

35 BRAND
FRAMEWORKS

BRAND STRATEGY TOOLKIT

FOR SOLVING REAL
BRAND CHALLENGES

IDENTITY / DIFFERENCE / CONSISTENCY / PERCEPTION

AUDIENCE / MESSAGING / PURPOSE

A PRODUCT BY

Brandhive

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Introduction ↙

Brand strategy can get messy quickly.

You know there's a problem, but figuring out **what exactly is wrong, where to look, and what to do next** isn't always obvious.

That's what this toolkit is here for.

When you're stuck, start by putting the problem into words. Find the area it relates to, choose a framework that fits, and work through it.

You don't need to read this from start to finish. **Use what you need, when you need it.**

And if you use AI to work through your brand challenges, use this toolkit to guide it. Give it the right framework, the right context, and let it help you work through the problem.

How to use this ebook?

01 DESCRIBE THE CHALLENGE

Describe it in words. Use the Problem Cluster to identify the core area it relates to.

02 PICK THE FRAMEWORK

Choose the one that fits your situation. With the help of Use it when and what it's for section.

03 APPLY & SOLVE

Work through it; don't just read it.

Problem Cluster.



Framework Selector.

Identity → Who are we?

- Brand Identity Prism (06)
- Brand Pyramid (07)
- Brand Soul Framework (08)
- Brand DNA (09)
- Brand Iceberg Model (10)
- Brand Archetype Wheel (11)

Purpose → Why do we exist?

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Perception → How are we seen?

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Note: Frameworks are grouped by the problems they best solve, but many can work across situations. Refer to “What it’s for” & “Use it when” sections for deeper context.

Identity

Who are we?



Brand Identity Prism

Build inside-out brand clarity

Who Created It

- Jean-Noël Kapferer, French brand theorist
- Introduced in 1996 in *Strategic Brand Management*

What It’s For

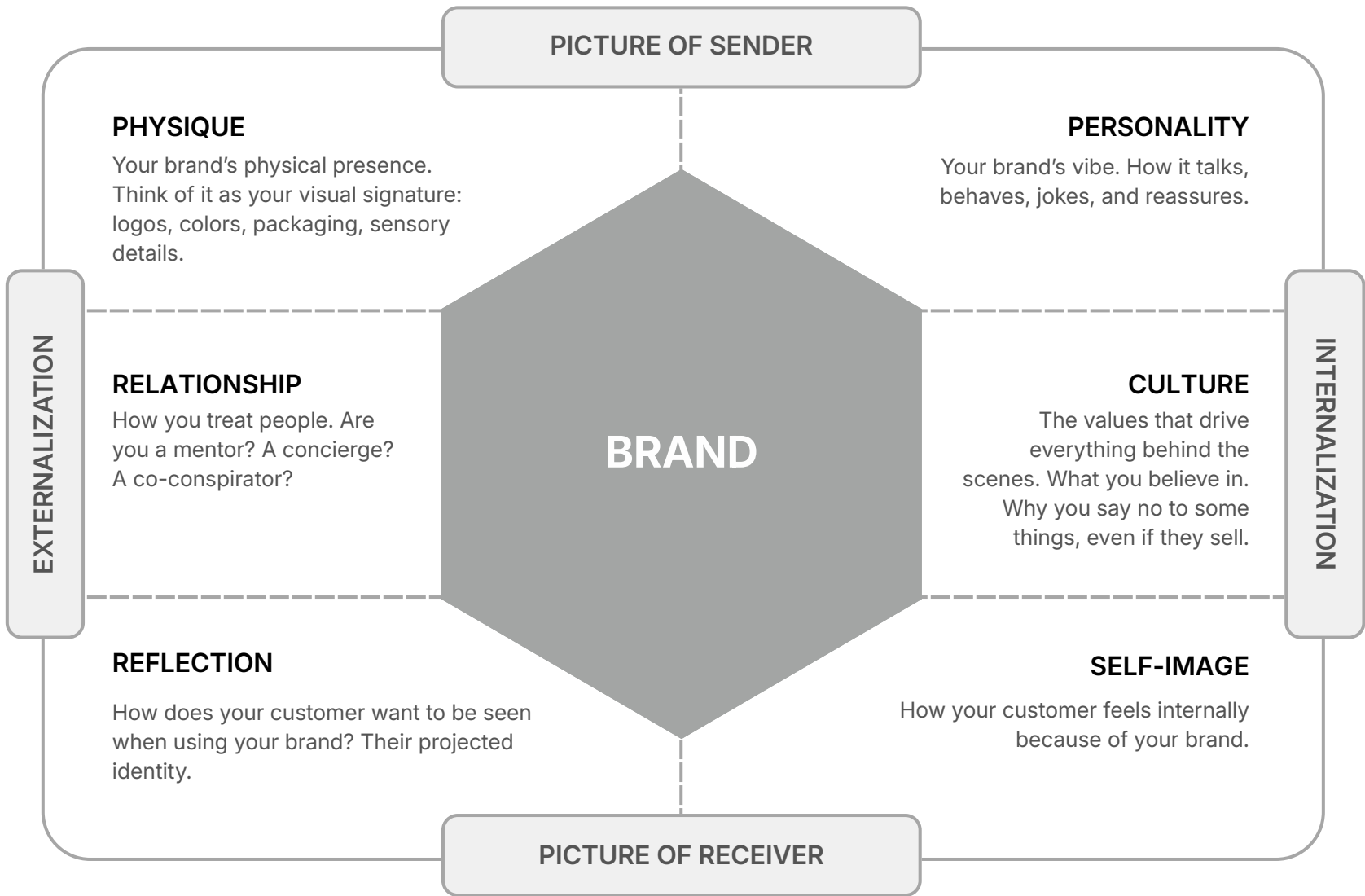
- Defining your brand as a complete personality
- Balancing internal culture with external image
- Creating a holistic identity across touchpoints

Use It When

- Undergoing rebranding or repositioning
- Aligning brand tone, voice, visuals, and values
- Creating brand guidelines or character systems
- Building a new brand from scratch

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Treating the prism as separate parts instead of one system
- ✗ Defining identity without aligning internal values and external expression
- ✗ Ignoring reflection and self-image (focusing only on the brand side)



4 Foundational Forces

Externalization

How the brand projects itself outwardly, its voice, look, and behavior. (Physique, Personality, Relationship)

Internalization

How audiences absorb and experience the brand emotionally and psychologically. (Culture, Reflection, Self-Image)

Picture of Sender

How the brand sees itself and its self-image from the inside. (Physique, Personality, Culture)

Picture of Receiver

How the audience sees and responds to the brand. (Reflection, Relationship, Self-Image)

Clarity Tip

Your prism should feel like a character sheet. If your brand had a face, voice, values, and attitude, this model would reveal it.

Brand Pyramid

Build meaning layer by layer

Who Created It

→ Popularized by Millward Brown (WPP), inspired by earlier brand equity models.

What It's For

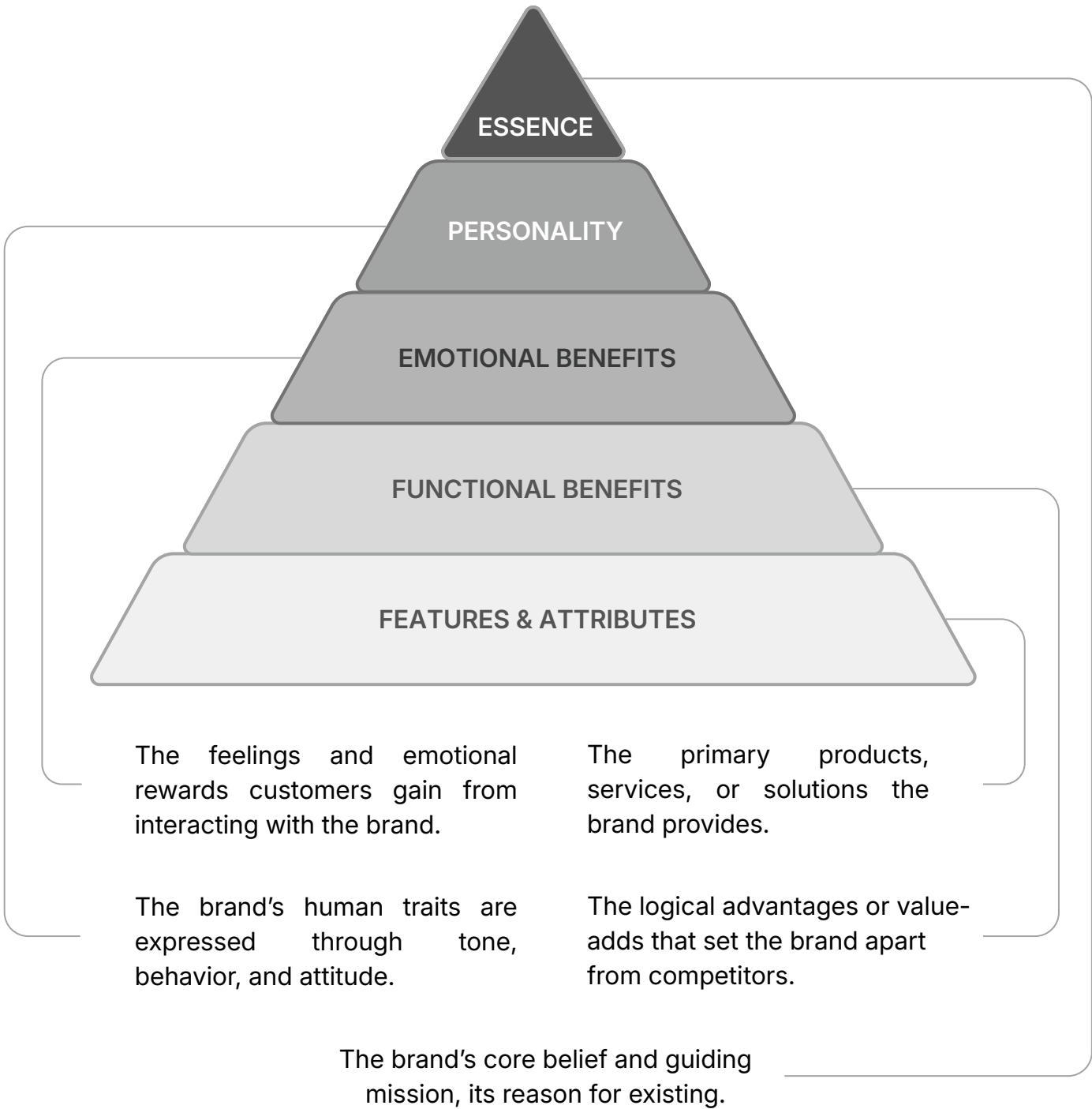
- Building emotional depth into your brand
- Turning product-led messaging into belief-led loyalty
- Strategic foundation for storytelling & design

Use It When

- Launching or repositioning a brand
- Defining a brand's essence clearly
- You want to get from "What we do" to "Why we matter"

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Skipping emotional benefits
- ✗ Using fluff in the essence ("we empower change")
- ✗ Not connecting features to beliefs



How to Use It

1. FEATURES & ATTRIBUTES

What are we selling?
Your product, service, or tech specs. The raw, unsexy truth.

2. FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS

What does it do for me?
The logical upgrade from "what it is" to "what it helps with."

3. EMOTIONAL BENEFITS

How does it make me feel?
This is where people actually start caring.

4. PERSONALITY

What's the vibe of this brand?
This is where tone, style, and culture show up. If your brand were a person, what would they be like?

5. ESSENCE

Why do we exist?
Your brand's soul in one tight line. Not a tagline. Not copywriting fluff. A belief.

Example Essence Lines

- "Move people forward." — Ford
- "Make everyday life better." — IKEA
- "Help people feel good about themselves." — Dove

Brand Soul

Finding the emotional DNA that gives your brand life

Why It Exists

- Mission sits on a deck. Vision hangs on a wall.
- But soul? That’s what people feel.
- This framework helps brands dig beyond strategy into emotional truth, what they believe, what they stir, and what they’d never compromise on.
- It’s your emotional spine, not a campaign line.

What It’s For

- Uncovers what fuels your brand at its deepest level
- Sharpens positioning by combining belief with feeling
- Ensures consistency across brand actions, even in chaos
- Creates resonance that lasts beyond messaging

Use It When

- Building a brand from scratch
- Shaping culture-led campaigns
- Reconnecting with purpose during pivots or plateaus
- Aligning leadership teams around why you matter

Common Pitfalls

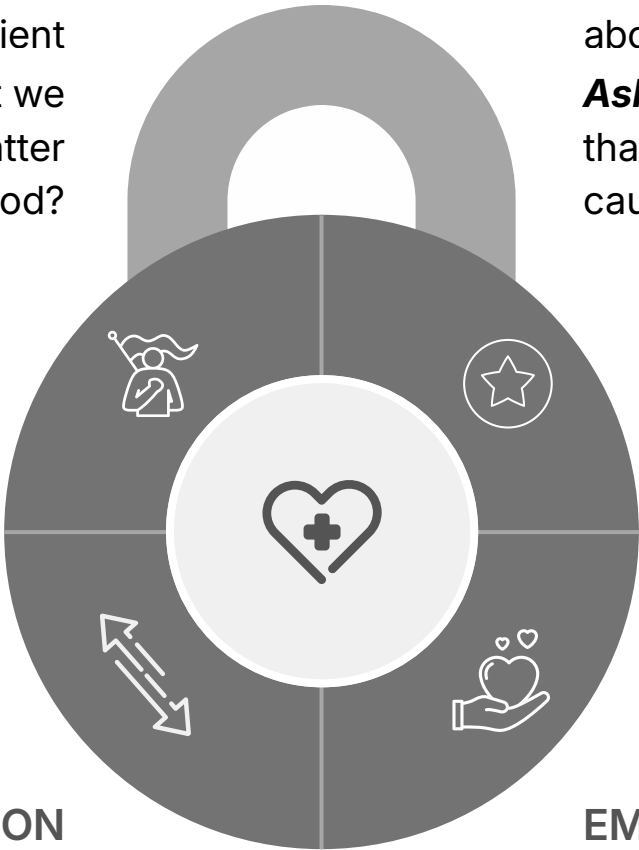
- ✗ Mistaking this for a tagline, it’s deeper than that
- ✗ Being vague or safe-soul requires honesty, not polish
- ✗ Ignoring emotion, brands without feeling don’t resonate
- ✗ Letting strategy overshadow humanity

DEVOTION

The promise you keep even when it’s inconvenient
Ask: What won’t we compromise, no matter the market or mood?

BELIEF

The truth your brand holds above all else
Ask: What do we believe that the world hasn’t caught up to yet?



TENSION

The societal, cultural, or personal friction you speak into
Ask: What frustration are we responding to? What norm do we challenge?

EMOTION

The feeling your brand is designed to create
Ask: What do people need to feel, and how do we deliver that?

How to Use It

STEP 1: RUN A SOUL SESSION

- Bring your founders, brand team, and real customer voices
- Ask questions that challenge, not just clarify

STEP 2: MAP THE 4 PILLARS

- Start with Belief, then Emotion, Tension, and finally Devotion
- Use sticky notes, whiteboards, even voice notes, whatever sparks truth

STEP 3: WRITE A SOUL STATEMENT

Format:
“We believe [belief]. We exist to help people feel [emotion], in a world where [tension]. That’s why we’ll always [devotion].”

STEP 4: PRESSURE-TEST IT

- Would you say this out loud to a customer?
- Would your team rally behind it under pressure?
- Does it feel honest, not aspirational fluff?

Example Soul Statement (Mailchimp)

“We believe small businesses deserve big business power. We exist to help people feel confident in a world where digital tools feel impersonal. That’s why we’ll always design for the underdog.”

Brand DNA

Where essence meets expression

Who Created It

- Adapted and evolved by identity-led studios like COLLINS, DesignStudio, and Wolff Olins
- No single originator; used to bridge brand strategy and design systems

What It’s For

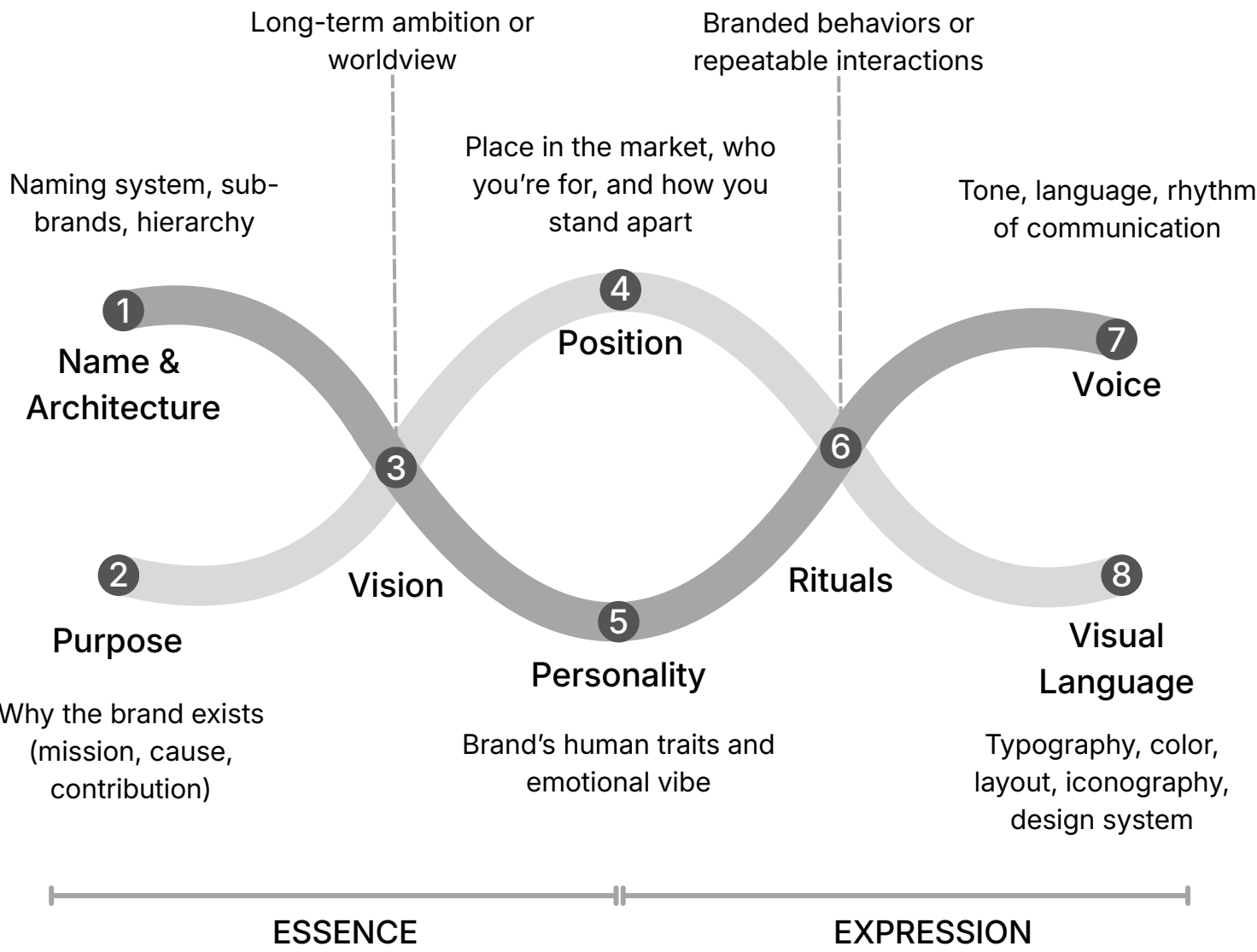
- Aligning foundational strategy with day-to-day brand expression
- Helping internal teams and creative partners speak the same brand language
- Visualizing how each part of the brand connects to the whole

Use It When

- Launching or evolving a brand identity system
- Bridging the gap between brand strategy and creative execution
- Scaling across design, content, marketing, and culture without dilution

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Creating a personality that doesn’t match the visual or verbal tone
- ✗ Over-emphasizing the expressive side without strategic depth
- ✗ Making it static, DNA must evolve with the brand



*This model helps brands build coherence across internal beliefs (essence) and external outputs (expression).

