

BUILDING BRAND + CULTURE

Impact @Scale

PRACTITIONER GUIDE



PREFACE

THE ROLE OF CULTURE AND BRAND IN THE IMPACT JOURNEY



Dear Community Development Bank Leaders:

Impact @ Scale is a long term initiative designed to build the capacity of mission focused banks, including Community Development Financial Institutions, Minority Depository Institutions, and those financing environmental sustainability to maximize their effectiveness and impact. Operated through a partnership between the Community Development Bankers Association (CDBA) and Partners for the Common Good (PCG), the initiative seeks to empower banks to integrate purpose and impact into their business strategies and better communicate their value to internal and external stakeholders.

The Impact @ Scale initiative began in 2019 with a training series focused on the following themes: (1) metrics, data analytics, and systems; (2) impact storytelling; (3) internal branding and building bank culture; and (4) integrating impact and purpose into bank strategic planning. The work of Impact @ Scale has continued via on-going CDBA programming and publication of a series of practitioner guides. The first guide “The Basics of Impact Analytics,” was released in June 2022. This guide – “Building Brand + Culture” – is the second. Forthcoming guides will discuss storytelling and strategic planning.

A foundational principle of Impact @ Scale is a recognition that building a mission-focused bank is not a destination, but a journey. Building a strong, purposeful culture is an iterative process, beginning where you are today. At each step of your journey, your goal should be to learn and refine, gradually improving on what you have already built.

I am excited about this Building Brand + Culture Practitioner Guide. Every bank’s brand begins from within; it is a reflection of the culture and values of the people who are the institution. We have partnered with author and renowned branding and culture expert Martin Thoma to develop this guide as a map through the journey of embracing your culture and purpose and using it to differentiate and position your bank to internal and external stakeholders. Enjoy the journey!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeannine Jacokes', written in a cursive style.

Jeannine Jacokes

Chief Executive Officer

Community Development Bankers Association

& Partners for the Common Good

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Martin Thoma is principal and co-founder of Thoma Thoma, a brand strategy and marketing communications firm in Little Rock, Arkansas, with particular expertise in serving the mission-driven community bank.

Martin wrote the book, *Branding Like the Big Boys: How to Grab Market Share, Improve Margins and Increase Loyalty In Your Small Business*, available for purchase at a discount to CDBA members at thomathoma.com/cdba.

He is frequently sought out for comment on brands and branding by publications like *Vice Sports*, *The Boston Globe*, *Arkansas Business* and *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. His ideas and efforts have been showcased in publications as diverse as *eHealthcare Strategies & Trends*, *The Journal of Accountancy* and *Transportation Industry News*. Martin has criss-crossed the country speaking on the power of brand leadership, with appearances from Honolulu to Seattle to San Antonio.

Martin and his partner Melissa created the proprietary brand development process known as The Brand Navigator™ to help executive teams unleash the power of their brands to attract customers, engage and align employees, and drive revenues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the valuable contributions of dozens of individuals and organizations that have made Impact @ Scale possible. We particularly wish to recognize the generous financial support of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, without which this program would not be possible. We also thank the 92 individuals from the 47 banks that participated in the two Impact @ Scale cohorts and the expert trainers that partnered with us to assemble the thought leadership and content that will propel this project forward.

This is a joint publication between Partners for the Common Good and the Community Development Bankers Association.

Authored by Martin Thoma with editing by Jeannine Jacokes and Carla Mannings. Design by Thoma Thoma.

The Impact @ Scale training program and these corresponding practitioner guides are generously supported by a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.



ABOUT

THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BANKERS ASSOCIATION (CDBA) is the national trade association for the community development banking (CDB) sector. Our members include banks that are US Treasury Department certified Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), Minority Depository Institutions (MDIs), and those that focus on environmental sustainability. CDBA has 20-plus years of experience with public policy advocacy and programs designed to promote knowledge sharing and best practices in the sector.

CDBA and Partners leadership and staff have co-authored impact guides with Aeris Insight (formerly CARS), trained Minority Depository Institutions (MDIs) with Deloitte as part of the 2014 CDFI Fund Capacity Building Initiative, and presented on impact management and measurement (IMM) at industry events. In 2019, they jointly launched Impact @ Scale as an industry initiative to build the IMM capacity of the sector.



PARTNERS FOR THE COMMON GOOD (PCG) is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance economic justice and racial equity. We partner with and strengthen financial institutions to bring capital, create opportunity, and build wealth for low-income people and communities. PCG's CDFI loan fund operates the industry's first national loan participation network and its CapNexus platform provides industry news and opportunities. In 2001, PCG helped launch and has since hosted the Community Development Bankers Association (CDBA).

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Purpose, Brand and Culture	6
----------------------------	---

PART 1: FUNDAMENTALS OF BRAND + CULTURE

Section 1: What is Branding and What is a Brand?	10
Section 2: What's in a Brand	13
Section 3: The Brand Leadership Frames	16

PART 2: ACTIVATING YOUR BRAND WITH CULTURE

Section 4: Building Brand Culture: Working "Inside Out"	22
Section 5: The Six Habits of Culturally Aligned Companies	24
Section 6: Clear Beliefs	28
Section 7: Constant Communications	29
Section 8: Compelling Stories	32
Section 9: Collective Celebrations	33
Section 10: Core Value Reward and Recognitions	35
Section 11: The Employee Brand Culture Council	36

PART 3: ASSOCIATED WORKSHEETS

Module 1: Brand Assessment Tool	39
Module 2: Brand Leadership Frames	45
Module 3: Assess & Develop Cultural Clarity	59
Module 4: Assess Your Bank's Core Values Maturity	62
Module 5: Build Your Cultural Communications	66
Module 6: Assess and Plan Collective Celebrations	71
Module 7: Recognition Program Assessment Tool	78
Module 8: Starting your Bank's Culture Committee	80



This Practitioner Guide is complemented by eight online videos and companion worksheets to help you go deeper and implement the concepts covered here. These materials are hosted on the CDBA's Impact @ Scale web page at: cdbabanks.org/brand-culture. Or scan this QR code with your smartphone to reach the page.

“The purpose economy is driven by workers’ thirst for meaningful work; consumers’ affinity for socially responsible companies, products and services; and business efforts to satisfy these urges.”

INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE, BRAND AND CULTURE

In this Impact @ Scale (I@S) Practitioner Guide, we explore the role of purpose in driving CDFI bank, MDI and environmentally sustainable bank brands forward, how to create differentiated positioning built on your unique purpose, and how to activate these ideas through extraordinary bank cultures. Collectively, we refer to these banks as mission-focused banks or Community Development Banks (CDBs).

Significant academic, sociological and think tank research underscores the major shifts occurring in U.S. society now that augur for the power of purpose. With this research foundation understood, bank leaders can proceed confidently, knowing that the time, talent and money they invest will be well rewarded. Further, mission-focused banks by nature are among the best positioned businesses in the world to ride this wave.

THE CASE FOR PURPOSE

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “purpose” as the cause or reason for which a thing exists. This is an important concept for the mission-focused bank today because more and more data demonstrate that consumers crave purpose.

For example, in 1993, 66% of American consumers said they would switch brands to one associated with a good cause, given similar price and quality, but by 2017, that figure had jumped to 89%, an increase by nearly half-again as many Americans.

A 2018 Cone & Porter Novelli study of U.S. consumers found that 78% say companies must positively affect society, not just make money. And 77% say they feel more emotionally connected to a company driven by a purpose and values. The 2018 Edelman Earned Brand study found that

64% of consumers around the world said they would buy or boycott a brand solely because of its position on a social or political issue – 13% more than in 2017.

And it’s not just consumers; investors are aligning their money with their values. In 1995, less than \$640 billion were held in assets placed with Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) screens. By 2018, that number had jumped to \$12 trillion – an 18-fold increase. In fact, by that time, 26% of all U.S. professionally managed assets were ESG. [U.S. Social Investment Forum] For the forward-looking mission-focused bank, purpose may seem to be something of a “soft skill,” but the societal trends suggest it is an organizational competency too important to overlook.

ABOUT



THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BANKERS ASSOCIATION (CDBA) is the national trade association for the community development banking (CDB) sector. Our members include banks that are US Treasury Department certified Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), Minority Depository Institutions (MDIs), and those that focus on environmental sustainability. CDBA has 20-plus years of experience with public policy advocacy and programs designed to promote knowledge sharing and best practices in the sector.

CDBA and Partners leadership and staff have co-authored impact guides with Aeris Insight (formerly CARS), trained Minority Depository Institutions (MDIs) with Deloitte as part of the 2014 CDFI Fund Capacity Building Initiative, and presented on impact management and measurement (IMM) at industry events. In 2019, they jointly launched Impact @ Scale as an industry initiative to build the IMM capacity of the sector.



PARTNERS FOR THE COMMON GOOD (PCG) is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance economic justice and racial equity. We partner with and strengthen financial institutions to bring capital, create opportunity, and build wealth for low-income people and communities. PCG's CDFI loan fund operates the industry's first national loan participation network and its CapNexus platform provides industry news and opportunities. In 2001, PCG helped launch and has since hosted the Community Development Bankers Association (CDBA).



USING THIS GUIDE

Building Brand + Culture in your CDB Bank delves into the building blocks of creating a purpose-driven, brand-centric culture. Accompanying this practitioner guide is a series of eight short videos to introduce the concepts and aid understanding.



In this printed guide, the videos and the worksheets, you will learn the fundamentals, apply the material to your bank and gain clarity on how deep you want to go. Find the associated videos and worksheets on the CDBA's Impact @ Scale web

page at: cdbanks.org/brand-culture. Or scan this QR code with your smartphone to reach the page.

First, we explore brand development as the foundation and provide tools for defining your brand of banking.

Then we focus on developing brand culture to transform your customer experience, improve talent acquisition and retention, and impact your bank's performance metrics.

Finally, we will introduce the concept of the Employee Brand Culture Council as "master class" to the reader, which is a practice that will put your cultural development and activation on steroids.

Leading CDBs have used this discipline to deliver impressive results in their organizations and their communities. It's a discipline you can master as well.



PART 1: FUNDAMENTALS OF BRAND & CULTURE

Section 1: What is Branding and What is a Brand?

The best place to start this journey is with the question: What is a brand? And then: how are they developed and how do they create value? We'll explore the fundamental theory of brands as a prelude to how to practice branding.

Branding Is Leadership, Not Marketing

A powerful and competitive brand is not something you solely advertise or design. It's everything you are and do. This means that "branding" is leadership, not marketing. A brand starts from within your organization.

Consider this: If you transplanted all the people at Walmart into Nordstrom, would it still be Nordstrom? The walls, the clothes, the displays, the slogan, and the advertising would still be Nordstrom's. Only the people would be different. Is it still Nordstrom? What if you reversed the operation? Is the result still Walmart?

Could you transplant all the engineers at Microsoft into Apple and hope to produce the next iPhone? Could you swap out the team at Southwest Airlines for Virgin's or American Airlines' employees and still have Southwest?

The answer to all of these thought experiments, of course, is of course not!

It proves the point. Great companies — and powerful brands — have deeply ingrained cultures, customer service delivery models, and mod operandi.

A brand is a living, breathing, evolving thing. The job of the brand leader is to ensoul it.

A highly clarified brand gives an organization a powerful sense of self and purpose. It can align and shape the culture, influence product

development, and guide the behavior of your organization in the marketplace. This is critical to service organizations like financial services providers.

