

CROSSOVER NOTE #1: WHAT A BRAND STANDS FOR

People in real life hardly give the deeper meaning of brands a second thought. They know that some appeal more than others. They may have a sense that brands jostle for their attention. But that's about it. They certainly don't agonize over the essence of this, or the brand truth of that.

That said, branding goes deeper than we in marketing may realize. Before marketing was even thought of, branding was part of life. Everything from national flags, to coinage, to the uniforms of soldiers, boy scouts and Supreme Court judges, to the plumage on peacocks (human and otherwise), is a form of branding... a brand, in the fullest sense, is hard to define. Dictionary definitions tend to focus on the trademark aspect, and yes, branding does involve some sort of identifying mark. But this misses the point.

What makes a brand valuable?

WHAT MAKES A BRAND VALUABLE?

The answer is The Advantage of Belief.¹ Charles Revson of Revlon famously said, ||In the factory we make cosmetics. In the store we sell hope.|| In other words, a brand is not a product; it's what people believe about a product. These beliefs can be immensely powerful. The most astonishing example is the placebo effect. In clinical trials, many patients respond to the —sugar pill,|| even when they have serious diseases. We see the same thing with blind and identified product tests. With a strong brand, the preference jumps markedly.

This can't be done by empty promises. We have to assess what consumers want against what the product delivers—and tell the story better than competitors do. All the —brand|| ideas are there to help (and sometimes confuse) — Brand Image, Equity, Personality, Character, Essence, Relationship, Footprint, Truth, Soul, Identity, and so on... But whatever the terminology, a brand has to stand for something relevant and different in the consumer's mind.

SickKids®

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Time and again, we were told about the stoicism and unrelenting optimism of children facing surgeries and treatments that would terrify the strongest adult. “These children are heroes, and who am I to not go the extra mile to help them, in the face of that kind of courage?” said one nurse in the intensive care unit.

Parents, themselves heroes in many ways, would tell about the heroic, self-sacrificing efforts of staff. SickKids deservedly earned the reputation of being a remarkable, nearly magical place. Out of this came the authentic, powerful theme for the campaign, “Join the Family of Heroes.”

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2005: **They need us. We need you.** ("Lean on Me" ad)

2006: Believe

2007: Believe. Donations make a difference.

2008: Family of Heroes

WHAT CHANGES? WHAT STAYS THE SAME?

2013: Together We Will

2014: Better Tomorrows

2015: Their Stories

2016: **VS**



Toronto Hospital for Sick Children - "Lean On Me"



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- **Believe (2006)** - https://web.archive.org/web/20170704194911/http://cassies.ca/content/caselibrary/winners/2006pdfs/_582SICK_KIDSWebDR.pdf
- **Believe (2007)** - <https://web.archive.org/web/20170704202320/http://cassies.ca/content/caselibrary/winners/2007pdfs/SickKids.pdf>
- **Believe (2009)** - <https://web.archive.org/web/20180419183828/http://cassies.ca/content/caselibrary/winners/2009pdfs/w22C08SICKKIDS.pdf>
- **Together We Will (2015)** - <https://web.archive.org/web/20170704201757/http://cassies.ca/entry/viewcasepast/17566>
- **Better Tomorrows (2016)** - <https://web.archive.org/web/20170802225928/http://cassies.ca/entry/viewcasepast/24898>