

THE GREATER OUTDOORS OUTFITTERS BRAND PLATFORM

Note: This document is for example purposes only. "The Greater Outdoors Outfitters" is a fictional company.

Why are We Doing This?

The simple answer: A great brand amplifies success when everything is going right, and helps preserve the loyalty of customers when things don't quite work out.

A great brand acts as a magnet to both customers and employees. It helps create a sense of purpose within our ranks. It helps create the focus needed to help us become a leader in our field – giving us a common goal, a consistent personality and unified style of speaking about ourselves.

Everything in the marketplace changes. Industries, technology, patents, products and procedures come and go.

But with proper, consistent support, a brand – our brand – will never fade away.

How Will We Know We've Created a Strong Brand?

Strong brands typically possess these three important characteristics:

Conviction – No one questions what the brand is, why it exists, whom it serves and what benefits it delivers. People within the company – brand stewards all – understand what the brand is capable of achieving, as well as its limitations.

Connection – A strong brand connects with people at a deep level – sometimes emotional, sometimes intellectual and often both. Great brands connect on a level that moves past the material (“I need this.”) to the aspirational (“I want this.”). It is a bond that extends beyond the pragmatic applications of the brand's services or products.

Consistency – A strong brand does not waver in how it portrays itself. Regardless of how someone interacts with the brand – whether through advertising or on the web or in the store or at corporate headquarters – they come away with the same impression. (Most companies forget this when they outsource their tech support.)

The Greater Outdoors Outfitters Branding Document Objective

This document will define four elements that create the foundation of our brand:

Vision

Positioning

Personality

Affiliation

The vision can be considered our brand purpose. The other three combine to form our brand promise to our customers and ourselves.

Brand Vision

Why should our brand even bother to exist?

The brand vision answers the fundamental question of why – beyond just making a buck – our brand exists. This answer is not tactical. That is, Bob's Screws 'n' Stuff would not have a brand vision that says "To sell screws to people who need screws." It might be "Helping builders build faster for less." Disney's is "Bringing happiness to millions." Notice how these statements are quite broad and do not limit the company to a particular product or service. Bob could easily expand into other building supplies without altering his vision. Disney's takes into account its ownership of Touchstone, ABC, etc. – which is why you don't see "children" in its vision statement. Please note, your vision is not your tag line.

Proposed Brand Vision:

Helping outdoor lovers gear up and get outside.

Brand Positioning

How do we want our audience to think of our brand?

Brand positioning is the rational part of a brand's promise. It sets aside the emotional components of branding to define the practical, logical place we wish to live inside our audience's collective mind. In our case, this rational promise will be conveyed using a classic three-part positioning statement that defines the target audience, the frame of reference, and the most compelling benefit the brand offers. All three pieces have to work together for the whole to be strong. The brand positioning statement follows this format:

To target, The Greater Outdoors Outfitters is the frame of reference that most compelling benefit.

Target

The target is – hold on – the group that will naturally be attracted to the brand along with those we want to attract who may not normally pay attention to us. The target is defined by characteristics that more psychographic – motivations, beliefs, temperaments, etc. – than demographic. For example, Bob's Screws 'n' Stuff would not target "guys 18 to 54 who need screws" but might instead target "builders who depend on quality materials."

Proposed target: **People who'd always rather be hunting, fishing or camping**

Frame of Reference

The frame of reference identifies the category in which the brand competes. In other words, if our customers didn't shop our stores, they would go to another _____. This is often easy to figure out, but sometimes deeper thinking can result in a surprising and more focused outcome.

Proposed frame of reference: **Outdoor gear supplier**

Most Compelling Benefit

The most compelling benefit is what sets us apart – in the minds of the target – from the competition as defined by the frame of reference. It identifies the needs and desires of our target. And by fulfilling those needs and desires, our brand will remain strong and relevant over time regardless of economic upheaval, cultural shifts or the inevitable evolution of our brand. It is similar to, but not necessarily the same as, a unique selling point.

Proposed most compelling benefit: **Offers great brands, advice and value without a great big hassle**

Complete proposed Brand Position:

For people who'd always rather be hunting, fishing or camping, The Greater Outdoors Outfitters is the outdoor gear supplier that offers great brands, advice and value without a great big hassle.

Brand Personality

What human traits bring our brand to life?

The brand personality defines the human characteristics that the brand attempts to live by through word and deed. Is your brand fun? Introverted? Steady? Bold? Those are the types of characteristics that make up a brand's personality. And our brand's personality does not simply mimic the personality of our customers. Instead, it's the type of personality our customers – current and potential – will be attracted to. In theory, the brand personality should consist of five or fewer words that are easily remembered and easily understood.

Proposed Brand Personality:

Down-to-earth, Knowledgeable, Experienced, Neighborly, Trustworthy

Brand Affiliation

Who is the ideal user of the brand?

To quote Stan Richards of The Richards Group, “Simply put, brand affiliation is how people come to believe others will perceive them as a result of being a known user of your brand.” It’s why some people will only carry around a Starbucks cup even though the gas station has 89-cent coffee. Or why people prefer Target to Walmart. So it is imperative that prospective customers view current customers as people with whom they would like to associate, whom they admire, or whom they aspire to be like. In other words, you attract what you have, so make sure you have what you want to attract.

Proposed Brand Affiliation:

People who would rather be outside living than indoors shopping.

Proposed Brand Platform

The Greater Outdoors Outfitters

Brand Vision

Helping outdoor lovers gear up and get outside.

Brand Positioning

For people who'd always rather be hunting, fishing or camping, The Greater Outdoors Outfitter is the outdoor gear supplier that offers great brands, advice and value without a great big hassle.

Brand Personality

Down-to-earth, Knowledgeable, Experienced, Neighborly, Trustworthy

Brand Affiliation

People who would rather be outside living than indoors shopping.