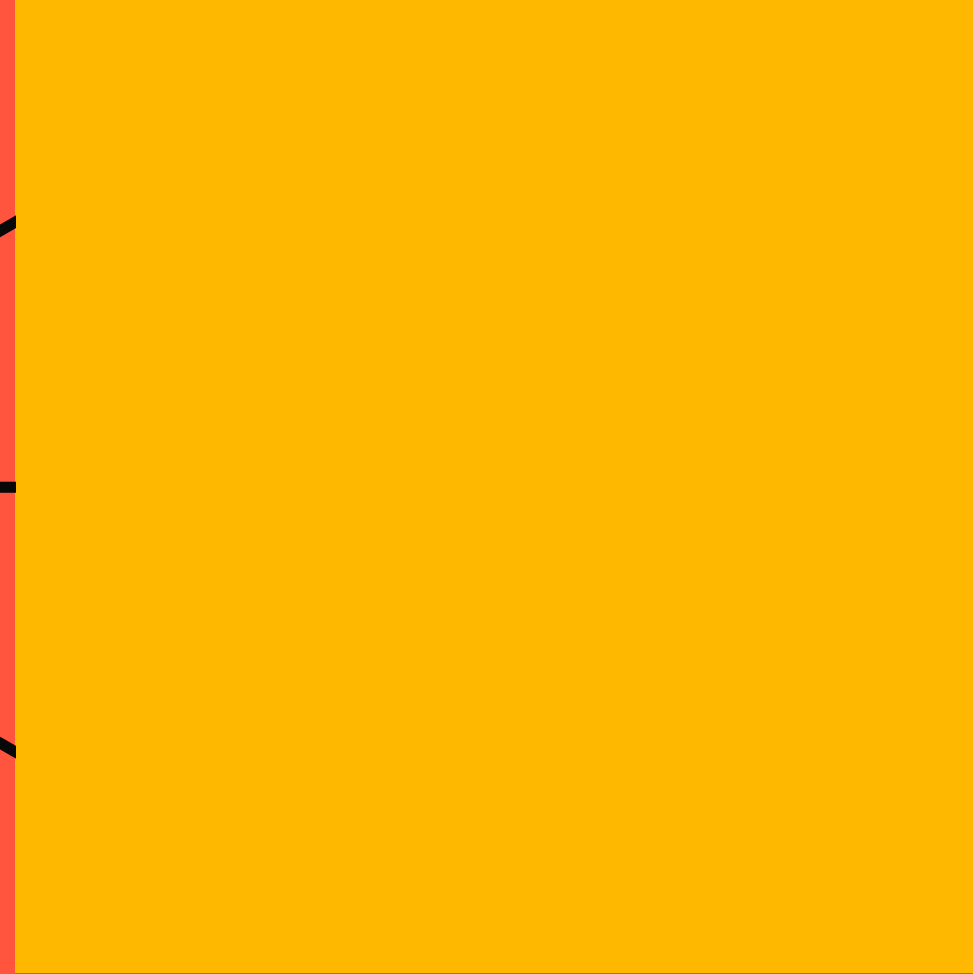
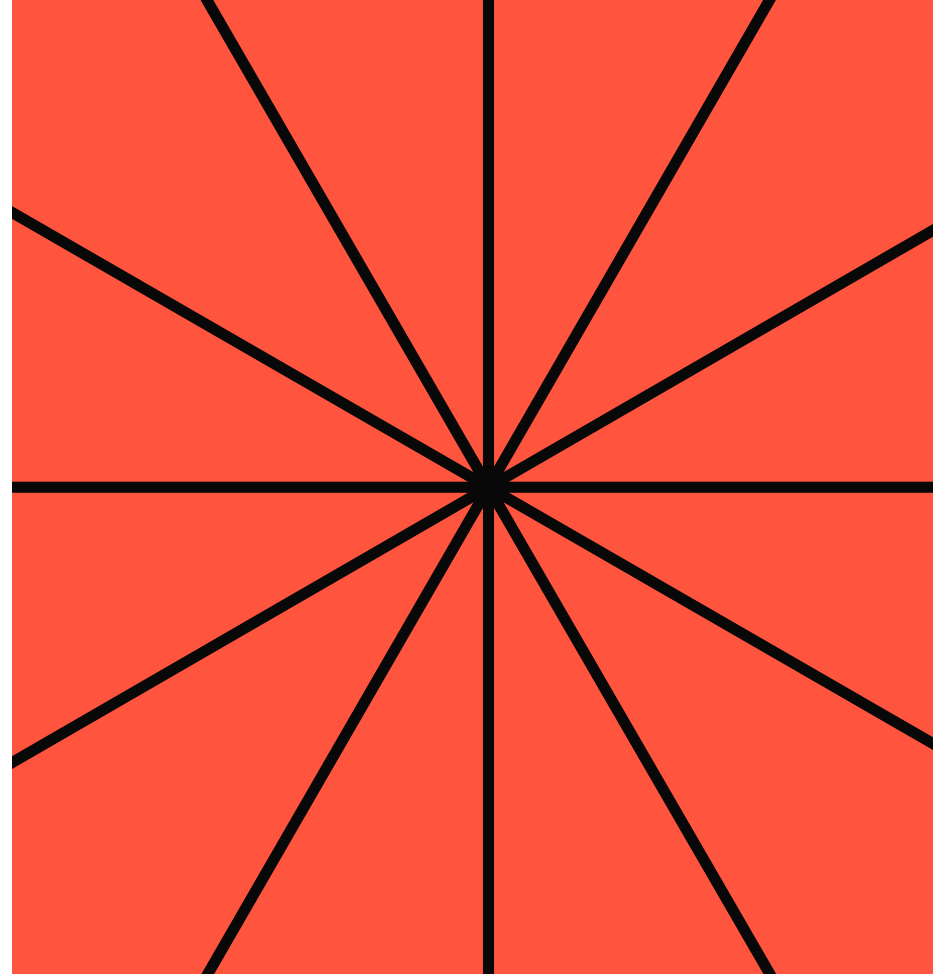


