

The Characteristics of Expressive Brands

Meta-Discourses In Brand Communications Theory
And Their Implications For Practice

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- The Expressive Brand
 - The Semiotic Lens
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Brand Definition Revisited

Keller's Cognitive Stance

'A set of **mental associations**, held by the consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service'. These associations should be **unique** (exclusivity), **strong** (saliency) and **positive** (desirable).

(Keller, 1998)

Brand Definition Revisited

Gregory's Cognitive Stance

“A ‘brand’ is not a thing, a product, a company or an organization. A brand does not exist in the physical world – it is a mental construct. **A brand can best be described as the sum total of all human experiences, perceptions and feelings** about a particular thing, product or organization. Brands exist in the consciousness – of individuals and of the public.”

(James Gregory 2009)

The 'Expressive' Band – The literal meaning

- Effectively conveying meaning or feeling (Websters)
- If you describe a person or their behaviour as expressive, you mean that their behaviour clearly indicates their feeling or intentions (Collins)

Synonyms

Meaningful, Indicative, Suggestive, Demonstrative

Brand Expression- Domain Experts

- How a **brand** expresses itself from its name, logo, corporate ID, packaging design and copy, Web design and copy and all the annoying rules that fill its style guide
- Is the most tangible manifestation of its essence; it offers intimations before purchase of the **brand's** soul, validation and reminder of its promise after trial

(Julie Cucchi and Nin Glaister, Ad Age 2002)

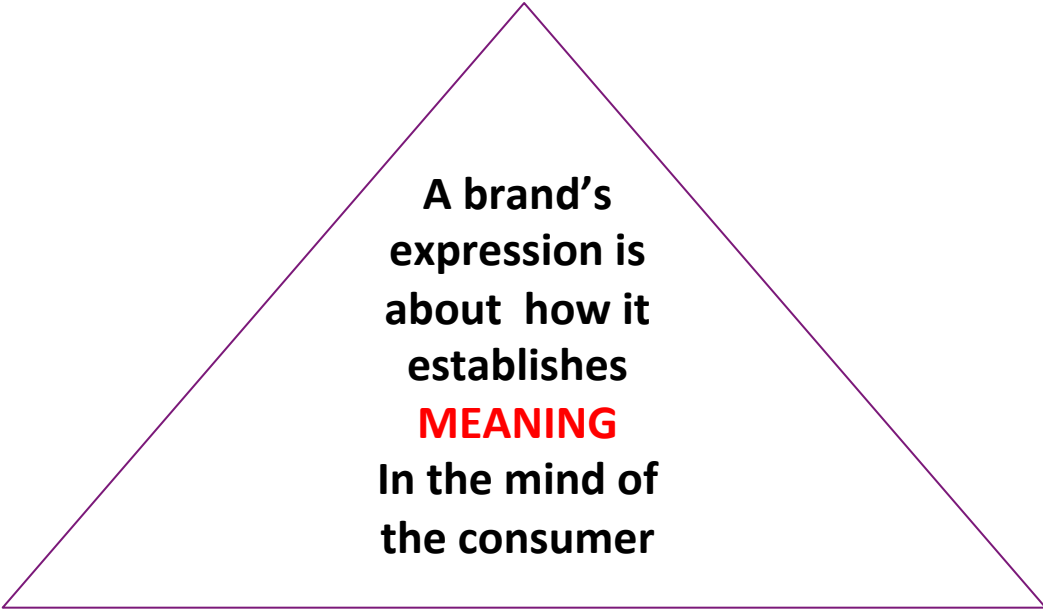
Brand Expression- Domain Experts

- In the world in which brands rule, products are no longer bundles of functional characteristics, but a means to provide and enhance a user's experience.
- The traditional paradigm was that communicating brand features and benefits constituted effective marketing.
- The world of today suggests that marketing must support sensory, affective, and cognitive experiences for consumers.
- In other words, brands are experience providers and the visual and sensory expression delivers an essential dimension of the experience.

(Bernd H. Schmitt 1999, *Experiential Marketing*)

A Brand Operates as a Triadic System of Sense Making

***Brand Concept
(Value Proposition)
Tangible and intangible***

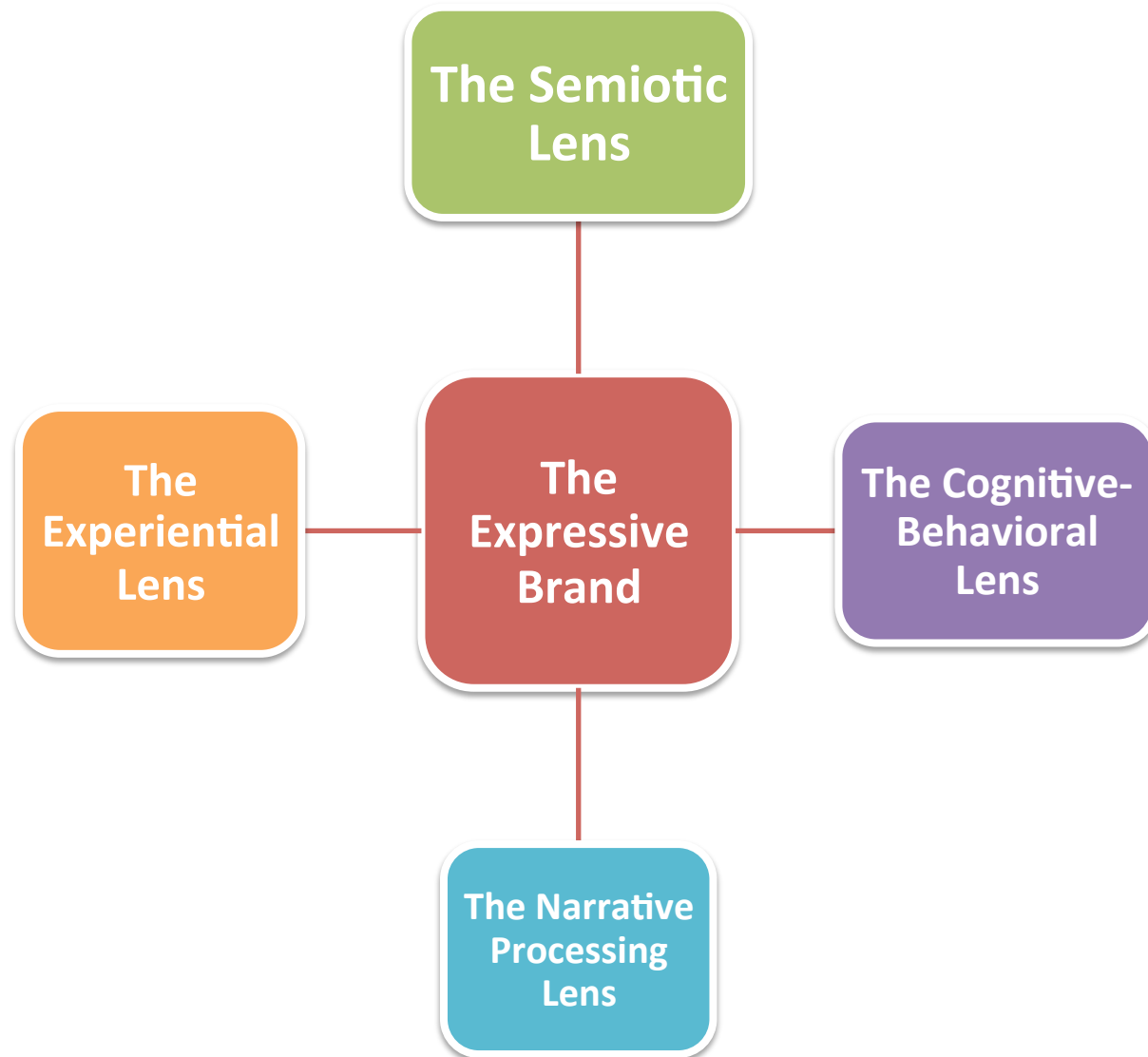


A brand's
expression is
about how it
establishes
MEANING
In the mind of
the consumer

