



# Practicing Brand Association

Understanding of your brand can be deepened by comparison to other known brands – even from categories that have nothing in common with the category in which your brand will be marketed. When is your premium ice cream brand like a luxury sports car? Or when is your inexpensive watch brand like particular TV network? It's when you practice brand association.

Brand association is an exercise agencies and consultants will use to help define brands by means of “like” comparisons to known brands in other categories. These known brands will have clearly established attributes and market positions that appeal to a certain target. So the comparison exercise of brand association will help uncover possible directions for your brand regarding:

- The desired market position
- The likely target demographic, psychographic and geographic
- The essence of the brand – it's *raison d'être*
- The personality and voice of the brand

Brand association can be very beneficial for a variety of reasons:

- It adds perspective to the brand understanding through comparison
- It reveals insights helpful down the road in marketing strategy, such as successfully reaching your target with the right media
- It will actually jump start group discussion about the new brand in a brainstorming session. Very often it will stimulate very lively debate.

The brand association exercise is simple. You ask your team “if our brand was a beer, what brand of beer would it be?” Write down the responses, ask for justification and, hopefully, reach a consensus. You can go through an entire battery of comparisons to electronics, computers, retailers, wines, cars, clothing labels, etc. You can also brand associate to your competitors.

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