

Understanding Your Brand



Most people think of branding as being some external concept created by some marketing whiz that includes colors, logos and catch phrases. The reality is that branding is much more internal and all encompassing. It is not something created separate from your company, but something which your company represents in all you do.

The True Definition of Your Brand is...

Every Single Interaction a customer has with your business... Plus... how the customer FEELS about that transaction.

Branding is not a catch phrase, logo or color scheme. It is the **emotions** that your company brings out in others.

These feelings and emotions happen every single time a customer interacts with your business. And regardless of your advertising, your position statements, your mission, or the color and style of your logo, those feelings **ARE** your Brand.

Branding is YOU (and what people feel about you)

To understand your brand you must first "Know Thyself".

Roy H. Williams*, aka The Wizard of Ads, has a patented method for drawing out your personality traits. Called *The Uncovery*, it consists of a page of 108 different words or phrases, of which you are given a limited time to circle seven that fit you best.

Upon review, the seven words or phrases someone chooses



tend to group themselves into two distinct categories.

My seven words or phrases were Fun, Delight of Being, Positive Attitude, Open & Honest, Service to Others, Relationship to God, and Helping Other People. In other words, my core values were **Having Fun** and **Helping Others**.

These are the values or traits that I hold dear. Therefore, *they are also the values I will praise and encourage in my staff and thus becomes the business culture I will create for my store.*

Once I uncover my own values I will have a simple guide to understanding the values/traits of my business, which become evident in what we do, and what we do creates the interactions and influences the feelings people have about our store which defines our Brand.

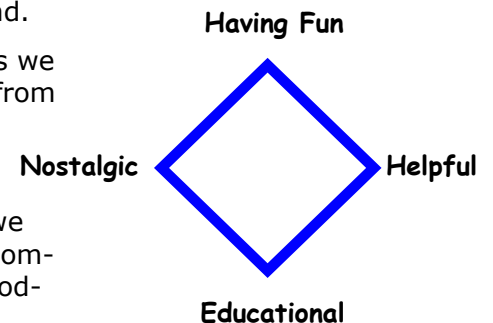
Accelerated Branding

David Freeman** is a screenwriting instructor who teaches a concept that has been used by his students for creating the best characters for movies and television. It involves creating three to five traits for a character that are consistent in every scene throughout the show.

Less than three traits, and the character seems flat. More than five and the character is too inconsistent.

The same principle is true of the best brands. They have three to five traits that are consistent throughout the brand.

To find the Toy House traits we started with the two traits from the Uncovery (**Having Fun & Helping Others**) and searched until we discovered two more. Since we teach classes, educate customers, and sell educational prod-



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ucts, **Educational** is one of our traits. And since we are 60 years old, sell for Christmas, birthdays and new babies, **Nostalgia** gives us a fourth trait.

Character Diamond

Your Character Diamond, therefore, is the three to five traits that best describe both YOU and YOUR Business.

The traits you possess are the traits you teach, encourage, and nurture in your business. Therefore, those same traits become the traits of your business, or the "business culture".



Don't worry if all your traits don't line up perfectly or even have much in common. It is okay. We call this "skewed opposites". In fact, it is better (more interesting) if a couple of your traits seem at odds with each other, as long as they are not exact opposites.

Education and Having Fun are almost opposite, but not exactly.

(Don't worry if you don't understand "Skewed Opposites". It is an advanced concept on the Character Diamond. Just know that it is okay if your traits don't all line up neatly.)

Never Compromise

One way to determine your character traits is to answer some



simple questions about your business such as...

What part of business would you Never Compromise?

This question is a concept often called by Roy Williams and the Wiz-

ard Academy as the "Sword in the Stone" – that unchanging part of your business.

In other words, what unwavering principle do you hold dear? What would make you close up shop before you changed your way of doing things?

For Toy House it is **Having Fun**. A toy store is supposed to be fun. If we can't have fun selling toys, we're out of here!

Character Diamond – Passion

We all have reasons for getting into the business we are in. But if you don't have a "passion" for your business, you need to get out.

If you do have a passion, you need to let it shine. Ask yourself this question...

What is your Passion driving you in this business?

