

Branding perspectives

Hedon Blakaj

4 different perspectives on branding

- **Mind-share branding**
 - Emotional branding
 - Viral branding
- **Cultural branding**

MIND-SHARE BRANDING

BRAND LEADERSHIP

Author of **BUILDING STRONG BRANDS**
and **MANAGING BRAND EQUITY**

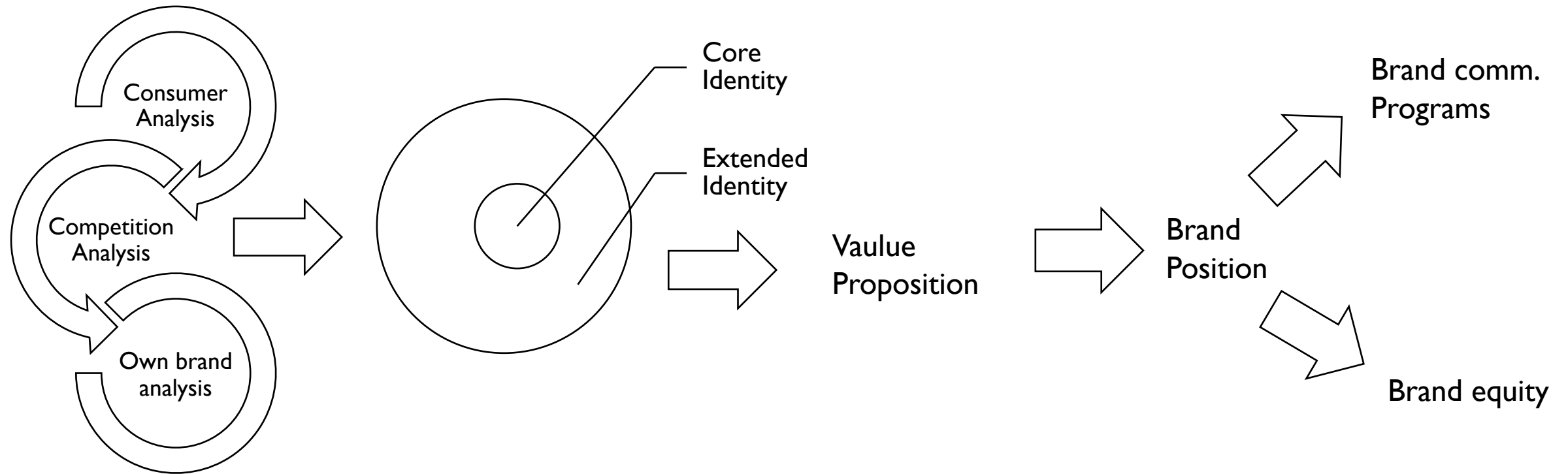
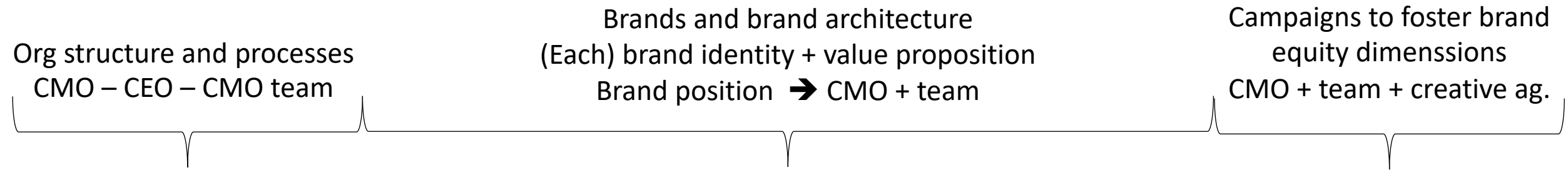
DAVID A. AAKER
& **ERICH JOACHIMSTHALER**



Why is the brand so important?

”The brand is the only sustainable source of competitive advantage.” (Aaker 1996)

- As per David Aaker and likeminded, managing brands strategically pays-off
- He offers a brand leadership perspective as a mean of building and sustaning strong brands
- Aaker offers four distinct but no mutually exclusive dimensions to argue for his model:
 - Organizational structure and processees
 - Brand architecture
 - Brand-building programs
 - Brand identity/position



I.

Organizational structure and processes

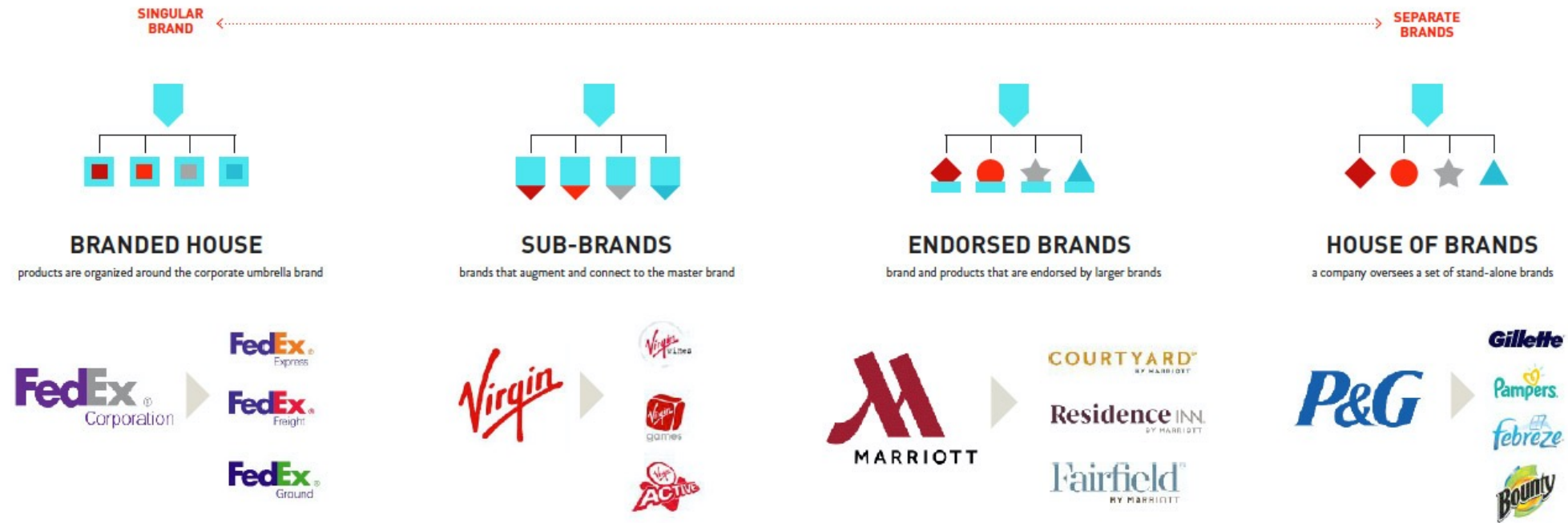
- Build/foster an organizational structure and culture that will lead to strong brands
 - Someone or somegroup needs to be in charge of brand building and maintenance processes → think about the role of the CMO
 - CMO and others, to offer *relatively* clear guidelines and rules for everyone in the organization and especially for those engaged in brand management
- “this is how we do branding in this organization” → organizational culture

II.

