HOW TO
TAKE CONTROL *of*
YOUR BRAND

The power of the link. **bitly**

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Global brands such as Pepsi, The GAP and Target didn't become internationally renowned overnight. They developed a solid brand strategy to take full control of all their individual assets. Moreover, they continue to leverage every aspect of their brand across multiple touchpoints in paid, owned and earned media.

With increasing competition, decreasing budgets and declining brand awareness, marketing practitioners face significant challenges. From Fortune 500 companies to multinational brands, doing more with less is a consistent theme shared by marketers. Creating and maintaining a powerful corporate brand has never been more important.

This ebook will give you insights and best practices
to help you take control of your brand.

OVER THE NEXT THREE CHAPTERS, YOU WILL LEARN:

Best practices for branding across platforms

Strategies to regain control of your brand

Metrics to help you reach overall company goals

ARE YOU IN CONTROL *of your* BRAND?

"Authentic brands don't emerge from marketing cubicles or advertising agencies. They emanate from everything the company does..."
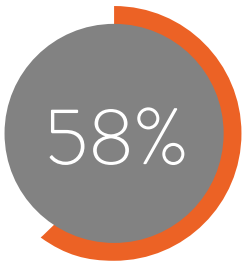
HOWARD SCHULTZ, CHAIRMAIN & CEO, STARBUCKS

EFFECTIVE BRANDING is the foundation for all marketing and sales efforts. It remains the most important tool to differentiate you from existing and emerging competitors. A strong brand strategy includes building trust with consumers and customers, and careful implementation of the brand across all customer touch points, including digital platforms. The question that often eludes marketers is how do you know if you have full control over your brand? **Here are six signs to help you make that assessment:**

58%

Did you know that on average 58% of consumers have tried a new brand in the last three months that they didn't even know existed a year ago?

1. YOU LACK CONSISTENCY ACROSS CHANNELS

You are missing opportunities to showcase and integrate your brand through all touch points.

Traditional channels such advertising, websites, print, etc. were straightforward. Today, digital channels offer many more opportunities to integrate branding.

2. YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN CONSUMER AND/OR CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR

Your campaign results continue to be less than stellar and you continue to struggle to understand what motivates consumers and customers to make a purchase. When asked to define your customer, you are unable to succinctly and consistently do so.

The biggest driver of consumer "stickiness" is decision simplicity - how easy consumers find it to learn about a product, trust the information they receive and weigh the options.

3. YOU'RE UNABLE TO IDENTIFY ADVOCATES AND INFLUENCERS

You and your team have the best intentions to create an advocacy program that would produce a solid return through earned media, but you just have not been able to find the right people with a quality following to get any leverage.

4. YOU FAIL TO LEVERAGE REAL-TIME DATA

You aren't tracking campaign performance in real-time, which prohibits you from pivoting when necessary. Not only are you reactionary, but you are losing significant time and resources trying to compete.

b When a link is shortened through Bitly, it becomes a Bitlink. This is an encoded link that provides additional intelligence about how it is being shared across the web.

5. YOU DON'T HAVE INTERNAL BRAND AMBASSADORS

Your organization has not invested in your workforce or developed programs to leverage the networks of its employees. Internal brand ambassadors don't play a significant role in sharing your message.

6. YOU CAN'T TIE YOUR MARKETING EFFORTS TO ROI

Your senior management continues to review and reassess what you are measuring. This is a good indication you are not aligned to the corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

b **Want to boost engagement? Top marketers know that posts with links are more engaging than text updates. Add links to blog posts, microsites or interesting news articles.**

It is not uncommon for marketers to recognize one or more, or even all of these signs at various times in the branding lifecycle. The key is to take corrective action.

HOW TO
REGAIN
CONTROL *of*
your BRAND

"*In the real world, you don't have infinite resources; you don't have a perfect product; you don't sell to a growing market without competition. You're also not omnipotent, so you cannot enforce what your brand represents. Under these assumptions, most companies need all the help they can get with branding.*"

GUY KAWASAKI, AUTHOR, FORMER CHIEF EVANGELIST OF APPLE

BEING TOP OF MIND is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Aside from having a great product or service, your brand is about how your prospects and customers perceive you. In Chapter 1, we looked at the signs that indicate you are not in control of your brand. In this chapter, we will outline the six best practices to help you regain control. *It is important to note that this is not a branding exercise, it is about refocusing and regaining control.*

STEP 1
Reset Goals & Objectives

Solid brand strategies - like those of The Huffington Post, Condé Nast and GE - start with goals and objectives. The key to having the right goals and objectives is aligning to the overall corporate KPIs. This will also facilitate buy-in from your C-suite for ongoing plans.

b **You can capture audience count when Bitly users create Bitlinks to your content. This is what we refer to as your organic audience.**

STEP 2
Update Your Brand's Voice & Values

Your brand voice and brand values are crucial for consistent messaging. By updating your brand voice and value propositions, you reaffirm the foundation about who you are and how your communicate.

STEP

3

Know Your Audience

According to the Marketing Science Institute, the top priority for marketers for 2014-2016 is understanding the customer and the customer experience. Understanding your customers, what motivates them and the path to purchase involves continual learning.