A Working Definition of Brand

Here's the definition we've used for decades in developing brand leadership with our clients at Thoma Thoma. For several reasons it works very well to create the clarity of thought necessary to lead your brand effectively :

Your brand is: "everything that is known, said, experienced, and felt about your bank, products, and services."

Your brand can also be viewed as a mental construct. Consider the horizon as a mental construct. The horizon doesn't exist in any real sense, but rather it's a way to talk about where Earth meets the sky. It's a useful mental framework for us to discuss something we can perceive. The same is true of a brand; it is a way of understanding an essential business component.

A brand exists "out there" in the collective consciousness. It's intangible; it's outside your control, though it is within your influence.

Parsing the Definition

"Known" represents facts and information understood by your employees, customers, and the world.

What is "Said" represents word of mouth (this still being the most powerful form of advertising, and now amplified by media and social media).

To be "Experienced" means every single customer experience is incorporated into the brand. Think about how many thousands of experiences your bank creates every day. Recognizing that each and every customer experience is in your brand creates a new imperative for managing the

customer experience.

Finally, **“Felt”** underscores the power of emotion in brand development. The brand is the emotional connective tissue between your bank and its stakeholders. **Your employees and customers develop feelings about your organization, which are the most powerful behavioral drivers.**

So, this is a very compelling and helpful definition of your brand because it underscores that **everything is in your brand, and therefore everything your bank does can build your brand.**

Why Build Brand Value?

Brands take a lot of time, energy and money to build and lead. Why invest?

First, your brand already exists whether you are purposefully shaping it or not. So your options are; either you're an activist for your brand seeking to turn it into a competitive advantage, or you're just letting it grow haphazardly.

Second, brands create tremendous value for companies that develop brand leadership. Illustrated below are some proof points:

- Corporate Branding measured a 5–7% lift in stock price due to substantial brand equity
- Parker LePla measured a 25% price premium for strong brands

- Y&R measured 289% stronger earnings growth of high-relevance brands over low-relevance brands

Brands create the emotional connective tissue between your employees, your customers, and your bank. A brand is essential to your customers. It helps them decide, helps them affiliate, and it helps them feel good. Your stakeholders need your brand as much as you do.

IN THE VIDEO + WORKSHEET

The associated worksheet is a self-assessment that will draw a picture for you of the strengths and opportunities of your bank brand. We encourage you to complete this exercise with the whole senior leadership team and then discuss your answers with the group. You'll almost certainly find some differences of opinion to discuss. And you'll probably identify opportunities to pursue and challenges to tackle.

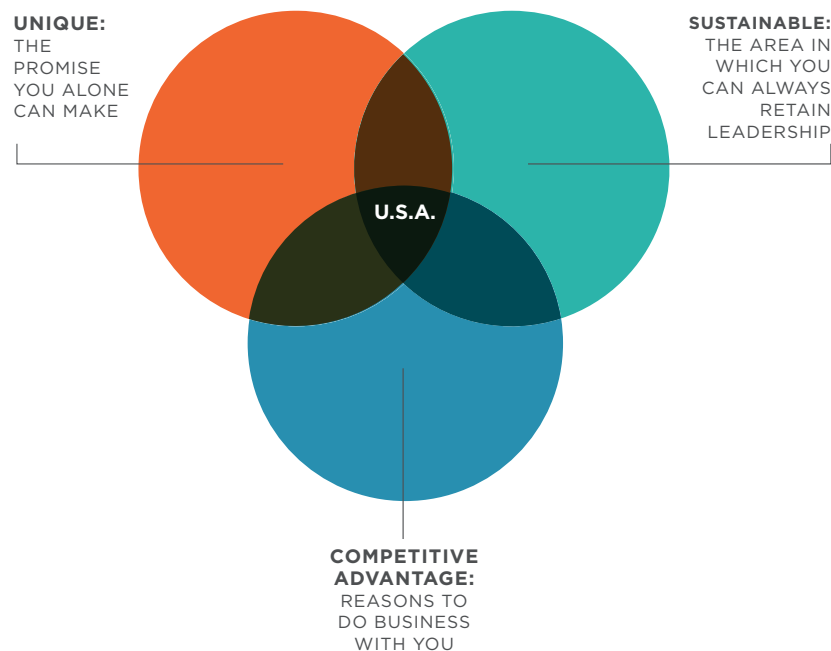


SCAN FOR VIDEO
+ WORKSHEET
OR BROWSE:
cdbanks.org/brand-culture.
REFERENCE MODULE 1

“A brand exists “out there” in the collective consciousness. It’s intangible; it’s outside your control, though it is within your influence.”



YOUR BRAND FOUNDATION: THE U.S.A.



Section 2: What's in a Brand

In this section, we'll dive deeper into the basics of brands and how banks succeed with brand building. We'll explore why customer experience and brand culture are critical to the bank brand. Finally, we'll look at some fundamental tools that are helpful in defining and articulating your brand differentiators to your employees and customers.

Your brand is everything that is known, said, experienced, and felt about your bank and its products and services.

By that definition, "everything is in your brand." Every communication, every customer experience, every bank building, every sign. It's why being intentional and purposeful in building and activating your brand yields such profound business results.

To understand how a brand goes together—what's in a brand—it helps to understand a couple of visual mnemonics.

The Unique and Sustainable Competitive Advantage

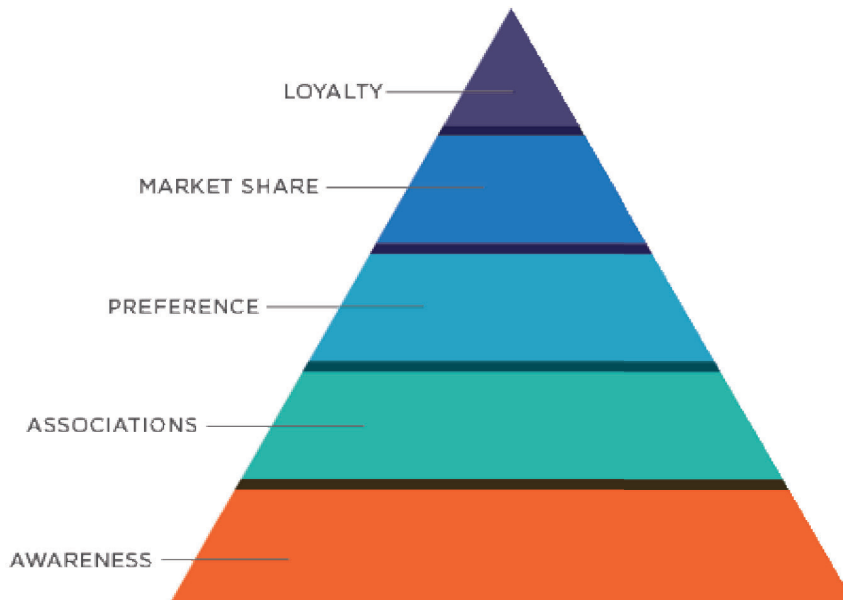
The first is this, Unique and Sustainable Competitive Advantage. Brands are built on differentiation, and that differentiation is the DNA that lies at the heart of this Venn diagram.

What is unique? What is the most differentiating attribute of your brand? Perhaps it's your people, your process, or your product. Now is it something you can always lead with? Is it sustainable? And finally, what of these attributes is a reason to do business with you?

It has to create value for your customers, or they won't buy it. That's a competitive advantage.

Your Unique and Sustainable Competitive Advantage—your Brand DNA—must meet all three criteria to drive success. Your work in the early going is to discern and define this core of your brand...its DNA.

THE BRAND EQUITY PYRAMID



Building Value: The Brand Equity Hierarchy

Just like with financial products, brands create equity for their owners. Building equity is a matter of moving individuals and markets up a hierarchy. Increasing levels of the hierarchy make greater and greater contributions to your brand equity.

Awareness: This is the base level of equity because your brand can't have value if people are unaware of it. "Unaided awareness" is the ability for a member of your target audience to bring to mind your bank's name when challenged to "name all the banks serving your area." This is also called "top-of-mind-awareness." "Aided awareness" is registered when a prospective customer responds they have "heard of it" when presented with your bank's name. Awareness is where you start.

Image or Associations: This answers the question, "When people reflect on your brand, what do they think?" Good, bad, indifferent? It's not uncommon for brands to develop very negative brand imagery. Corporate scandal, environmental

abuse, product recalls, regulatory orders and other causes of negative publicity can tarnish a brand. These are exceptions of course, and it's the work of the brand builder to drive positive associations into the brand. As stated earlier, everything is in your brand; these are all of the associations generated by communications, word of mouth, direct customer experiences and more.

Preference: This attribute develops out of strong awareness and favorable associations. Among all the bank brands your prospective customers know of, which would they lean to? All things being equal (and they never are), which bank would they chalk up as their first choice? Preference builds over time, and just like a bank account can experience debits and credits. You must establish awareness and positive associations to earn preference.

Market Share: This element of brand equity represents actually getting a customer, and getting share of wallet. While occasionally a customer walks into a business sight unseen

and signs up, it's more common in a competitive market that you must earn preference to win a new customer. Each strata in the brand equity pyramid is a stepping stone to the next.

Loyalty. This is the holy grail of the brand builder. Brand loyalty is the desire or willingness to repeat business and refer business, the lifeblood of every bank.

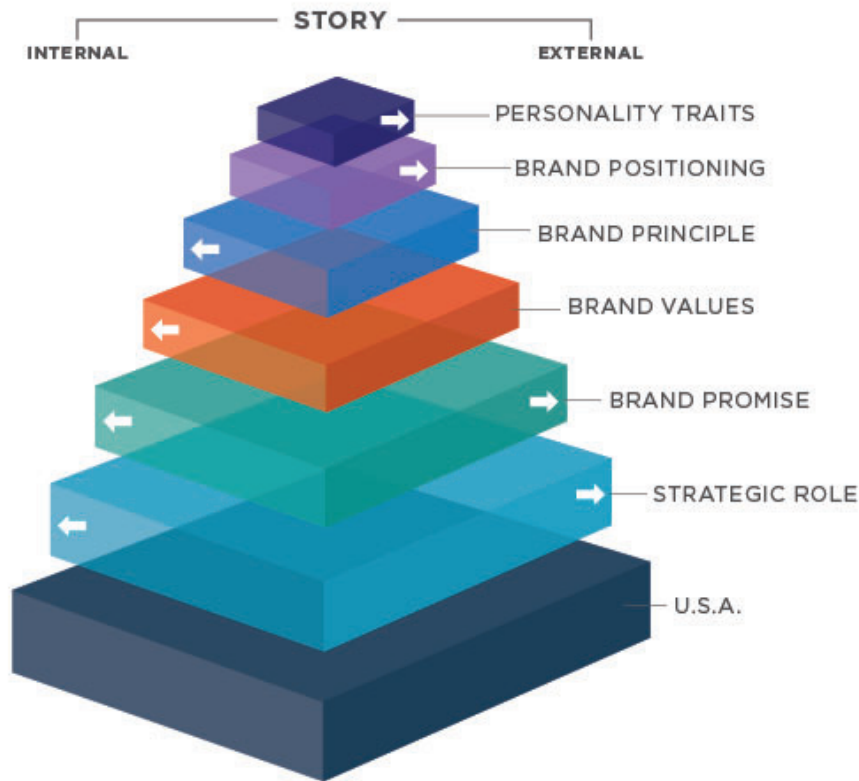
In the formula for calculating brand equity, the higher reaches have increasingly greater weightings. In fact, loyalty is weighted five times as great as simple awareness.

