What is a lifestyle brand? When brands become a way of life…

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Once, all companies needed to do to grab the attention of their target audience was design a stunning advertisement. The right TV message or banner was enough to inspire and engage almost any customer.

Today, the average consumer is sick and tired of "traditional ads". People don't want to be "sold to" by their favourite brands. Instead, they want an incredible experience – something that motivates them to invest and buy. No company inspires loyalty and conversion better than lifestyle brands. These organisations have learned how to earn their customers by offering them more than just a product, but also the lifestyle they crave too.

Lifestyle brands are effective because they work on a deep understanding of what their target customer wants to do and achieve. They understand the experiences that their audience craves, as well as the people, things, and places that inspire them. Successful lifestyle brands don't just compile demographic data into a user persona and begin to churn out content, they dissect every aspect of their audience until they know exactly what makes them tick.

Creating a lifestyle brand is about defining who or what your customer wants to become in the future, and giving them the solution that will help them to achieve that end goal. It's not about designing the perfect running shoe, but convincing your audience that your company will make them a better runner.

Here, we'll answer the question "what is a lifestyle brand?" and help you come up with a unique lifestyle brand strategy to captivate your audience.



What is a lifestyle brand? Creating your lifestyle brand strategy

Unless you happen to be a movie star, famous athlete, or talented singer, the chances are you live a pretty ordinary (even boring) life. While many of us enjoy our standard day-to-day experiences, we can feel that a certain scent, food, or item of clothing makes it easier for us to associate ourselves with the people we "want" to be, rather than the people we currently are.

Lifestyle brands allow you to encompass your ideal version of you. They give you a sense of belonging to a community you admire or appreciate. Look at Marks and Spencer for example. There are plenty of companies out there that sell food and clothing together. However, few brands give you the same sense

of luxury that you get when you buy something from Marks and Spencer.

Luxury lifestyle brands like M&S convince their customers that they can enjoy a better standard of living when they buy from them. Since we're more obsessed with experiences today than anything else, this is an important differentiation point for the current market.

Successful lifestyle brands choose a specific kind of person and work consistently to appeal to that individual. They use their voice, image, and brand identity to form deeper connections with a smaller number of customers overall, hoping that those customers will be willing to pay more for an affiliation with the brand and the lifestyle that company promises.

The lifestyle brand marketing campaigns you choose will depend on what kind of customer you want to connect with. For instance, you might be interested in reaching out to:

- The athlete, like Nike, Puma, or Under Armour.
- The thrill-seeker, like Vans, The North Face, or DC Shoes.
- The adventurer, like Jeep or Harley Davidson.
- The trend-spotter, like Warby Parker, or Dior.
- The luxury lover, like Marks and Spencer, Ralph Lauren, or Pashley.

Lifestyle brand examples: An insight into successful lifestyle brands

If you imagine traditional marketing as being the pre-roll advertisement that comes before your YouTube video, lifestyle brand marketing is the actual content that your customer has

been searching for all along. Lifestyle brand marketing is about finding out what kind of person your customer wants to be and then giving them the tools they need to enter that community.

Creating lifestyle brands takes a lot of hard work. Ultimately, everything you put into your brand, from your purpose to your name, needs to represent the vision you're trying to portray to your customer. Ultimately, your overall identity should be a representation of the kind of character your customer wants to embrace.

With such a tall order to fill when it comes to creating successful lifestyle brands, it can be helpful to look at a few businesses that are doing it right. Here are some of the top lifestyle brands, and what you can learn from them.

Lifestyle brand examples: Nike

Nike's marketing strategy isn't just about selling shoes or athletic apparel. When you buy an item from Nike, you're investing in a lifestyle and an idea that anyone – no matter where they come from or what they do, can be an athlete. One of the things that makes Nike one of the top lifestyle brands, is the fact that it has a compelling concept that can connect with anyone.



In today's world, where people are consistently trying to improve their health and show off their physical beauty, Nike tells its customers to "Just Do It". Nike also uses its lifestyle brand marketing strategies to show just how broad their target audience is. Nike doesn't just appeal to the standard athlete, but anyone who wants to make a change to their health and fitness.

Nike even launched their app Nike+ to allow people to share their goals and achievements with friends. This creates a perfect opportunity for word of mouth marketing while also making sure that customers can identify themselves with the lifestyle they crave through social media channels.