**SVBOTEUR**

# Foundations for freedom

**The Saboteur Brand Toolkit**  
Brand Positioning



**SV  
BO**



## Get in touch

Brand positioning 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 positioning toolkit, who it’s already worked for, and how we can use it to set your brand free, please get in touch.

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1. What is brand positioning?
2. Principles for effective positioning
3. Our positioning framework
4. Writing a great internal brand line
5. A technique for writing a two-word internal brand line
6. Common questions
7. The relationship between positioning and other brand elements
8. Further reading



# What is Brand Positioning?



# Brand Positioning

Your brand's position is the unique place it occupies in the mind of its audiences.

Brand positioning is a strategic task that consists of identifying the most valuable 'place in the mind' your brand could occupy, and then articulating it in a way that your entire business can easily understand and follow.

Effective positioning establishes a brand as the first and only to do what it does. Taking somebody else's place in the mind is near impossible, so we must invent new space for the brand to occupy.



# Principles for effective positioning



# Well-positioned brands can answer these 6 questions

1. Who is your **aspirational audience**?
2. What will you **set them free** to do, or be?
3. **Why now?**
4. **Why you?**
5. How would you sum it all up in **a great line**?
6. If you could **own a word**, what would it be?



1.

# Who is your aspirational audience?

An effective positioning must be for someone and cannot be for everyone. Strong brands identify a group that its audiences aspire to belong to, and then make that segment the hero of their brand story.





1.

Tesla's aspirational audience

**“Tech-savvy,  
green-friendly  
executives and  
entrepreneurs”**





2.

# What will you set them free to do, or be?

Great brands don't just point us to products or services, they help us change our status in life and become who we dream of being. They set us free from our status quo, and free to become better.





2.

AirBnb sets you free to

**“Belong  
Anywhere”**





3.

# Why now?

An effective positioning sets out the problem that our brand will solve. This problem should be a significant pain point that you are uniquely well-placed to address.

3.

## Apple

*Q. Why now?*

*A. Because somebody needs  
to stand up to big tech*

**“Will Big Blue dominate  
the entire computer  
industry? The entire  
information age? Was  
George Orwell right?”**

Steve Jobs, speaking to Apple  
shareholders in January 1984

**“The fact is that an  
interconnected ecosystem  
of companies and data  
brokers...is more present  
in our lives than it has ever  
been, and it has never been  
so clear how it degrades  
our fundamental right  
to privacy”**

Tim Cook, speech at European Computers,  
Privacy and Data Protection Conference in 2021

# Why us?

An effective positioning describes what you, and only you, can do to set your audiences free and solve their pain points. It makes the biggest promise you [credibly] can, so everyone in your organisation has to live up to it.



4.

A great 'why us' statement describes your business at its best. Here's Amazon's:

**“A place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online.”**





5.

# How would you sum it all up in a great line?

An effective positioning strategy is known inside the organisation by a single, summarising phrase. It's short enough, and poetic enough, to be remembered by all, without referring to a document.



5.

A great line, capturing the  
essence of the Disney brand:

**“Family  
magic”**





6.

# If you could own a word, what would it be?

Over time, a clear and well-applied positioning gives you ‘ownership’ of an important word in your marketplace.



6.

