



The 360° Advantage

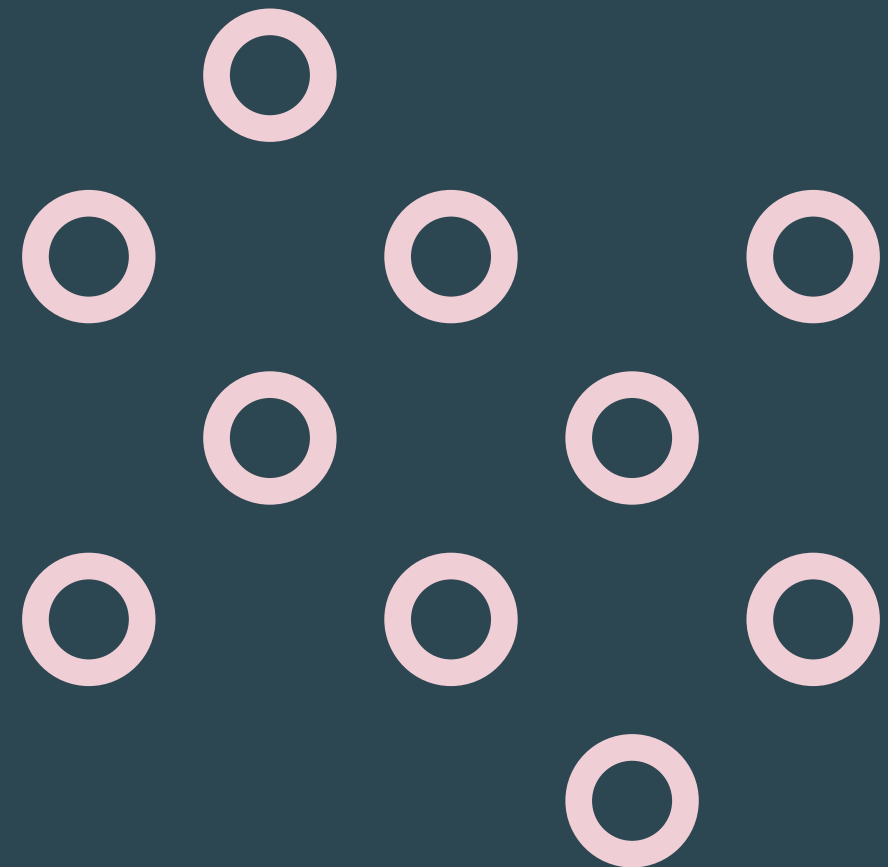
How Whole Brands Dominate

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Foreword



This is the most vital time in history to be in the brand-building business.

While most brands — what we call fragmented brands — are scrambling to find their footing, whole brands are creating sustainable and dominant growth. This reveals a new mindset for how modern business leaders are embracing a new, 360-degree definition of brand — as the sum of every experience a consumer has with a company or organization. Such leaders understand that every action they take, inside and out, is their brand.

Whole brand thinking leads to companies, organizations, teams and people that understand they are all responsible for the brand, not just the marketing department. They apply creativity across the whole brand spectrum (see right page), the vast array of actions available for brand-building, from business ideas to marketing ideas. This spectrum is a workshop

and playground, a starting point for idea development that will make the brand as valuable as possible.

Whole brand thinking solves for the complicated problems that result when the parts that make up a business aren’t working as one. It is a powerful tool for opportunity spotting, internal integration, collaboration, alignment, communication and growth. When a business works as a unified whole, it evolves into something much greater than the sum of its parts: A whole brand.

Such brands are designed for growth, outperforming competitors and building market value and superiority as a result.

The following report contains the results of our first Whole Brand Study: an analysis of 123 brands in 16 categories. It’s an introduction to both the model and measurement (Whole Brand Index) of the power and performance of such brands.

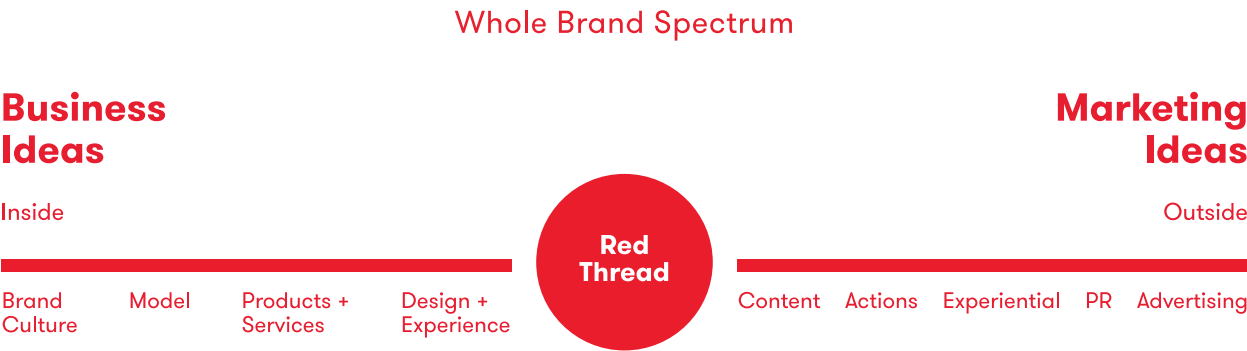
Four elements of a whole brand

We developed these 4 attributes of a whole brand based on how modern consumers view and experience brands. While our study delves into the performance measurements of such brands — product, brand culture, experience, design and communication — we have made correlations to complete this definition and determine which brands are truly “whole.”

Becoming a whole brand is no easy feat: Most brands live in a space between fragmented and whole. Our prediction: whole brands will continue to dominate now and well into the future.

In today’s market, brands can’t hide. Now more than ever, consumers and communities demand transparency and valuable impact for brands. No longer can a company be one thing and a brand be another. They are one in the same forevermore. This requires business leaders to scrap old definitions and commit to a new mindset that treats everything as brand.

This is the first of many examples of how whole brands will dominate markets to come, giving marketing leaders for brands and their C-suite counterparts proof of the impact of 360-degree thinking and how a collective, systematic approach to brand building can change the trajectory and future of brands.



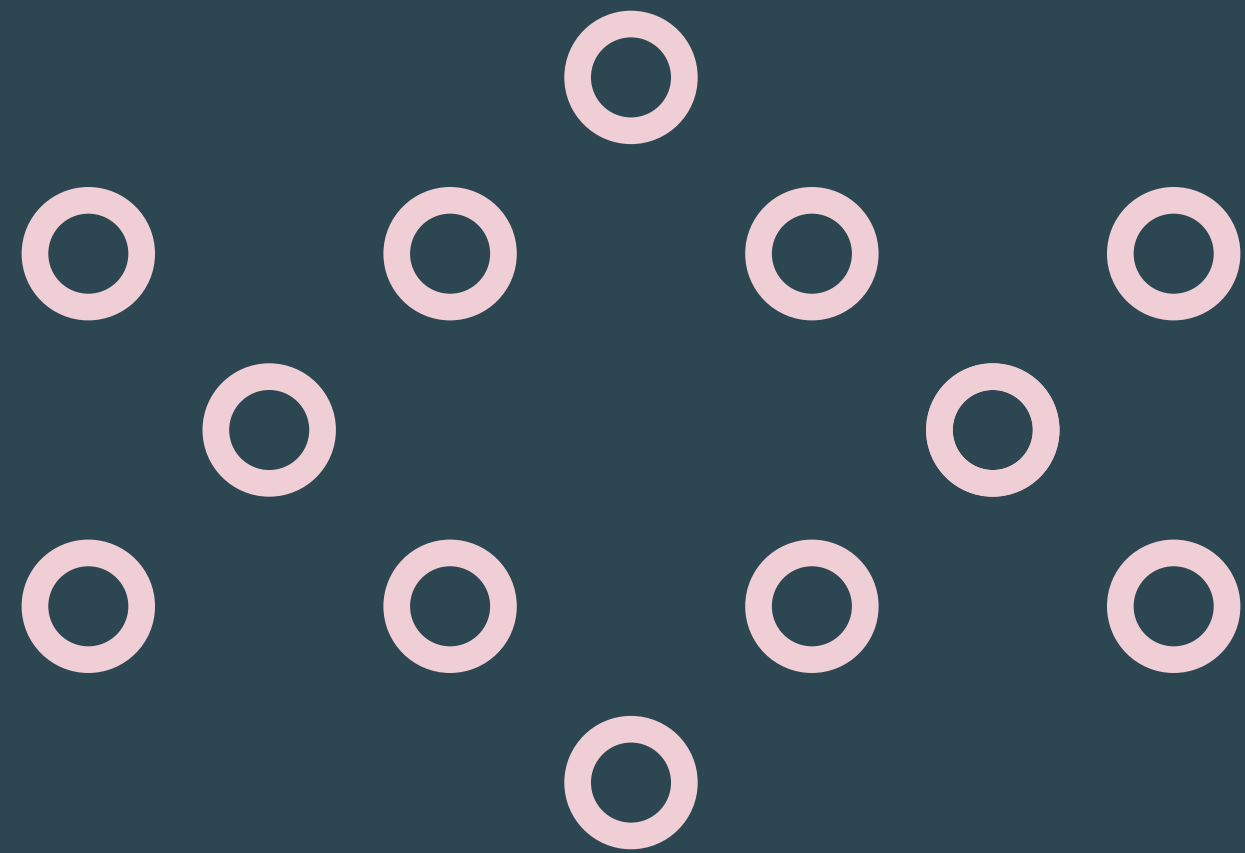
- 1

A whole brand is an organization that treats everything it does as the brand.
- 2

A core, long idea guides, inspires and connects every action a whole brand takes, across the spectrum of marketing ideas to business ideas. We call this the red thread.
- 3

A whole brand is full of purpose and action, and it matches what it says and does internally with what it says and does externally.
- 4

A whole brand measures success holistically by balancing profit and performance across the Whole Brand Spectrum with its impact on people, communities and the planet.



Introduction

Brands win when consumers
choose them more often



“We know you have a choice when you fly....” (You remember, flying, right?)