Lifestyle brand examples: Apple

Another of the top lifestyle brands worth talking about in this post is Apple. Whenever you visit the Apple website or walk into a store, you get exactly the experience you expect – a clean, simple, and ingenious world of innovation. While part of what makes Apple special as a brand is their USP, the fact that they sell a lifestyle, rather than just a product also

has a significant impact.



Apple customers see their products as innovative, simple, and stylish. Most Mac users stay with their technology throughout their life and eventually become advocates or ambassadors for the brand too. Though the technology offered by Apple might have changed over the years, the lifestyle they promise remains the same.

Ever since their first commercial, Apple has been associated with living a life on the cutting edge of technology.

Lifestyle brand examples: Burt’s Bees

Burt’s Bees are a company that sells a huge range of natural products for body care, all the way from lip balm to moisturiser. Part of what makes this company so compelling is the fact that it’s one of the top luxury lifestyle brands. Burt’s Bees convinces their customer that everything they put on their body should be made from the best ingredients that nature has to offer.



Credit: Tools of Men

This company is one of the most successful lifestyle brands because it appeals to luxury and corporate responsibility at the same time. When you buy from Burt's Bees you're showing the world that you care about natural products, but you're also devoted to protecting the environment.

Head to the Burt's Bees website, and you'll find a history of their timeline and all the things they've done to make the world a more sustainable place. In fact, Burt's Bees are one of the few companies in the world to have a "carbon neutral" certification.

Lifestyle brand examples: Red Bull

Sometimes the top lifestyle brands earn their success because they offer their customers a sense of excitement that steps outside of their everyday life. Red Bull is a fantastic example of this. Its strapline, commercials, and websites all sell customers on the idea of epic adventures and adrenaline-fuelled escapades.



Red bull shines the spotlight on anyone who’s willing to go above and beyond the ordinary. In an era where people are constantly searching for new ways to show off to their friends on social media, being associated with a thrill-seeking company like Red Bull can be perfect for those with an adventurous streak.

Lifestyle brand examples: Vans

Finally, Vans is another example of one of the best-known successful lifestyle brands. This action-sports company has proven itself as a leader in snowboarding and skate culture, to such an extent that its customers love it for more than just its apparel. Today’s extreme athletes are proud to display the Vans logo on their boards, and accessories.



Vans has built its reputation as a lifestyle brand by getting involved with events and experiences its customers care about, including the "Warped Tour" music festival, and "Go Skateboarding Day".Vans uses its lifestyle brand marketing to underscore a belief that skating is a way of life. It does this not just in its incredible advertising campaigns, but also in the initiatives it supports. For instance, the company opened a huge skateboarding complex in California to act as a free playground for its fans.

The ingredients of luxury lifestyle brands: Steps for success

So, by this point, you should have a pretty good answer to the question: "what is a lifestyle brand?". However, the chances are you're still wondering what a lifestyle brand strategy should look like, or what you need to do to start creating a lifestyle brand.

Ultimately, lifestyle brand marketing is all about convincing your customers that you can deliver the experiences and

identities they've been searching for. Whether your aim is to become one of the many luxury lifestyle brands that promise their customers a better standard of living, or you'd prefer to be associated with ethical or adventurous ideas is up to you.

Because lifestyle brands embed their characteristics throughout the whole of their company experience, you'll need to determine what kind of lifestyle you want to sell before you begin designing (or re-designing) your logo or coming up with a marketing plan. Here are a few steps to get you started.



1. Decide what kind of lifestyle you want to sell

The first step in creating a lifestyle brand is figuring out what you want your customers to associate you with. Ask yourself what your customers like to do, what kind of companies they already like, and whether they aspire to any people in the current industry. If you're not sure where to

get started, you could hire a brand consutlancy, or survey your customers as a starting point.

Only once you've figured out the kind of life your customer is looking for can you start to produce products and content that cater to their lifestyle. For instance, if you know your customers want to live a more active life, you could create podcasts that tell them how to use your product to become more physically fit.

2. Weave lifestyle into your brand story

For lifestyle brands to be effective, their story needs to outline a mission or vision that their customers can resonate with. The human brain instinctively responds to stories, and we've shared narratives ever since the time when we lived in caves and drew pictures on walls. Your brand needs to develop a memorable and engaging tale that sells the lifestyle you plan to offer.

Start by addressing a problem you know your customer wants to solve, then find ways to highlight how your company, product, and ideas can help your audience to overcome the challenges they face in an authentic and believable way.

3. Be personal

Lifestyle brands are inherently social. When people embrace a lifestyle, they usually do so to show the world around them what kind of individual they are. The best way to connect with your followers from a lifestyle perspective is to engage on the platform they most often visit daily. Social media, for instance, is a great way to get your lifestyle brands name out there while collecting data on your target audience.