The two intertwined strands represent how emotional clarity and creative execution must evolve in sync, no siloed strategy, no disconnected design.

How to Use It

- STEP 1: NAME & ARCHITECTURE**
Ask: How are our offerings structured under one identity?
- STEP 2: CLARIFY PURPOSE**
Ask: What impact are we trying to make in the world?
- STEP 3: SET YOUR VISION**
Ask: Where are we going, and what will the world look like if we succeed?
- STEP 4: DEFINE MARKET POSITION**
Ask: What space do we claim in people’s minds and the market?
- STEP 5: BUILD BRAND PERSONALITY**
Ask: If our brand were human, what would its character be like?
- STEP 6: DESIGN BRAND RITUALS**
Ask: What do people do with us that becomes habit or meaning?
- STEP 7: CRAFT YOUR VOICE**
Ask: How do we sound when we write, speak, or respond?
- STEP 8: DEFINE VISUAL LANGUAGE**
Ask: What visual world does our brand own?

Brand Iceberg

Build from what’s beneath, not just what’s seen.

Who Created It

→ Field-developed concept used widely in brand strategy
(Inspired by the iceberg metaphor used across psychology and organizational theory.)

What It’s For

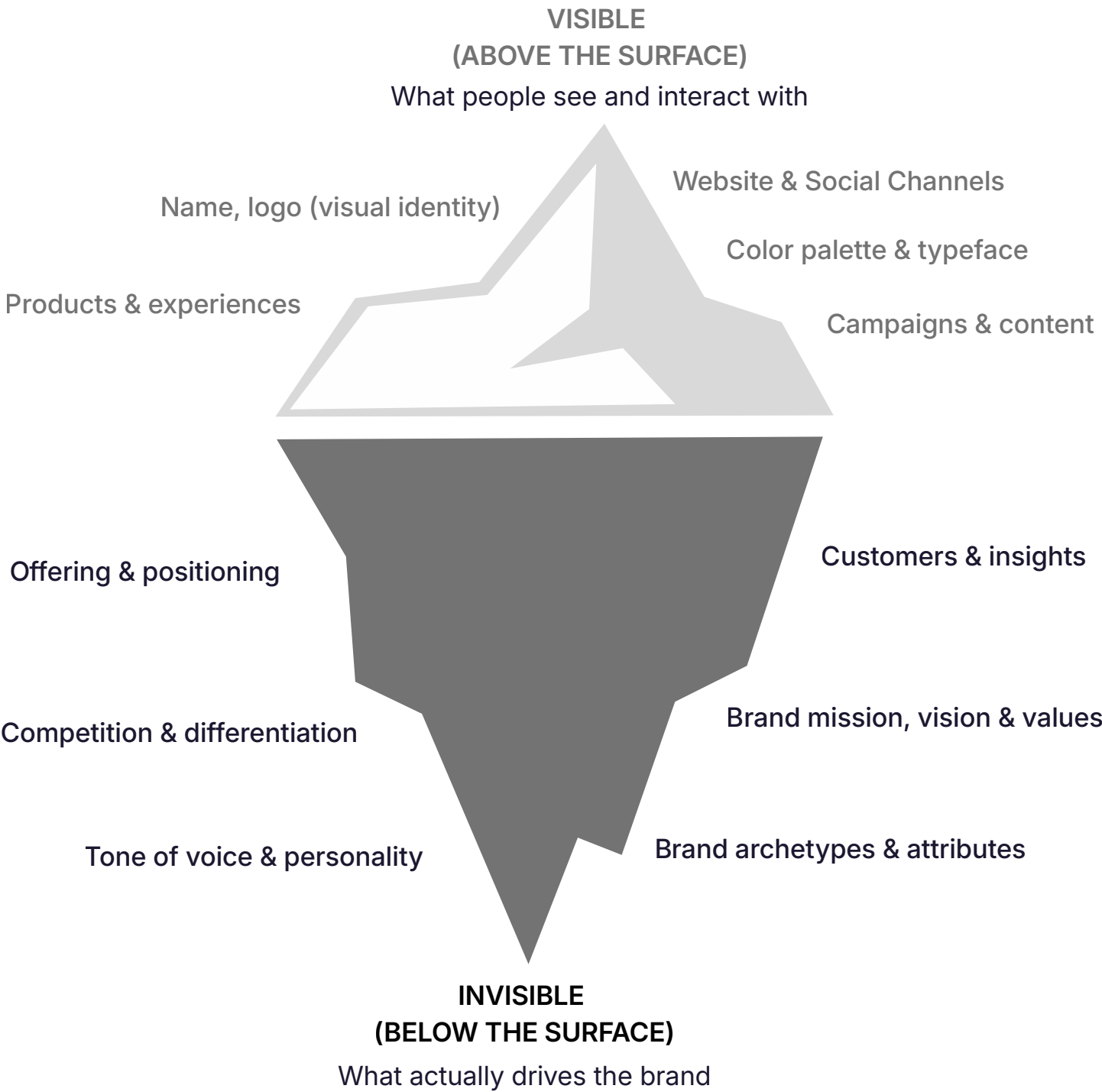
- Distinguishing what’s visible vs what truly drives the brand
- Uncovering deeper layers behind surface-level identity
- Building brands rooted in meaning, not just aesthetics

Use It When

- Your brand feels shallow or overly visual
- You’re defining identity from scratch
- You need to align internal truth with external expression

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Focusing only on visual identity
- ✗ Defining values that don’t reflect reality
- ✗ Building from the outside-in instead of inside-out



How to Use It

- 1. START BELOW THE SURFACE**
Define your purpose, beliefs, values, and customer truth first.
- 2. ALIGN THE CORE**
Make sure these elements connect and don’t contradict each other.
- 3. TRANSLATE ABOVE THE SURFACE**
Turn your internal foundation into visuals, messaging, and experiences.
- 4. CHECK FOR CONSISTENCY**
Ensure what people see reflects what actually drives the brand.
- 5. REFINE CONTINUOUSLY**
Adjust the visible layer as your understanding deepens.

Clarity Tip

If you remove your logo and visuals, does the brand still feel distinct?
If not, your foundation isn’t strong enough.

Brand Archetype Wheel

Define your brand’s human persona and emotional identity

Who Created It

The Brand Archetype Wheel is inspired by Carl Jung’s psychological archetypes and adapted for branding by thinkers like Margaret Mark & Carol Pearson (authors of The Hero and the Outlaw).

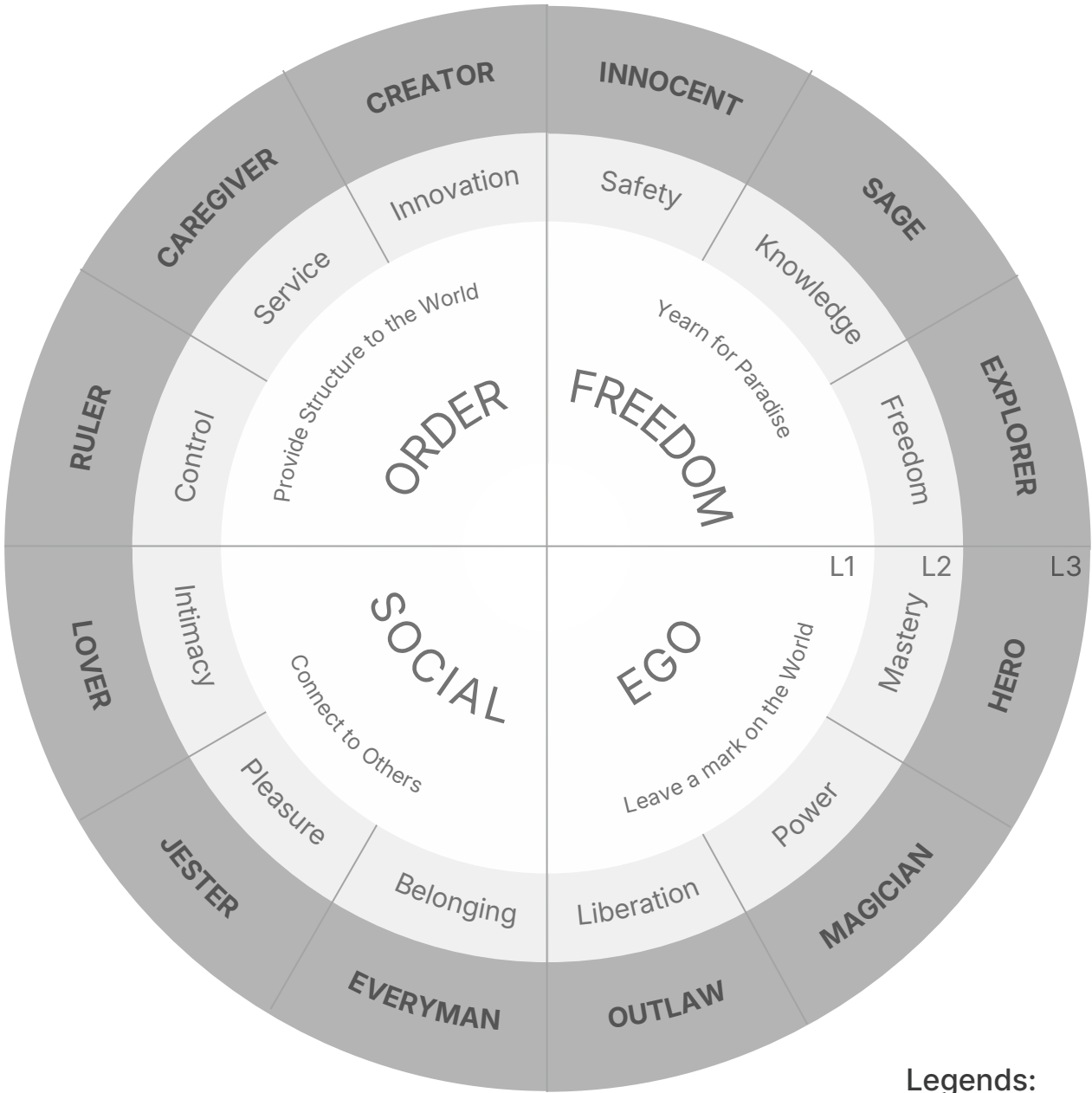
It has since been widely adopted by strategists and agencies to humanize brands and shape storytelling, tone, and design.

What It’s For

- While it’s often used to define Tone of Voice, it also supports:
- Brand storytelling and content themes
 - Visual identity and creative direction
 - Culture and internal alignment
 - Naming, packaging, campaign positioning
 - Consistency across multi-market brands

Use It When

- Your brand feels inconsistent across channels
- You want to emotionally differentiate from competitors
- You’re rebranding or launching a new brand/sub-brand
- You need a shorthand for aligning teams on “how we show up”
- You’re briefing creatives, agencies, or content teams



Legends:

Layer 1: Motivational Cluster
Layer 2: Core Goal
Layer 3: Archetype

How to Use It

- 1. IDENTIFY YOUR CORE MOTIVATION**
→ Does your brand crave control, seek freedom, chase mastery, or foster connection?
- 2. PICK YOUR ARCHETYPE(S)**
→ Choose 1 primary and 1 secondary archetype that best expresses your brand’s personality.
- 3. USE IT ACROSS TOUCHPOINTS**
→ Let your archetype guide your tone of voice, design style, storytelling, and behavior.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Choosing too many archetypes (confuses your voice)
- ✗ Picking an archetype that doesn’t match your audience
- ✗ Using the same archetype across unrelated brands or sub-brands

Purpose

Why do we exist?



Golden Circle

Great Brands Begin Within

Who Created It

- Simon Sinek (Author & Leadership Consultant)
- Introduced in 2009 via his TED Talk Start with Why

What It’s For

- Helping brands uncover and articulate their core purpose
- Building emotional loyalty through belief-driven branding
- Aligning teams, messaging, & decision-making around “Why”

Use It When

- Defining brand purpose or mission
- Founder-led brand building or rebrands
- Leadership or internal alignment workshops
- Crafting keynote stories or brand manifestos
- Early-stage brands seeking emotional clarity

WHAT - Your Output

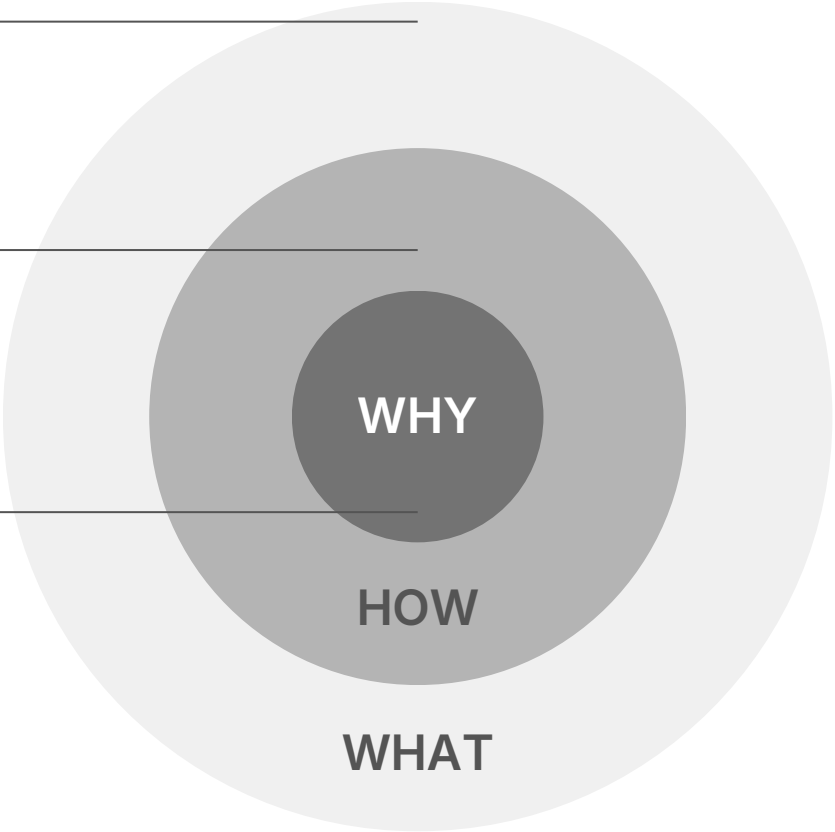
Your product, service, or offering.
What do you create that proves your purpose?

HOW - Your Way

Your unique approach. The principles, values, and methods that bring your purpose to life.
How do you do it differently?

WHY - Your Purpose

Your belief. The cause that fuels you.
Why do you exist beyond profit?



How to Use It

1. ARTICULATE YOUR WHY
What belief would the world lose if we disappeared?
→ Think human impact, not business goals
2. Clarify Your HOW
What’s unique about how we act on our beliefs?
→ Principles, philosophies, internal practices
3. Define Your WHAT
What tangible thing do we create to prove our belief?
→ Product, service, behavior

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Starting from the outside (WHAT → HOW → WHY)
- ✗ Writing a vague WHY (“make the world better”)
- ✗ Confusing profit with purpose
- ✗ Turning the WHY into a tagline
- ✗ Making the WHY too founder-centric

Core/Credo Framework

Define what your brand stands for, beyond what it sells.

Who Created It

Field-developed framework used by brand strategists to define a brand’s core belief system (often expressed as a brand credo or manifesto)

What It’s For

- Defining the belief system behind the brand
- Moving from functional to meaningful positioning
- Creating a foundation for consistent decisions and messaging

Use It When

- Your brand feels transactional or product-led
- You struggle to articulate what you stand for
- You want to build a stronger emotional connection

CORE (What you believe)

The fundamental truth your brand stands on
→ What do you believe that others don’t?

CREDO (What you stand for)

A clear expression of that belief in action
→ What do you commit to because of this belief?

PROOF (How it shows up)

How this belief translates into real-world behavior
→ How does this belief shape decisions, products, and communication?

