

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/the-power-of-brands>

Stanford adjunct lecturer and entrepreneurial marketing expert Lynda Kate Smith explains that, at the start of the career, she thought branding was about a logo and a color scheme. She now understands that brands are much more powerful, and encompass a company's actions, values, and interactions with the customer, as well as the customers' overall feeling about the company.



Transcript

- Yeah, we used to think very early in my career, 00:00:04,480 yeah, you had to have a brand.. It was like a logo.. It was like the colors that you picked out, and you had to have a brand.. Your company had to have a brand.. I didn't realize until later in my career, the power that a brand can really have.. Maybe that's because I was doing a lot of B2B work, and I didn't think of it as much there.. Probably my peers that were B2C thought about it every day.. But it finally dawned on me and I got very excited about it.. So when you think about a brand, this is the perceived emotional corporate image as a whole.. And why do we emphasize the whole? Well, it is more than a logo..

It is more than the color or the fonts that you've picked out, and the brand exists in the mind of consumers.. By the way, another word that if you go out and do a Google search on you're gonna find umpteen definitions.. But a brand also exists in the mind of the consumer, which means it really comes back to how people perceive you.. Coming back to that idea of the whole, a brand lives at the intersection of the brand attributes.. All right, the logos, the colors, the words that describe it.. Those are the more marketingish things we look at.. It's also about the company actions, which is driven by culture and the values.. And then it's about the customer experience and how you really have a customer feel when they go through the complete experience, do they have with the company.. From the time they get to know you, to the time they buy your product, to their ongoing experience with you.. Coming back to that idea that your brand lives in the hands of the consumer, well, that end customer is really going to be the one that helps shape that brand and projects that brand as they talk about you out there..

And brands are important with a whole variety of audiences that you, as an entrepreneur, need to care about.. It's your prospects.. It's your customers.. It's your channel partners.. It's your employees.. It's the investors.. It's the market influencers that are out there, the brand influences.. But again, it's not just the logo.. It's all aspects of that brand that are part of that influencing tool.. And if you can achieve that really strong brand out there in the market, it is gonna add value to your company..

It's gonna require less persuasion for consumers to use other products from your same brand.. It can ensure that lasting customer relationship, a relationship that's built on trust.. Again, if you think about those three circles, trust isn't necessarily coming from what your brand attributes are.. It's really about how they interact with your company and the experiences.. It's

gonna help in that recognition in that cluttered marketplace.. It's gonna allow differentiation between very similar products.. It has that ability to command a premium, and it leads to that perception of quality.. And I like to laugh.. And one of the companies that I think has done an amazing job of building the brand, started well before I got over there, was Twilio.. People thought we were five times the size we were..

And part of what really drove that, and I like to laugh about it, is the power of cotton.. We had Twilio t-shirts all over the place.. And we, as individuals who had coded, had developed our Twilio app, had our red track jacket.. And people would see us out there.. It was like, "Oh my gosh, you seem to be everywhere." Well, it was how we deployed our brand out into the marketplace.. And that power of the brand was super strong, and it really helped carry the company a long way.. This iconic Twilio t-shirt still exists today.. And the brand is still stronger than ever.. Coming back to how brands are communicated, in addition to the power of cotton.. It's the name, it's the logo..

It's the visual grammar.. Yes, think colors and fonts and all of that.. It's the voice.. And I want to just pause on that one a little bit because people forget about the written word, is so much a part of your brand and how you use that written word, whether it's the customer support tickets that people are responding to.. It's the website that you're creating.. It's the way you actually talk to customers when you're engaging with them.. That voice of the company carries so much power.. And then some companies whose taglines, everyone has messaging, and marketing really leverages all of these to bring that brand to life...