***Brand name and Symbols
(Semiotic Invariants)***

***Product or Service
EXPERIENCE***

Theoretical Discourses on the Concept of Brand Expression



EXPRESSIVE BRANDS

Understanding Brands through the Semiotic Lens



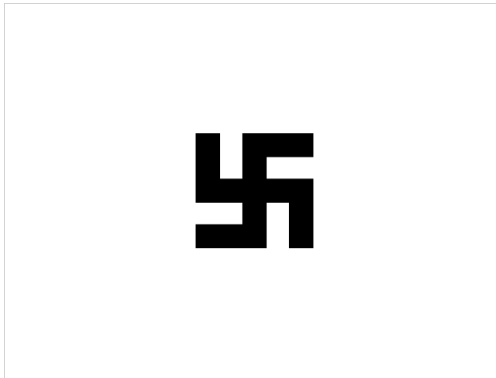
The Semiotic Lens

- Semiotics is a science, whose purpose is to investigate all possible languages. It's aim as a social science is to understand the ways any phenomenon or object or sign constitutes itself, that produces meaning.
- It focuses on this through the analysis and construction of symbolic communication
- Brands are signs, that summarize the expectations that consumers have towards a company, its products, or services.
- Today, brands are increasingly using sophisticated technological resources to convey their messages, and they build shared meanings with their audiences, exercising the interaction and activism that are typical of contemporary 'multividuals' (Canevacci 2005).

The Semiotic Lens



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The Semiotic Lens

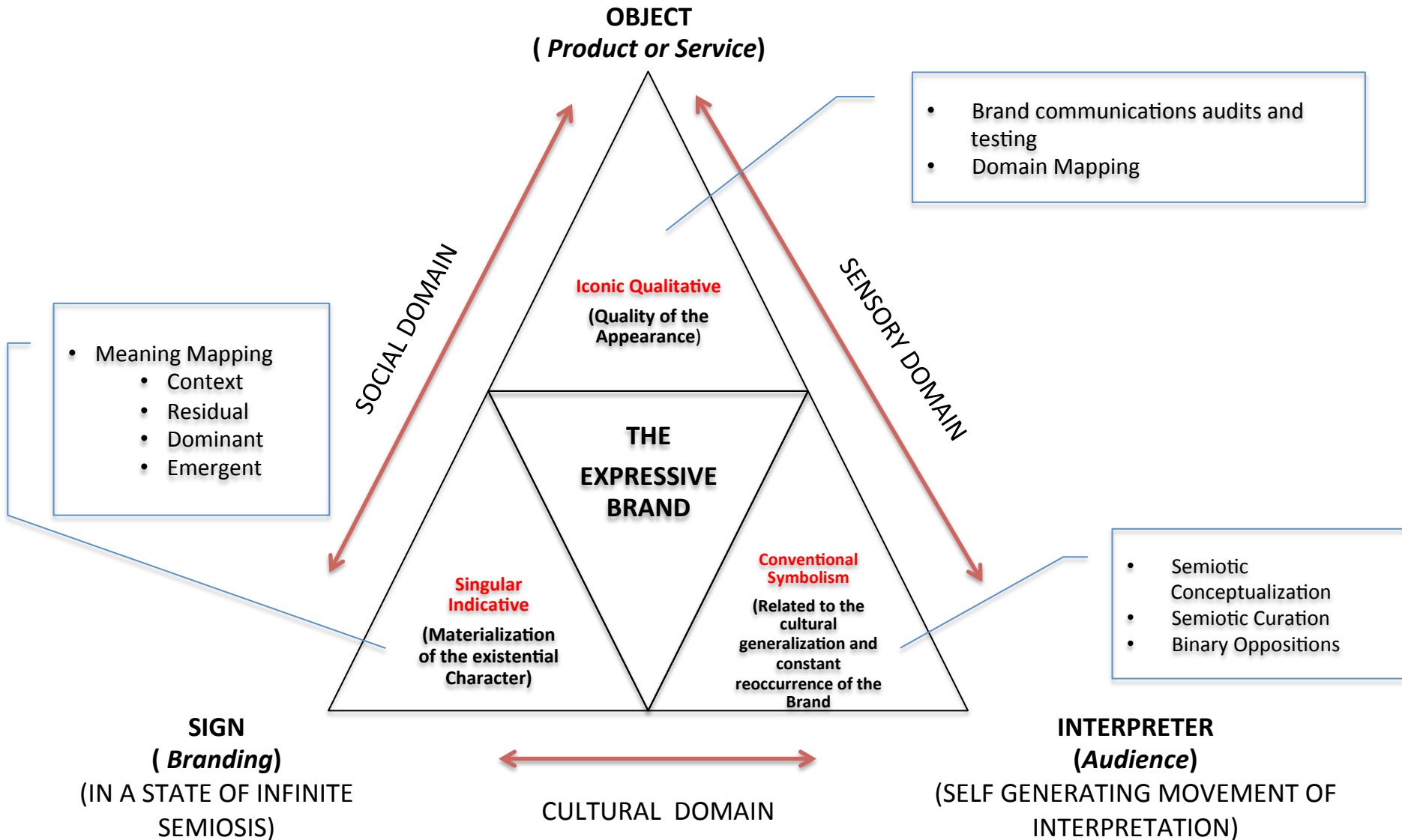
Central to Peirce's semiotics is the definition of the sign. With a broad vision, Peirce (1977) understands that a sign can be anything, provided it is interpreted in terms of a fundamental which is unique to it.

The Semiotic Lens

- Peirce considered any human production, accomplishment, and expression as being always a matter of semiotics.
- A sign can be a painting, a diagram, a scream, a pointing finger, a wink, a footprint on the sand, a dream, a concept, an indication, an event, a symptom, a letter, a number, a word, a sentence, a book, a library, a salty taste in the mouth, and summarizing, anything that is in the world, whether it is in the physical universe, in the world of thought, or connected with some subjective process of understanding

(Peirce 1977; Santaella 1995).