Brand architecture

- Identify brands and sub-brands as well as their roles, but also, see how they relate to one another
- Doing so, you will be in a better position to:
 - Offer clear consumer/customer offerings
 - Engage in better communication programs
 - Also, to leverage brand equity assets
- Brand architecture may help you decide:
 - When to stretch and existing brand (extension)
 - When to develop a new brand
 - When to use a sub-brand

BRAND ARCHITECTURE SPECTRUM



SOURCE: "The Brand Relationship Spectrum," David A. Aaker: known as the 'Father of Modern Branding'



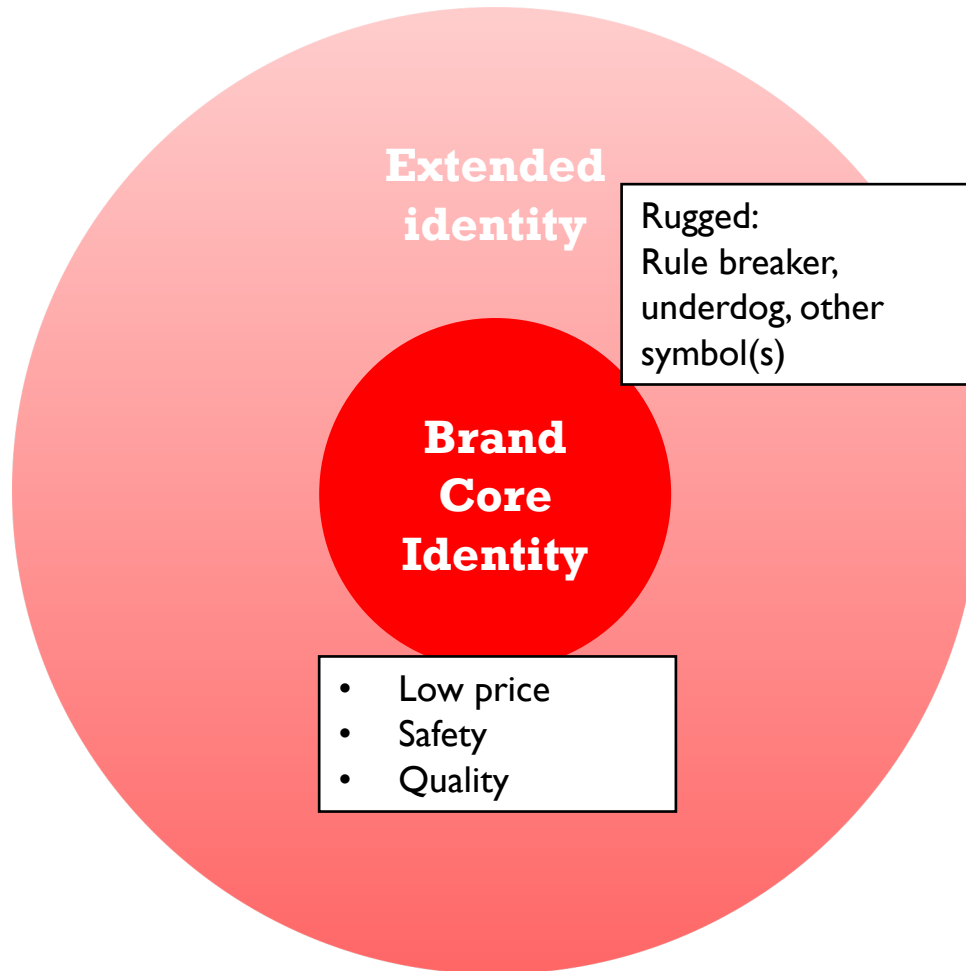
- Holistic view on branding
- Each brand has a role to play within the brand architecture
- The idea is not to manage brands as if they were silos
- CMO and her/his team to decide and internally communicate this aspect
- Identify strategic brands and invest in them

III.

Brand identity and positioning

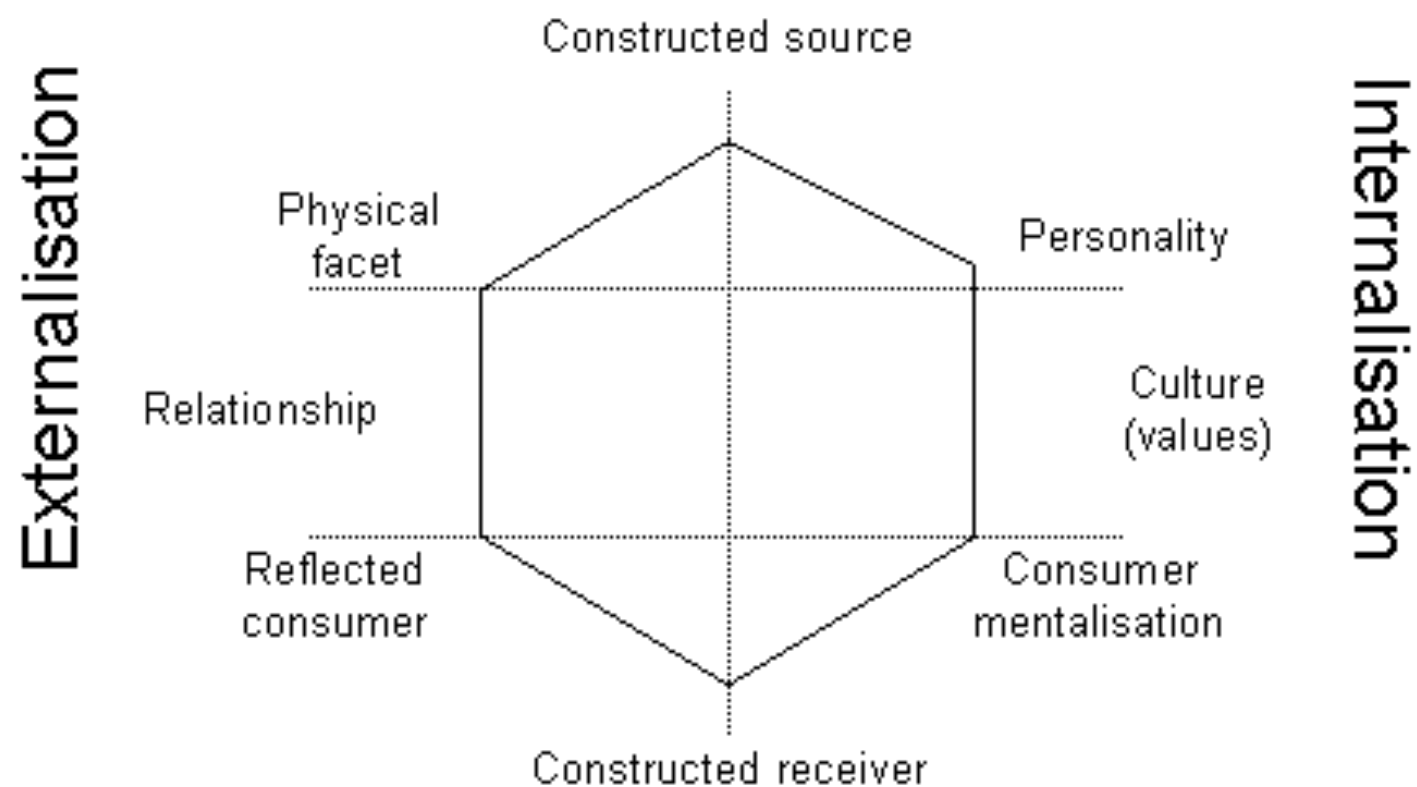
- Each brand has/needs a brand identity:
 - How should consumers perceive our brand(s)?
- Brand identity → the crux of brand building programs
- Needs to be precise; to avoid confusion
- Crucial for brand differentiation

