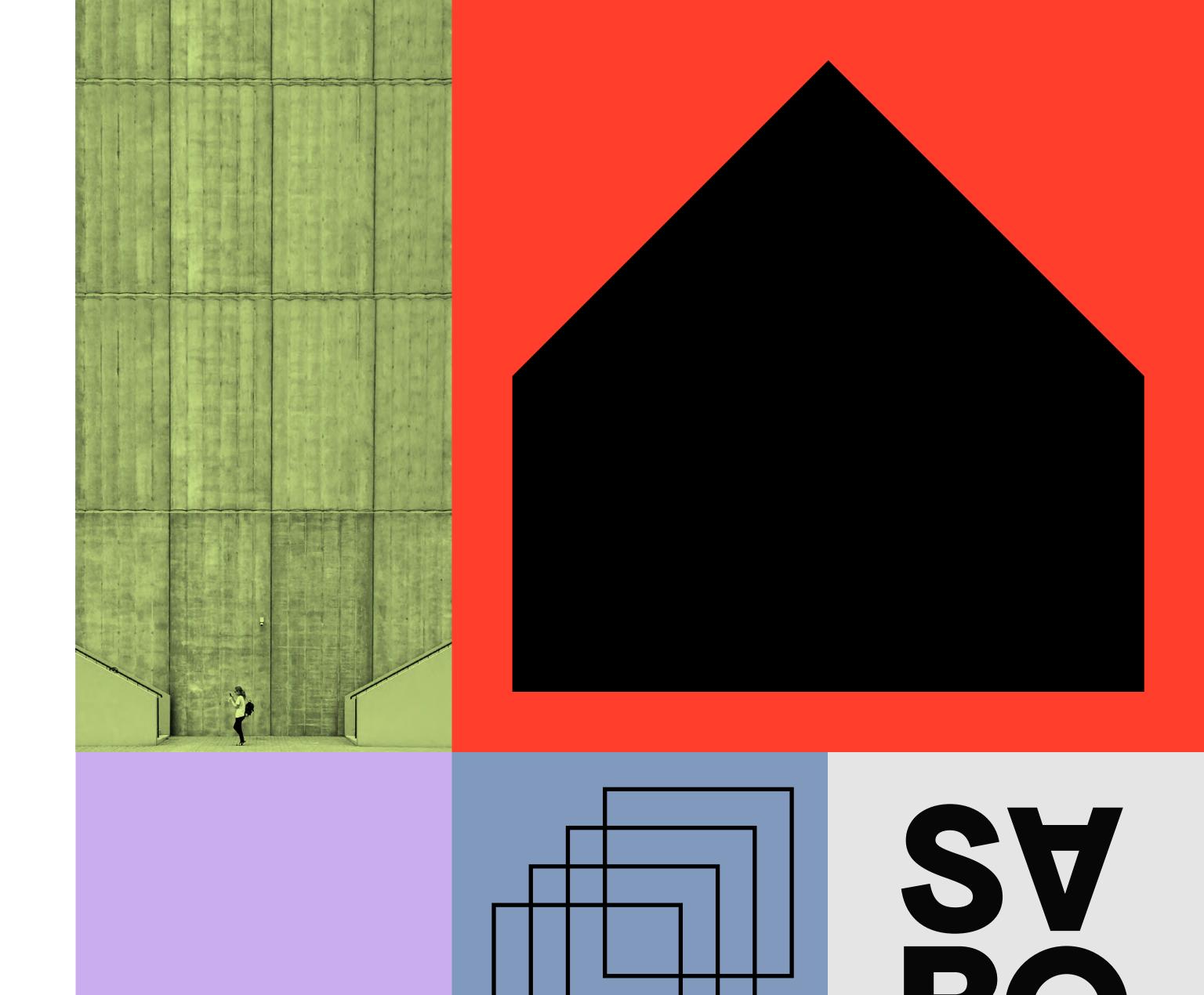
SABOLEUR

Foundations for freedom: Brand Architecture



The Saboteur Brand Toolkit

Get in touch

Brand architecture is just one of the 'foundations for freedom' that great brands put in place in order to escape their constraints and achieve their potential.

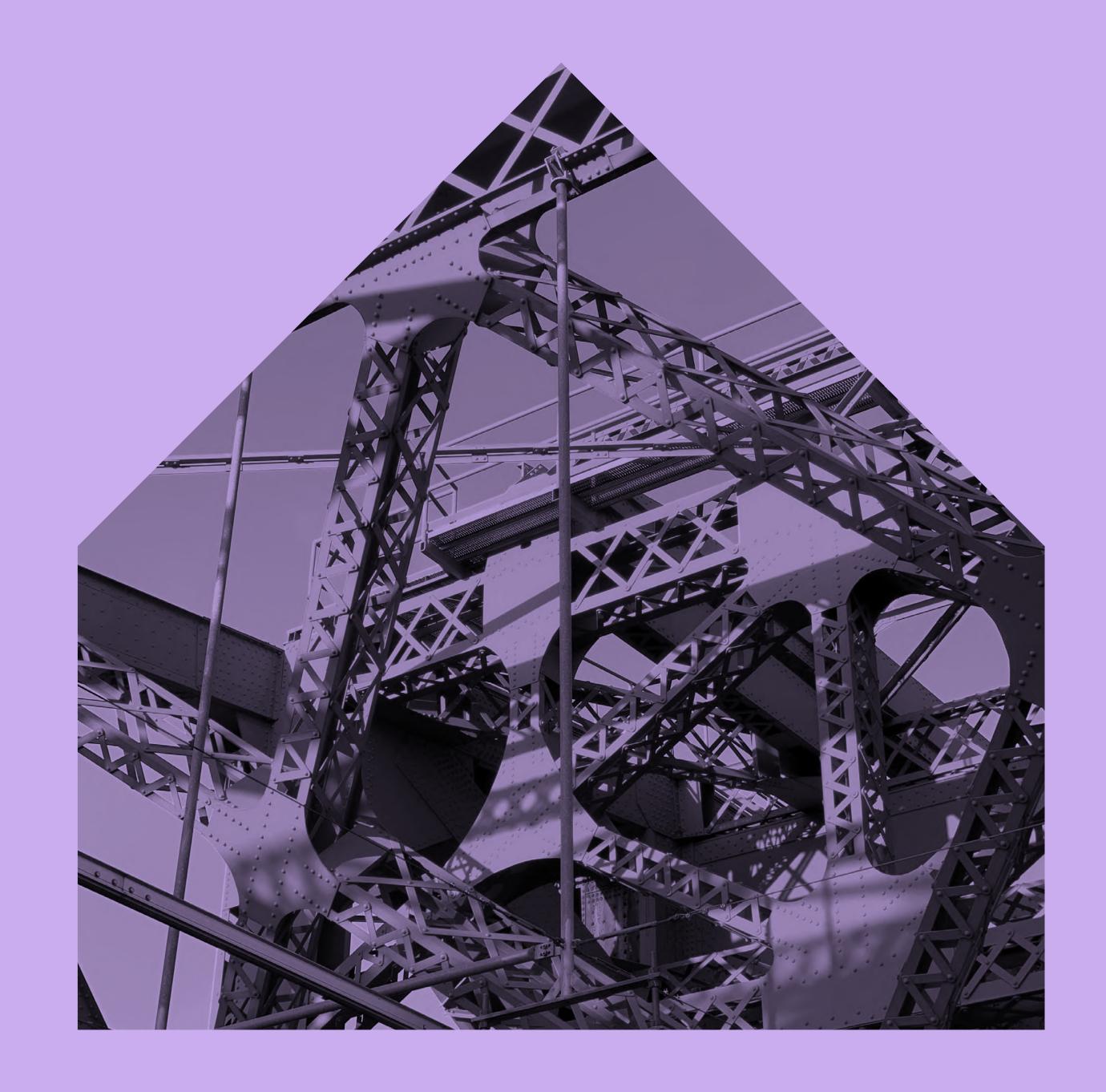
If you would like to find out more about our brand architecture toolkit, who it's already worked for, and how we can use it to set your brand free, please get in touch.

Saboteur Team
hello@saboteur.studio
+44 203 8839 559

Contents

- 1. What is brand architecture?
- 2. Overview: The 4 brand relationships
- 3. Overarching principles
- 4. In detail: 8 levels of architecture
- 5. FAQ
- 6. The relationship between brand architecture and other brand elements
- 7. Further reading

What is brand architecture?



Definitions

Brand architecture

'Brand architecture' is the way a business's offers are branded and organised in relation to one another. Brands are powerful tools of attraction, but they are also expensive to build and manage.

