

# Designing Brand Identity

fifth edition

**Alina Wheeler**

*with foreword by Debbie Millman*

an essential guide for the whole branding team

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**Designing Brand Identity** is a quick reference guide. All subject matter is organized by spread for ease of access in the blinding speed of business and life. All that is needed is your desire and passion to be the best.

**Basics**

**Part 1 presents the fundamental concepts needed to jumpstart the branding process and creates a shared vocabulary for the entire team.**

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**Brand basics**

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- 4 Brand identity
- 6 Branding
- 8 Brand governance
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- 16 Culture
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## Foreword by Debbie Millman

*Designing Brand Identity* reinvents the idea of a marketing textbook, demystifies branding, and illuminates the range of tools and techniques used by experienced practitioners. Since the first edition appeared in 2003, Alina Wheeler's book has become a singular resource providing a common language for the whole branding team.

*Designing Brand Identity* demonstrates the relationship between strategy and design, and showcases compelling best practice case studies from the public and private sectors, globally. It's not surprising that the book was an immediate hit, with five updated editions over fourteen years, and translated into seven languages. It strikes a deep chord in culture, and unequivocally proves how the practice of branding engages intelligence, creativity, imagination, and emotion unlike any other business discipline.

*Designing Brand Identity* has become a trusted resource and road map for designers, brand consultancies, digerati, and their clients. It is rare that one book can be used by both marketing and creative. *Designing Brand Identity*

accomplishes this feat, educating and inspiring the entire branding team, regardless of one's specific role. And its reach extends beyond working professionals: it is a textbook in design and business programs across the globe.

In short, I contend that *Designing Brand Identity* has done more to illuminate the mysteries and significance of branding than any other book of our time.

You are now holding the fifth edition of *Designing Brand Identity*. Each edition has evolved with the massive changes in technology, in behavior, and in our comprehension of the role branding plays in our cognition. Wheeler's contribution to this understanding is unprecedented.

## Design is intelligence made visible.

Lou Danziger

Debbie Millman is the cofounder and chair of the Masters in Branding program at SVA, training a new generation of brand leaders. As host of the podcast *Design Matters*, she has interviewed more than three hundred design luminaries and cultural commentators. She worked with over two hundred brands during her tenure as president of the design division of Sterling Brands from 1995 to 2016.



To mark the occasion of this new edition, I had the opportunity to explore the origins and intention of this effort with the author herself.

**Why was this book needed?**

I wanted to demystify branding, deconstruct the process, and give teams the tools to build trust and achieve remarkable results. While there were a lot of brilliant brand strategy books, and a lot of inspiring design books, there weren't any about a disciplined process to revitalize a brand. I had met a lot of smart leaders who were eager to understand the fundamentals and benefits of branding, and why good design was a business imperative.

**What changes have you seen since the publication of the first edition?**

The book underscores how far we have come. In the first edition, there were no apps or social media. Rising above the competitive clamor gets harder each day. Brand expression has exploded across all digital platforms. Content marketing has become a core competency, and armies of algorithms are at work. I've seen a dramatic increase in best practices across organizations big and small, public and private, for profit and nonprofit, driven by a new generation of agile leaders.

**You've mapped a disciplined process in *Designing Brand Identity*. How has it evolved over the various editions?**

My five-phase process to revitalize a brand is still the bedrock. It works. Readers from around the world share the successes their organizations have had by following the process. Reader feedback has enriched each edition and added important international perspectives.

**I find that some CEOs don't know what good design is, and it's shocking. Why do you think they aren't aware of the power of design?**

I am not shocked. If I looked under the hood of a Lamborghini, I would not know it's a high performance engine. If no one has ever shared best practices or case studies, how would a CEO know about the power of design? There are voluminous marketing case studies that never even include the "D" word. My aim has always been to spotlight the powerful synergy of strategy and design.

**How have you changed since the first edition?**

I have more empathy for clients. Changing anything takes a great deal of courage. Just because something is the right thing to do doesn't mean it's the easy thing to do.

**Why do you think change is so hard to implement?**

It's all about people. Getting people on board with change is difficult; there is always resistance. But I am optimistic: employee engagement is being embraced. A key part of my process is taking the time—up front—to build trust and agree on brand strategy, before moving on to design strategy. More participation, less persuasion.

**What advice do you have for organizations embarking on revitalizing their brands?**

Commit to a disciplined process. Stay customer-centric and trust the process. Engage your employees. Forge emotional connections and life long relationships with your customers. Seize every opportunity to amplify your differentiation. Be innovative, original, and dynamic. Become irreplaceable. Stay calm on the roller coaster of relentless change and keep moving.

**What do you hope readers will get from this fifth edition?**

The insights, courage, and tools to do the right thing for the right reasons. I want most to give readers the confidence to brand the future.

# 1 Basics

**Part 1 illuminates the difference between brand and brand identity, and what it takes to be the best. Don't bypass the fundamentals in the speed of a new project. Establish a shared vocabulary for the entire branding team.**

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## Brand

As competition creates infinite choices, companies look for ways to connect emotionally with customers, become irreplaceable, and create lifelong relationships. A strong brand stands out in a densely crowded marketplace. People fall in love with brands, trust them, and believe in their superiority. How a brand is perceived affects its success—whether it's a start-up, a nonprofit, or a product.

