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Before any company enters into the rebranding process, it's incredibly important to take a step back and audit your current brand. This process can show you what brand equity exists and what isn't working. It can also help you identify the biggest areas of opportunity. Most importantly, a thorough brand audit will help you determine just how well (or not) you know your brand. As a leader, you need to not only know it; you also need to live it. From your management team to vendors, people will associate you with the brand and if there's a disconnect, they'll feel it.

A thorough brand audit takes four areas of your brand into account: core elements of the brand, culture, brand personality, and brand style. To gain the most from an audit, engage your Mars Team, those within your organization you would trust to open a location on the Red Planet. These are people who care deeply but are honest about the brand's strengths and weaknesses.

Audit your core brand elements.

At the highest level, the core elements of your brand help guide all other aspects. First, consider the category your company lives in. By nature, we categorize people and products to make it easier to understand and recall things later on. For example, when meeting someone for the first time, you more than likely ask them what profession they're in. If they respond with, "I'm a teacher," your brain automatically puts them in the Education category. When you think of Sharpie, the markers or writing tools probably come to mind. Know your category and keep it as simple as possible.

From there consider your Purpose and ask yourself why this company exists (beyond making money). If you closed tomorrow and vowed to never reopen what would the world be missing? Do you exist to provide refreshment or to reduce an industry's carbon footprint or something entirely different? Your Purpose illustrates the heart behind your business.

Outlining your Position could help you further clarify your Purpose. It's important to have an honest conversation about what only your brand can do. What do you do better or unlike anyone else and why does it matter? Use the following exercise to help you identify your current Position:

My business serves WHO to create WHAT IMPACT so that RESULTS are generated. We do this by PRODUCT/SERVICE in the way ONLY WE CAN.

Other brand elements to consider during the first phase of a brand audit is your existing tagline or brand promise. Is it true and are you (and your team) living up to it? Lastly, where do you sit within the competitive life cycle—are you an up-and-comer, a behemoth or somewhere in between? Knowing what your brand stands for currently can help you visualize where you want to be.

Audit your current culture.

When leaders and teams are deep in the trenches it can be difficult to see how well or how poorly the internal culture is within a location or across the entire organization. Yet brands are built from the inside out. Your employees across every department should be flying the same flag, however, when values aren't communicated or expressed or expectations are muddled, culture is one of the first areas of your brand that suffers.

One of the easiest ways to look at the current culture is by asking yourself (and others within your organization) the following questions. How decisions are made and the behaviors that are (or aren't) recognized or rewarded can have a lasting impact on internal culture.

- How is authority distributed?
- What methods do you use to make decisions?
- How do you get together and collaborate?
- How do you clarify behaviors that are rewarded and punished without hindering autonomy?
- What are the behaviors you punish?
- What are the behaviors you reward?
- Do you have any rituals?
- What are your peculiar ways of starting, managing, celebrating, or mourning your work?
- How do you help each other learn and grow through feedback?
- Is there psychological safety? Do you encourage everyone to speak up? Do you promote participation and candor or groupthink and silence?
- What are some signature stories about your company?
- What are the proclivities of your company?

To get started it's important to consider the level of hierarchy that exists within the company, and the level of empowerment each of those has. The biggest brand ambassadors are those who understand the value they bring and those who are challenged to help you accomplish your vision. All too often these conversations and opportunities are not widely distributed, which creates doubt in the minds of employees and prevents them from doing their best work.

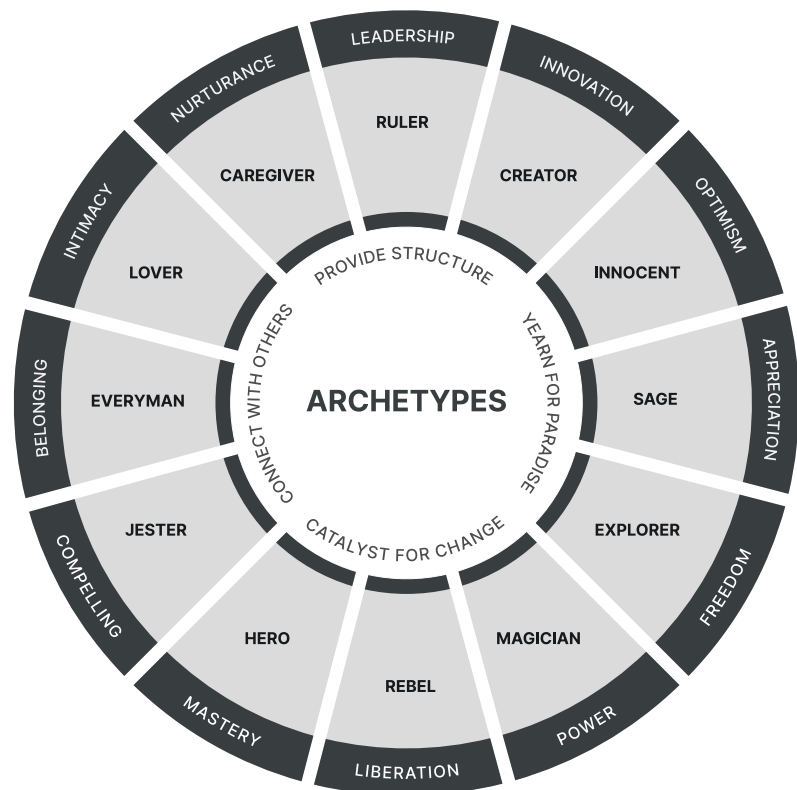
After answering the questions based on an honest look at where the brand sits today, consider going through them again but through the lens of the future. What are the aspiration answers to these questions and can you foster enough change to get there?

