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BRAND DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP

# Using Ingagement To Build Stronger Brands



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How do you build a great brand?

When considering that question, most companies have meetings. They call together their top leaderships team or hire branding consultants. Often, good

things result. But have you also noticed that many companies have to start the branding process all over again after two or three years? The brand concept that they distilled somehow didn't take hold, or changes took place in the marketplace and somehow, that carefully defined brand statement didn't seem just right. Time to start over again.


But have you also noticed that some brands never have to engage in that cycle? I'm referring to iconic brands like Levis, L.L. Bean, Coca-Cola, Ford, Colgate, Rolex or Hilton Hotels. Their brands feel like part of our landscape, as solid as the Rockies. You might assume that is because they've been around for so long that they don't have to think so much about their brands. That might be true. But have you also considered that newer companies have built brands are just as strong – companies like Apple, Facebook, Lexus, Red Bull, Target, and Google? How have they done it?

Part of the answer lies in the truths that most of us know about branding. A brand has to resonate authentically with a company's values, its way of doing business and its approach to customers and the marketplace. It needs to be communicated consistently through advertising, signage, colors, fonts and language.

All that is true. But today I would like to suggest a different way to define and build a brand – or at the very least, another approach that can be integrated into the branding process...

Engagement can be used to build great brands

## What Is Engagement?

Engagement is a new leadership philosophy built on the belief that it is not enough to tell people what to do or offer incentives for performance. [An engaged leader creates a company where everyone shares ideas, goals – even their emotions and hearts.](#) 

Engaged leadership is not a theory, but a practical process that is practiced in ways like these:

- **Everyone's ideas are actively solicited** in open meetings and put into action when possible, often with the people who created them in charge.


- **The question “What is our company’s vision?”** is asked often and consistently. In the companies I lead, for example, many meetings start by having attendees explain, in their own words, what they believe the company’s vision is. In many ways, your company’s vision is its brand.
- **A positive outlook is cultivated** that encourages everyone to eagerly offer suggestions and ideas, not self-censor. A free flow of information and ideas is in forging a genuine brand. For example, I have learned to listen for the kernels of wisdom in what people are saying – to be alert for what is right, not what is wrong. And I encourage everyone to be positive, not negative, in the way they use language, describe challenges, and more.
- **Clear, simplified communication is a high priority**, perhaps the highest of all. I favor simplifying practices that include putting detailed procedural and other information on the company intranet instead of sending it out repeatedly in emails. What does that have to do with branding? How can you build a great brand if your communication isn’t effective? Everyone needs to be on the same page.
- **Leaders strive to work in open and engaged ways** with clients and customers, vendors, suppliers, leaders of other companies, and more; the net is spread as wide as possible. A brand identity is something that is built in partnership with those constituencies, not something that is created in-house and communicated outward.

## Why Engagement Builds Stronger Brands

There are still more reasons why [engaged leadership results in a brand identity that is genuine, powerful, and built to last](#). 🐦 When a company adopts an engaged approach to doing business, these brand-building benefits begin to accrue:

- **Your brand gets away from false “image-building” and becomes more authentic** because it grows organically from within your organization instead of being dictated from the top.
- **Your brand becomes more attuned to the marketplace** because the people who shape it come from all organizational levels – including front-line employees, salespeople, and others who interact with customers and clients.

- **Your brand and tells the world who you and your people really are**, because your brand becomes you.
- **Your brand will become more durable** because the people who build it will shape it in the years to come – even after your current leadership is no longer in place, new employees come on board, or other changes occur.
- **Your brand is communicated more effectively** because people at all levels live it every day, and convey it more effectively than ads or marketing campaigns ever can.

A brand that is created by company leaders or consultants might “work,” meaning that it could be accepted by people, serve as the basis for marketing and advertising, and pass other benchmarks. But [a brand that emerges organically from the people in an organization is something special.](#)  It is the future, the foundation, and the face of your company in the years to come.

And that happens through engagement.

 Brand Authenticity, Brand Champions, Company Culture, Employee Engagement



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Evan Hackel, the creator of the Ingaged Leadership concept, is a recognized business and franchise expert and consultant. Evan is also a professional speaker and author. Evan is Principal and Founder of Ingage Consulting, a consulting firm headquartered in Woburn, Massachusetts. A leader in the field of training as well, Evan serves as CEO of Tortal Training, a Charlotte North Carolina-based firm that specializes in developing and implementing interactive training solutions for companies in all sectors. To learn more about Ingage Consulting and Evan’s book [Ingaging Leadership](#), visit his website below.



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