You hear those words as you taxi to the gate, in the last moments while the flight attendant has your undivided attention. The airline knows that the only way to build their business—their brand—is to win as many consumers as possible. It’s that simple. It’s how marketing works: people choose which brands win when it comes to meeting their needs, large or small. It’s an endless, everyday battle.

Southwest Airlines, once a little-noticed, Texas-based shuttle service with funny looking planes and smiling flight attendants wearing loud colors, became America’s leading domestic carrier by getting people to choose them instead of another airline.

Some believe Southwest wins because of low fares. Others because they stand for “fun” or “freedom.” There’s another reason: they do everything well. Southwest is a whole brand in the truest sense.

Today they stand as the top domestic carrier in the United States. How did they do it? How did they take on competitors with global reach and legendary brand names?

They attacked the market on multiple fronts, leaving nothing to chance. Their product—one type of plane, no hubs, point-to-point flying—was all meant to move people along with as little friction as possible. A team of smiling employees delivered the most rewarded customer service in the industry. They provided a memorable (and useful) customer experience that matched their flying model—no assigned seats, no clunky service cart, no-frills aisle service, a quirky take on the safety instructions, and a bags-fly-free

policy. For an airline, especially in their early days, it also looked different—the design system used a bright, almost outlandish color scheme. And finally, they had engaging, relevant marketing communications. Southwest is a whole brand, one that applies intentional decision-making to every aspect of its brand and leaves nothing to chance. It’s what we call a 360-degree approach to brand-building — and clearly, it works.

But in many organizations, traditional marketing orthodoxy prevails. If you blindly walked into a typical planning session at firms in almost any category, you would mostly hear “marketing” conversations. How do we differentiate? How do we reach our targets with the right ads? What’s our brand personality?

That’s an imperfect, inefficient, and incomplete way to build a brand in the 2020s.

Yes, it’s primarily the way brands have been built since the golden age of mid-20th century advertising. It’s the Unique Selling Proposition made famous by Rosser Reeves. It’s “winning the battle for the consumer mind,” the mantra of Trout and Ries when they identified positioning. It’s the way that United, American and Delta went up against each other for years, while the off-beat brand from Dallas — paying little heed to the traditional marketing rules — did it another way.

The way of the Whole Brand.

Southwest Airlines is by no means alone — but they are part of an elite. The question is, how do the elites become elite?

To answer that, we conducted deep research into a wide range of brands, looking for evidence that explained how some, like Southwest, rise to dominance, while others fall behind. What follows is the story of what we learned.

At a glance

Attributes of the 360° whole brand

A

The most dominant brands in the marketplace are whole brands. They perform at a high level across a broad spectrum of brand impact determinants over which they have full control.

B

These impact determinants cover a complete set of brand actions, not just traditional marketing functions.

C

A Whole Brand Index (WBI) is an aggregated score representing how effectively brands perform across this range, relative to other brands in their category.

D

The WBI consists of consumer evaluations of all the elements a brand controls when it enters the marketplace: its products, the skill of its workforce, its customer experience, its design system and its communications.

E

Two discrete scores for each studied brand — the Whole Brand Index and Total Brand Performance Score — are highly correlated and stand as single, aggregated scores for rating the strength of brand impact determinants and total market effectiveness.

F

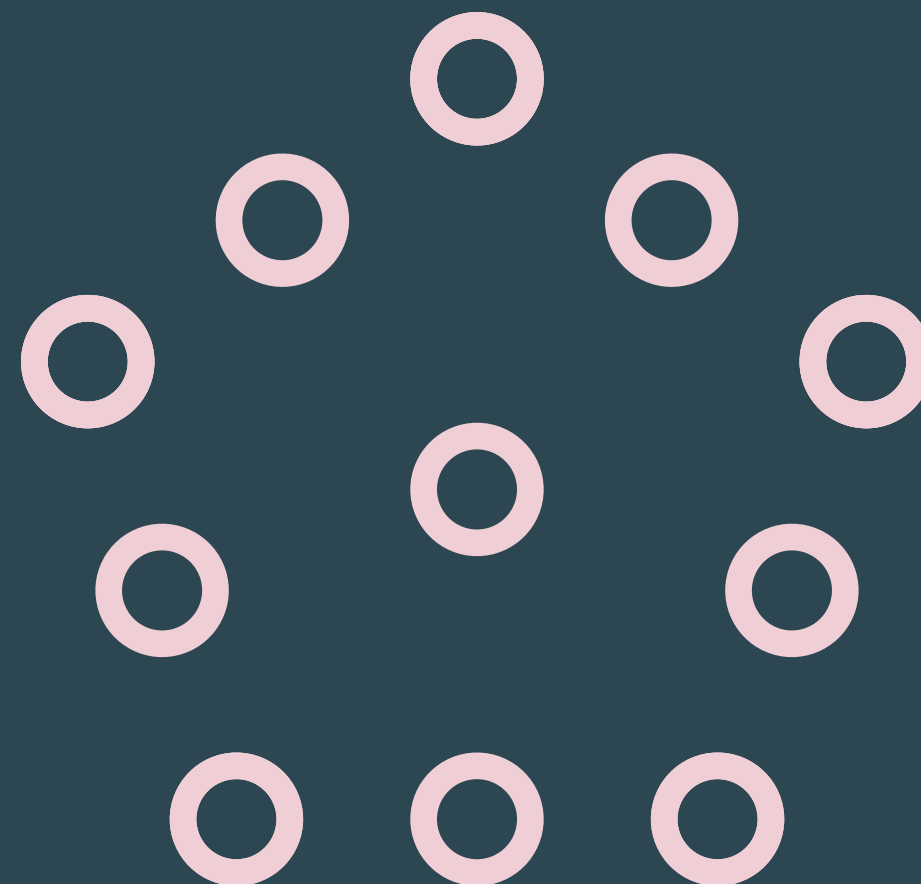
High-scoring brands — in the top quintile of WBI scores — consistently outperform brands in the lower four quintiles by wide margins on these metrics.

G

Brands with high Whole Brand Indexes that are publicly traded outperform lower-ranked brands on several widely observed measures of financial performance.

Executive summary

What it takes to win



Success is easy to spot, but hard to predict: it’s a lagging indicator, and the leading indicator that predicts it — value — is usually hidden.

Which political candidate will emerge from a crowded field? Which tech startup will shatter IPO records? Which pitcher with a 98-mph fastball will lead your team to a pennant? Data science has found ways to answer questions like that.

The question of why certain brands break away from a pack of look-alikes and create value far beyond others is similar. Would it have been possible to predict Southwest’s rise to dominance before it overtook its legacy competitors? Our study sought to understand the key to brand dominance and, as this model evolves, may prove to have predictive value.

Whole brands, which are brands that spread their strength across a defined set of strategies and actions, grow faster and win more customers than their weaker, more fragmented competitors. And they do so decisively on at least eight key performance metrics.

These are brands with higher than average Whole Brand Index scores. Landing in the top quintile of our study, they achieve overwhelming dominance against brands in the lower four quintiles.¹ (See Table 1.)

¹ All this data — detailed in Table 1 — was compiled directly from our study, from questions that consumers answered about the brands that they evaluated.

Whole brands vs. fragmented brands

- Whole Brand
- Fragmented Brand

Whole brands are recommended nearly twice as often

2x ↑



Whole brands triple fragmented brands in “bought most often”

3x ↑



Whole brands double fragmented brands in market penetration

2x ↑



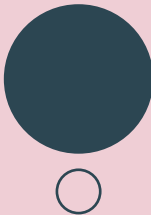
Whole brands are rated five times more likely as a “brand on the rise”

5x ↑



Whole brands are eleven times more likely to command a premium price

11x ↑

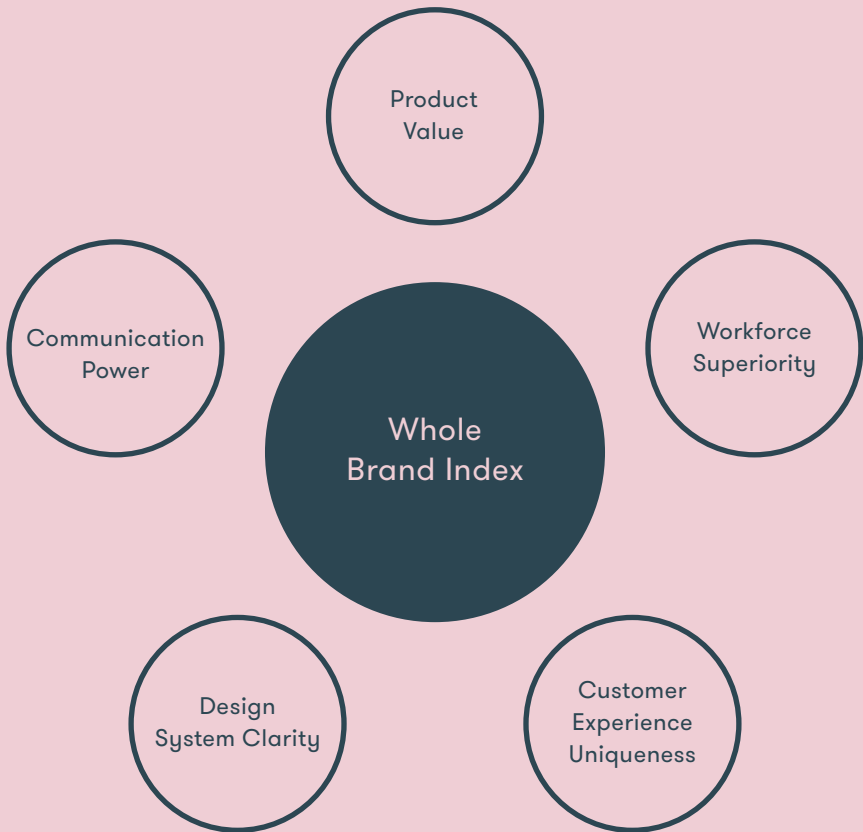


WBI scoring

The WBI is computed on a 100-point scale (more detail follows below on page 44 on how scores are calculated). Scores ranged from a low of 51 (Spirit Airlines) to a high of 85 (Nike). Table 1 shows that the top 25 brands — the top quintile out of 123 brands — have an average WBI of 75, which is 23% above the average WBI of 61 for the 100 brands in the lower four quintiles.