How to Use It

- 1. DEFINE THE CORE BELIEF**
Identify a truth your brand genuinely stands for.
- 2. TURN IT INTO A CREDO**
Translate that belief into a clear, actionable stance.
- 3. VALIDATE WITH REALITY**
Ensure your product, culture, and decisions support it.
- 4. APPLY ACROSS TOUCHPOINTS**
Let it guide messaging, tone, and brand behavior.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Writing generic, inspirational statements with no real stance
- ✗ Defining beliefs that don’t reflect actual decisions
- ✗ Treating it as messaging instead of a decision-making filter

Brand Pillars

Clarify the five pillars that hold your brand up

Who Created It

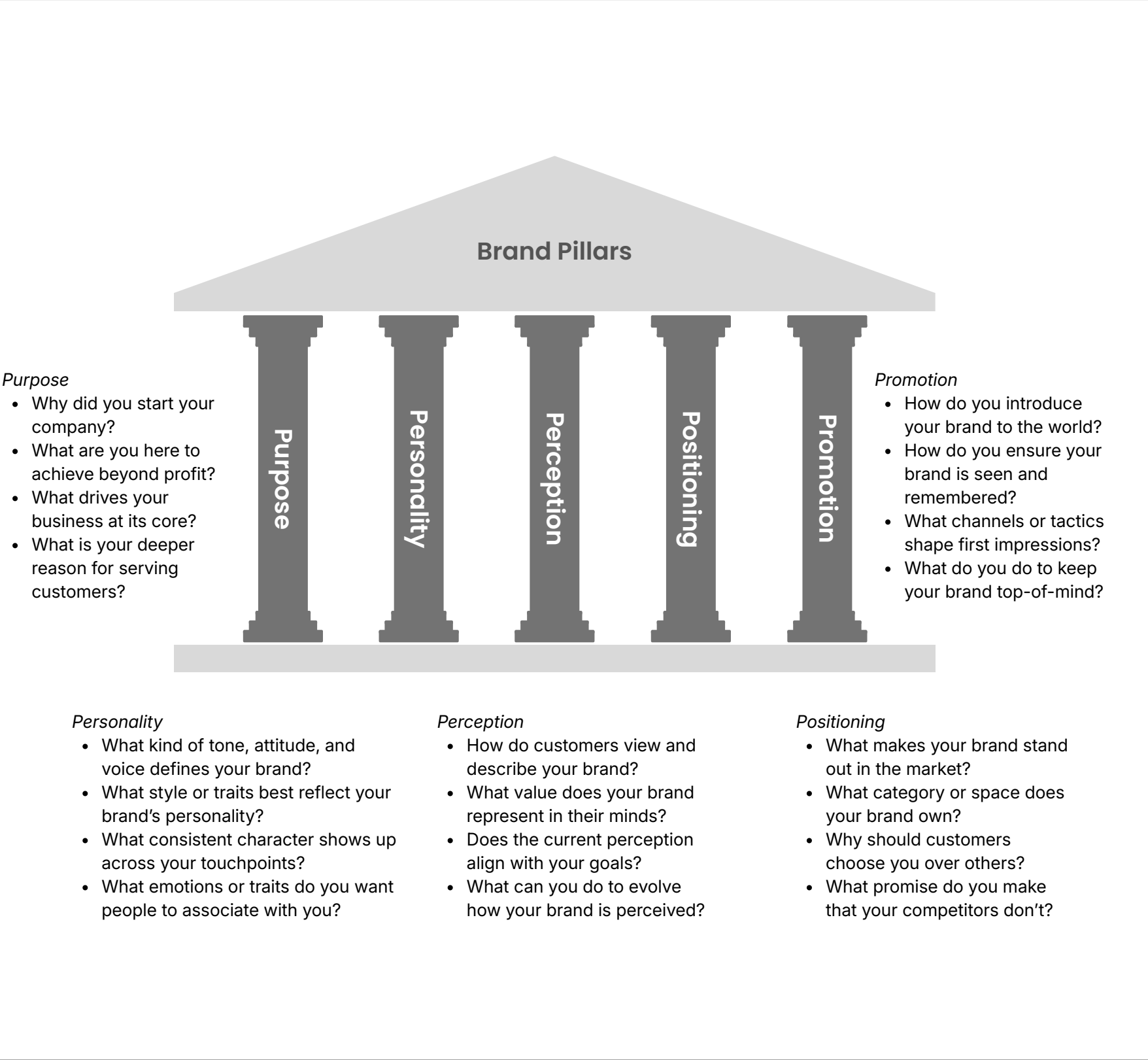
- A widely used framework in brand strategy and messaging, with no single originator
- Popularized in brand platforms by consultancies like Interbrand, Siegel+Gale, and in-house brand teams
- Often adapted as a structure to align strategy, storytelling, and marketing

What It’s For

- Define and organize your brand’s core truths
- Build a consistent brand across internal culture, external messaging, and customer experience
- Create alignment across strategy, creative, and execution

Use It When

- You're building or refreshing a brand platform
- Messaging, design, or teams feel fragmented
- You need to align internal and external perception
- You're preparing for scale, launch, or a strategic pivot



How to Use It

- 1. START WITH WHAT YOU KNOW**
 - Look at your website, decks, and team language.
 - What themes keep showing up?
- 2. TALK TO PEOPLE INSIDE AND OUT**
 - Ask your team and customers:
“What do we stand for?”
“Why do you choose us?”
- 3. USE THE PILLARS AS FILTERS**
 - For each one, Purpose, Personality, Perception, Positioning, Promotion, ask:
“What’s true, unique, and clear here?”
- 4. SPOT THE GAPS**
 - Where do your words and actual brand experience not match?
- 5. REFINE FOR CLARITY & ALIGNMENT**
 - Make sure the 5 pillars work together and feel true.
 - If it sounds generic, go deeper.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Treating the pillars as copywriting buckets
- ✗ Making every pillar sound the same (i.e., vague, fluffy statements)
- ✗ Skipping customer insight when defining perception
- ✗ Using tone words without personality behavior

Brand Conviction Springboard

Define your fight. Find your soul.

Who Created It

- No single author
- Popularized by consultancies like FutureBrand, Interbrand
- Evolved during the 2010s as deeper-purpose frameworks expanded beyond the Golden Circle

What It’s For

- Defining belief systems and emotional differentiation
- Going deeper than product, into founding truth + future intent
- Building brand conviction, not just messaging

Use It When

- Defining or refreshing brand purpose with real depth
- Brand relaunches, pivots, or realignments
- Leadership or culture-reset workshops
- Moving from tactical to belief-driven strategy
- Aligning multiple stakeholder teams



How to Use It

- 1. EXPLORE ORIGINS**
Ask: What makes us who we are?
- 2. SCAN CULTURAL LANDSCAPE**
Ask: What shift do we align with or resist?
- 3. IDENTIFY YOUR CAUSE**
Ask: What do we believe should change?
- 4. CLARIFY WHAT MAKES YOU REMARKABLE**
Ask: What makes us stand out authentically?
- 5. DOCUMENT WHAT YOU DO**
Ask: What offerings reflect our cause?
- 6. DEFINE BRAND PERSONALITY**
Ask: How would people describe our tone?
- 7. MAP ADVOCATES**
Ask: Who spreads our cause without being paid?

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Treating it like a tagline exercise
- ✗ Jumping to the product before the belief
- ✗ Ignoring cultural context
- ✗ Naming fake “advocates” (who aren’t truly aligned)
- ✗ Using generic cause statements (“make the world happy”)



Audience

Who is this for?

Customer Empathy Map

See the world through your customer’s lens

Who Created It

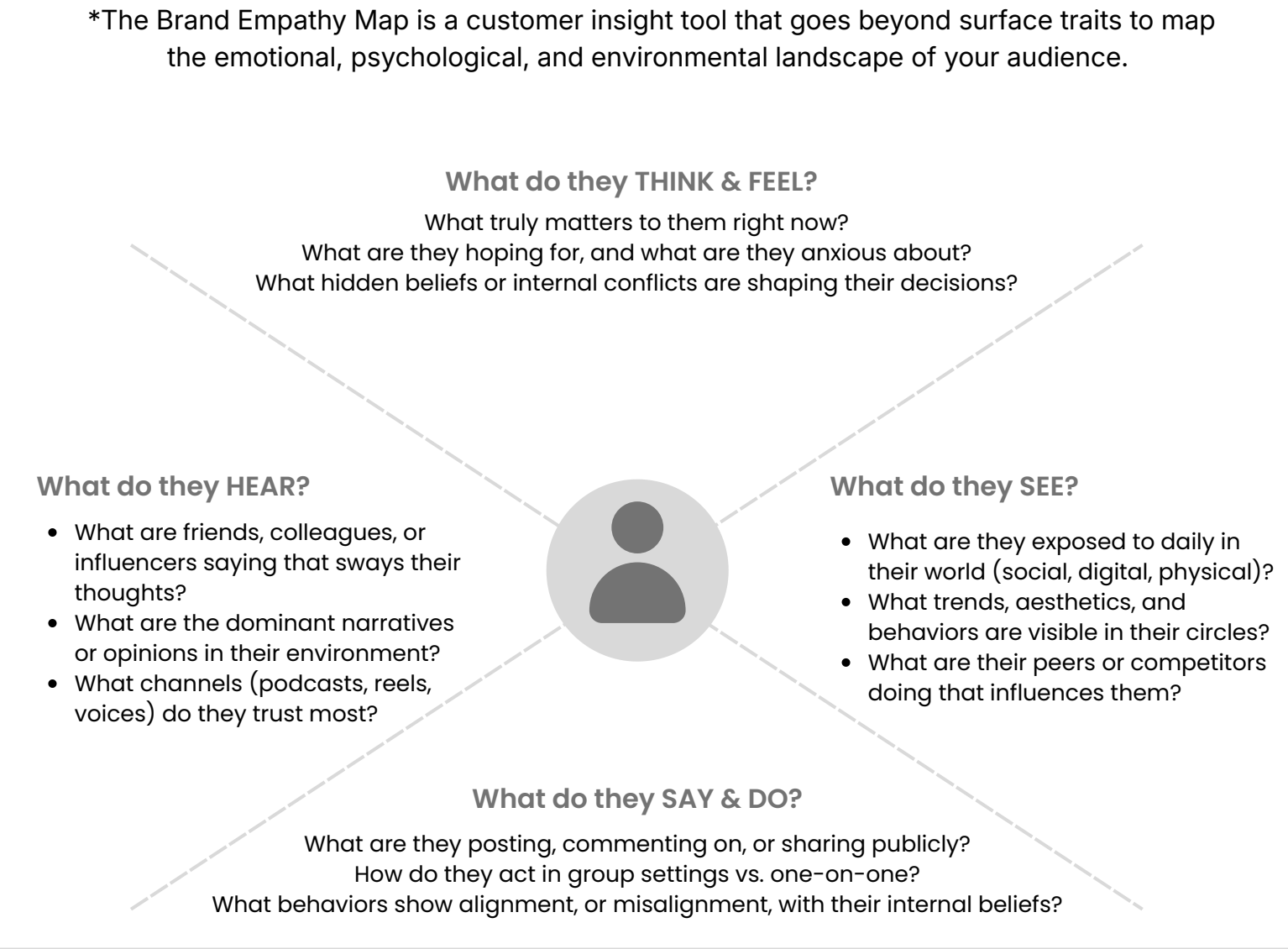
- Originally introduced by XPLANE as a design thinking tool
- Adapted widely by brand strategists, UX teams, and service designers
- Now a staple in customer journey mapping, campaign planning, and persona building

What It’s For

- Creating a deeper emotional connection with audiences
- Humanizing personas by moving from what they are to how they feel
- Finding insight hooks that unlock more resonant messaging or positioning
- Aligning teams on a shared understanding of the audience

Use It When

- Your messaging isn’t landing or feels generic
- You’re building empathy-based personas
- You want to sharpen voice-of-customer insights for strategy, content, or UX
- You’re preparing for a creative sprint, campaign, or product design phase



PAINS (Frustrations & Frictions)

What keeps them stuck or slows them down?
What frustrations or obstacles are they dealing with?
What do they fear being judged for?

GAINS (Motivations & Desires)

What would delight them or make life easier?
What transformation are they looking for?
What success or identity are they trying to move toward?

How to Use It

- STEP 1: CHOOSE A REAL SEGMENT**
→ Don’t build for “everyone.” Focus on one customer group or buyer type.
- STEP 2: USE DATA, NOT JUST ASSUMPTIONS**
→ Pull from interviews, surveys, customer service insights, and social listening.
- STEP 3: MAP THE 6 ZONES**
→ Go quadrant by quadrant. Challenge team biases. Push for depth.
- STEP 4: VALIDATE & REFINES**
→ Review with actual customer feedback. Update as behavior changes.
- STEP 5: APPLY IT CROSS-FUNCTIONALLY**
→ Let this inform messaging, product UX, campaign copy, and tone of voice.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Using stereotypes instead of real insights
- ✗ Writing what you want them to feel, instead of what they actually feel
- ✗ Forgetting to revisit it after major product or market changes

Jobs To Be Done (JTBD)

Turn customer behavior into a clear, actionable statement.

Who Created It

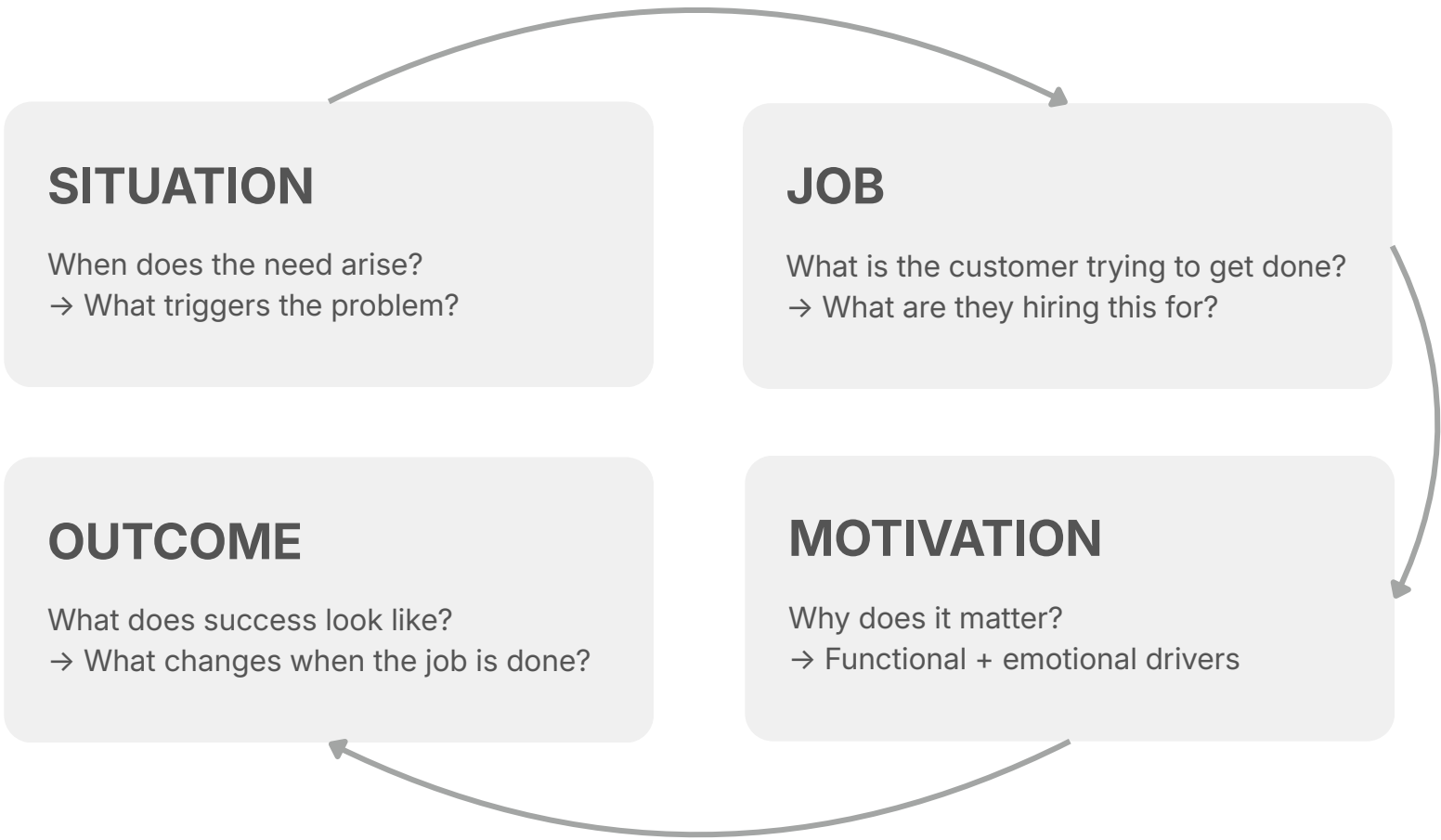
→ Popularized by Clayton Christensen through his work on innovation and customer behavior

What It's For

- Understanding the real reason people choose a product
- Moving beyond demographics to behavior and intent
- Creating clarity for positioning, product, and messaging

Use It When

- You're unsure what your customer truly wants
- Your messaging isn't resonating
- You need clarity on what to build or communicate



JTBD STATEMENT

As a [customer / situation], I want to [job], so I can [desired outcome], because [motivation].

Example
As a busy professional with limited time, I want to quickly plan healthy meals, so I can stay consistent with my diet, because I want to feel in control of my health.

How to Use It

- 1. DEFINE THE SITUATION**
Start with when the need actually shows up.
- 2. CLARIFY THE JOB**
State what the customer is trying to get done.
- 3. ADD MOTIVATION**
Capture both functional and emotional drivers.
- 4. DEFINE THE OUTCOME**
Describe what success looks like.
- 5. FORM THE STATEMENT**
Combine everything into one clear JTBD statement.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Focusing on who the customer is instead of what they're trying to do
- ✗ Writing vague or overly broad job statements
- ✗ Ignoring emotional and contextual drivers

5 Whys

Get to the root. Fix what matters.

