

Majority of marketers still don't know what 'branding' is

 By [Chris Mberdyk](#)

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Maybe a lot of marketers like to intentionally confuse boards of directors and clients when it comes to "brands" and "branding". I cannot believe they are all that naive.

In corporate terms, a *brand* is the product or sometimes the company itself. *Branding* on the other hand, is something entirely different. *Branding* is creating a positive feeling of confidence within the consumer particularly at the point of purchase.

Now, that wasn't too hard was it? And yes, I know I have published all of this before. But I am going to keep doing it until the penny drops.

Branding is a feeling, a good feeling about something. Very similar to when one spots a loved one or good friend in a crowd of strangers. Branding is a 100-percent emotional process that draws a prospective customer to your product or service.

It is often something that happens within the consumer's mind subconsciously rather than consciously. The consumer just knows that your product or service is the one to be trusted. While your product might be no different to those of your many competitors, what will make customers choose yours is branding.

And because branding so clearly involves winning the hearts and minds of the consumer, of getting into the consumer's head and planting positive, motivating seeds, it is inevitable that the pursuit of branding excellence by marketers involves more and more detailed studies of the human mind and psyche.

The importance of branding is best demonstrated at that typical point-of-purchase situation where a customer comes in to buy product "A" and more often than not the salesman tries very hard to switch-sell the customer to product "B" usually because his commission or incentive is higher on that product.

Without powerful branding, consumers are easily swayed and all that excellent marketing effort that was used to get the customer into the store in the first place, is wasted. Branding ensures that customers stick to their intuitive guns when they're subjected to switch-selling tactics.

And contrary to what all these new "brand" agencies claim in terms of branding replacing marketing, it is clear that branding is very much part of marketing and always has been.

Which is precisely what many smart marketers have done by taking advances in neuroscience and applying them to branding to get a little closer to the heart of how brand decisions are made.

Professor Antonio Damasio, an expert in the area of neuroscience, has revealed that people make decisions based on perceived outcomes – how they want to feel once the decision is made. These decisions are based on both rational experience and emotional reaction, suggesting that we scan our full range of perceptions, knowledge, experiences and feelings before taking a decision. We remember each experience as good or bad and store these 'markers' as part of our future decision toolkit.

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ABOUT CHRIS MOERDYK

Apart from being a corporate marketing analyst, advisor and media commentator, Chris Moerdyk is a former chairman of Bizcommunity. He was head of strategic planning and public affairs for BMW South Africa and spent 16 years in the creative and client service departments of ad agencies, ending up as resident director of Lindsay Smithers-FCB in KwaZulu-Natal. Email Chris on moerdykc@gmail.com and follow him on Twitter at [@chrismoerdyk](https://twitter.com/chrismoerdyk).

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