Out of sight, out of mind: How to rejuvenate brand recall

Category: Branding
written by Steve Harvey | 10 September 2018
Unforgettable…that's what you are.

Or at least, that's what every brand wants to be.

In a world that's saturated by competition, there are few things more valuable than the real estate at the front of your consumer's mind. If you can be the first business your client pictures when they need something in your niche, then you're already on the fast track to success.

The question is, how do you achieve the brand recall you need?

A subsection of brand awareness, brand recall refers to how much of an imprint you can leave on your customer's mind through your logo, messaging and other branding materials. Think of it this way, when you hear the word "broadband" who do you think of? Virgin, Sky, TalkTalk? When someone suggests going out for a burger, is there a particular logo that comes to mind?

A brand recall strategy is about building the right associations between your company, and your customers. Used correctly, brand recall and recognition can pave the way to an unforgettable business and that all important business metric: loyalty.

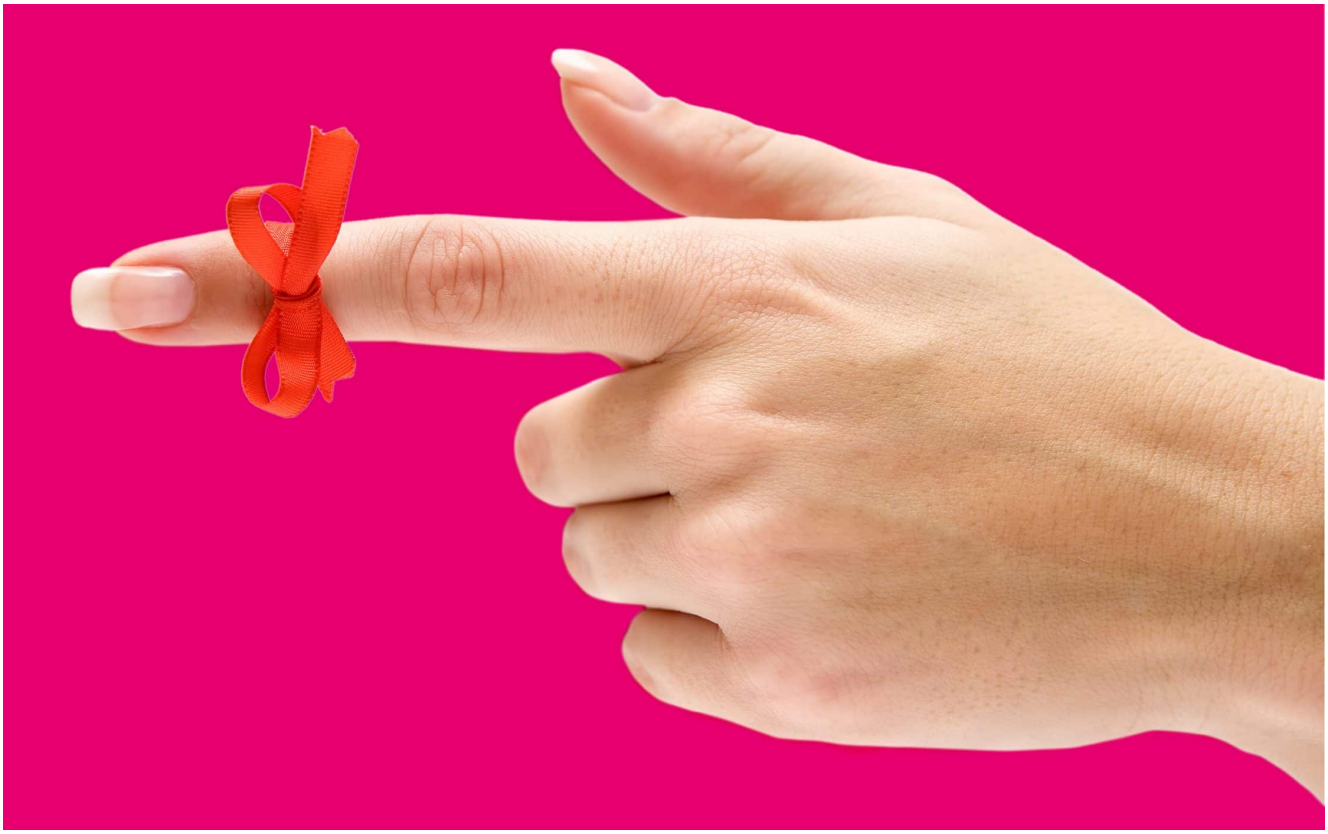
So, how do you promote brand recall for your organisation?