Who Created It

- Originated by Sakichi Toyoda, used at Toyota as part of the Lean manufacturing philosophy in the 1930s
- Popularized in Six Sigma, UX, agile, and strategy circles for root cause analysis

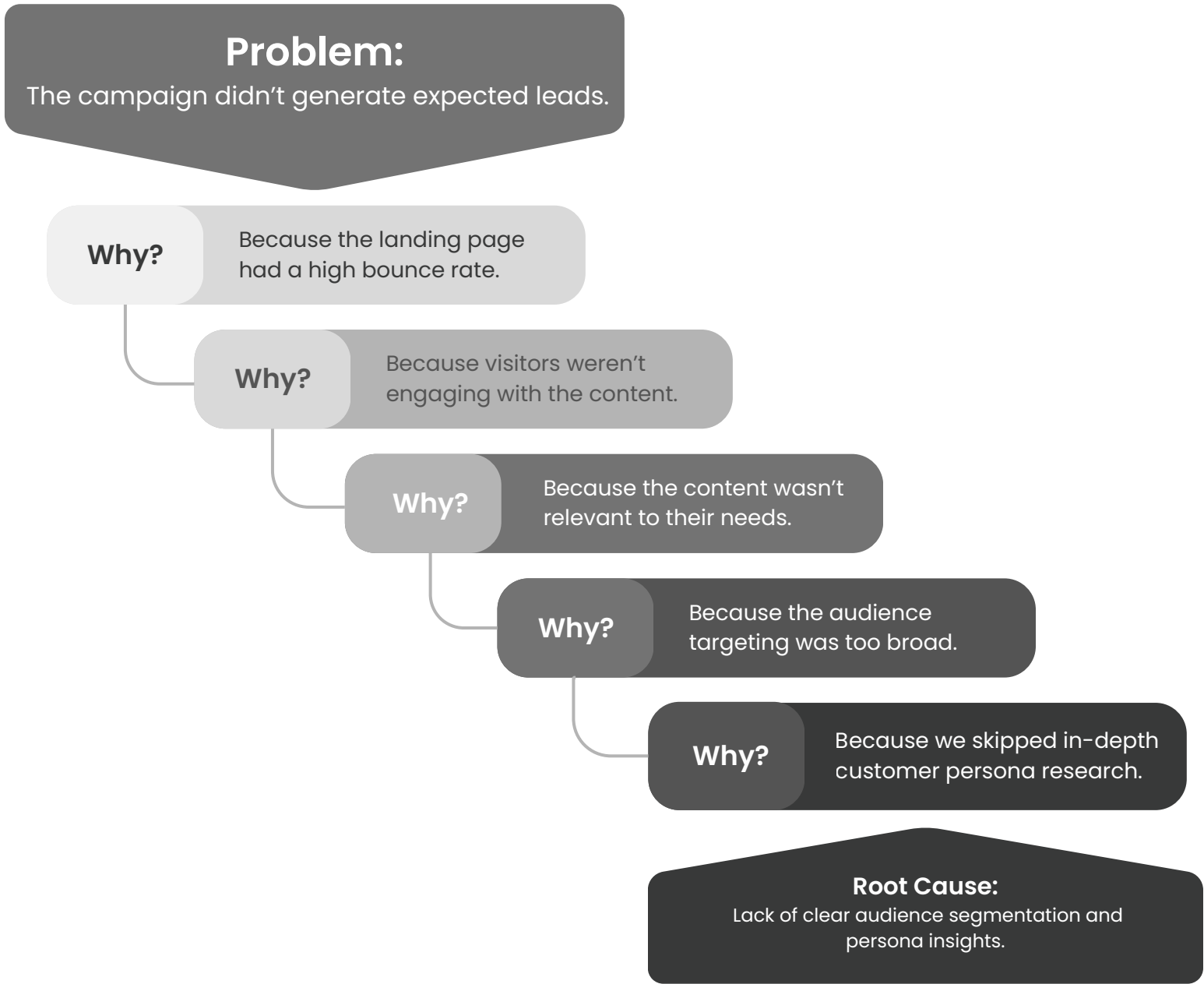
What It’s For

- Digging beyond symptoms to uncover the real cause of a problem & consumer insights
- Preventing knee-jerk solutions or blame games
- Creating smarter fixes for strategy, campaigns, or team issues

Use It When

- A brand or marketing initiative underperforms
- Stakeholders are jumping to quick fixes
- Teams are stuck debating what’s wrong instead of why it’s happening
- You’re mapping pain points in the customer journey or team workflow

*The 5 Whys is a simple but powerful technique for uncovering the true underlying cause of any problem by asking “Why?” five times in a row. It’s not just for engineers or product teams; it’s invaluable in brand, marketing, and strategy work to avoid treating symptoms instead of the source.



How to Use It

STEP 1: STATE THE PROBLEM CLEARLY

- Keep it factual and specific.
- Ask: What exactly is going wrong?

STEP 2: ASK “WHY?” OF THE FIRST REASON

- Don’t overthink; just go one level deeper.
- Ask: Why is that happening?

STEP 3: REPEAT THIS PROCESS 5 TIMES

- Each answer becomes the next “why” prompt.
- Stop when you hit a root cause, not a different symptom.

STEP 4: IDENTIFY ACTIONABLE ROOT CAUSE

- The final “why” should point to something you can improve, change, or prevent.
- Ideally, something systemic, not circumstantial.

STEP 5: ALIGN FIXES WITH THE ROOT, NOT THE SYMPTOM

- Use the outcome to refine your strategy, design, team process, or product.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Stopping at surface-level reasons
- ✗ Asking leading “whys” that reinforce assumptions
- ✗ Not involving the people closest to the problem
- ✗ Treating it like a checklist, not a genuine inquiry

Audience Segmentation Matrix

Break your audience into meaningful groups, not just broad categories.

Who Created It

→ Field-developed framework used across marketing and brand strategy to structure audience understanding

What It’s For

- Moving beyond “everyone is our audience”
- Identifying distinct customer groups with different needs
- Creating more targeted messaging and positioning

Use It When

- Your audience feels too broad or undefined
- Your messaging is trying to speak to everyone
- You need clarity on whom to prioritize



How to Use It

- 1. LIST YOUR BROAD AUDIENCE**
Start with who you currently think your audience is.
- 2. BREAK INTO SEGMENTS**
Group them based on behavior, needs, or intent.
- 3. MAP ACROSS DIMENSIONS**
Understand each segment across all four layers.
- 4. IDENTIFY PRIORITY SEGMENTS**
Focus on the ones with the highest value or alignment.
- 5. APPLY TO MESSAGING & STRATEGY**
Tailor communication and positioning for each segment.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Segmenting only by demographics
- ✗ Creating too many segments with no clear focus
- ✗ Not linking segments to actual messaging or decisions

Persona Spectrum

Understand your audience as evolving mindsets, not fixed profiles.

Who Created It

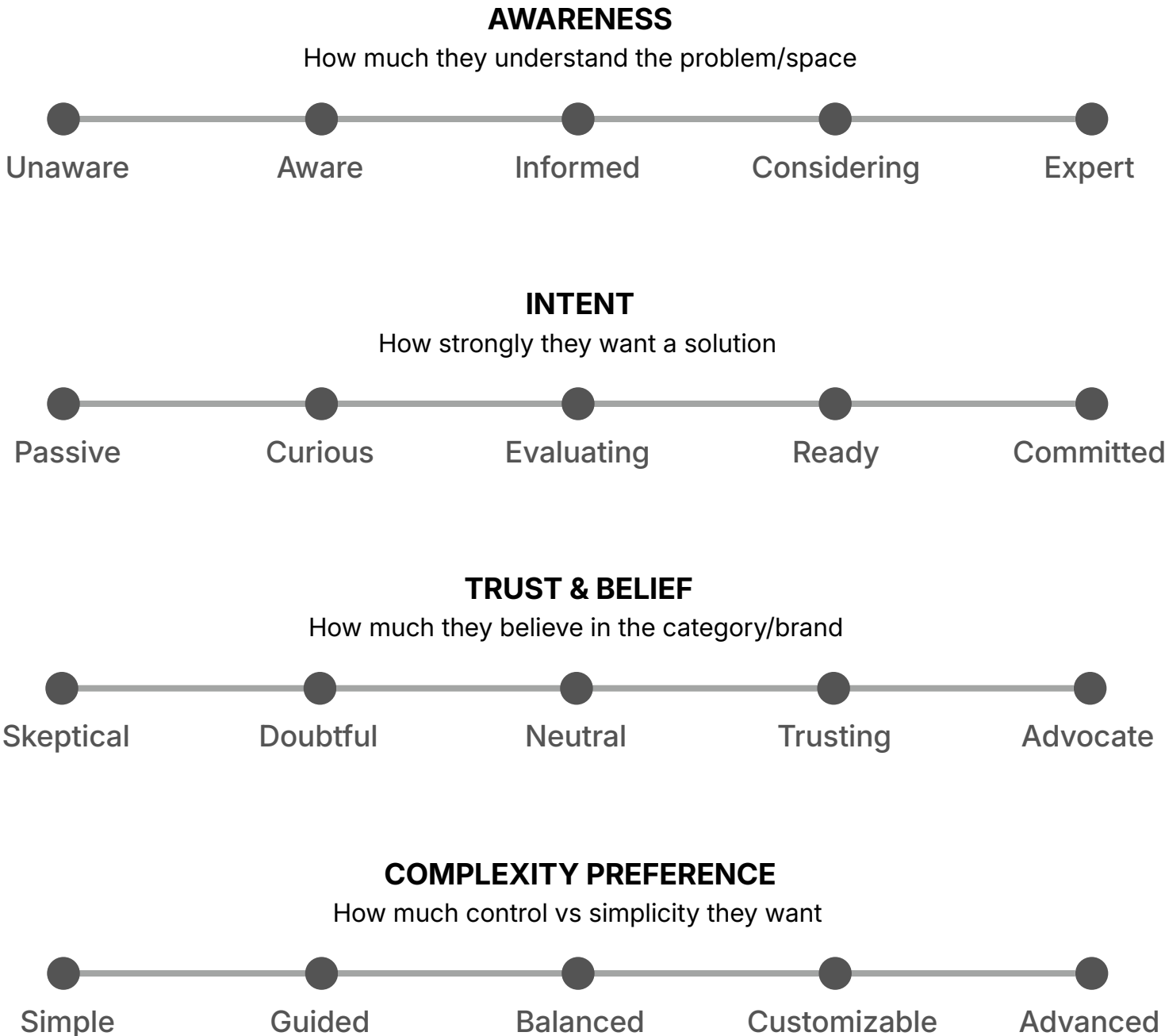
→ Field-developed framework used to move beyond static personas

What It's For

- Moving beyond rigid, one-dimensional personas
- Understanding variation in behavior, awareness, and intent
- Adapting messaging based on where the audience is

Use It When

- Your audience behaves differently across contexts
- Your messaging needs to adapt to different states



How to Use It

- 1. DEFINE YOUR DIMENSIONS**
Choose 3–5 dimensions that matter for your context (these are examples, not limits).
- 2. SET THE SCALE**
Define clear start and end states for each dimension.
- 3. MAP THE SPECTRUM**
Add key stages between those extremes.
- 4. PLOT YOUR PERSONAS**
Position each persona across all dimensions.
- 5. APPLY TO DECISIONS**
Use this to guide messaging, product, and targeting.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Treating personas as fixed categories
- ✗ Overcomplicating with too many stages
- ✗ Not linking stages to messaging decisions

A.C.T. Framework

Craft communication that actually lands.

Who Created It

- **Created by:** ThinkFWD strategy studio, rooted in behavioral psychology and audience mapping.
- **Year:** Early 2020s, as content teams began blending audience insight with conversion strategy.
- **Adoption:** Used by marketing strategists, content designers, and creative directors to align message, mindset, and medium, especially for digital-first campaigns.

What It’s For

- Building sharper messaging that connects with audience psychology
- Aligning strategy across brand, marketing, and media teams
- Bridging insight and execution without generic personas

Use It When

- Launching a new brand, content strategy, or campaign
- Refreshing messaging to improve resonance or conversion
- Segmenting audiences by mindset or habits (not just age/location)
- Planning touchpoints across platforms with intent

A. Audience Segment	C. Content & Communication	T. Triggers & Touchpoints
Who are you targeting? What behaviors and habits define them?	What message will resonate with their needs, values, or ambitions?	Where and how will you reach them? What will spark engagement or action?
This group: • Starts their day with a digital scroll and a mindful routine, seeking energy without the crash • Look for smarter habits, not louder ones, to stay focused • See themselves as modern optimizers: thoughtful, curious, and performance-driven	Brand Message: • A clean, smart source of fuel, designed for clarity and calm performance • Functional ingredients with no fluff, just purpose • Speaks to focus, flow, and the quiet confidence of staying ahead	Channel Strategy: • TikTok and Reels content showing mindful routines and product integrations • Focused newsletter drops with headlines like “Upgrade Your 10 a.m. Brain” • Partner with productivity apps or wellness creators to demonstrate real-life use moments

How to Use It

- 1. DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE SEGMENT**
 - Forget demographics, start with behaviors and routines
 - What do they scroll, buy, believe, or repeat?

Ex: "Early risers seeking calm focus through minimalist routines"
- 2. CRAFT YOUR RESONANT MESSAGE**
 - What value do they crave?
 - Avoid fluff. Speak to what drives or defines them.

Ex: "Fuel without the crash. Designed for clarity."
- 3. DESIGN TARGETED TRIGGERS & CHANNELS**
 - Where do they live digitally?
 - What content format earns attention in that moment?

Ex: Reels showing product inside a morning habit, not just product features.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Targeting “everyone” instead of behavior-led segments
- ✗ Overcomplicating the message, this is not a brand manifesto
- ✗ Using default channels (email, ads) without mapping behavior
- ✗ Being loud instead of relevant

Brand Commitment Matrix

Aligning what you stand for with what your audience stands on

Who Created It

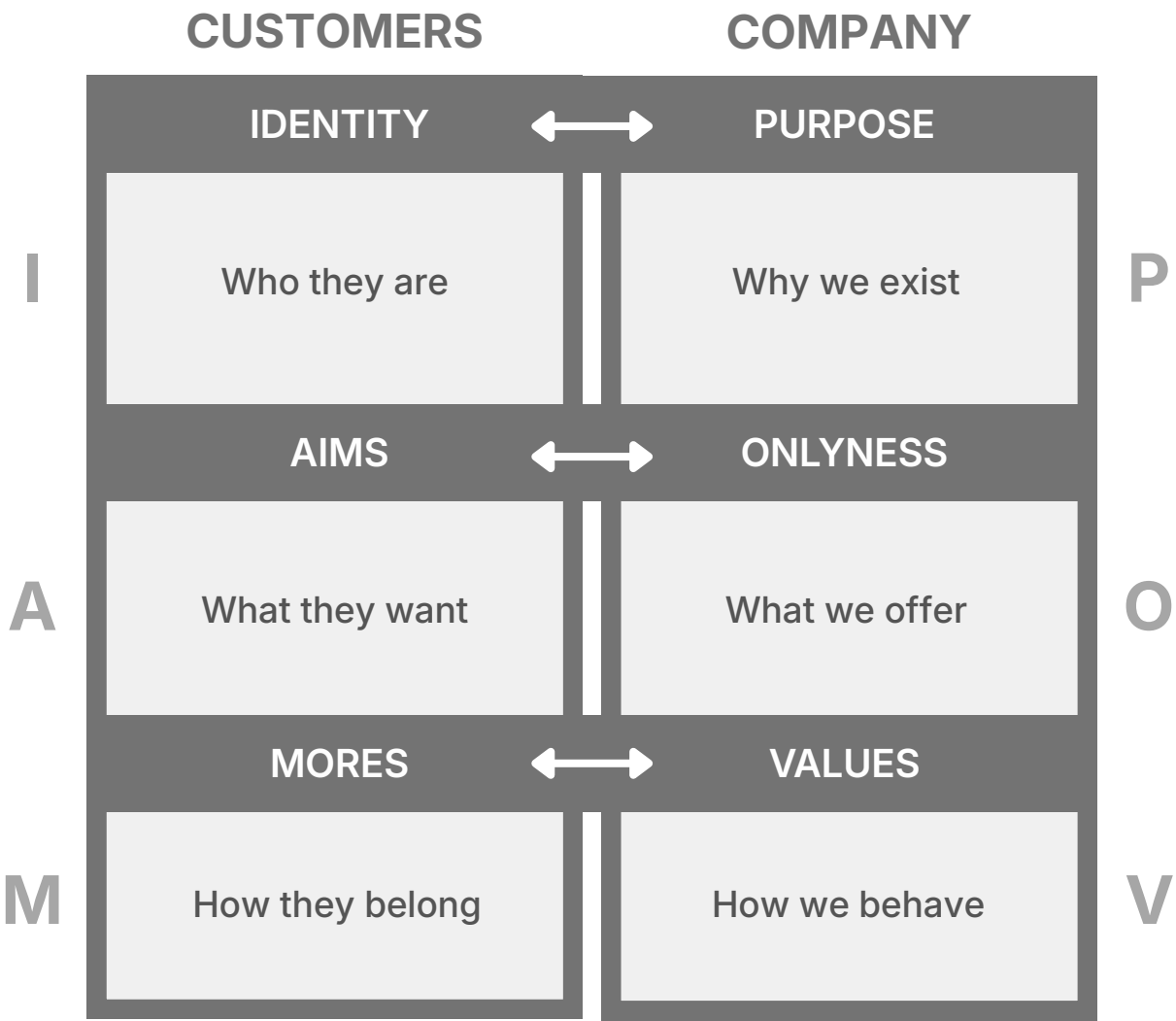
- Developed by Marty Neumeier, author of The Brand Gap and Zag.
- Designed to help brands clarify their purpose and connect it meaningfully with customer identity.

What It’s For

- To create deep alignment between the company and the customer.
- Bridges internal brand strategy with external audience relevance.
- Helps teams ensure the “why,” “what,” and “how” of the company aligns with “who,” “what,” and “how” of the customer.

Use It When

- Brand feels disjointed or irrelevant
- Rebranding or refreshing brand strategy
- Aligning internal culture with customer expectations
- Building foundational messaging before campaigns



How to Use It

- 1. DEFINE YOUR POV**
 - Clarify your Purpose, Onlyness (unique offer), and Values.
 - Be honest: What makes you different and consistent?
- 2. UNDERSTAND YOUR IAM**
 - Identify your target customer’s Identity, Aims, and Mores.
 - What do they believe, want, and align with culturally?
- 3. CHECK THE BRIDGES**
 - Does your Purpose reflect their Identity?
 - Does your Onlyness fulfill their Aims?
 - Do your Values align with their Mores?
- 4. TIGHTEN THE GAPS**
 - Rewrite, realign, or reposition to close misalignments between brand and audience.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Creating a company POV in isolation from customer insight
- ✗ Confusing product differentiation with emotional resonance
- ✗ Assuming alignment without actually mapping it out
- ✗ Letting internal values drift from actual external behavior

Difference

Why us?



