



# Breakthrough Branding: Discussion Guide

## Chapter 1: What's the Brand Idea?

1. A central thesis of the book is that nothing is sold until it's branded? Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. What's your business or brand idea? Is it a small idea: simple, focused and relevant? If not, how can you focus it better? Define your brand idea in a sentence.
3. Why is this business the best and only business for you to start? What other business ideas were you considering? Why did you reject them? What do others in the group think of your business idea? How can it be improved or enhanced?
4. If you don't have a business idea, explore these questions. What would be the best business for you to start based on your unique talents and interests?
5. Where's the white space? What unmet need in the marketplace could lead to a business? Is there a successful business in another part of the world that you can adapt for your market?
6. What are the new trends that could lead to a business idea?
7. Is there a nonprofit or social entrepreneurship idea that you could launch to make the world a better place? Or a charitable idea that you could tie into your business?

## Chapter 2: The Alchemy of the Brand Entrepreneur

1. What specific traits make you different, even better, than others? How can that be an advantage in your business?
2. What are your "hard power" assets as an entrepreneur: tangible business assets you could list on your balance sheet such as cash, real estate, inventory, etc.? Or tangible things you can list on your resume like job credentials, skills, etc.?
3. What are your "soft power" assets for your business such as brands, IP, customers, alliances, etc.? For yourself such as your network, image, reputation, etc.?
4. How are you and your business intertwined in terms of message and values?
5. What perceptions do your customers and investors have about you and your business? What perceptions do you want them to have?



### Chapter 3: Power Positioning Exploration

1. **Attribute positioning:** owning an important attribute like Volvo and safety. What attribute could your business or brand own (list attribute).
2. **Be the First:** Is there a new category you could create where your business can be first in? Is there a way to slice the category so that you stand out as the first?
3. **Be the leader:** Can you make a credible claim to leadership for your business? What is it?
4. **Maverick or Reverse positioning:** How is your business the opposite of the leader?
5. **Have a Magic Ingredient or Special Process:** Is there a new material or component, or a new process that gives your brand a competitive advantage? What is it and what is the advantage?

### Chapter 4: The Making of a Brand's Verbal Identity

1. Is the name you are considering for your brand a good name? Different from competitors? Short and easy to spell? Evoke meaning? Sound good?
2. Explore creating a name you can own on the Internet:
  - Create a compound name by combining two words (JetBlue)
  - Tweak the spelling of an existing word (Zappos)
  - Blend parts of words (Skype)
  - Take a name from a different arena (Mango)
  - Make up a name (Lululemon)
3. The big brands wrap their brands in evocative catch phrases to lock in the brand identity. What's a good tagline for your brand?
4. A powerful story for entrepreneurs is the creation story, why and how you started the business. The more dramatic you can make it, the more memorable it will be to customers, prospects and the media. What's your creation story?

### Chapter 5: Creating Your Brand's Look and Feel

1. What is the visual something you want to associate with your brand: a logo, a shape, a color, or a design? How can it help lock in your brand idea?
2. What logos from the world of brands do you admire most? Why?
3. What's your brand color? What's your palette? How can you rev up your brand's look and feel?
4. How can you design a special user experience and events for your brand?



## Chapter 6: Pimp My Brand!

1. What goes viral on the Internet is what moves people because it's interesting, useful or shocking. What kind of "emotional" content could you develop for people to pass along?
2. What are the main touch points where your customers come into contact with your brand in person?
3. What are the virtual touchpoints? Are they all consistent?
4. What kind of feedback are you getting about your brand from customers on the phone or in person? What about on online forums like Yelp? How have you responded?

## Chapter 7: Brand Big! Boldly Marketing the Brand

Developing the Creative Brief:

1. **Business Snapshot:** In a nutshell, give a business snapshot of your industry, the key players and its dynamics in three to five sentences.
2. **Brand Promise/Reasons to Believe:** Define the brand promise, the most compelling reason customers should buy your brand in a sentence. Follow it up with three reasons that support your brand positioning.
3. **Customer Persona:** Describe your typical customer as if you were writing a casting call description. What makes them tick?
4. **Customer Insight:** Convey in a short sentence an interesting or surprising insight about your brand or business.
5. **Marketing:** How can you enchant customers so much that they pass along your content? What special treatment can you offer your best customers? What marketing tactics might work best in your industry?
6. How can you recruit brand ambassadors to spread the word about your brand?

## Chapter 8: Company Culture: One Team with One Dream

1. What skills and aptitudes do you lack? Are they covered by other team members?
2. How can you make innovation part of everyone's job?
3. How would you define your internal culture or company brand?
4. What type of employees are right for your business - your employee brand?



### **Chapter 9: Whats Your Pitch?**

1. What's your business pitch to customers and the media? Go around the table with each person giving a sixty second elevator pitch.
2. The Quest story is about overcoming obstacles to achieve a hard-fought goal. What's your quest story for your business?

### **Chapter 10: Take the “Work” Out of Networking**

1. Who can you ask to be part of your advisory board? Who is on your dream team? How can you reach out to them?
2. How can you pitch yourself and your business to the media? What's the hook that will make you and your business interesting to an audience?
3. How can you gain more visibility for yourself and your business?

### **Chapter 11: From Small Idea to Big Brand**

1. What products, procedures and systems can you develop to scale your business?
2. What can you do that competitors are not doing to enchant your customers?
3. How can you make growth and breakthrough branding part of everyone's job?
4. After reading this book, what is one thing you will do differently? Why?

#### **Notes:**

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