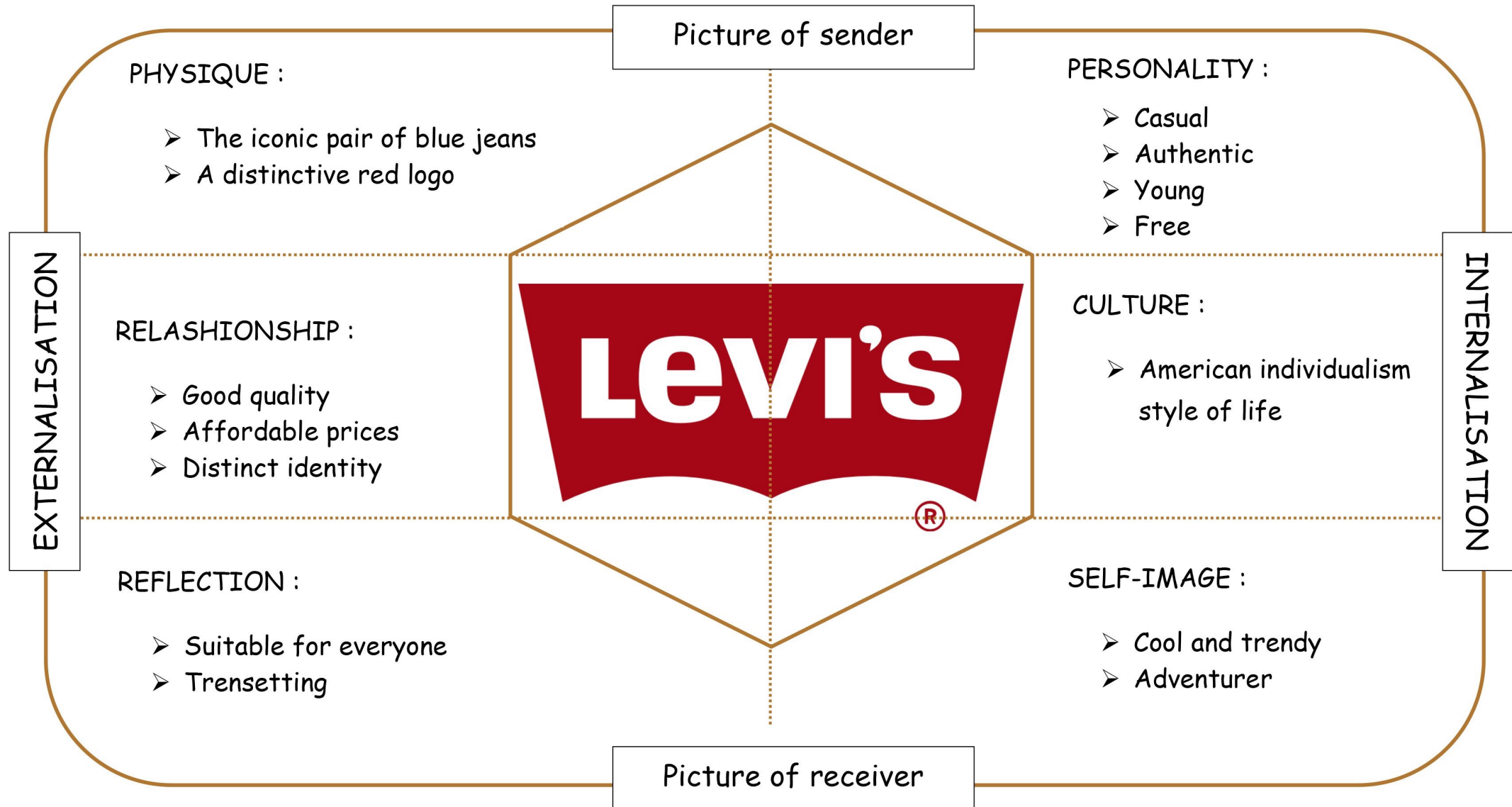
The brand “onion model”



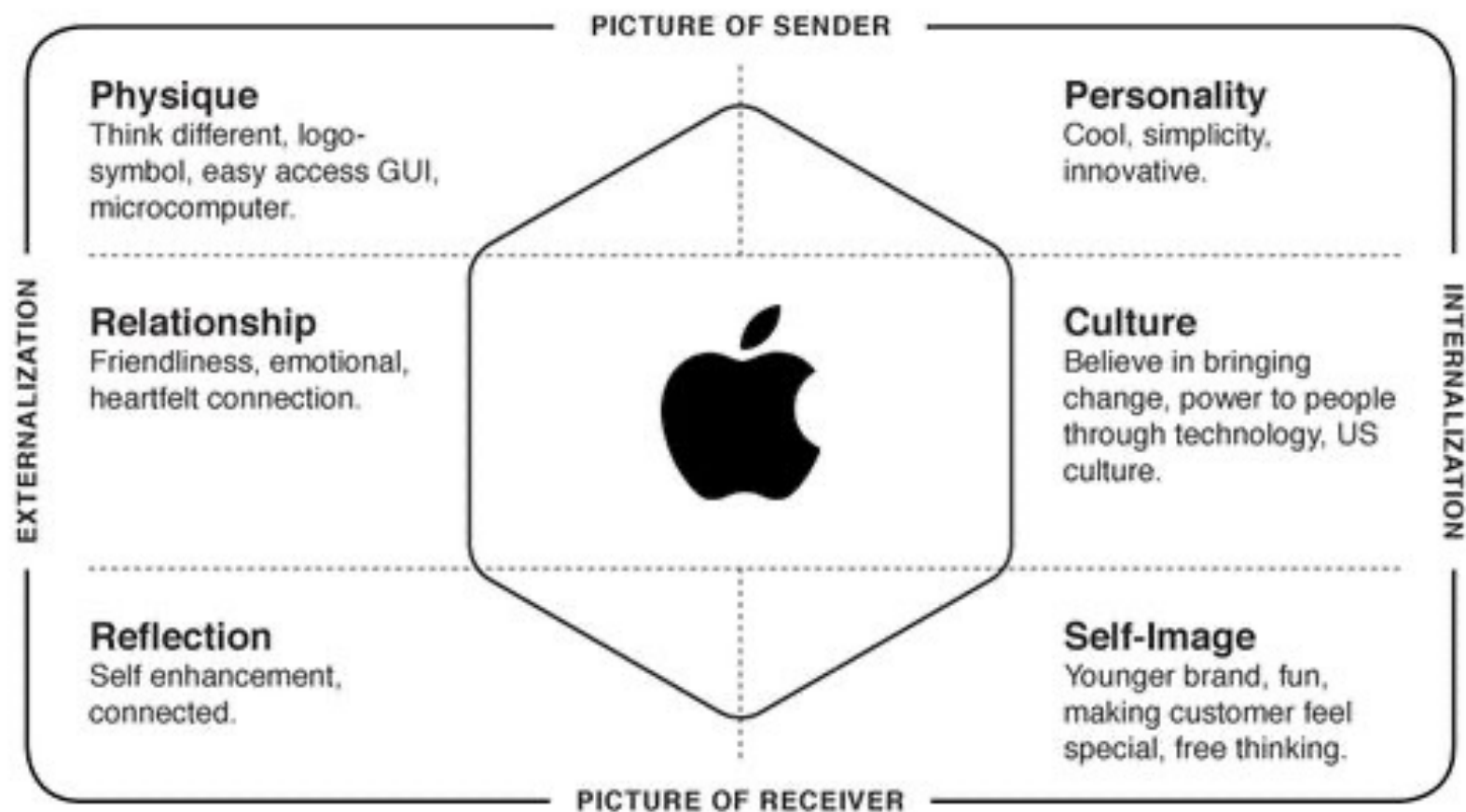
- The core identity remains unchanged
- The extended identity can and should be updated → What IMC does!