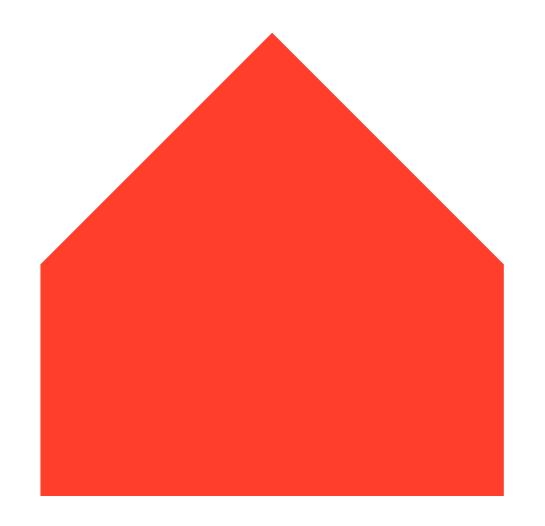
The best brand architectures help businesses to maximise their appeal among different customer groups, while minimising the costs of doing so.

They consist of the fewest brands possible, but no fewer.

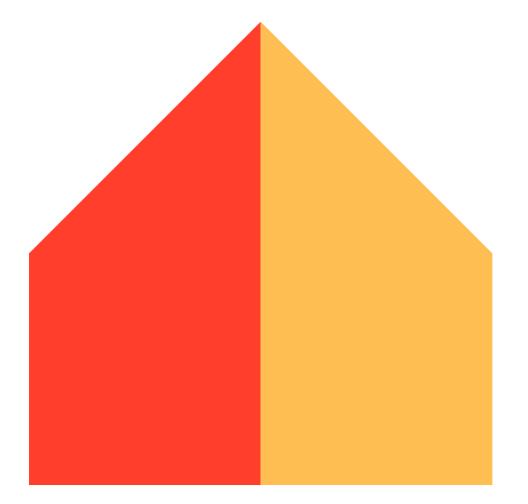
Overview: The 4 brand relationships



There are four main ways to brand an offer



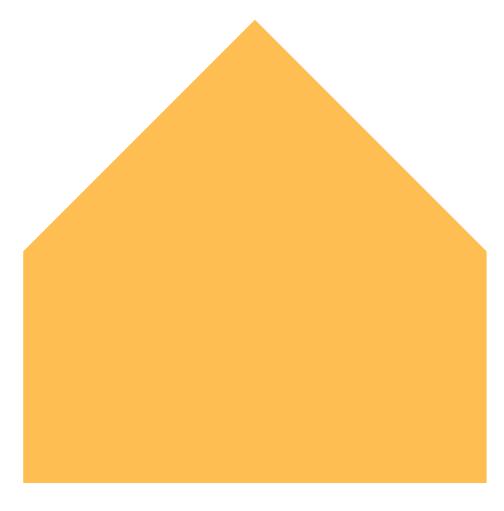
Master branded Your main brand identity



Sub branded Your main brand identity, plus a few additional elements



Endorsed A separate identity, plus elements from your main identity



Standalone A separate identity, with no elements of your main identity

There are four main ways to brand an offer









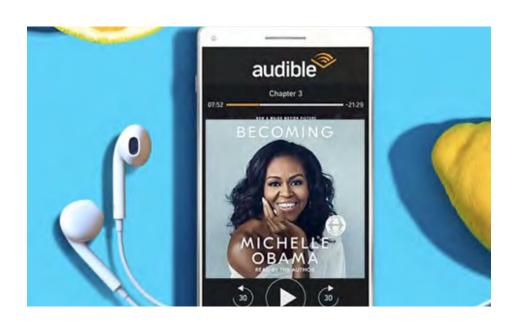


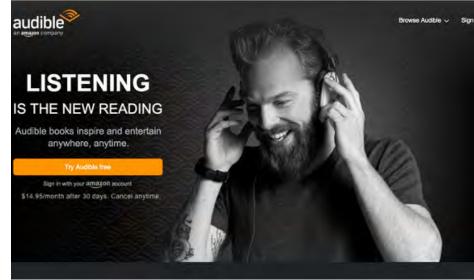








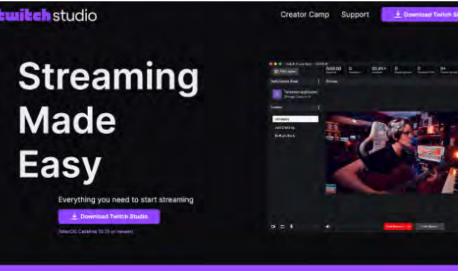














There are four main ways to brand an offer







When the offer is credible coming from the master brand'







When the offer is credible under your main brand identity, providing you add a few new associations.





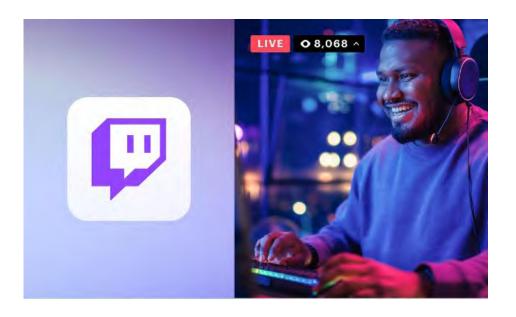


When the offer would not be fully credible under your main brand identity, but the offer, and your main brand, would benefit if associated with each other.



Standalone





When the offer would not be fully credible under your main brand identity, and any association with the main brand would damage its appeal.

Master branded

Principle

When the offer is credible coming from the master brand.

Example

Amazon's fashion offer provides a broad selection, competitive prices and fast delivery, just like other Amazon-branded offers.

It is credible when presented using Amazon's main identity.





Sub branded

Principle

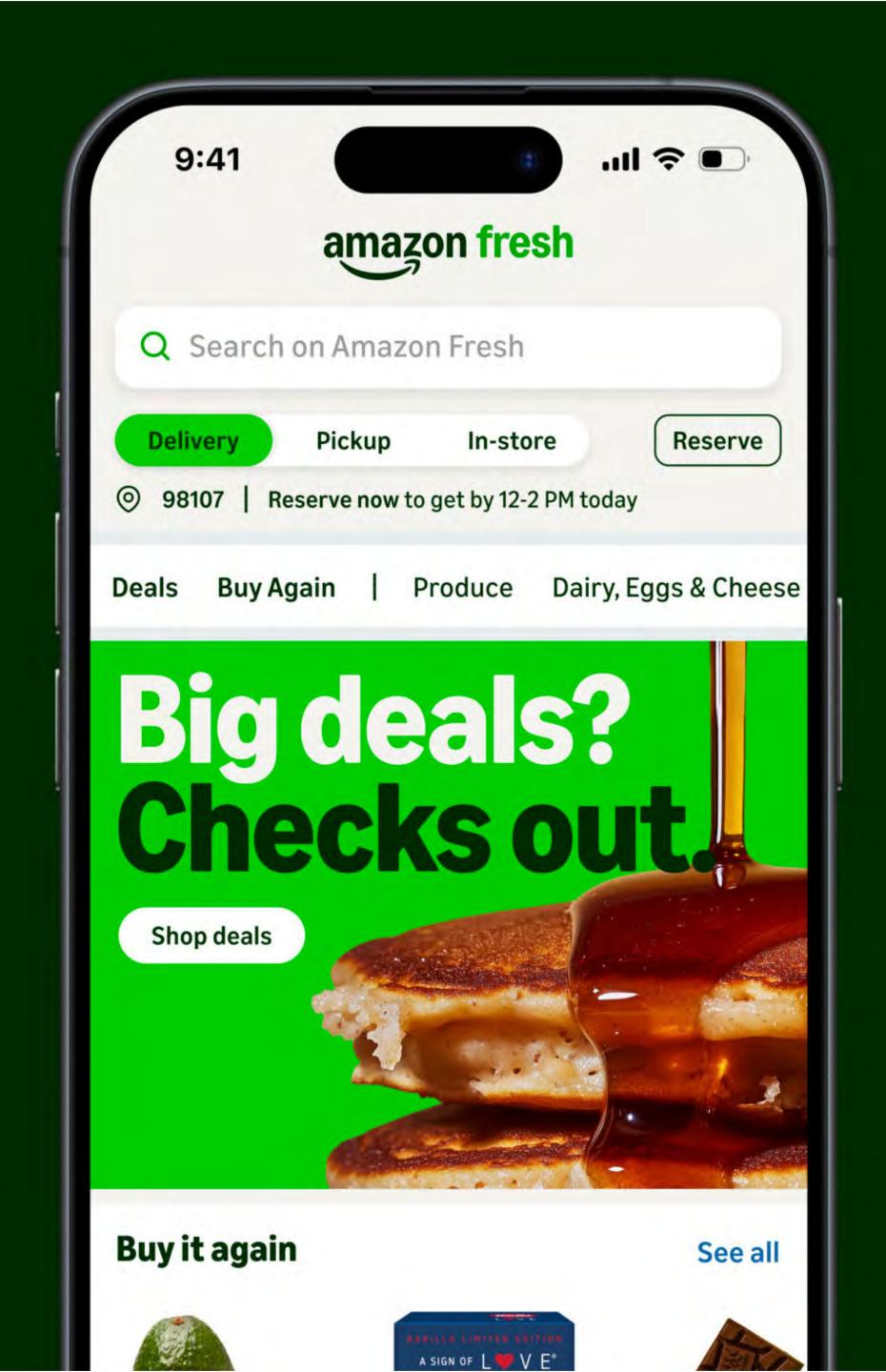
When the offer is credible under your main brand identity, providing you add a few new associations.

