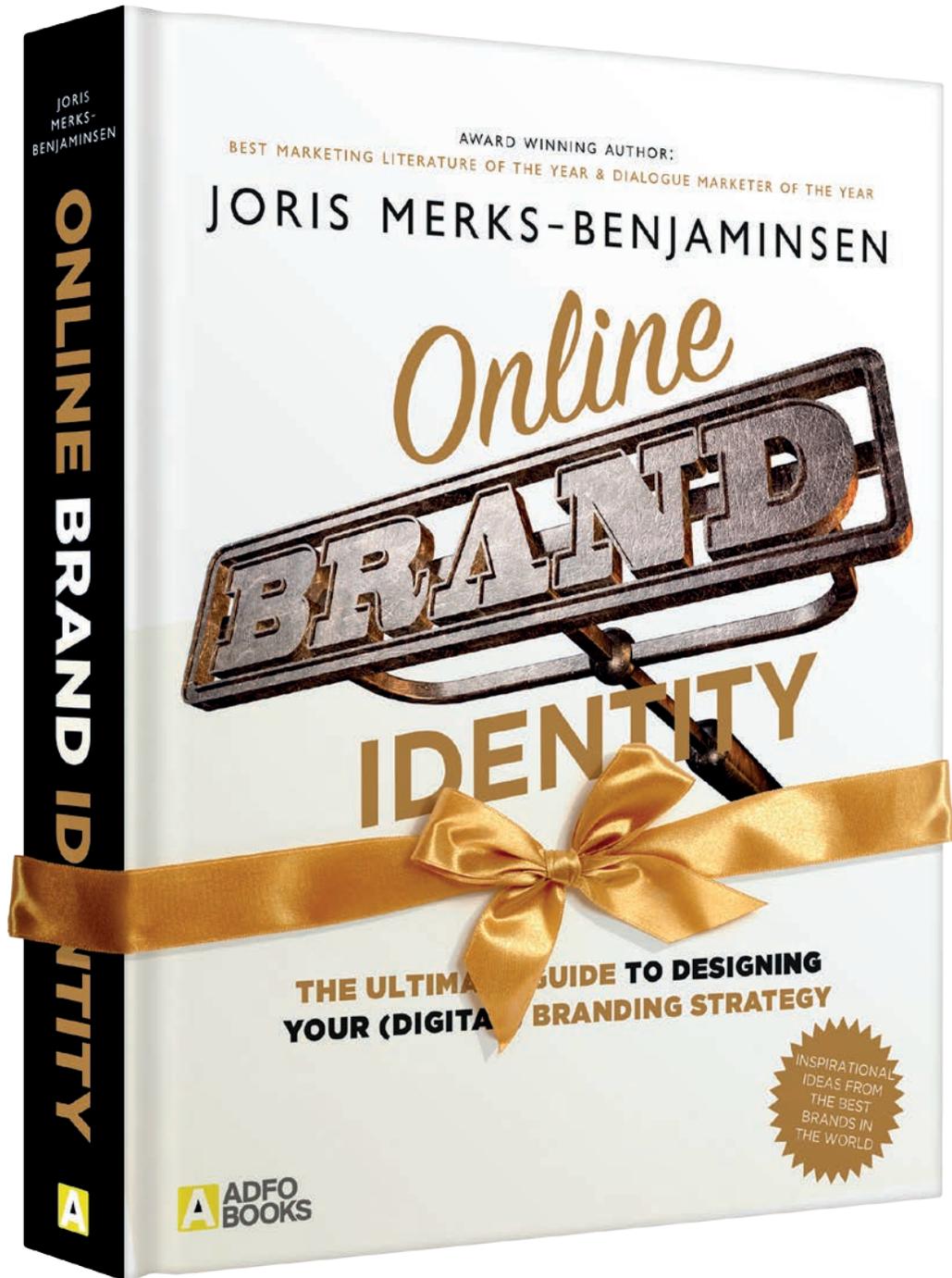


WINNER **BEST MARKETING LITERATURE** 2015



SAMPLE

ONLINE BRAND IDENTITY

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO DESIGNING YOUR (DIGITAL) BRANDING STRATEGY

Five to ten years from now the majority of all advertising, including TV, radio, and print, will be bought through digital automated trading systems. We can argue about the exact timing and the exact percentage of the advertising spend that will become digital and automated. We can also argue about the exact definition of programmatic buying. In fact, in the book *Online Brand Identity* a whole chapter is dedicated to discussing the topic of programmatic buying and it is very well possible that in 2025 it might have a completely different name. But these are details. What matters is that the majority of all media consumption will inevitably become digital and that the majority of all advertising buying and serving will become automated in some way. In 'Global Entertainment & Media Outlook' PwC predicts that 2018 will be the first year in which global digital advertising spend will be larger than global TV spend. Predictions vary, and variations naturally increase if you look further ahead, but rather than arguing about the details, I feel it makes more sense to ask ourselves some critical questions. If the majority of all advertising is booked through digital channels in automated trading systems, what does that mean for our advertising strategies? How will the dynamics of brand building change? Which of the things we do now would no longer work? What elements of advertising and brand strategy could be even be *more* useful than they are now? Are we running the right experiments to be ready for this change? *Online Brand Identity* is the ultimate guide to designing your future ready brand and advertising strategy. It offers a brand framework that puts digital thinking at the heart of your business. The framework is illustrated with forty inspirational cases from big and small brands. The book offers exercises to define the experiments you can start running tomorrow. This is a quick preview of the book. I hope you will enjoy it!



Joris Merks-Benaminsen is Head of Digital Transformation at Google, helping top 100 companies embed digital thinking into their strategies. His fresh thinking has won him prizes for Dialogue Marketer of the Year in 2012 and Best Marketing Literature of the Year in 2013. Joris was also nominated for Company Researcher of the Year and Cross Media Man of the Year in 2013. In his workshops he brings together marketers, brand managers, strategists, creatives, data experts, digital specialists and company leaders to jointly craft their future ready brand strategy.