Brand Identity Prism (Kapferer)



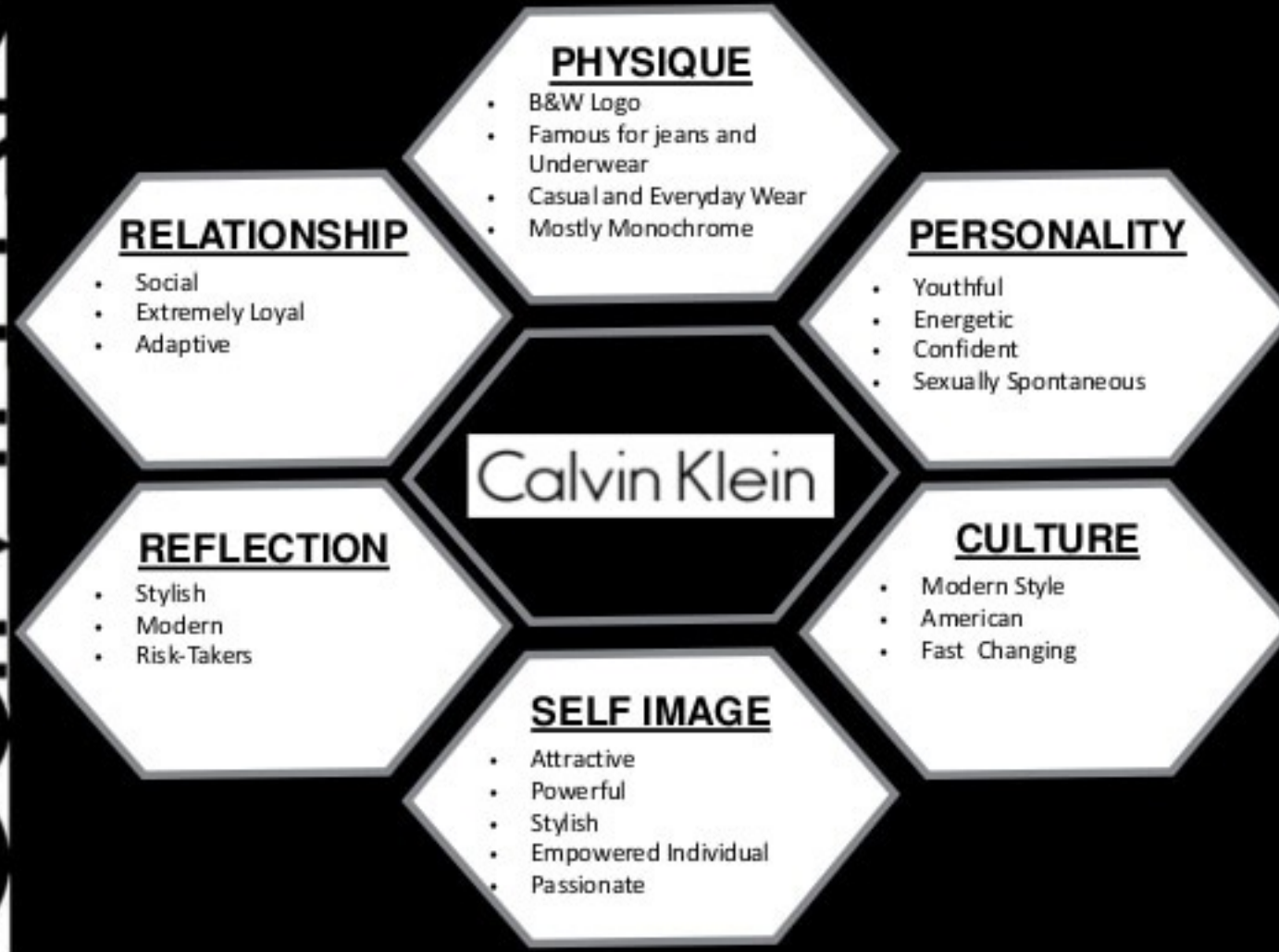


BRAND IDENTITY PRISM



Calvin Klein

Brand Identity Prism



IV.

Positioning

- “the act of designing the company’s offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the mind of the target market” (Ries and Trout 1981; Kotler 2003)
- Brand position helps with communication objectives:
What message will best differentiate the brand and appeal to designated consumers?

Positioning and value propositions in practice

Nike owns the idea of 'athletic achievement' (positioning + value proposition; the promise of value to be delivered)

35% of customers said 'Mercedes' when asked to name a car brand to describe 'quality' (positioning + value proposition; the promise of value to be delivered)

Volvo → safety (positioning + value proposition; the promise of value to be delivered)

"We GUARANTEE -
Fresh hot pizza, delivered in 30 minutes or less or it's FREE!"



Brand position “the part of the brand identity (core + extended) and value proposition (*benefit*) that is actively to be communicated to the target audience”

Nikon®

Nikon Positioning Statement

For (creative professionals with an eye for capturing and sharing beauty), (Nikon) is

(target)

(brand)

the (digital point and shoot) that delivers (a window to their world), so they can (ex-

(category)

(point of difference)

perience deeper connections through a shared perspective) because (of Nikon's 100

(end benefit)

year history of developing new technologies that allow you to capture and share

(reason to believe)

your experiences in their purest form, it's as if you were there)

The goal is to generate **brand equity** through managing a brand identity that is consistent and timeless (Aaker 1996)

Brand equity

- The logic of the mind-share paradigm → to build strong brands by attending to brand equity elements
 - What does this mean?
- Brand equity: “brand assets (liabilities) linked to a brand’s name and symbol that add to (or subtract from) a product or service.” (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000: 17).

“Product plus” view of equity

**Branded
product
markup**

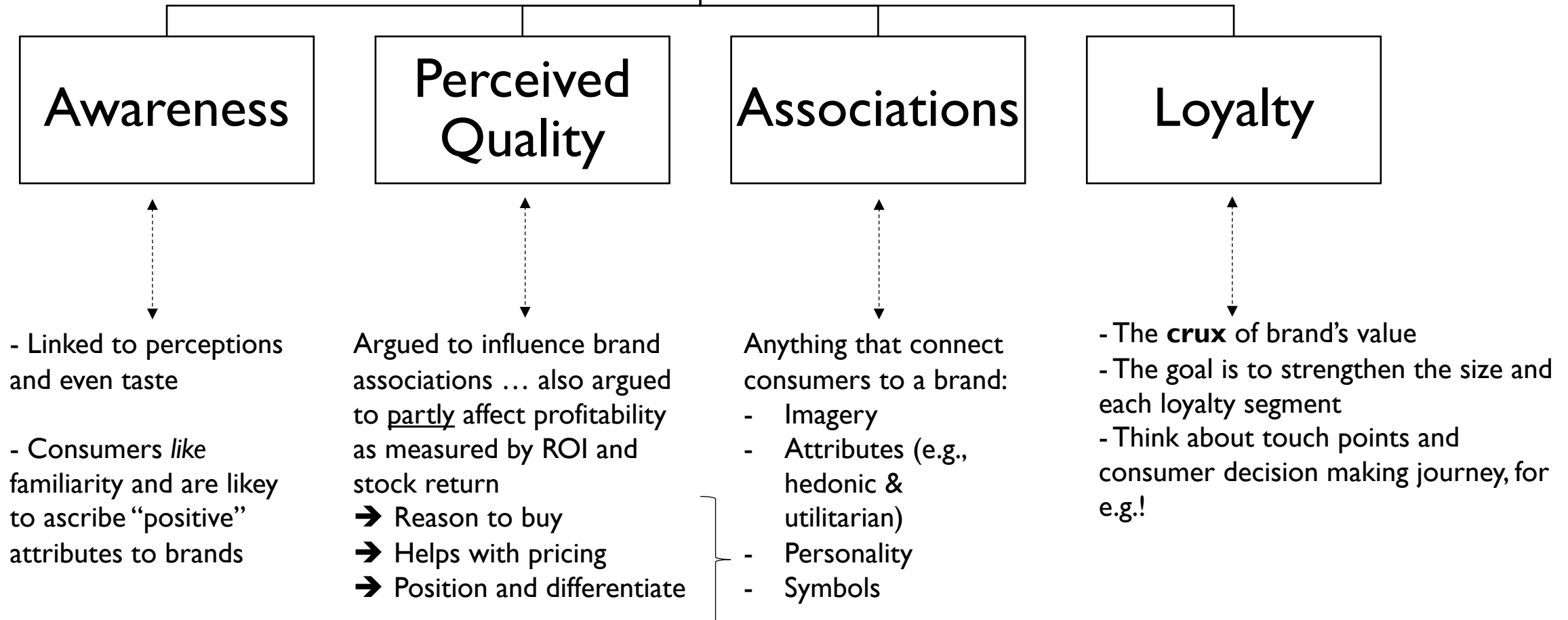
Brand equity = the additional sum of money a consumer is willing to pay vs. a similar, (un)branded product (de Chernatory & McDonald 1992)

