

Your Research Story

A LEAN BRAND STRATEGY FOR SCIENCE COMMUNICATION



| The creative agency for science.



Photo by Paul Wilson Images NZ

WHAT IS A “LEAN BRAND?”

A brand is not a logo. It’s not a company. It’s a relationship that an organization builds with its audience, guiding them through a confusing, complex, and crowded marketplace to connect with their needs and values.

A brand starts with a story. Your science and your research tells an amazing story of curiosity, discovery, and innovation. As a brand, you can create amazing experiences for deeper connections with the public and inspire them to share your story with others.

A “lean brand” applies a **BUILD + MEASURE + LEARN** strategy as an iterative method for developing innovative product experiences in the Lean Principle. It’s the simplest, most fundamental connection you can make in any industry and one which grows through feedback and conversation with your audience.

A brand is not built. It’s co-created with your audience. It’s a conversation that grows over time.

BEGIN BY ANSWERING THESE 3 QUESTIONS ...

Describe your primary research “customers?”

Explain the research problem you’re solving for them?

What is unique about the way you practice your research?

With each page and answer, be sure to save this document so you don’t lose any work.

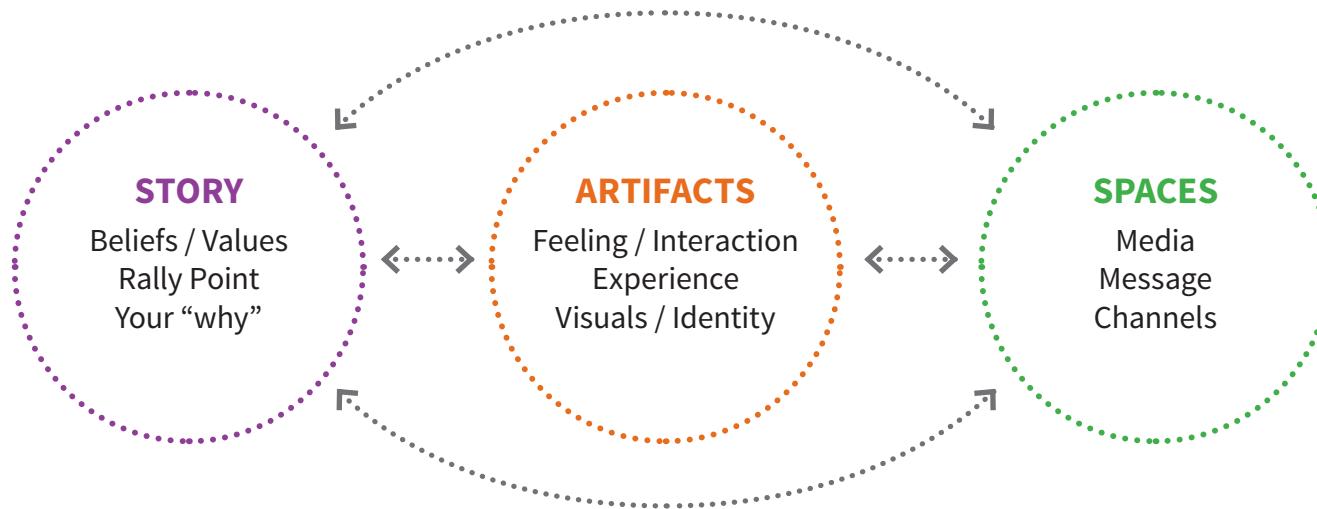
BUILD YOUR LEAN BRAND STRATEGY.

Develop your “minimum viable brand” with a few, basic elements, based on the previous 3 questions, to build your first connections with an audience. These elements are:

YOUR STORY, or how customers discover a connection with you.

YOUR ARTIFACTS, or the visuals and symbols customers see for a deeper emotional connection with you.

YOUR SPACES, or the places and channels in which customers connect with you.



Over time these elements will pull the audience into a relationship with your research and develop into a lasting, more meaningful, shared experience. The following exercise will help you define your story, your artifacts, and your invitation to build your brand’s **POSITIONING STATEMENT**.

STORY

What is your brand story? What are your beliefs, your rally point, and your “why?” What are your values and beliefs that connect with your “customers?”

Write your answer here.

With each page and answer, be sure to save this document so you don't lose any work.

ARTIFACTS

What are your brand artifacts? What are the feelings from interacting, describe an experience, and what do your visuals and identity look like? What is the creative connection “customers” will have with you?

Write your answer here.

With each page and answer, be sure to save this document so you don't lose any work.