Three brands that have come to own a word in their categories:

**Facebook: Friends**

**Volvo: Safety**

**Nike: Greatness**





# Our positioning framework

Bringing these 6 ingredients  
together into a single, unifying  
positioning statement.





# Principles

1. Who is your aspirational audience?
2. What will you set them free to do, or be?
3. Why now
4. Why us
5. How would you sum it all up in a great line?
6. Owns a word

# Positioning statement

In the minds of **[aspirational audience]**,

We will be the only brand that sets them free to become **[status]**, and to stop being **[status]**.

They live in a world in which **[pain points]**.

But our brand will **[at its best]**.

Inside our organisation, we will come to know this positioning by the phrase **[great line]**.

In our marketplace, we will 'own' the word **[word]**.

# Writing a great internal brand line



# Internal brand line

An internal brand line is an evocative piece of copy, no more than a few words long, that summarises your brand's desired position in the minds of its audiences.

It's a piece of strategic communications, designed to help people inside an organization to understand and remember the brand's position and make decisions that align to it.

1. An internal brand line is sometimes called a 'brand essence', 'brand mantra' or 'brand platform statement'.

2. An internal brand line should not be confused with a 'tagline'. They two serve different functions, explained later in this toolkit.



# 6 qualities to look for in an internal brand line

1. Brief
2. Positive
3. Universal
4. Poetic
5. Open-ended
6. Differentiating

# Brief

Shorter phrases tend to be easier to remember and therefore more likely to be used. If a brand line cannot be recalled spontaneously, it's unlikely to live beyond a strategy document.

**Disney: “Family magic”**



# Positive

Effective internal brand lines promise a better life – or a better world – for the brand’s key audiences. Everyone inside the organisation is thereby challenged to help deliver that promise.

**L’Oréal: Feminine confidence**



# Universal

Effective internal brand lines are equally relevant to all the brand's current (and likely future) activity. Thus, they unite every part of an organisation under a single brand concept.

**Adobe: Creativity for all**



# Poetic

A line that sounds beautiful has a greater chance of being memorised, quoted and therefore acted upon. Alliteration, rhythm, rhyme and other poetic flourishes can be very powerful.

**LVMH: Art de vivre**

# Open-ended

Effective internal brand lines are deliberately left open to interpretation. They allow room for talented and diverse people to interpret and act upon them in original and ingenious ways.

**IBM: Smarter planet**



# Differentiating

The greatest brand lines create distance from competitors. Sometimes they're even counter-intuitive or counter-cultural.

**Nike: Authentic, Athletic, Performance**



# Writing a two-word internal brand line





## Two-word brand lines: Examples

L'ORÉAL

“Feminine Confidence”

Disney

“Family Magic”

STOREGDA

“Future Possible”

## A technique for writing two-word internal brand lines

1. *Like [other brands],  
we provide a feeling of:*

**1-4 words**

2. *But with us, and only us, it's:*

**1-4 words**

3. *Internal brand line:*

**2 words**



## A technique for writing two-word internal brand lines

1. *Like other cosmetics brands, we provide a feeling of:*
2. *But with us, and only us, it's:*
3. *Internal brand line:*

L'ORÉAL

Increased self-confidence

Classically feminine

**Feminine confidence**

## A technique for writing two-word internal brand lines

1. *Like other great entertainment brands, we provide a feeling of:*
2. *But with us, and only us, it's:*
3. *Internal brand line:*



Surprise and delight

For the whole family

**Family magic**



## A technique for writing two-word internal brand lines

1. *Like other climate activists,  
we provide a feeling of:*
2. *But with us, and only us, it's:*
3. *Internal brand line:*