A Conceptual Model For Understanding Your Brand's Expressiveness through the Semiotic Lens



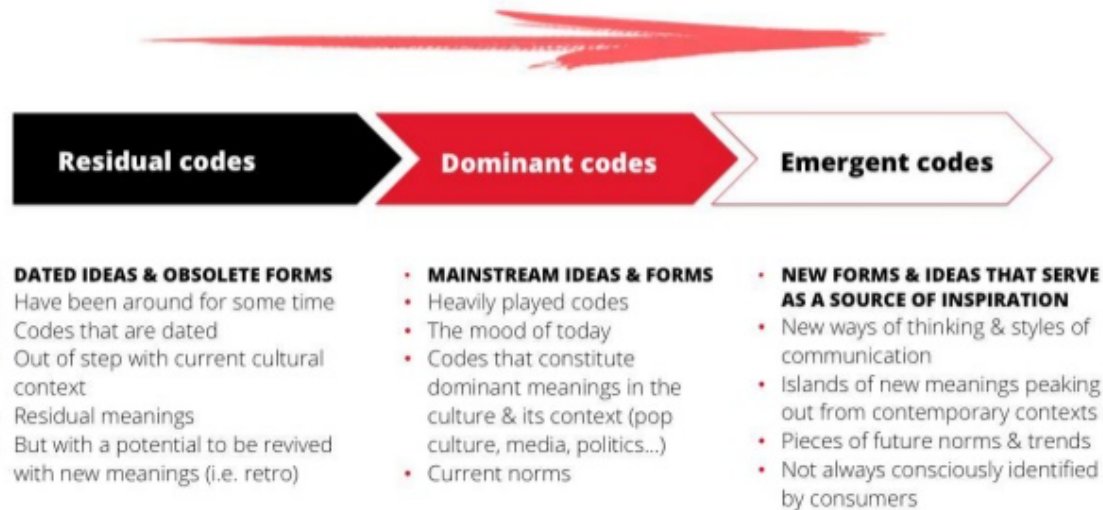
The semiotic lens and its Implications for Practice

- An expressive brand must develop a strong semiotic framework that:
 1. Balances the sensorial, the social and cultural semiotic codes of the brand. In order to do this, it must have codified them.
 2. Recognizes that signs are constantly reproducing as must therefore maintain an effective level of semiotic invariance.
 3. Pays very close attention to iconic quality of the visual and sensorial brand
 4. Is transparent and clear enough to declare what the existential character of the brand is and how that manifests contextually within its category
 5. Establishes its cultural embeddedness and how this is rejuvenated over time by its target audience/consumer base
- A semiotic framework is effective in situations where:
 1. Brand differentiation cannot be spelt out through language
 2. Categories are matured or fast maturing with increased fragmentation and weak differentiation
 3. The category is complex and a lot of technical details exist (medicine, Tech,)
 4. The brand operates in a multi-cultural context requiring optimisation

Brand Semiotic Communications Tools

1. Domain Mapping
2. Brand Communications audit and Testing
3. Meaning Mapping
4. Semiotic Conceptualisation
5. Semiotic Curation
6. Binary Oppositions

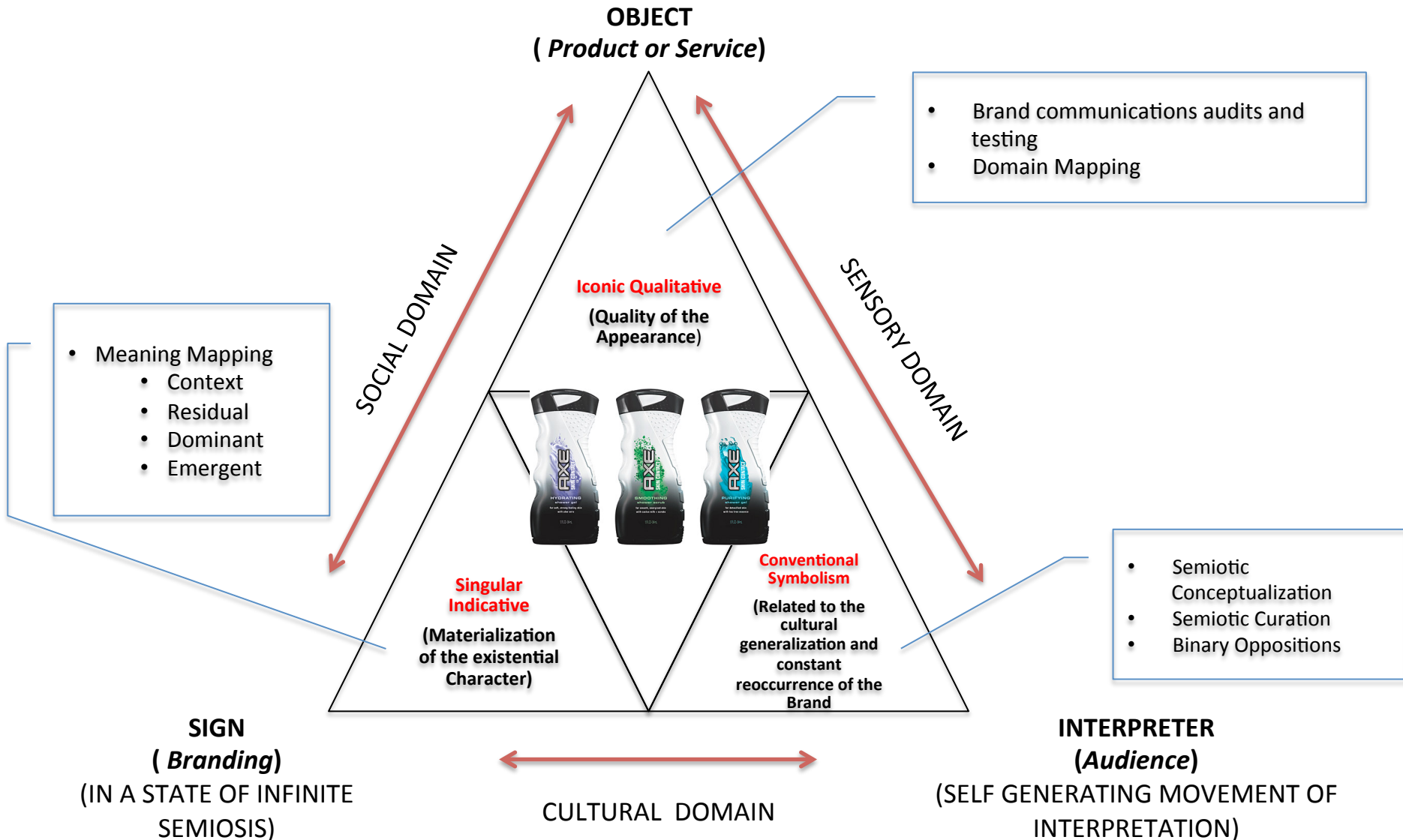
Meaning Curating: R-D-E mapping method.





Axe is a Unilever brand that focuses on personal care products that are targeted at the 15-25 year old male demographic. Their marketing and design strategy centers around dynamic and over-the-top semiotic driven imagery and messaging to convince young males that their products are for the macho man and will attract the ladies.