Brand Bullseye Model

Align brand meaning from the core to the customer

Who Created It

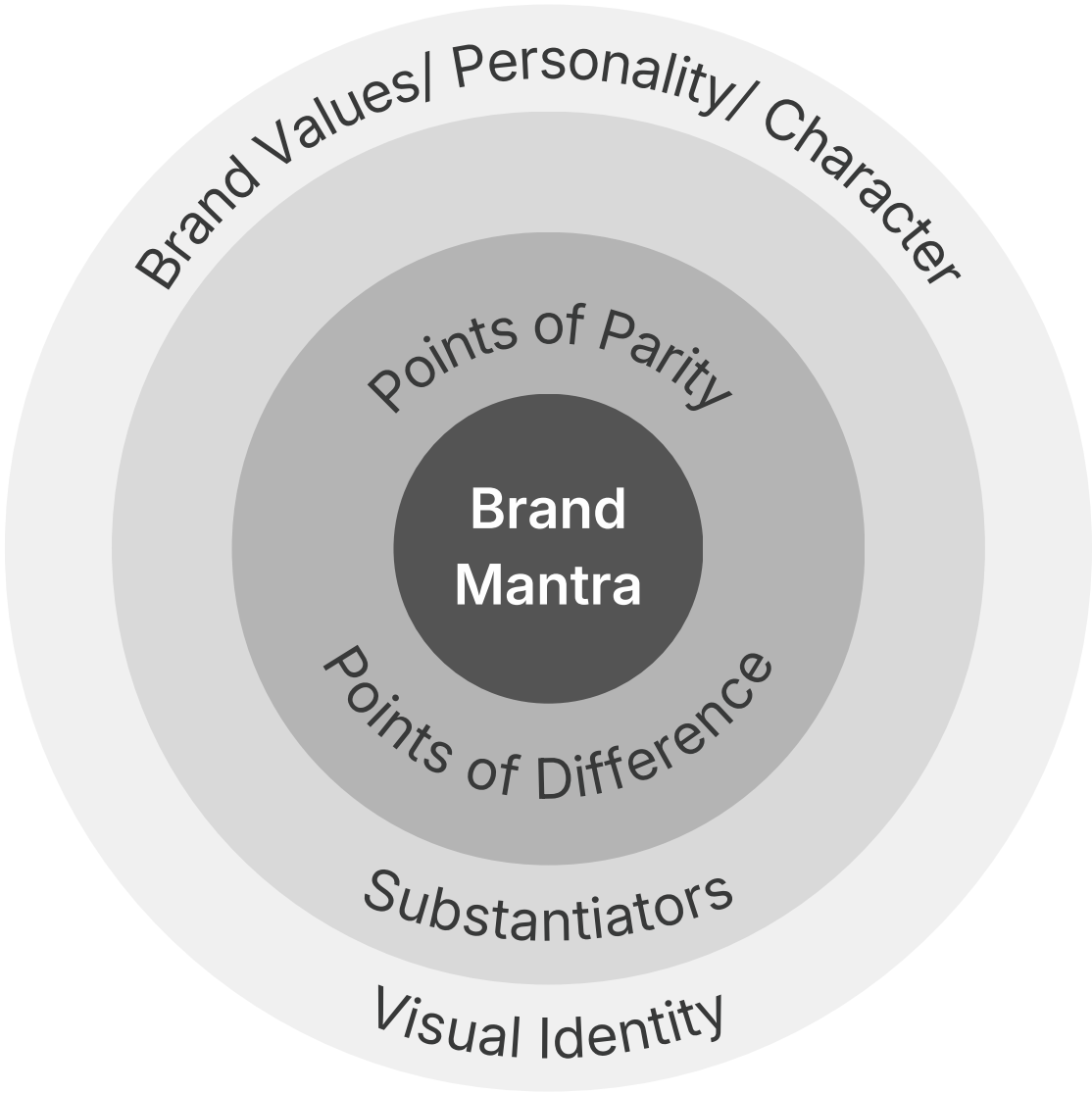
- Developed by Kevin Lane Keller (branding expert and author of Strategic Brand Management)
- Popularized as a way to simplify the brand positioning process into layered components

What It's For

- To distill a brand's essence into a structured, layered model
- Helps align positioning, differentiation, and communication across internal and external teams
- Clarifies what the brand stands for, how it's different, and how that meaning is brought to life

Use It When

- You need to translate brand strategy into a clear positioning framework
- Creating a brand platform for campaigns, design, or product marketing
- Simplifying complex brand attributes into a single source of truth
- Onboarding new creative partners or internal teams



How to Use It

- STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR BRAND MANTRA**
→ Distill your brand into a 3–5 word internal phrase (e.g., "performance through innovation")
- STEP 2: CLARIFY POINTS OF PARITY**
→ Identify baseline attributes needed to be seen as a legitimate category player
- STEP 3: IDENTIFY POINTS OF DIFFERENCE**
→ Pinpoint what uniquely sets you apart, functionally or emotionally
- STEP 4: ADD SUBSTANTIATORS**
→ Back your claims with proof (case studies, awards, results)
- STEP 5: DETAIL THE VISUAL IDENTITY**
→ Define the visuals that consistently express your brand essence
- STEP 6: LOCK IN BRAND VALUES & CHARACTER**
→ Define the brand's personality, how it would "behave" if it were a person

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Confusing parity with difference
- ✗ Using vague substantiators ("great service" isn't proof)
- ✗ Misaligning the visual identity with the core meaning

Value Proposition Canvas

Align what you offer with what your customer actually needs

Who Created It

- Created by: Alexander Osterwalder (Strategyzer)
- Year: 2012
- Adoption: Used globally in product strategy, customer development, and business model design. It's become a staple in innovation teams, UX workshops, and startup accelerators.

What It's For

- Clarifying product-market fit
- Designing offers that directly match customer expectations
- Bridging internal solutions with external needs
- Making messaging and positioning truly customer-first

Use It When

- Launching a product or service
- Rewriting marketing copy for clarity and relevance
- Prioritizing features in a roadmap
- Designing value-led business models
- Conducting user research or persona validation

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Starting with the product, not the customer
- ✗ Guessing instead of researching
- ✗ Trying to be everything to everyone
- ✗ Using buzzwords instead of plain, human outcomes

VALUE MAP (YOUR OFFER)



CUSTOMER PROFILE (THEIR WORLD)



How to Use It

- STEP 1: INTERVIEW OR OBSERVE REAL CUSTOMERS**
- Talk to actual users. Don't assume.
 - Focus on what they're trying to do, what's frustrating them, and what outcomes they value.
- STEP 2: FILL IN THE CUSTOMER PROFILE FIRST**
- Write down:
 - Jobs: Tasks or goals they're trying to complete
 - Pains: Anything that annoys, delays, or creates risk
 - Gains: Specific benefits or emotions they're hoping for
- STEP 3: MAP YOUR PRODUCT AGAINST IT**
- On the Value Map side, write:
 - What your product/service offers
 - How it removes each pain
 - How it creates each gain
- STEP 4: LOOK FOR SHARP FIT AREAS**
- Draw lines between pains relieved and gains created
 - Eliminate extras that don't match
 - Refine your offering or messaging to focus on the strongest overlaps
- STEP 5: TEST + VALIDATE**
- Show the canvas to real users or internal teams
 - Refine language and positioning based on feedback

Brand Key Model

Strategic alignment for global, complex brands

Who Created It

- Developed by Unilever Brand Management Teams
- Originated in the 1990s to scale brand definitions globally

What It’s For

- Structuring a brand across multiple layers
- Unifying market, customer, product, and belief into one system
- Creating clarity across global markets and cross-functional teams

Use It When

- Operating in complex industries (FMCG, healthcare, finance, etc.)
- Aligning brand across countries, markets, and agencies
- Managing brand portfolios across teams or product lines
- Building internal clarity across stakeholders



How to Use It

- Follow the numbering in the framework (1–9) as the sequence to build your Brand Key.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Rushing insight without emotional depth
- ✗ Overcomplicating RTBs (Reasons to Believe) with jargon
- ✗ Lack of internal agreement on definitions
- ✗ Weak Discriminator (“we care more”)
- ✗ Vague or generic Brand Essence

Suggestion

Brand Key is your alignment engine. It prevents global dilution and internal confusion. When in doubt, run everything through it.

4C's Model

Mapping a Brand's Strategic Landscape

Who Created It

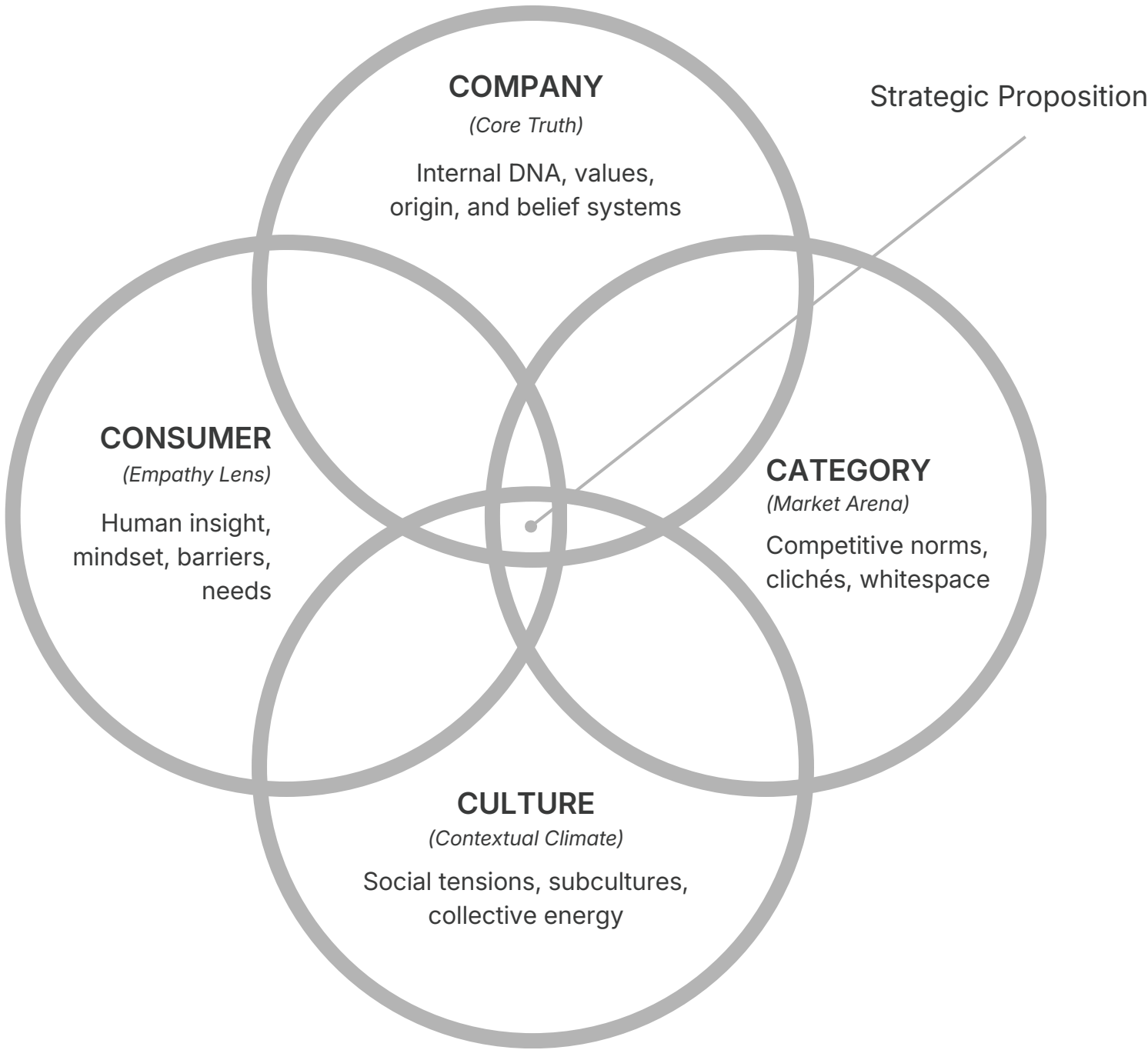
- Not officially credited to a single author
- Popularized by brand strategists in agencies and consultancies
- Used widely in brand audits, pitch decks, and positioning workshops

What It's For

- To understand a brand's surrounding ecosystem before making strategic decisions
- To identify patterns and white space across brand, audience, market, and culture
- To build an insight-rich foundation for brand positioning or campaign strategy

Use It When

- Kicking off a rebrand or brand audit
- Building a positioning strategy from scratch
- Pitching a new client or running a competitive analysis
- Planning seasonal campaigns with cultural relevance



How to Use It

- COMPANY** → Brand's internal truth
Look for values, vision, origin story, and growth goals.
→ Source: brand books, C-suite bios, annual reports, About pages.
- CONSUMER** → Audience mindset & needs
Identify motivations, pain points, behaviors, and identity cues.
→ Source: surveys, reviews, social listening, Reddit.
- CATEGORY** → Competitive norms & whitespace
Analyze how competitors behave, what's overused, and what's missing.
→ Source: websites, campaigns, product copy, trend reports.
- CULTURE** → Social forces & relevance
Spot macro/micro trends, taboos, and tensions shaping expectations.
→ Source: NYT, TikTok, Substacks, trend decks.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Relying only on surface trends instead of deeper cultural insight
- ✗ Skipping company dynamics (like internal misalignment or ambition gaps)
- ✗ Missing non-obvious competitors or analogous brands in category scans



Messaging

What do we say?

StoryBrand Framework

Turn your message into a story they want to join

Who Created It

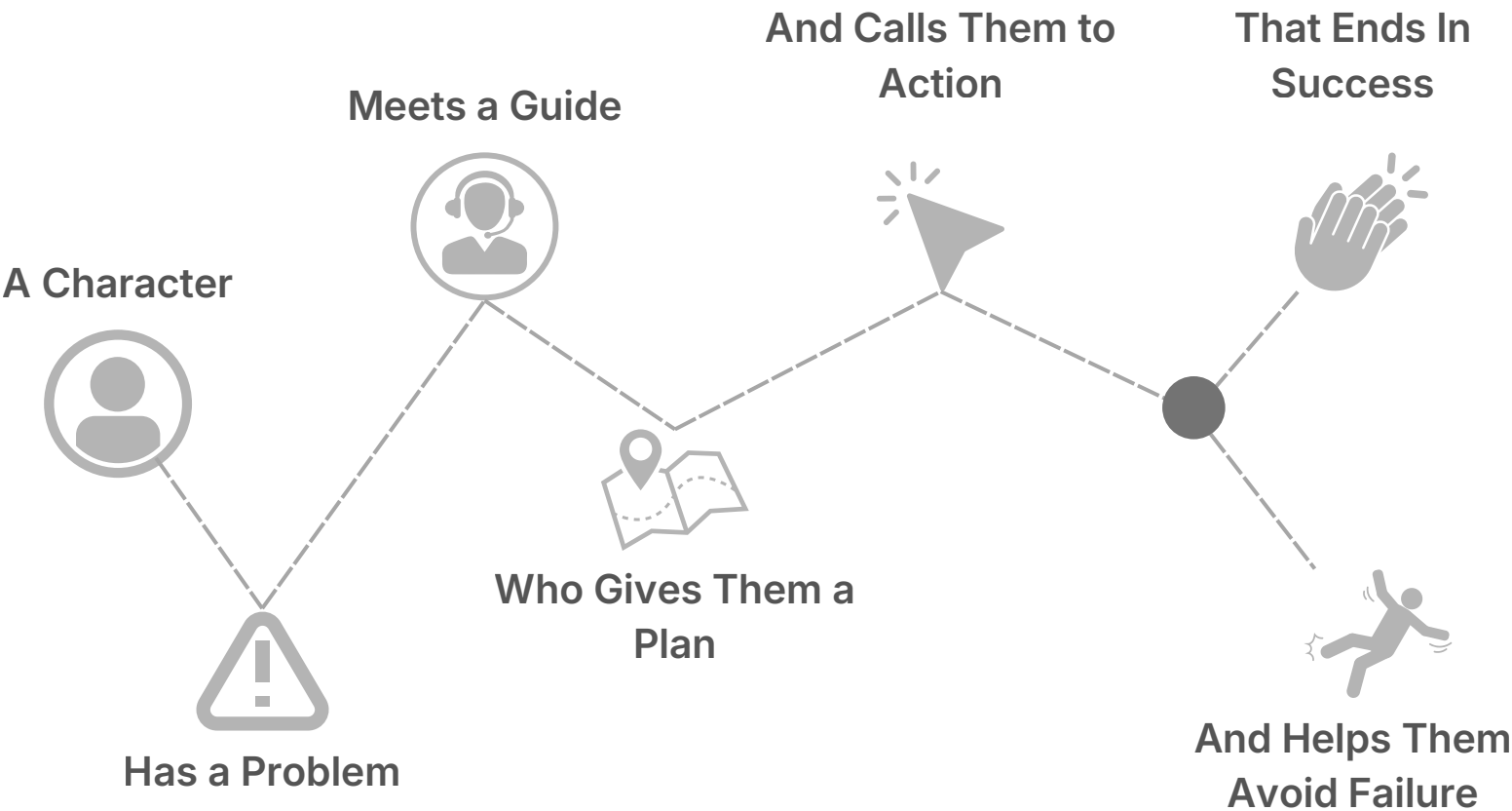
- Developed by Donald Miller (author of Building a StoryBrand)
- Adapted from classic narrative structure (the hero's journey) into a brand messaging framework

What It's For

- To clarify brand messaging using a simple story structure
- Positions the customer, not the brand, as the hero
- Helps turn confusing or feature-heavy messaging into a clear, compelling narrative

Use It When

- Your messaging feels bloated or unclear
- Website conversions are low
- You're launching or refreshing a product
- Teams struggle to communicate the same brand story
- You need a consistent narrative across sales, content, and onboarding



How to Use It

1. DEFINE THE CHARACTER
What does your ideal customer truly want?
2. NAME THE PROBLEM
External, internal, philosophical
3. POSITION YOUR BRAND AS THE GUIDE
Show empathy and authority
4. OUTLINE THE PLAN
A clear, step-by-step process
5. CREATE A CALL TO ACTION
Direct or transitional
6. HIGHLIGHT WHAT'S AT STAKE
What do they risk by doing nothing?
7. PAINT THE SUCCESS
What future are they stepping into?

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Making your brand the hero instead of the customer
- ✗ Overloading with features instead of focusing on problems
- ✗ Forgetting the emotional stakes
- ✗ Getting clever instead of being clear

Messaging Ladder

Climb from product facts to emotional resonance

Who Created It

- **Created by:** Emerged from brand psychology and communication theory; widely used by strategists and agencies like Ogilvy, BBH, and Interbrand.
- **Year:** Gained traction in the early 2000s with the rise of emotional branding.
- **Adoption:** Commonly used in messaging strategy, campaign planning, and copywriting to move from product features to human resonance.