That's what we're here to discuss.

By the time you've finished reading this article, you'll know

the answers to “What is brand recall?”, “How can I design my own brand recall strategy?” and “What do I need to do to turbocharge my awareness initiative?”

You’re in for a memorable read.



Forget me not: What is brand recall?

The first thing you’re going to need is a brand recall definition you can take with you into your strategy-building sessions.

As mentioned above, brand recall is a component of brand awareness and something that works in conjunction with brand recognition. In simple terms, it’s part of the equation that dictates how people think and feel about your business.

There are two forms of awareness available for today’s brands:

1. **Aided awareness:** When someone remembers your company

when you give them a clue, like reminding them of what you sell.

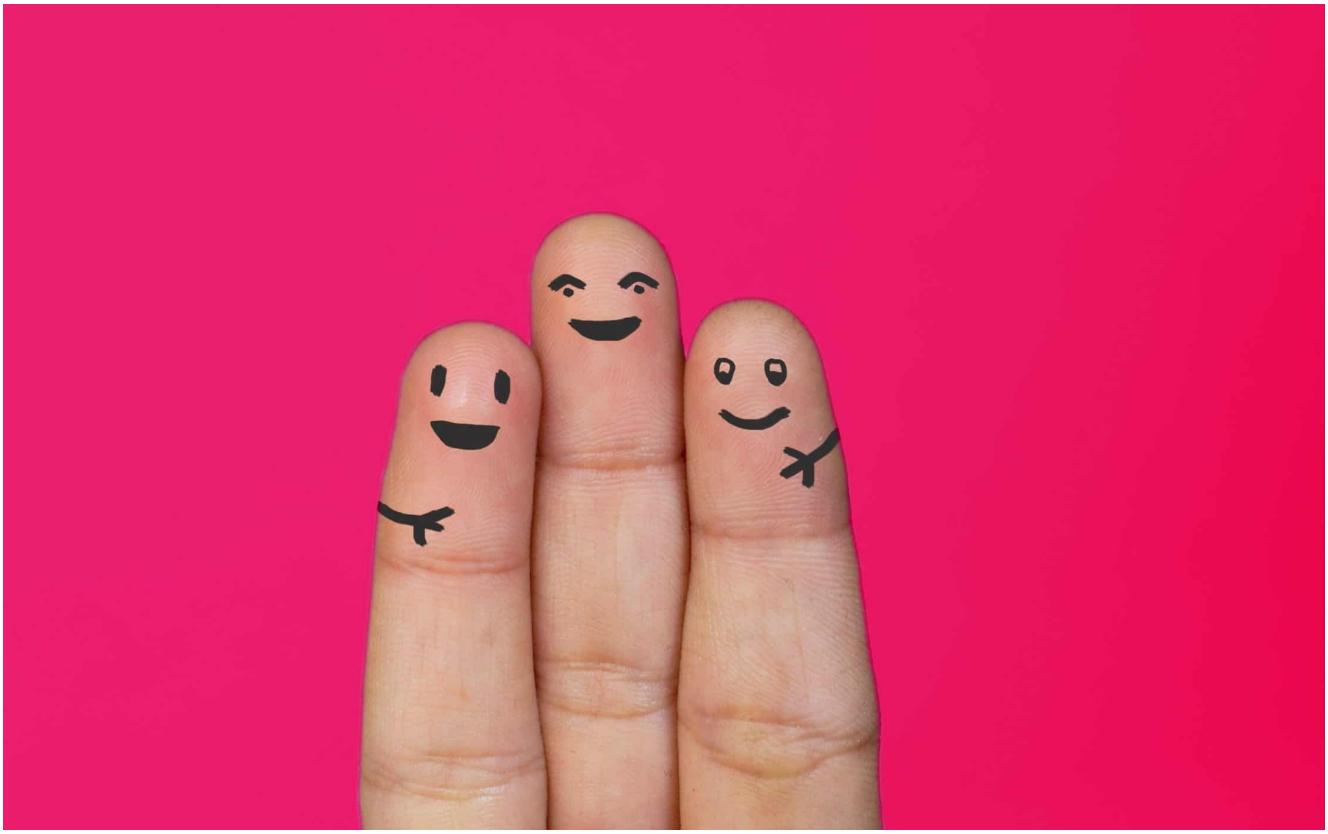
2. **Top-of-mind (un-aided awareness):** When people remember you instantly whenever they think of a particular product or industry.