The crucial insight you should take away is that the lower reaches are most informed by communications, advertising, and PR, often mistakenly thought of as the whole of brand building.

The higher reaches of this formula are increasingly informed by bank culture, customer experience, and by the brand's performance. In light of this, it's easy to understand why for the banking organization building brand culture is a transformational discipline.



BRAND LEADERSHIP FRAMES



Section 3: The Brand Leadership Frames

There are many applicable frameworks for getting to the heart of your brand and articulating it to the world. This series presents a system of Brand Leadership Frames that undergird the discipline of building brand + culture.

The first order of business is defining your brand strategy. You must determine, distill and express your unique place in the world, known as your brand of banking.

Your bank has to have a strategy against which your senior leadership team can execute. You'll start by developing a system of narratives called The Brand Leadership Frames. Why "frames?" A painter stretches his canvas on a frame before

painting and a frame is a window through which you view the world. Certain assumptions tend to "frame a conversation."

Brand Leadership Frames are the actionable tools that provide leaders and communicators the clarity, direction, and focus to organize internal alignment and external communications activities. They include:

Brand Purpose: This statement answers, "How do we uniquely create value in the world?" It identifies our role in the lives of prospects, customers, and stakeholders. It reflects our purpose—so it is naturally much more than just a category description.

Brand Promise: What results does our brand promise to our prospects, customers, and stakeholders? This statement encapsulates the outcomes we expect to provide.

Brand Values: Values are the closely held mores that motivate behaviors and serve as boundaries for action. People don't act in opposition to their fundamental values; neither do organizations and their brands.

Brand Principle: This statement conveys our unique approach and culture, a claim that describes the "true north" compass for "how we operate."

Brand Positioning: This is your competitive differentiation; it's how you elbow your way into the market and create compare/contrast impressions with your competition.

Brand Personality Attributes: Brand personality traits reflect the idea that brands can be viewed similarly to people. People react emotionally to brands, just as they do to other people. Consistent expressions of your personality traits ensure that your brand communication provides the right feel and tone.

Brand Story: Great brands almost always have a "back story" or "creation story." The story is the mythology that explains your being and who you are.

IN THE VIDEO + WORKSHEET

The worksheet is a tool to help you draft your own Brand Leadership Frames. These narratives are anchored in your brand DNA—the Unique and Sustainable Competitive Advantage—and serve to create a common language within the bank. They will be used to organize your internal culture building and inform your external communications.



SCAN FOR VIDEO
+ WORKSHEET
OR BROWSE:
cdbanks.org/brand-culture.
REFERENCE MODULE 2



CASE STUDY

FNBC BANK'S BRAND LEADERSHIP FRAMES

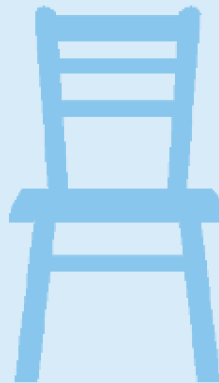
To illustrate the Brand Leadership Frames, the brand narratives of FNBC Bank are presented here. Chartered in 1912, FNBC serves distressed rural communities in northern Arkansas and southern Missouri. It achieved CDFI designation in 2016 and

operates 14 branches throughout its service area. Every organization is unique, and their brands are too. These mantras help define it for employees, customers and prospects alike.



Brand Purpose – Empowering Community, One Customer at a Time

FNBC's unique purpose is identified by this statement: Empowering community, one customer at a time. FNBC is a driver, a catalyst, an engine of economic vitality. FNBC sees its unique role as improving, developing and enriching the communities it serves. And it knows that contribution is always delivered point-to-point, hand-to-hand, human-to-human.



Brand Principle – “Pull Up A Chair”

The principle statement for the FNBC brand is a simple mantra that captures the bank's spirit of relationship, accessibility, collaboration and timely problem-solving. The statement actually derives from a customer's comment: "I know if I've got a problem or an opportunity, I'm going to go in there, pull up a chair and we're simply going to get it done." "Pull up a chair" is a rallying cry and speaks to customer intimacy, to a solutions-oriented mindset, and to excellence in execution. These ideas drive FNBC's culture.

“FNBC’s statements are an expression of the fundamental principles guiding its leadership, its people, its organizational behavior and its brand.”



Brand Positioning – The Bank that Works Harder to Get it Done Better

FNBC is known by its customers for the quality of its people and the quality of their execution. It’s the bank that works harder to get it done better. This statement creates a point of pride and at the same time sets a standard for performance.



Brand Promise – Good Relationships Accrue

FNBC’s promise is to foster relationships that catalyze success. This frame is inspired by the bank’s Hedgehog Principle of “building profitable relationships that last” good relationships accrue value. Good relationships accrue trust. And ... good relationships accrue from a culture and team that actively fosters and highly values them.

Core Values

Core value statements predict action. They are demonstrable. You can spot them behaviorally and reward or remark upon them. FNBC's statements are an expression of the fundamental principles guiding its leadership, its people, its organizational behavior and its brand.

Integrity in Word and Deed

- Act ethically: Do the right thing, even when it's hard
- Be honest: Tell the truth, even if it's challenging
- Protect confidentiality: Respect privacy and keep confidences

Servant Leadership in Relationship

- Maintain a humble heart; act with humility
- Care first for others then for yourself
- Project a positive attitude; add energy!
- Be a giver, not a taker

Accountability in Action

- Do what you say you'll do when you say you'll do it
- Finish what you start and "close the loop"
- Know and live our customer service standards

Brand Personality

Like humans, brands have personalities. These personality traits will appear in communications inside and outside the bank.

- **Down-to-earth:** The FNBC brand is approachable, genuine, real and grounded. It is unpretentious.
- **Friendly:** The FNBC brand is personable, open, friendly.
- **Sincere:** Honesty, integrity, confidentiality and sincerity go hand-in-hand. The FNBC brand is direct, it's real, it's sincere.
- **Dependable:** Grounded in more than 100 years in the community, and driven by a passionate commitment to excellent customer service, the FNBC brand is dependable.
- **Hardworking:** The bank that works harder to get it done better is naturally hardworking. This personality trait arises from the bank's local roots and is perpetuated by a culture that values accountability.
- **Happy:** The FNBC brand is optimistic, upbeat and positive. The bank is populated by happy people who make customers happy. The FNBC brand is happy!



S.M.I.L.E.

STAY POSITIVE
MAKE IT HAPPEN
IDENTIFY SOLUTIONS
LIGHTEN THE MOOD
EMPATHIZE

PUT A SMILE ON THE BANK!



S.M.I.L.E.

SPEAK CLEARLY
MAINTAIN EYE CONTACT
INVITE CONVERSATION
LOVE YOUR CUSTOMER
END ON A POSITIVE NOTE

PUT A SMILE ON THE BANK!



S.M.I.L.E.

SMILE WITH YOUR WHOLE SELF
MENTOR
INVEST YOURSELF
LOVE WHAT YOU DO
EMPOWER OTHERS

PUT A SMILE ON THE BANK!



PART TWO: ACTIVATING BRAND CULTURE

Section 4: Building Brand Culture: Working “Inside-out”

So often people think “branding” means creating a name, logo or tagline. All the outside stuff.

A few recognize that great brands actually start inside. Starbucks revolutionized coffee in the U.S. by elevating the experience. Apple created the world’s most valuable company by obsessing over elegant, powerful, bulletproof technology packaged in groundbreaking industrial design. Southwest Airlines disrupted an entire industry by democratizing the skies.

On the foundation of their crystal-clear business purposes, winning companies build powerful internal brands — the culture and ethos that drive product development, service delivery and the voice of the organization.

Branding is an inside job. Leaders mobilize their entire employee base to talk up, live out and propagate their brands in the world. Without employees driving it forward, a brand doesn’t go very far.

In fact, a 2019 KPMG study of 18,520 consumers in 20 countries showed that 74 percent said product quality inspired their brand loyalty and 56 percent said customer service did. These were product brands, and as we know for service organizations like banks, the service often is the product.

We’ve heard for decades that “happy employees create happy customers.” Richard Branson, CEO of Virgin, has said, “If you look after your internal customers you don’t have to worry about the external customers.”

How does one go about mobilizing an entire employee population to understand, champion

and live the brand? Five principles work well in any sized business.

Make it real: Your people sniff out B.S. in a heartbeat. The stories, the facts and the rationale of your brand strategy must be real and must resonate. Brand purpose is rooted in the DNA of the company, its history and its uniqueness. If your internal brand development program is simply masking the imperative to “make more money” with some altruistic smokescreen, employees will be on it in a moment. You must connect your internal brand story to the underlying mission of your organization.

Find and tap natural leaders: Inside, you need brand culture leaders. Not every leader is at the top of the organization. Leaders are those who others want to follow. Find those individuals in the organization that have strong “followership.” Then plug them into the initiative in meaningful ways.

Put some skin in the game: Some may think a paycheck is sufficient recompense for an employee’s contribution. The internal brand leader is not so naïve. Money might get the bodies to work, but it will not engage hearts and minds. A meta-analysis of studies from organizations including The Conference Board, Gallup, the Journal of Healthcare Management, the Society for Human Resource Management, BambooHR, and British Psychology Society shows that pay generally ranks lower than intrinsic benefits such as culture, recognition, values-alignment and purpose in driving employee engagement.

So, it’s still helpful to add some tangible incentive or reward to your internal branding program; this helps grease the skids and get people off the fence. Southern Bancorp doubles the value of its core value awards when employees sock the money away —

encouraging development of personal net worth, core to the bank's mission.

Be accountable: Extensive, long-term employee data developed by Gallup underscores that employee engagement and alignment correlates directly with financial performance.

CEOs and CFOs don't sign onto internal branding programs just because "it's good for morale." They want and need to know it will deliver tangible, bottom-line results to the organization. Being accountable means bringing relevant and concrete success metrics for your program. Use metrics as simple as "can our employees repeat our brand purpose, brand principle and brand promise" statements to more bottom-line measures such as "how many new opportunities did we open based on employee referrals?"

Work top-down and bottom-up: Clearly, the organizing principles and brand strategy are an executive-suite discipline. But once you turn it loose into the wild, you want your internal branding effort to harness and enjoy the wisdom of the crowd. The collective intelligence of the organization is vastly greater than the brain trust of the brand strategy consultant, CMO and CEO holed up in the executive suite.

Distributed, bottom-up approaches are congruent with our social media-driven culture, in which every person has universal access to powerful communication channels. Designing your internal brand activation program with these tools and temperaments in mind gives it the chance to catch fire and spread virally within the organization.

"CULTURE EATS STRATEGY FOR BREAKFAST"

It's a common maxim that in business "culture trumps strategy"—clearly recognizing that no matter the category, any company's success rests squarely on the performance of its people. And that performance is driven by culture. Culture trumps strategy, innovation, technology, operational excellence.

Culture drives success because:

- Competitors can copy strategy but not culture. There are dozens of low-fare airlines now, but still only one Southwest.
- Culture is persistent; strategy is not. A new CEO, a turnaround, market dynamics. Numerous factors drive strategic shifts; the culture will defeat or enable that shift.
- Strategy is forged in private; culture in the open. By rights, strategy formation is the domain of the CEO

and executive team. On the other hand, cultural formation occurs at every level of the organization and therefore engenders vastly greater emotional investment of those who will actually execute the strategy.

