Brand Resilience
A sneak peek
So, this is where we find ourselves: a world in which brands can be incredibly powerful, but more challenging and more expensive than ever to create and maintain, and less resilient. Under these conditions, building a resilient brand—and defending it against both intended and unwitting acts of brand sabotage—needs to be your number one priority.

—Jonathan Copulsky, *Brand Resilience*, chapter one
Close your eyes for a moment and consider the word *brand*.

Within milliseconds, images of the world’s leading corporate brands, ranging from Nike to Apple to Disney, may flood your brain. Or, to be more *au courant*, Google, Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia, Yelp, Foursquare, Urbanspoon, and YouTube.

The images inevitably consist of the iconic symbols, logos, and trademarks we encounter dozens of times a day on clothing, shopping bags, packages, sports arenas, office buildings, and homepages. Nike’s swoosh, Apple’s partially eaten apple, Google’s font, Disney’s Mickey Mouse, Geico’s gecko, McDonald’s golden arches, and Coca-Cola’s script. If you’re a baby boomer like me, you may think of Oscar Mayer’s Wienermobile. If you’re a millennial, maybe you’ll think of the Red Bull MINI Cooper.

Think about it a little longer. We bet you can come up with brands associated with every aspect of life: sports, popular culture, politics, geographic regions, and even literature.

- **The Chicago Cubs**, our hometown team, is a winner when it comes to brand recognition, thanks in part to television station WGN and its national cable reach. Cubs-branded caps, hats, towels, pennants, and other assorted merchandise generate millions in annual sales. If you have any doubts about the strength of the brand, try getting tickets to a home game at Wrigley Field on a Saturday afternoon in July.

- **The Olympics** has its distinctive five rings, theme song, torch, and thousands of athletes who proudly bear the title of Olympian. Every four years, television networks ante up a king’s ransom to secure broadcast rights ($2.2 billion for U.S. rights to the 2010 Winter Olympics and 2012 Summer Olympics⁴), corporations shell out extraordinary sums to sponsor the games, and cities invest huge amounts of money to support their Olympic bids. The lucky bid winner then earns the right to spend boat-loads more money to build the venues and facilities that will allow it to stage the Olympics and Paralympics for a stretch of approximately four weeks.

- **Paris Hilton** created incredible recognition first for herself and then for her Paris Hilton–branded products by parlaying a surname most known for its association with a global luxury hospitality chain. Her official website (www.parishilton.com) features footwear, fragrances, handbags, sunglasses, hair accessories, watches, sportswear, bedding, swimwear, and lingerie “collections,” in addition to her blog, photos, videos, and other “news” items. Hilton, given as she is to tabloid coverage, personifies the idea of being famous for being famous as she graces the pages of *People* and *Us Weekly*. When Paris’s brand wanes, any number of reality television stars, ranging from Kim Kardashian to Bethenny Frankel, are poised to replace her.

- **Donald Trump** has his name emblazoned on the marquees of office buildings, hotels, and casinos. You can also tack on the advice books based on the Donald’s business experience, a reality television show designed to test the mettle of would-be moguls, golf courses, a university, clothing, eyewear, leather goods, jewelry, furniture, lighting, home décor, mattresses, spring water, and vodka. Try to trump that.

- **Barack Obama** was an electoral success due, in part, to the meticulous manner by which the Obama brand was developed, cultivated, and merchandised. Think of the photograph artfully converted into the now-famous campaign poster by artist Shepard Fairey (although apparently without first securing permission from the photograph’s owner, the Associated Press), the simple but powerful theme of change (as in “Change We Can Believe In”), the patriotically colored O adorning bumper stickers and lawn signs, and the emotionally compelling personal narrative that informed not one but two bestselling books. In April 2009 Desirée Rogers, the former White House social secretary, asserted “we have the best brand on Earth: the Obama brand.”⁵ (Presidential adviser David Axelrod responded, “The president is a person, not a product. We shouldn’t be referring to him as a brand.”)
• We find Sarah Palin, the onetime mayor of an Anchorage suburb turned political dragon slayer, on the other side of the aisle. Palin and her running mate were self-styled “mavericks,” with Palin willing to engage in a little self-parody by appearing on “Saturday Night Live” along-side her doppelgänger, Tina Fey, before taking up the mantle of political commentator. Ironically, they branded themselves with the name of a nineteenth-century Texas rancher, Samuel Maverick, who resolutely refused to brand his own cattle. In 2009, Palin added the sobriquet “rogue.”