Brand recall is “unaided” awareness, and it plays a crucial part in getting customers to stick with your company as long-term customers and advocates. Usually, companies test brand recall through the use of surveys. These help organisations to determine how easily their target audience can remember their name or company when addressing a particular problem.

There are plenty of great brand recall examples out there to help with your brand recall definition. For instance, most people think of Nike, Adidas or Under Armour when considering sports clothing. When someone wants a glass of fizzy drink, the most common brands to come to mind are Coca-Cola or Pepsi. Other examples include:

- **Premium supermarkets:** Waitrose, and Marks and Spencer’s.
- **Sports cars:** Lamborghini, Ferrari, and Porsche.
- **Technology:** Apple, Samsung, and Dell.

Obviously, brand recall comes with its fair share of benefits. Being the first company to pop to mind when someone needs something from your niche means that you don’t have to work as hard to maintain a consistent revenue.



The difference between brand perception, brand recall, and recognition

We've mentioned before in our Fabrik blog, that many companies struggle with branding because they automatically associate a brand with a logo or name. However, the truth is that there's a lot more to brand-building than most people expect. When you start digging into the details of brand creation, you discover many terms like brand recall, brand recognition, and brand awareness. While some of these terms can overlap, it's worth knowing the difference between each.

Brand awareness is a broad term that refers to the front-of-mind potential of your company. Most brand awareness studies look at how easily consumers can remember your company with a small amount of prompting. This is the "aided recall" we mentioned above. For instance, if someone was browsing through an aisle in Tesco, looking for shampoo, and they saw a name

and logo they felt familiar with, this would be an example of brand awareness.

With a brand recall strategy, your consumers don't need that extra hint to jog their memory. From the moment they decide that they need a new bottle of shampoo, your brand is the first thing to come to their mind. While brand awareness obviously helps to give your products more appeal when your customers do find them, brand recall is how you make sure that your user personas actively seek out your company time and time again – without extra inbound marketing.

Finally, brand recognition is the emotional perception that customers have of your company. Once your client has either "recalled" your brand, or noticed it thanks to brand awareness, recognition is how they decide whether to buy or not. After all, people can maintain both positive and negative memories of a company.

Although it takes a lot of hard work, and a good marketing strategy to get your business to the point of brand recall, when you achieve that holy grail of memorability, your company instantly starts to grow. After all, the more likely a person is to remember your brand without prompting, the more likely they are to keep coming to you regardless of your marketing plan.

Combine brand recall and recognition strategies, and you can even create referral campaigns and word of mouth marketing strategies for your company. After all, the people who consistently hold your business in mind are also the ones that are most likely to recommend you to friends, family, and even strangers looking for a solution to their problem.



Brand recall factors: Forget boring branding

So, how can you achieve the same level of association that Google has with search engines, or “Post-its” have with sticky notes? Well, you’re going to need to get all the right brand recall factors into place. A memorable brand needs to be defined, differentiated and consistent.