- Strategy engenders compliance; culture drives commitment. Achieving mission at scale means winning hearts and minds. Start with the hearts and you'll earn the minds.
- People are loyal to cultures; strategies, not so much. A week into its month-long new employee training, Zappos offers new hires \$2,000 to quit; it quickly weeds out those whose values don't align. Founder Tony Hsieh considered it the best investment they make in the business.

Section 5: The 6 Habits of Culturally Aligned Companies

In a fascinating and compelling empirical study of the world's most highly customer-driven companies published by Forrester Research, these companies all exhibited powerfully aligned cultures, organized in service to a clear and compelling purpose. They practiced "6 C's" fundamental to cultural development:

Common beliefs: Core values. Clear purpose. A common language. Aligned cultures all sing from the same songbook.

Collective celebrations: Zany and informal to serious and planful, aligned cultures celebrate successes, their uniques, their values, their people. Anything, in fact, to have a good time together and enjoy what they're building.

Constant communications: Research shows that any message needs to be repeated five to seven

times to be understood and internalized. Cultural alignment entails a lot of repetition, any way and anywhere you can get the message across.

Compelling stories: The story is the most ancient, persuasive and memorable medium known for cultural transformation. It was true around the campfire millennia ago; it was true yesterday around the water cooler. Effective bank cultures harness the power of storytelling.

Consistent tradeoffs: Management must be willing to make tradeoffs consistent with the bank's cultural imperatives. Zappos provides a famous example, where there are no time limits or employee incentives to shorten call times in the call center. This philosophy gives rise to videos such as "The Longest Phone Call," chronicling a 10-hour 43-minute customer service interaction that became an internet viral phenomenon.

Commitment to employees: Happy employees, happy customers. Employees in highly aligned



THE 6 C'S OF BRAND CENTRICITY



cultures know how valued they are because the company makes tangible commitments, recognizes them readily, celebrates their success and tells stories about them continually.

Culture is vital to the C-suite, and for good reason. Business research underscores that culture trumps virtually every other business discipline in driving organizational performance. A 2013 survey released by TinyPulse.com revealed that only 42% of employees reported knowing their company's mission statement, vision and values. What makes all of those words come off the wall and into the brand culture of a business? The Six C's do—which the rest of this Practitioner Guide will explore and elaborate on.

IN THE VIDEO + WORKSHEET

The associated worksheet offers a means by which you can score your bank's cultural clarity.



SCAN FOR VIDEO
+ WORKBOOK
OR BROWSE:
cdbanks.org/brand-culture.

REFERENCE MODULE 3

CASE STUDY

ONE SOUTHERN ONE MISSION

Building your brand culture means getting your entire employee population on the same page, wholly aligned and invested in developing a common language.

A highly effective way to launch your internal brand is to create a “Big Bang” for your employees. That is, a significant company-wide event: a party, a picnic, a virtual meeting, or an in-person meeting. For large, geographically distributed banks, consider a roadshow where your executives visit the field. The important thing is to give everyone in the bank a shared experience and convey the sense from leadership: “this is important; this is the future.”

Two-billion dollar Southern Bancorp is one of the country’s oldest and largest CDBs, serving some of the nation’s poorest counties—the Delta of Arkansas and Mississippi. After completing the Brand Leadership Frames, CEO Darrin Williams conducted a five-location whistlestop tour to unveil the new brand frameworks and launch an internal unification campaign with the moniker “One Southern. One Mission.”

This initiative was entirely focused inside the bank to rally employees in three discrete business units into one common mindset. Clever lead-up communications set the stage for this company-wide launch. It was the first time in its 25-year history that the company aligned around shared core values, ideologies, and actions. This launch set the stage for consistent, effective internal brand activation that drove significant increases in employee engagement scores and contributed to transformational growth in the organization over the subsequent years.





Section 6: Clear Beliefs

The Clear Beliefs of your culture are codified in your Brand Leadership Frames—these are the narratives or mantras that provide the common language for the organization’s culture. And of all these frameworks, the Core Values deserve a particular focus because values are boundaries for action. They are guide rails. People don’t act outside of their core values, and neither do organizations and brands. So when you’re building a culture to transform your organizational performance, you want clear, compelling, and action-oriented values.

Let’s look at the values systems of a couple of well-known companies and brands.

Southwest Airlines’ core values are simply stated, easily understood and transmitted. Importantly, they are calls to action. Anybody who has flown on Southwest has experienced these values, especially the Servant’s Heart and Fun Luv-ing Attitude.

Purpose

Connect people to what’s important in their lives through friendly, reliable, and low-cost air travel

Live the Southwest Way

Warrior Spirit | Servant’s Heart | Fun-LUVing Attitude

Work the Southwest Way

Safety and Reliability | Friendly Customer Service | Low Costs

Zappos revolutionized e-commerce by creating a new benchmark for customer service and customer-centricity. It was built as a culture-first company by its founders. As you can see from Zappos’ core values, they are clear, concise, and predictive of specific behaviors. It will be easy to identify when someone is demonstrating such values.

1. Deliver WOW Through Service
2. Embrace and Drive Change
3. Create Fun and A Little Weirdness
4. Be Adventurous, Creative, and Open-Minded
5. Pursue Growth and Learning
6. Build Open and Honest Relationships With Communication
7. Build a Positive Team and Family Spirit
8. Do More With Less
9. Be Passionate and Determined
10. Be Humble

Compare these statements of Southwest Airlines and Zappos with the generic core values statements often found in organizations today: Integrity, Accountability, Teamwork, etc. It’s no wonder they so often remain on the shelf.

A model for core values statements is that they should be concrete, cohesive, actionable, and demonstrable.

A robust and well-constructed core values system is one that your organization can use in recruitment, training, management, rewards and recognition. When evaluating the utility and strength of your core values, test them against these criteria.

IN THE VIDEO + WORKSHEET

The worksheet for this section is a core values maturity assessment. In it, you’ll rate your bank’s progression along a spectrum of articulating and activating core values.



SCAN FOR VIDEO
+ WORKSHEET

OR BROWSE:
cdbanks.org/brand-culture

REFERENCE MODULE 4



Section 7: Constant Communication

Culturally adept companies communicate constantly. These companies produce a constant drumbeat of information, influence, insight, and anecdotes about what makes them unique, interesting, remarkable, likable, and memorable.

All of this communication serves to bond people in the organization together behind common ideals. The activity builds a community out of a collection of individuals.

Banks typically communicate regularly about policies, HR matters, operational information and other items regarding the bank's business. But, the culture-building bank will also speak continually about its culture, its people, its successes, its differences, its customer service, its heroes, and its brand. There are many creative ways to get these messages across.

Email is commonly utilized; it's easy to broadcast an email. However, corporate emails these days are generally opened by somewhere between 25% and 50% of recipients. Your bank may have moved

to a messaging platform like Slack, Microsoft Teams, or Google Chat. These often get better readership due to their immediacy.

Some banks effectively utilize **private Facebook groups** for an informal internal network. Others have deployed **intranets** where you can create web pages, announcements, forums or chat groups, personnel directories, and HR document depositories.

Consider a periodic **voicemail** campaign from your CEO or other brand + culture champions. A short **videotaped message** from the CEO can convey much richer content than print alone.

Internal **poster** campaigns are visible, intrusive and influential. "Poster" can even include these variations: bathroom stall signs, bathroom mirror clings, table tents for the desk, badge cards, wallet cards, murals and banners, and floor clings. There are many answers to how to communicate, but what about what to communicate?

When you're building culture, it's crucial to get peer-to-peer communication going, and it's unreasonable to expect that every effective communication will emerge from the communications department. That's why private Facebook groups, intranets, and chat channels are critical to propagating your culture.

Encourage informal, ad hoc communications. Create organized internal campaigns using any of the vehicles we've discussed.

Southern Bank's initial One Southern One Mission campaign is a great example. This campaign featured teaser communications to pique people's interest. It featured a road show in which the CEO and other senior executives visited each

market and rolled out the campaign. It featured leave-behind objects that served as reminders to the team members. It featured a poster and email campaign to remind and reinforce the messages. And it opened the door to the CEO's blog and a robust intranet that was simply infused with cultural and brand messages.

FNBC's Reach 500 campaign is another effective example. With the thematic goal of growing the bank to \$500 million, bank leadership knew it had to enroll every employee as an effective ambassador and new business agent. Using multiple communications strategies and tactics over the next three years, the bank drove growth past the target entirely organically.





Culturally adept banks know that day in, day out, there are good things to communicate, and cultural communication is generally not just about the what or how but about the why of the bank.

For example:

- Why the bank is different from others
- The meaning of the bank's core values
- Illustrations of those values in action
- Success stories with customers, communities, collaborators
- The impact of the bank's work on individuals, families, organizations, and communities
- Transformations and achievements enabled by the bank
- New products or services...and how they are aligned with the unique position of the bank
- Employee transitions and how they are aligned with the bank's purpose
- Observations of the CEO, the biggest brand champion in the bank

IN THE VIDEO + WORKSHEET

The associated worksheet offers an inventory and means by which you can build your bank's cultural communications.



SCAN FOR VIDEO
+ WORKSHEET

OR BROWSE:
cdbanks.org/brand-culture.

REFERENCE MODULE 5



Section 8: Compelling Stories

Culturally adept companies deploy the powerful communications strategy of storytelling. This communication technique gets its C because it is powerful and influential in conveying cultural motifs.

Our human brains are wired for stories. All the great religions, cultures, and even the first histories were all conveyed orally—with stories—for centuries or millennia before they were written down.

The Impact @ Scale program enjoys storytelling leadership from the Center for Social Impact Communication at Georgetown University, and a discrete Impact Storytelling Practitioner Guide.

“Our human brains are wired for stories.”

Section 9: Collective Celebrations

All cultures celebrate. These celebrations create a common mindset and affirm shared beliefs and core values, drawing people together into a unified whole.

Consider national celebrations like the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving in America. These collective celebrations bind us together. They afford the chance to recognize and resonate with the history and values of our country. In France, they celebrate Bastille Day. In Mexico, the Day of the Dead. Culturally strong companies celebrate together and for similar reasons.

Corporate collective celebrations take virtually every form you can imagine; they are not necessarily massive productions like a Thanksgiving dinner or Fourth of July fireworks display.

They can be:

- **Parties**
- **Contests**
- **Games**
- **Coffee/donut breaks**

They can undoubtedly be all-hands events and incredibly powerful; however, they're just as effective as department-level or branch events.

When you introduce these criteria into your celebrations you'll be down the path of creating memorable, influential events in your organization.

Collective celebrations always include some, if not all, of these attributes:

- **Powerful music** – music sets the stage and creates the tone
- **Stylized behavior** – think secret handshakes, corporate cheers, particular personae
- **Costumes and symbols** – this can be as simple as “Everybody wear your t-shirt”
- **Storytelling** – the most powerful communication tool
- **Structure** – the event is organized and some leader or cheerleader is driving the show
- **Aesthetics** – room decor complements the theme and sets the tone
- **Space** – the space is laid out appropriately and adequately equipped to house the event
- **Food** – Is it a party if there's nothing to eat? The food can be stylized for the event, such as decorated cakes, cookies, etc.
- **Activity** – Some planned activity ties the event to the message. Games, contests, crafts. You're limited only by imagination.
- **Presentation** – There's always an opportunity to make more formal comments. Participants will expect and be ready for some prepared statements.
- **Memento** – You want folks to have a takeaway that reminds them of the shared experience.