• Geographies have long been associated with brands, particularly when it comes to food. Think of the basics—cheese (Roquefort), wine (Burgundy), and meat (Prosciutto di Parma). But the lure of geographic links has spread beyond quaint agrarian regions of France and Italy. The December 14, issue of the New York Times (a clear geographic tie) carried an article on “Brooklyn: The Brand.” Brooklyn-branded products mentioned in the article include pickles, salsa, beer, and chocolate. It also describes a new bar, The Brooklyner, that features Brooklyn hot dogs, Brooklyn pickles, Brooklyn whiskey, Brooklyn ricotta, Brooklyn jam, and Brooklyn-brewed kombucha, despite being located in Manhattan. The bar’s owners define a Brooklyner as “someone who admires Brooklyn” and claim that they “merely wanted to share the food and drink they love with the rest of the city.”

• Jane Austen, the nineteenth-century author of romantic novels, is a brand. The opening paragraphs of her novel Pride and Prejudice appeared unattributed in the early ads for Barnes & Noble’s ebook reader the Nook, as if daring the reader to identify the source. Legions of rabid Janeites eagerly consume new books, movies, and musicals that build upon her considerable legacy. Pride and Prejudice and Zombies, anyone?

• Even terrorists have become brands. The January 31, 2010, edition of the Wall Street Journal carried an editorial titled “Carlos the Brand: The Jackal Has a Brand to Protect” that described an upcoming ruling by a court in Paris on a claim lodged by one Ilich Ramirez Sánchez, a.k.a. Carlos the Jackal. Carlos and his lawyer-cum-wife were “suing a French production company for the right to review and ‘correct and edit’ a made-for-TV film about him entitled ‘Carlos.’” Carlos and his lawyer alleged that “the filmmakers . . . [were] out to ‘demolish Carlos,’ “whose aim in filing the suit was “to protect the intellectual property rights to his name and ‘biographical image.’”

• Barco Uniforms offers a line of Grey’s Anatomy scrubs for nurses. The article “Branding Operation” by New York Times columnist Rob Walker quotes a letter from a reader who writes, “How odd is it that a profession that asks people to trust its members to take life-or-death actions would advertise a brand based on a TV show on the job?”

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Was it always like this?
The word brand, based on an Old Norse word meaning "to burn," originally referred to the practice of herders burning marks onto the hides of their animals. The different marks on the livestock identified individual herders and, thus, their products. Over time, a brand became synonymous with the names and images that manufacturers developed to distinguish their products from those of their competitors. A variety of businesses claim to be the first to have registered a brand, including the British brewer Bass & Company, which used its distinctive red triangle on the barrels of ale that it shipped all over the world.

It’s a short hop, skip, and a jump from a red triangle to the Budweiser Tastebuds. We have moved beyond simple brand marks printed on products and shipping containers. Everywhere you look, you see a veritable sea of brands.

Consider food. In 1988, during a vacation in France dedicated to the consumption of copious amounts of fine food and wine, my wife and I were lucky enough to dine at a very special restaurant in Lyon, L'Auberge du Pont de Collonges. The restaurant’s chef and owner was (and is) Paul Bocuse, one of the fathers of nouvelle cuisine and a recipient of the Michelin Guide’s coveted three stars.

