

Branding tech - Lessons from brand leaders

 By [Janice Spark](#)

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Brand leaders have evolved from a tactical and reactive approach to a strategic and visionary approach when it comes to branding, and lessons can be drawn that can help technology companies build better brands and achieve their business goals.

In the technology sector where innovation, movement, new products and rapid development are everything, a tactical approach is very seductive. However brand leadership can only be achieved by realising that building brands demands a long time horizon. Brands are built over time by brand champions who understand that consistency creates connections that endure and withstand market turbulence. Brand leaders also move from brand image to brand equity and understand the effect that solid positioning and competitive differentiation have on brand equity. Although some brand leaders have a multiple product - multiple market approach, stretching the brand with new products and markets, this is an orchestrated event that is mindful of the complexity of brand architectures.

A commonality of brand leaders is that the organisation is brand centric. What you will find at brand leaders is that the brand is the central focus of the enterprise. This ensures that the brand lives beyond the image or the pay-off line. That the brand is a living nerve that runs through customer touch points to ensure congruency between the brand promise and business actions. The effect that business leadership has on brands is deeply appreciated by leading brands. They know that the words and actions of their leadership have a significant impact on the value and reputation of the brand. More so, that events and actions that negatively affect their brand will adversely affect their business.

Emerging technology companies can learn a great deal from traditional brands that lead their category. Coca-Cola shows that great brands have a clear and recognisable identity, while brands like McDonalds show the power in consistency. A brand like Marmite teaches the value in building lasting relationships while no other brand taps into emotional relationships quite like Harley Davidson. Creating an emotional connection with consumers is the strength that creates the endurance of many great brands.

Other lessons from leading brands include adapting to change while never sacrificing the inner core, living the brand values by tangible knowing who and what the brand is. What the brand would do and what it wouldn't do. In economies where products proliferate, new entries challenge old orders and there is little certainty, brands can create sustainability and a competitive advantage. Strong branding solves the modern marketplace dilemma. When products are equal it is the brand that drives consumer choice and wins consumer loyalty.

ABOUT JANICE SPARK

Janice Spark is a founding director of Idea Engineers, a company that identifies then engineers ideas to build both brands and reputation. Idea Engineers provide marketing solutions that are better than advertising and more powerful than PR. In doing so, they guarantee a return on ideas that boost the bottom line. Spark is the former Marketing Director of Adcock Ingram and General Manager of Aramis for Estee Lauder. In a career that has spanned some 18 years Spark has pioneered South African marketing innovations such as the introduction of banking products and sell-through videos. She launched 15 new brands for Adcock Ingram and took the company to local market leadership. While at Estee Lauder, Spark launched Tommy Hilfiger and DKNY into South Africa.

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