**Who are you? Who needs to know?  
How will they find out? Why should they care?**

**Brands now appear regularly on balance sheets in many companies. The intangible value of the brand is often much greater than the corporation's tangible assets.**

Wally Olins  
*The Brand Book*

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### Brands have three primary functions\*

#### Navigation

Brands help consumers choose from a bewildering array of choices.

#### Reassurance

Brands communicate the intrinsic quality of the product or service and reassure customers that they have made the right choice.

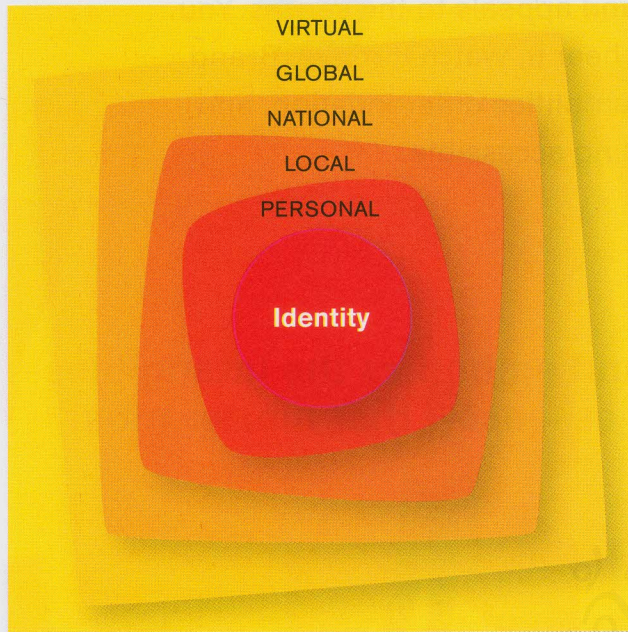
#### Engagement

Brands use distinctive imagery, language, and associations to encourage customers to identify with the brand.

\*David Haigh, CEO, Brand Finance

**Brands have become the global currency of success.**

*Brand Atlas*



**Businesses are now only as strong as their brands, and nothing else offers business leaders so much potential leverage.**

Jim Stengel

*Grow: How Ideals Power Growth and Profit at the World's Greatest Companies*



**Brand touchpoints**

Each touchpoint is an opportunity to increase awareness and build customer loyalty.



## Brand identity

Brand identity is tangible and appeals to the senses. You can see it, touch it, hold it, hear it, watch it move. Brand identity fuels recognition, amplifies differentiation, and makes big ideas and meaning accessible.

Great brands are like friends—you encounter a huge number of them everyday, but you only remember the ones you love.

Luc Speisser  
Managing Director  
Landor

Design differentiates and embodies the intangibles—emotion, context, and essence—that matter most to consumers.

Moira Cullen  
VP, Global Beverage Design  
PepsiCo



Laura Zindel



Target



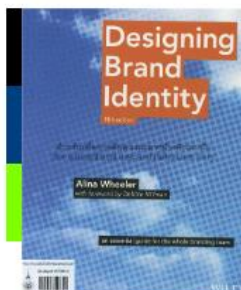
7 Minute Workout on the Apple Watch



Bevel Shave System

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McDonald's



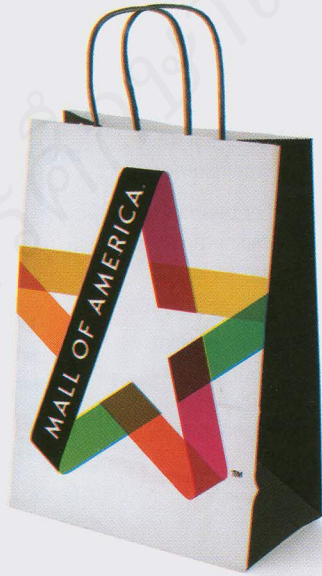
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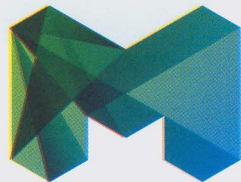
Dale Carnegie



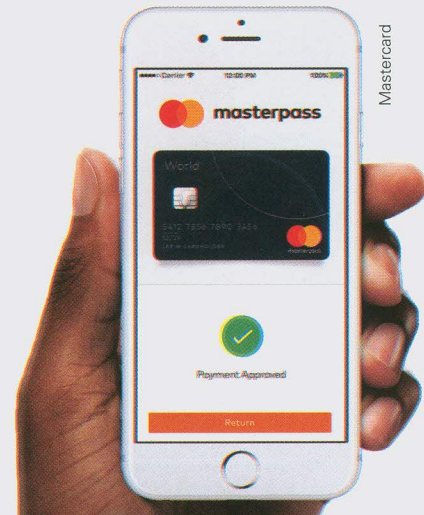
Pitney Bowes



Dale Carnegie



City of Melbourne



Mastercard