For most companies, this means that the first step in a good brand recall strategy is sitting down and working through their brand manifesto. Ideally, you’ll want a list of essential elements that spark crucial associations in the mind of your audience, such as:

1. A compelling brand logo

Logos are probably the most recognisable assets in any brand portfolio. With any luck, they’ll be the image that jumps to mind the moment someone in your industry starts looking for a

product or service like yours. To create a logo that's effective for brand recall, you'll need something that is:

- **Clear and simple:** Make sure that your logo isn't too cluttered or overwhelming, as this can make it harder to remember.
- **Evocative:** Your logo should represent the essence of your brand. Think about what you want to stand for and try to convey your vision in your brand mark.
- **Transferrable:** Consistency is critical to any brand recall strategy. If your logo looks different on your business cards, website, and social media sites because it's too complex, you won't be able to build a lasting presence in your niche.



Think of companies with great brand recall, like Target with its simple bullseye logo, or Google with its unique typography. Create an image that's easy to understand and visualise.

2. A carefully-chosen selection of colours

While your brand colours might not seem as important as your logo at first glance, they're another critical component of brand recall. In fact, some people remember the "golden" shades of McDonald's arches before they remember the shape of the logo. When it comes to Coca-Cola, the bright red is just as iconic as the typography used on the cans.



Use colour creatively enough, and it can instantly drive additional value for your company. Just remember to be cautious with the shades you choose. Colour has a habit of sparking emotional responses in your customers. This is great for brand recall, as emotional experiences drive stronger memories. However, you'll need to ensure that you choose the right colours to deliver the feelings that you want people to associate your brand with.

3. A memorable brand name

The next asset on our list of brand recall factors is your company's name.

If you want your customers to recall your organisation with ease, then it's a good idea them a compelling name that they can link to the logo and colours already in their minds. In some cases of brand recall, names become so synonymous with the service that they stand for, that they become "verbi-ified."

For instance, consider Google, and how that name has become a synonym for search. When you want to find something online today, you don't just "look for it," you "Google it."

4. An unforgettable slogan

The conversations that companies have with their target audience are becoming increasingly important in an experience-focused world. Before you can begin marketing your brand and raise brand recognition through things like direct marketing campaigns, content, and social media, you can start your

conversation with a simple tagline or slogan.



Slogans and straplines help to add context to brand recall. For example, when a customer thinks about beer, they might visualise Carlsberg and their “Probably the best” tagline. Fabrik’s own strapline, “Creative industry” is both memorable and qualifies our offering. When customers start searching for an audiobook company, they remember Audible, and “Stories that surround you.” The right slogan reminds your audience of what you’re all about, and why they’re choosing you.

5. A powerful USP

Even the best brand recall strategies can’t succeed if your business is just the same as countless others in your industry. If you want to revamp brand recall, then you need to commit yourself to finding something about your business that customers can’t find anywhere else. Coca-Cola fans know that they can get similar flavours from brands like Pepsi, but they don’t get that unique experience that they get from Coke’s happiness-focused approach to marketing.



Your unique selling point can be anything that sets you apart from the crowd. For some companies, it's a low price point. For others, it's exceptional customer service. Figure out how you can differentiate yourself.

Brand recall strategies: How to make your brand more memorable

Brand recall is a concept built on the idea that the best brands are timeless.

No matter how marketing strategies change, and how consumer preferences might evolve, your brand recall strategies are always there to keep your customers coming back for more.

While there's no secret formula that will help you to promote brand recall and boost awareness for your company, there are things you can do to make your marketing more memorable. Here are just some of the ways that you can keep your company front of mind with your target audience.

1. Know your goals

The first thing you'll need to succeed in any brand recall strategy is a solid mission in mind.

If you don't know what your company is supposed to stand for, then how can you expect your audience to make the right associations?