Listening to your prospects and customers via social media is one way to learn more about what channels they prefer, what terminology they use, what content they consume and when they are active.

From this information, you can develop your customer personas. Your customer personas will help you further develop your language and key words, with an understanding of which channels are used to consume and share content.

b New to customer personas?
Access the Bitly Persona Worksheet HERE.
Text

Through listening and persona creation, you will lay the foundation to have better insight into your consumer/customer behavior.

STEP
4

Inventory & Determine Channels and Touchpoints

PAID MEDIA

Publicity gained through paid advertising. *Examples: print, television, display ads, paid search*

OWNED MEDIA

Publicity gained through company-owned channels. *Examples: website, blog, company social profiles*

EARNED MEDIA

Publicity gained through efforts other than advertising. *Examples: Word of mouth, reviews, social media posts*

Track every touch point that you currently use and categorize them within **Paid, Owned and Earned** media, paying particular attention to digital assets. Your digital assets are often the most underutilized and the area where you can gain the most momentum.

Ask yourself the following questions:

☐ *Have you secured a Branded Short Domain to ensure consistency and increase brand visibility?*

☐ *Are you targeting specific personas through customization of the back-half of your Branded Short Domains?*

☐ *Do you track the specific performance of a campaign or content in different channels?*

By asking and answering these questions, you will begin to understand the possibilities with your brand's digital assets, as well as the tools you will need. The world's leading brands are laser-focused and plan for consistency of messaging **and** branding across every channel and every touch point. Looking for and leveraging every possible asset will reinforce your branding and help keep you top of mind.

STEP
5

Determine What Technology/Tools Will Help You Succeed

With the previous steps completed, you are now able to determine just what technology and tools you need to succeed. When assessing what you need, be sure to factor what tools will enable you to monitor how your content is being shared across the entire web, by whom and when.

By having access to this data you will be able to:

- *Make real-time decisions on what content is performing well and where it is performing well.*

- *Determine if old content or evergreen content is resurfacing based on your own campaigns or the campaigns of others, enabling you to reshare or create complimentary content.*

- *Get real insights on the growth, or lack thereof, of your organic audience.*

- *Identify individuals or other brands that are sharing your content on a regular basis and determine the traction.*

This will then help you determine if there are cross-promotional opportunities or value-adds that you can work towards expanding your reach through proven influencers.

By using Branded Short Domains with Bitly, you can extend your brand to all messaging. When consumers create their own shortened links to your content, they will be automatically branded, turning each follower to a brand ambassador.

STEP
6

Train Employees

When it comes to
employees sharing content
via personal social channels,
it is best practice that
employees not use any
corporate branding.
For example, if John works
for company ABC, his
Twitter handle should not
be @JohnABC.

Once you have Steps 1-5 completed, train your employees so they understand the brand voice, how to communicate with prospects and customers as well as when to defer conversations to the brand. Be sure to develop a standardized company description for employees to use in their LinkedIn profiles.

b Help employees be successful by clearly defining acceptable behaviour on social media, including when not to respond or escalate processes.

This standardized description adds yet another level of consistency across your touch points and gives employees an added level of comfort in terms of how to share your brand values.

Employees as brand ambassadors can be powerful. And when trained, they take on the role with pleasure.

ROI AND MARKETING METRICS *to* CONSIDER

"Lots of marketers don't know what they're doing and can't answer the question, 'Does this impact my business?' By tracking your marketing, you learn what works and you keep doing that, while cutting out the things that don't work."

COLIN NEDERKOORN, FOUNDER + CEO, CUSTOMER.IO

MARKETING DOLLAR SPEND has never been more scrutinized by marketing

leaders who expect a solid ROI.

You and your organization are no doubt having

these conversations on a frequent basis. The ques-

tion that continues to surface is: what are the right

measures and how does this relate to the overall

marketing strategy?

> **b** **By creating sub accounts in Bitly Brand Tools, you can monitor how any content or campaign is performing across one channel or several, all in real-time.**

The important thing to remember is that whatever

metrics you choose, they should align with your

overall KPIs.

Based on best practices, here are some of the met-

rics we suggest you consider:

Share of Voice
How are you
doing relative
to your
competitors?

Share of Conversation

How are you doing relative to
your overall industry?

Audience Reach

How far is your content and/or messages going?
What geographic regions?

Content Shares

How often is
your content
being shared
and by whom?
Are people
creating their
own Bitlinks
to share
your content?

Clicks
What specific content
is over or under
performing?

Demographics

Are you reaching
the right
demographics?

TAKE CONTROL *of*
YOUR BRAND

Internationally renowned brands have found unique ways to make their brand stand out. They experience the same challenges as you do, trying to build brand equity with decreasing budgets and increasing competition. The difference comes down to taking full control of their brand, leveraging every opportunity for branded content and messaging across every touch point.

After reading this ebook, you now have the resources to regain control of your brand and an overview of what metrics to use to reach your overall corporate goals and objectives.

**INTERESTED IN LEARNING HOW BITLY
CAN HELP YOU REGAIN CONTROL OF YOUR BRAND?**

Visit **bitly.is/ControlYourBrand** to learn more about Bitly Brand Tools.

bitly
The power of the link.