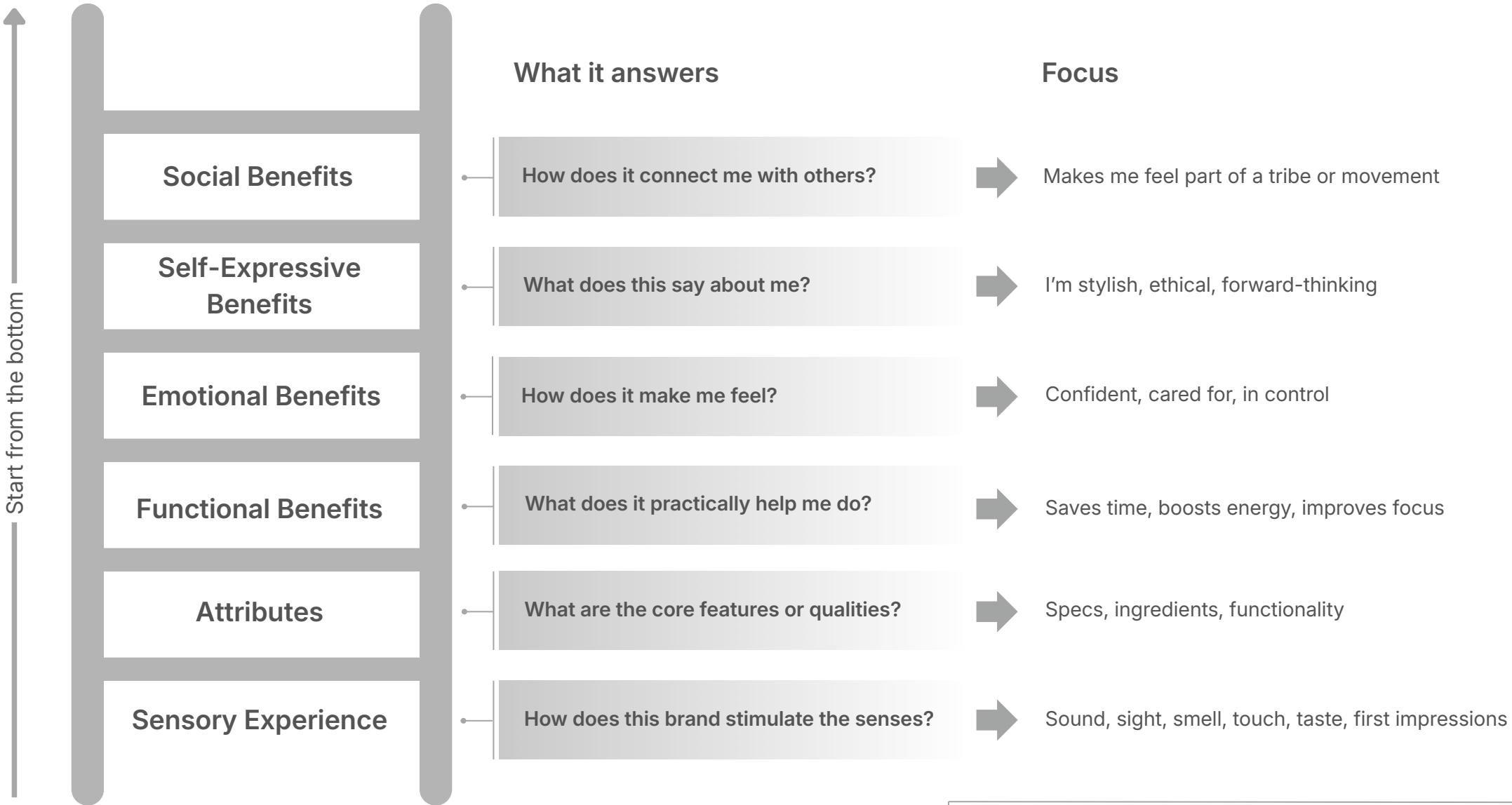
What It's For

Great messaging doesn't just describe your product. It climbs from facts to feelings, tapping into how people want to feel, be seen, and belong.

The Messaging Ladder helps structure communication from the ground up, starting with sensory and functional value and ending with emotional, identity-based, and social resonance.

Use It When

- Writing product or campaign copy
- Clarifying brand messaging hierarchy
- Moving from feature-led to benefit-led storytelling
- Aligning internal messaging across teams and channels
- Creating resonance in brand storytelling or advertising



Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Staying stuck at the functional level (boring!)
- ✗ Using vague emotions that don't match the product experience
- ✗ Forgetting how people want to be seen through the brand
- ✗ Writing features instead of benefits

Brand Messaging Hierarchy

Build a message that moves from belief to soundbite.

Who Created It

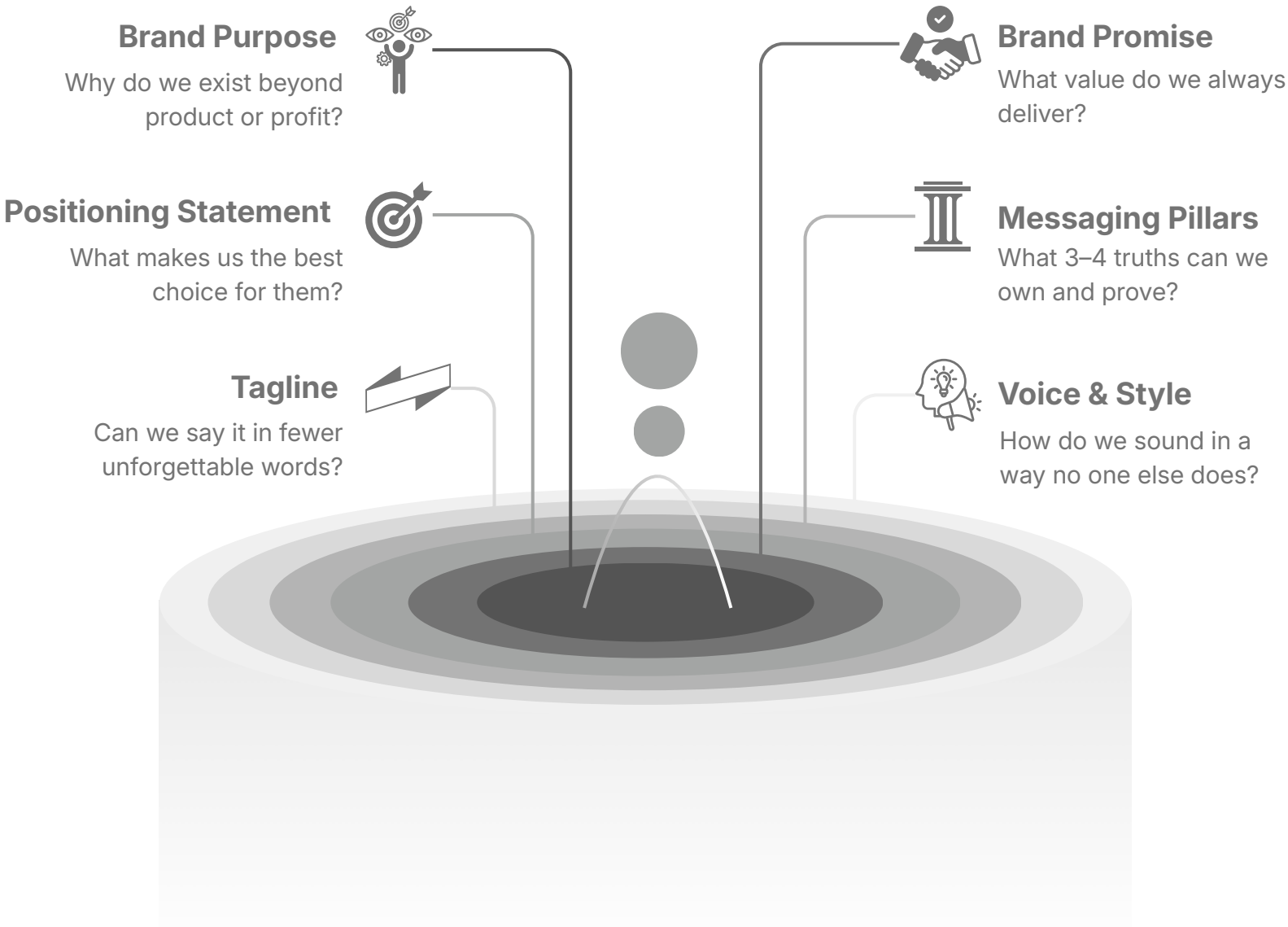
- Created by: Refined and popularized by brand strategists and communication consultants. No single origin.
- Year: Emerged during the 2010s, as omnichannel content required tighter brand control.
- Adoption: Used by content strategists, CMOs, and brand teams to build consistent messaging across platforms, from pitch decks to packaging.

What It’s For

- Align all messaging from deep strategy to everyday copy.
- Build clarity across brand voice, positioning, and storytelling.
- Ensure every asset reflects one coherent message, no matter the format.

Use It When

- Developing or refreshing your core messaging strategy
- Creating a content playbook, tone guide, or copy brief
- Launching a new campaign or product with internal alignment
- Training sales, content, or customer-facing teams



How to Use It

1. CLARIFY YOUR PURPOSE
→ The soul of your brand.
2. DEFINE YOUR PROMISE
→ What customers can rely on.
3. NAIL YOUR POSITIONING
→ Internal strategic compass.
Template: For [audience] who [need], [brand] is the [category] that [benefit], because [proof].
4. IDENTIFY 3–4 MESSAGING PILLARS
→ Themes that anchor all communications.
5. CRAFT A TAGLINE THAT TRAVELS
→ The face of your message.
6. CODIFY YOUR VOICE FOR CONSISTENCY
→ Your brand’s signature tone across everything.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Messaging that doesn’t ladder up to the brand purpose
- ✗ Generic claims with no proof
- ✗ Voice that shifts across touchpoints
- ✗ Over-prioritizing slogans without strategic depth

Before–After–Bridge (BAB)

Turn your value into a clear transformation story.

Who Created It

Popularized in modern copywriting and marketing as a simple structure to communicate transformation

What It’s For

- Clarifying the transformation your brand delivers
- Making messaging more concrete and relatable
- Turning features into outcomes

Use It When

- Your messaging feels vague or generic
- You struggle to explain value clearly
- You want stronger, more persuasive communication



Example

Before: Juggling tasks across multiple apps

After: Everything organized in one place

Bridge: One workspace that brings it all together

How to Use It

- 1. DEFINE THE BEFORE**
Describe the current pain or limitation.
- 2. PAINT THE AFTER**
Show the ideal outcome clearly.
- 3. BUILD THE BRIDGE**
Explain how your solution enables that change.
- 4. KEEP IT CONCRETE**
Avoid vague or exaggerated claims.
- 5. APPLY EVERYWHERE**
Use it in copy, ads, landing pages, and pitches.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Making the “after” unrealistic or generic
- ✗ Focusing on features instead of transformation
- ✗ Weak or unclear connection between before and after

Message–Market Fit Canvas

Ensure the right message reaches the right audience at the right moment.

Who Created It

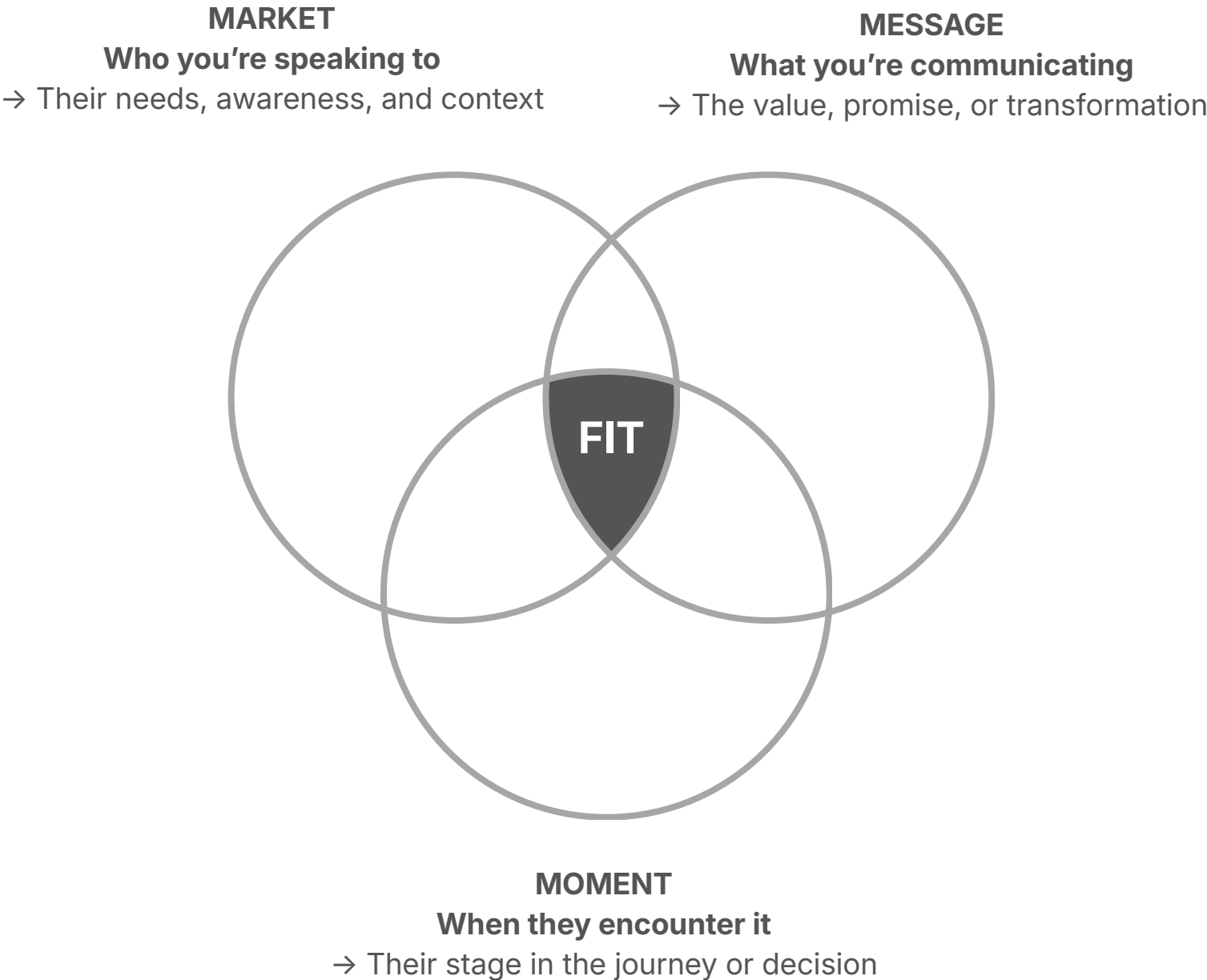
Field-developed concept derived from product–market fit, adapted for messaging and positioning

What It’s For

- Evaluating whether your message actually resonates
- Aligning message with audience needs and awareness
- Improving conversion and clarity in communication

Use It When

- Your messaging isn’t converting
- You’re getting attention but no action
- You’re unsure if your message matches your audience



How to Use It

- 1. DEFINE THE MARKET**
Clarify who the message is for.
- 2. REFINE THE MESSAGE**
Make the value clear and relevant.
- 3. IDENTIFY THE MOMENT**
Understand when the audience encounters it.
- 4. CHECK ALIGNMENT**
Ensure the message matches both audience and timing.
- 5. TEST AND ITERATE**
Adjust based on response and performance.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Blaming the message when the audience is wrong
- ✗ Ignoring timing and context
- ✗ Using the same message for all segments

Brand Funnel

Translate product facts into emotional meaning

Who Created It

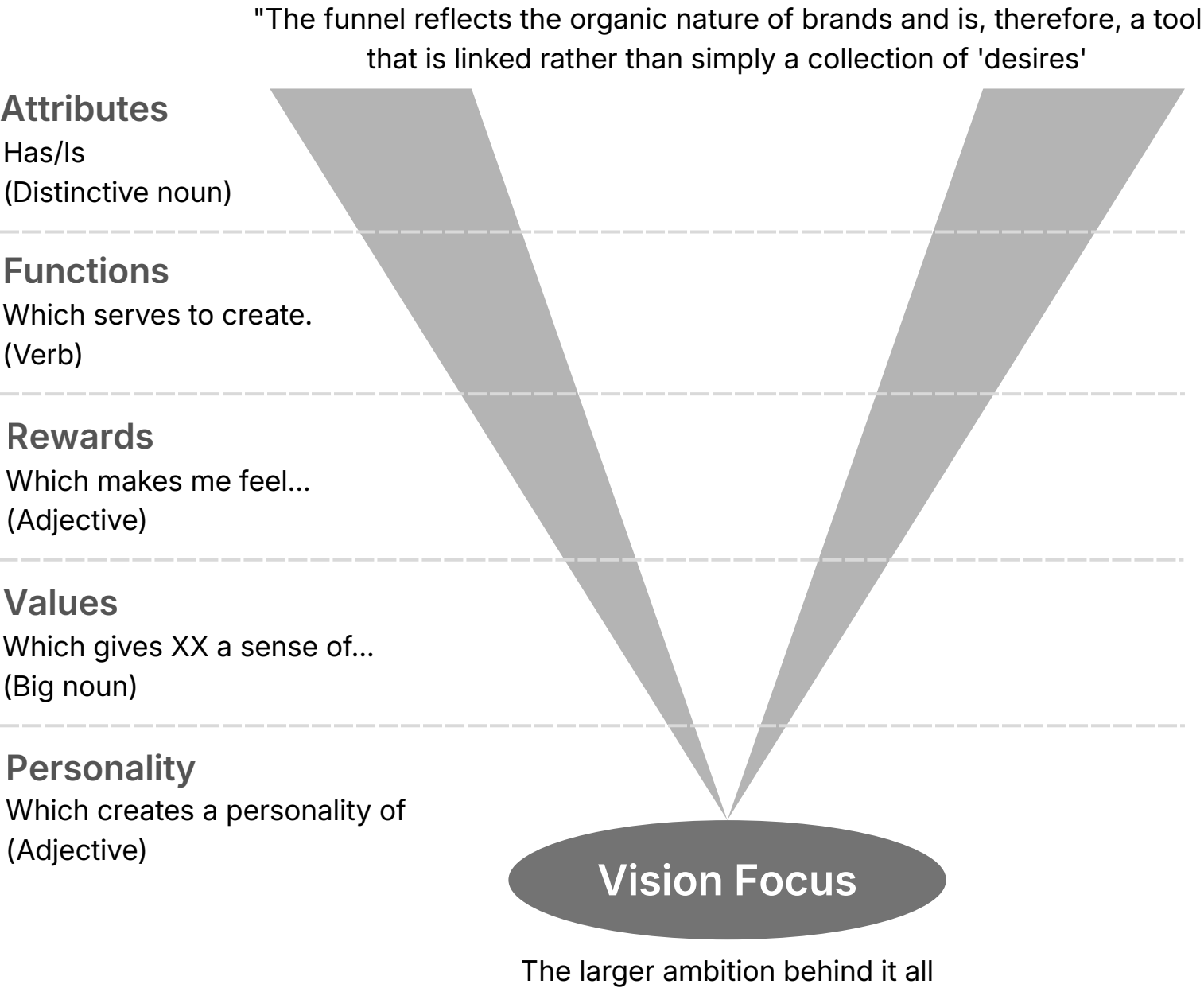
- Developed by strategic brand consultants
- Built from emotional laddering + positioning models
- Circulated in the early 2000s via WPP, Interbrand, and FutureBrand

What It’s For

- Mapping how product features lead to brand personality and vision
- Bridging the gap between functional attributes and emotional resonance
- Helping internal teams understand the “why we matter” narrative flow
- Sharpening brand storytelling from the inside out

Use It When

- Building or refining positioning narratives
- Training internal teams (sales, HR, marketing)
- Linking customer emotion to product benefits
- Running brand storytelling or narrative workshops
- Especially useful in B2B, SaaS, service brands, and corporate rebrands



How to Apply the Funnel

1. LIST TANGIBLE PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES
→ Features, services, or ingredients
→ “What do we have?”
2. TRANSLATE INTO FUNCTIONAL OUTCOMES
→ Verbs like save, improve, and simplify
→ “What does this do?”
3. CAPTURE EMOTIONAL REWARDS
→ Customer feelings post-use
→ “How does it make them feel?”
4. IDENTIFY DEEPER VALUES
→ Meaning, status, belonging
→ “What life need does this meet?”
5. DEFINE YOUR BRAND PERSONALITY
→ Human-like behavior
→ “How would we act at a dinner party?”
6. WRITE YOUR VISION FOCUS
→ Tie it all into an inspiring belief
→ “What do we exist to change?”