The WBI is a single, aggregated score that measures a brand’s performance across five sets of actions: product value, workforce superiority, customer experience uniqueness, design system clarity and communication power.

These are the key determinants of brand action and success in the marketplace.



Financial performance improves when Whole Brand Index rises

Table 1

	Top 25	Bottom 100	All brands
Average Whole Brand Index	75	61	64
Penetration: usage in the past 12 months	41%	20%	24%
Bought most often	28%	9%	13%
Net Percent: brand rising minus brand declining	27%	5%	10%
Willing to pay more	22%	2%	6%
Recommended to others in the past six months	35%	20%	23%
Increased use in the past six months	20%	13%	15%

Our hypothesis: brands that mastered a complete set of determinants over which they had full control would be stronger than those that excelled at a limited set of actions (such as highly visible advertising for a competitive product).

To test our hypothesis, we asked consumers to score the competitive strength of top brands within 16 different categories — 123 brands in all. All scoring was relative and comparative in a category, a realistic measurement of how consumers would behave in the marketplace.

Survey respondents also considered a separate set of questions related to their usage and preference for brands — think of these as market performance indicators (MPIs). This is how we discovered that whole brands so dramatically outperform weaker brands. These questions collected data on what brands consumers had used or purchased in a category in the last year — giving us all-important penetration scores. We also asked which brand they bought most often, whether they would pay full price for a given brand when a competitor was on sale, whether they had recommended a brand to others in the past six months, and whether they viewed brands as on the rise, on the decline or holding steady.

Whole brands win in the financial market as well

These elite brands also out-perform weaker brands on key financial metrics. We looked at 30 publicly traded brands from our testing group — 15 with whole brand scores in the top third of our rankings and 14 with scores in the lowest third.²

Key financial ratios: top-tier brands Table 2

	WBI	Price-to-book	P/E	Five-year CAGR	Three-year market
Nike	85	18.8	62.3	7.1%	75
Amazon	80	14.8	138.1	25.8%	217
Netflix	80	18.7	96.5	29.6%	238%
Southwest Airlines	77	2.9	10.1	3.8%	-46%
Planet Fitness	77	0	59.0	22.5%	177%
Adidas	74	8.4	34.7	9.1%	37%
Under Armour	73	4.5	0	11.3%	-52%
Toyota	73	.1	8.0	3.3%	18%
Verizon	73	4.1	15.4	.8%	26%
Progressive	71	3.2	13.8	12.0%	76%
United Health	71	4.8	20.9	13.2%	62%
Delta	70	2.5	4.3	3.1%	-48%
Honda	70	.64	11.0	4.9%	-4%
T-Mobile	69	2.3	20.1	8.8%	80%
Target	68	4.7	59.0	1.5%	132%
Average	74	6.1	34.4	10.5%	65.9%

Key financial ratios: bottom-tier brands Table 3

	WBI	Price-to-book	P/E	Five-year CAGR	Three-year market
NY Times	61	4.5	34.6	2.5%	145%
Amex	61	4.4	9.2	4.6%	13%
Bank of America	60	1.3	12.8	.5%	-4%
Volvo	59	2.3	6.7	8.8%	3%
Wendy's	58	9.7	9.9	-7.3%	47%
Chipotle	58	12.1	62.3	6.3%	173%
Wells Fargo	58	1.0	9.0	.1%	-54%
Kohl's	58	1.1	9.7	1.0%	-45%
Citibank	58	.8	7.6	-1.3%	-23%
Macy's	55	.6	5.9	-2.1%	-71%
Dick's Sporting Goods	54	1.8	.83	6.3%	3%
U.S. Cellular	54	.6	18.9	.70%	-18%
Nordstrom	53	6.1	0	2.8%	-67%
Spirit	51	.7	4.8	0%	-65%
Average	57	3.4	14.3	1.6%	+2.6%

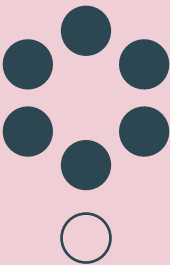
² We were not able to obtain complete financial metrics on all brands in our study — either because they were not publicly traded or they were part of a publicly traded corporate brand that did not break out financial performance of individual brands. In some instances, high-scoring brands did not have a viable price-to-book ratio because of their asset allocations; they were also omitted from our calculation.

Three metrics of financial performance

Based on SEC filings and other financial reports assembled by the Wall Street Journal, the 15 brands with the higher scores outperformed the lower 14 on several dimensions:

- Whole Brand
- Fragmented Brand

Five-year CAGR for the top-tier brands is six times greater than the lower-tier brands.



6x ↑

Price-to-book ratios, which reflect brand value, are 1.5 times higher than the lower-tier brands.



1.5x ↑

The price-to-earnings ratio for the top-tier is more than double the lower-tier.



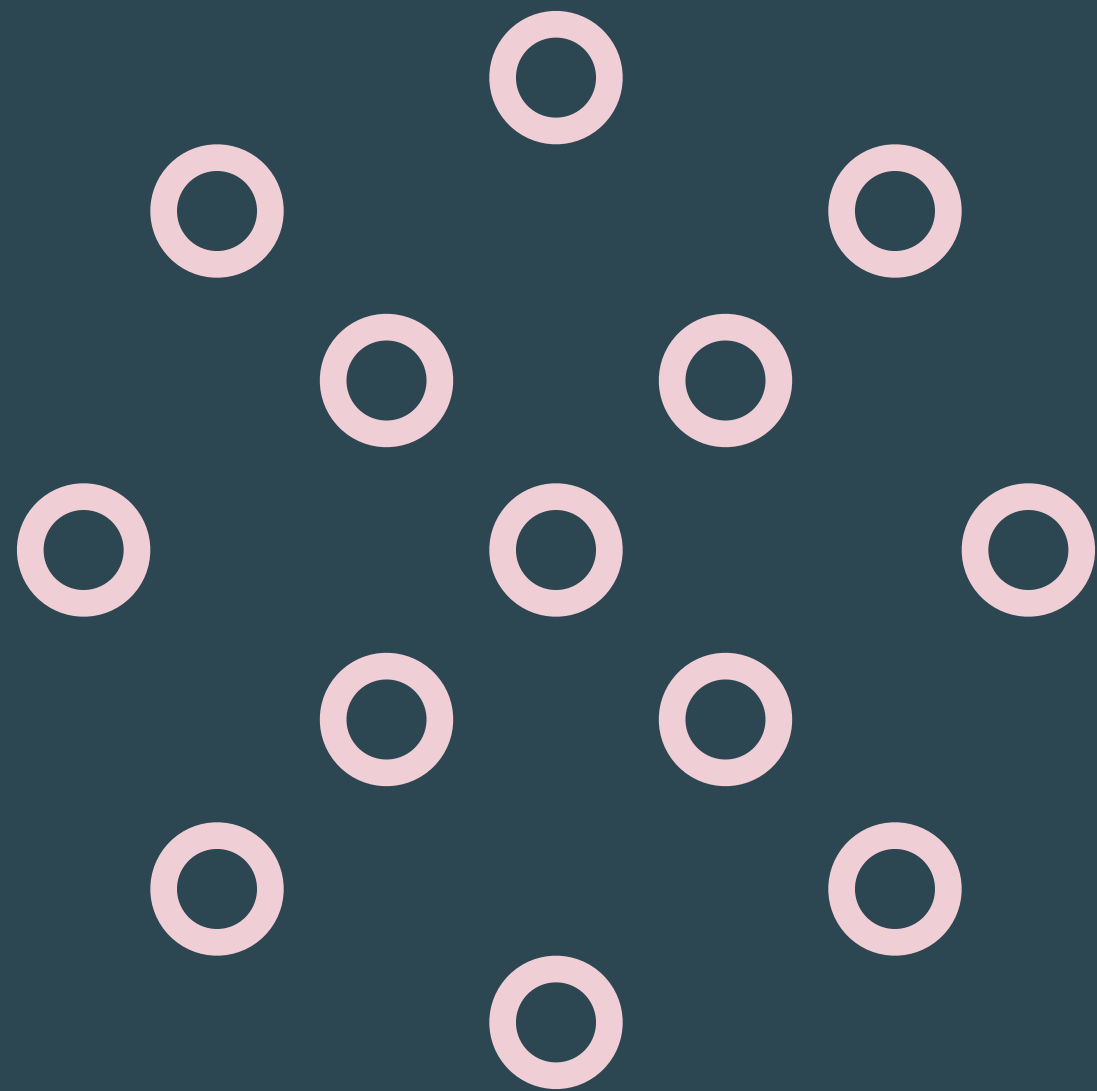
2.5x ↑

Conclusion

For brands to achieve significant market dominance, with performance scores along the lines noted above on page 19, it is essential for them to operate as whole brands.

To do so, they need to set goals not just for financial performance and market penetration, but they must also perfect a full spectrum of strategies across the five sets of determinant actions noted above: product, workforce, customer experience, design and communications.





Research approach

Brand impact
determinants lead to
the Whole Brand Index



Our study covered a wide range of brands and numerous categories. (See page 46).

This made it necessary to assess brand impact determinants in a broad sense, across categories with wide differences among them — such as financial services companies, wireless providers and quick-serve or fast-casual restaurants. For example, products in those categories are quite different. So are design systems and styles of marketing performance. To

account for these differences, we needed to find common denominators that all brands, regardless of category, could be judged on.

A well-defined set of strategies and actions have an impactful determination on brand success in the marketplace.

Our approach looks at each brand’s products, customer service, customer experience, design and communications. We assessed how each of these five crucial determinants function even across varied categories, asking consumers two questions for each determinant.

Table 4: The left-hand column lists the five broad determinants, with the right-hand column listing two different evaluation points for each of these, turned into questions.