My wife still talks about the food, ambience, and service more than 20 years later as her benchmark for fine dining. We were surprised, consequently, given this experience, to see the cabinets in the restaurant’s entry hall filled with Paul Bocuse–branded merchandise available for sale to patrons. Hardly what we expected to see in this bastion of elevated taste.

That was then. Not long after our visit, Bocuse opened up a restaurant at Walt Disney’s Epcot. Other Paul Bocuse restaurants have followed. Today, Paul Bocuse has a website that includes “L’Espace E-Boutique de Paul Bocuse” and sponsors the Bocuse d’Or, a biennial culinary competition featuring teams from 24 countries.

In retrospect, it seems that Bocuse was in fact an early innovator when it came to profiting from a chef’s fame through branded books, television shows, prepared foods, and cookware. What seemed odd in the twentieth century is common practice in the twenty-first.

Chefs are not the only brand names when it comes to food. In Chicago, for example, grass-fed Tallgrass Beef (founded by brand-name journalist Bill Kurtis) is offered for home consumption as well as on the menus of the city’s top restaurants. You can sip branded espresso at the local outlet of a global coffee chain, where you can also buy its branded blended drinks, branded coffee-related merchandise, and branded music using the store’s branded stored-value card. Or you can buy the global coffee chain’s branded ice cream or branded bottled coffee drinks at your branded supermarket.

At Deloitte, the professional services firm where I have spent the past 14 years of my career, we teach our new practitioners to think about what it will take to build their “personal brand” and counsel them that their professional success is directly related to these brand-building efforts. On more than one occasion, I have delivered a PowerPoint presentation in which I quote from Tom Peters’s book The Brand You50: “We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. Our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You. Starting today you are a brand. The good news is that everyone has a chance to stand out. It’s this simple: You are in charge of your brand.”
Not too long ago, I read an article about Bloggy Boot Camp, an event designed to help the participants (about 90 percent of them mothers) “take their blogs up a notch, whether in hopes of generating ad revenue and sponsorships, attracting attention to a cause, or branching out into paid journalism or marketing.” The title of the article? “Honey, Don’t Bother Mommy. I’m Too Busy Building My Brand.” The article’s title, if not the piece itself, was tongue-in-cheek, although I found a breathless endorsement of the article on Samson Media’s blog, Playing in Traffic, which opened, “As you probably know by now, in today’s business environment, it’s ALL about your personal brand.”

A discussion on personal brands once led a colleague to refer me to the Interbrand website. Interbrand, a leading brand consultancy (as it says on their site, “started in 1974 when the world still thought of brands as just another word for logo”), offers a section on its website featuring its “Personal Brand Valuation” methodology. I was mildly disappointed to discover that it’s actually meant to help value celebrities and athletes for endorsement purposes, rather than for ordinary schlubs like me. But after the Tiger Woods incident, it’s not surprising that advertisers and sponsors would be interested in tools for personal brand valuation.

You get the idea.

The power of ubiquitous brands
The explosive growth of brands should come as no surprise. While it’s easy to poke fun at the self-promoters scrambling to build their personal brands, the fact remains that ubiquitous brands are incredibly powerful value-creation engines.

What do we mean by a “ubiquitous brand”? A ubiquitous brand is one where the brand’s presence and reputation extends well beyond the products or services with which it was originally associated to the point where it generates substantial economic benefits for its owners above and beyond the margins generated by the sale of its core products or services.

In the 2010 study “BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands,” by Millward Brown Optimor, the 10 most valuable global brands (Google, IBM, Apple, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, McDonald’s, Marlboro, China Mobile, General Electric, and Vodafone) collectively account for an eye-popping $693 billion of value. The 2009 version of this same study notes that “in a year of global financial turmoil, when every key financial indicator plummeted, the value of the top 100 brands increased by 2 percent to $2 trillion.” Sounds like a much better performance than my investment portfolio during the same period. It also sounds like a great opportunity for a financial engineer to figure out how to create a class of securities based on brand value.

