



Consistency in Branding: Strategies for success

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Abstract

In today's digital age, maintaining brand consistency is crucial for businesses to build trust, enhance brand perception, and foster long-term customer relationships. This article explores the importance of a unified brand and the challenges of achieving brand consistency in a diverse and fast-paced environment. It discusses key components of a brand, such as brand identity, voice, and messaging, and provides strategies for maintaining consistency, including conducting audits, creating brand guidelines, leveraging technology, and training internal teams. By prioritizing brand consistency, companies can achieve credibility, better customer engagement, and success in a competitive market.

Keywords: Brand Consistency, Branding, Strategy, Brand Identity, Brand Guidelines.

Introduction

Branding is a company's identity. A "unified Brand" means the uniformity in which a company communicates its image to customers across different touchpoints. This is very important as this is what leaves an impression on the customers and makes a company easily identifiable. Maintaining a consistent brand not only strengthens the brand image but also builds trust, enabling long term relationships with the customers. If a customer gets the same message across all outlets, it enhances brand perception and credibility, in turn leading to increased engagement.

However, keeping a coherent image is a rather difficult task in the modern diverse environment. Lack of cohesive communication is typical when there are several teams and members, multiple channels, various platforms, and the general focus on producing content as fast as possible. This inconsistency can decrease the level of trust with customers and lower the interaction and credibility of the brand.

There are a few steps we will discuss in this article that can be taken to mitigate these issues like establishing brand guidelines, reviews before the communications ship out etc.

The Importance of a Brand consistency

With the increasing digitalization, a lot of businesses are creating a multi-channel presence. It is becoming more important for businesses to establish their identity in a much stronger way and so brand consistency is not simply an asset, it is a requirement now a days.

- **Build trust and loyalty**

Due to brand consistency comes brand familiarity. This helps build trust among customers and helps develop a long-term relationship with the customers amidst stiff competition.

- **Generate revenue**



Image: Customer behavior [1]

Brand consistency ensures customers can differentiate easily between this brand and other competitors and help with repeat customers.

- **Easier Brand expansion**

Already established brand makes it easier for brand expansion in the future. [2]

- **Improved Brand messaging**

Brand consistency also helps the company communicate their value proposition in a consistent way which help retain customers [3]

Key Components of a Brand

- **Brand identity**

The visual elements of a company's brand is Brand identity. Things like Logo, colors, tag line etc. are part of what creates a brand identity.

The orange and vibrant pink color makes it difficult to not recognize the brand as Dunkin'. Bold icons and custom-made fonts truly capture the fun, lively vibe of the brand [4]

- **Brand voice**

A brand voice is not merely the pronunciation; it is the character of a brand unleashed in words and the style the brand employs. They guarantee that a brand uses the correct language and speaks in the right tone and does so genuinely across different channels. On one hand, their elements should be rather consistent but at the same time it is crucial to address platform-specific contexts.

Oatly uses fun and quirky as their tone. We can find this voice across all their elements like packaging, social media captions and videos. [5]

- **Brand messaging –**

Brand messaging is how the company communicates the value proposition through products or verbal and non-verbal communication. Brand messaging considers the mission, vision, and the core values of the company. Messaging also considers the target audience.[6]

Dove incorporates their vision “beauty is a source of confidence, not anxiety” in their advertisements than just presenting the product features and proves that branding goes way beyond than what a company sells. [7]

How to achieve brand consistency

Although managing and building brand consistency is almost paramount for achieving the goal, brands face lot of challenges like fragmented team Communication, inconsistent adoption, platform specific constraints, that make it difficult for them to be consistent. These difficulties can be overcome with specific strategies to guarantee that there is strong coherence in the communication channels.

- **Audit Current Communications & create a brand guidelines document**

The first process that people should take is to audit communication as they are in the present. Such an audit is useful to detect shifts in the brand inconsistency that can create confusion in the minds of the audience or conflict with the brand image. Looking at emails, social media posts, a company's website, and ads enables a brand to compare and contrast plus look for patterns. For instance, the language used in social media can be different than that used on the website. The logo and company name used on the website could be different from the ones that go out on an email.

Once the audit is done, the next step is to develop a detailed brand guideline addressing the issues noticed from the audit. A brand guideline document is very important given the number of users working internally and externally on content creation. All the teams can refer to this document as a guide. In the brand guideline document, we can include things like logos, colors, font styles, brand voice, tag lines, choice of words etc. and correspond to the organization's and target audience's values. For example, the tone for a sustainable fashion brand might be to be empowered, and sympathetic with the use of sustainable and innovative words.

The guide should also contain rules that are related to the platform since every platform is different and demands appropriate communication. For instance, social media may need brief messaging, whereas email marketing needs might necessitate a proper business-like language.

Train internal Teams

It is not only sufficient to create a brand guideline but also circulate it to all team members and train the various teams on the guideline document created and how to use it. Also, leave feedback loop mechanism options open for the users to reach out in case of any questions or suggestions. Such feedback loops and communication between the brand's teams ensure consistency as the brand grows as well.

Use of Brand Guidelines

95% of Companies have Formal Brand Guidelines

Only 25% of Companies Stick to Their Brand Guidelines



everviz.com

Demand Metric/LucidPress Survey, 2016

Image: Usage of brand Guidelines [8]

- **Leverage Technology**

Technology is also used to keep the organizational alignment in check and minimize friction in the work process. Use technology to store the brand guideline in a central location so that it is accessible to everyone and make sure that anyone who accesses it does not run into the issue of using an older version guideline. Through integrating such tools into the daily working processes, errors that may be made by people while creating content are reduced, and the created content delivers the right view that was expected. Maintenance of the technology stack, as well as occasional reviews of its efficiency also help the brand team to achieve the set objectives in the sphere of communication.

Leveraging tools like DAM to store and retrieve brand images will also help in streamlining consistency.

- **Review of content before shipping out**

At least during the initial days, it would be good for a little handholding by the brand team i.e. to review and sign off on the content before it is being circulated externally to the larger audience. As it would be very difficult to review every content that is being created, prioritize the large reach and high impact comms to begin with based on the editorial calendar. This is another area where technology could be leveraged, and automation can be created.

Measuring Success

Analysis of brand consistency is crucial to make sure that it is being perceived in a positive manner by the audience and is bringing the intended result. Measuring parameters like evaluating how the brand is doing on social media and other channels. Quantifiable factors such as the engagement rates of social media posts, from 'likes' to 'share' can be measured. Also looking at qualitative data like sentiments and comments on social media helps in analyzing trends of the opinion of the audience so that it can be addressed immediately in cases of wrong perception. Collecting surveys related to brand is also another way to measure data.

Conclusion

In today's digital world, maintaining brand consistency is not just a want, but is a must have. But, achieving brand consistency is challenging due to diverse teams, multiple channels and the fast-paced nature of content production.

To overcome these challenges, businesses can incorporate strategies like using a centralized collaboration platform, generating a brand guideline document, constant training and development, feedback loop to reach out to brand team.

Branding is not a one-time activity but instead a continuous process of retaining good brand perception among the customers. This may require changes to the brand identity, voice or messaging. With the updated brand strategy, even the brand guidelines need to be kept updated and communicated to the teams in a timely manner.

By prioritizing brand consistency, companies can achieve credibility, better customer engagement, and enhance their brand perception. This way they can achieve success in today's competitive world.



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