Five areas of evaluation

Table 4

Brand impact determinants (broad)	Specific points of evaluation (narrow)
Product actions	Overall product value
	Product differentiation
Customer service actions	Level of customer service
	Workforce knowledge and skill
Customer experience actions	Memorability of experience
	Most satisfying experience
Design/ access actions	Easy to recognize and find
	Overall simplicity of usage
Communications + advertising actions	Visibility of advertising — seen most often
	Relevance of advertising

The tacit power of purpose

A brand's success depends heavily on a concept that underlies all these determinants: purpose. Purpose gives a brand intention and clarity. It's both a guiding theme and higher calling.

In Barkley's overall performance model, we refer to the idea that unifies the entire brand spectrum as the red thread. It's the central idea, derived from purpose, that guides how the brand comes to life, internally and externally. It inspires everything the brand does, inside and out. A red thread is not a tagline (though it might be in some cases). Consumers may not see it directly, as with Nike, which lives by the belief, "Everyone is an athlete," while consumers hear "Just Do It."

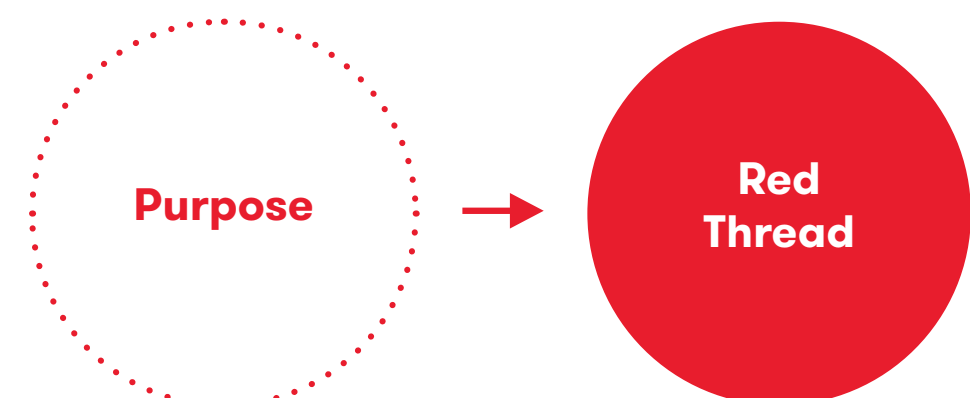
Because a red thread influences all the things a brand does, it's not the same as the brand determinants in the study — it's of a higher magnitude. We did, however, include a purpose question in the study, asking respondents to evaluate whether brands stood for a higher purpose, other than making money.

The average purpose score for all brands in the survey was 61, three points below the average WBI of 64. There is, however, a correlation of $r=0.90$ between higher purpose and the Whole Brand Impact. A slightly lower score for purpose compared to the WBI is not

surprising. The WBI measures tangible attributes of a brand: Is it valuable? Is it different? A memorable experience? Easy to find and use? Visible to you? With relevant messaging? Higher purpose is less tangible, with many brands never coming forward to illustrate higher purpose to any notable degree (even though it may quietly exist behind the scenes).

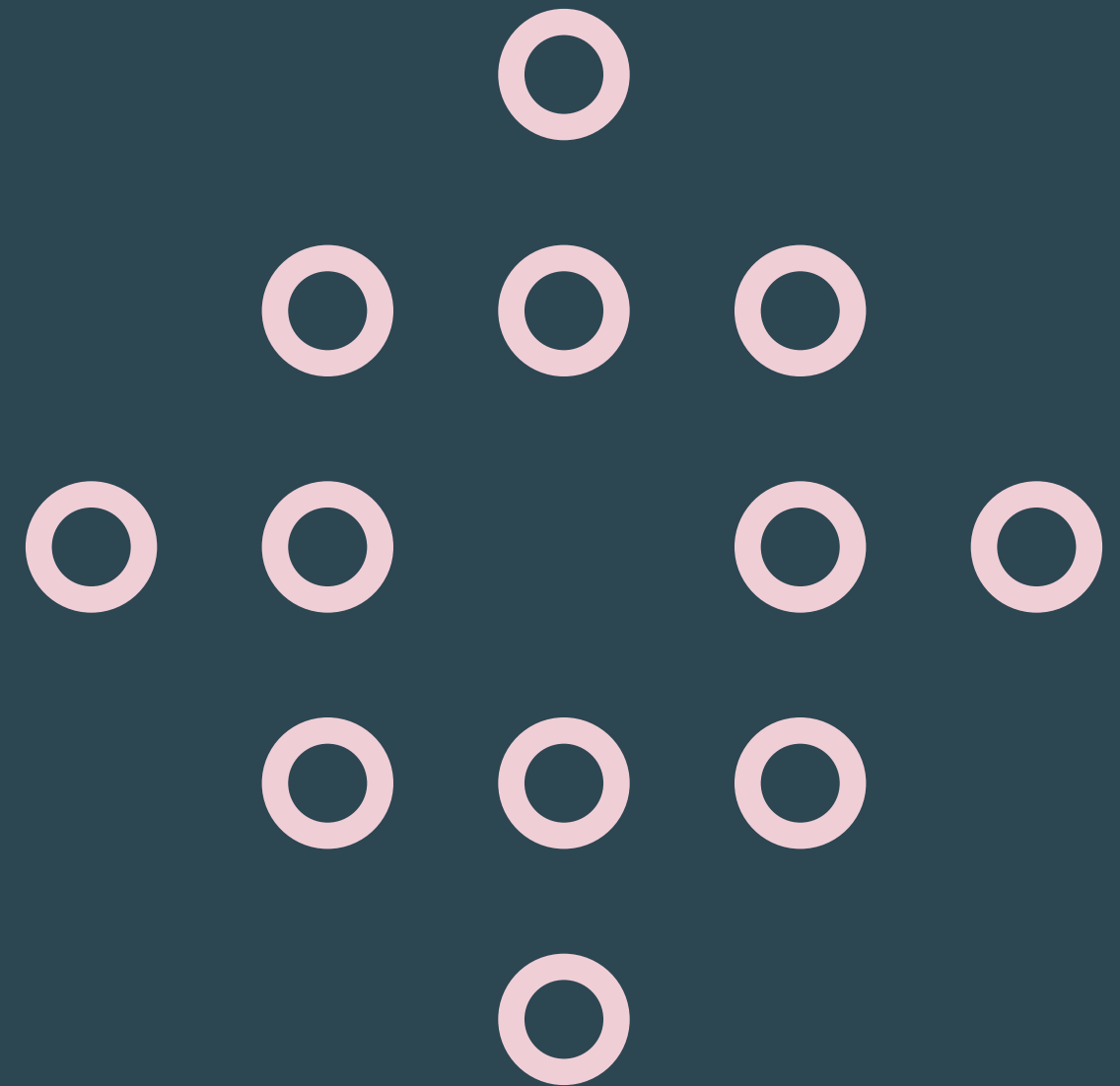
More importantly, the top quintile of brands by WBI have an average purpose score of 64, compared to 60 for the four lower quintiles below them. Whole brands cross the spectrum more deeply and completely than weaker brands, and purpose underlies some of that strength.

Purpose is a more subjective concept than individual brand determinants, which consumers assess every day in the choices they make. However, in up-close case studies of brands, in which strategic analysts can study brands in granular detail, it can be documented and described. The power of brands like Nike is testament to that.



Analysis

The Total Performance Score:
Why the whole is greater
than the sum of its parts



At the beginning of this report, we highlighted how brands in the top quintile of Whole Brand Index scores outperformed brands in the lower four quintiles on five different market performance indicators.

For each brand in a category, we asked respondents questions to determine the following:

- 1. Penetration: Which brands had they used or purchased in the past 12-months?
- 2. Preference: Which brand did they buy most often?
- 3. Price premium: Were they willing to pay full price for a brand even if a competitor was on sale?
- 4. Advocacy: Had they recommended the brand to anyone in the past six months?
- 5. Buzz: Was the brand on the rise, on the decline or holding steady?

Each of these questions yielded a percentage answer. On two questions — net willingness to pay more and whether a brand was on the rise or not — the net percentage could be negative if consumers were more likely to go for the brand on sale or saw the brand as on the decline.

As brands with WBIs in the top quintile scored dramatically better than brands in the bottom four quintiles, we find this trend is consistent at every level. Each of these metrics has a strong statistical coefficient of correlation back to the WBI. Here are the r-coefficients for each (any value above 0.5 is considered high):

- Penetration: 12-month penetration: .56
- Preference: Bought most often: .77
- Price premium: Willingness to pay full price: .63
- Advocacy: Recommended past six months: .78
- Buzz: On the rise vs. on-the-decline: .65

The implication is clear: the higher the WBI, the stronger the market success for the brand in these individual measures of performance.

As impressive as these numbers are, they’re not a single number. To get to a single number for each brand, we added together all five of their market performance percentages. That gives us a Total Performance Score. It’s a simple aggregation of market performance, and, at a glance, can tell a brand manager or a CEO how much collective market power the brand has.

That leaves us with two numbers:

The WBI, described in depth starting on page 26, is a mean score of 10 brand impact determinants (two each in five different action sets), as evaluated by consumers.

The TPS, which is an aggregation of how well the brand succeeds in everything from penetration to its buzz-factor, also reported by consumers.

When we correlate all 123 WBI scores to TPS scores, the coefficient of correlation is $r=.84$. The r^2 value is 71%. None of the individual correlations noted above on page 32 exceeded .78 or an r^2 of 61%.

The key insight of this study: Whole brands have greater total market impact — they are, indeed, greater than the sum of their parts.

TPS scoring



Some additional details about our group of 123 brands and how their WBI and TPS ratings compare:

For the entire set of brands, the average WBI is 64 and the average TPS is 75. The highest WBI (Nike) also has the highest TPS (248). The lowest WBI (Spirit Airlines) has a TPS of minus-10, though the lowest TPS (minus-42) goes to Nordstrom, a struggling brand with the second-lowest WBI at 53.

The information below shows — at a glance — how the two most important scores in this study — the WBI and the TPS — are built. Each score is one number:



Measures

Measures actions controlled by the brand — for each of the five, the study collected scoring on two questions.

Actions

- Product Attributes
- Customer Service Actions
- Customer Experience Impacts
- Design System Attributes
- Communications + Messaging Impacts



Measures

Measures what consumers say about their usage and perception of each brand in the marketplace.