A Conceptual Model For Understanding Your Brand's Expressiveness through the Semiotic Lens



EXPRESSIVE BRANDS

Understanding Brands through
the Cognitive-Behavioural Lens



The cognitive-Behavioural Lens

- Cognitive Behavioural Psychology offers another lens through which the concept of expressiveness as it relates to brands may be studied.
- Essentially Behaviourism and its cognitive extension are a family of theoretical philosophies stating that behaviour is explained by external events, and that all things that organisms do, including actions, thoughts and feelings can be regarded as behaviours. The causation of behaviour is attributed to factors external to the individual within the behaviourist school but also internalised through internal cognitive markers in the cognitive school

The cognitive-Behavioural Lens

- Two types of behaviours or conditioned learning are critically in helping us better understand the nature of brand expressions when viewed from through this lens:
 - Instrumental Behaviour
 - Expressive Behaviour
- A second analytical framework more closely aligned to the cognitive school, looks at the three domains of internalisation of learning or behaviours as
 - Contative
 - Affective
 - Cognitive

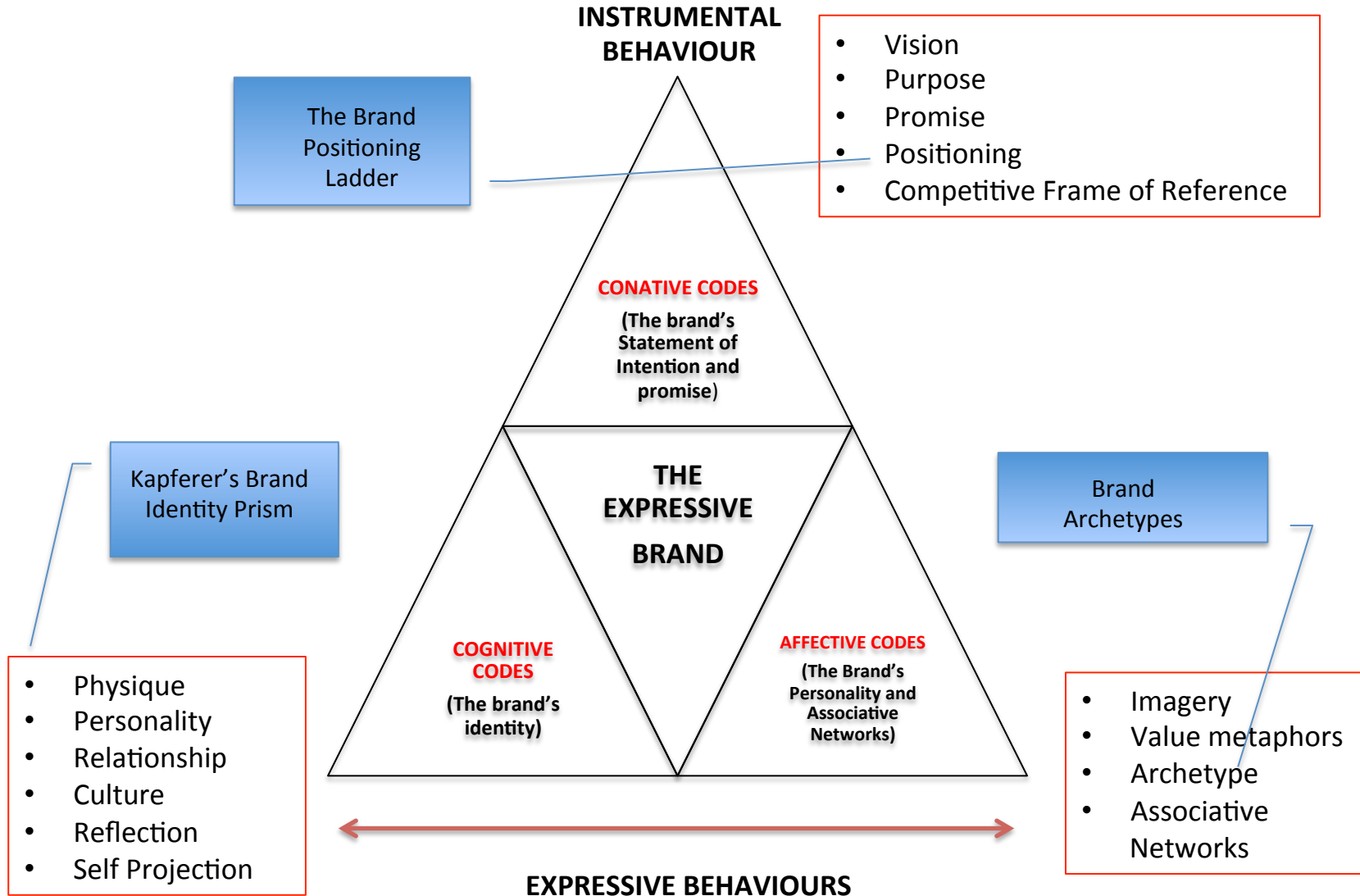
The cognitive-Behavioural Lens

- Instrumental Behaviours refer to structured and programmed actions directed towards a stated goal. In other words the presence of intentionality and or purpose
- Expressive Behaviours refer to the series of action intended to demonstrate inner character of the the subject.
- These contextual differences in behaviour are manifested by humans in their various theatres of endeavour, including that of being consumers, and this they do in response to stimuli that have been offered to them
- The argument being made therefore is that a brand being a stimuli, offers a range of signals or codes which elicit either instrumental or expressive behaviours in their own right.

The cognitive-Behavioural Lens

- The Cognitive Behavioural Codes
Represent our intelligence, thoughts, beliefs and ideas about something which we manifest in an observable form.
- The Affective Behavioural Codes
This component deals with feelings or emotions that are brought to the surface
- The Conative Behavioural Codes
Which may also be referred to as the behavioural or the natural disposition that one has towards something. These contextual differences in behaviour is manifested by humans in their various theatres of endeavour, including that of being consumers, and this they do in response to stimuli that have been offered to them

A Conceptual Model For Understanding Your Brand's Expressiveness through the Cognitive-Behavioural Lens



The Cognitive-Behavioural lens and its Implications for Practice

- An expressive brand must develop a strong cognitive-behavioural framework that:
 1. Clearly declare its set of conative codes such as its intended purpose, positioning and both verbal and colloquial meaning.
 2. Articulates a detailed set of cognitive codes that establish its sense of identity along the lines of Kapferer's prism
 3. Enunciate a range of affective codes which offer a deeper insight into its archetypal persona, what type of associations and value metaphors help to build its image in the eyes of its audience/consumer
- A Cognitive-Behavioural framework is effective in situations where:
 1. The category is emergent or growing rapidly and rivalry is becoming intense and dynamic
 2. Several commoditizers exist within the category and differentiation is largely limited to features and
 3. The brand operates in a multi-cultural context requiring optimisation
 4. The brand is part of a portfolio strategy with a clearly articulated brand architecture

