



Advertising  
Specialty  
Institute®

## **Standing Out From the Crowd: The Art of Differentiation**

Jay Busselle - FLEXpoint, Equipment Zone, PromoKitchen

**Branded Merch, Apparel & Promo**  
companies are **competitive.** Building a  
brand and a business that stands apart  
from your competitors is **critical.**



One way to **stand out** is by  
developing a **differentiation strategy.**  
Building a brand and a business that  
**by design is different** from those of  
your peers.



# A Blueprint for

# Brand Relevance

- Breakdown & define “Brand Relevance”
- Highlight 4 Branding Pillars to help remain relevant
- Focus on 5 Differentiation categories
- See examples of Brand Relevance

# BRAND PREFERENCE?

*Brands that are engaged in the marketplace using traditional marketing strategies **to earn short term preferences** like a new feature on a product that is innovative or a discount pricing bundle.*

# BRAND RELEVANCE?

*A brand's ability to **CREATE A NEW CATEGORY** (or subcategory) within the market that **creates a LONG TERM advantage**. It emotionally connects with people on a more personal level that becomes deeply relevant to them.*



# BRAND RELEVANCE

The goal is to be so innovative and creative that your competition is instantly at a huge disadvantage or becomes irrelevant.



# SING YOUR SONG!

Musicians strive to create a **unique song** with a memorable melody that sets them apart.

Businesses need a **distinct marketing melody** to stand out in a crowded, noisy market.





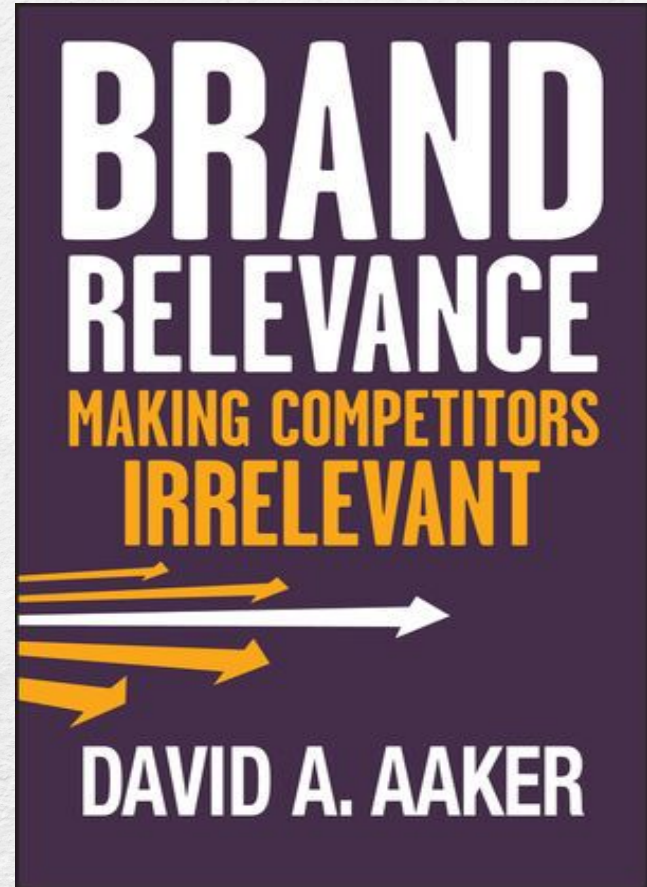
# David Aaker

Hundreds of articles published and  
authored 14 books:

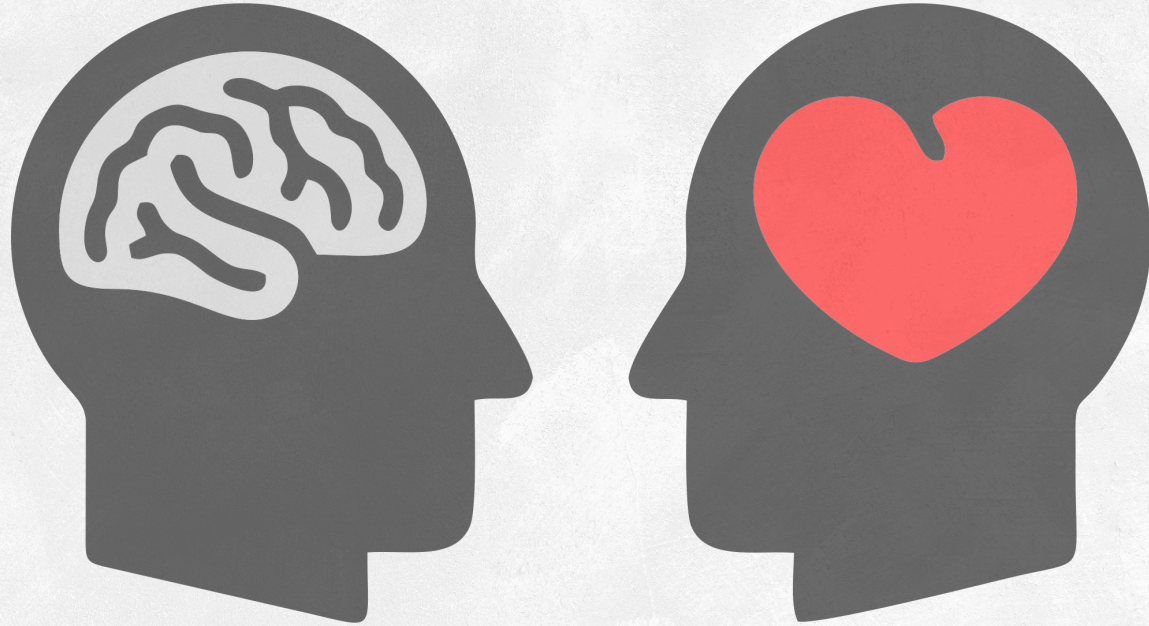
1996: *Building Strong Brands*

2010: *Brand Relevance*

2011: *Winning the Brand Relevance War*



# The best brands



**DO BOTH**

# FOUR PILLARS

## **Customer Obsessed**

Focused on solving their problems

## **Consistently Innovative**

Pioneering new solutions

## **Distinctively Inspiring**

Uniquely qualified to reach emotions

## **Ruthlessly Pragmatic**

Keeping it real, no spin... data & truth



**TELL ME**

**WHAT PROBLEMS  
DO YOU SOLVE?**



# HOW DO YOU EXCEL?

**What does your company do best?**

**What are you most known for?**

**What do your customers say they like about you?**

**Make a list** of at least **FOUR**  
problems your company is  
**UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO**  
**SOLVE.**



1

## PRODUCT

- Knowledge base and category dominance
- First looks, trends, colors
- Mastery of decorating techniques

2

## SERVICE

- Ordering process, ease and speed
- Bundling, packaging, kitting and delivery
- Training: before - during - after

3

## CHANNEL

- Size of businesses served (Fortune 100)
- Hyper local, Main street, Chamber of Commerce
- Experiential, Events, Live Activations

4

## RELATIONSHIPS

- Trusted, proven track record, years in business
- Planning committee, they ask you, consultation
- Seat at the table, volunteer, serve on boards, donate

5

## REPUTATION

- Leadership, earned trust
- Accreditation, evidence of status, achievement
- The community vouches for you, testimonials



**Now that you know some of your key points of differentiation...**

**CAN YOU DEFINE IT  
& CATEGORIZE IT?**





**FASCINATE THEM WITH  
SOMETHING**

**DIFFERENT!**

**You do not merely want to be  
considered the best of the best.  
You want to be considered the  
only ones who do what you do.**

*Jerry Garcia, The Grateful Dead*





The best marketing is based on **TRUST.** Not tricks!

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