WHY EXISTING BRAND STRATEGIES ARE NOT FUTURE READY

Imagine a world where outdoor advertising is the last mass push medium left. Imagine a world where people only watch ads *they want* to watch at moments that suit *them*, rather than ads *we want* them to watch at moments that suit *us*. Are we ready for that future? Right now I don't think we are. Many companies have built successful business models utilizing the unique capabilities of the digital landscape, but most of those focus on what we call performance advertising: running ads with the objective of generating short-term sales. Those who best understand digital capabilities tend to be those who have learned how to optimize their ads real time based on direct purchase behaviour. Those who understand brand building however, have used the internet way too little even though it offers great opportunities for building engaging brand experiences and reaching broad audiences. Most 'traditional' brand builders haven't really made the internet the basis of their brand building. They still base their media plan on the use of offline media with a line of digital bolted on, just like the example below. In fact this is what most media plans look like nowadays: one line for each offline medium and then (often at the bottom) one line for digital.

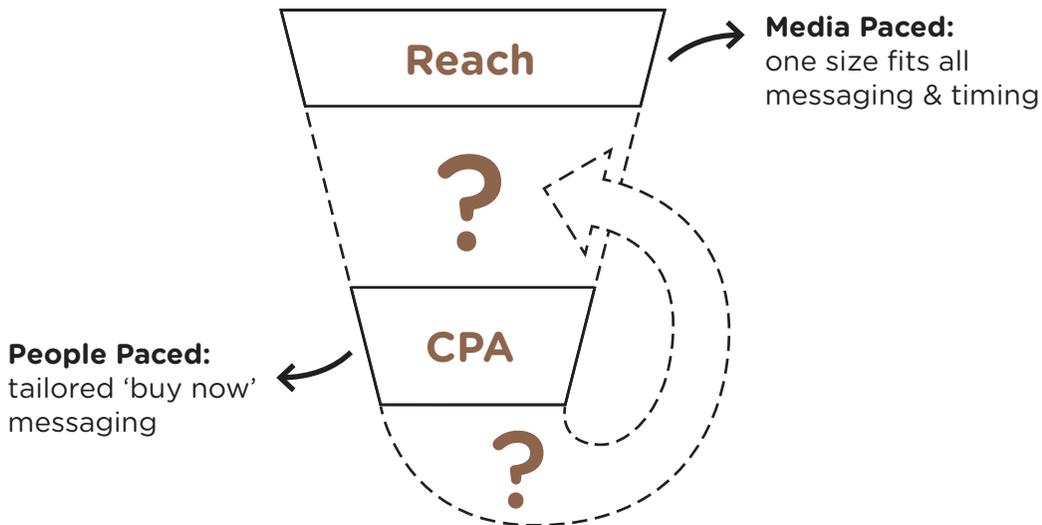
Media channel	Format	February				March				April					May	
		5	12	19	26	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	4	14
TV																
Motivational registration	60"/40"/20"															
Talking to Scotland editorial platform	12 trans a week															
Radio																
Registration (target under registered)	40"/20"															
Motivational/registration	20"															
Leaflet support/last minute call to action	20"/40"															
Editorial Platform	60"															
Press																
Launch	Full page / 30x5															
Registration	Full page / 30x5															
Leaflet support	25x4 / Platforms															
Last minute call to action	Full page / 30x5															
Local press	Full pages															
National and regional reminder	Full pages															
Editorial Platforms																
Outdoor																
Online																
Display																