**STOREGDA**

**Concern for our future**

**A solid plan**

**Future possible**

# Common questions





# **What's the difference between an internal brand line and a tagline?**



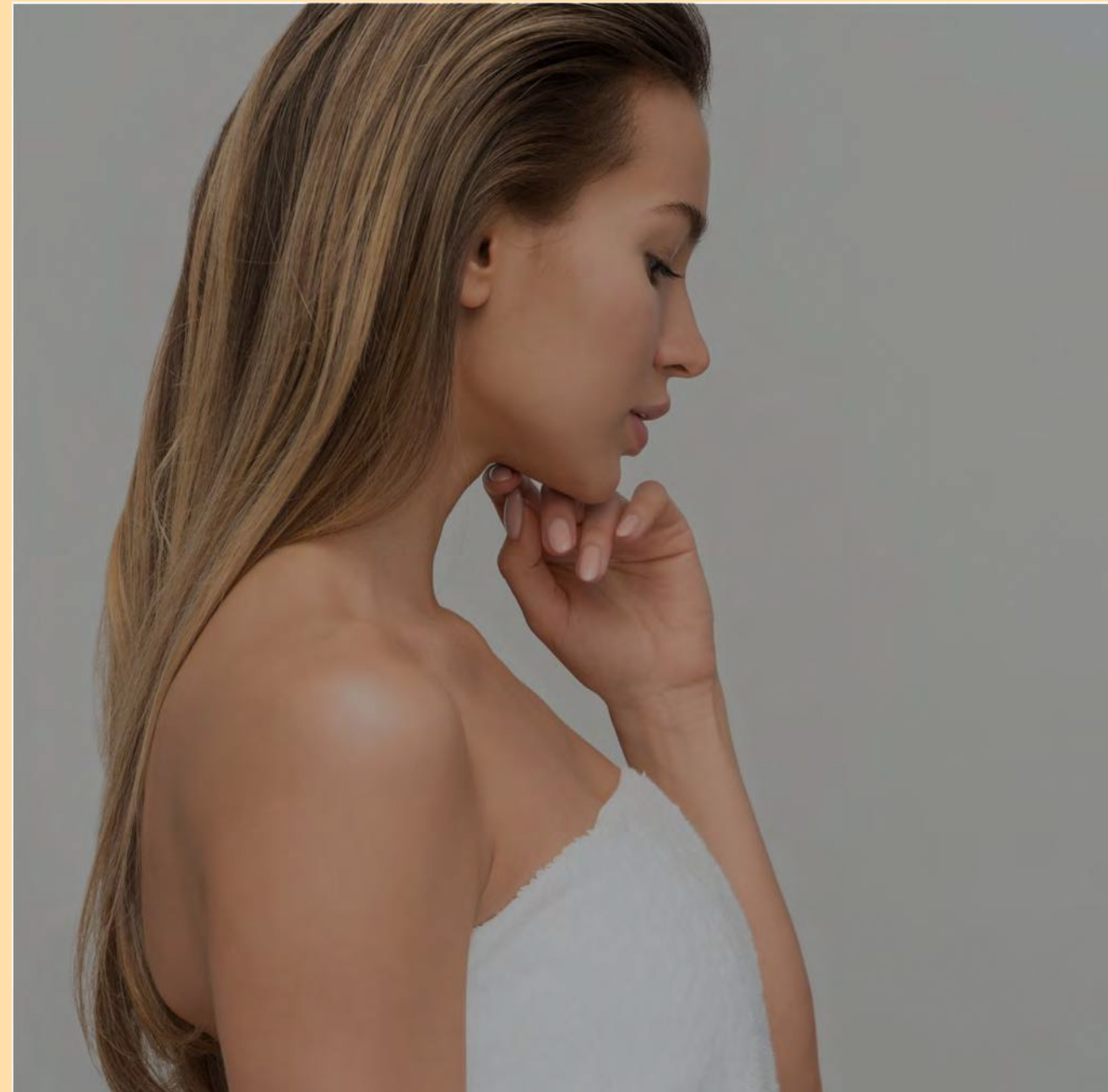
# What’s the difference between an internal brand line and an external tagline?

Internal brand line	External tagline
An evocative piece of copy, no more than a few words long, that summarizes your brand’s desired position in the minds of its audiences.	An evocative piece of copy, no more than a few words long, that communicates the value of a brand to its customers in an appealing way.
Written for employees	Written for customers
Focused on the brand strategy	Focused on the customer benefit
Fits your entire offer	Can be product or territory specific