Actions

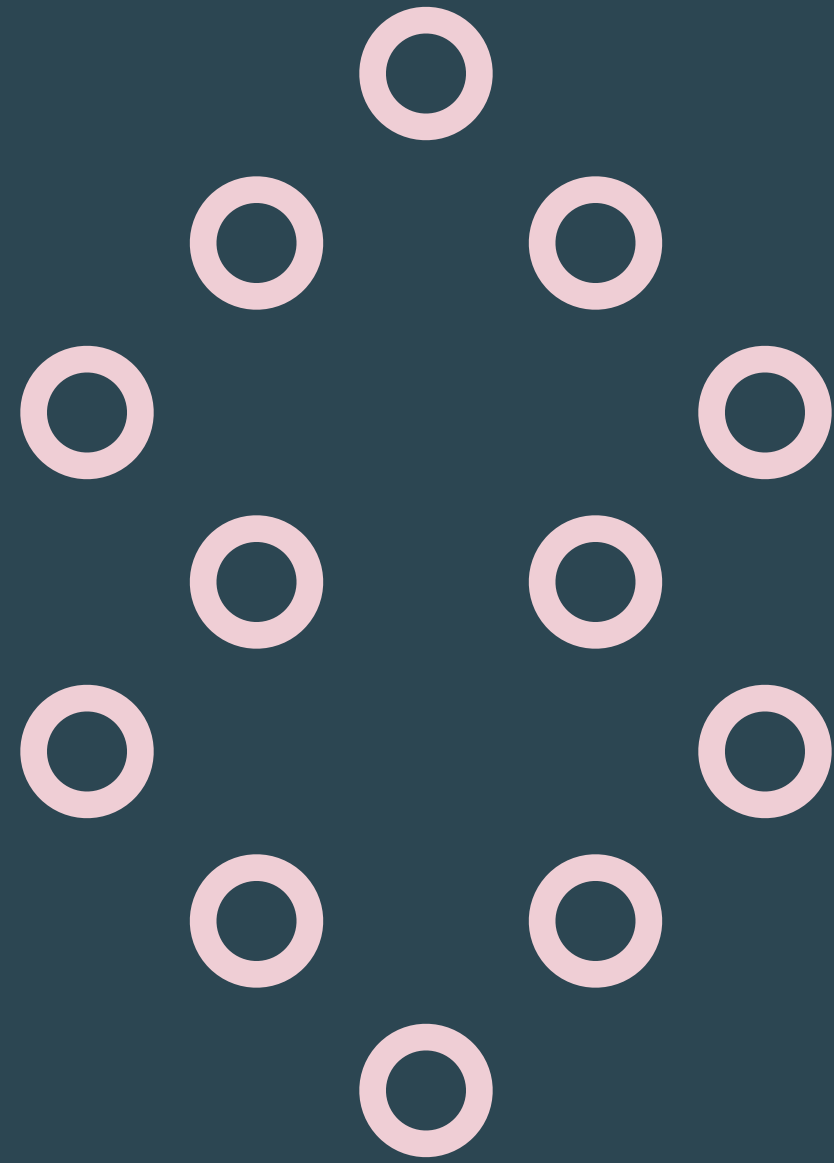
- Past 12-Month Usage
- Bought Most Often
- Net Willingness to Pay Full Price
- Recommended to Others - Past 6 Months
- Net Brand Trajectory (% Rising minus Falling)

Table 5 shows the WBI and TPS scores for the top-ten brands in the study. For complete listing of scores for all 123 brands, see the tables at the end of this report on page 46.

Top ten brands in the Whole Brand Index

Table 5

Brand	Category	Whole Brand Index	Total Performance Score
Nike	Athletic Wear	85	248
Blue Cross and Blue Shield	Health Insurance	82	160
Home Depot	Home Improvement	81	189
Amazon	Large Retail	80	244
Netflix	Streaming/ Social	80	224
IKEA	Home Decor	78	149
Southwest Airlines	Airlines	77	164
Planet Fitness	Fitness	77	188
Lowe's	Home Improvement	75	134
Old Navy	Retail Apparel- Men's	74	141



Key takeaways

Two numbers explain the
power of a whole brand

In the last 10 years, leading marketing thinkers — notably David Aaker, Douglas Cameron and his colleague Douglas Holt, and Byron Sharp — have chipped away at conventional marketing orthodoxy.

In different ways, each of them questioned the value of differentiation and positioning, the Zeus and Hera of marketing's Mount Olympus. Aaker argued that differentiation is essentially a dead-end strategy and that brand relevance is more important. Holt and Cameron, gurus of cultural strategy, were even more blunt — presenting a bevy of case studies that ridiculed “mindshare” marketing of all kinds, arguing in favor of brands “crossing the cultural chasm” to connect with consumers.

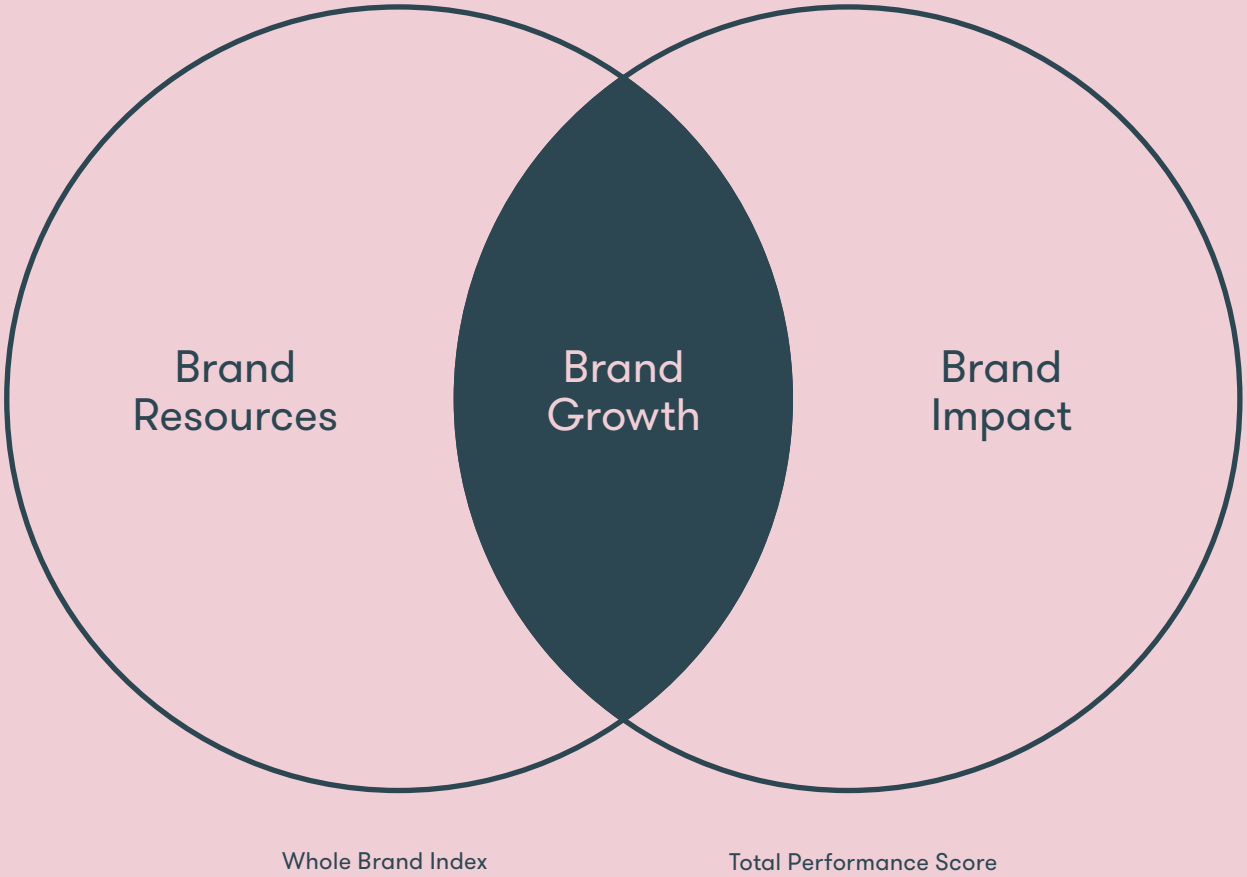
Sharp was the biggest disrupter of all, compiling mountains of data, collected over decades, debunking differentiation and narrow targeting, and convincingly showing that among competing brands, there is a vast sharing of customers. He argues that brands grow through penetration, that loyalty is a function of penetration, and that mental and physical availability drive that growth.

We believe all these thinkers have a case to be made and that there are, indeed, too many zombie ideas in the marketing world, too much adherence to traditional notions that don't produce real growth. But none of them look at what happens in the trenches of the marketplace — how brands fight it out with competitors based on the range of brand impact determinants they bring to the market. Aaker's relevance strategies, along with the Holt/Cameron cultural strategies, are also hard to measure.

Measurement is a rearview mirror. Brands need a systemic model for attacking the market, for guiding them into it, and for predicting their success.

Our view is that a brand is more than marketing — it's total action. That's why the origin of this study was in our attempt to develop a performance framework for our clients, a practical tool intended to serve as both a brand guidance system and a scorecard.

Whole brand thinking:
A systemic model for success



Consumers determine the final score

To understand how brands behave in the market and compete day-to-day, we settled on a model that emphasized the things that a brand has full control over: the products it sells, the people who make and service those products, the experiences they provide their customers, the way they design their image and their physical assets and the way they deliver their messages.

There are nuances to how brands do these things — how they organize them and what they emphasize. But in one way, shape or form, they all do the things we have enumerated here. Those things are their brand determinants. They make up the Whole Brand.

It’s how brands compete with one another, and it’s how consumers encounter them in the marketplace. Consumers make the final judgment about brands, the only judgment that matters.

They decide if the product is good, if the service is terrible or stellar, if the experience is one they remember forever or they hope to forget, if the brand itself is easy to find and use, and if they consistently notice the brand in the media universe where they clash head-to-head with their competitors.