If your media plan looks like this, with one line for online advertising, your plan is not future ready

But digital isn't one medium in the mix, it is a full media mix in itself that can work across all stages of the consumer journey. In fact, digital is *the* media mix of the future. If you don't start looking at digital as a full media mix you won't make the most of it.

USING NEW STUFF IN OLD WAYS

Even if brands use digital for branding purposes we often see it used as if digital were an offline medium. The worst case scenario is putting your TV commercial online with demographic targeting. Digital offers a much broader creative canvas for interactivity that isn't limited to a thirty second video and digital offers many better ways of targeting than demographic targeting. We see the same happening in the adoption of programmatic. Performance advertisers were the first ones to adopt programmatic systems, yet they mainly use them to gather even more data to get even better CPAs, which means they are still stuck at the end of the funnel, while brand advertisers mostly use programmatic systems to make bulk deals to reach as many people as possible versus the lowest cost, which means they are still stuck in the upper parts of the funnel. As a result very few advertisers have made the shift from programmatic *buying* towards programmatic *marketing*: bringing the right message to the right person at the right time across the full consumer journey. Our advertising strategies still sound like broken records repeating one size fits all brand messaging 'Hi I am brand X and we have a new product' followed by a repetitive 'Buy now! Buy now! Buy now!' that is the result of the last-click focus of performance advertisers. If consumers go online and ask questions or seek inspiration without giving a clear buying signal, very often advertisers are not there. The result is illustrated in the figure below.



Too much focus on reach and CPA results in a gap between the upper and lower funnel

You can easily observe this pattern of communication across all kinds of product categories by looking at advertising in the Google search engine. Try typing 'book hotel' and you'll find a page full of advertising because this is a clear buying signal. Keywords with a clear buying signal are the ones that convert well, hence advertisers with a last-click strategy will aggressively bid on those keywords. If, however, you type in a common question like 'what are the most beautiful places in the world?' the advertisers will disappear and only forums, blogs, and other types of advisors will offer an answer. Advertisers could choose to answer this question and in fact you can build your brand in powerful ways by providing an answer to these types of questions, but advertisers don't do that (enough) because the question is not a buying signal hence there is no short-term impact on sales. At the same time, the value of answering these kinds of questions cannot be quantified accurately through reach numbers or GRPs, so branding experts also often fail to use this opportunity. You can see the result in the following two figures.

The screenshot shows a Google search for 'book hotel'. The search bar contains the text 'book hotel' and a search icon. Below the search bar, there are tabs for 'Web', 'Images', 'Maps', 'Videos', 'News', 'More', and 'Search tools'. The search results show 'About 1,100,000,000 results (0.35 seconds)'. The results are dominated by advertisements. On the left side, there are ads for Booking.com, ebookers.nl, Agoda, and Booking.com again. On the right side, there are ads for trivago, hotelscombined.com, Gaiahotels.com, and beoo.com. Each ad includes a star rating, a brief description, and a call to action.