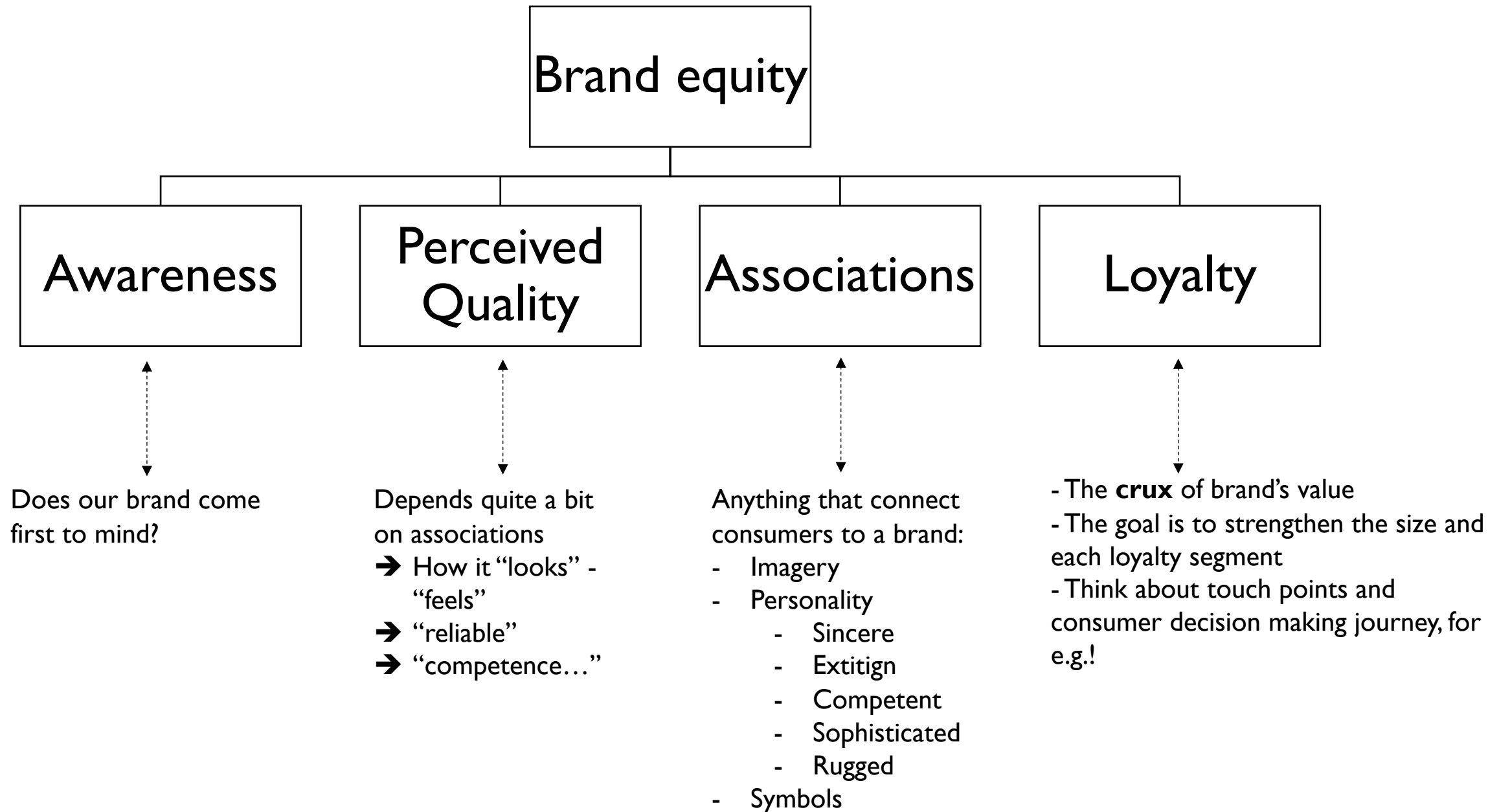
**Branded
product X**

**Generic
product Y**

Brand equity

(Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000: 17)





(Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000: 17)



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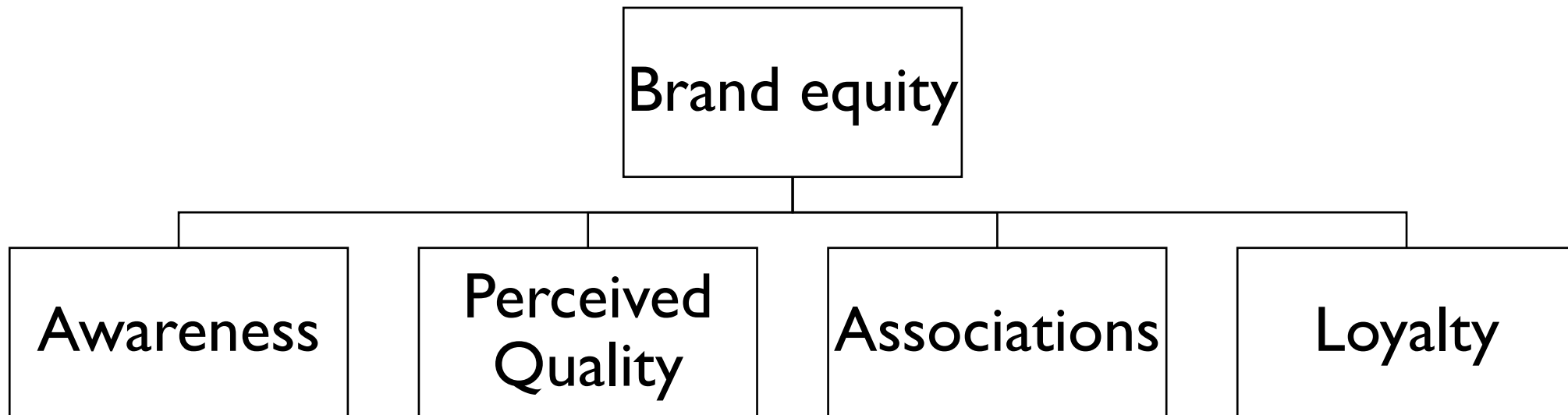
Awareness:
 Perceived quality:
 Associations:
 Loyalty:



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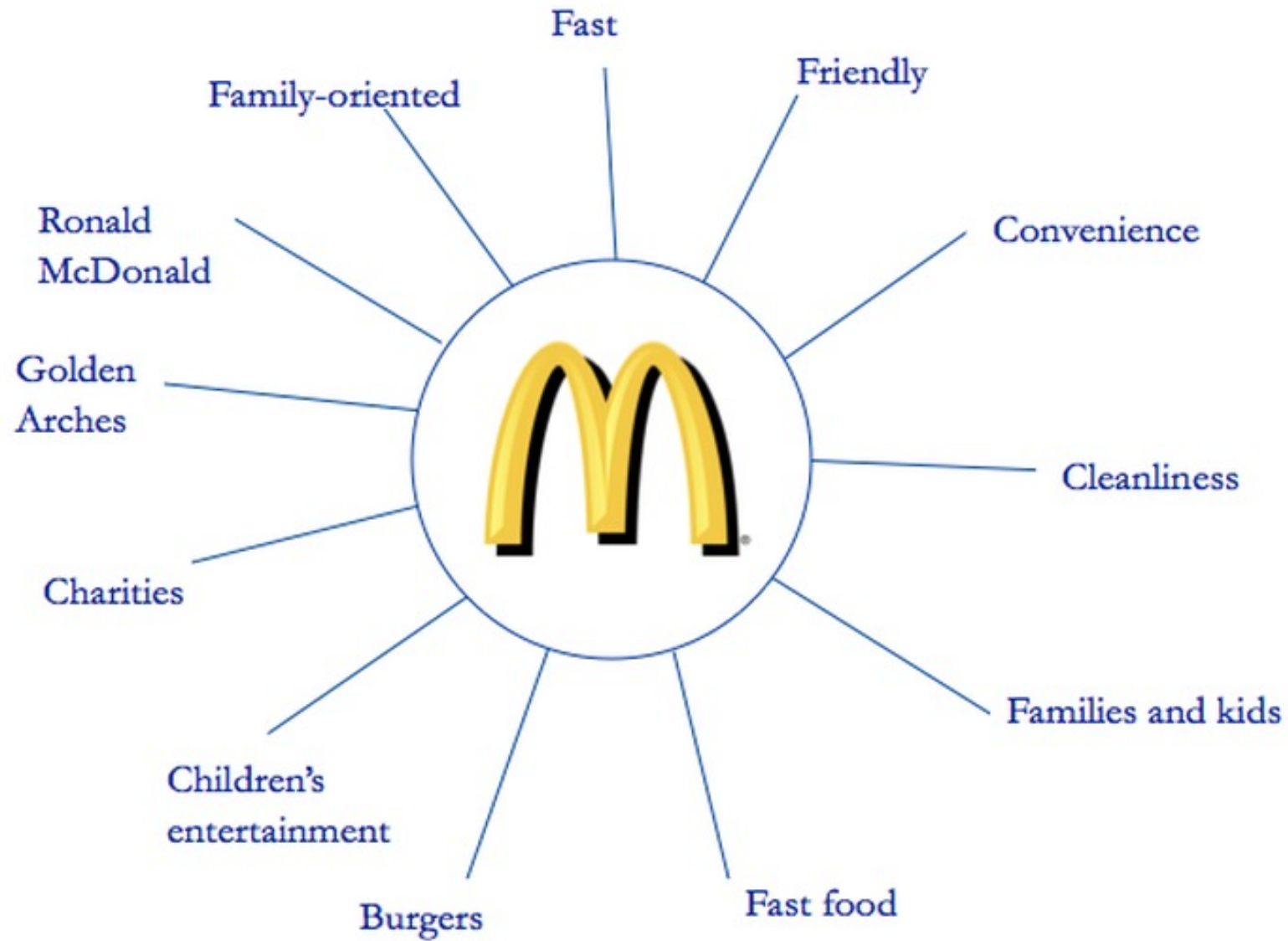
Awareness:
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Communication Outcomes	Communication Options										
	TV	Promos	Events	PR	Social Media	Website	Search	Display	Mobile	Direct	Selling
Create awareness and salience	+++	++	++	++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	++	+
Convey detailed information	+	+	+	+	++	+++	+	+	++	+++	+++
Create brand imagery and personality	+++	++	++	++	+++	++	+	+	++	+	+
Build trust	+	+	+	+++	+++	+	+	+	++	+	+++
Elicit emotions	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	++	+	+	++	+	+
Inspire action	+	+++	+	+	+	++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++
Instill loyalty	++	+	+	+	++	++	+	+	++	++	++
Connect people	+	+	++	+	+++	+++	+	+	+++	+	+

Notes: +++ = greatest influence; ++ = medium influence; + = least influence.

Associations



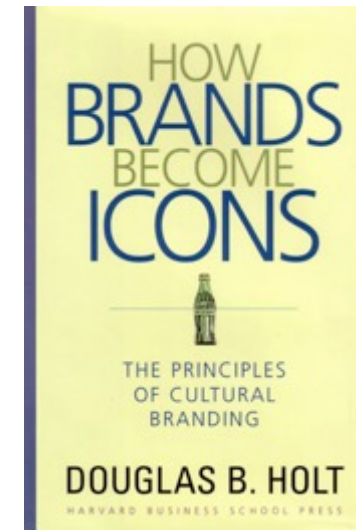
Brand-building programs – recap

- Brand leadership as a strategic mean of brand-building
- Brand centric organizational structure
- Need to realize the brand identity and define it + position
- Promotional mix tools utilized to make brand identity elements salient and consistently communicated
- Strong brands = strong brand equity
- The challenge: how to be noticed and remembered, how to change perceptions, how to reinforce attitudes/associations and to create strong consumer relationships + measurements reflecting brand equity elements

Cultural Branding

Introducing cultural branding

- Put together and formally introduced by Douglas Holt in his 2004 book “How Brands Become Icons”
- The themes and thinking had been developed in academic articles before this, through (Holt’s and others’)
- To a certain degree a culmination of the rise of CCT thinking in marketing



Reflections

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research

ERIC J. ARNOULD
CRAIG J. THOMPSON*

This article provides a synthesizing overview of the past 20 yr. of consumer research addressing the sociocultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption. Our aim is to provide a viable disciplinary brand for this research tradition that we call consumer culture theory (CCT). We propose that CCT has fulfilled recurrent calls for developing a distinctive body of theoretical knowledge about consumption and marketplace behaviors. In developing this argument, we redress three enduring misconceptions about the nature and analytic orientation of CCT. We then assess how CCT has contributed to consumer research by illuminating the cultural dimensions of the consumption cycle and by developing novel theorizations concerning four thematic domains of research interest.

Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research

SUSAN FOURNIER *

Although the relationship metaphor dominates contemporary marketing thought and practice, surprisingly little empirical work has been conducted on relational phenomena in the consumer products domain, particularly at the level of the brand. In this article, the author: (1) argues for the validity of the relationship proposition in the consumer-brand context, including a debate as to the legitimacy of the brand as an active relationship partner and empirical support for the phenomenological significance of consumer-brand bonds; (2) provides a framework for characterizing and better understanding the types of relationships consumers form with brands; and (3) inducts from the data the concept of brand relationship quality, a diagnostic tool for conceptualizing and evaluating relationship strength. Three in-depth case studies inform this agenda, their interpretation guided by an integrative review of the literature on person-to-person relationships. Insights offered through application of inducted concepts to two relevant research domains—brand loyalty and brand personality—are advanced in closing. The exercise is intended to urge fellow researchers to refine, test, and augment the working hypotheses suggested herein and to progress toward these goals with confidence in the validity of the relationship premise at the level of consumers' lived experiences with their brands.

What is “culture”?

- “excellence of taste in the fine arts and humanities, also known as high culture”
- “an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning”
- “the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization or group”

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Cultural icons

- The goal of cultural branding is to build the brand into a cultural icon
- An icon is a symbol of an ideal that people hold in considerable esteem
- Other than brands, politicians, movies, books, photographs and even events can have iconic value









Identity brands

- The cultural branding model is intended for branding mostly identity categories
- Identity brands = value of products as a means of self-expression
- Products such as clothing, home decor, beauty, leisure, entertainment, automotive, food, and beverage etc.