Example

Amazon's groceries offer provides a broad selection and competitive prices, just like other Amazon-branded offers.

However, it deals in fresh produce, which must be selected and handled with greater care than you'd expect from a regular Amazon order.

The 'Amazon Fresh' sub brand signals this important difference by adding new and relevant identity elements, including colours and photography that signal 'freshness', and of course, the 'Amazon Fresh' name.



Endorsed

Principle

When the offer would not be fully credible under your main brand identity, but the offer, and your main brand, would benefit if associated with each other.

Example

When Amazon purchased 'Audible' it already had a strong reputation with audiobook listeners, voice actors and publishers. By keeping the 'Audible' brand, Amazon kept hold of this strong reputation.

However, it also endorsed the brand as 'An Amazon company', which:

- 1. Benefits Audible, by letting its customers know that the service is backed by trusted organisation with a history as a bookseller.
- 2. Benefits Amazon, by reminding consumers, investors and others that Amazon is not just an online retailer, but also a consumer tech company and a content producer.



Standalone

Principle

When the offer would not be fully credible under your master brand identity, and any association with the main brand would damage its appeal.

Example

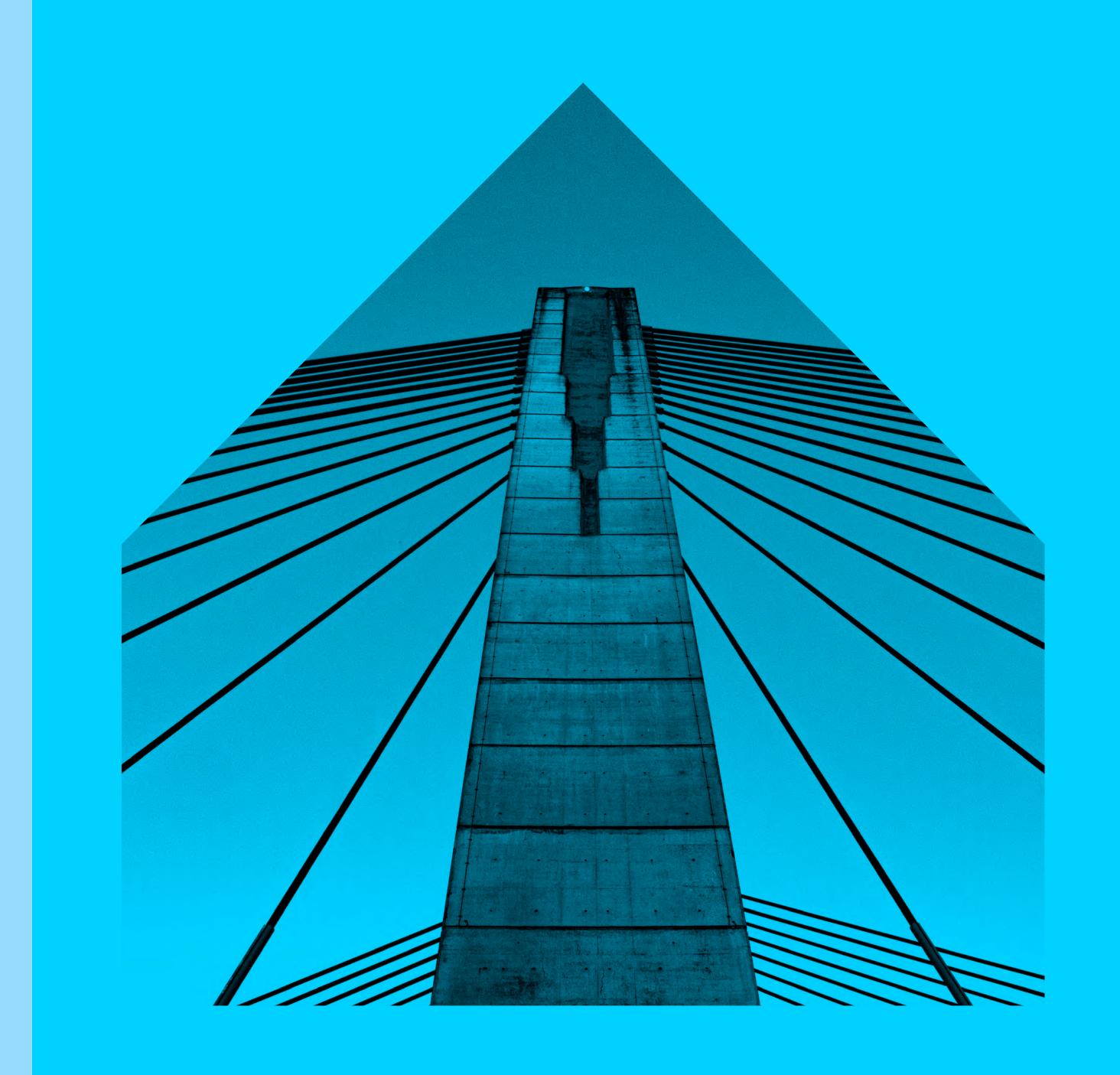
When Amazon bought Twitch – a streaming platform for gamers – it had a strong reputation within the gaming community.

Gaming is a subculture, whose members are often suspicious of big companies who attempt to enter 'their space'.

Avoiding any prominent use of 'Amazon' branding helped Twitch to retain its appeal among these audiences.

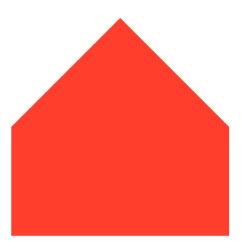


Overarching principles



Master brand wherever possible

Successful brand architectures are designed on the premise that a business should use its master brand 'where possible', and only resort to other brand relationships 'where necessary'. This is because, in almost all cases, the benefits of master branding far outweigh those of sub branding, endorsing, or creating new brands entirely.

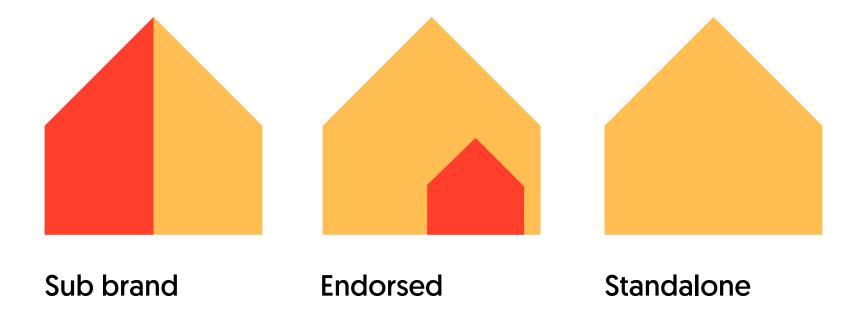


Master brand

WHEREVER POSSIBLE

Master branded offers:

- + Benefit from the master brand's fame, reputation, and marketing expenditure
- + Are less likely to encourage 'siloes' within your organisation
- + Are much quicker, easier and cheaper to brand and promote
- Allow you less freedom to create a brand image tailored to a specialist audience



WHENEVER NECESSARY

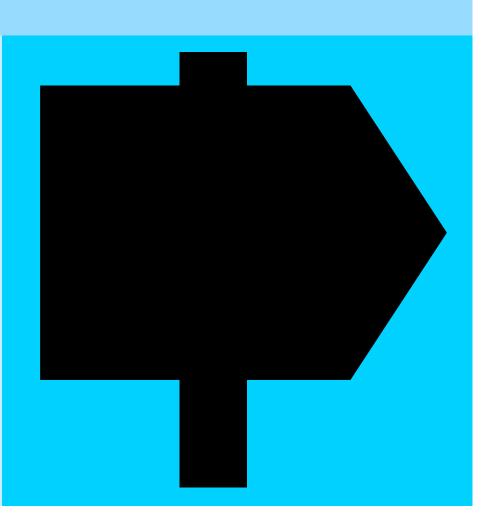
Non-master branded offers:

- + Allow more freedom to create a brand image tailored to a specialist audience.
- Benefit less (or not at all) from
 the master brand's reputation
- Are more likely to encourage'siloes' within your organisation
- Take longer, and cost more,
 to brand and to promote.