This is the only reasonable way to understand brands and to plan strategies for how they win, and to measure the power of what they take into competition with other brands. That measurement is the Whole Brand Index. After that, it’s a matter of determining whether all those things are strong enough so the brand gets purchased more often, whether it’s worth its price or if it can command a premium, and whether people talk it up and think it’s a brand on the move. That last set of measures is the Total Performance Score.

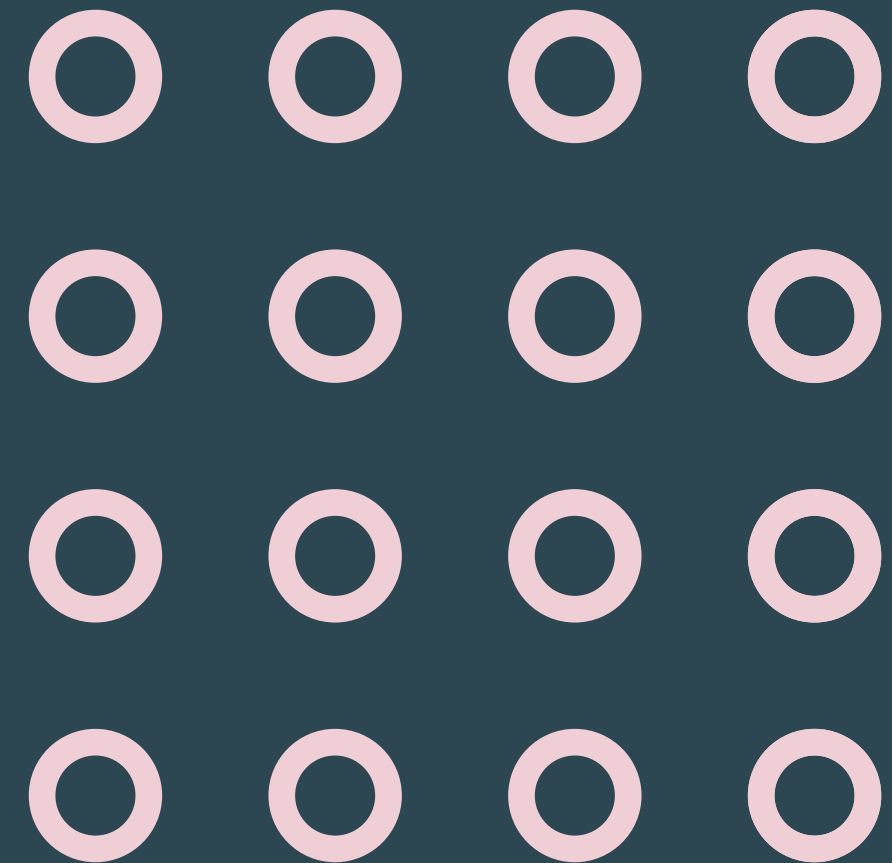
Two numbers — the WBI and the TPS — easy to understand and highly correlated, with deep data sets underneath them, provides endless guidance and strategic insight. That’s what we hope emerges from this study and from the model that supports it.

Using this model, brands can obtain a clear view of where they stand against their competitors. Where they win, lose and draw. Where they need to invest, pull back or adjust.

One number, the WBI, assesses their brand resources. The other assesses their impact. Together, they provide a clear path to elite status and enviable growth.

Methodology

Study background
and scoring the
Whole Brand Index and the
Total Performance Score



In January 2020, Barkley conducted a national research study of more than 4,000 general-population consumers to learn how they evaluated 123 brands across 16 categories.

Respondents evaluated the strength of brands in five brand impact determinant areas — products, customer service, overall customer experience, design system (visibility and ease of usage) and communications and advertising.

In an earlier section, we explained the scoring approach for the Whole Brand Index. We repeat it here as well. In the study, consumers scored brands in two randomly selected categories (though only men were selected for men’s apparel and only women for women’s apparel). Sample sizes for categories ranged from n=479 to n=511. For each category, respondents identified brands with which they were familiar. They then selected “winners” in each of the five evaluation areas. Winners were awarded 10 points. Respondents then evaluated the remaining brands that didn’t win in their eyes, awarding them 1 to 9 points for each

evaluation area. This unique scoring system mimics the 10-point “must” system used to score boxing matches — an approach that rewards the winner in a competitive situation with a guaranteed high score.

We developed this approach because we believe it emulates what happens when consumers make brand choices. They make comparisons, then they make a choice. Sometimes the comparisons are impulsive, other times carefully weighed. The study doesn’t discriminate, it only reports what consumers think and do.

The WBI score assigned to each brand, reported as a whole-number on a 100-point scale, combines scores across all five evaluation areas.

The Total Performance Score was calculated based on scores related to how consumers use and view brands when they encounter them. There were five components to this score — past 12-month usage, brand bought most often, net willingness to pay extra for a brand, active recommendation of a brand to others in the last six months and net trajectory of the brand (percent on-the-rise minus percent on-the-decline). The five scores were then added together, with the percentages turned into whole numbers. Theoretically, the lowest TPS would be minus-200 and the highest score 500. Negative scores are possible because two of its components — net willingness to pay more and net brand trajectory — can be either positive or negative.

We developed this approach because we believe it emulates what happens when consumers make brand choices. They make comparisons, then they make a choice.

Complete list of all brands studied by category



Airlines

Alaska Airlines
American Airlines
Delta Airlines
Frontier Airlines
JetBlue
Southwest Airlines
Spirit Airlines
United Airlines



Auto Insurance

Allstate
Esurance
GEICO
Liberty Mutual
Nationwide
Progressive
State Farm
USAA



Wireless

AT&T Wireless
Boost
Cricket
Sprint
T-Mobile
U.S. Cellular
Verizon



Fitness

24 Hour Fitness
LA Fitness
Lifetime
Orangetheory
Peloton
Planet Fitness
Snap Fitness



Large Retailers

Amazon
Dick's Sporting Goods
Kohl's
Macy's
Nordstrom
Target
Walmart



Streaming/
Social Media

Disney
Facebook
Hulu
Instagram
Netflix
YouTube



Home Improvement

Ace Hardware
Home Depot
Lowe's
Menards



Home Decor

At Home
Home Goods
IKEA
Pier 1
Pottery Barn
Wayfair
West Elm



Automotive

Chevy
Ford
Honda
Subaru
Toyota
Volvo



Women's Apparel

Anthropologie
ASOS
Athleta
Banana Republic
Gap
H&M
J. Crew
Lululemon
Madewell
Old Navy
Urban Outfitters
Zappos
Zara



Banks/Financial
Services

American Express
Bank of America
Capital One
Chase
Citibank
Fidelity Investments
Schwab
USAA_FIN
Vanguard
Wells Fargo



Men's Apparel

ASOS
Banana Republic
Bonobos
Gap
H&M
J. Crew
Lululemon
Old Navy
Urban Outfitters
Zappos
Zara



Restaurants-
QSR + Fast Casual

Burger King
Chick-fil-A
Chipotle
KFC
McDonald's
Panera
Subway
Taco Bell
Wendy's



Media

CNN
Fox News
MSNBC
National Geographic
New York Times
Rolling Stone
Time Magazine
USA Today



Health Insurance

Aetna
Anthem
Blue Cross and Blue Shield
Cigna
Humana
Oscar
United Healthcare



Athletic Wear

Adidas
Nike
Puma
Reebok
Under Armour

Whole Brand Index and Total Performance Scores

All brands studied are shown below, organized by WBI scores.

Table 6

	Brand	Category	Whole Brand Index	Total Performance Score
1	Nike	Athletic Wear	85	248
2	Blue Cross and Blue Shield	Health Insurance	82	160
3	Home Depot	Home Improvement	81	189
4	Amazon	Large Retail	80	244
5	Netflix	Streaming/ Social	80	224
6	IKEA	Home Decor	78	149
7	Southwest Airlines	Airlines	77	164
8	Planet Fitness	Fitness	77	188
9	Lowe's	Home Improvement	75	134
10	Old Navy	Retail Apparel- Men's	74	141
11	Adidas	Athletic Wear	74	176
12	Old Navy	Retail Apparel- Women's	74	123
13	National Geographic	Media	74	131
14	Under Armour	Athletic Wear	73	157
15	Toyota	Automotive	73	108
16	Peloton	Fitness	73	154
17	YouTube	Streaming/Social	73	168
18	Verizon	Wireless	73	103
19	Wayfair	Home Decor	71	138