Conversely, there are a few recipes for failure. Avoid these errors in planning and conducting your celebrations:

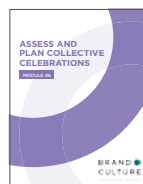
- ***Going through the motions***
- ***Unclear aims***
- ***Misreading your audience***
- ***No buy-in***
- ***Using the event to criticize***
- ***Inauthentic behavior***
- ***Careless comments***
- ***Over-planning***
- ***Mandating the fun***
- ***Maintaining an aloof atmosphere***
- ***Not learning from past failures***

Celebrating together is a high-energy input to your bank's cultural development program. Celebrations create shared experiences, emotional connections, and heightened enthusiasm. Celebrations drive your brand culture

forward. Effective celebrations don't have to be big, expensive, all-hands deals. They can be localized to branches or departments. They can be simple and spontaneous or elaborate and orchestrated. The key is to design celebrations that connect **your** people to **your** culture.

IN THE VIDEO + WORKSHEET

In the companion materials, you'll find tools to assess and plan your own bank's collective celebrations.



SCAN FOR VIDEO
+ WORKSHEET

OR BROWSE:
cdbanks.org/brand-culture.

REFERENCE MODULE 6

BEST PRACTICES

FNBC's Core Values Carnival

Timed in the spring near Mardi Gras celebrations, FNBC Bank's Core Values Carnival tied the bank's cultural development work together with a fun, timely celebration.

The bank's "Core Values Carnival" consisted of 4 different stations/activities:

- 1. Accountability Packs a Punch:** Bankers enjoyed hurricane-type drinks (nonalcoholic!) and played a "minute-to-win-it" cup stacking game.
- 2. At the Be the King of Servant Leadership booth:** Bankers got king cake and played the doubloon toss.
- 3. At the Don't Throw Away Your Integrity station:** Bankers played a bead toss game.
- 4. Strut Your Core Values:** Bankers enjoyed a photo booth with core values and carnival props.

The whole experience was capped off with a Mardi Gras parade through the bank's departments and was replicated in all of the branches.

Section 10: Core Values Reward and Recognition

Employee reward and recognition programs tightly aligned with your core values and brand principles are proven means to put your core values on overdrive.

By aligning your reward and recognition program with your core values, you create the means to continually educate, inspire and motivate behaviors driven by values—the very behaviors that will drive your brand differentiation and growth.

Several attributes define effective core values reward and recognition programs.

Effective programs have a **memorable theme and graphic elements**: Creating a vivid image for employees can be very helpful. Southern Bancorp’s RAISE Recognition program was an acronym for the five core values and included engaging visuals that grabbed attention and reinforced the objectives.

Successful programs deliver **timely rewards**: Research is clear that rewarding or recognizing at or near the time of the behavior is the best reinforcement for future behavior. Consider announcing core values awards weekly.

Successful programs build in **employee peer recognition**: While praise from managers is highly valued, according to TinyPulse’s Employee Engagement Survey, “employees are ready, willing, and able to give each other high fives. When offered a simple tool, 44% of all workers will provide peer recognition on an ongoing basis.” So make sure to build your program around creating opportunities for peer recognition.

Praise in public is paramount: Recognizing employees publicly really makes living the core

values contagious. The awardees enjoy that praise, and sharing these stories offers additional opportunities for clarifying, training, and rewarding brand-centric behavior.

Companies that successfully build a culture consistent with their core values must hire, fire and promote with core values as a yardstick. Lip service will never create an aligned culture, so a rewards program must be exactly that: rewarding. We’re not talking about just money here. Employees value so much more than that. Survey employees to make sure what you offer is truly rewarding in the eyes of your team.

Obtaining a culture of brand-centric behavior requires encouragement, education, and reinforcement. It is not built overnight but will self-perpetuate in the right environment. Your rewards and recognition program will prove an invaluable tool in nurturing the values by which you are driving your business. It’s how you get those values off the wall and into your mission-focused bank’s DNA.

IN THE VIDEO + WORKSHEET

In the worksheet, you’ll find tools to assess your bank’s reward and recognition program.



SCAN FOR VIDEO
+ WORKSHEET

OR BROWSE:
cdbanks.org/brand-culture.

REFERENCE MODULE 7



Section 11: The Employee Brand Culture Council

In this section, we'll visit the development of the Employee Brand Council: What it is, how it works, how it generates momentum, and how to build one.

In one organization after another, it has been demonstrated that forming an internal group of cultural ambassadors is the X-factor in unleashing brand power inside the organization.

The Brand Council (you can call it the Culture Council if you'd like) is an intentional and purposeful group of 15–25 opinion leaders and

influencers from all across the company. They come together periodically—formally 3 to 4 times annually and informally more often.

They create and execute internal activities—guided by the 6 C's—to bring the brand culture alive for everyone in the organization. The committee produces a lot of value, such as:

They act as eyes and ears: Committee members may act as your front line when it comes to hearing and seeing coworkers' opinions about their work environment and reporting these issues

“In one organization after another, it has been demonstrated that forming an internal group of cultural ambassadors is the X-factor in unleashing brand power inside the organization.”

to bank leadership. They serve as an internal focus group, keeping their fingers on the organization's pulse. The CEO gets to hear objective feedback in a trusting environment.

They come up with fresh ideas: The culture committee will provide a steady supply of ideas and innovative thinking for propagating your brand culture across the organization. Get a couple of dozen high-energy sorts in a room and the creative sparks fly!

They create a sense of community: Employees are more likely to accept change when they have a role in decision-making. Before implementing new procedures or policies, a culture committee can help solicit the workforce's opinions, suggestions, and commitments.

They drive the adoption of the Six C's inside the bank: They demonstrate and facilitate the development of these key competencies by planning and conducting activities. As the organization experiences these activities; it builds the muscles of culture.

They develop the core values: Your brand development process defines and codifies the core values, but at first, they tend to just be words. The council is in a frontline position with management to drive the core values' implementation, activation, and understanding.

They catalyze change: The council suggests improvements to the senior leadership team. Frequently, these committees act as highly effective sounding boards for the CEO and senior leadership.

What do Brand Councils do? Here are some ideas and examples:

- They conduct mini-celebrations like dropping in on a branch with core values-themed cookies and treating the employees to coffee.
- They act as hospitality crew at any and every organization-wide team meeting.
- They draft and present skits illustrating the core values, brand principles, and purpose.
- They initiate and propagate stories throughout the organization, working hard to spot brand heroes and lift them in front of the entire organization.
- They plan and coordinate games and contests within the organization, not just at the company picnic but daily.
- They build and take immersive brand-centric experiences out to the branches and the departments so everyone gets their senses involved in the brand.
- They support the rollout of new corporate initiatives and campaigns by making personal visits to workgroups and branches.

There's virtually no end to how the brand councillors can bring their peer influence to the organization.

IN THE WORKSHEET

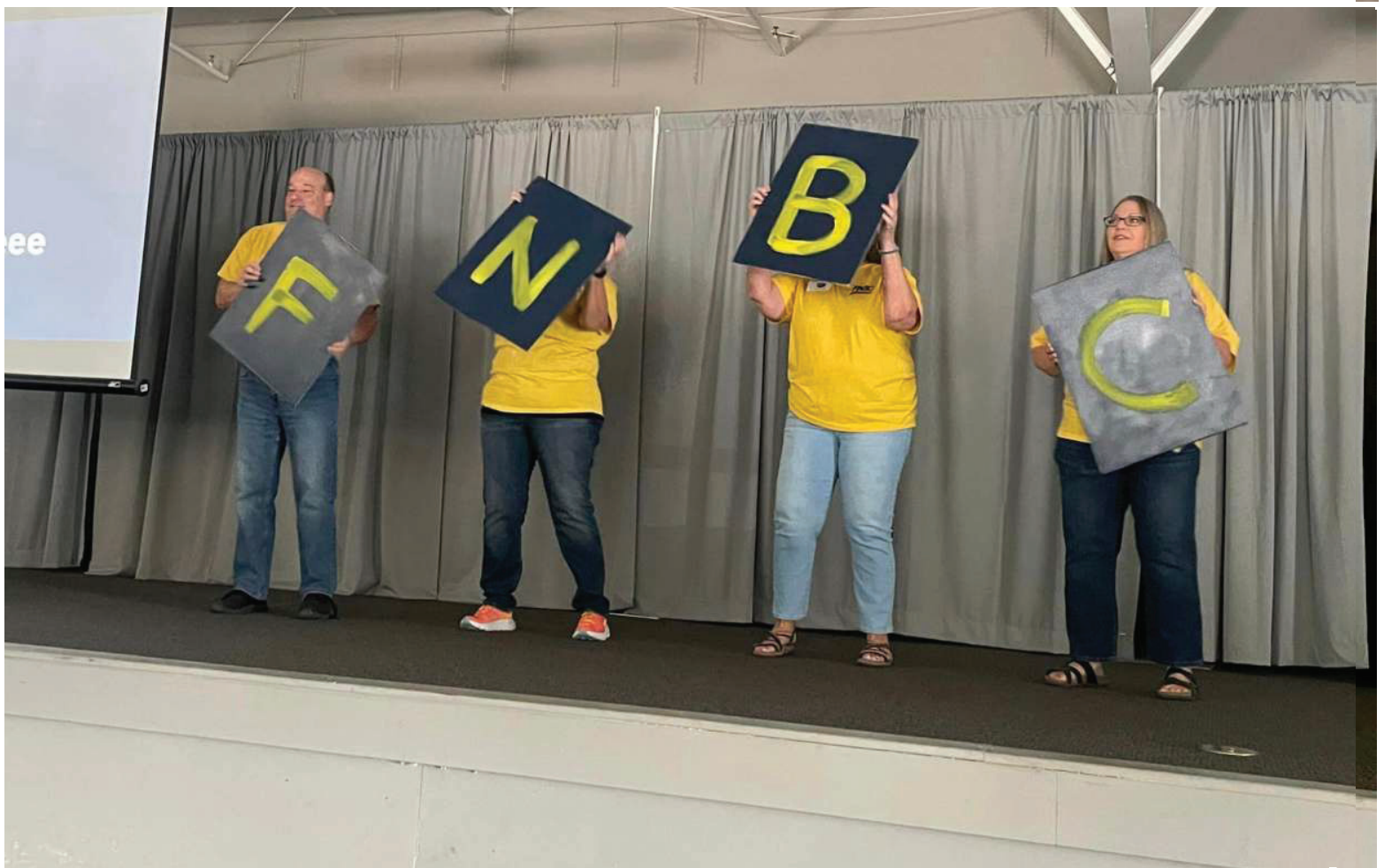
In the associated worksheet, you'll explore the fundamentals of establishing a brand council in your bank. Your brand council can help the management team develop and deploy the tools and competencies covered in this Practitioner Guide.



SCAN FOR VIDEO
+ WORKSHEET

OR BROWSE:
cdbanks.org/brand-culture.

REFERENCE MODULE 8



BRAND ASSESSMENT TOOL

MODULE #1

BRAND 
CULTURE
{ DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM }



Brand Clarity

QUESTIONS	SCORING	YES	SORT OF	NO
If someone asks you what your bank stands for, or what makes it special, can you explain it in 20 seconds or less?	2	1	0	
Does your bank have a story that clearly sets it apart?	2	1	0	
Can you describe how your bank creates value for your customers compared to other banks?	2	1	0	
Can you articulate your bank's purpose or reason for being?	2	1	0	
TOTAL SCORE				

Why is this important?