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Overloading layers with too much detail
- ✗ Confusing functions with emotional rewards
- ✗ Writing generic “vision” statements (tagline-sounding)
- ✗ Skipping customer research (defaulting to internal assumptions)



Consistency

How do we stay consistent?

Brand Passport

One page. Total clarity.

Who Created It

- Evolved organically inside design-led agencies and brand studios (field-born tool)
- Used widely by teams like Ragged Edge, Moving Brands, and Ustwo
- Known in various forms: Brand ID Card, One-Pager cultural ID that distills the soul of your brand

What It’s For

- Creating a single source of brand truth
- Helping teams instantly understand tone, character, and conviction
- Used in onboarding, briefing, and content writing, design QA, and alignment across functions

Use It When

- Launching a brand or evolving one
- Briefing an agency, freelancer, or new hire
- Aligning internal teams on tone and identity
- Vetting creative work across touchpoints

Signature	What instantly brings your brand to mind? Is it a tone? A ritual? A visual cue?
Values & Personality	Identify emotional traits and human behaviors Avoid generic values, be specific and lived
Promise	Nail the emotional payoff for your audience expects every time. This is not what you do; it’s what you deliver emotionally.
Philosophy	Define the principles that guide behavior and decision-making. Think of this as your internal compass
Brand Purpose	Why do you exist beyond making money? What change are you part of?
Insight	Go beyond data. Uncover a truth or tension your audience feels. This insight should drive how you show up.
Target Group	More than just age or income, define them by mindset and belief. This makes your message magnetic

How to Apply the Funnel

- STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR SIGNATURE
Ask: What flashes through people’s minds when they hear our name?
- STEP 2: CLARIFY VALUES & PERSONALITY
Ask: What 3 adjectives should we never lose?
- STEP 3: ARTICULATE YOUR PROMISE
Ask: What do customers trust us for without question?
- STEP 4: ESTABLISH YOUR PHILOSOPHY
Ask: What’s non-negotiable in how we operate?
- STEP 5: WRITE YOUR BRAND PURPOSE
Ask: What human problem are we here to solve?
- STEP 6: IDENTIFY A SHARP AUDIENCE INSIGHT
Ask: What do we understand about them that others don’t?
- STEP 7: DEFINE YOUR TARGET GROUP
Ask: Who are our believers, not just buyers?

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Making it sound like a tagline sheet
- ✗ Using generic language like “empowering” or “innovative”
- ✗ Skipping insight or audience specificity
- ✗ Trying to write it for everyone instead of your believers

Brand Onion

Structure your identity from the core outward

Who Created It

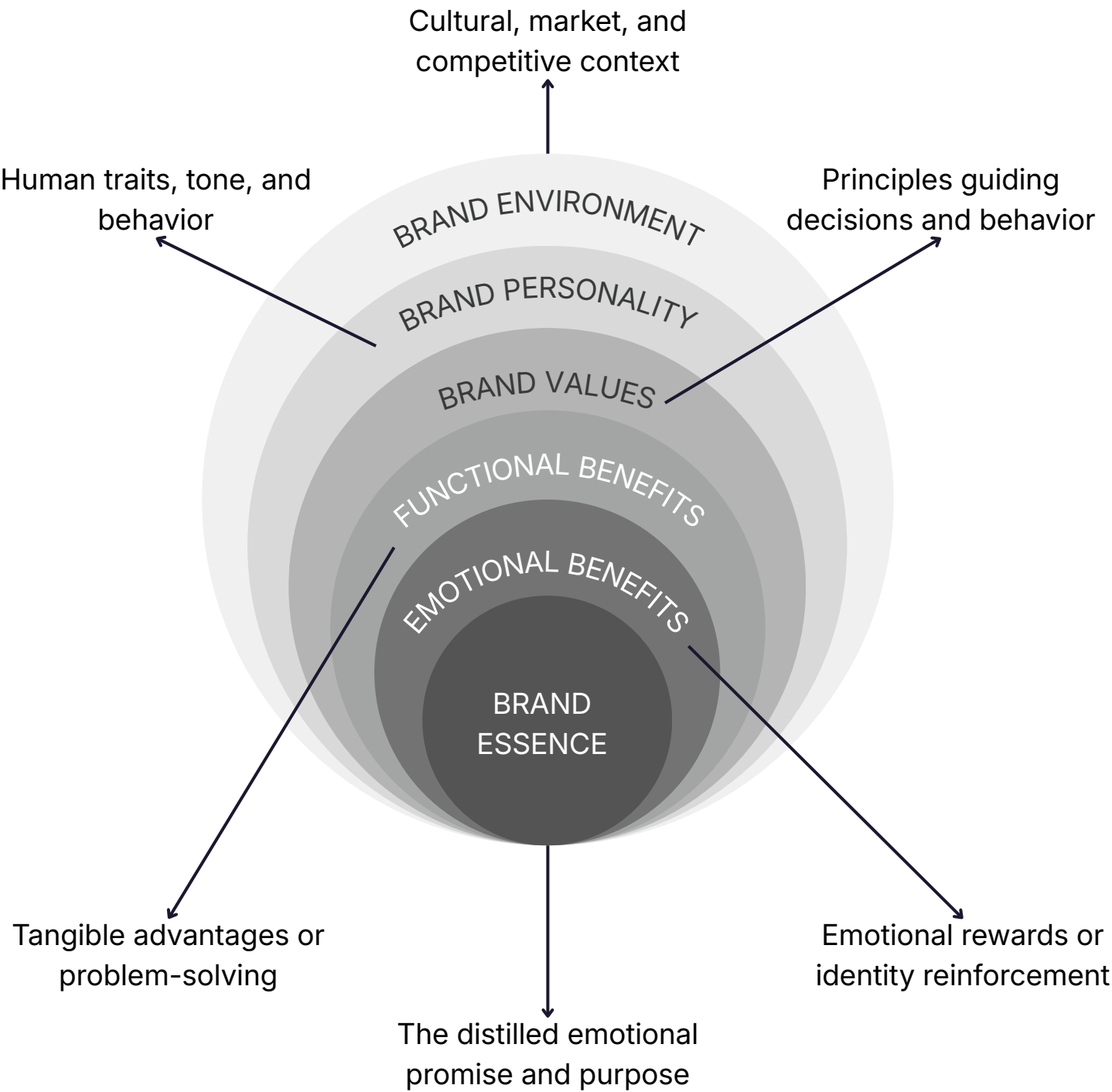
- Evolved from models used by Saatchi & Saatchi, Interbrand, and WPP
- Developed and adopted widely between the 1990s – 2010s

What It's For

- Organizing brand identity into layered, connected elements
- Balancing internal culture with external positioning
- Giving a flexible structure to brands across cultures and markets
- Ideal for fast-moving industries where internal values and external voice must stay in sync

Use It When

- Building a global or multi-market brand
- Aligning internal brand culture with customer-facing positioning
- During rebrands, acquisitions, or culture resets
- Creating playbooks, brand guides, or onboarding docs
- Especially useful for hospitality, lifestyle, retail, and service-based industries



How to Apply the Funnel

- 1. MAP THE BRAND ENVIRONMENT**
What's shaping the customer's world?
- 2. DEFINE BRAND PERSONALITY**
What personality would customers want to hang out with?
- 3. CLARIFY BRAND VALUES**
What do we defend, even at a cost?
- 4. DEFINE FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS**
What problems do we help solve?
- 5. DEFINE EMOTIONAL BENEFITS**
How does interacting with us make people feel?
- 6. WRITE THE BRAND ESSENCE**
What emotional promise makes us irreplaceable?
- 7. OPERATIONALIZE IT**
 - Embed the Onion into training, onboarding, and brand activation
 - Refresh yearly as culture, customers, and categories evolve

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Treating the environment as fixed, it should evolve
- ✗ Using generic or contradictory traits in personality
- ✗ Filling the Values layer with corporate fluff
- ✗ Skipping the emotional layer entirely
- ✗ Writing an Essence that sounds like a marketing tagline

Verbal Identity Framework

Define how your brand sounds, through the words it uses and avoids.

Who Created It

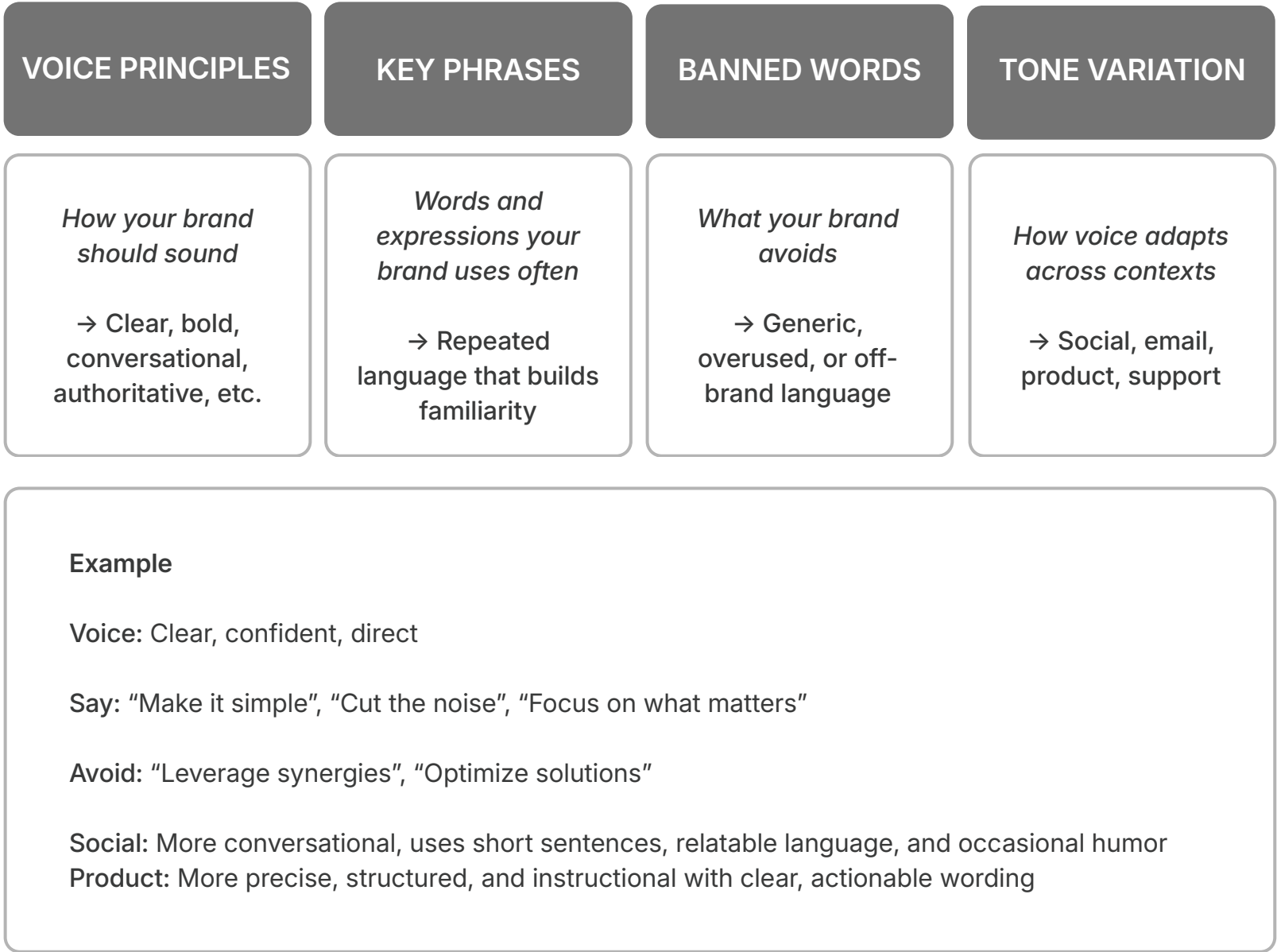
→ Field-developed framework used in brand and content strategy to create consistent verbal expression

What It's For

- Making tone of voice actionable and consistent
- Defining how your brand communicates across touchpoints
- Turning abstract personality into concrete language

Use It When

- Your brand voice feels inconsistent
- Different teams communicate differently
- You want clearer, more distinctive messaging



How to Apply the Funnel

1. DEFINE VOICE PRINCIPLES
Choose 3–5 traits that define how you sound.
2. LIST KEY PHRASES
Identify words and expressions you'll repeat.
3. DEFINE WHAT TO AVOID
List words, tones, or styles that don't fit.
4. MAP TONE BY CONTEXT
Adjust how the voice shows up across channels.
5. APPLY ACROSS TEAMS
Ensure everyone communicates consistently.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Defining voice too vaguely (e.g., "friendly")
- ✗ Not specifying what to avoid
- ✗ Inconsistent tone across channels

Tone Dial by Channel

Adapt how your brand sounds based on context, without changing who you are.

Who Created It

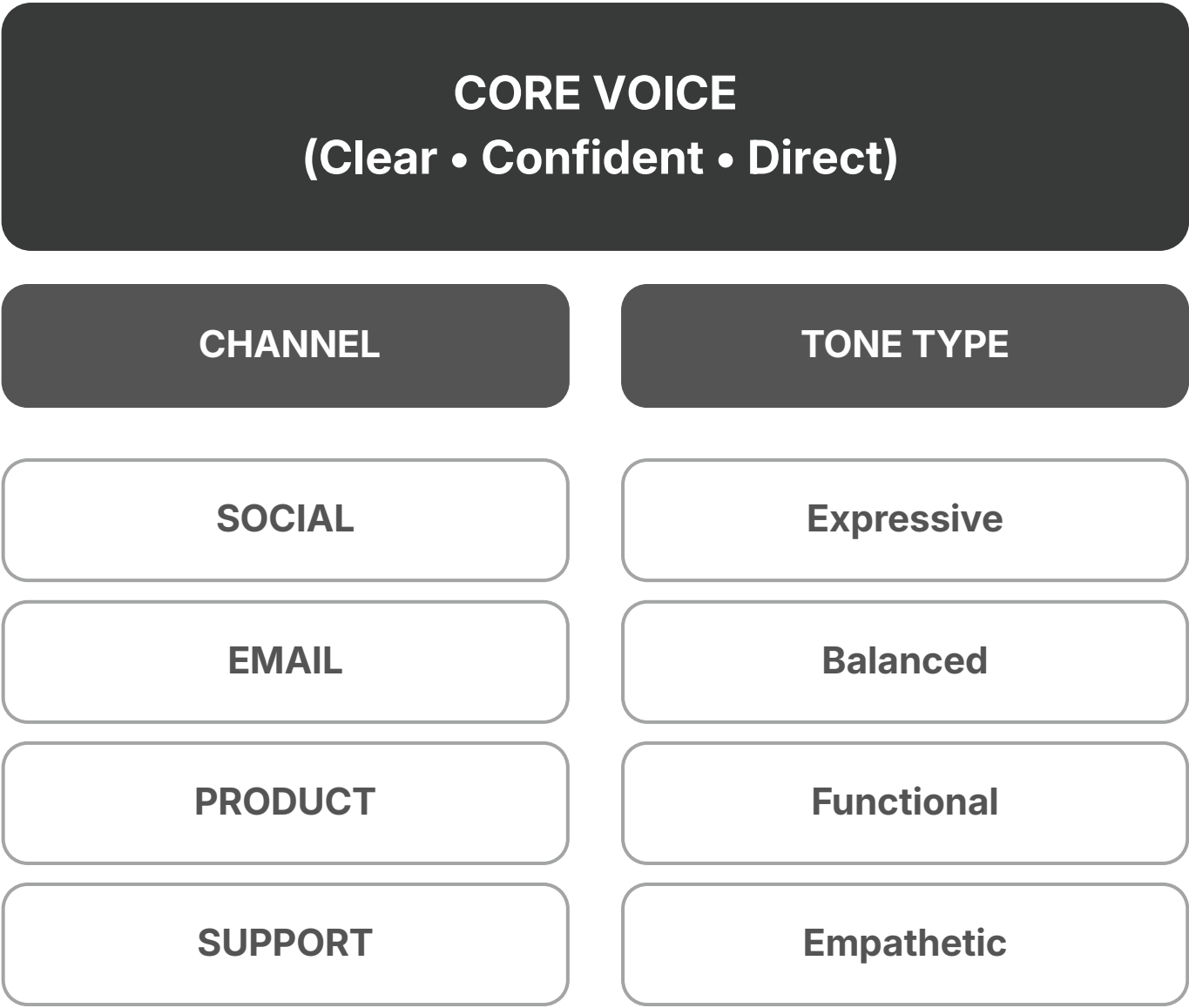
→ Field-developed framework used in brand and content strategy to adapt tone across touchpoints

What It’s For

- Maintaining consistency while adapting to different channels
- Avoiding one-tone-fits-all communication
- Making voice usable across real-world contexts

Use It When

- Your brand sounds different across platforms
- The same message doesn’t work everywhere
- You need to balance personality with clarity



How to Apply the Funnel

1. DEFINE CORE VOICE
Establish traits that remain constant everywhere.
2. LIST KEY CHANNELS
Identify where your brand communicates.
3. DEFINE TONE PER CHANNEL
Assign a clear tone type to each channel
4. APPLY CONSISTENTLY
Ensure teams follow this across communication

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Treating tone as fixed across all channels
- ✗ Using intensity instead of position on a spectrum
- ✗ Changing voice instead of adjusting tone

Brand Personality Slider

Define your brand by choosing where it sits between opposing traits.

