Guide: Building Brand Competencies™ and Behaviors

This document contains:

Part 1: **Overview**

Part 2: **Creating a Master List of Behaviors**

This guide was created by Brand Integrity Inc. to correspond with Truth 8 of the *Achieve Brand Integrity* book. For help with this guide or any of its exercises, please feel free to contact us at info@brandintegrity.com or 585.442.5404.

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Guide: Building Brand Competencies™ and Behaviors

Part 1: **Overview**

It is leadership's responsibility to guide the definition of what successful performance looks like for each job in the company. Most of the time, the problem is that companies have strategies but don't know how to *do* them. Even if you have a good company strategy, it's probably not written at the job level. The process of building Brand Competencies™[1] and brand-driven behaviors[2] will leverage your strategy and help you pull out high-level behaviors that can be further defined at the job level.

It's important to take your company strategy from the 50,000-foot level down to line-of-sight behaviors so employees know what is expected of them in their day-to-day roles. Engaging, inspiring, and motivating employees should be the goal of every company when it comes to stimulating good or great performance. Defining Brand Competencies and organizing brand-driven behaviors within those competencies is the first step in this effort.

Building your company's Brand Lens concepts into performance expectations provides an opportunity to define what success looks like (for employees and your company) and to set realistic benchmarks for accountability; benchmarks your employees will actually want to be held accountable for. In addition, connecting behaviors to business impacts enables employees to understand how their performance has a direct influence on the company's bottom-line success, the work culture, and their personal development.

The key to successfully defining Brand Competencies and behaviors at the job level is to go through a peer development approach. You can find more information about integrating your brand strategy into a peer-developed performance success program in Truth 8 of the *Achieve Brand Integrity* book on pages 159 through 178. Also, a guide to building an Achieving Brand Integrity Performance Success program can be found at www.brandintegrity.com/truth8.

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[1] Brand Competencies: the knowledge, skills, and abilities that describe how an employee can have the most impact on delivering superior on-brand performance, which enhances success in achieving the company's goals and objectives.

[2] Brand-driven behaviors: Visible actions that bring a brand to life, while strengthening employee, partner, customer, and marketplace perceptions. Also called brand-based behaviors or on-brand behaviors.

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Part 2: Creating a Master List of Behaviors

Preparation

1. Review the brand strategy[3] and Brand Lens concepts to gain an understanding of the full intentions of each concept — how they differ and what they mean.

2. Explore competencies and behaviors in your brand strategy:

   - **Competencies** are found in beliefs and benefits that were developed for each Brand Lens concept.

   - **Behaviors** come from the beliefs as well as the Continue, Stop, Start Behaviors for the organization.

Note: The Guide to Building and Operationally Defining a Brand Lens helped you through exercises for drafting beliefs, benefits, and behaviors to define the Brand Lens concepts for your company's brand strategy. This guide can be found at www.brandintegrity.com/truth6. To successfully develop Brand Competencies and brand-based behaviors, it is imperative that you have operationally defined Brand Lens concepts.

Pulling Competencies from the Brand Lens

1. Competencies will reference how employees should behave, but not specifically enough to be an actual behavior. You can think of them as behavioral sets to help in categorizing and brainstorming specific visible behaviors. Here is an example :

   - "We believe that customers should feel welcome when they enter our facility." This belief could help define what Amazing Customer Service means to an organization.

   - "Making customers feel welcome." This is too vague to be a behavior, but would make a great competency. It represents an area of behaviors that are needed to deliver Amazing Customer Service for this organization.

   - "Smile as customers walk through the door." This is how someone in the organization would demonstrate "making customers feel welcome."

     WARNING!
     - Double-check to make sure that the competencies you are forming are general enough to apply across several job categories.[4]

     - Be careful of statements that are *too* vague to help in brainstorming. For example, "Deliver great customer service" doesn't get granular enough to add value and help to brainstorm and categorize behaviors.

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[3] Brand strategy: The process of aligning what you say with what you do to positively influence what customers (and employees) think. (For more information, see page 19 of the *Achieve Brand Integrity* book.) A brand strategy contains defined business objectives, along with organizational beliefs and behaviors that lead to experiences for employees and customers.
[4] Job category: A set of job positions that are at least somewhat similar in job responsibilities and very similar in Brand Competencies and brand-driven behaviors.

2. Create enough competencies to fully represent each Brand Lens concept.

3. Format the competencies in first person, action-oriented words as in "Provide excellent care …" or, "Decrease negative results …" or, "Format the competencies…."

4. Be careful not to include two separate thoughts in a competency. For example, "Provide friendly service and eliminate errors" are two separate skill sets.

5. Once you have pulled out the competencies from the Brand Lens, review the overview and ensure that there aren't any duplicates between competencies or key intentions of the concept that aren't covered in the new competencies.

6. Next, review all the competencies for duplication between concepts. Also ensure that each competency is in the most applicable concept.

Pulling Competencies from the Job Documentation

1. Review existing job descriptions for the position you are building behaviors for. Make note of any competencies and behaviors that exist and match them to the most appropriate Brand Lens concept.

   - Make note of items in the existing job descriptions that are tasks associated with the job that are separate from the brand-based behaviors. These are typically technical (with respect to the type of job) or administrative tasks that should be categorized in a job profile as "key responsibilities".

2. Put any additional behaviors under the most appropriate competency in the running list you have started.

Adding Impacts

1. Align impacts with each Brand Lens concept.

Final Check of Master List

1. Review the behaviors from all sources to eliminate duplication.

2. Look for competencies that are very low on behaviors (less than 2 or 3) and look to merge them into others where appropriate.

3. Look for competencies that have a large number of behaviors (more than 15 or 20) for opportunities to pull out a subset of behaviors into a separate competency.

4. Review all behaviors to identify those that appear subjective. Make a note of which behaviors are subjective, as these are the behaviors that are more difficult to measure. Consider putting the more subjective behaviors into the tasks list (key responsibility) area.

COMMENTS? SUGGESTIONS?

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