Remember, on social media, your aim shouldn't be to consistently sell to your audience but to take part in conversations and engage in activities that show your

personality to your customers. If they can begin to see that your company has the kind of character that they respect or identify with, then your customers are more likely to invest in your company.

4. Use content to create experiences

Creating a lifestyle brand, just like establishing any kind of brand, can hinge on the importance of great content. Ideally, your aim should be to focus on pieces that don't feel like a "hard sell" to your audience. For instance, blogs can help you to show your authority while ensuring that you rank better on the organic search engine channels. On the other hand, videos and podcasts can help you to connect with your customers on a more visual level.

Look for ways that you can use your content and your unique tone of voice to connect with your customers on an emotional level. For instance, remember the Coca-Cola brand and their ability to inspire joy and thoughts of winter around the holidays.

5. Build your community

Once you know what kind of identity you want to portray to the world, you'll be able to start building a look and voice that connects you with other lifestyle brands in your industry. Ideally, you'll want to start growing your community as quickly as possible, through influencer marketing and word of mouth content that showcases the lifestyle you can offer.

Remember, it's not enough to simply tell people that you can give them the experiences that they're looking for, you also need to cultivate evidence that convinces your customers that you're the key to achieving their identity goals.

Lifestyle brand marketing: Tips for creating a lifestyle brand

Lifestyle brands are effective because they appeal to our human need to find a company that embodies our ideals. The word “lifestyle” is a somewhat broad one, and it means that your company can focus on a range of areas, all the way from fashion, to cooking, or sportswear.

While there’s no step-by-step guide for a one-size-fits-all lifestyle brand strategy, the following tips could help you to get started on the right track, before you begin your marketing campaign.

1. Do your research

At this point, you should have a clear idea of the kind of lifestyle brands you like, or the identity you want to build. With that information in hand, you can start to do some research into your marketplace, including:

- What kind of competitors you’ll be facing.
- How your name, logo, and visual identity should represent your lifestyle.
- What kind of brand values your customers respond best to.
- Where your customers spend most of their time, and what kind of marketing they like.
- What your brand should never become.

Remember, your aim is to define your company as something that can help your customers to achieve their goals. To do that, you’ll first need to learn what those goals are, and which solutions already exist in the marketplace.

2. Build your personality

The top lifestyle brands have recognisable personality traits that travel with them wherever they go. The research you did to define what kind of customer you want to appeal to should give you an insight into how that type of person talks and interacts with other individuals in their community. This will make it easier for you to adapt your voice to resonate with your followers.

Remember, some lifestyle brands even create their own branded buzzwords and language. For instance, employees at Disney World aren't called staff members, but "cast members".

3. Cohesively demonstrate your ideals

Finally, the one thing that lifestyle brands do better than any other company, is convey a lifestyle or ideal that their customers aspire to. For instance, your brand might be associated with luxury, hospitality, or an adventurous nature. Perhaps you have a strong devotion to the environment, or you challenge what your customers think is possible.

Ultimately, whatever you decide your lifestyle brand is going to be about, you need to be willing to commit to your ideals for the long-term. While the way you work to achieve your vision might change over time, and even the methods you use to communicate might evolve, make sure that your customers can rely on you to embody their ideals, no matter what.



Brands and customer expression: Becoming a lifestyle brand

At the end of the day, most buying decisions are rarely logical.

People don’t buy Doc Martens because they need a new pair of boots, they choose that particular brand because of the identity it embodies, and the idea that if they have their own pair of Docs, they can join the creative punk ideology behind the company.

Consumers view the items and services they purchase as an extension of who they are and what they believe in. Lifestyle brands simply build on that concept, by ensuring that they don’t just sell a product, but a set of values that appeal to their target market.

If you can get to the bottom of what your customer wants and needs from your industry, then harness their dream lifestyle

accordingly, then you're sure to create desire for your product. The key to success is to remember that you're not trying to associate yourself with what your customers already are, so much as what they'd like to achieve. Nike doesn't exclusively market itself to accomplished athletes. Instead, the company encourages everyone to believe that, with its help, they can all be successful in their health and fitness goals.

Products come and go, but our underlying quest to find ourselves, and become the people we want to be can remain the same for decades. If you can learn from lifestyle brands, and market an experience and vision to your customer, instead of just an item, then you could achieve the brand loyalty that turns your company into a household name or even a cult entity.

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