Google book hotel

Web Images Maps Videos News More Search tools

About 1,100,000,000 results (0.35 seconds)

Booking.com - Hotels - Over 530,000 hotels online
Ad www.booking.com/ -
4.6 ★★★★★ rating for booking.com
Read Real Reviews and Book Now!
Free Cancellation - 24/7 Customer Service - Read Real Guest Reviews
Booking.com has 4,063,544 followers on Google+
Hotels in London Hotels in Dubai
Hotels in Edinburgh Hotels in Amsterdam

Hotels Booking - ebookers.nl
Ad www.ebookers.nl/hotels -
Vind & boek uw hotel naar keuze. +110.000 hotels, laagste prijs.
Aanbiedingen - Boek een Hotel - Vlucht en Hotel - Vlucht Hotel en Auto

Agoda® Hotel Booking - agoda.com
Ad www.agoda.com/Hotel_Deals -
Best Price Guarantee, up to 80% Off Book Now, Pay Later - Only at Agoda

Booking.com: 703,061 hotels worldwide. 52+ million hotel ...
www.booking.com/ -
Big savings on hotels in 77000 destinations worldwide. Browse hotel reviews and find the guaranteed best price on hotels for all budgets.
Malaysia - Thailand - List your property on Booking ... - Booking.com app

trivago™ 700,000+ Hotels
www.trivago.com/Hotels-Booking -
trivago™ Save up to 78% on Hotels.
Compare over 200 Booking Sites!

Save up to 80% on Hotels
www.hotelscombined.com/Save-On-Hotels -
4.3 ★★★★★ advertiser rating
Compare Prices & Book For Less.
Snap up Cheapest Hotel Deals Here!

Best Hotel Deals
www.galahotels.com/ -
4.2 ★★★★★ rating for galahotels.com
+44 20 3384 6448
Book with Galahotels save up to 75%
Easy Booking Best Deals online!

Cheap Hotels -80% Off
www.beoo.com/ -
Find the Cheapest Hotel - Search!
100s of Travelers Save Money Here.

A keyword with a clear buying signal results in a page full of ads due to the focus on the last-click before purchase

Google  

Web Images Videos News Shopping More ▾ Search tools

About 243,000,000 results (0.41 seconds)

The 100 Most Beautiful and Breathtaking Places in the World

www.youramazingplaces.com/the-100-most-beautiful-and-breathtaking-...

The 100 Most Beautiful and Breathtaking Places in the World in Pictures (part 1).

From majestic waterfalls, and lost cities, to mysterious landmarks and natural ...

The Most Beautiful Places In The World - Forbes

www.forbes.com/sites/bethgreenfield/2012/.../the-worlds-prettiest-places/

Mar 16, 2012 - "Most people define beauty by sunsets. In this incredible group of islands, it's the sunrises as well," notes Greenberg of this remote collection of ...

Images for what are the most beautiful places in the world

[Report images](#)



[More images for what are the most beautiful places in the world](#)

Superlative spots | 30 of the most beautiful places in the world

www.mnn.com > [Earth Matters](#) > [Wilderness & Resources](#)

A shout-out to some of the places that showcase the amazing accomplishments that nature has achieved.

A commonly asked question without a buying signal almost never triggers ads

This test works across all product categories. Type 'buy running shoes' and you'll find lots of advertisements, yet type 'what are the best running shoes to run a marathon' and you'll find almost no advertisers on the search page. Try this for yourself in your own product category. If you start typing some search words in relation to your product in Google, the autocomplete function will provide commonly asked questions.

DIGITAL 1ST THINKING AND 4D BRAND BUILDING

Most brands don't make the most out of digital for their branding strategies. Not because their people are stupid or because they don't see the importance of digital, but because changing a strategy that has worked well for many years is very hard. In a strategy that puts digital at the heart of all branding, almost everything you do changes: you have to think about your audience differently because targeting offers new and better opportunities, you have to build ads differently, you need to start building branded content and you need to learn to create engagement through interactivity. The way you buy, serve, and optimize campaigns is different and the way you measure impact is different. As a result of all these differences organizational structure needs to change: you need new skills in your organization and people from separate departments and agencies need to start working together. You need different technology and professionals and teams within the organization need new targets. There is a whole new creative canvas out there, both for distribution and creation of ads and (branded) content. We are just at the beginning of learning how to make the most out of that opportunity. Building that learning curve and restructuring an organization is not something you can do overnight, so the experiments required to make your organization future ready have to start now.

Online Brand Identity offers a model for 4D brand building that helps to make the most out of digital for branding:

- Digital 1st audience targeting
- Digital 1st content and campaigns
- Digital 1st KPIs
- Digital 1st evaluation and optimization

DIGITAL 1ST AUDIENCE TARGETING

This is about personalization at scale: using all data and contextual cues available to you to find the people your brand wants to speak to on all important moments across the full consumer journey. That starts with defining your people/moment matrix. An example of a people/moment matrix, as used by the Google Chrome marketing team, can be found in the figure below. A matrix like this is the basis for both targeting and messaging strategy.