# What's the difference between an internal brand line and an external tagline?

**“Feminine Confidence”**



**Internal brand line:**  
Written for employees

Because you're worth it.  
**L'ORÉAL**  
PARIS

**External tagline:**  
Written for customers



# What's the difference between an internal brand line and an external tagline?

**“Food, golks and fun”**



**Internal brand line:**  
Focused on the brand strategy



**External tagline:**  
Focused on the customer benefit

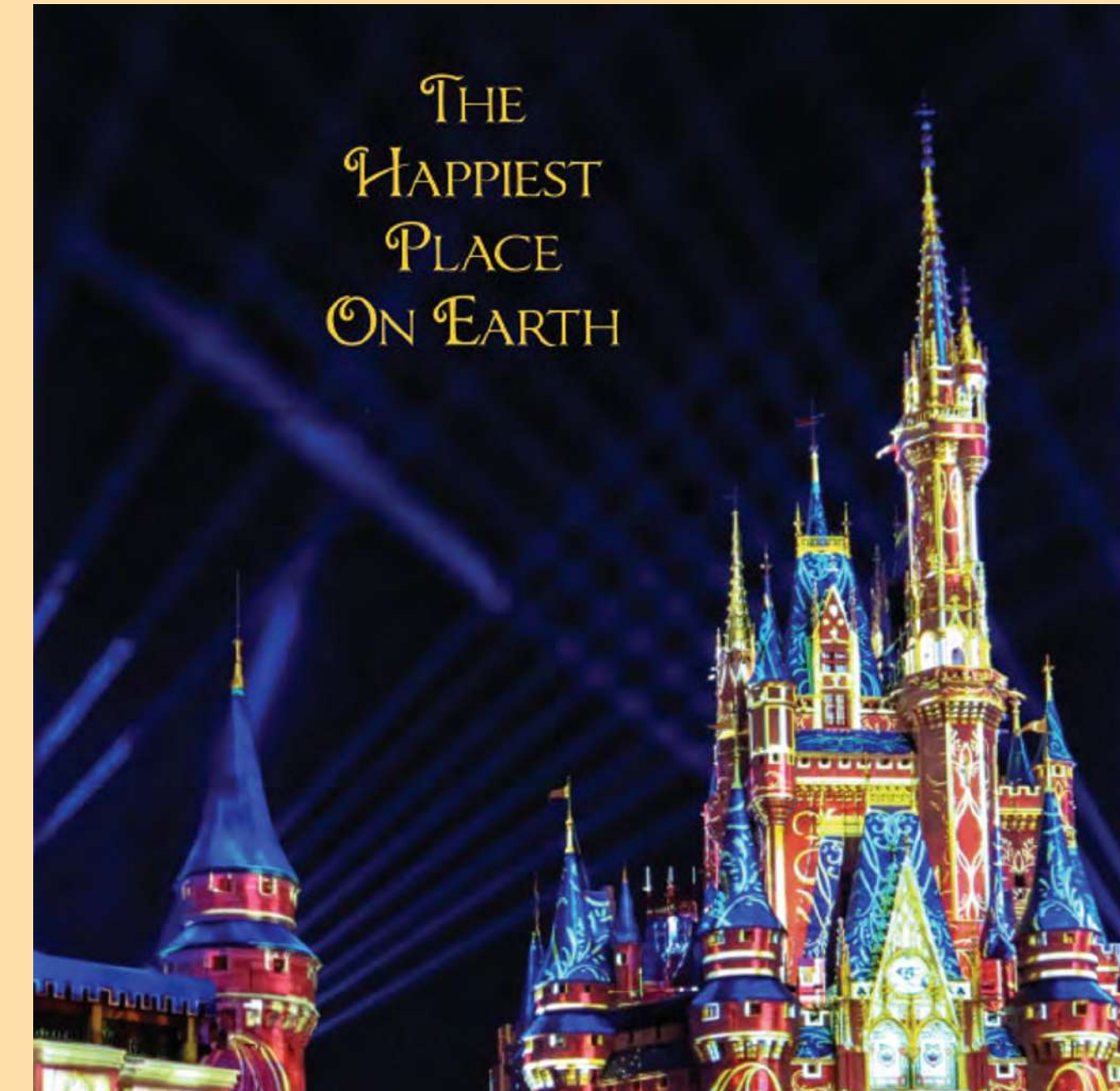


# What's the difference between an internal brand line and an external tagline?

**“Family magic”**



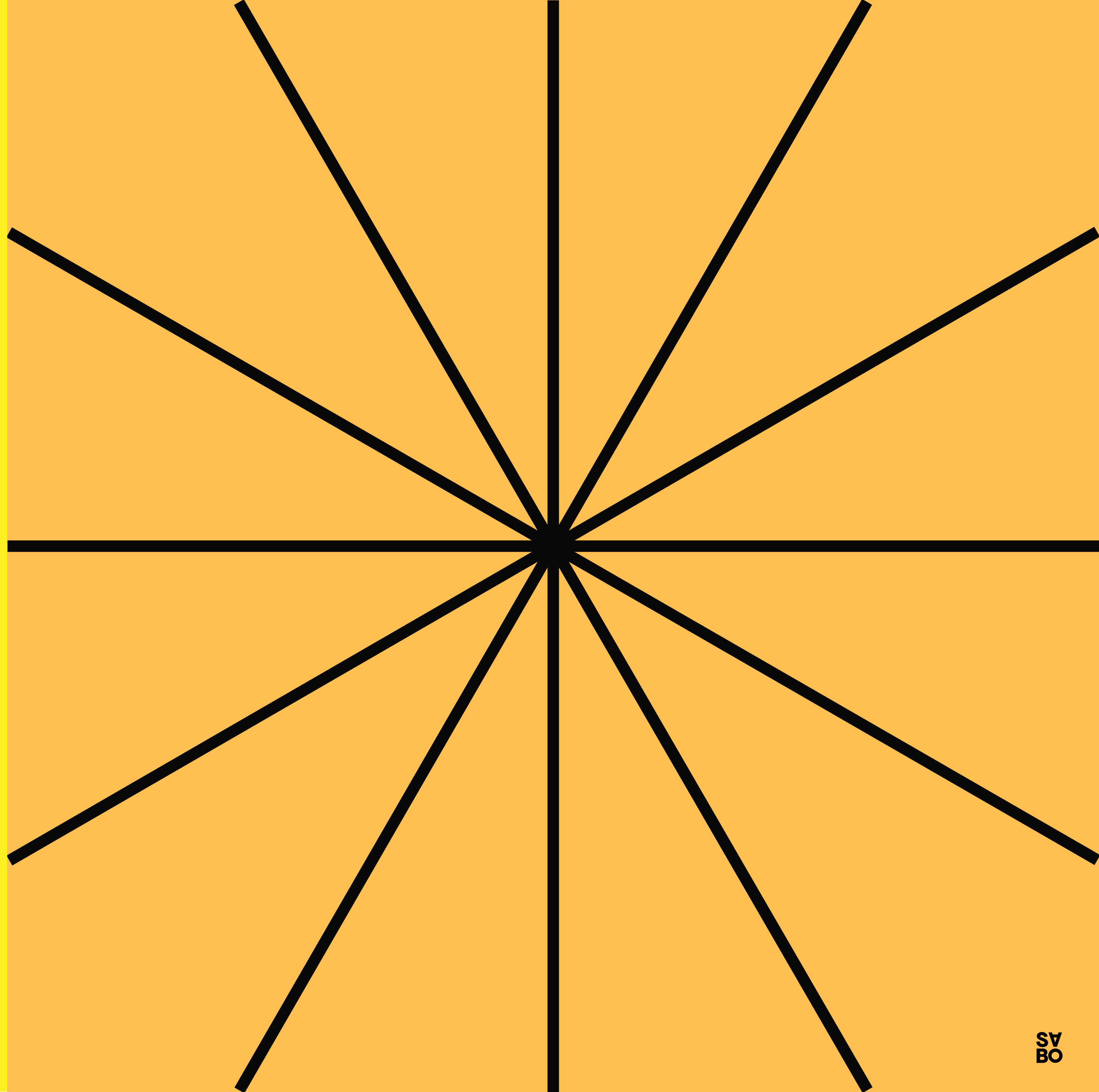
**Internal brand line:** Fits your entire offer



**External tagline:** Can be product or territory specific



**Could my  
internal brand  
line also serve  
as my tagline?**





Could my internal brand line also serve as my tagline?

No	Yes
If your internal brand line wouldn't appeal to external audiences.	If your internal brand line would really appeal to external audiences.
If it would appeal, but you could write something that appeals more.	You couldn't write a more appealing tagline if you tried.
You need your tagline(s) to be product or audience specific.	You don't need your tagline(s) to be too product or audience specific.

# Could my internal brand line also serve as my tagline?

## Authentic Athletic Performance.



An internal brand line that probably **wouldn't** work as a tagline.



An internal brand line that probably **does** work as a tagline.



# The relationship between positioning 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, brand messaging

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

- BRAND POSITIONING**
- SERVICE**
- STRATEGIC DELIVERABLE**
- COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM**
- COMMUNICATIONS APPLICATIONS**
- EXPERIENCE PLATFORM**
- EXPERIENCE APPLICATIONS**