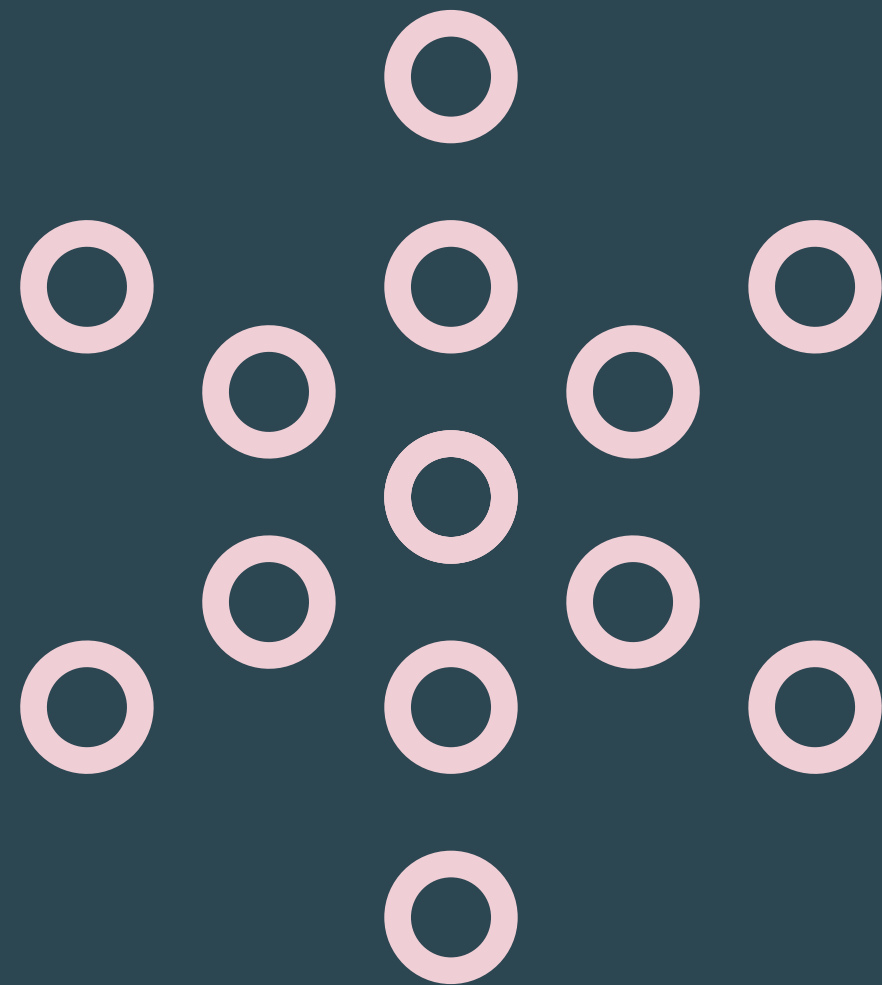
	Brand	Category	Whole Brand Index	Total Performance Score
20	Progressive	Auto Insurance	71	105
21	Home Goods	Home Decor	71	153
22	United Healthcare	Health Insurance	70	110
23	24 Hour Fitness	Fitness	70	123
24	Delta Airlines	Airlines	70	127
25	State Farm	Auto Insurance	70	87
26	Walmart	Large Retail	70	184
27	Honda	Automotive	70	84
28	LA Fitness	Fitness	70	117
29	Orangetheory	Fitness	69	113
30	GEICO	Auto Insurance	69	95
31	Ace Hardware	Home Improvement	69	59
32	T-Mobile	Wireless	69	109
33	Menards	Home Improvement	69	108
34	Ford	Automotive	69	70
35	Chevy	Automotive	69	62
36	Capital One	Banks/Financial Services	69	123
37	Target	Large Retail	68	98
38	Hulu	Streaming/Social	67	145
39	Chick-fil-A	Restaurant	67	149

	Brand	Category	Whole Brand Index	Total Performance Score
40	Chase	Banks/Financial Services	66	136
41	Allstate	Auto Insurance	66	60
42	Subaru	Automotive	66	55
43	Disney	Streaming/Social	66	157
44	H&M	Retail Apparel- Men's	65	100
45	Fidelity Investments	Banks/Financial Services	65	103
46	H&M	Retail Apparel- Women's	65	105
47	Reebok	Athletic Wear	65	29
48	Gap	Retail Apparel- Men's	65	59
49	Pier 1	Home Decor	65	31
50	AT&T Wireless	Wireless	65	69
51	American Airlines	Airlines	64	97
52	Pottery Barn	Home Decor	64	34
53	Humana	Health Insurance	64	46
54	Anthem	Health Insurance	64	67
55	Puma	Athletic Wear	64	41
56	Liberty Mutual	Auto Insurance	64	58
57	Lifetime	Fitness	64	71
58	JetBlue	Airlines	63	72
59	Banana Republic	Retail Apparel- Men's	63	68
60	Zappos	Retail Apparel- Men's	63	61
61	USAA	Auto Insurance	63	56

	Brand	Category	Whole Brand Index	Total Performance Score
62	Urban Outfitters	Retail Apparel- Men's	63	71
63	United Airlines	Airlines	63	61
64	Snap Fitness	Fitness	63	71
65	Cigna	Health Insurance	63	51
66	McDonald's	Restaurant	63	153
67	Vanguard	Banks/Financial Services	62	82
68	Zara	Retail Apparel- Men's	62	93
69	Schwab	Banks/Financial Services	62	75
70	Panera	Restaurant	62	89
71	Subway	Restaurant	62	95
72	At Home	Home Décor	62	121
73	Gap	Retail Apparel- Women's	62	21
74	J. Crew	Retail Apparel- Men's	62	55
75	Alaska Airlines	Airlines	62	88
76	Facebook	Streaming/Social	62	54
77	USAA	Banks/Financial Services	61	58
78	Lululemon	Retail Apparel- Men's	61	85
79	New York Times	Media	61	87
80	West Elm	Home Decor	61	51
81	Instagram	Streaming/Social	61	87
82	Urban Outfitters	Retail Apparel- Women's	61	68
83	Aetna	Health Insurance	61	46

	Brand	Category	Whole Brand Index	Total Performance Score
84	Nationwide	Auto Insurance	61	20
85	Time Magazine	Media	61	46
86	Oscar	Health Insurance	60	65
87	American Express	Banks/Financial Services	60	54
88	Lululemon	Retail Apparel- Women's	60	58
89	Bank of America	Banks/Financial Services	60	54
90	Rolling Stone	Media	60	20
91	CNN	Media	60	70
92	Bonobos	Retail Apparel- Men's	59	73
93	Zappos	Retail Apparel- Women's	59	45
94	Volvo	Automotive	59	-10
95	Wendy's	Restaurant	59	111
96	Sprint	Wireless	59	17
97	ASOS	Retail Apparel- Men's	59	87
98	Athleta	Retail Apparel- Women's	58	68
99	Citibank	Banks/Financial Services	58	58
100	Wells Fargo	Banks/Financial Services	58	33
101	Taco Bell	Restaurant	58	103
102	Kohl's	Large Retail	58	9
103	Zara	Retail Apparel- Women's	58	55

	Brand	Category	Whole Brand Index	Total Performance Score
104	Chipotle	Restaurant	58	80
105	USA Today	Media	57	32
106	Esurance	Auto Insurance	57	17
107	Banana Republic	Retail Apparel- Women's	57	-6
108	J. Crew	Retail Apparel- Women's	56	-3
109	Anthropologie	Retail Apparel- Women's	56	17
110	Madewell	Retail Apparel- Women's	56	51
111	Burger King	Restaurant	56	93
112	Fox News	Media	55	46
113	Cricket	Wireless	55	19
114	Boost	Wireless	55	9
115	Macy's	Large Retail	55	-41
116	ASOS	Retail Apparel- Women's	55	49
117	Dick's Sporting Goods	Large Retail	54	-26
118	U.S. Cellular	Wireless	54	-28
119	KFC	Restaurant	54	40
120	MSNBC	Media	53	29
121	Frontier Airlines	Airlines	53	11
122	Nordstrom	Large Retail	53	-42
123	Spirit Airlines	Airlines	51	-10



Brand culture

A closer look at the impact of brand culture: how does it influence the strength of a whole brand?

Building a whole brand means leaving nothing to chance.

Our study rates the strength and power of whole brands based on how customers see them in the marketplace, and what consumers think about a brand is the judgment that matters most.

But when a brand sets out to create competitive products, to deliver those products to customers with care and attentiveness, to offer a memorable experience along the way, to make those products easy to find and use, and to sell them with relevant messages — who does all those things, those things that make the whole brand?

A workforce dedicated to that purpose.

The term we use to describe that component of a whole brand is “brand culture.” Ideally, we could measure the cohesiveness of a brand culture with a score of its own. It could then be incorporated into the set of “brand impact determinants” that we used in this study to arrive at the Whole Brand Index. Of course, the only way a score like that can be derived is with the participation of any given brand. That wasn’t possible in this study because we can’t directly survey employees of brands.

But if we were implementing our WBI directly with a brand, we would develop a process for doing this. Our approach would consist of two elements: a direct study of the workforce team to assess its role in bringing to life a brand’s purpose and a comparable study to determine their effectiveness. That approach could give us an empirically grounded assessment of whether the brand has an internally cohesive structure that is also validated by the outside world.

Short of that, we can study the relationship between brand cultures and total brand performance through proxies. One simple way is to look at the brand determinant scores in our study for “best customer service” and “most knowledgeable and helpful employees,” and then look at how those inform the Whole Brand Index. The reasoning here is that disciplined, focused and purpose-driven employees will get noticed by consumers, who will get better service from them.

Here’s how to break that down:

The average WBI for the top quintile of all 123 brands we studied is 75; for the bottom quintile, it’s 55. That’s a 36% advantage for the top brands over the bottom. The average Total Performance Score, the consolidated number that tells us how brands actually deliver in the marketplace, is 157 for the upper quintile and 18 for the bottom quintile — almost nine times stronger.

When we look at the role of the two brand impact determinants that have a direct relationship to a brand’s workforce, and thus its brand culture, we see subscores for those determinants that are similar to the “whole” scores: an average of 74 for the top quintile and 58 for the bottom quintile. The overall correlation between the customer determinant scores and the WBI is approximately $r=0.9$ — very strong. This clearly establishes consistency between the customer-service determinants and the WBI.

It tells us that consumers seem to notice a significant difference in how the workforces of top performing brands treat them compared to the workforces of brands in the lowest quintile. It’s not a stretch to conclude that there may well be differences in the brand cultures of these brands.

“Indeed” scores and the Whole Brand Index

To expand the proxy analysis a bit further, we selected an outside source known for evaluating employee cultures on a mass level — the online job-posting aggregator, Indeed. Indeed conducts ongoing surveys of employees from thousands of companies, obtaining ratings on job satisfaction, compensation and benefits, work/life balance and numerous other attributes. We compared Indeed ratings on two dimensions: employee overall rating and employee culture rating, to our WBI scores for all 123 brands. Neither of these dimensions are identical to the concept of “brand culture,” which focuses on the cohesion that a workforce brings to a brand’s sense of purpose. Indeed’s measurements are a broader concept of company culture.

The connection between the scores is slight, at best. The top-tier brands in Indeed’s Employee Culture Rating have WBIs about 5% higher than other brands. Correlations between Barkley’s WBI (all 123 brands

included) and the Indeed dimensions are low — averaging $r=0.16$ for the Employee Overall Rating and $r=0.19$ for the Employee Culture Rating.