Ubiquitous brands attract customers like flowers attract bees. These customers often pay premium prices, despite the availability of less expensive and equally serviceable alternatives. These customers often pay premium prices, despite the availability of less expensive and equally serviceable alternatives. The willingness of customers to wait years to plunk down $6,000 (or more, according to my wife, who knows about these things) to purchase a Birkin handbag from Hermès is just one example of the hold a ubiquitous brand can have on its customers. Other examples range from the Cheerios that you consume for breakfast in lieu of the generic oat cereals that sit alongside it on the grocery shelf, to the popular BMW 3 Series that drivers continue to snap up despite the availability of much cheaper domestic alternatives.
Ubiquitous brands give their owners permission to enter new markets and launch new products and services in ways not available to owners of weaker brands. Take a look at how the market holds its breath whenever Apple drops the slightest hint of a new product launch. In the days surrounding the launch of Apple’s iPad, the buzz was unbelievable. People may have criticized the price, the name, the features, and the functionality, but there was no lack of people talking, writing, blogging, and, tweeting—even though the product announcement preceded the actual availability by months. Apple has become an iconic brand, revered for its design aesthetic, distinctive advertising, and innovative products, and it was named the world’s most admired company by Fortune in 2009.

Apple’s success with its devices has also propelled the success of services and complementary products that adhere to Apple’s design standards. In the company’s reporting for the quarter that ended in December 2009, iPod sales grew 1 percent to $3.39 billion, while revenues from Apple-branded and third-party iPod accessories, iTunes-store sales, and other iPod services rose 15 percent to $1.16 billion.

The proliferation of successful brand extensions and the growth of lucrative brand licensing exemplify the potential of strong brands to create value. The major sports leagues generate billions of dollars in incremental revenue each year from licensed merchandise such as video games, apparel, toys, and trading cards—more than $13 billion and growing. Westin’s Heavenly Bed, designed to address travelers’ concerns about the difficulty of enjoying a restful night while staying at a hotel, has been so successful that Westin now sells the bed through in-room catalogs, online, and at Nordstrom.

What else can a ubiquitous brand do for your company?

Ubiquitous brands are a magnet for talent, attracting employees as well as customers.

Like customers, employees relish being associated with a brand that radiates personality. What’s good for the goose is apparently good for the gander. It should come as no surprise, then, that the lists of top brands and top employers correlate highly. Google, number one on the brand value list, ranks number four on Fortune’s 2010 list of “100 Best Companies to Work For.”

Customers flaunt their consumption of ubiquitous brands, and engaged employees can become the most conspicuous consumers of a ubiquitous brand’s products and services. Visit an Apple store if you want to see highly satisfied employee advocates at work, serving highly loyal customers. According to Sanford C. Bernstein analysts, Apple reached $1 billion in annual retail sales faster than any retailer in history. Its stores generate more than $4,000 per square foot—a tidy sum, particularly when compared to $2,600 for Tiffany, no slouch in the branding department itself.

Brand value, as calculated by Millward Brown Optimor and others, is real and significant and is clearly reflected in the stock prices of publicly traded companies. By their calculations, for example, 61 percent of American Express’s market capitalization comes from its brand value. It’s hard to believe that the most valuable assets of many companies don’t show up on their balance sheets, thus avoiding the scrutiny that comes with financial regulation, reporting, and disclosure.

Because of the huge advantage conferred by employee advocates, measuring employee engagement and loyalty is now common practice. Organizations recognize that engaged and loyal employees are their best advertisements, while strong brands help to engage employees and keep them loyal.
It takes hard work to develop ubiquitous brands

The critically acclaimed television show Mad Men is what used to be known as a water-cooler show. The day after the broadcast of a water-cooler show, workers in the office would gather around the water cooler (or perhaps the coffee machine) to discuss the show’s latest plot developments and intrigues.