Sit down with your branding team, and the essential members of your company, and ask yourself how you'd want your customers to describe you. Figure out:

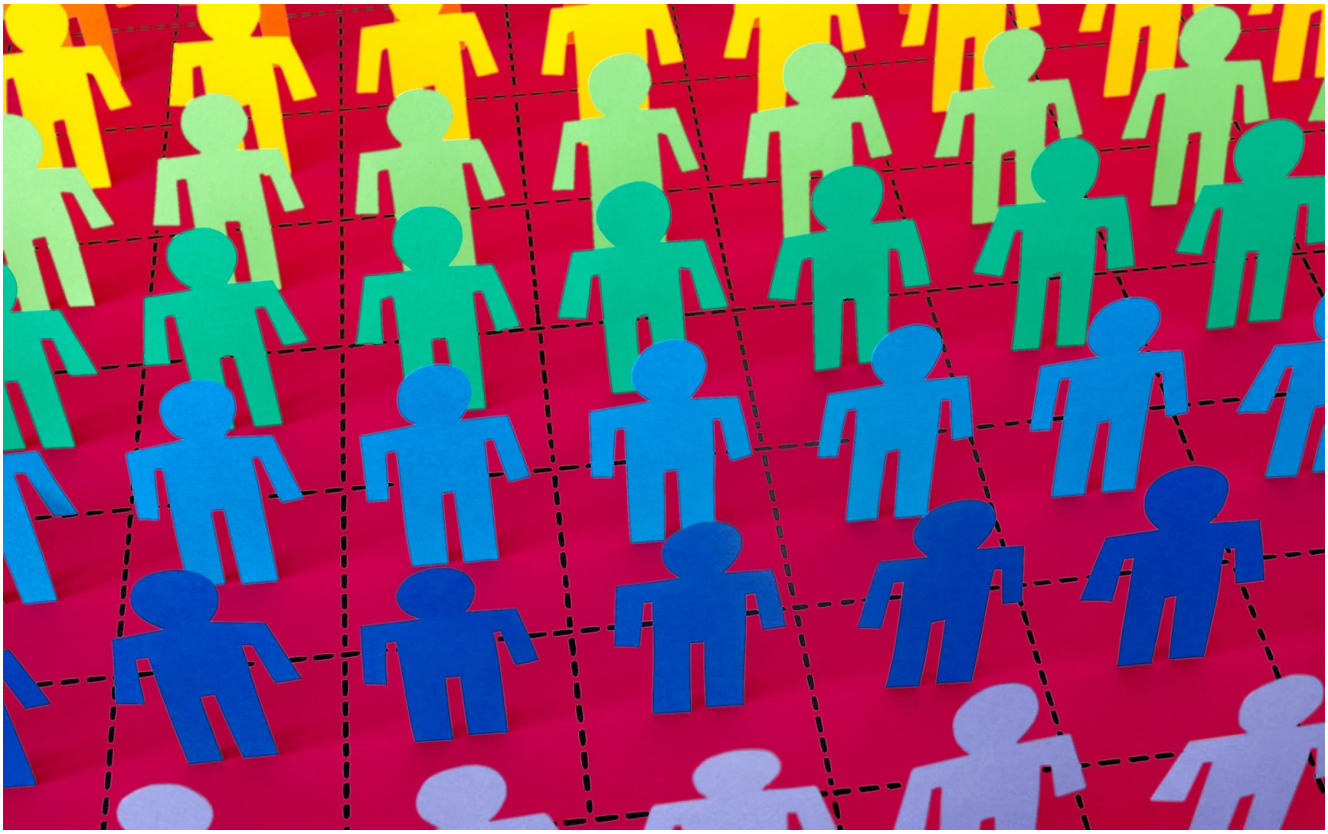
- Which niche you want to be synonymous with.
- Which problems you can solve for your customers.
- What kind of customers you're trying to appeal to.
- What words you'd use to describe your organisation.

2. Tap into the power of emotions

Think of some of your fondest memories. The chances are that the images that play in your head come with a series of feelings. That's because we naturally preserve the moments in our lives that deliver a strong emotional response.

Tapping into the power of emotions through your marketing and customer service strategies can help to prompt better brand recollection. There are many different ways that you can make your audience "feel" something about your company. For instance:

- **Tell stories:** Show your customers you resonate with them by telling tales that they can connect with.
- **Use images:** 90% of the information that reaches your brain is visual. Pictures and videos can prompt stronger emotional responses than text for many customers.
- **Make connections:** Partner with community groups and charities that your customers care about to show that you care about the same things they do.