Identity brands

- Brands, products and styles provide a tangible method of meaning transference for consumers who seek to both fit in to peer groups and express individuality (Tuten 2007)
- Consumers feel their identity-building projects are intense “personal quests”, but in truth similar quests are shared by many in the population (Holt 2004, p. 6)

Brand meaning

- Brands are historical artifacts moving through time and are carriers of meaning (Holt 2004, p. 1-4, 38)
- Brand meaning is a result of collective interpretations by multiple stakeholders over numerous historical moments (Hatch & Rubin 2005)
- Many of the assumptions in the other branding models don't take historical and the cultural context into account

The gist of Holt's criticism

- “Timeless consistency” can be impossible to attain, same for controlling a brand identity
- The idea is to align the brand with the right identity myth (stories) in a credible and appealing way in its marketing communication (Holt 2004, p. 11, 214-215)
- Brands respond to changes by “speaking again” in new contexts, and adapt old meanings to new circumstances

Identity myths?

“imaginative stories and images that selectively draw on history as source material, which function to continually re-imagine and vitalize the nation’s ideology”



Myth of man-of-action hero
A particular masculinity myth/story

YOU CAN
BE MASCULINE
WITHOUT
BEING
TOXIC
BRO.
TRUTH TO POWER



More on identity myths

- Myths define culture by expressing its shared emotions and ideals (Solomon et al. 1999, p. 447)
- People feel anxieties when their personal life experiences and realities are in conflict with what the national ideology expects of them (Holt 2004, p. 45, 57, 210-213)
- People's identification with an identity myth is dependent on how well it soothes people's anxieties in their personal identity building projects

Common anxieties

- people's ambitions at work
- gender roles and sexuality
- their dreams for their children
- their fears of technology
- college graduation
- retirement
- mid-life crisis
- “the construction, maintenance and dissolution of key life roles that significantly alters one's concept of self”

(Holt 2004, p. 212; Fournier 1998)

How brands soothe anxieties

- Carriers of identity myths offer relief through ritualistic consumption of the product/text/brand
- Brands are special, because even if they aren't as affective as e.g. movies, they enable ritual and frequent consumption
- For example, by wearing a t-shirt of a certain myth, the myth is “transferred” to the person

Brands and identity myths

- A brand's strength is dependent on how well a brand encapsulates an identity myth and how strongly people identify with that myth
- The brand manager's role = to look back and understand the brand's "genealogy" and match it fit the proper identity myth
 - (think about the role of the CCO here)

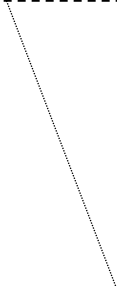
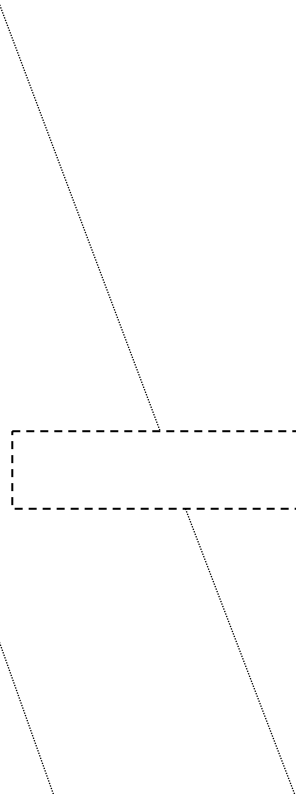
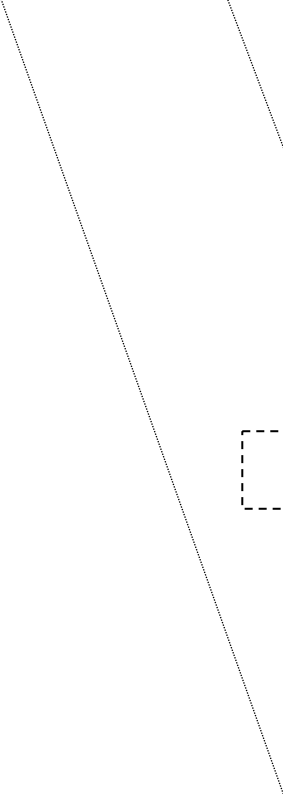
X related myth

Y- related myth

Y- related myth

Brands

Consumers (ritualistic)





Myth: masculinity myth (competing masculinity ideals)

Anxiety: masculine identity – “who am I?” ... “how I want others to see me?”

Brand manager (CMO/CCO): deep cultural understanding (meaning) of the myth + understand how consumers experience the myth

Transfer meaning from the myth to the brand → creative idea → encoding

Communicate it via advertising (predominantly) ...

Populist worlds

- The “place” where the identity myth resides and gives it its legitimacy and cultural appeal
- Usually in the fringes of society (punks, hippies, bikers, LGBT communities, extreme athletes, hipsters, the underground etc.)
- People feel drawn to them when they notice that the populist world has an “answer” for an anxiety

Populist worlds

- The brand must “earn” a place in the populist world if it wants to credibly portray the myth
- The insiders who live in the populist world determine the brand’s (and other people’s) worthiness to claim membership in the populist world

Three constituencies

- Insiders - legitimize the brand as an icon for the populist world
- Followers – enthusiastic fans of the brand, not members of the populist world
- Feeders – opportunistic bandwagoners of the brand's identity value, the vast majority of consumers and were attracted by followers
- The brand must keep the insiders happy, or at least tolerant of the brand's presence in the world → the insiders are the real target audience
- If the brand manages this, the followers and feeders will follow

Rooted in the Finnish agrarian myth!

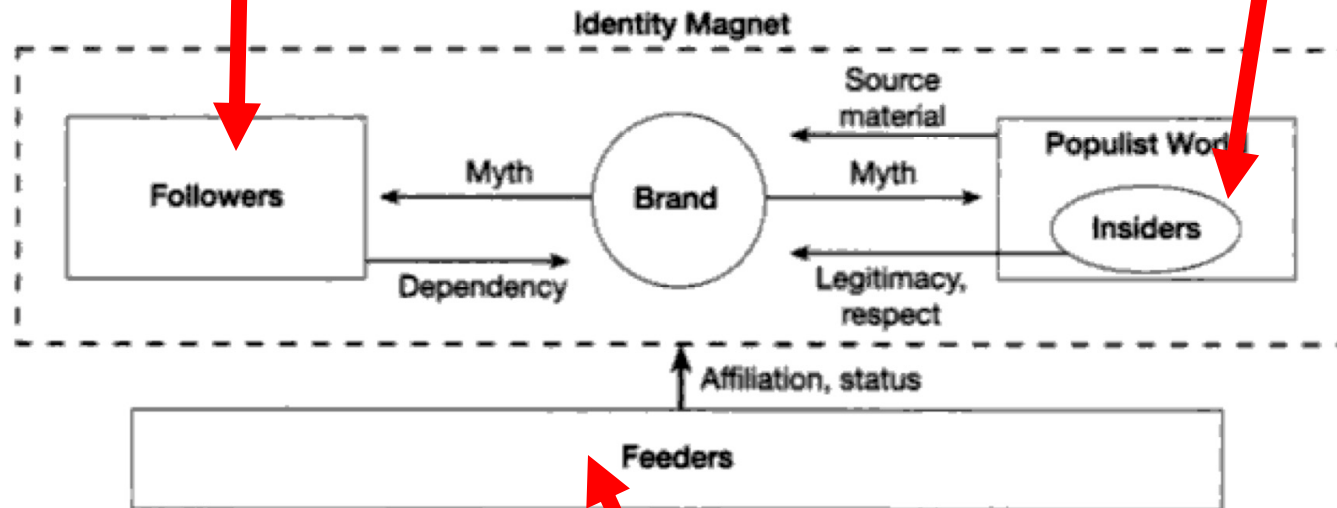






... (2) which will attract a following for the brand...