Branding ≠ signposting

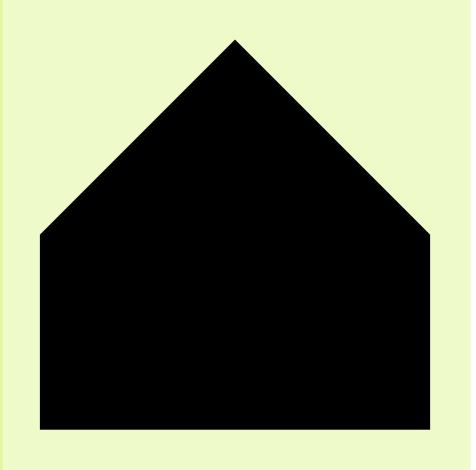
Signposting

Guides your audience through your portfolio, helping them find what they need, or what you want them to see.



Branding

Identifying and attaching the right associations to each part of your portfolio, in order to maximise your chances of success.

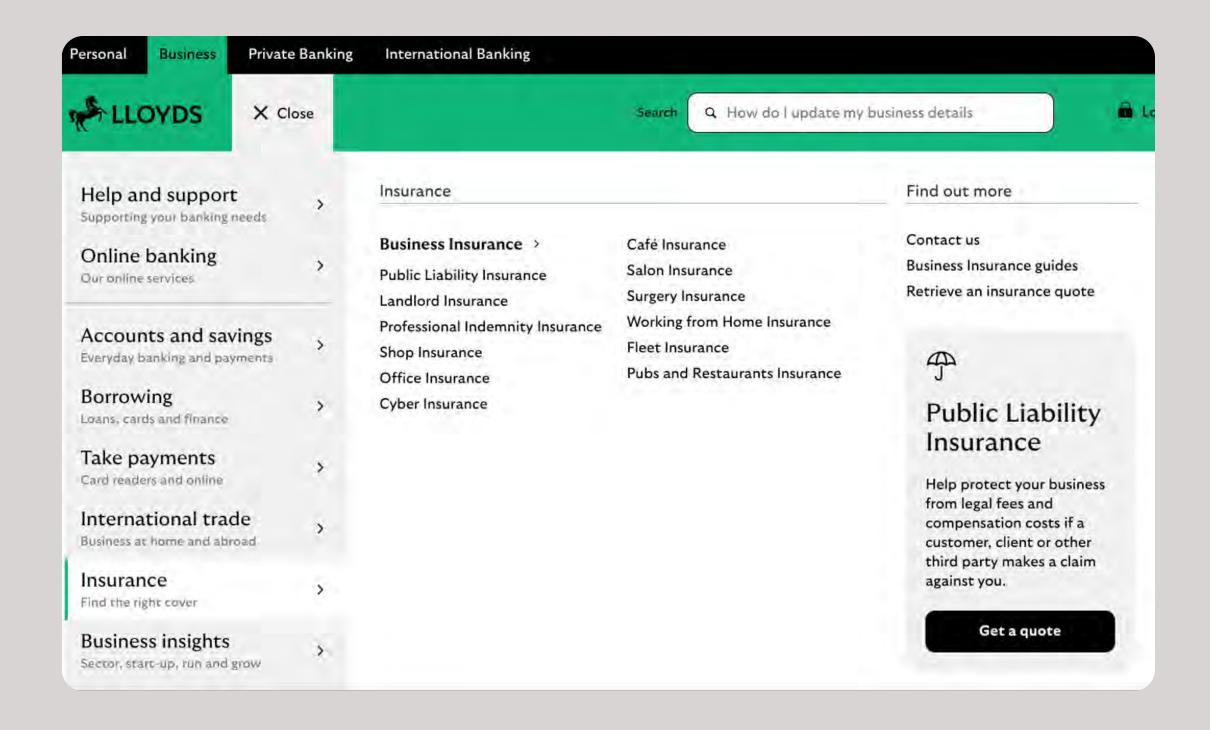


Branding ≠ signposting

Lloyds Bank's line of products and services are well-signposted.

For example, their range of insurance products are clearly named, organized and presented, making it easy for customers to find the offer that applies to them.

As this example shows, a company's separate offers do not require separate 'branding' for their customers to find them.