Great brands create a shorthand for customers. They “save mental real estate” and make it easier to compare/contrast. They crystallize what’s different about your company, product or service.

Just like people, well-established and expertly articulated brands have personalities. They can be smart, thoughtful, cheeky, clever, beguiling or offbeat. Your personality breathes life into your communications and helps people to identify with you.

Strong brands often have compelling “creation stories.” Nike started with the waffle sole, invented on a waffle iron by a track coach pursuing performance. Perrier derives from a natural spring first visited by prehistoric man. These stories help your audience to understand where you came from, why you care about what you do and the values that you use to operate daily.

Smart, effective brand strategies are built on a solid foundation—the attribute(s) that are unique, sustainable and “reasons to buy.” We call these the U.S.A.s and without them, your bank could blend in with the crowd and be subject to the whims of your competitors’ offerings. Your U.S.A.s should always be obvious to your customers and prospects.

Great brands have a definite purpose, reason for being or “why they exist.” Southwest Airlines, for example, exists to “democratize the skies.” Apple exists to make technology that is simple to use and does not break. Think about the “why” for your bank and make sure to address this in your communications.

All aspects of your marketing communications should clearly and consistently convey your brand promise, U.S.A.s and values. Make sure that these important brand attributes have been clearly identified and articulated both inside and outside of your bank!



Brand Style

QUESTIONS	SCORING		
	YES	SORT OF	NO
Do you have a style guide or uniform set of standards that includes the treatment of your logo, typefaces for your brochures and print ads, and standard Pantone® colors?	2	1	0
Do you have defined design elements that are part of every marketing piece?	2	1	0
Does everything you share/market adhere to your defined brand style?	2	1	0
Can you name five adjectives that describe the personality of your bank?	2	1	0
Does your style reflect your bank's personality?	2	1	0
Does your advertising, website, public relations activity and sales support material tell a consistent story and project a consistent tone?	2	1	0
TOTAL SCORE			

Why is this important?

In this world of information overload, ensuring that your bank's messaging is identifiable and clearly reflects its style and personality across all points of engagement from website to inbank signage is a requirement.

Effective visual branding creates memorability and recognition — and can attract your target market in ways that go deep into the psyche. Evaluate your visual messaging frequently and make sure it is uniform and attractive.



Brand Culture

QUESTIONS	SCORING	YES	SORT OF	NO
Is your management team—from the CEO on down—in lockstep agreement on your brand positioning, brand values and business purpose?	2	1	0	
Is your entire employee team on the same page regarding your brand story, brand purpose and unique value proposition? Can every employee state these clearly?	2	1	0	
Does your bank’s culture and values inform your approach to recruiting, training and retaining employees?	2	1	0	
Does your bank articulate and train for specific employee behaviors that align with the culture?	2	1	0	
Does your bank have a reward or recognition program tied to the mission, vision, values, or culture of the bank?	2	1	0	
TOTAL SCORE				

Why is this important?

An effective brand is not simply a marketing framework; it is a leadership principle. A great brand helps guide organizational behavior. But a brand can never reach such a pinnacle without the complete investment of the senior team.

Second to leadership, the most effective ambassadors of any brand are the employees themselves. Nobody speaks more persuasively for—or against—the brand. And many voices speaking in unison are exponentially more powerful than a cacophony of disparate conversations.

Once brand definition becomes strong enough, it begins to inform how you develop your workforce. A brand that is driven by an ethic of servanthood doesn't hire surly, angry rebels. A brand that is driven by the spirit of Rock-n-Roll seeks out tat-covered, spiky-haired individualists. Culture becomes an important element of customer training and reward and recognition.

In short, a strong brand means a strong culture for your bank.



Brand Strength

QUESTIONS	SCORING	YES	SORT OF	NO
Do you know the market shares of your brand and your competitors' brands in your top geographic markets?	2	1	0	
Are your customers willing to pay more for your product or service?	2	1	0	
Are you consistently attracting talent and gaining customers based on your bank's unique appeal?	2	1	0	
Do you regularly measure customer loyalty, referability, satisfaction, experience and/or brand advocacy?	2	1	0	
Do you know the Net Promoter Score of your bank, and how it compares to industry peers' or specific competitors'?	2	1	0	
Do your physical and digital places of doing business express the same brand values and personality?	2	1	0	
TOTAL SCORE				

Why is this important?

Brand strength is a measure of how well you are integrating your brand into your marketing strategy, your customer experience and your communication tactics to generate true results in the marketplace. The most informative indicators of your success are market share and your Net Promoter Score.

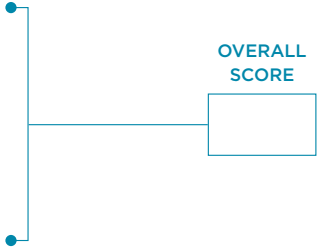
Market share is where the rubber meets the road. If you are gaining and keeping customers, you are succeeding, so knowing where you stand against your competitors is important, and setting clear growth goals is key. Your brand should be supporting these goals and helping to make them a reality as you clearly articulate your brand promise and deliver on that with aligned customer service and experience.

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is an excellent proxy for brand equity and has been demonstrated via significant research to be the most powerful predictor of future market share growth. Your business should aim for a minimum NPS score of 50. An NPS in the 60s or 70s indicates a highly desirable, highly recommended bank — a high bar but one that a well branded and culturally optimized bank can achieve.



Scoring/Percentage

SCORE

	TOTAL AVAILABLE	YOUR POINTS	
CLARITY	8		
STYLE	12		
CULTURE	10		
STRENGTH	12		
			OVERALL SCORE <div></div>

If you scored **half the points** in any of these sections, you need to prioritize developing that section.

OVERALL PERCENTAGE

27 OR BELOW	POOR - Time to roll up your sleeves; there is important work to do for your bank.
28-32	GOOD - A solid performance for your organization; this mid-range score clearly indicates opportunities for growth. Look at your lowest-performing dimensions for greatest opportunity.
33 - 37	VERY GOOD - Nicely done! Your bank is in the upper echelon of well-branded, differentiated organizations. You should be experiencing significant payoffs for your efforts. Improving on any low-performing dimensions may still afford significant upside.
38 - 42	EXCELLENT - Great work! Your bank is in the vanguard and should be outperforming its competitors. Did the rating expose any opportunities for growth?

© 2022 Thoma Thoma All rights reserved. Please do not reproduce or distribute without permission.

BRAND LEADERSHIP FRAMES

MODULE #2

BRAND 
CULTURE
{ DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM }



Developing Your Brand Strategy

The foundational structures on which a living brand is built are called “Brand Leadership Frames.”

Why “frames?” A painter stretches his canvas on a frame before painting; a frame is a window through which you view the world; certain assumptions are said to “frame a conversation.” Brand leadership frames are the actionable tools that provide leaders and communicators the clarity, direction, words and focus to organize internal alignment and external communications activities.

- **Strategic Role:** This statement answers the question, “How do we uniquely create value in the world?” It identifies the role we play in prospects’, customers’ and stakeholders’ lives. It reflects our purpose—so it is naturally much more than just a category description.
- **Brand Principle:** This statement describes our unique approach and culture, a claim that describes the “true north” compass for “how we operate.”
- **Brand Positioning:** This is what distinguishes us in the mind of our audience—the structure for marketing and other communications we create.
- **Brand Promise:** What results does our brand promise to our prospects, customers and stakeholders? This statement encapsulates the outcomes we expect to provide.
- **Personality Attributes:** Brand personality traits reflect the idea that brands can be viewed in much the same way that as people. People react emotionally to brands, just as they do to other people. Consistent expressions of our personality traits ensure that our brand communication provides the right feel and tone.
- **Core Values:** Values are the closely held mores that motivate behaviors and serve as boundaries for action. People don’t act in opposition to their fundamental values; neither do organizations and their brands.
- **The Story:** Great brands almost always have a “back-story” or “creation story.” The story is the mythology that explains our being and who we are.

In brand development, these are the foundational strategic tools.



BRAND FRAME

OUR STRATEGIC ROLE

The strategic role answers the question, “What value do we create in the world?” It identifies the role we play in prospects’ and customers’ lives—and the value we create for them. It is a statement of purpose—for what purpose do we exist? Therefore, it is more than just a category description.

Thinking of some commonly recognized brands:

The strategic role of Home Depot is the resource center for the do-it-yourselfer. The strategic role for BMW is delivering race car-quality performance to the passionate driver. So the strategic role goes beyond the category description to embody the customer benefits we deliver.

OUR STRATEGIC ROLE:

WHAT VALUE DO WE CREATE IN THE WORLD?

IDENTIFY THE ROLE WE PLAY IN OUR CUSTOMERS’ LIVES.



[illegible]



BRAND FRAME

OUR PRINCIPLE

The brand principle is the “true north” of our compass. . . guiding our activities and communications alike. This is our unique approach to our work, so essential that it is second nature. The brand principle answers the “how” of our business and our brand.

Thinking of some commonly recognized brands:

The brand principle of Home Depot is “empowering expertise.” The brand principle for BMW is “performance.”

OUR PRINCIPLE:

WHAT IS OUR UNIQUE APPROACH TO OUR WORK?

HOW DO WE CARRY OUT THIS UNIQUE APPROACH?



WHAT IS THE CORE IDEOLOGY THAT DRIVES US?

DRAFT BRAND PRINCIPLE:



BRAND FRAME

OUR PROMISE

Our promise is exactly that; what does our bank promise to deliver for those who engage with our company? Many brand thinkers hold that in the final analysis, a brand IS a promise.

OUR BRAND PROMISE:

WHAT DO WE PROMISE TO DO FOR OUR CUSTOMERS DAY IN AND DAY OUT?

WHAT CAN OUR CUSTOMERS EXPECT FROM US WITHOUT FAIL?

WHAT VALUE DO WE PROMISE TO DELIVER?



DRAFT BRAND PROMISE:



BRAND FRAME CORE VALUES

Core values represent our most closely held and cherished beliefs. Brand values are often thought of as the “rails” upon which the brand travels. They keep it out of the ditches and on course. Values are boundaries for action: a person rarely acts in opposition to his or her core values; neither do brands.

Thinking of some commonly recognized brands:

Starbucks values equity in its trading relationships and sustainability of the agricultural regions that grow its product. It works to create fair trade and to preserve and sustain the environment. Home Depot values independence and work ethic. It supports America's Olympic hopefuls with full-time salaries for part-time jobs.

OUR CORE VALUES:

WHAT UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES REFLECT THE BEST BEHAVIORS AND DECISIONS OF YOUR TEAM?

WHO ARE THE ROLE MODELS WITHIN YOUR BANK AND WHAT VALUES/BEHAVIORS DO THEY DISPLAY THAT YOU WANT TO SEE OTHERS DISPLAY?



LIST THE 3-7 TRAITS REFLECTED IN THE ABOVE BOXES THAT, TAKEN TOGETHER, PROVIDE A POWERFUL GUIDE FOR BEHAVIOR INSIDE YOUR BANK.

DRAFT CORE VALUES:



BRAND FRAME

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Brand personality traits reflect the idea that organizations and brands can be viewed in much the same way that people are. People react emotionally to companies and brands just as they do to other people. Consistent expressions of our personality traits ensure that our communications provide the right feel and tone.