Brand Cognitive-Behavioural Communications Tools

1. Brand Visioning and Positioning Ladder
2. Brand Identity Prism
3. Brand Archetype mappings



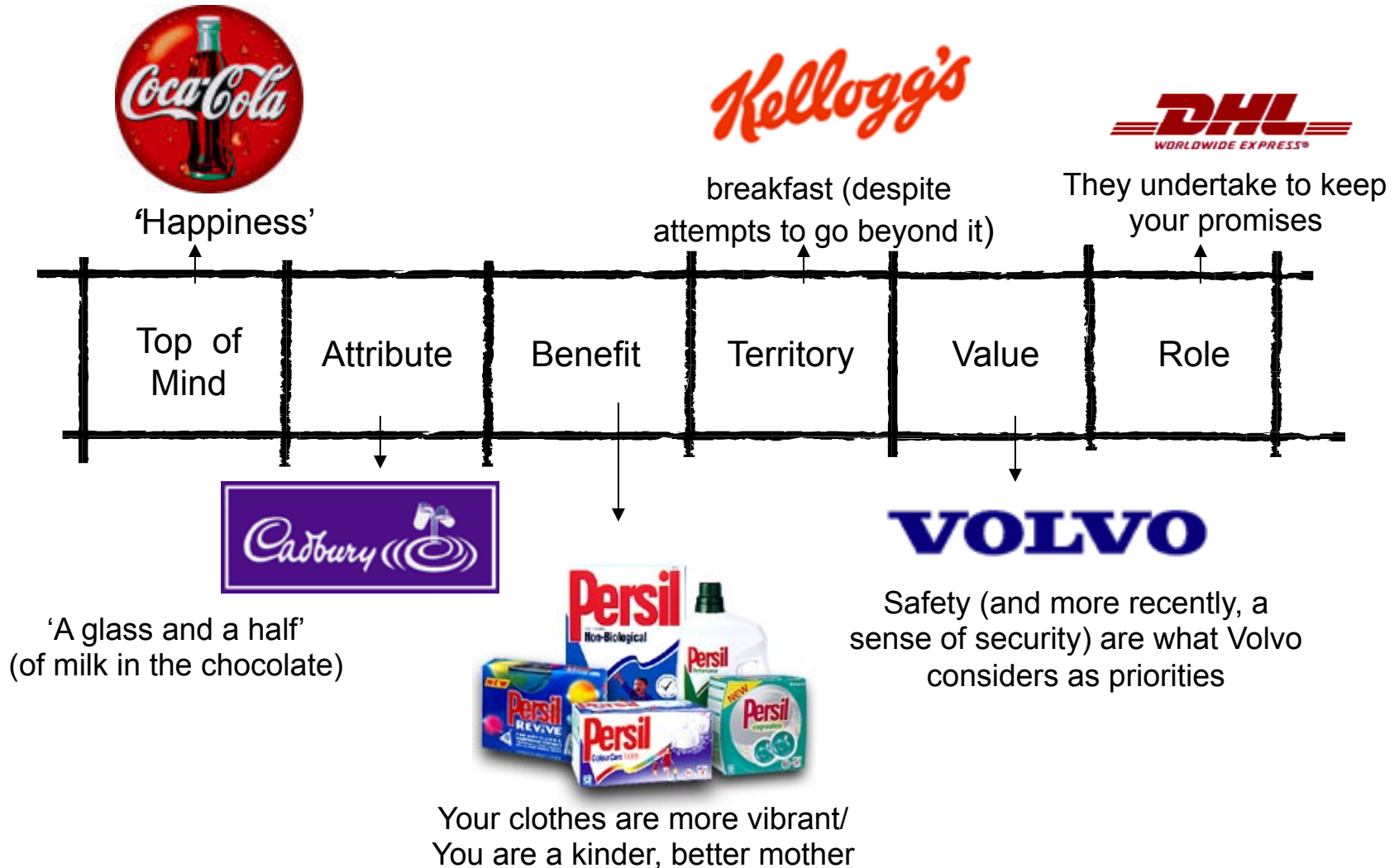
wrinkled?

wonderful?

Will society ever accept 'old' can be beautiful? Join the beauty debate.

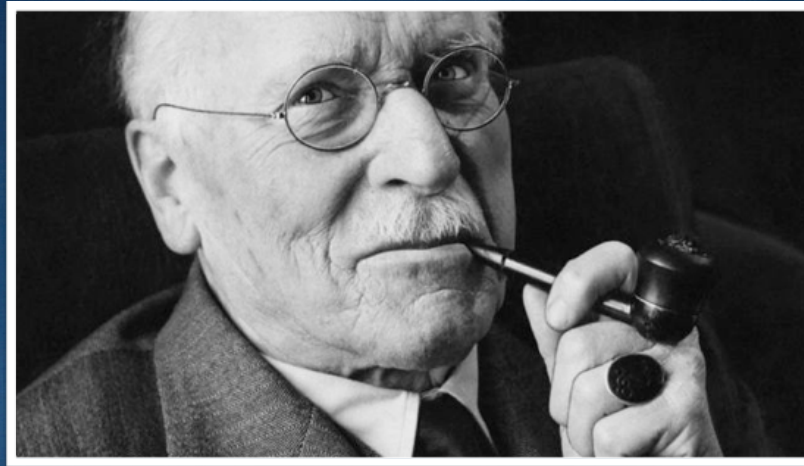
campaignforrealbeauty.co.uk  | *Dove*

The Brand Positioning Ladder



Brand Archetypes





ARCHETYPES

“There are forms or images of a collective nature which occur practically all over the earth as constituents of myths and at the same time as individual products of unconscious. These are imprinted and hardwired into our psyches.”

– Carl Jung’s ‘Archetypal Theory’

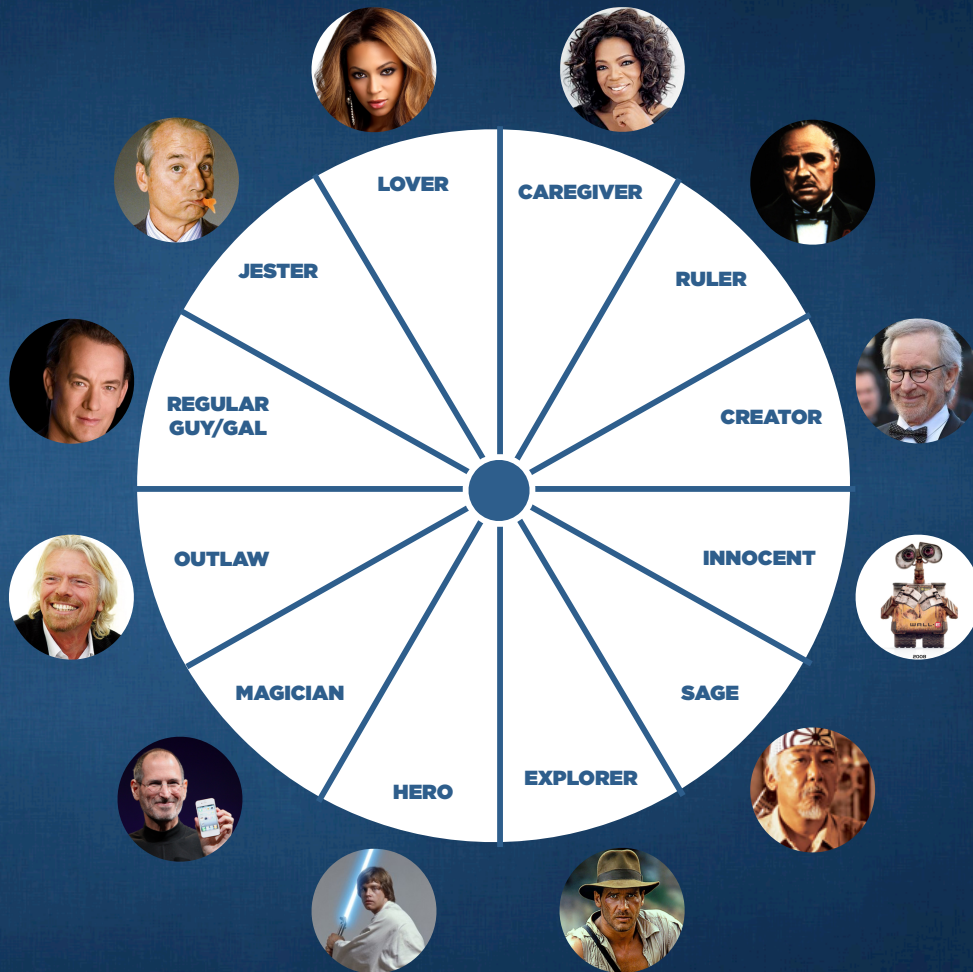
ARCHETYPES

A SYSTEM FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF MEANING

“The concept of archetypes was borrowed by Jung from classic sources, including Cicero, Pliny, and Augustine. In Sanskrit, they were called ‘subjectively known forms’; and in Australia, they were known as the ‘Eternal Ones of the Dream.’”