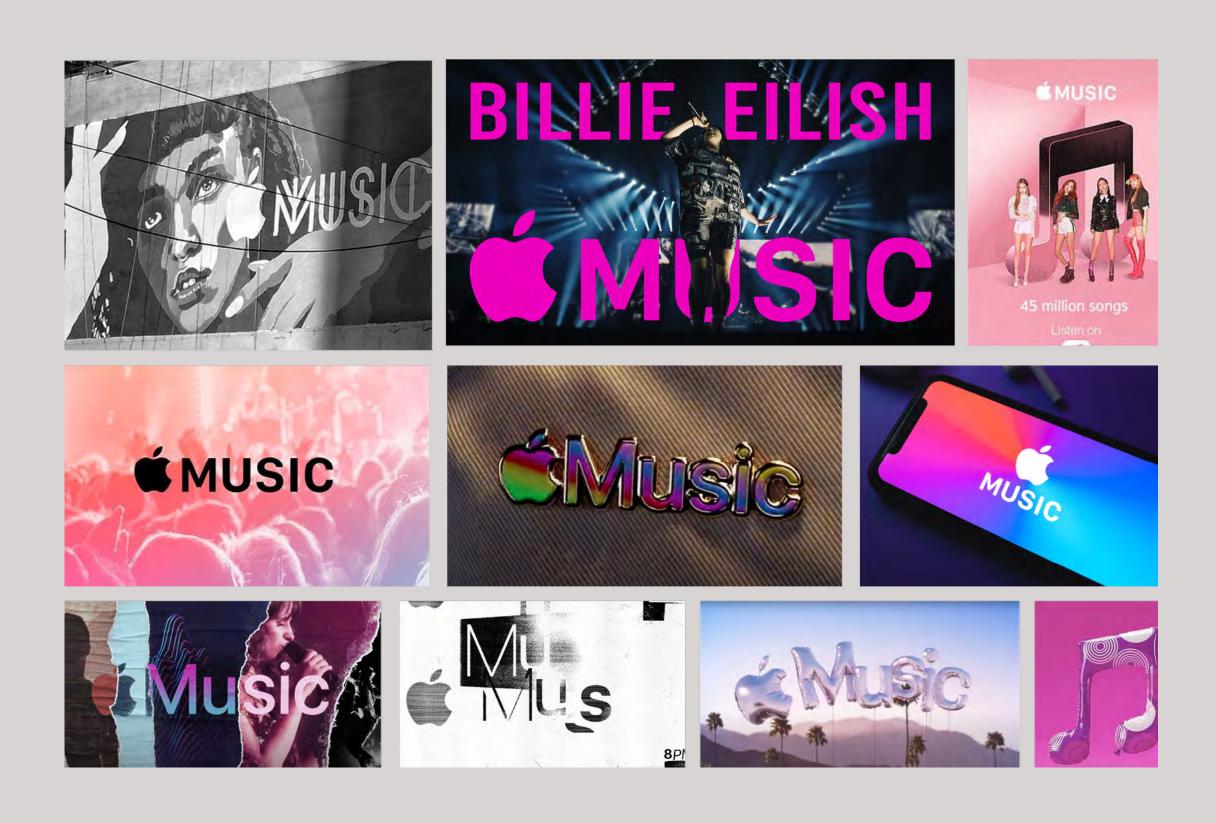


Branding ≠ signposting

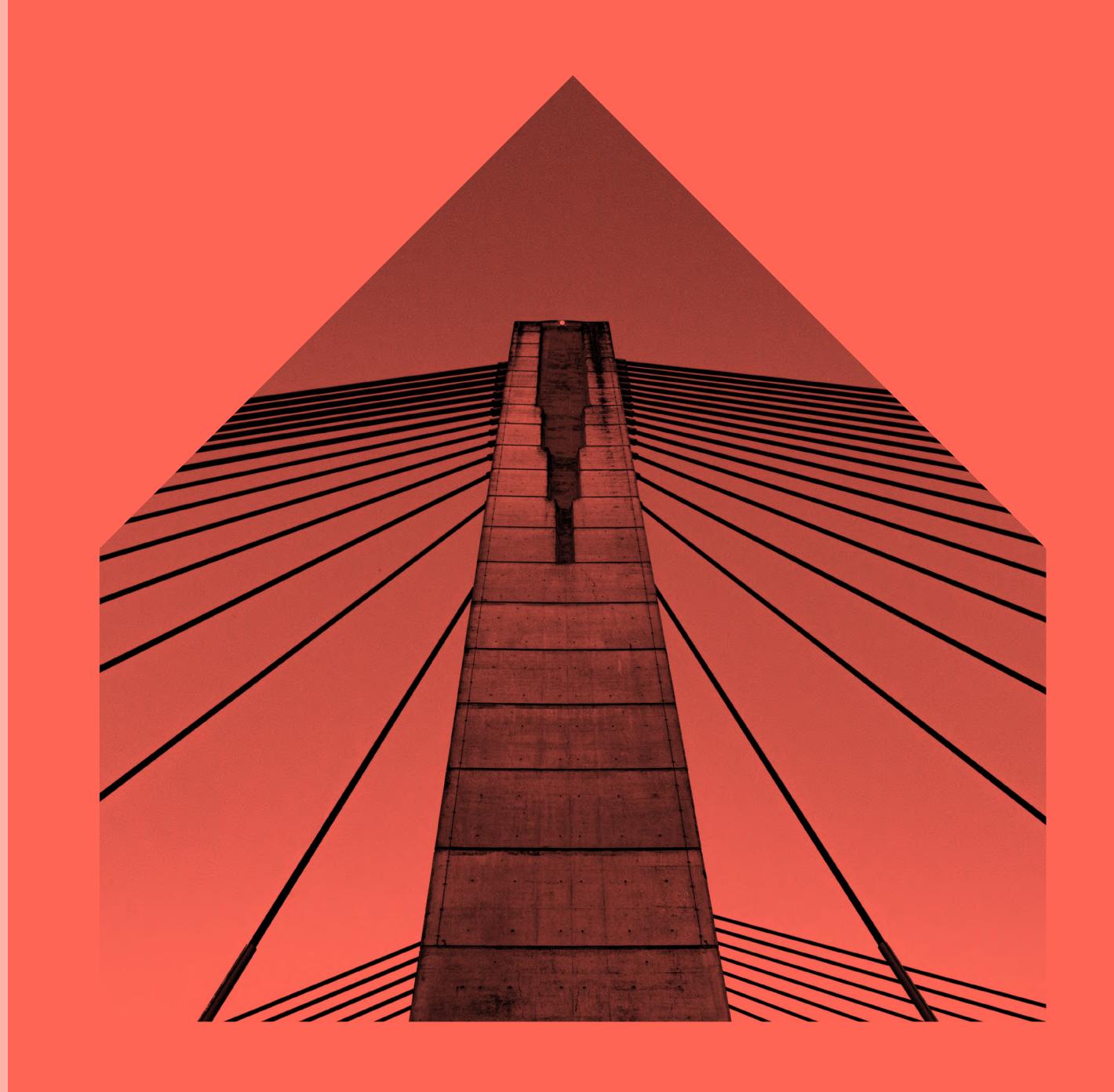
Apple's Music offer is well signposted. It does not require separate branding for customers to find it.

It has separate branding only because it must add new associations to succeed.

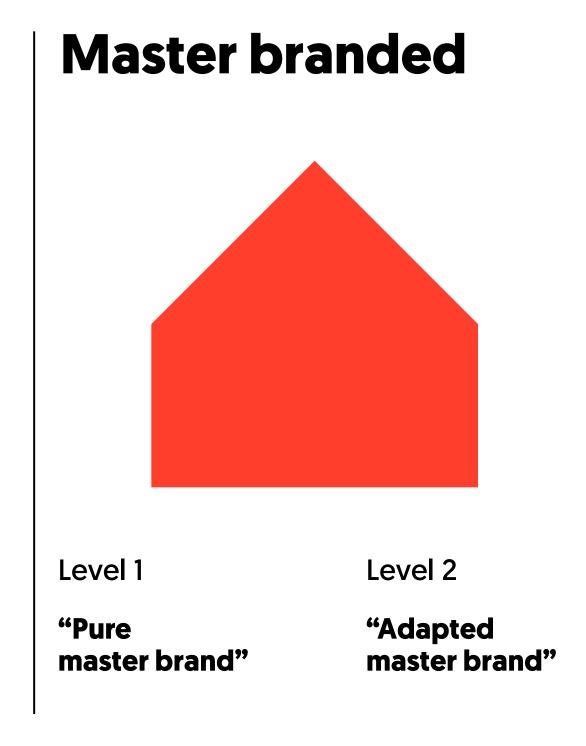
For example, it needs to feel exciting and eclectic, which wouldn't be possible under Apple's austere master brand identity.

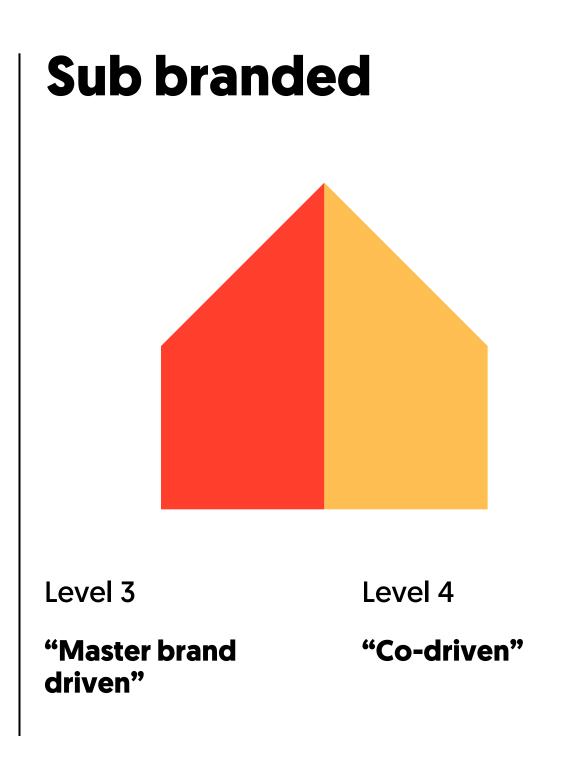


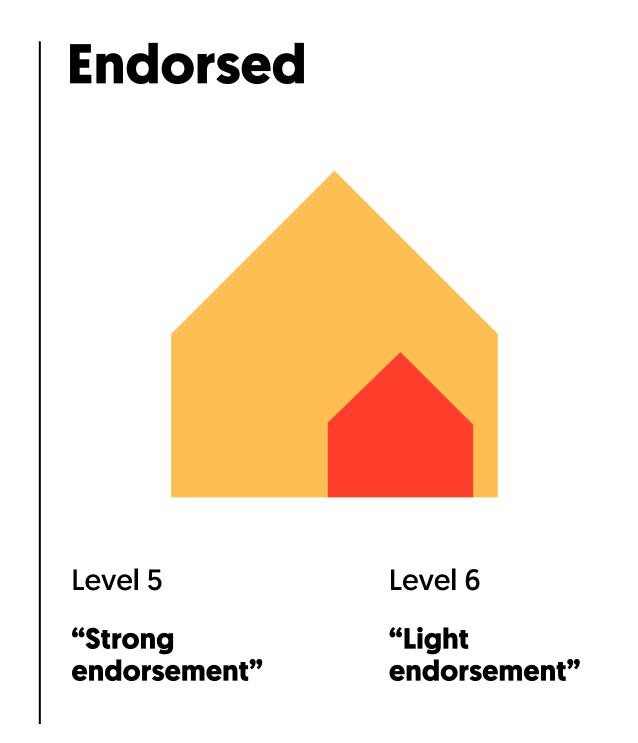
In detail: 8 levels of architecture

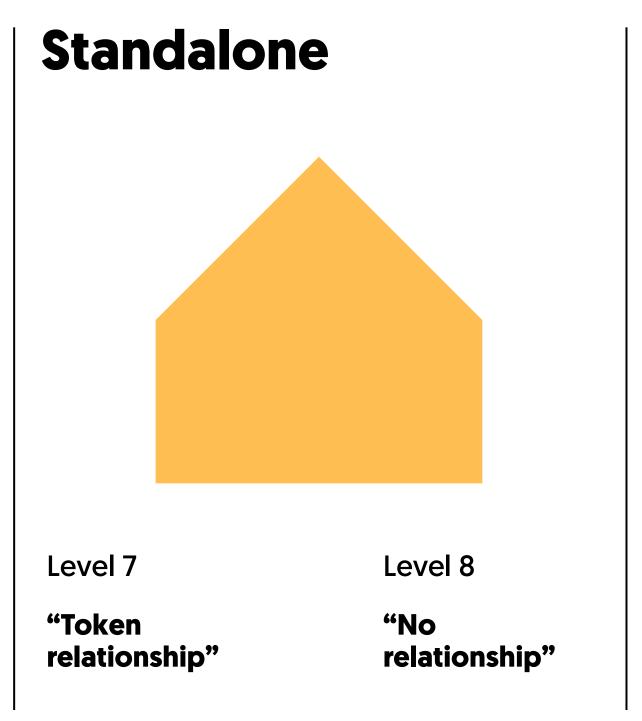


8 levels of architecture









Each of the four brand relationships can be split into two categories, creating eight brand relationships in total.

