

## **Practitioners' Use of the Brand Development Theory: the Brand Personality Grid**

Leading branding exponents, such as Prophet (David Aaker) and Interbrand, suggest that businesses identify core values that are reflected in their business capabilities and their brands' positionings, and in the perceptions of their target stakeholders. In addition, specific features or attributes that can be construed as brand benefits should be defined. In order to truly make a brand 'come alive' and be distinctive in the marketplace, leading branding experts argue that a brand personality should be specified and communicated to stakeholders. Such personality traits are the emotive characteristics of the brand, whereas the brand benefits are more tangible and specific attributes, as outlined.

### 1. Personality

What sets the company apart/describes its character and personality

### 2. Values

The heart of the emotive market-facing proposition

### 3. Brand benefits/attributes

Detailed/specific features of benefit to the customer

Fujitsu's evolving branding is a good example of this.....

Japanese-based Fujitsu is one of the world's biggest businesses, focusing mainly on electronics and IT services. The company had traded under different names across the world and in the UK was familiar to business clients as ICL. Fujitsu decided to maximise its global standing under the Fujitsu name and looked to create a leading brand. Globally, Fujitsu is the world's number three IT services company, is growing and is increasingly successful. In the UK, Fujitsu handles IT outsourcing and management for major banks and retailers, central and local government, the Post Office and many manufacturers.

The old brand in the UK was somewhat staid: hardware-led, overly 'techy', 'grey' and stood for ICL's old values from when the business focused on producing mainframe computers rather than offering innovative IT solutions and management options to leading-edge businesses. The new-look Fujitsu is a dynamic, progressive, forward-thinking business, partnering other leading-edge suppliers to address clients' fast-changing IT requirements and to help clients to transform their business practices.

There are many providers of IT support and many may be able to offer the brand benefits stated above, in the right-hand column. However, fewer B2B companies could claim to have a reputation for being caring, passionate, likeable, dependable and knowledgeable about clients' business issues. In IT services, interpersonal relationships between the supplier and the client are of paramount importance. Clients also perceive high risks in handing over their IT – on which the success of their operations may depend – to a third party. The brand values and brand personality suggested in this analysis would be highly attractive to many senior executives in current or potential business clients.

Having developed a brand proposition – personality, values and attributes – as hypothesised in the example above, the marketing challenges are then to ensure that both:

- all promotional activity reflects this overall message
- any interface with clients and suppliers or partners conveys these sentiments, whether in print format, e-communications, broadcast media or even with any personnel meeting and working with clients.

In addition to developing suitable marketing communications materials, therefore, there is a core requirement to ensure that a company’s workforce understands and utilises the brand proposition developed, not only a company’s marketers. There is a requirement for internal marketing.

The brand personality grid for Fujitsu could easily look like this:\*

<b>Fujitsu</b> <i>The Possibilities are Infinite</i>		
Brand Personality	Brand Values	Brand Benefits
<b>Friendly People</b> <b>Customer-focused</b> <b>Confident</b> <b>Dynamic</b> <b>Future-focused</b> <b>Passionate</b> <b>Likeable Staff</b> <b>Global</b>	<b>Knowledge</b> Customers business Across sectors <b>Dependability</b> Trusted to deliver 30/40 year track record <b>Technical Excellence</b> At forefront of change Tap into Fujitsu’s huge R&D <b>Passion</b> Staff are passionate Deliver for customers <b>Collaboration</b> Working together Networking with partners	<b>Infrastructure Management</b> <b>Free-up Resources</b> <b>Operational Efficiency</b> <b>Customers Enabled to Focus on <i>Their</i> Business Imperatives</b> <b>Latest Technology</b> <b>Total Solutions</b> <b>Leading-edge Partnerships</b> <b>Reliable</b> <b>Cost Effective</b>

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\* The suggested brand personality grid for Fujitsu is an external observer’s view and does not necessarily reflect the company’s own analyses or intended brand strategy.