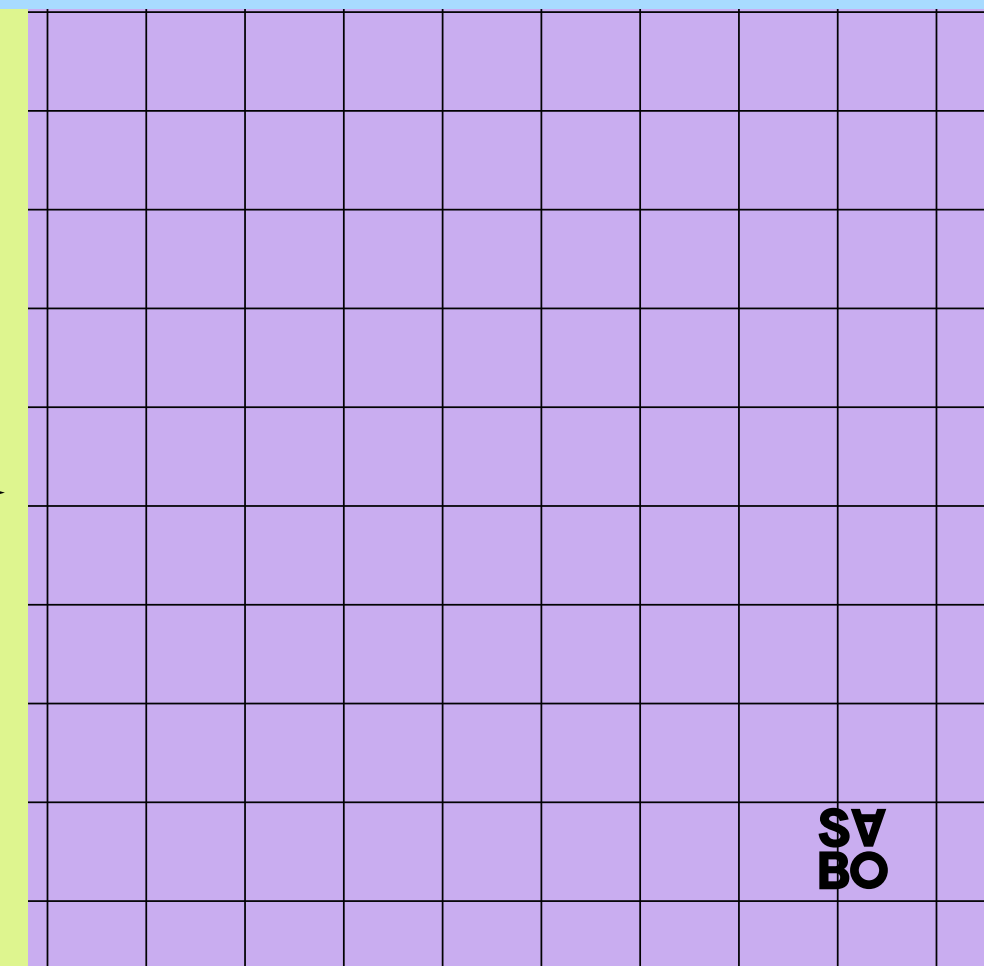
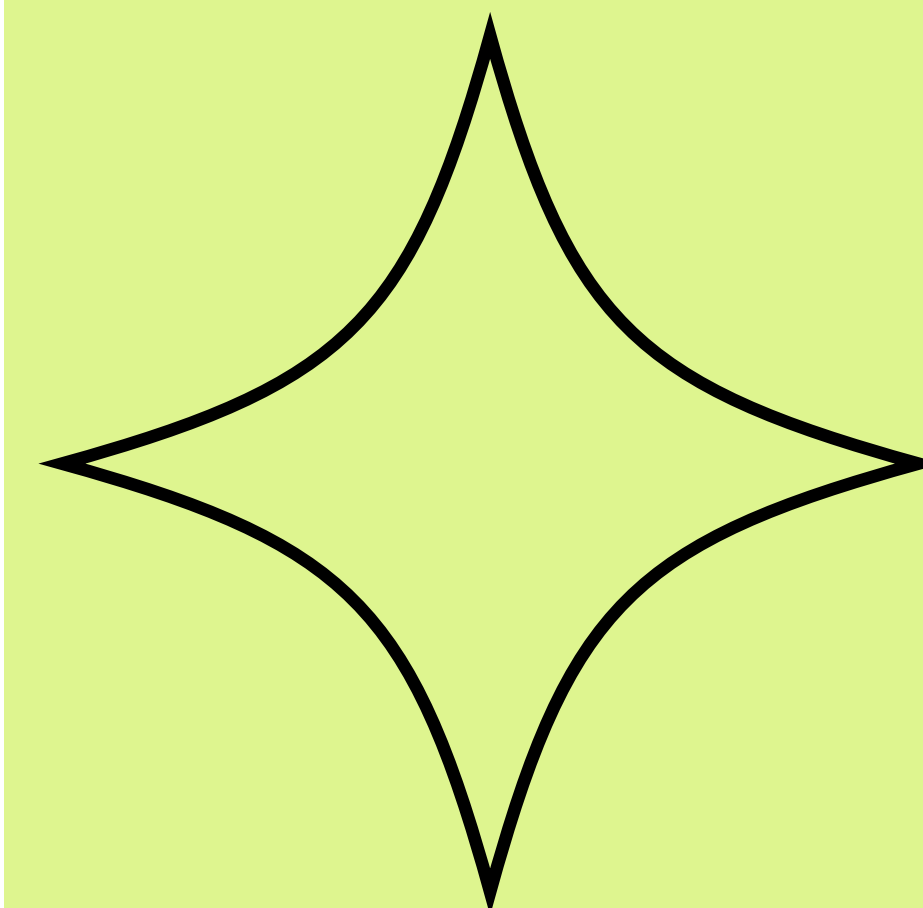
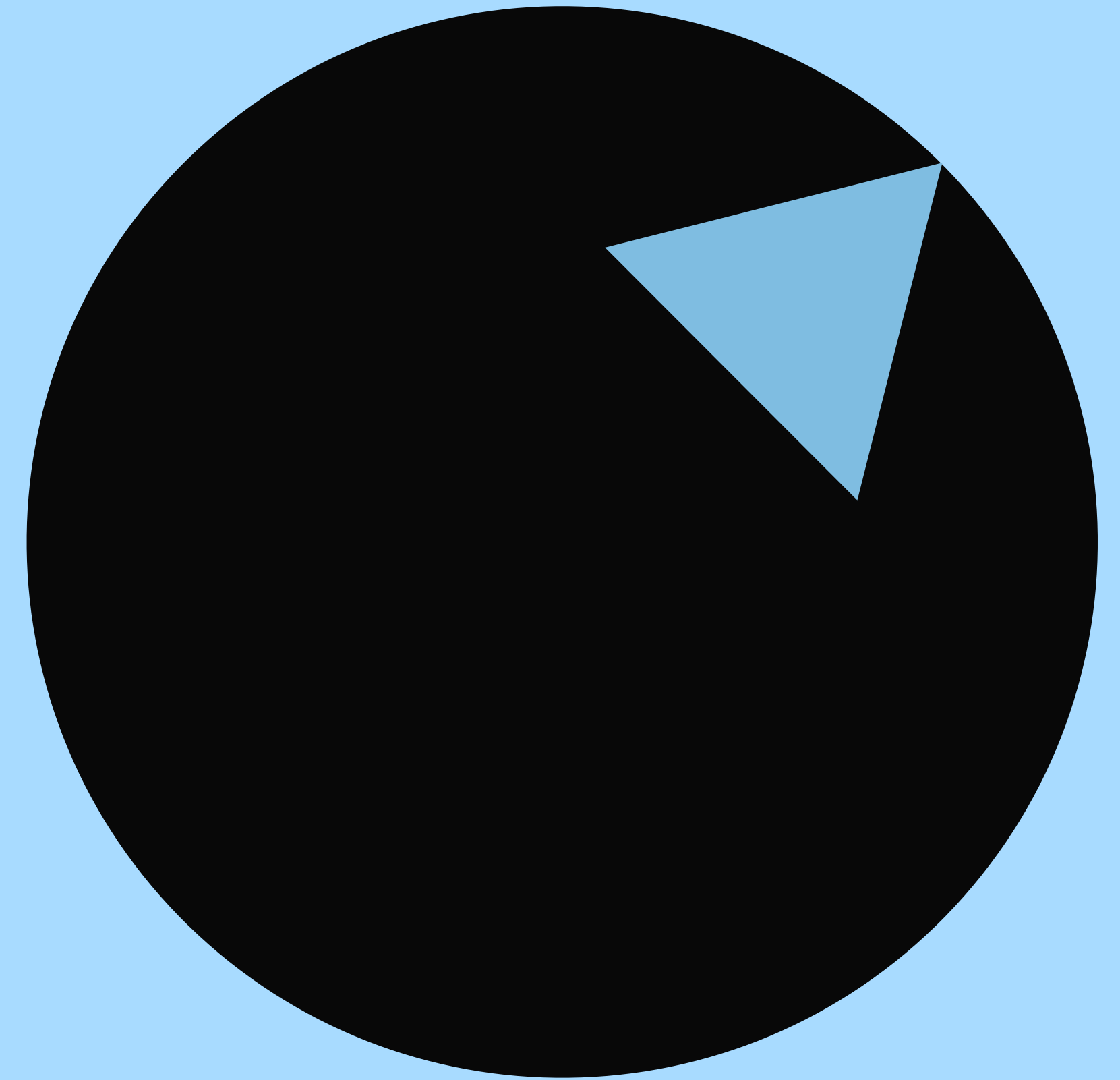
# Further **reading**

If you want to find out more about organisational purpose, we recommend the following titles.



## Further reading

- 1. The marketing classic. Positioning: The battle for your mind. How to be seen and heard in the overcrowded marketplace**  
By Al Ries and Jack Trout  
McGraw-Hill Education (2001)
- 2. The 22 immutable laws of marketing**  
By Al Ries and Jack Trout  
Profile Books (1994)
- 3. This is marketing: You can't be seen until you learn to see**  
By Seth Godin  
Portfolio Penguin (2018)
- 4. Zag: The #1 strategy of high-performance brands**  
By Marty Neumeier  
New Riders (2006)





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