Each level has its own:

- Definition
- Use cases
- Implications for brand design

MASTER BRANDED



The offer is presented using the master brand identity (the main brand with which the company goes to market) with no unique identity elements.

MASTER BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

Uses master brand name

Identity:

Uses master brand toolkit

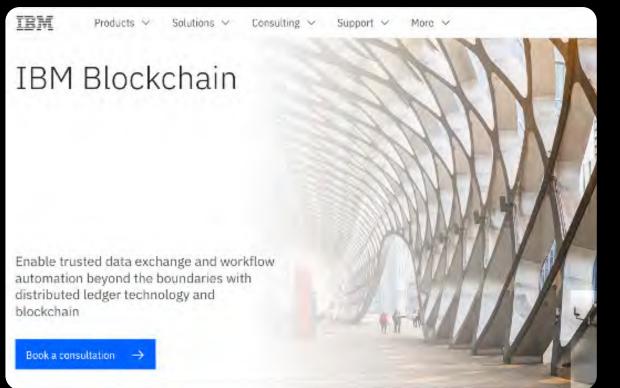
UNIQUE BRAND ELEMENTS

Descriptor:

Uses master brand name

USE WHEN

The master brand can provide all the necessary brand appeal (it is credible and appealing in the relevant markets, and customers only need signposting to find the right service) It's extremely important to avoid any sense that the offer or the team providing it represents an "other" within the organisation



and Tesla Model 3:

These products and services are "purely master branded".

IBM Blockchain, AT&T Wireless

These products and services are "purely master branded". They use "generic" descriptors and every element of their identity is taken from the master brand toolkit. 100% of their "personality" comes from the master brand.





MASTER BRANDED



Level 2 "Adapted master brand"

The offer is presented using the master brand identity, plus a unique element or two (just enough to let the customer know they're "in the right place").

MASTER BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

Uses master brand name

Identity:

Uses master brand toolkit

UNIQUE BRAND ELEMENTS

Descriptor:

Uses "category generic"

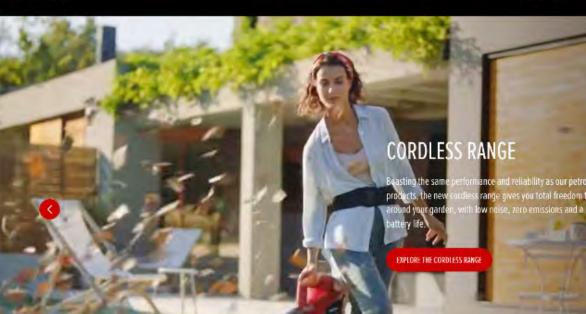
Identity:

Unique elements (Min. no. required to signal audiences are "in the right place") e.g. Photography style, TOV

USE WHEN

The master brand is credible and appealing in multiple markets, but it serves very different audiences and needs, so customers of certain offers need additional signalling to be sure they're "in the right place"

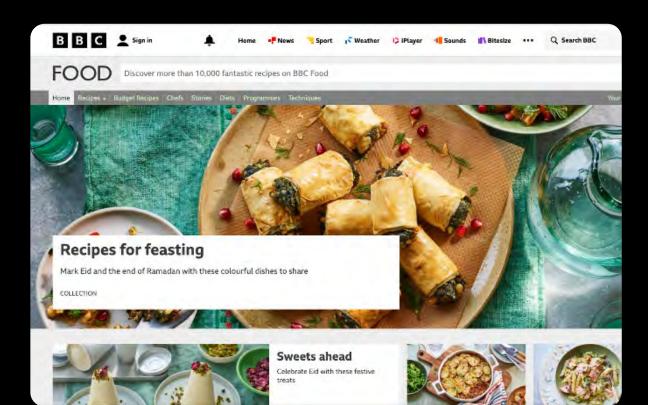




Unlike the most of the Honda portfolio, Honda Lawn & Garden uses lifestyle photography focused on product benefit and buyer image.



The whole of Netflix's offer is master branded, but it uses characters and colour ways – which don't appear in the main brand identity - to signpost child-friendly content and features.



BBC Food uses a more playful, informal tone of voice than many other parts of the BBC.

SUB BRANDED



Level 3 "Master brand driven"

The offer is presented using the master brand identity, with a modification that is essential to generate appeal among a specific audience.

MASTER BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

Uses master brand name

Identity:

Uses master brand toolkit

UNIQUE BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

Literal suffix/prefix

Identity:

Unique elements (Min. no. required to create specialist appeal) e.g. Colour, Tone of voice, photography or illustration style

USE WHEN

To enter an adjacent market, it is necessary to signal a modification to the experience that customers associate with the master brand



Spotify Kids, British Airways First and Apple Music each use the master brand name plus a descriptive suffix.

They also use the master brand identity system, plus a few additional elements, designed to signal an experience tailored to a specific audience or need.





SUB BRANDED



The product is presented under two brand names simultaneously – the master brand's, and the product brand's.

MASTER BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

Uses master brand name

Identity:

Uses master brand toolkit

UNIQUE BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

'Metaphorical' or 'Abstract' suffix/ prefix

Identity:

Unique elements (Min. no. required to "balance" sub & master brand personalities) e.g. Colour, TOV, photography or illustration style

USE WHEN

The company wants to enter a new market, and the master brand can only provide some of the credibility it needs The product/service will risk seeming too similar to others in the master brand portfolio without clear brand differentiation

SAMSUNG Galaxy

Galaxy, Sensor and Nest are all examples of brands that invite their customers to buy into the image of the master brand, and the image of the sub brand, in equal measure.

To achieve this, the sub brand name (e.g. 'Galaxy') and identity needs enough personality to stand out next to the master brand, but not so much that it steals focus.





ENDORSED



Level 5 "Strong endorsement"

The master brand name is integrated into the product brand's identity. In some cases, other master brand elements (such as colour) are also integrated into the product brand's identity.

MASTER BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

Uses master brand name as lock-up, pre-fix or suffix

Identity:

May borrow elements from master brand toolkit (Min. no. required to capitalize on relevant associations)

UNIQUE BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

Product has its own name, chosen to create specialist appeal

Identity:

Product has its own identity toolkit, designed to create specialist appeal

USE WHEN

The product/service needs a unique set of brand associations in order to succeed, but an association with the master brand is also an advantage in almost all circumstances







Audible, KitKat, and McCafe each demonstrate different ways of integrating the master brand name into a product brand's identity.

In each case, this allows the product brand to 'borrow' some of the associations of the master brand, such as breadth, quality or price.

It also helps the parent brand to publicly demonstrate the breadth of its offer.

In the case of Audible and McCafe, a core master brand colour is also used, further tying the product brand to its parent's reputation.

ENDORSED



The master brand logo and identity appears prominently, but is not integrated into the product brand's identity.

MASTER BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

Master brand name appears, but is kept apart from product name/logo

UNIQUE BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

Product has its own name, chosen to create specialist appeal

Identity:

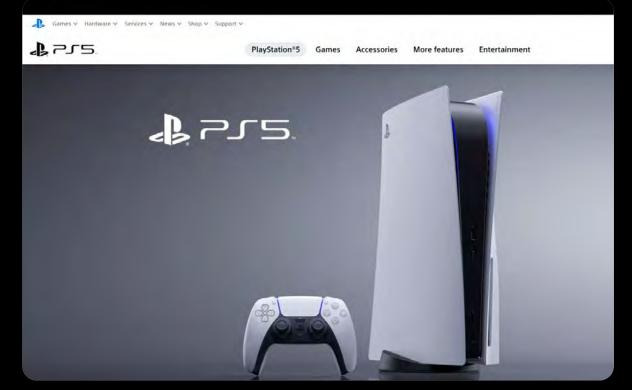
Product has its own identity toolkit, designed to create specialist appeal

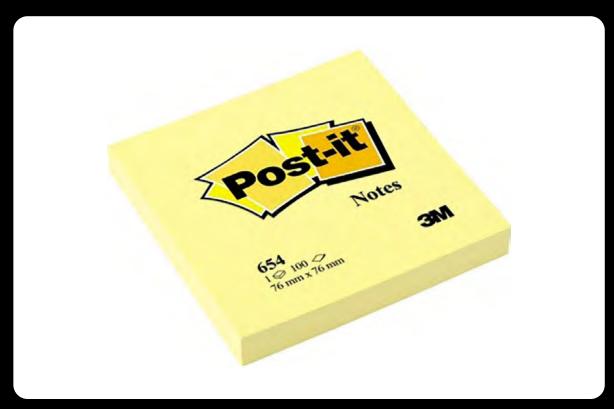
USE WHEN

The master brand can provide the product with some very desirable associations (e.g. "Trustworthiness"), but would also confer less desirable associations if linked too closely

The product has a role to play in building the awareness and reputation of the master brand







Master brands like Meta, Sony, and 3M attach a 'light endorsement' to some of their products.