1. Keep these guys happy, or at least tolerant of the brand by defending the populist world and its ethos



... (3) and the rest will follow

How do you keep the insiders happy?

- The brand must show two things:
 - literacy – a understanding of the populist world’s rules, idioms, and codes (Holt 2004, p. 65).
 - fidelity - to the populist world it draws from, and sacrifice short term financial gains to gain authenticity (Holt 2004, p. 89)
- “Harmony between good and world” (McCracken 1986)
- Without legitimacy, a brand’s marketing strategy will not resonate with the target audience (Tuten 2007)



**Have a Coke
and a smile.**

Coke adds life.
Trade mark ©



”Mean Joe Greene” from a consumer psych perspective



- Communicates the desired associations of the Coca-Cola brand in a emotionally engaging way
- American, refreshing, ”family”, fun, happy, iconic...

Cultural perspective

- Case study from Holt (2004) "How brands become icons"
- Coca-Cola has a long, long history as an American icon, representing "the best" of America (especially during and after WW II)



Cultural perspective

- The Vietnam war had seriously strained American unity
- Racial tensions and "angry black men" struck fear into white America
- America was in need of "healing"

**SWEET SWEETBACK'S
BAADASSSSSS SONG**



”Mean Joe Greene” from a cultural perspective



- Struck a crucial cultural nerve with its powerful message of **racial harmony** and forgiveness, a unified America and Coca-Cola as a symbol of this healing
- Because of Coca-Cola’s long history as an American icon, it could ”speak” this way (very few brands could have)
- It repositioned Coca-Cola, redefined its **identity myth** in American culture while respecting its roots

So to recap...

- Brands are carriers of meaning
- Some brands become iconic by encapsulating a powerful ideal
- The most successful brands have been rooted into very relevant populist worlds
- The key is to manage this link to the populist world by showing respect to the people living “in” the populist world

How the branding
models fit together

The branding models are connected

- Each model represents an evolutionary step in the marketplace, consumers, brand & marketing thinking and overall progress in management
- Tougher competition has driven the models in different product categories
- That doesn't mean they can't or shouldn't be used together, because they're intended for different purposes
- “Hybrid branding strategies”

TABLE 2-1

Comparison of Axioms Across Four Branding Models

	Cultural Branding	Mind-Share Branding	Emotional Branding	Viral Branding
Key Words	Cultural icons, iconic brands	DNA, brand essence, genetic code, USP benefits, onion model	Brand personality, experiential branding, brand religion, experience economy	Stealth marketing, coolhunt, meme, grass roots, infections, seeding, contagion, buzz
Brand Definition	Performer of, and container for, an identity myth	A set of abstract associations	A relationship partner	A communication unit
Branding Definition	Performing myths	Owning associations	Interacting with and building relationships with customers	Spreading viruses via lead customers
Required for a Successful Brand	Performing a myth that addresses an acute contradiction in society	Consistent expression of associations	Deep interpersonal connection	Broad circulation of the virus
Most Appropriate Applications	Identity categories	Functional categories, low-involvement categories, complicated products	Services, retailers, specialty goods	New fashion, new technology
Company's Role	Author	Steward: consistent expression of DNA in all activities over time	Good friend	Hidden puppet-master: motivate the right consumers to advocate for the brand
Source of Customer Value	Buttressing identity	Simplifying decisions	Relationship with the brand	Being cool, fashionable
Consumers' Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personalizing the brand's myth to fit individual biography Ritual action to experience the myth when buying and using product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that benefits become salient through repetition Perceiving benefits when buying and using product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interaction with brand Building a personal relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Discovering" brand as their own, DIY Word of mouth

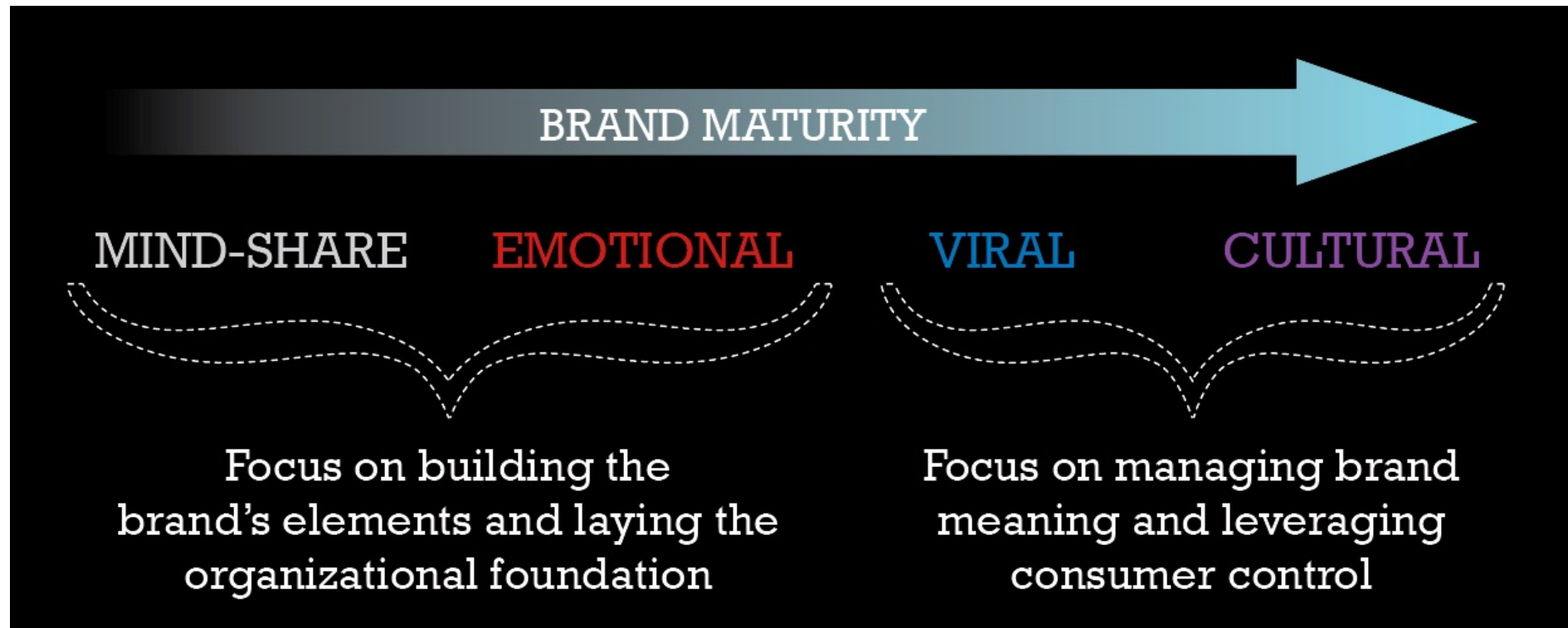
Brand building process (1/3)

1. Mind-share: put in place the brand organization, the thinking, the initial core promise, and the tangible brand elements. Emphasis strategic nature of brand building in organization.
2. Emotional: add more layers to the brand and take a heavy emphasis in sensorial elements of the brand and the brand's experiential elements especially in retail environments. Make the brand “smashable”, so that the brand can be identified even from the tiniest bit (Lindstrom 2003)

Brand building process (2/3)

3. Viral: consumers should be able to pick up the brand they've just smashed and give new meaning to it. Crucial in online environments, where all brand elements need to be interactive and shareable. The brand's communications need to become two-way channels for dialogue.
4. Cultural: work hard to get the right kind of consumers to give the brand meaning and be proactive in shaping the brand to become culturally relevant in the hands of storytellers as well. Monitor changes in brand meaning and try to guide this evolution to the right direction.

Brand building process (3/3)



Q&A!