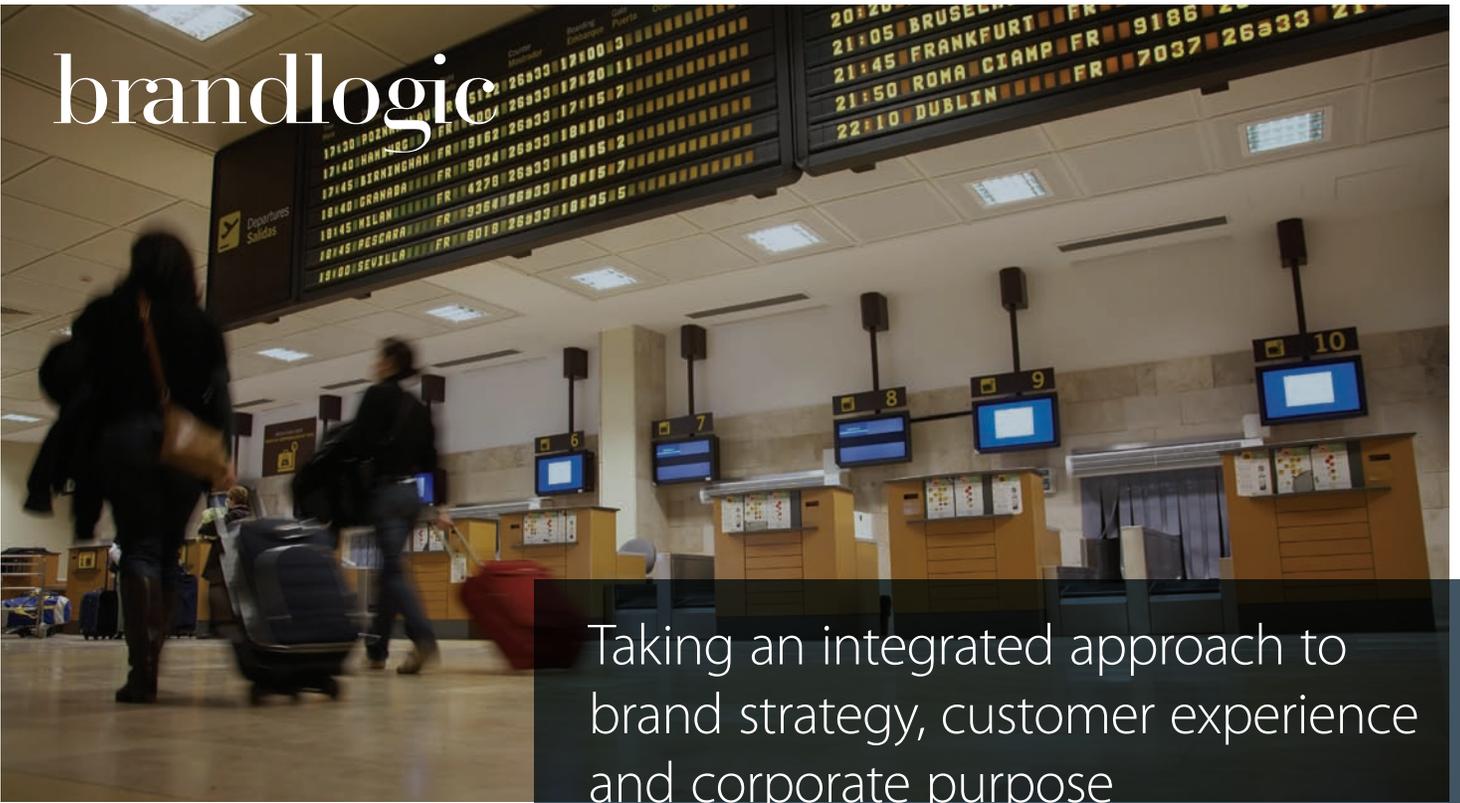


# brandlogic



## Taking an integrated approach to brand strategy, customer experience and corporate purpose

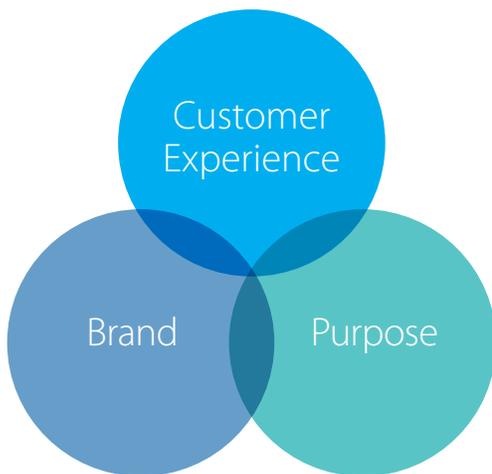
In simpler days, brands were built primarily through advertising touting a company's or a product's virtues and selling an image tied to lifestyle associations desirable to targeted segments.

Today, successful brand building means crafting and managing customer experiences, both through time and across digital and physical realms. To get it right, employees must rally around a common purpose with determination to deliver consistently on the branded experiences that customers have been promised.

Mastering the dynamics of three crucial marketing strategy components—brand promise, customer experience and corporate purpose—is an area of growing importance for leadership. This competency is emerging as a future determinant of competitive advantage. However, the tools needed to craft truly integrated answers to the tough questions involved have yet to be fully developed.

Customer-experience innovation programs often start by seeking better alignment with the existing brand promise and related attributes. The intended brand-customer relationship is at the core of shaping branded experiences. The brand itself is the point of departure. It provides common themes that are used to tie together customer experiences across channels and interactions.

In terms of creating defensible, sustainable advantage, it is easy to see the importance of closely aligned, intertwined brand communications and customer experiences. What may be missed by those embarking on a strategic rethink, however, is the fact that the discovery process may, in fact, lead to altering the brand, the business model and customer experiences. If properly addressed, this has the potential to drive innovation, increased relevance and market advantage.



**INTEGRATED PROCESS:****BRAND STRATEGY, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND CORPORATE PURPOSE****Research, audit and map**

- Isolate and map customer journeys
- Identify and evaluate brand equities
- Review competitive differentiators
- Frame internal ethos, capabilities, capacities

**Discover insights**

- Opportunities to improve and differentiate customer experiences
- Opportunities to increase brand relevance and differentiation
- Opportunities to redefine purchase/loyalty criteria
- Themes that bind brand, experience and purpose

**Innovate**

- Brand-customer relationship; brand character
- Signature customer experiences: prototyped, tested and refined