Who Created It

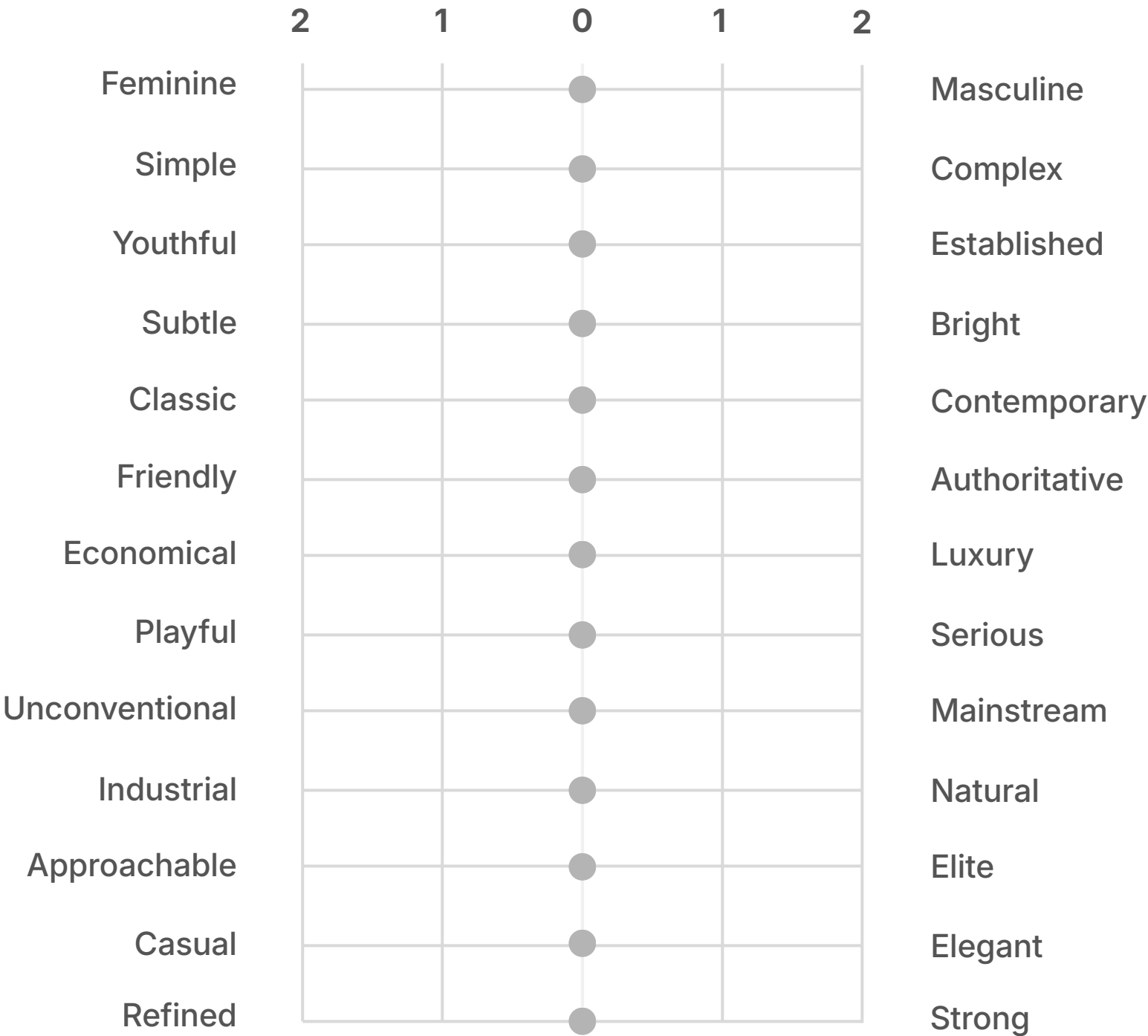
Popularized in branding exercises by designers like Jacob Cass and featured in Google’s Design Sprint Kit, as a practical application of Jennifer Aaker’s Brand Personality framework

What It’s For

- Making brand personality clear and specific
- Avoiding vague traits like “friendly” or “innovative”
- Creating alignment across teams and communication

Use It When

- Your brand personality feels unclear or generic
- Different teams describe the brand differently
- You want sharper positioning and tone



How to Apply the Funnel

- 1. CHOOSE TRAIT PAIRS**
Pick 4–6 opposing traits relevant to your brand.
- 2. SET YOUR POSITION**
Decide where your brand sits on each spectrum.
- 3. AVOID THE MIDDLE BY DEFAULT**
Be intentional; don’t stay neutral unless it’s strategic.
- 4. APPLY TO COMMUNICATION**
Use these decisions to guide tone, visuals, and behavior.
- 5. ALIGN TEAMS**
Ensure everyone uses the same personality cues.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Staying neutral on every trait
- ✗ Choosing conflicting traits
- ✗ Not applying personality in real communication



Perception

How are we seen?

Brand Perceptual Map

Define your brand by choosing where it sits between opposing traits.

Who Created It

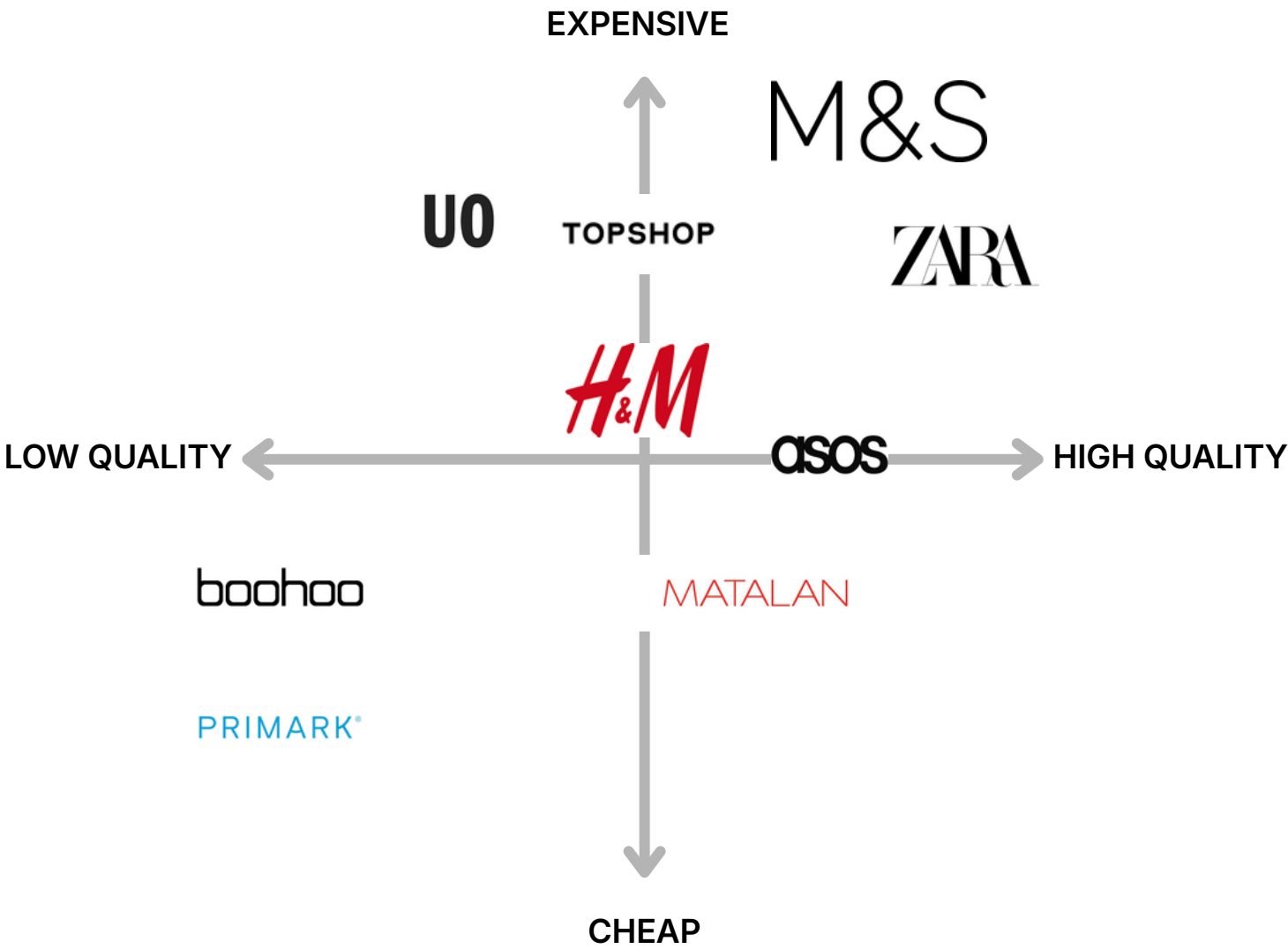
Not attributed to a single creator, this is a classic market research tool used widely in branding, product strategy, and marketing. Popularized by academics and strategists as a simple yet powerful way to visualize brand perception.

What It’s For

- It’s a fast way to:
- Spot market gaps
 - Avoid brand confusion
 - Identify your competitive edge
 - Align internal perception with customer reality

Use It When

- Launching a new brand or product
- Repositioning your brand in a crowded market
- Visualizing competitor landscape for a pitch
- Testing whether your message is landing as intended
- Aligning internal teams on brand perception



How to Apply the Funnel

- STEP 1: PICK YOUR AXES**
Choose two attributes that are relevant to your category (e.g., Expensive vs. Cheap and Low vs. High Quality). They should reflect what matters most to your audience.
- STEP 2: GATHER INPUT**
Use surveys, interviews, or internal alignment to understand how your brand and competitors are perceived. Tools like Appinio or Google Forms work well.
- STEP 3: PLOT THE BRANDS**
Place your brand and competitors on the map. Be honest, even internal assumptions can be revealing.
- STEP 4: SPOT THE PATTERNS**
Look for whitespace opportunities (e.g., High Quality but Affordable).
See if your desired position matches your perception, or if a gap needs to be bridged.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Using only internal opinions, ask real users
- ✗ Picking attributes that are too generic (e.g., “Good vs. Bad”)
- ✗ Overloading with too many competitors or unclear scales
- ✗ Confusing brand aspiration with brand perception

Brand Association Map

Visualize the ideas, attributes, and emotions linked to your brand

Who Created It

No single creator, this tool evolved from brand management practices and consumer psychology studies. It's commonly used in academic research, strategic planning, and agency workshops.

Popularized through marketing courses (like Keller's CBBE model) and brand audit techniques, it helps bring intangible brand perceptions to light.

What It's For

- Understand your brand's mental real estate
- Spot misalignments or confusion
- Refine positioning and communication
- Compare your brand's space vs competitors

Use It When

- Auditing your brand perception
- Planning a rebrand or repositioning
- Evaluating brand equity or awareness
- Pitching strategy or storytelling angles
- Clarifying your brand's core and extended identity



How to Apply the Funnel

STEP 1: PLACE YOUR BRAND IN THE CENTER
This is the anchor. All associations will radiate from here.

STEP 2: ADD BRAND ASSOCIATIONS
Surround it with concepts people link to your brand, attributes (e.g., "cool"), emotions (e.g., "motivation"), use cases (e.g., "basketball"), and product types (e.g., "shoes").

YOU CAN COLOR-CODE OR SYMBOL-TAG:
● Attributes | ◆ Emotions | ■ Products | ● Competitors | ▲ Related Concepts

STEP 3: USE RESEARCH OR BRAINSTORMING
Draw from:
→ Customer interviews/surveys
→ Social media mentions and sentiment
→ Internal brand team workshops

STEP 4: ORGANIZE BY STRENGTH OF ASSOCIATION
Closer to the center = stronger or more core associations.
Outer rings = weaker, fading, or aspirational associations.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Listing only what the brand wants to be known for
- ✗ Ignoring negative or surprising associations
- ✗ Making it too abstract or overly detailed
- ✗ Treating it as fixed, this map evolves with time

Aaker's Brand Personality Dimensions

Turning brands into relatable characters

Who Created It

Developed by Stanford professor Jennifer Aaker, this framework brings structure to the emotional side of branding by categorizing brand personalities into five core traits. It's widely used by strategists to guide tone, design, and customer experience.

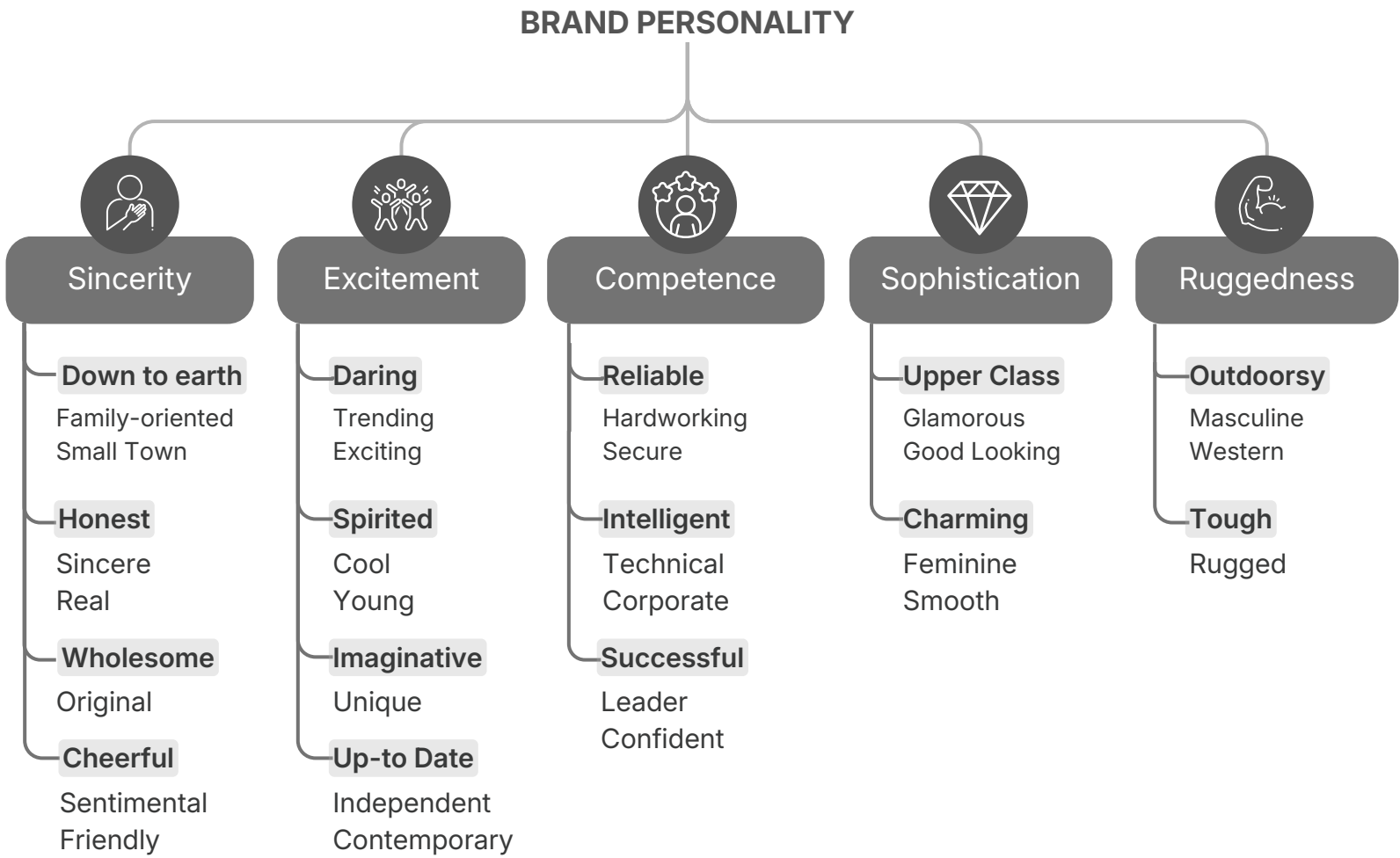
What It's For

Aaker's model helps brands express human-like traits that build emotional connections. It supports:

- Defining tone of voice
- Personality-aligned content & messaging
- Consistent customer experience
- Brand positioning & identity strategy

Use It When

- You want your brand to feel consistent and human
- You're crafting tone of voice or rebranding
- You're briefing writers, designers, or agencies
- You want to differentiate emotionally in a crowded space



*Aaker's framework isn't about pretending your brand is a person, it's about making sure your brand feels relatable, memorable, and emotionally real.

How to Apply the Funnel

1. GATHER TEAM INPUT
 - "What kind of personality do we want our brand to express?"
 - "If our brand were a person, what would they be like?"
2. PICK 1–2 DIMENSIONS
 - Choose a primary and optional secondary trait that best matches your brand.
3. AUDIT YOUR TOUCHPOINTS
 - Check: Is our website tone, packaging, and social presence aligned with this personality?
4. USE FOR BRAND GUIDELINES
 - Translate each trait into copy tone, visual cues, and customer service behaviors.

Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Trying to express all five dimensions equally
- ✗ Confusing tone traits with values or mission
- ✗ Inconsistency across customer touchpoints

Now, Build With Intent.



Email: hello@brandchive.com

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