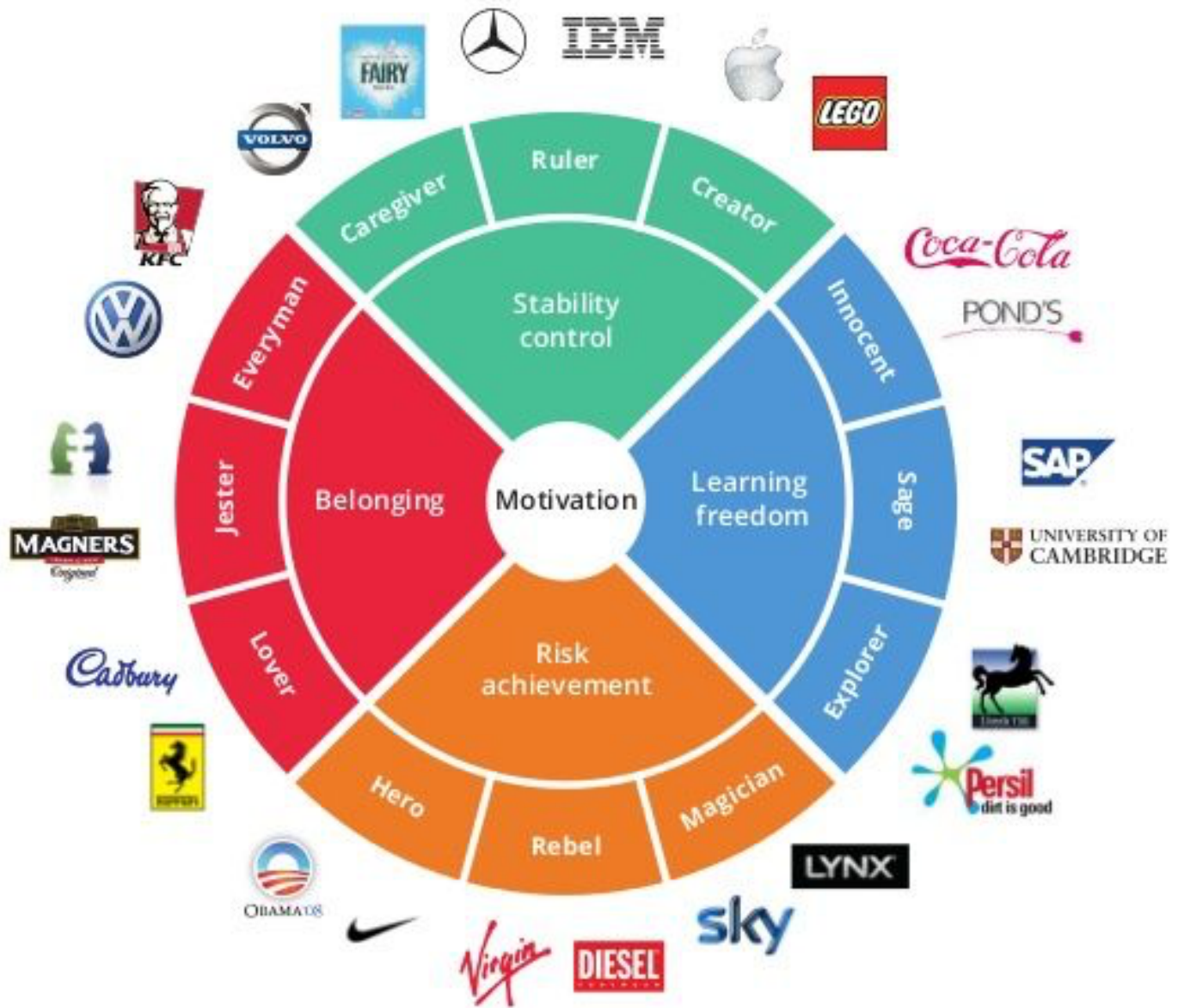
—Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces

CULTURAL ARCHETYPES



BRAND ARCHETYPES

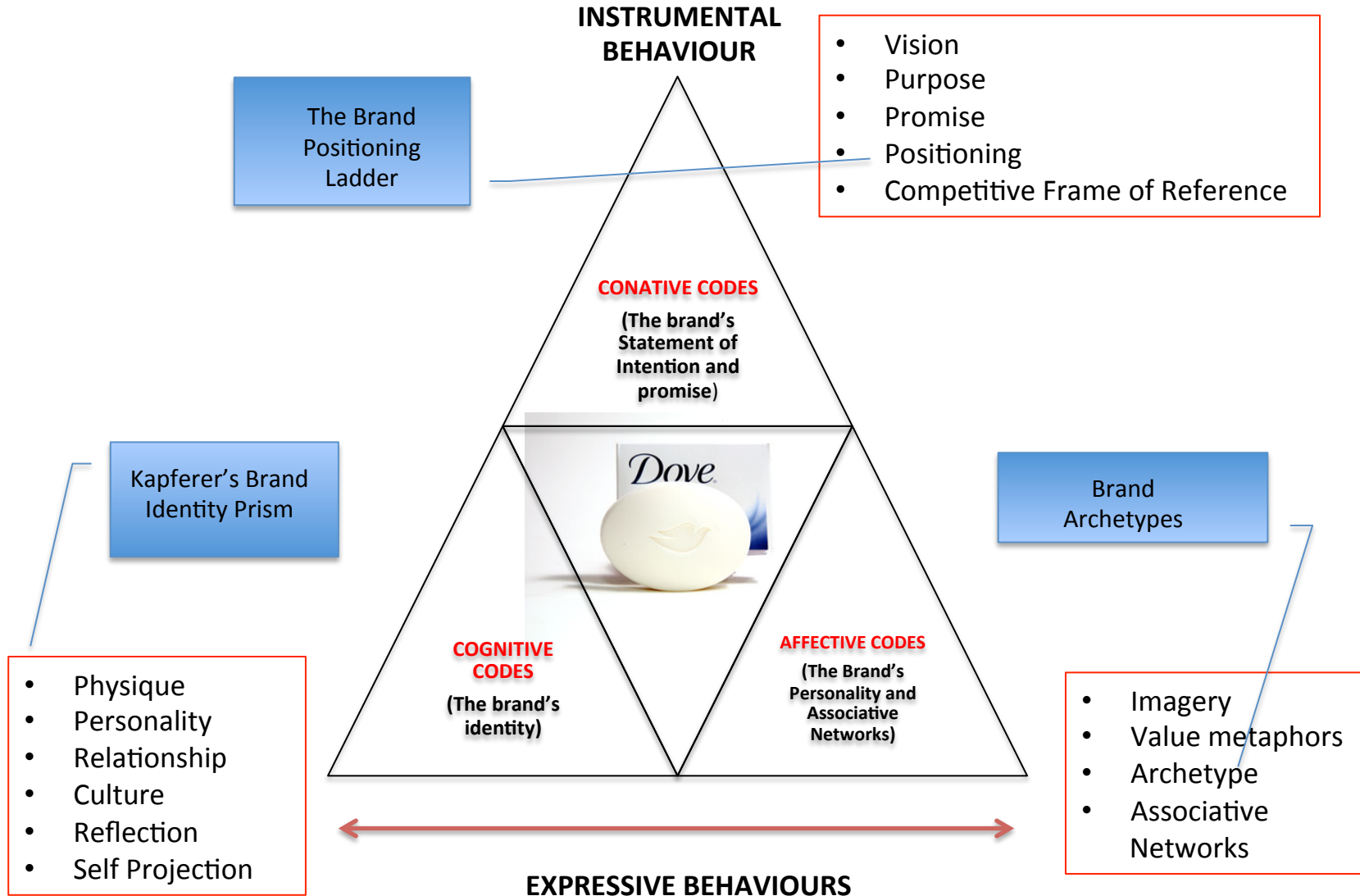




The Brand Identity Prism



A Conceptual Model For Understanding Your Brand's Expressiveness through the Cognitive-Behavioural Lens