Mad Men is a show about the heyday of advertising, when any advertising agency that mattered was housed in a building located along New York’s Madison Avenue. In Mad Men’s version of reality, its mostly male executives wear suits to work, drink cocktails at lunch, and have assistants to answer their phones and type their correspondence while they busy themselves creating brilliant television commercials and fabulous four-color magazine spreads featuring their clients’ products. What a life.

Mad Men is mainly about creativity, with a little bit of account management thrown into the mix. The palette for this creativity is mass media—network television, newspapers, and national magazines—with the attendant millions of viewers and readers.

In the early 1960s, when Mad Men is set, virtually every household with a television watched network television—ABC, CBS, or NBC. There was no Fox, no CNN, no FX, no TBS, and certainly no AMC, Mad Men’s home network.

CBS’s Gunsmoke, a network television legend, symbolized the power and draw of network television in the early 1960s. Gunsmoke’s 635 episodes ran from September 10, 1955, to March 31, 1975. It was the number-one-ranked show from 1957 to 1961.25 Almost half of American households watched a typical broadcast, featuring James Arness as U.S. Marshal Matt Dillon, Milburn Stone as Doc Adams, and Amanda Blake as saloonkeeper Kitty Russell. For years, viewers wondered about the true nature of the relationship between Marshal Dillon and Miss Kitty.

In the days portrayed by Mad Men, building a brand meant buying commercials on popular network television shows like Gunsmoke. Perhaps you’d also throw in some ads in a couple of major magazines and daily newspapers. With a decent media budget but without too much work, you could easily reach most American households.

Reaching the same portion of households is a lot harder and a lot more expensive today. Consumers are busy playing video games, surfing the web, updating their Facebook accounts, listening to their iPods, and following their friends on Twitter. If they are actually watching a television show, it’s probably on one of the dozens of cable channels available to them. Or on a DVR, a mobile phone, an on-demand video service, a portable MP3 player, an online video-sharing site, or any number of other technologies that allow them to see what they want when they want it. And they can happily do so without interruption by the commercials that were once the bedrock of brand building.

The decline of network television has been mirrored in virtually every advertising-supported medium that existed 20 years ago. Reader’s Digest, which enjoyed peak U.S. circulation of 17 million in the 1970s, had dropped to 8 million by 2009. Daily newspaper penetration dropped below 50 percent long ago, and almost every day brings new reports of newspapers going out of business. Mad Men, AMC’s most popular show, regularly captures fewer than 2 million viewers for its regular broadcasts, although it garners additional viewers through the web and on-demand versions.

So, brand owners need creative new ways to do what used to be easy.
Building a brand today means much more than just spending money on mass media. The clusters of coworkers that gathered around the water coolers of the 1960s have been replaced by virtual communities that connect through social media—like the slyly named Watercooler, a startup in California that creates social games and sports-fan communities on Facebook and other top social networks. Its games and applications have been installed by more than 30 million users.

Instead of a relatively straightforward mix of network television and other mass media, brand owners need to think about integrating more narrowly targeted elements like video programming, niche publications, event marketing, sponsorships, direct marketing, online marketing, social media, etc., ad infinitum.

Meanwhile, it’s not getting any cheaper.

Take the Super Bowl, a barometer of advertising health, and one of the few broadcasts that has actually increased its absolute viewership since the ’60s. The 2010 Super Bowl generated the highest viewership in broadcast history—as the Hollywood Reporter points out, the 2010 event “drew 106.5 million viewers . . . edging out 1983’s M*A*S*H finale, which garnered 105.97 million viewers—although these figures also reflect the fact that the total “TV audience . . . [had] climbed from 218 million viewers to 292 million” between 1983 and 2010.28 In 2011, Super Bowl viewership edged up again to 111 million viewers. (For the record, the stats are in table 1.1.)