3. Use repetition and consistency

Repetition is a critical aspect of learning. When you launch a brand recall strategy, you're essentially teaching your customers that they should associate you with a particular idea, niche, or mission statement. This means that you need to repeat the same message on various platforms until it hits home.

Repetition makes your marketing message more memorable, but it also makes you credible too. For instance, imagine if your bank or regular supermarket constantly changed their logo, or switched the products and services they sold. You'd have no idea what the company stood for, or whether they knew what they were doing. A brand that remains consistent appears stronger. Don't fall victim to the problems of inconsistent branding. Make sure that all of your brand assets stay the same, including your:

- Logo.
- Colours.

- Tone of voice.
- USP.
- Brand mission/vision.

4. Create a new position in the marketplace

Unique companies make for memorable brands. We're inherently more likely to remember something new and different, which is why it's so important to differentiate yourself from your competitors. Showing your clients that you have something special to offer helps them to make associations with your company that they can't make anywhere else.

Consider Coca-Cola and their "Happiness" campaign for instance. While other beverage brands in the space focused on things like flavour, Coca-Cola decided to take their brand recall to the next level, by linking themselves to the idea of happiness. This meant creating advertising campaigns that showcased different types of happiness – from moments with friends to memories with loved ones.

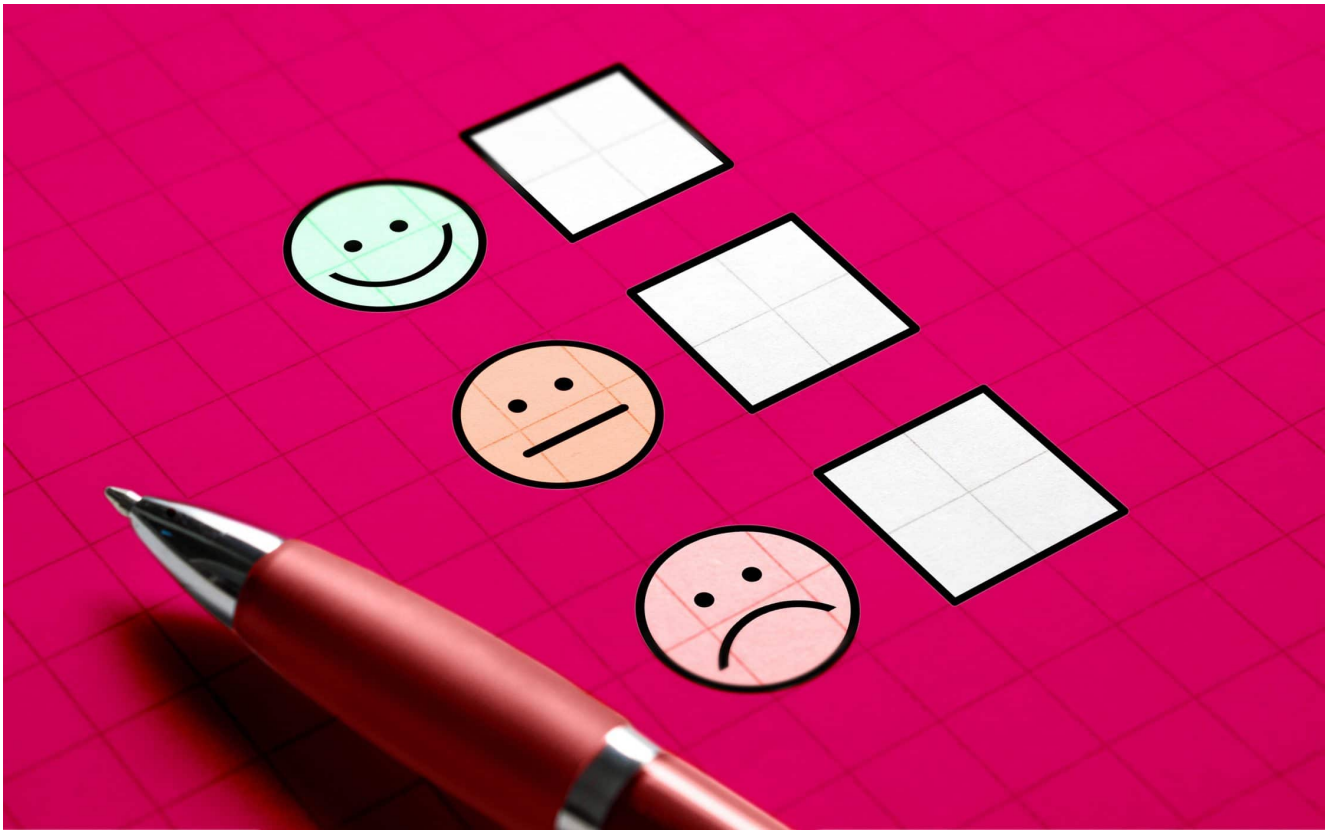
Find a way to set yourself apart by looking at your niche from a brand-new angle.