EXPRESSIVE BRANDS

Understanding Brands through
the Narrative Processing Lens



The Narrative Processing Lens

- Narrative Processing might otherwise be referred to as story telling and forms a powerful lens through which brand managers may better understand how brands demonstrate expressiveness.
- Humans create stories to organize their experiences, create order, explain unusual events, gain perspective, and make evaluations (Bruner, 1986, 1990).
- Narratives help fit the pieces of people's lives together through the construction of causal links: Stories elucidate goals, evaluate actions to achieve goals, and interpret outcomes (Pennington & Hastie, 1986).
- People use stories to make sense of the world around them, to give meaning to what goes on in their own lives, and to construct their identity as individuals and members of society.

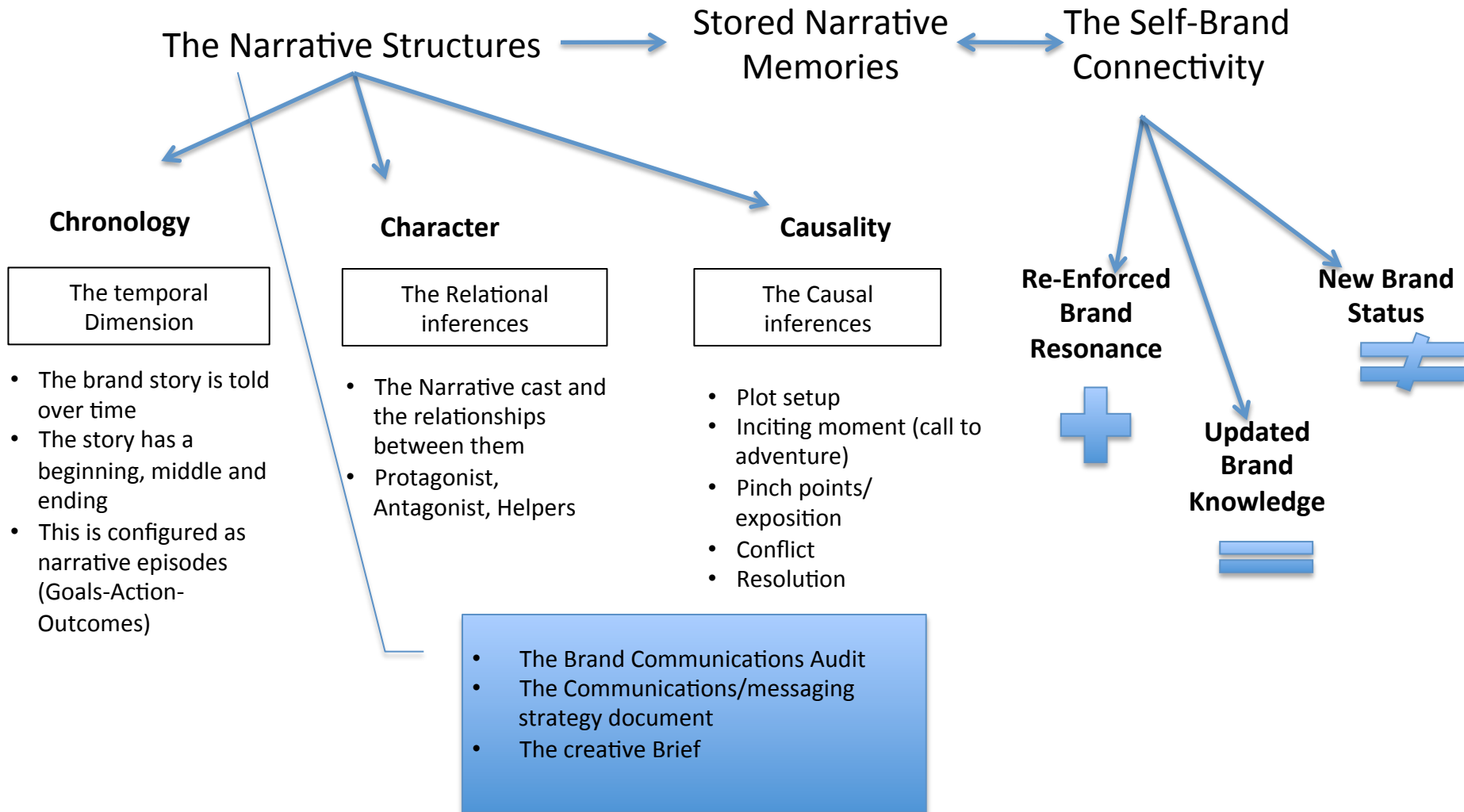
The Narrative Processing Lens

- Within the brand communications context, what a brand means to a consumer is based in part on the narratives he or she has constructed that incorporate the brand.
- The consumer develops narrative processing maps for all incoming stories, which is then over-layered onto stories in memory (Shank & Abelson, 1995).
- Because stories focus on goals, actions, and outcomes, and stories in memory are likely to be self-related, a link may be forged between brands in a brand story and the achievement of self-related goals.
- Ultimately the consumer forms what is referred to as 'A self-brand connection (SBC)' based on these perceived psychological benefits.

The Narrative Processing Lens

- This idea of the SBC is based on recent research which indicates that consumers construct their self-identity and present themselves to others through their brand choices based on the congruency between current or future potential brand-user associations and self-image associations (Escalas & Bettman, 2003)
- The structure of such brand narratives and the manner in which they are processed provides the framework for causal inferencing about the meaning of brands and the meaning of consumers (in other words their expressiveness)
- There are three key constructs that make up brand narrative processing:
 1. Temporal Dimension of the narrative Structure
 2. The Relational and causal Inferences of the narrative structure and,
 3. The Self Brand connectivity

A Conceptual Model For Understanding Your Brand's Expressiveness through the Narrative processing Lens



The Narrative Processing lens and its Implications for Practice

- An expressive brand must develop a strong story telling framework that:
 1. Establishes a temporal dimension which places the brands narrative within a time context
 2. That demonstrates episodic details of goals actions and outcomes for the brand story
 3. That places the brand within a world of vibrant narrative casts of characters with strong dramatic relationships between them
 4. Utilizes the causal inferences of plot elements with story telling to establish the brand's distinctness as well as credentials with the target consumer
 5. Ultimately develops a narrative process that positively reinforces the self identity of a loyal consumer, while updating brand knowledge for a fringe consumer.
- A Narrative Processing framework is effective in situations where:
 1. The category is emergent or growing rapidly and rivalry is becoming intense and dynamic
 2. Several commoditizers exist within the category and differentiation is largely limited to features and
 3. The brand operates in a multi-cultural context requiring optimisation
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The Lego Batman Movie