This approach allows the product brands the freedom they need to create specialist appeal, along with the opportunity to benefit somewhat from any positive associations with the master brand (e.g. security, technology, quality).

It also allows the organization to publicly 'take credit' for its innovations, which might appeal, in particular, to talent, investors, and other stakeholders.

STANDALONE



Level 7 "Token relationship"

The master brand's name and identity is 'there if you look for it', but does not appear prominently in design or communications.

MASTER BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

The master brand name does not appear in the product's brand identity system, but is freely associated with the product when relevant (e.g. PR, sales, footer copy etc.)

UNIQUE BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

Product has its own name, chosen to create specialist appeal

Identity:

Product has its own identity toolkit, designed to create specialist appeal

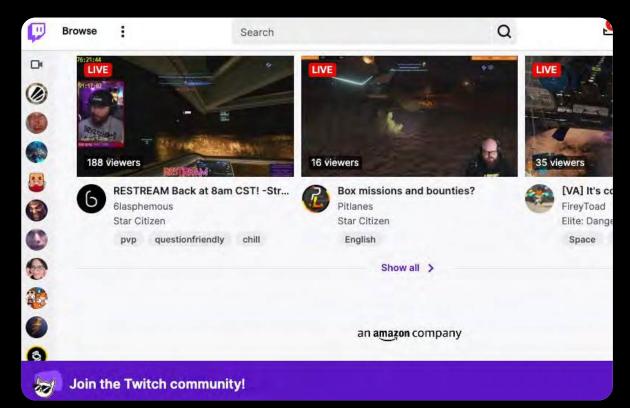
USE WHEN

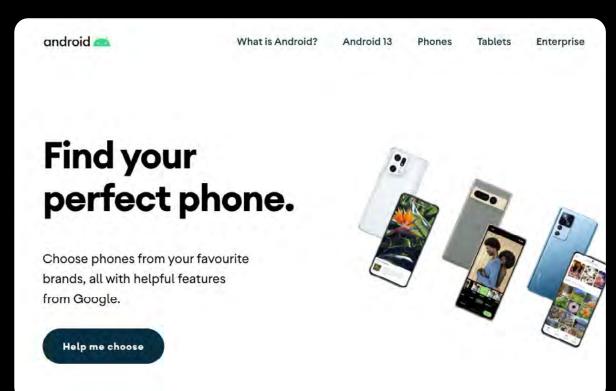
The product and master brand have incompatible associations

Associating product and master brand would threaten the success of one, or both

However in certain circumstances, and among certain audiences, a visible link between the two brands would be beneficial







Pictured: Ben & Jerry's, Twitch and Android,

The owner's logo or identity does not appear in a prominent place on the product brand's packaging or website, but the product brand's ownership is not kept secret, either.

Unilever appears on the back of Ben & Jerry's packaging, Amazon is mentioned in Twitch's website footers, and Android frequently references Google products.

In each case, the link between product and master brand isn't exactly 'advertised', but if you look for it, it's there.

STANDALONE



The link between the product and its owner is not shown in the product brand's design or communications.

MASTER BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

Master brand name does not appear in the product's brand identity system, but is freely associated with the product when relevant through PR, sales, footer copy etc.

UNIQUE BRAND ELEMENTS

Name:

Product has its own name, chosen to create specialist appeal

Identity:

Product has its own identity toolkit, designed to create specialist appeal

USE WHEN

The product and master brands have incompatible associations

Associating product and master brand would threaten the success of one, or both

The master brand lacks credibility in the product's market

The product brand competes with the master brand, or other brands in the portfolio



giffgaff

UFC (Endeavour), Giffgaff (Telefonica) and Cadbury (Modelez International) are all owned by organisations with strong corporate brands, but they avoid showing this link in product communications.

Reasons for product brands to take this approach include: Negative Image Transfer (if customers would find the ownership off-putting);

Internal competition (the brand may compete against others in the same portfolio);

Values in conflict (revealing the ownership may undermine the brand's story or image).





When do I need to create a sub brand?

Principle

In most cases, master branding your offer is most advantageous to both your offer and your organization as a whole. This is because use of the master brand:

- Ensures that your offer benefits from master brand's fame, reputation, and marketing expenditure
- Ensures that other parts of your organization benefit from your offer's reputation and success
- Discourages 'siloes' within your organisation
- Makes branded materials quicker, easier and more cost-effective to produce

In most cases, however, employees prefer to create and retain separate brand identities. This is because:

- Separate brands are seen to bestow status on the teams that own them
- Teams with separate brands feel more entitled to create separate cultures to the rest of their organisation
- Brands form part of employees' personal identities,
 which makes them hard to part with

It is imperative that in any branding decision, employees are required to provide a high level of evidence for any brand relationship aside from 'master branded'

Otherwise, any brand architecture system is likely to be led by the emotional needs of influential individuals, rather than the strategic objectives of the business overall.

Method

The following flow chart is designed to help you work out which 'brand relationship' is most appropriate for your offer.

The burden of proof is high for each brand relationship except 'pure master brand'. This is to ensure that the master brand is used wherever possible, and the other relationships are used only when necessary.

Start here

I can demonstrate

The master brand lacks the majority of the associations necessary to create appeal among our target audience, and

A visible link between the offer and the master brand would **damage the appeal** of the offer among our target audiences

Yes

I can demonstrate that a **minority audience** needs to be able to seek out and find a link to the master brand (e.g. in small print)

Yes No



Standalone

(No relationship)

The link between the offer and the master brand is not shown in brand design or communications.

Standalone

(Token relationship)

The master brand's name and identity is 'there if you look for it', but does not appear prominently in design or communications,

I can demonstrate

The master brand lacks the **majority** of the associations necessary to create appeal among our target audiences

Yes No

I can demonstrate that while a **visible link between the offer and the master brand** will
increase appeal in some circumstances, it will also
reduce appeal in other crucial circumstances.

Yes No



Endorsed

(Light)

The offer is presented under a new brand created especially for it. The master brand name features prominently, but is not incorporated into the new brand's identity.



Endorsed

(Strong)

The offer is presented under a new brand created especially for it. The master brand name is incorporated into the new brand's identity.

I can demonstrate

The master brand lacks a minority of the associations necessary to create appeal among our target audiences.

Yes

I can demonstrate that the **missing associations** are primarily emotional (so a new personality must be added) rather than technical (meaning a new expertise should be signalled)

Yes No



Sub branded

(Co-driven)

The offer is presented under two brands simultaneously – the master brand, and a new brand created specifically for the offer.



Sub branded

(Master brand driven)

No

The offer is presented using the master brand identity, but with a slight modification that appeals to a particular audience and need state.



Master branded

(Adapted)

The offer is presented using the master brand identity, plus a unique element or two (just enough to let the customer know they're "in the right place")



I can demonstrate

The offer serves a different audience of need

will need extra help, beyond 'signposting', to

feel confident they're "in the right place".

Yes

to your other master branded offers. Audiences

Master branded

(Pure)

The offer is presented using the master brand identity (the main brand with which the company goes to market).

No

Should my corporate brand be the same as my master brand?

Corporate brand

- Represents the overarching organisation
- Governs how it presents itself to investors, regulators, employees, the press and other stakeholders
- Reflects the purpose, mission, values and reputation of the parent company

Master brand

- Represents the majority of the organisation's offer
- Governs how it presents itself customers and other stakeholders
- Reflects the attributes of the majority of its products, services and experiences

Corporate brand = Master brand

Corporate brand

Master brand



DVIDIA



Corporate brand ≠ Master brand

Corporate brand

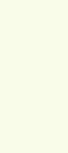
Master brand





Corporate brand

Master brand





Corporate brand



Master brand



For most organisations, the corporate brand is the master brand. In most cases, this is the strongest approach because it:

- Ensures all parts of the business benefit from the master brand's fame, reputation, and marketing expenditure
- Discourages 'siloes' within the organisation
- Makes branded materials quicker, easier and more cost-effective to produce

For some organisations, the corporate brand is different to the master brand(s). This can be a stronger approach when:

- The organization owns multiple 'master brands', and it is important to avoid signaling bias towards some over others
- The corporation must signal different, or broader capabilities than those implied by its master brand
- It is important to shield the corporate brand from current or potential reputational issues facing the master brand (and vice versa)
- The master brand may be divested in future

Should my business be dual branded?

Dual branding

When an organisation operates under two, formerly separate brand names, placed side by side.