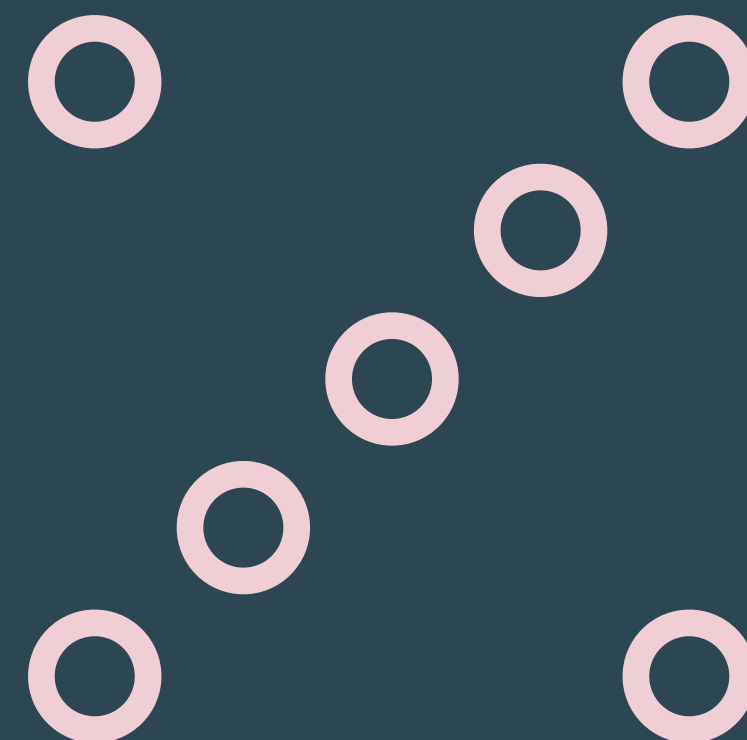
There are limitations to ratings from Indeed, because the definition of “culture” is broader than our notion of brand culture. Overall employee culture looks at a company workforce as a mini-social culture of its own. Brand culture is more pointed — it refers to the strength of workforce to carry out a brand’s purpose.

This is one of those instances in research in which we say, “Further study is needed to determine a clear connection.” On a positive note, this should encourage any brand who wants to build a high-impact brand culture to set benchmarks and then construct an ongoing, disciplined research review that determines how the culture performs. It’s a critical step toward building a whole brand.



Battle of the brands

Southwest
vs. Frontier



Southwest Airlines is a favorite choice for brand case studies. There's a good reason for that — they succeed not in spite of being different, but because of it.

Others claim their success is a consistent low fare model, forcing legacy carriers to operate on thinner margins as they cling to old service styles. Some say, no, it’s all about a customer-is-king commitment. There have even been theories that Southwest dominated because they had savvy traders who knew how to hedge jet fuel prices.

Some point to their unique business model, built on using one type of aircraft in a point-to-point flight system instead of using large hubs.

In the first few paragraphs of this report, we made a different argument: they do everything well. With a Whole Brand Index of 77, they are one of the top brands in our study. In the airline category, they were the clear leader in both their WBI and Total Performance Score:

Snapshot of a category: airlines Table 7

Brand	Whole Brand Index	Total Performance Score
Southwest Airlines	77	164
Delta Airlines	70	127
American Airlines	64	97
JetBlue	63	72
United Airlines	63	61
Alaska Airlines	62	88
Frontier Airlines	53	11
Spirit Airlines	51	(11)

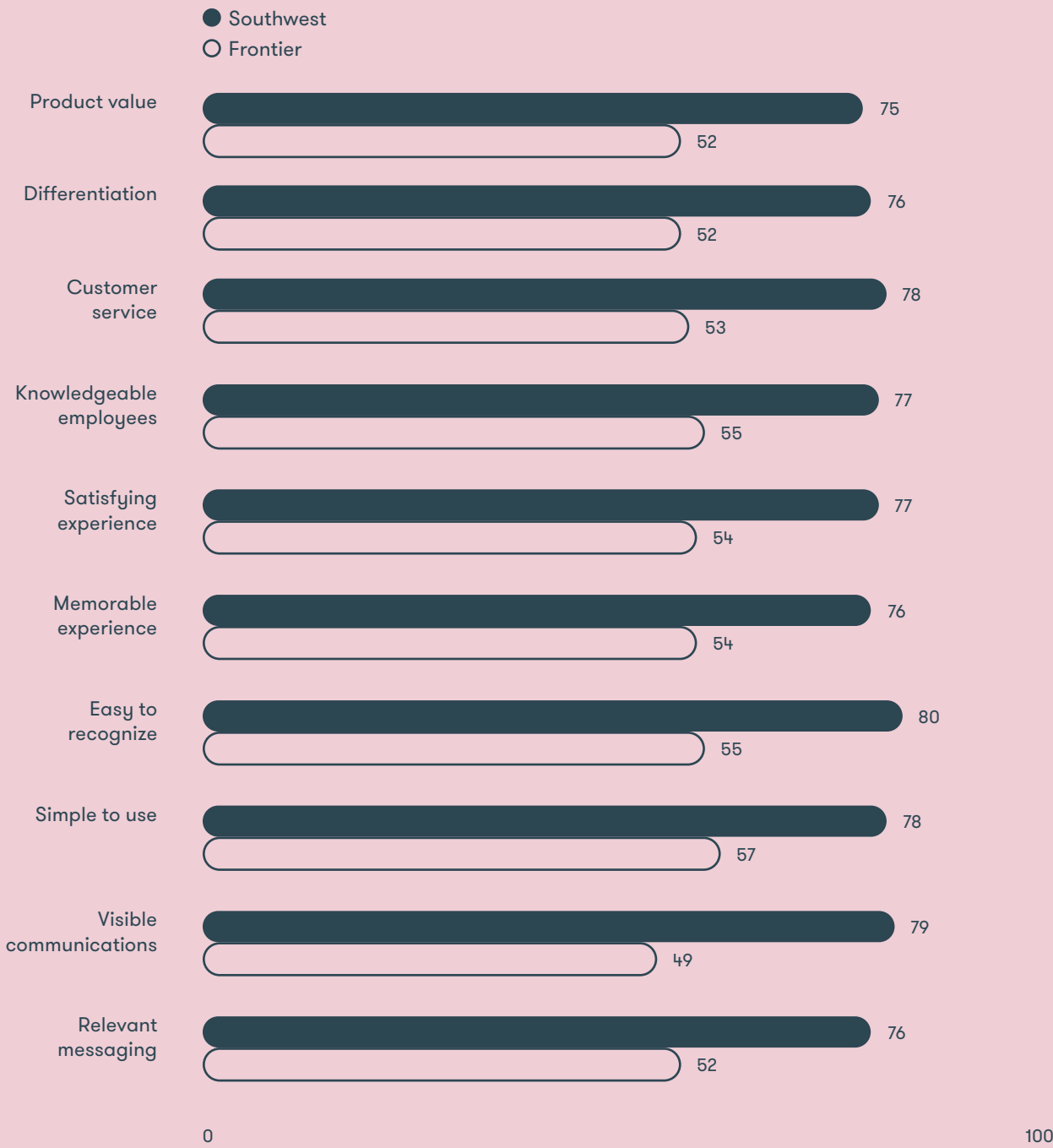


We can learn a lot about Southwest by contrasting them with one of their smaller competitors, Frontier Airlines (WBI of 53), the extreme-discount carrier based in Denver. Table 8 shows all 10 of the “brand impact determinants” that contributed to the WBI for both brands. Southwest leads their smaller competitor by margins ranging from 22 to 30 points. This accounts for the 24 points difference in their WBI scores.

Is it a fair comparison to pit the powerful Southwest against a carrier with fewer routes and a smaller fleet? It is because the comparison is precisely what happens in everyday market battles. It’s also fair because in an earlier time, Southwest was the small, regional carrier going up against the behemoths of the airline industry — some that no longer exist, in part because Southwest helped bring them to their knees.

Southwest vs. Frontier
Comparative brand impact determinants

Table 8



What we see from these brand impact determinants is that Southwest excels by a wide margin across a broad spectrum. On one determinant, visible communications, Southwest leads by 30 points. No doubt, its size helps them here, and heavy advertising can certainly lift a brand in other areas as well, perhaps causing people to view and score them more favorably on other measures.

Hidden beneath the numbers, however, is a stability for Southwest that none of its competitors match. It's found in the statistical tool popular with investors known as the coefficient of variation (CV), which measures volatility in a dataset. Expressed in percentages, a low CV means stability and consistency. The WBI consists of a large dataset — thousands of reported scoring choices across 10 brand determinants, all averaged into a single score.

With a 14% CV, Southwest's WBI is about 40% less variant than Frontier's, suggesting that besides being a higher score, it's also a more consistent score, i.e., a more whole score.

Think also about Southwest's history. It was also once in Frontier's position: a low-cost alternative who could beat the big players on price, but had to survive by its wits in other respects. It worked hard to be that five-tool brand — great product, great service, great experience, memorable look and feel and fun advertising.

It has always worked hard to penetrate across the total brand spectrum, doing everything well. Even though it never offered anything close to a white-glove service experience, it consistently beat competitors in service satisfaction (by being polite, smiling, and with an offbeat sense of humor). Its WBI proves it's an elite, whole brand.

CV scores for the eight airline brands in our study

Table 9

Brand	CV score
Southwest Airlines	14%
Delta Airlines	18%
American Airlines	20%
JetBlue	19%
United Airlines	21%
Alaska Airlines	21%
Frontier Airlines	23%
Spirit Airlines	28%

Resources



Scratch:
How to build a potent modern brand from the inside out

Today, your brand is everything you do, inside and out. Part workbook, part prediction for the future, Scratch is a how-to guide for building a whole brand in a world where every action you take matters to the consumers you're trying to reach.
thescratchbook.com



The Purpose Advantage™:
How to Unlock the New Ways of Doing Business

From interviews with CEOs of some of the most purpose-driven brands to a step-by-step workshop on finding your own brand's reason for existing beyond profit, this book explores the power of purpose to connect with modern consumers — building brand loyalty in the process.
advantageseries.com



Whole Brand Project

Join the community: the Whole Brand Project is an ongoing study on, resource for and celebration of how whole brands are winning the modern marketplace, created by Barkley.
wholebrandproject.com

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