Big opportunities come with big brands, but it’s harder work than it used to be to realize the opportunity. The difficulty in delivering against these opportunities partly explains why chief marketing officers (CMO) tend to have some of the shortest life spans in the executive suite. In figures compiled by Spencer Stuart’s Greg Welch, the average CMO’s shelf life is 75 percent shorter than that of the next-shortest-lived executive, the chief information officer, and 60 percent shorter than that of the other senior executives. CMO Mike Linton attributes this to the “marketer’s dilemma,” which requires CMOs “to hit the sweet spot that delivers today’s results while building the brand for the long term.”

### Table 1.1 Super Bowl: The barometer of advertising health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super Bowl</th>
<th>Viewership</th>
<th>Cost for a thirty-second spot</th>
<th>Cost per thousand viewers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Super Bowl I (1967)</td>
<td>51 million</td>
<td>$42,500/CBS/$37,500/NBC*</td>
<td>$.83/.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Super Bowl XXI (1987)</td>
<td>87 million</td>
<td>$600,000</td>
<td>$6.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Super Bowl XL (2006)</td>
<td>90 million</td>
<td>$2.5 million</td>
<td>$27.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Super Bowl XLIV (2010)</td>
<td>107 million</td>
<td>$2.6 million</td>
<td>$24.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Super Bowl XLV (2011)</td>
<td>111 million</td>
<td>$30 million</td>
<td>$27.03</td>
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*The only time the game was broadcast on two networks.

Brands are now about trust

Traditionally, brands have played a key role in communicating the quality of a product or service. As any good dictionary will tell you, quality means being free from defects, deficiencies, and significant variations. The International Organization for Standards (ISO) defines quality as “the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs.”

Successful brand owners develop measurable and verifiable quality standards and put processes in place to ensure that those standards are consistently and uniformly met. When you purchase a branded soap or visit a branded hotel or eat at a branded restaurant, you trust the brand to ensure that you enjoy a quality bar of soap, a quality hotel room, and a quality dining experience.

Quality also implies what won’t happen as much as what will. A quality razor delivers a smooth shave, but also a safe one. A quality car comfortably transports its passengers from place to place without the need for unscheduled repairs. A quality meal is one that is enjoyable to eat, but also won’t make you ill.

A friend from another country reported her initial experience in the United States shopping for cereal at a local grocery store. As she entered the cereal aisle, she was confronted with what seemed like miles of shelves, covered with an amazing array of sizes and varieties of transformed grains waiting for a bowl, spoon, and milk—far more choices than she had ever seen before. She froze. Her tension abated, however, when she recognized a cereal box containing “her brand” and she realized that the move to the United States didn’t mean abandoning the familiar, and safe, choice.

There are plenty of ways to gauge the quality of a product or service. You can turn to Zagat or Yelp to help you find and select a restaurant. You can turn to J. D. Power to help you evaluate cars. If you want to buy a camera, a powerboat, a computer, a flat-panel television, a stove, a pair of running shoes, or a myriad of other products, you can easily find an Internet site, blog, or wiki that rates and describes it. In fact, we contend that you will quickly be overwhelmed by the incredible abundance of information about how to make the best possible selection among all of the options available to you.
Third party-evaluators have been with us for years. In 1936, Consumers Union, the parent company of Consumer Reports, was founded as “an expert, independent, nonprofit organization whose mission is to work for a fair, just, and safe marketplace for all consumers and to empower consumers to protect themselves.” But the current set of alternatives presents an astonishing breadth and depth of robust and easy-to-use information. Information that used to be expensive or time-consuming to obtain and difficult to digest is now cheap and easy, thanks to the thousands of webmavens that make the acquisition of this information their life’s work.

In 2006, my colleague Alistair Davidson and I coauthored an article for Strategy and Leadership in which we described the growth of webmavens as key influencers on customer buying behavior. We also discussed the emergence of a new imperative for CMOs focused on “maven management.” While comments from webmavens can provide product managers with fresh intelligence on the failures and successes that customers are experiencing with their offerings, the bad news is that the negative feedback from just one or two influential webmavens can have dire results for a brand’s reputation.