Heavy online video buffs

Gadget lovers

Modern family: young parents

Your favourite series or movies even cooler on the big screen	Enjoy your favourite concert even more on the big screen	Enjoy your favourite sports highlights even more on the big screen	Stream all your favourite content to the big screen	Chromecast as must have gadget present	All your smartphone pictures on your TV
Your smartphone as remote for your favourite series or movies	Your favourite concert on TV with your smartphone as remote	Your favourite sports highlights on TV with your smartphone as remote	Stream online video on your TV with your smartphone as remote	Chromecast as cool gadget present	All your smartphone pictures on your TV
Stream kids series on TV Stream favourite series when kids in bed	Watch your favourite concert when the kids are in bed	Watch your favourite sports highlights when the kids are in bed	Stream lots of kids content to your TV	Chromecast as cheap and easy gadget present	Cast your family memories to the big screen



Watching series or movies

Music/dance mood

Up for watching sports or soccer

Orientation on or buying a video streaming service

Father's day Mother's day Birthday

Showing pictures to friends at home

Example of a people/moment matrix for Google Chromecast

DIGITAL 1ST CONTENT & CAMPAIGNS

The digital world offers a whole new creative canvas that brands can use to create engaging experiences. There are no restrictions in time or schedule and digital devices offer new sensors and tools to be relevant, inspirational or interactive or all at the same time. The art is bringing those that understand technology together with those that understand creativity and brands. If you can do that, the most beautiful things can happen as the example below demonstrates.

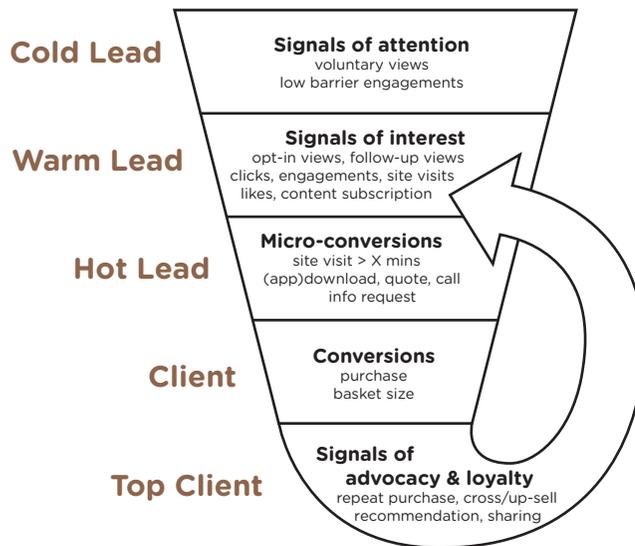


Hot Wheels created an awesome racing game stitching multiple videos together through hyperlinks

Advertisers should learn to think more like publishers. *Online Brand Identity* offers models, exercises and best practices to define your branded content strategy and it offers many more examples of brands that created beautiful work leveraging unique digital capabilities.

DIGITAL 1ST KPIS

It is often said that as media digitizes, everything becomes measurable. In reality, the opposite is true, at least if you look at measurement from the perspective of the methods that advertisers and marketing organizations currently use. If advertisers learn to utilize the principles of 4D brand building, there will be a shift towards always-on presence as opposed to advertising in large bursts, not just in performance advertising but also in branding. This shift is triggered by smarter use of data and contextual cues and the shift towards content strategy, choice-based ads, and personalized ads to reach people with messages tailored to the meaningful moments in their lives. If branding becomes an always-on activity, all existing measurement systems fail. Last-click thinking doesn't work, brand trackers and marketing mix modeling cannot capture always-on branding and reach and GRP numbers cannot capture the huge variety of targeting and ad formats the digital landscape offers. We need a new brand funnel: a brand funnel based on digital behaviours. That brand funnel is unique for each brand and it follows directly from the ads and content you create. The book helps translating advertising and content strategy into a funnel of behaviours you can track real-time. The figure illustrates what a funnel like that can look like.