EXPRESSIVE BRANDS

Understanding Brands through
the Experiential Lens



The Experiential lens

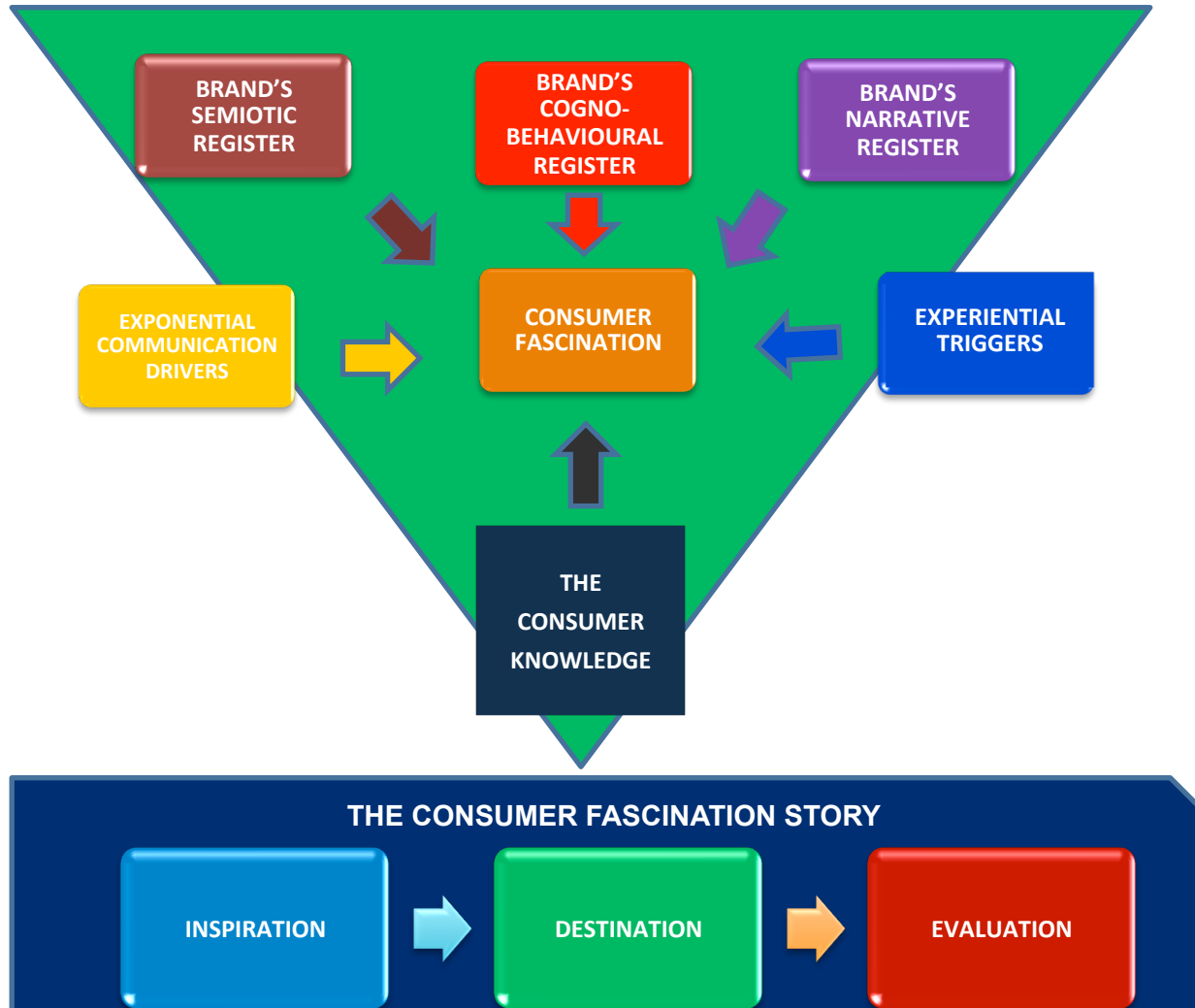
- Brand Expression may also be viewed in the context of brand experience
- Brand Experience is conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications and environments (Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello 2013)
- Experiences occur when consumers search for products, when they shop for them and receive service, and when they consume them.
- There are five dimensions of brand experience: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral and these dimensions form the basis of the 5 triggers that the brand uses to express itself.

(Arnould, Price, and Zinkhan 2002; Brakus, Schmitt, and Zhang 2008; Holbrook 2000)

A Conceptual Model For Understanding Your Brand's Expressiveness through the Experiential Lens

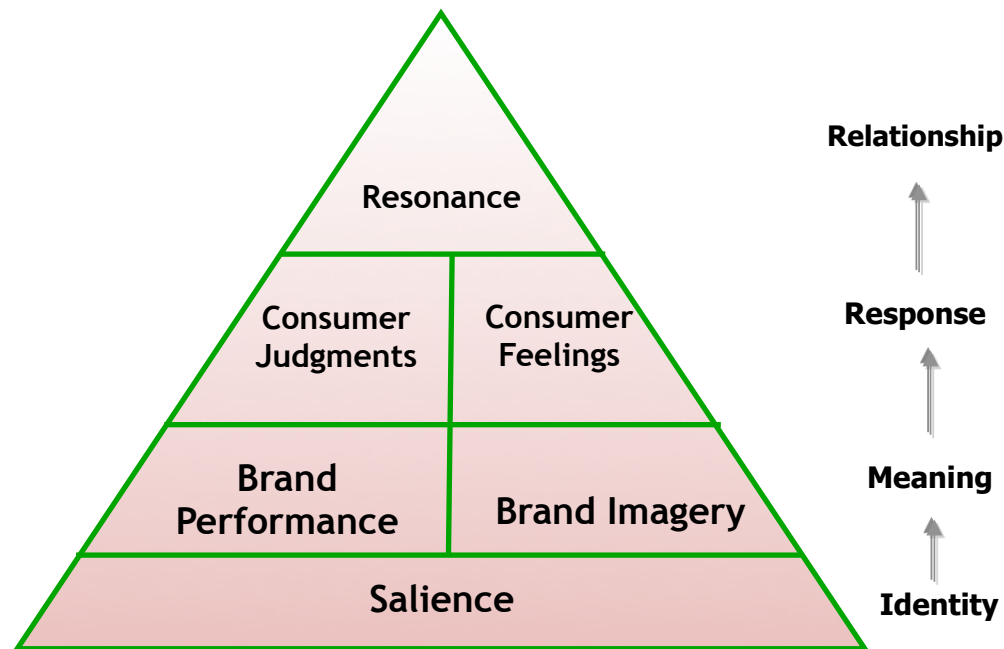


ADVANTAGE EXPERIENTIAL FRAMEWORK – CONSUMER FASCINATION™



Summary and Conclusion

- All brand building efforts are ultimately geared towards the growth of brand equity and the maximization of brand valuation.
- Expressiveness in itself means nothing if it is not utilized as a basis for enhanced differentiation and ultimately achieving greater resonance with the brand's TA
- Our job as brand practitioners is to be more deliberate and thorough in probing the underlying basis for such differentiation and deploying the appropriate tools and techniques to help that manifest.



ANY QUESTIONS?

