



## The 5 Rules of Branding

Branding is a discipline and, as such, involves the practice of training people to obey rules. In our work with brands over the years, we have developed five rules of branding that are relevant for every type of organization.

<p><b>Rule #1: Consistency</b></p>	<p><b>Everything your organization says and does needs to be consistent.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Messages should support the Core Values of the organization (internal) and the Brand Positioning (external)</li> <li>• All aspects of your brand strategy need to be aligned</li> <li>• People need to know what they can expect from your brand/organization</li> </ul> <p><b>Everyone needs to be saying/doing/promising the same thing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising –TV, radio, print, digital/social media, website, signage, collateral, etc.</li> <li>• Marketing efforts – promotions, events, sponsorships, tie-ins, etc.</li> <li>• Community outreach and social investment initiatives</li> <li>• Internal - Customer service and employee, vendor, and partner communications</li> <li>• External - Annual reports, news and press releases, wall street/investor reporting</li> </ul> <p><i>“The best brands, like the most interesting people, have a keen sense of self. You have to understand what your brand means not only within your offices, but out in the world, where the consumers are...Once you’ve figured it out, stick with it.”</i></p> <p>- David D'Alessandro, former President/CEO, John Hancock</p>
<p><b>Rule #2: Discipline</b></p>	<p><b>Stay focused on the brand’s core values and brand positioning.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don’t let the brand “drift”</li> <li>• Don’t get seduced by good ideas that are off strategy</li> <li>• You can’t be all things to all people; don’t try – it dilutes you brand promise</li> </ul> <p><i>“One often neglected challenge in developing a business strategy is knowing when to say no to good ideas that don’t fit...SAS receives a hundred business offers and proposals a month, many of them quite good. But only a fraction fit in with our goal of providing the best possible service for the frequent business traveler. The rest would require us to dissipate our energy after we have worked so hard to focus it on our goal.”</i></p> <p>- Jan Carlzon, former CEO, SAS</p>
<p><b>Rule #3: Commitment</b></p>	<p><b>Stick with it – Keep doing the things that make your organization different and better than the competition.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don’t get bored</li> <li>• Repetition is good; people will come to understand and recognize your brand promise</li> </ul> <p><i>“Commitment is what transforms a promise into reality. It is the words that speak boldly of your intentions. And the actions which speak louder than the words.”</i></p> <p>- Abraham Lincoln, 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, Author, <i>Emancipation Proclamation</i></p>
<p><b>Rule #4: Improve</b></p>	<p><b>Set the bar high – get there and set it higher.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decide what you are best at and continue to get better at that</li> </ul> <p><b>Beat out the competition.</b></p> <p><i>“Here is the prime condition of success: Concentrate your energy, thought and capital exclusively upon the business in which you are engaged. Having begun on one line, resolve to fight it out on that line, to lead in it, adopt every improvement...and know the most about it.”</i></p> <p>- Andrew Carnegie, Industrialist and Philanthropist, Founder of U. S. Steel</p>
<p><b>Rule #5: Evolve</b></p>	<p><b>Stay ahead of your industry – Know where change will happen. Respond before peers do.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipate change and have a plan to address it</li> <li>• Lead your peers in the areas of importance to your brand</li> <li>• Remain relevant to your core audience(s)</li> </ul> <p><i>“Excellent firms don’t believe in excellence - only in constant improvement and constant change.”</i></p> <p>-Tom Peters, Management Consultant &amp; Best-Selling Author: <i>In Search of Excellence</i></p>

NorthStar Strategies is a strategic marketing and communications company. We provide smart, integrated marketing plans that deliver measurable results. Our job is to get clients to think differently about their business. Collaboration begins with strategy and continues through execution. That’s our commitment. Contact us if you would like to discuss your branding challenges at [Info@northstarstrategies.biz](mailto:Info@northstarstrategies.biz)