

Brand Emotional Intelligence: The secret to establishing an emotional bond with your customers

By Carol Chapman, Principal and co-Founder of the Brand Ascension Group

What is Brand Emotional Intelligence?

Brand Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the extent, to which a business acknowledges, understands and manages its customers so as to enhance the perceived value of its brand. The concept of Brand EQ was derived by The Brand Dimensions Group LLC based on the extensive research by Daniel Goleman on Emotional Intelligence which demonstrates there is more to an individual's success than just being "smart." Emotional Intelligence is an intangible part of each of us that tunes into personal and social nuances about emotions, and when used effectively can drive actions and decisions that deliver positive results. It is a significant part of personal and professional success for people at all levels in business. Unlike IQ, EQ can be learned, developed and improved over time.

At the Brand Dimensions Group, we believe the same holds true for the collective emotions within an organization and how these extend outward toward customers impacting their emotions and perceptions created as a result of their experience with your brand. Brand EQ Elevation™ is a straightforward, practical tool for organizations to build their success on the foundational concepts of emotional intelligence. Customers (as human beings) constantly perceive information. They take in thousands of bits of information through all of the sensory perceptions: visual, auditory, tactile, scent, flavor and intuition. They process this information, form opinions and judgments, and make decisions based on this data. Being fully conscious of the knowledge of how customers' constantly perceive your brand helps businesses to consistently create "wow" experiences for them.

Brand Emotional Intelligence is made up of four distinct dimensions that cover how organizations recognize and manage behaviors both internally and externally to drive the desired customer perception. (See Figure 1.0)

	What we see	What we do
Internal Brand Competence	Internal Brand Awareness	Internal Brand Management
External Brand Competence	External Brand Awareness	External Brand Management

Figure 1.0

Internal Brand Emotional Awareness – is an organization’s ability to accurately perceive the varied and collective emotions, behaviors and perceptions of its employees and how these drive customer perceptions. This includes staying abreast of how employees tend to respond to specific situations and people, and how these positively or negatively impact the Brand Promise. For example:

- ◇ *Do your employees listen intently to your customers and are they respectful, caring and sensitive to their needs and wants?*
- ◇ *Does your organization directly assess and evaluate how your employees represent your brand (e.g., via call monitoring, mystery shoppers, video tapes)?*

Internal Brand Emotional Management – is an organization’s ability to use awareness of the collective emotions, behaviors and perceptions, and harness the hearts and minds of its employees to positively direct their behavior. This includes managing employees effectively to drive the “desired culture,” reinforcing the behaviors that deliver on the Brand Promise. For example:

- ◇ *Does your organization take action on the results of employee feedback where improvements are indicated (e.g., modifying procedures, delivering training, offering incentives, etc.?)*
- ◇ *Does your organization take a carefully planned approach and actions to ensure your employees fully understand your brand in relation what the brand stands for and your brand promise?*

External Brand Emotional Awareness – is an organization’s ability to readily recognize and assess the emotions and behaviors of customers, understanding what drives customer perception and what customers are thinking and feeling and anticipating their wants and desires. This includes investigating what drives customers’ opinions and judgments about the brand to understand their perception as congruent with the brand promise. For example:

- ◇ *Does your organization regularly solicit and review formal customer research to evaluate the features that are intended to differentiate your brand from your competitors’ brands?*
- ◇ *Does your organization regularly solicit and review formal research to evaluate the features of your brand that are intended to have the most significant impact on your customers (i.e., the drivers of customer appreciation, delight and excitement?)*

External Brand Emotional Management – is an organization’s ability to use the awareness and assessment of the emotions of its customers to internally and externally manage, direct and adapt quickly to drive increases in positive customer perceptions. This includes staying on top of what it takes to create “wow” customer experiences congruent with brand promise to create increased brand equity and exceptional perceived value. For example:

- ◇ *Does your organization react quickly and flexibly (e.g., changes to a customer nurturing program) to support your brand promise and build equity in light of changes in the business environment?*
- ◇ *Does your organization readily adapt communications to your customers based on their brand perceptions to ensure they understand changes to features of your brand?*

If you answered no to any of the questions posed in the four quadrants defined above, then your brand has missed some key opportunities to build Brand Emotional Intelligence.

Visit our website at http://www.brandascension.com/assessment_tools.html and purchase and download the assessment for only \$24.95. Complete the assessment on your organization's current Brand EQ ElevationSM.

About the Author

Carol Chapman is Principal and co-Founder of The Brand Ascension Group, a multi-faceted consulting and training firm that specializes in brand perception. They partner with organizations to help them get laser-focused on achieving sustainable brand success from the INSIDE OUT. They do this by guiding them to define, create, and build powerful brand experiences that engage, captivate and inspire customers, employees and all stakeholders.

For 30 years, Carol has cultivated extensive experience and proven success in leading businesses through significant challenges involving organizational transition, brand development, revitalizations and integrations; leadership development, cultural alignment and mergers and acquisitions.

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