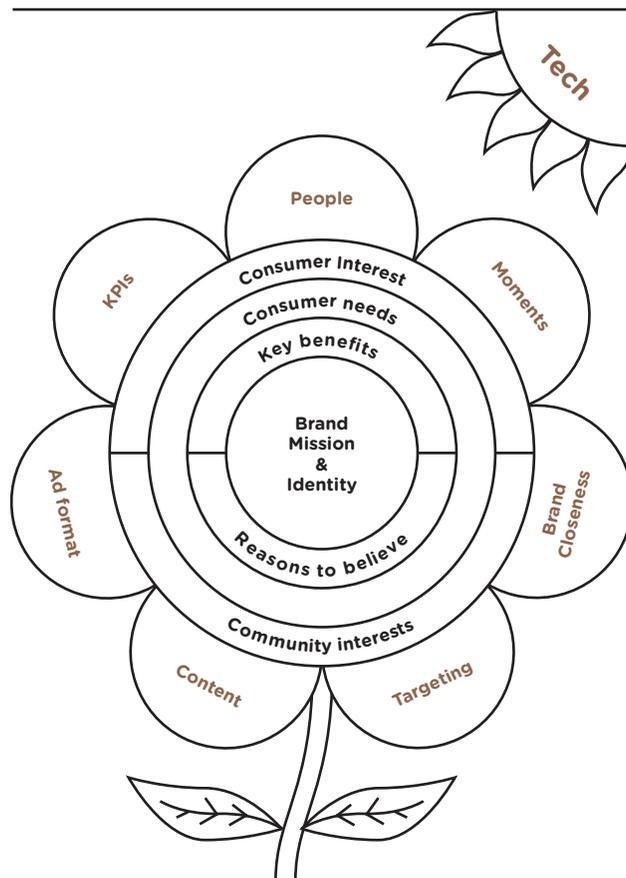
The digital brand funnel is a journey of voluntary interactions with your content and advertising

DIGITAL 1ST EVALUATION & OPTIMIZATION

After you construct your digital brand funnel, one question remains: what can I expect in terms of sales? What is the value of a like, or a voluntary view of my video, or a subscription to my YouTube channel, or engagement with my app? If you know how to value these things brand advertising becomes as measurable as performance advertising is today; it basically becomes branded performance. This is where digital attribution modeling comes in. Attribution modeling is the practice of estimating the value of touch points or engagements across the full consumer journey in driving the sale at the end of that journey. That sale can be either a short-term or a long-term sale and ideally you would even include the lifetime value of a client in the calculations. Digital attribution modeling is what will replace existing measurement systems, however you can only make it happen if you track all consumer interactions with your ads and content in one system and if you store them in one unified data base as consumer journeys. This sounds a lot easier than it is because your database will always be full of gaps that are the result of 'time and space challenges' because consumers switch channels and devices and because consumer journeys can be long. *Online Brand Identity* explains the challenges of building a consumer journey database and offers pragmatic solutions to estimate the financial value of consumer engagements in all stages of the consumer journey.