- Calibrated interrelationships across digital/physical environments
- Operational alignment

**Create**

- New, targeted customer experiences: tested, refined and finalized
- Refocused brand platform and messaging incorporating experience
- Internal purpose aligned with targeted brand-customer relationship

When a company rethinks its customer-experience strategy, it is best to remain open to potential impacts on the brand platform and purpose statement. All three components should be seen as interdependent variables. Treating the brand platform as a fixed point of departure presumes that brand leaders already know all key differentiators and potential sources of advantage, and that the brand is already properly positioned to leverage these points. In many cases, this is not likely to be true.

Similarly, to assume the corporate purpose statement is fixed presumes that no matter what may be discovered about shifts in how customers' needs, expectations and aspirations, the company's *raison d'être* and future course are set.

Treating important brand elements as fixed constrains the scope for innovation before the process gets started. In turn, the possibilities for a bold, coordinated leap forward and the value that could result are also constrained.

Yet, merely removing these limits is not the complete answer. Better still is to think about an integrated approach from the outset, one that actively targets discoveries and improvements on all three dimensions. By doing so, the discovery of untapped purchase/loyalty drivers can be translated more readily across experience design, employee activation and brand communications.

With brands built more and more through orchestrated experiences, an omni-channel review of customer experience is vital. Without it, no brand team can provide guidance that unifies the direction for brand communications and service delivery in ways that heighten relevance, attraction and the loyalty of customers.

Technology is opening up new opportunities to both differentiate customer experiences and to establish new or additional criteria for trial, selection and loyalty across nearly every industry. As these changes become factors of business strategy, they must also be reflected in the definition of brand strategy, signature experiences and corporate purpose.

Integration is the key. It is time to stop thinking about brand strategy, customer experience and corporate purpose as related but separate disciplines. Rise above historic patterns and create the integrated processes required to drive new value creation through customer-experience centered brands.

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