5. Develop your influence

Sometimes, if you want your customers to associate you with an idea or emotion, you'll need a little help. It's difficult for any budding company to make their brand instantly memorable. However, connecting yourself to other organisations in your space that share your vision or values can help to boost your brand recall strategy.

As an example, if you were launching a new adventure holiday company, then it would make sense to partner with companies who already have a strong influence over consumers drawn to action and exploration. In this way, a partnership with a

company like GoPro would show that you're experience-oriented and that your company offers vacation moments worth recording. You can even team up with influencers in your social media space that help to add weight to your company.



Measuring awareness with a brand recall survey

So, by now you know the answer to "what is brand recall," and you've even got a few tips on how to start your brand recall strategy. This is the point when you might be asking yourself, how do I know if my brand recall strategies are working?

Like anything else in the branding and marketing world, it's important that you can measure and track the success of your campaigns. Most companies measure brand recall as part of a brand awareness audit.

A brand awareness audit simply measures how familiar people in your target audience are with your product or brand. If people

can instantly distinguish your product from a competitor's in your space, then you have a distinct advantage in your niche. If your customers have no idea what makes you different from your competitors, then you've got a problem.

The easiest way to measure brand recall is with a brand recall survey. As you might guess, this is just a questionnaire that you can send out to people who fit your user personas. With your brand recall survey, you can test:

- **Unaided brand recall:** How many people instantly know your company without prompting.
- **Aided brand recall (awareness):** How many people know your business when given hints or tips.

To test for unaided brand recall in a survey, you'll need to ask open-ended questions where your brand names and products don't come up. For instance, if you're testing for brand recall in the marketing industry you could ask:

- What's the first company you think of when you need help with marketing?
- Which brands do you think are the most popular in the marketing industry?
- Can you name this company? (show your logo)
- What do you think about when you see this logo?

If your brand awareness is high, but your recall isn't. Don't worry. Good brand awareness is a sign that you're on your way to better recall, you just need to keep working at it. Unaided brand awareness simply indicates that the brand impressions you're making are strong enough to keep you top of mind for your customers. A good way to boost recall is to ask your customers: "What reminded you of this brand?"

If you find out that your logo is memorable, but your strapline and name aren't aiding your brand recall strategies, then you can go back to the drawing board and re-work them. The next time you conduct a brand recall survey, you might

discover that you get better results.



It’s time to promote brand recall for your company

There’s nothing worse than being forgettable when you’re trying to launch a successful company.

A great brand needs to be timeless, expressive, and memorable. If you want people to buy from you, then you need to make sure that you’re the first business they “recall” when thinking about a particular niche.

Of course, just like any other branding strategy, ensuring better brand recall takes time. Just like Rome, the best brands don’t form in a day, and it’s going to take some time and focus to make your company truly iconic. The most unforgettable brands are the ones that have been around for a while. However, that doesn’t mean you can’t start building brand recall from day one.

Get out there and start making a name for yourself. Brand reach leads to brand awareness, brand awareness leads to recall, and recall leads to loyalty.

Good luck.

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