There are really two parts to articulating your organization's personality. The first is by walking the halls and taking note of the overall feel of the space and the people in it. Does the atmosphere feel serious, dry and data-driven or are people collaborating, drawing ideas on dry-erase walls and seemingly relaxed and more casual?

Audit your brand personality.

Compare this to your current marketing and advertising. Do the personalities align? Is the tone and color palette of your brochures or social media platforms consistent with the atmosphere you feel in the office or at store locations?

To make this easier consider using our Archetype Discovery Tool to gain clarity around your brand's personality. Much like your category, consumers use archetypes to quickly identify who brands are and what they stand for. In nearly every story ever written there is a hero, a lover, a sage and other personality types that have distinct values, beliefs and behaviors.



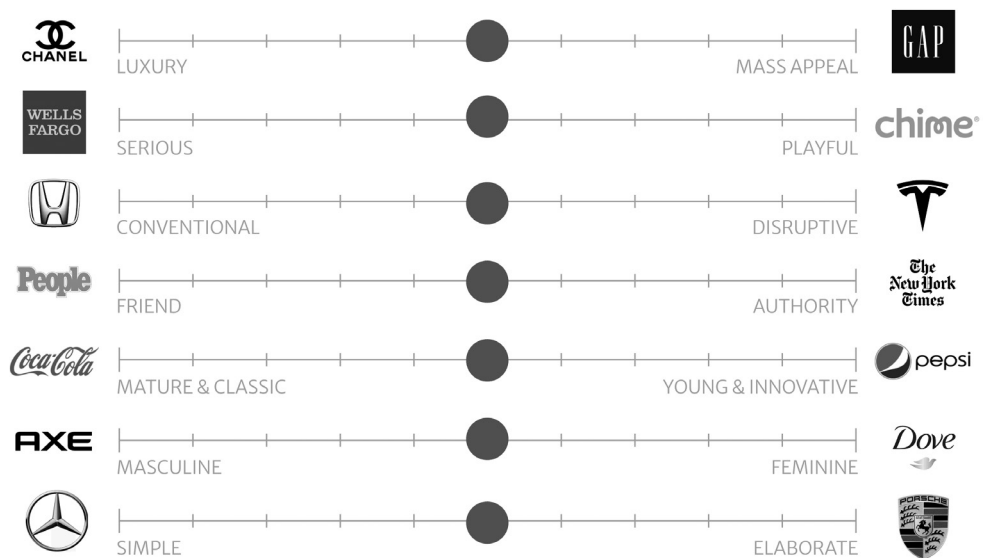
Identifying your primary one or two archetypes can help you make decisions, hire people that naturally fit well in your organization, and communicate in more meaningful ways to your audiences. If you gathered marketing and advertising materials during the personality audit, you have the tools needed for identifying your brand's style. Whether you have a

Audit your brand's style.

table or wall to place several examples of your brand, spread them out to create a moodboard and step back. Consider the conclusions you can draw from studying how you visually express your brand:

- How consistent is your color palette, tone and overall look and feel?
- Does your brand feel bold or soft, authoritative or friendly?
- Does it feel like your company moves quickly, slowly or somewhere in between?
- What do your color choices say about your brand?
- What feelings or expectations do the shapes, patterns or textures evoke?
- If you asked someone off the street to look at this board for 30 seconds and then turn away and draw your brand or logo, how close would they get? As in, how memorable is your current brand?

Think about where your brand should live on the chart below and mark where you would move the circles, either farther right or left.



A brand audit creates clarity around what is and isn't sticking.

The purpose of a brand audit is to be intentional in identifying how well you know your current brand, which in turn tells you whether or not it's time to pursue a rebrand (which could be an evolution or a revolution from where you are now) or double down on what you've been doing. A few questions to ask your Mars Team after completing all four areas of the audit:

- Is our brand effective in identifying who we are and what we stand for?
- Is our brand resonating with the right people?
- Do our internal teams feel connected to and part of our brand?
- Is this brand keeping us on the path toward reaching our vision?
- If we were to strengthen or evolve our brand, what needs to change?

Learn more about [what we do](#), including how we guide brands through the audit process to determine if this is the right time for a rebrand.



 We're a pivotal-moment brand agency

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