For Toy House, our Passion is being **Helpful**. We want to help people get the right products, get their needs met, get their car seats installed, furniture delivered, packages wrapped, packages shipped, etc. We help customers find the right toys that help their children develop. We help them hide the toys through layaway programs and free giftwrapping. Everything we do is with the purpose to help.



Character Diamond – Absolute Truths

Every business category has different beliefs. Even within a category, there are different beliefs among each individual store.

What do you believe about your business? About your indus-

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try? About your store?

What Absolute Truth do you believe about your business?

The Toy House believes that all toys teach, that **Education** is the greatest value of a toy, that being more educated about toys and baby products helps parents make better choices and saves them time and money.



Character Diamond – Feelings

Every business category has a reputation or emotion attached to it. Coffee shops are warm and inviting. Dentists are scary and painful. Used Car Salesmen are slick, phony and untrustworthy.

Every individual store also has a reputation or emotion attached to it. Least scary, most trustworthy, most knowledgeable, friendliest.

But it isn't what you think, it's what others think. The best way to find out is to ask people who you trust will give you an honest answer.

How do people Feel about your business?

When people talk about Toy House, they often talk nostalgically. They recall their earlier trips to Toy House as a kid. They talk about Toy House gifts they received or gave when younger. If you grew up in Jackson as a kid, you probably have a fond memory or two of the Toy House.



The Toy House specializes in Nostalgic Events – birthdays, Christmas, baby showers, Easter, etc.

People get **Nostalgic** thinking about toys and the Toy House.

Creating Your Character Diamond #1

Answer the following questions:

1. What part of business would you Never Compromise? (Having Fun)
2. What is your Passion driving you in this business? (Helping Others)
3. What Absolute Truth do you believe about your business? (Educational)
4. How do people Feel about your business? (Nostalgic)

Your answers reveal the traits you hold dear.

Creating Your Character Diamond #2

Another way to create your diamond is to look within yourself at the traits that have been used to describe you and see which ones translate into your business. Follow these three steps:

1. Write down all the traits people have used to describe you.
2. Choose three to five traits that you share with your business.
3. Write down three examples of each trait as it pertains to your business.



Creating Your Character Diamond #3

A third method for creating your diamond is to work backwards from the business model. Follow these three steps:

1. Write down all of the things you do for customers.
2. Group them into 3 to 5 groups of similar activities.
3. Label each group with the trait that defines them.

Try out all three versions and see if you come up with similar answers. If so, great. If not, see where the differences lie

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and try to rectify those differences until you come up with the 3 to 5 traits that most closely identify the core values of your business (and you).

Congratulations! You now have a Character Diamond!

Consistency is Key

Once you have your Character Diamond you need to evaluate every aspect of your store to see what parts are consistent with your Diamond and eliminate or change anything that doesn't fit.

When you fully develop and refine your diamond and make every part of your store more consistent with your diamond you will find yourself attracting more and more customers who relate with those traits. At the same time you will find that people who don't share any of those traits will not be your customers.

That's okay! You cannot reach 100% of the population anyway.

Consistency is the key. The more consistently your business aligns with your Character Diamond, the more control you exert over how people *feel* about your business, which is the goal of branding. And once you know your Character Diamond, it is easier to pick the color scheme, logo and catch phrase that will resonate best with your customers.

The Core Message

From your Character Diamond comes the Message, the one point you want to share with the world. Call it your unique selling proposition, your brand, your mission statement, or whatever you want. This is the core message your advertising needs to convey.



To find your message:

1. Choose the Point on your Diamond with Deepest (or Widest) Appeal (*Note: Start first with the trait with Deepest Appeal. The trait with the Widest Appeal may be a trait shared by your competitor that they are also advertising. It may reach a lot of people but not move them deeply towards **your** business*)
2. Determine how that Trait Speaks to the Heart of your Customer
3. Determine what is most Relevant to your Customer about that Trait
4. Test your message – ask your friends, neighbors, co-workers how it makes them “feel”

The Emotional Pulsar

There is another concept in identifying what your brand actually is called the Emotional Pulsar. It is simultaneously...



