a serious looking typeface like Times New Roman. We see the same principle in wedding invites. The typefaces used tend to have flourishes. A pharmaceutical corporation will rather not use such. It will convey a wrong impression.

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# COLORS SPEAK

Colors convey moods. It's why yellow and red are not worn to funerals. The mood is somber hence black. Lawyers and banker don't wear red or purple suits for a reason. They tend to favor navy blue, grey and black. These are "serious" professions. Notice a lot of banks use blue in their logo. First Bank, Citibank and Barclays are good examples. It's not a coincidence. There's something called color theory. Colors evoke emotions and feelings:

- Red stands for passion.
- Orange stands for vitality and energy.
- Yellow evokes happiness, youth and optimism.
- Green is linked to nature and growth.
- Light blue evokes a feeling of openness and innocence.
- Dark blue stands for professionalism.
- Purple signifies royalty and luxury.

- Pink is associated with femininity.
- Brown is earthy and rugged. It is also old fashioned.
- White evokes cleanliness, health, simplicity and modernism.
- Grey is neutral.
- Black is powerful, sophisticated and somber.

What colors are in your logo?

We can go on and on but these are what I call critical headers in Brand 101.

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# SUMMARY

Here's a summary of all you've learnt in this lecture:

1. Logos
2. Corporate colors and visual identity
3. Brand marketing
4. Naming your business
5. Brand promises
6. Misconceptions about branding.

I do hope this lecture has been most useful to you.

I wish you success in your brand creation endeavor.