SPACES

What is your brand invitation? What is your medium, your message, and what are the channels you share? What are the places and space that customers will connect with you?

Write your answer here.

With each page and answer, be sure to save this document so you don't lose any work.

YOUR POSITIONING STATEMENT

Your positioning statement should be a bold and descriptive “promise” from your organization to your audience based on your answers from the previous exercises. Isolate your unique identifiers and the formula for a positioning statement looks like this:

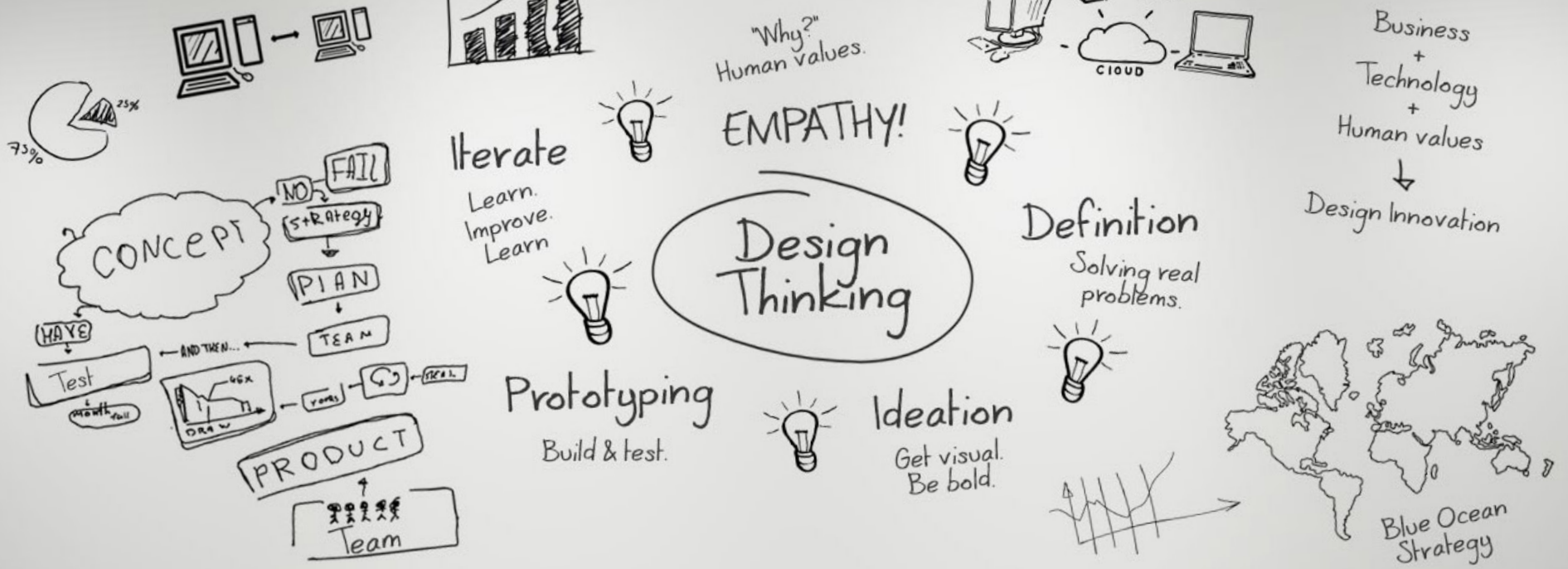
Target Market + Company + Point of Difference + Reasons to Believe + Frame of Reference + Brand Promise

Here’s an example:

For research groups, universities, and private foundations, SpacetimeLabs is the first creative agency for science. We are a team of award-winning marketers, designers, and producers developing communication strategies and creating digital content for the research community. We create science experiences for the public to inspire greater support and funding, a deeper engagement with our world, and a better understanding of why science matters.

Write your positioning statement here.

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CONGRATULATIONS! YOUR LEAN BRAND STRATEGY IS READY.

That's it. That's all you need to get started. You still might need a logo or a typeface, a color palette, and some photo imagery to build your website, social media profiles, or other science communications, but you've just developed the core principle to help you grow your research brand.

Still not feeling confident? That's a good sign, actually. It means you need to get your ideas out of the lab and in front of real people. Listen to what they say and watch how they interact with your story. Take what you discover and come back to this worksheet to update your answers. Save each version to see how your brand develops with each iteration.

Just remember, your brand is a conversation that grows over time and it's never finished. If you don't start, you won't learn anything at all.