Thinking of some commonly recognized brands:

The personality attributes of Home Depot include “helpful, knowledgeable, friendly.”

The personality attributes of BMW include “passionate, precise, enthused.”

OUR BRAND PERSONALITY TRAITS:

WHAT IS OUR “VIBE”—OUR STYLE AND WAY OF SEEING THINGS?

WHAT IS OUR COMMUNICATIONS STYLE WITH OUR CUSTOMERS?



WHAT PERSONALITY ARE WE TRYING TO CONVEY?

DRAFT PERSONALITY TRAITS:



BRAND FRAME

THE BRAND STORY

Almost every culture has a creation myth. Ancient tribes told tales that passed cultural knowledge from one generation to another. Stories are powerful: as humans, they tell us who we are and help explain why we are here. For brands, stories are equally powerful. They create a frame of reference and an easily understood “creation myth” that can be used to telegraph the brand proposition to key audiences.

Consider the story of how the first Nike shoe was created by an Oregon track coach tinkering with his wife’s waffle iron in the garage. You’ll rarely see a “waffle sole” on a Nike shoe today, but that single-minded pursuit of performance still drives the Nike brand.

OUR BRAND STORY:

HOW DID OUR BANK COME INTO BEING? (HISTORY)

WHAT WERE THE PASSIONS AND DRIVERS FOR OUR BANK’S FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT? WHAT WERE THE FOUNDERS TRYING TO ACHIEVE?



IS THERE A STORY OR TWO THAT SUMS UP WHY
WE ARE HERE AND HOW WE DO BUSINESS?

DRAFT BRAND STORY:

ASSESS & DEVELOP CULTURAL CLARITY

MODULE #3

BRAND 
CULTURE
{ DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM }



“Culture eats strategy for breakfast. Purpose drives its appetite.”

Dozens of CEOs and management gurus have quoted the maxim—clearly recognizing that no matter the category, the success of any company rests squarely on the performance of its people. And that performance is driven by culture. Culture trumps strategy, innovation, technology and operational excellence.

Culture drives success because:

- **Competitors can copy strategy but not culture.** There are dozens of low-fare airlines now, but still only one Southwest.
- **Culture is persistent; strategy is not.** A new CEO, a turnaround, market dynamics. Numerous factors drive strategic shifts; the culture will defeat or enable that shift.
- **Strategy is forged in private; culture in the open.** Strategy formation is the domain of the executive team. Cultural formation occurs at every level of the organization.
- **Strategy engenders compliance; culture drives commitment.** Achieving mission at scale means winning hearts and minds. Start with the hearts and you'll earn the minds.
- **People are loyal to cultures; strategies, not so much.** A week into its month-long new employee training, Zappos offers new hires \$2,000 to quit; it quickly weeds out those whose values don't align. CEO Tony Hsieh considers it the best investment they make in the business.

“Culture isn’t just one aspect of the game, it is the game.”

— LOU GERSTNER,
FORMER CEO OF IBM

If culture eats strategy, purpose drives its appetite. This is basic human nature: we all crave meaning in our lives and in our work; we need social engagement; we want to make an impact. When a compelling, galvanizing purpose is clear and present to every single employee—from the CEO to the front lines—culture thrives and drives. Southwest Airlines exists to “democratize the skies.” Apple exists to create elegant, bulletproof technology “for the rest of us.” Zappos exists to wow its customers and “deliver happiness.” If a company selling shoes online can invest purpose and meaning in its work, any company can.



Cultural Clarity Self-Assessment

Rate your bank: Score your bank by indicating how much you agree with each statement:

- +2** Strongly Agree
- +1** Somewhat Agree
- 0** Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 1** Somewhat Disagree
- 2** Strongly Disagree

QUESTION	RATING
Our bank has a crystalline purpose, and it's codified into a memorable, universally understood mantra.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our purpose clearly differentiates us from our competition; it's attractive to customers, investors, stakeholders and employees alike.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our bank has a system of core values, simply and clearly stated, fully understood and readily repeated by all.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our core values are more than "words on the wall;" they are vibrant, alive, visible and continually motivating our employees to action.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our bank regularly recognizes and rewards individual behaviors and performances based on their expression of our core values and organizational purpose.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our reward and recognition program functions in real-time, enabling peers to "catch each other doing good;" it is present and visible from day to day and not just at, for example, an annual all-hands event.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our bank has organized means, supported by management and funded in the budget, for propagating culture in an intentional, methodical manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our bank conducts periodic surveys or other assessments to track cultural strength and employee alignment with cultural norms.	<input type="checkbox"/>
TOTAL SCORE <input type="text"/>	

Scoring key: Grand total assessment

13-16 You are rocking the culture; pat your team on the back and look for ways to move from "good to great"

8-12 Getting there! You've probably identified zones for improvement in those scores you rated zero or negative values

0-7 Hmm. You're not winning the culture wars. Let's explore the 3 disciplines of highly aligned cultures with your tablemates.

-16-1 Yikes! Let's get to work building a culture that drives mission impact, talent acquisition and retention and financial performance

ASSESS YOUR BANK'S CORE VALUES MATURITY

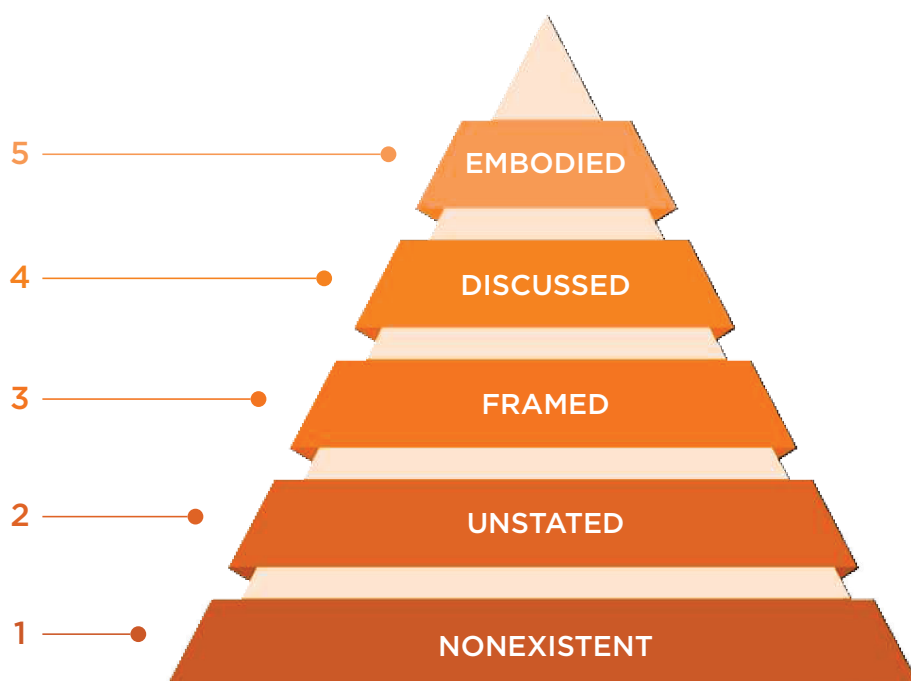
MODULE #4

BRAND 
CULTURE
{ DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM }

Evaluate your bank's maturity on the core values maturity spectrum.

U.S. banks may find themselves at any of these levels. The higher your bank reaches on the spectrum, the more powerful and transformative your system of core values will be. Banks with embodied core values — the highest level of integration and implementation — are more likely to be attracting and retaining top talent; outperforming their competition and gaining market share.

CORE VALUES ASSESSMENT





#1: Non Existent

If you have no written core values but believe that leadership has an idea about what they are, move to the next level.

- ☐ No core values have been established
- ☐ Leadership has not recognized that these are not a part of the bank
- ☐ Leadership has not considered the worth of establishing core values

#2: Unstated

If you have stated/written core values, move to the next level.

- ☐ There are no written/stated values within the organization
- ☐ The bank is multi-generational and leadership believed the founding values are being embodied
- ☐ Values are exemplified by leadership, but are unspoken
- ☐ The bank believes it hires employees who embody the values
- ☐ The bank believes its customers know what the bank stands for

#3: Framed

If the core values have been defined and discussed, move to the next level.

- ☐ Core values are written and posted within the bank, but are not actively discussed or referenced
- ☐ The leadership team or CEO created the core values without input from anyone
- ☐ The values are designed primarily with the customers in mind and not the employees or stakeholders
- ☐ Values are stated as single words or very simple phrases with no clarifications or example behaviors associated
- ☐ No one can remember the core values without a cheat sheet — including leadership



#4: Discussed

If the core values are actively recognized, rewarded, celebrated and lived out, proceed to the next level.

- ☐ The leadership team knows the core values, but mid-level and line-level have only partly adopted them
- ☐ Core values are published and referenced at meetings but otherwise don't play a role in the bank's daily operations
- ☐ When asked, employees feel the core values are applied inconsistently
- ☐ Core values are not used to screen applicants during an interview or mentioned during the hiring process

#5: Embodied

If you have finished developing your Brand Leadership Frames, you will have drafted a system of core values. These values statements should be clear, compelling and predictive of behaviors — not just generic words like “integrity” or “accountability.”

A next step on your Brand + Culture development journey is to bring these values to life within the bank and use them to create a common language and common mindset within your team.

The stages of core values maturity and implementation provide clear milestones for developing and implementing your own program. In subsequent modules of Brand + Culture, we will explore tools and techniques for embodying core values in your organization.

- ☐ All employees know the core values and understand them. They even have their personal favorites!
- ☐ Values are discussed frequently and referenced at all organization levels
- ☐ Bank leadership uses the core values to make key decisions
- ☐ Values are applied to all stakeholders internally and externally
- ☐ Core values are regularly celebrated and employees are rewarded and/or recognized for exhibiting the core values

BUILD YOUR CULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

MODULE #5

BRAND 
CULTURE
{ DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM }



In Module 5 we explore the power of constant communications and compelling stories to propagate your brand culture.

As we discussed, effective cultural communication is top-down, bottom-up and side-to-side. While the CEO is the standard-bearer of the brand and the culture, he or she is not the sole effective communicator of culture. In fact, a bank in which all the cultural notes emanate solely from the top is unlikely to have the most powerful culture possible. That's because everyone influences everyone, and the more culturally aligned communications you have, the better.

Use these exercises to identify your communications infrastructure and to plan how and where you can fully activate communications to drive your cultural development.

IDENTIFY AVAILABLE COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

A good place to start is with this evaluation of the communication channels available to you (and which ones you might want to develop). This list is not exhaustive but should serve as a good idea-starter and conversation-builder for your bank.

CHANNEL	WE HAVE IT	WE USE IT	WE SHOULD
Breakroom walls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Breakroom floors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Desktops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cubicle walls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee bulletin boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee restroom walls, stalls, mirrors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Company intranet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS CONTINUED

CHANNEL	WE HAVE IT	WE USE IT	WE SHOULD
Private employee Facebook group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Slack, Teams or similar messaging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadcast voicemails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadcast emails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wall murals or decals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stanchion signs, banners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1:1 meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Company-wide meetings, picnics, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Badge cards, wallet cards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Company newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New-hire orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



IDENTIFY 5 KEY INITIATIVES

With a good sense of how you're using key communication channels now to propagate culture, identify a shortlist of highest impact, most feasible ways and means to develop your communications muscles. Using the grid below of key internal audiences, map out how and when you can increase communications content and focus. The grid has been started with some initial ideas, but you should feel welcome to overwrite these with your own material.