- One **Single Concept or Trait** that *encompasses every aspect* of the Character Diamond
- One Concept that can mean **Many Different Things** to many different people
- One Ideal that permeates **Every Aspect** of your business, product, service

Nike created the best Emotional Pulsar campaign ever – Just Do It. What does Just Do It mean to you?

It means something different to everyone. But it means *something* to everyone. And that meaning, since it was created by you, is personal and powerful. You own that meaning. You have an emotional connection to “Just Do It”.

And not only does it connect with everyone, it changes with the ages. As we change, so does the way we interpret “Just Do It”. And the meaning is still ours.

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Finding Your Emotional Pulsar

Start with your Character Diamond. Look for the single unifying Factor of your traits. Test this Factor:

- Does it have multiple meanings? (List them)
- Does the customer get to create his or her own meaning?
- Does it encompass ALL points of your diamond? (Show how)

If it passes the test, you have an Emotional Pulsar. If not, keep searching.

(Note: Not every business will be successful in creating an Emotional Pulsar. If you can – great! If you're struggling, put it aside and focus on strengthening the consistency of your Character Diamond)



Emotional Pulsar and Your Message

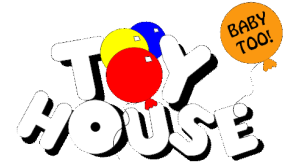
Just like the Character Diamond, the Emotional Pulsar helps you discover your Message. Better yet, by its nature it makes the job much easier because it is one simple concept instead of three to five traits.

Your Emotional Pulsar becomes the single unifying principle that must permeate every part of your brand from the website to the front door, from the highest ranking officer to the lowest clerk, from the phone message to the odor in your bathroom - EVERYTHING.

And once you discover it, advertising and everything else you do is a breeze! Just make sure you stay *consistent* with your Emotional Pulsar.

For Toy House our Emotional Pulsar is... **“We’re Here to Make You Smile”**

- **Having Fun** – When you have fun, you smile
- **Helping Others** – When someone helps you, you smile
- **Educational** – When you learn something new, you smile
- **Nostalgia** – When you remember fondly, you smile



Take control of your Brand by understanding and identifying the feelings your business conveys and making sure you consistently convey those feelings in everything you do.

Nicknamed the Wizard of Ads by an early client, **Roy H. Williams and his staff have often been the unseen, pivotal force in amazing come-from-behind victories in the worlds of business, politics, and finance.*

Williams teaches creative thinking, strategic planning and human persuasion in a three-day Wizard Academy that is attended by executives from many of the world's largest advertising agencies, professors from leading universities, broadcasters, journalists and small-business CEOs from around the world.

His first book, The Wizard of Ads, was voted Business Book of the Year in 1998 and his second book, Secret Formulas of the Wizard of Ads, became The Wall Street Journal's No. 1 Business Book in America in 1999 as well as a New York Times bestseller. The third and last book in the Wizard trilogy, Magical Worlds of the Wizard of Ads, also received the honor of being a bestseller on The Wall Street Journal list. Each of the books has been translated for international distribution in China, Brazil, Korea and Israel. His other books include Accidental Magic and Free the Beagle.

A lifelong student of the human race, Williams is forever seeking to answer the question, What makes people do the things they do? And the answers that he is discovering along the way provide a wealth of practical knowledge and a constant source of entertainment for his students and friends on five continents.

Williams lives in the Middle of Nowhere, Texas, with his wife, Pennie.

***David Freeman began developing the Character Diamond concept through studying the greatest films of our times. His screenwriting classes are consistently sold out and considered the must-attend event if you want to be a screenwriter.*

You will see David's influence in films like Good Will Hunting, The Austin Powers movies, Sling Blade, Lost in Translation, Runaway Bride, The Wedding Singer, Mr. Holland's Opus, and Legally Blonde among others. His TV influences include shows like The Simpson's, ER, Chicago Hope, Married with Children, Roseanne, Coach, Cheers, and Saturday Night Live.

David devotes his time to helping businesses discover their diamonds and develop their advertising to fully utilize their brand, helping video game designers create better character stories and helping screenwriters develop characters we love (or love to hate).