PROS

In the case of mergers or acquisitions, 'dual brands' are sometimes used to:

Appease talent

'Dual branding' can help retain talent by ensuring both parties are seen to have equal status in the organization

Signal scale

'Dual branding' can provide a strong and immediate signal that the company has a new and dominant position in its category

Force reevaluation

'Dual branding' can be a way of ensuring that every legacy customer is made aware of the new company's broader capabilities

CONS

However, dual brands are usually best avoided because they are:

Less focused

Dual branding can effectively 'dilute' the attributes and appeal of each brand to its respective audience

Less practical

Dual branding creates long names and wordmarks that are harder for companies to reproduce and customers to recall

Less distinctive

Finding a 'common' personality and identity typically involves removing distinctive elements that set brands apart Most dual brands become monoliths eventually







2004





Deloitte.

1993

2016



2019





KANTAR

The relationship between brand architecture and other brand elements



BUSINESS STRATEGY ARTICULATION

Making the business's strategic objectives clear and compelling to all relevant stakeholders, especially those inside the organisation

Organisational purpose statement, vision statement, mission statement, corporate values

BRAND PORTFOLIO AND ARCHITECTURE STRATEGY

Deciding the number and types of brand needed to reach an organisation's objectives

BRAND POSITIONING

Defining how the brand must be perceived for the business to reach its objectives [key behaviour changes: purchase, invest, advocate, create]

Positioning statement, brand essence (a.k.a. 'strategic platform' or 'positioning idea'), brand narrative, brand personality

EMPLOYER VALUE PROPOSITION (EVP)

Defining what you stand for, offer, and require as an employer (key behaviour changes: apply, don't apply, align, stay)

EVP statement, essence, narrative, messaging

BRAND NAMING Claiming or reinforcing the brand's position through its choice of name	VISUAL IDENTITY Claiming or reinforcing the brand's position through its look and feel	VERBAL IDENTITY Claiming or reinforcing the brand's position through its use of language	BRAND CAMPAIGN Claiming or reinforcing the brand's position through a series of ads or activations	CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE Claiming or reinforcing the brand's position through customer interaction	TALENT CAMPAIGN Claiming or reinforcing the EVP through a series of ads or activations	EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE Helping to realise the business strategy & EVP through employee interaction
BRAND ARCHITECTURE	Visual identity platform or 'creative idea' Inspires and unifies all design applications Expressed as a sentence or one liner	Brand messaging and voice Inspires and unifies all written and spoken applications Expressed as guidelines and examples	Campaign platform or 'campaign idea' Inspires and unifies a campaign's elements and executions Expressed as a short phrase	Customer experience platform Inspires and unifies all signature experiences Expressed as customer experience pillars and/or a short phrase	Campaign platform or 'campaign idea' Inspires and unifies a campaign's elements and executions Expressed as a short phrase	Employee experience pillars Inspires and unifies a set of internal strategic initiatives Expressed as a shared belief, behaviour, or 'mantra'
SERVICE						
STRATEGIC DELIVERABLE	Design applications, graphic device, logo, colour	Headline examples, internal comms examples,	Campaign applications including design,	Signature brand experiences, customer	Campaign applications including design,	Employee engagement initiatives, events, rituals,
COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM	palette, motion principles,	speeches, press release	copywriting, campaign	service flourishes, hero	copywriting, campaign	internal initiatives, policy,
COMMUNICATIONS APPLICATIONS	photography, illustration, brand tagline	examples, etc.	tagline, etc. (Can be customer, talent, or	products and services, key features in physical	tagline, etc. (Can be customer, talent, or	codes of conduct, etc.
EXPERIENCE PLATFORM			employee facing)	environments, etc.	employee facing)	
EXPERIENCE APPLICATIONS						

Further reading



Further reading

Brand Portfolio Strategy: Creating Relevance,
 Differentiation, Energy, Leverage and Clarity

By David A. Aaker Simon & Schuster (2004)

2. Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity (5th Ed.)

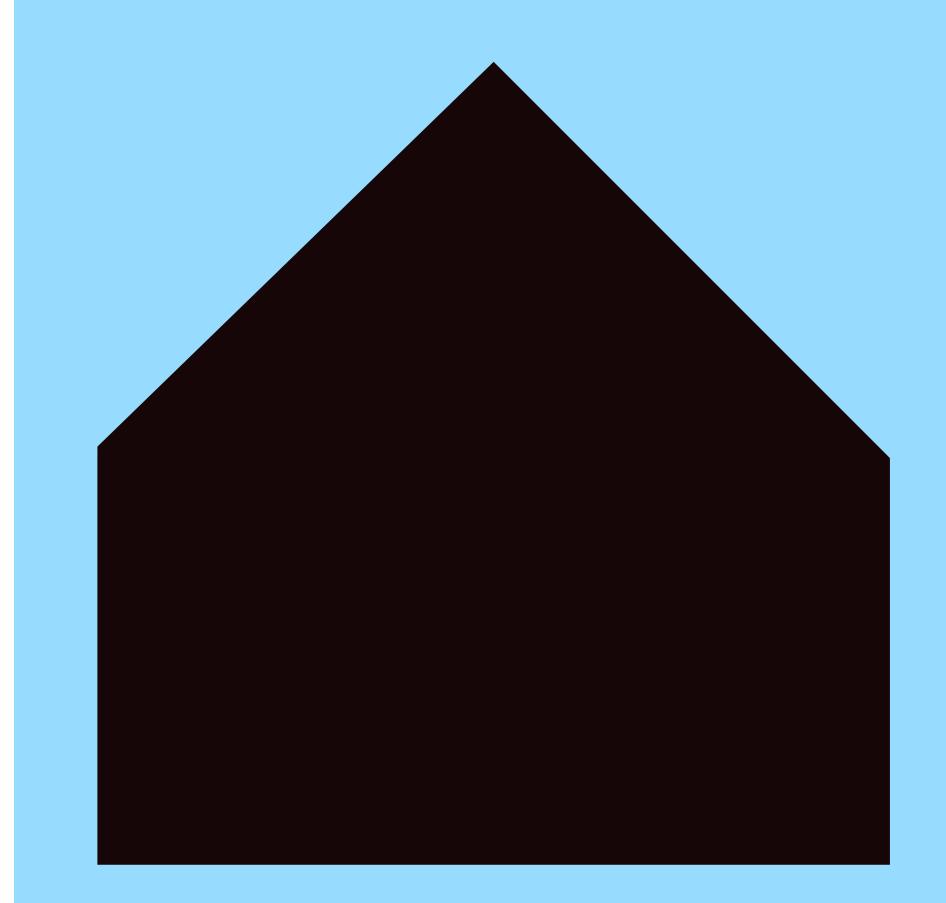
By Kevin Lane Keller Pearson (2012)

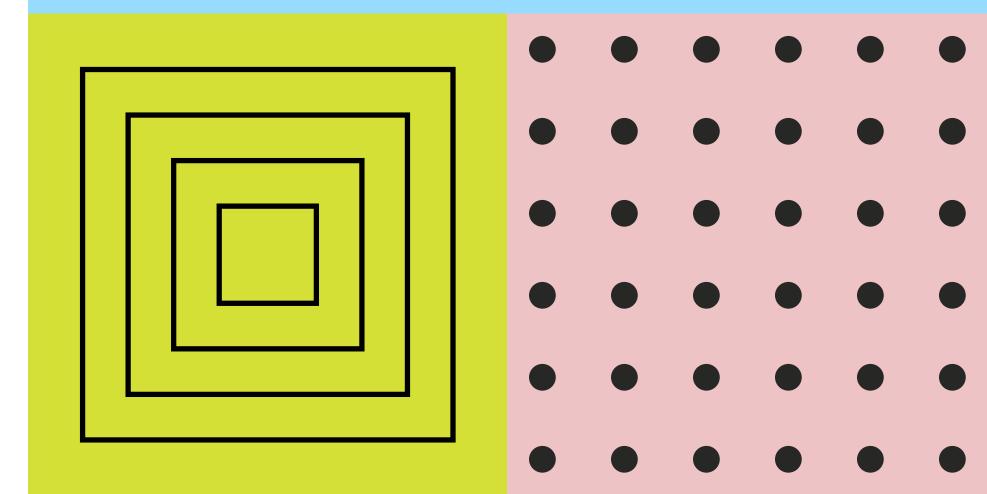
3. **Marketing for Growth**

By Iain Ellwood
The Economist (2014)

4. Designing Brand Identity: A complete Guide to Creating, Building and Maintaining Strong Brands (5th ed.)

By Alina Wheeler John Wiley & Sons (2017)





Get in touch

Brand architecture is just one of the 'foundations for freedom' that great brands put in place in order to escape their constraints and achieve their potential.

If you would like to find out more about our brand architecture toolkit, who it's already worked for, and how we can use it to set your brand free, please get in touch.

Saboteur Team

hello@saboteur.studio +44 203 8839 559