Consumers are changing their habits as a result. Sixty-three percent of Americans (191 million), are actively using the Internet, and people now default to websites to help them understand and evaluate their options before making a major purchase. According to surveys completed by our colleagues at Deloitte, more than half of U.S. consumers have purchased a product based on an online recommendation, and most consumers believe that it is relatively easy to obtain information about products that they are considering purchasing. The growth of mobile devices, along with the advent of fast mobile broadband networks, means that much of this information can be accessed and consumed even at the point of sale. Between 2007 and 2008, for example, the number of mobile Internet users increased from 12 percent to 18 percent of the U.S. population.

Perhaps because of this, quality levels are rising dramatically. The National Quality Research Center at the Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, administers the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). ACSI measures satisfaction with the goods and services of hundreds of companies and public-sector organizations. A glance at ACSI’s scores over the past 10 years suggests that most have risen dramatically during this period. Manufacturing defects, service outages, and service delivery shortfalls have all decreased fairly significantly and fairly steadily. Your best option today is better than it ever was in the past, but so is the next best alternative.

All of this raises the question of why we even need brands anymore. What’s their role in a world with great transparency of information and high overall quality levels?

Answer: We choose brands because we trust them.
We trust that they deliver quality, but we also trust everything that they stand for.

The brands that we choose use the right ingredients, purchased from the right suppliers, and produced by the right employees, in the right manner.

Freed from the burden of demonstrating quality, brands convey a much richer set of messages, which may include:

- I’m sustainable.
- I use fair labor practices.
- I don’t pay bribes.
- I only use organic ingredients.
- I take care of my employees.
- I will safeguard your private information.
- I will configure my offerings based on your needs.

When we choose a brand today, it is as much about declaring who we are and what we value as it is about the product. We choose proudly and display those choices proudly. We have moved from mere consumption of a brand to a relationship with a brand. Our willingness to build these relationships with brands is what makes the most successful brands ubiquitous and therefore valuable.

Trust in a brand also means that we are willing to recommend a brand. This is the ultimate compliment that we can pay to a brand: making someone else aware of our trust and letting them know that it’s okay for them to trust the brand as well. In fact, in their article “The Good, the Bad, and the Trustworthy,” Paul Argenti, James Lytton-Hitchins, and Richard Verity (this really is his name, believe me) suggest that opportunities increasingly exist for companies to use “trustworthiness” as a source of competitive advantage.

Various organizations have started to measure brand trust. Millward Brown, for example, identifies which brands are the most trusted and most recommended. In its report “Beyond Trust: Engaging Consumers in the Post-Recession World,” Millward Brown introduces its proprietary metric, TrustR, “a new metric for understanding and strengthening the bond between consumers and brands.” The top performer on the most recent study was Amazon.com. According to Millward Brown’s CEO, Eileen Campbell, “the number one ‘TrustR’ brand in each of the 22 countries we researched was nearly seven times more likely to be purchased [than its competitors] and consumers were 10 times more likely to have formed a strong bond with these brands” versus other brands in general.

Other firms offer tracking polls to measure brand trust and reputations daily, given how quickly opinions seem to shift. YouGov (“What the World Thinks”) is an Internet-based market research organization launched in 2000 that relies on online panels to rapidly gather perceptions, opinions, and attitudes. YouGov’s offering, BrandIndex, for example, “is a daily measure of public perception of 850 consumer brands across 34 sectors, measured on a 7-point profile: general impression, ‘buzz,’ quality, value, corporate reputation, customer satisfaction, and whether respondents would recommend the brand to a friend.”

It is based on interviews with nearly 10 thousand adults per day, drawn from its panels of more than 2 million consumers across 10 countries.
When brand trust goes bad

The rise in importance of brand trust means that any breach of our faith in a brand can be fatal to the relationship. If “our brand” behaves in a manner that suggests our trust is misplaced, we terminate that relationship quickly and decisively. Unrepaired breaches are particularly harmful.