INTERNAL AUDIENCE	CHANNEL	CHANNEL	CHANNEL	CHANNEL
COMPANY WIDE	Annual meeting	Employee newsletter	Intranet	Employee Facebook group
NEW EMPLOYEE	Orientation and training module	Onboarding visit with manager		
SENIOR MANAGEMENT	Management meeting			
BRANCH MANAGER				
DEPARTMENTAL/ LINE EMPLOYEES	Departmental or branch meetings			

ADDING STORYTELLING

As discussed in the video, storytelling is one of the most powerful communication tools available to the culture developer. Stories convey information simply, memorably and compellingly. Through illustration and example, the storyteller conveys the most essential and important information about the bank's brand, its culture and its purpose. Use this grid to map out how and where you can insert the power of story into your communications channels.

COMMUNICATIONS CHANNEL	USE OF STORYTELLING OR STORY SHARING



STORYTELLING WORKSHEET

There is a simple, repeatable and effective means for developing stories that stick. Use this simple roadmap to construct any organizational anecdote into a memorable, instructional and influential corporate story.

This worksheet can be photocopied, taught and shared with team members who are charged with developing compelling stories within the bank.

SET THE SCENE	
INTRODUCE THE CHARACTERS	
BEGIN THE JOURNEY	
ENCOUNTER THE OBSTACLE	
OVERCOME THE OBSTACLE	
MAKE THE POINT	

ASSESS AND PLAN COLLECTIVE CELEBRATIONS

MODULE #6

BRAND 
CULTURE

{ DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM }



The Cultural Power of Collective Celebrations

Celebrating together is a high-energy input to your bank's cultural development program. Through celebrations you create common experiences, emotional connectivity and heightened enthusiasm. Celebrations are propellant to drive your brand culture forward. Effective celebrations don't have to be big, expensive, all-hands deals. They can be localized, brand-specific, department-wide. They can be simple and spontaneous or elaborate and orchestrated. The key is to design celebrations that connect your people to your culture. This tool helps you evaluate the celebrations you've held and plan future celebrations.

RATE YOUR CELEBRATIONS

Generate an inventory of your bank's collective celebrations, then complete the grid to determine how effective your celebrations are in advancing your culture and values.

Place an X inside every cell that you can answer "yes" to. Notice the cells that you left blank. These are opportunities to deepen your bank's culture that can be incorporated into future celebrations.

CELEBRATION DESCRIPTION	CELEBRATION HIGHLIGHTED OUR CORE VALUES	CELEBRATION ENGAGED ALL OF THE SENSES	CELEBRATION INCLUDED A STORY	CELEBRATION RECOGNIZED STAFF	CELEBRATION WAS WELL ATTENDED
	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC <input type="checkbox"/> FOOD <input type="checkbox"/> GAME/ACTIVITY <input type="checkbox"/> DECORATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC <input type="checkbox"/> FOOD <input type="checkbox"/> GAME/ACTIVITY <input type="checkbox"/> DECORATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC <input type="checkbox"/> FOOD <input type="checkbox"/> GAME/ACTIVITY <input type="checkbox"/> DECORATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC <input type="checkbox"/> FOOD <input type="checkbox"/> GAME/ACTIVITY <input type="checkbox"/> DECORATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC <input type="checkbox"/> FOOD <input type="checkbox"/> GAME/ACTIVITY <input type="checkbox"/> DECORATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N



CREATE A CELEBRATION

Use this envisioning exercise and planner to create a collective celebration in the bank celebrating a milestone, core values or a corporate achievement.

Describe your new celebration and determine the milestone/event/achievement you wish to celebrate:

When will this event take place?

Where will this event be held?



Who will be responsible for planning
and executing this event?

What core value, mantra or achievement(s)
will you highlight during this event?

How will you engage the senses?



MUSIC:

FOOD:

GAME/ACTIVITY:

DECORATIONS:



Where will storytelling be incorporated into your celebration?

How might you recognize staff, or a department, etc. for “living the culture”?



PROJECT PLANNER

Break your celebration plan down into discrete responsibilities ("who"), actions ("does what"), milestones ("by when") to produce a project planner for your celebration.

WHO?	DOES WHAT?	BY WHEN?

RECOGNITION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT TOOL

MODULE #7

BRAND 
CULTURE
{ DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM }



Evaluate Your Employee Rewards and Recognition Program for Cultural Impact

Use this worksheet to assess your bank's current employee reward and recognition program. This assessment will provide insight into how well you are doing in rewarding and recognizing bank employees in alignment with your brand principles.

If you do not currently have a formal recognition program this worksheet will help to highlight the elements that should be incorporated into a recognition program. *Note: Answers score from minus one (-1) to plus two (+2)*

QUESTIONS	SCORING	
1. We show some form of appreciation to our employees every week	Y = +1 N = 0	
2. Our recognition program is tied to measurable results or our core values	Y = +2 N = 0	
3. Employees find our rewards program complicated	Y = -1 N = 0	
4. Our rewards programs is peer to peer	Y = +2 N = 0	
5. Our rewards program is manager to peer	Y = +1 N = 0	
6. Employees see the rewards we currently offer as valuable	Y = +1 N = 0	
7. We have a rewards program, but employees and managers rarely use it	Y = -1 N = 0	
8. Organizational, departmental and individual goals/expectations are clearly defined and understood; our rewards program is aligned with these expectations	Y = +2 N = 0	
9. Employees report that our program is silly	Y = -1 N = 0	
10. Small contributions/achievements as well as major ones are recognized	Y = +1 N = 0	
POINTS TOTAL		

9-10 points: Excellent! Job satisfaction is likely high, meaning you're more likely to recruit and retain strong employees.

6-8 points: Not bad, but you are missing essential components of recognition that motivate and retain employees.

1-5 points: Time to rethink your recognition program and make it stronger.

STARTING YOUR BANK'S CULTURE COMMITTEE

MODULE #8

BRAND 
CULTURE
{ DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM }



How to Start a Culture Committee

Culture committees drive progress by helping teams live out the bank's core values, purpose and key objectives. They support management by identifying important issues to address, planning culture-driving activities, activating and enlivening core values, planning celebrations and championing the bank's core ideology to peers. **The value of a culture committee lies in these key areas:**

Act as eyes and ears

Members of the committee may act as your front line when it comes to hearing and seeing coworkers' opinions about their work environment and reporting these issues to bank leadership.

Come up with fresh ideas

The culture committee can provide a steady supply of ideas and innovative thinking for propagating your brand culture across the organization.

Create a sense of community

Employees are more likely to accept change when they have a role in the decision-making process. Before implementing new procedures or policies, a culture committee can help solicit opinions, suggestions and commitments from the workforce.

Drive adoption of the Six Cs

Plan and conduct activities that will use these cultural competencies.

Represent diverse employees' interests

The culture committee may help you better understand the broader audience's feelings and experiences throughout the development of your program.

Improve the Bank's image and reputation

Culture committees can be great when attempting to attract investors, hire new staff, and boost your bank's brand.

Develop the core values

Your brand development process should have defined and codified the core values; at first, however, they tend to just be words. The committee can be in a continual dialogue with management about the implementation, activation and understanding of the core values.

Catalyze change

The committee can make suggestions for improvements to their executive sponsor and the senior leadership team. Frequently, these committees act as highly effective sounding boards and focus groups for the CEO and senior leadership.



Steps to Developing a Culture Committee

Developing a culture committee is within reach of any bank; it simply requires a modest commitment of human resources and time, a good facilitator and a roadmap for success. Here are key steps to building and chartering your committee.

Step 1: Identify the executive sponsor

Without executive sponsorship, a culture committee will likely fall flat. A key member of the executive team should be the champion of this group. And the CEO should either sponsor the committee, or participate.

Step 2: Recruit a diverse and representative committee

The group should represent a mix of all the experiences in the company: tenure, ethnicity, age and service area or location. Your committee should include the following:

Opinion Leaders: These are the people—not always with a “chief,” “supervisor” or “manager” in their titles—who altruistically tend to speak up in meetings, influence others or ask productive and challenging questions about the company. They already have an interest in the way things operate outside of their individual roles. They are viewed as leaders by their peers; they are “the people others want to follow.”

Naysayers: Give consideration to inviting employees who tend to be most resistant to change, particularly those with longer tenures. Often these folks are strong opinion leaders and their voices and influence can be powerful once they embrace the committee and its responsibility to strengthen the culture.

Cross section of departments and functions: Make sure all branches and departments are represented, as well as key departments such as HR and Marketing/Communications, who will naturally have a large stake in guiding and coordinating the committee's work.

Step 3: Recruit your team

It's ideal for committee members to want to serve vs. being told to serve. That necessitates the right kind of recruiting effort. Presented well, an invitation to join the council will be received as an honor and a privilege. After all, the invitation is a reflection of that person's standing and influence in the company.

Step 4: Create a budget

The committee should work from a budget to produce events and communications vehicles that will support building the culture. The size of the budget isn't as important as determining and allocating resources for this purpose.

**Step 5: Create a charter and set process**

Take the time to codify the committee's objectives and goals. Determine how, when and how often the committee will meet, who will be accountable for communication and follow-up and how the committee will report to the full executive team. Determine how long members will serve and how and when they will roll on/off the committee. Have all rules of engagement set in writing.

Step 6: Determine what initiatives the committee would like to tackle

Below are some types of activities that might be initiated. Remember to work from the Six Cs to help institutionalize these best practices:

Surveys: Poll your entire organization to find out what is and isn't working in your company culture. What behaviors or practices are they seeing that run counter to desired cultural outcomes? What culture initiatives would they like to see?

Celebrations (one of the Six Cs): Consider which events, holidays, achievements your company would like to celebrate and how. Design and implement celebrations as brand + culture leaders.

Retreats and meetings (commitment to employees): Get-togethers don't have to cost much and can be held online to include everyone on your team. You can host weekly casual lunches and simple catch-up chats. Use standing meetings to convey cultural information, communicate about core values and bring focus to rewards and recognition. Banks that hold annual or semi-annual "all-hands meetings" can and should use these occasions to drive cultural development.

Culture training (commitment to employees and core values): Your culture committee can offer culture training to help all team members get familiar with the company's values, mission, culture, and the best ways to embody these. Mentorships and onboarding culture training can also help everyone get familiar with how things are done at your organization.

A Culture Book (think "storytelling"): Zappos publishes a culture book, filled with the year's celebrations and cultural initiatives. Your culture council might spearhead your own book, an art installation or intranet page sharing your culture. Consider placing a large canvas or board in your workplace and asking team members to draw or write in memories and paste in photos. Or create a region or forum in your intranet or in a private social media group where your team members can add pictures, commentaries and callouts celebrating your culture.

Company perks and benefits (can be commitments and trade-offs): Do your perks and benefits fit with the culture you're building? If, for example, your culture is built around giving back to the community, do you offer paid time off for volunteer work? If your bank's purpose is building economic vitality and family wealth in your communities, does your compensation, bonus and rewards program afford similar opportunities to employees?

Rewards and recognition: Aligning your rewards and recognition program(s) with culture and core values is a best practice in culture development. Your culture council can be integral in designing and implementing such rewards programs so that they have maximum impact in driving your culture forward.

Building a culture committee has been demonstrated as a powerful "arrow in the quiver" of bank culture development programs. Well designed, staffed and supported, your culture committee will unleash untold emotional, intellectual and psychological energy in your organization.