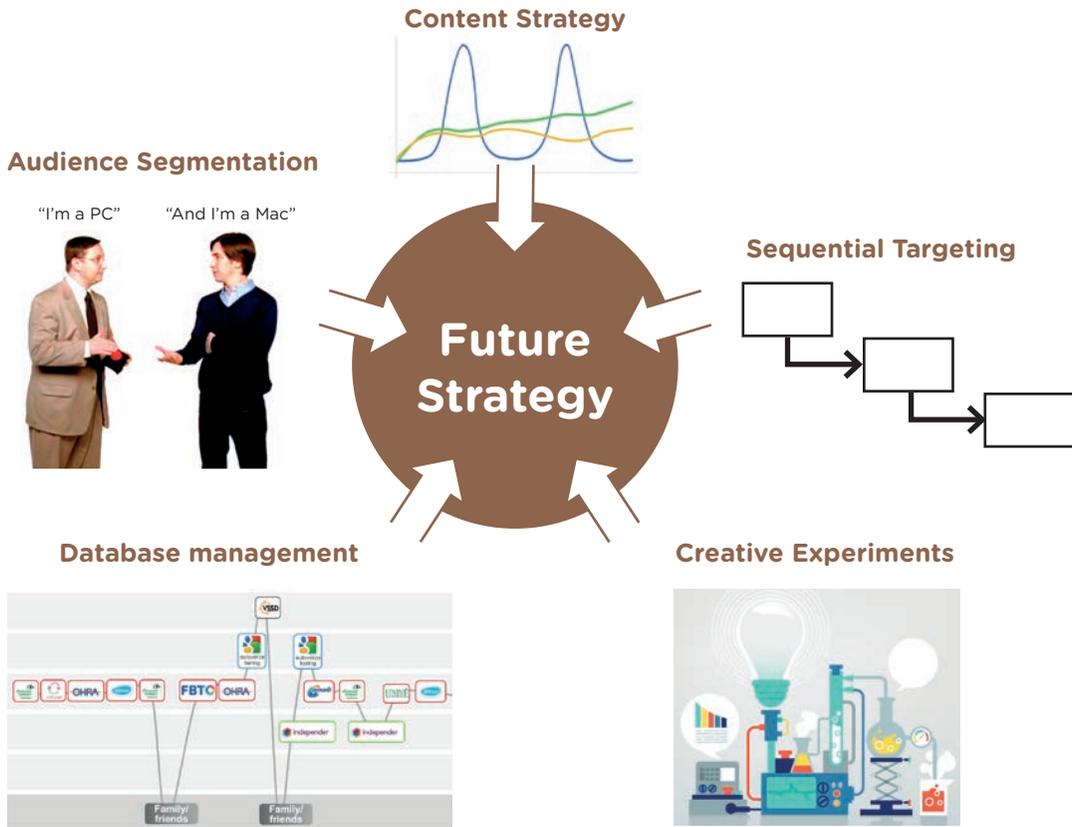
PAST AND FUTURE IN A DIGITAL 1ST BRAND FRAMEWORK

When becoming Digital 1st most elements of your brand strategy will change, but some will remain the same as some aspects of brand strategy are timeless. In some ways we need to go back to the original core of what branding should be. *Online Brand Identity* offers a framework that captures both the timely and timeless aspects of brand strategy. That framework is supported by exercises that help you run your own workshops or brainstorm with groups of people from across the organization, because brand management is no longer the job of the brand manager only. You can only successfully build a brand in the digital age if all people in the company shape their work in line with the brand's mission and identity. The brand needs to become the organizing principle of everything you do, which even includes the products and services you make, otherwise your brand ends up making promises it doesn't deliver on. That will quickly result in consumers complaining online and harming your brand. The figure illustrates the Digital 1st brand framework. If you can get all dimensions of the brand flower aligned, you have found your key to creating a smashable and future ready brand. When applied well, the model and exercises can help in making everyone in the organization a brand thinker, rooted in brand strategy and centred on consumers.



MAKING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SMALL AND FEASIBLE

If you think about digital transformation as one holistic process, it becomes a painful reorg that no one wants to do. I prefer to look at digital transformation as a series of low barrier experiments that you can start in different parts of the organization simultaneously. Those experiments will disrupt existing ways of working in small steps so your strategy becomes future ready. Below are five examples of digital experiments you can start running tomorrow and that help getting ready for the future of branding. Each is illustrated in more detail in the book.



Five types of experiments that are great starting points for building your future strategy

FOR WHOM IS THIS BOOK?

The book *Online Brand Identity* is meant for all professionals who are responsible for one or more brands or that work in advertising, either on the advertiser or agency side. This book aims to unite professionals to define the future of branding together. If you are a marketing manager, a brand manager, or CMO you'll find a brand model that puts the brand at the heart of your strategy and that helps in making the most out of digital to give depth and credibility to your brand. If you are a media strategist, media manager, or communication professional you'll find a model to make the internet your media mix of the future. If you are an art director or strategist at an advertising agency you'll find lots of inspirational cases leveraging the full digital creative canvas to build engaging brand experiences. If you are an expert in E-commerce or performance advertising you'll find an opportunity to make your knowledge and skills useful across the full consumer journey rather than just at the end where the final purchase happens. If you are a researcher or some other type of data-driven professional you'll find examples for integrating traditional research and real-time data to provide strategic and real-time brand insights and you'll find a model for building your data infrastructure of the future. Finally, if you are a company leader you'll find insight into the key barriers for digital transformation, how to overcome them, and how to mobilize all these different types of professionals to join their expertise to make the brand and company future ready.

You can learn more about the book on www.onlinebrandidentity.org and you can find links there to many of the branding cases. You can also download PDFs of worksheets on the site that support workshops and brainstorms to shape your Digital 1st brand strategy.