Competitors are also increasingly quick to jump on real and perceived breaches of trust. After one mobile phone company experienced problems with dropped calls in their latest phone and belatedly announced a fix involving “bumpers,” a sort of protective case, a competitor unveiled full-page ads announcing “No Jacket Required,” with the accompanying text “We believe a customer shouldn’t have to dress up their phone for it to work properly.” The target of the ad was instantly clear; there was no need to mention the competitor by name.

Incredibly schizophrenic consumer behavior now appears to be the state of the world when it comes to brands. On one hand, we forge incredibly loyal bonds with brands. On the other, we abandon these brands when they prove unworthy. “Trust,” as the 2010 Edelman Trust Barometer notes so eloquently, “is fragile.”

So, this is where we find ourselves: a world in which brands can be incredibly powerful, but more challenging and more expensive than ever to create and maintain, and less resilient.

Under these conditions, building a resilient brand—and defending it against both intended and unwitting acts of brand sabotage—needs to be your number one priority.

Key takeaways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we know...</th>
<th>And what you can do...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ubiquitous brands generate extraordinary value for their owners.</td>
<td>Put processes in place to assess brand value and measure changes in brand value over time, just like you would with any critical asset.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It takes hard work to develop ubiquitous brands.</td>
<td>Track spend on building and maintaining brand value.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brands are now about trust.</td>
<td>Understand how your customers feel about your brand, in terms of trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untreated breaches of trust can be fatal.</td>
<td>Establish the mechanisms for detecting and averting acts of brand sabotage; ensure that brand resilience is an organizational priority.</td>
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What people are saying about *Brand Resilience*

“Be afraid. Be very afraid. Brands are now so valuable that damage to them can mean millions or billions in lost profits, while threatening the very foundation of a business —its customer loyalty. Luckily, history gives us good models for defense against such threats, and Copulsky does an outstanding job of showing how brand stewards can apply these models to keep their brands safe. A must-read for everyone who cares about the future of their company.

—Marty Neumeier, author of *The Brand Gap*

“Shakespeare tells us that: ‘who steals my purse steals…nothing…But he that filches from me my good name…makes me poor indeed.’ In a world where brands are more vulnerable than ever, Copulsky does a terrific job of clearly identifying the risks to your ‘good name’ and providing a blueprint for proactively managing these risks. His insights on how to play aggressive brand defense are invaluable.”

—Mark Zupan, Dean, Simon School of Business and Professor of Economics and Public Policy

“Increasingly, brand value and trust are influenced less by what companies say and more by what others say about them. Today’s social networks provide a great opportunity for companies and their customers to amplify a brand’s qualities, but not without risk. Copulsky does a great job describing how these powerful social networks can also quickly damage brands. This book is a must read for anyone involved with shaping and delivering brand strategy.”

—Chris Abess, V.P. Strategic Marketing, SunPower Corporation

“The battlefield has shifted from building to protecting brands and Copulsky’s *Brand Resilience* is the perfect guide in this new arena.”

—Allen Adamson, author of *BrandSimple* and *Brand Digital*

“Copulsky has hit the nail on the head. You better be ready with a contingency plan if your brand takes a surprise hit, which can come from anywhere. An untimely or awkward response to a crisis can destroy you, while a brilliant response can strengthen you. Copulsky doesn’t just state the problem; he prescribes actions.”

—Jim Schrero, former CEO Carlson Marketing, EVP Sales & Marketing Chrysler, VP Global Marketing Ford, and Partner, Booz Allen & Hamilton
Read more
To learn about the seven-step plan that will help identify the source of possible sabotage, galvanize employees to protect the brand, and establish an early warning system to head off future treats, pick up a copy of Brand Resilience. It's available at Amazon.com, Borders.com, and BN.com.

For additional information visit www.deloitte.com/us/brandresilience.

Sources


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