

evaluating brand health

the importance of
brand tracking studies

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A brand is more than a name; it is the heart of a business. Your brand is how you can interact and engage with your audience, so it should embody a persona that connects to them.”

introduction

From a marketing standpoint, successful brands are top-of-mind in their industry and therefore stand apart from the competition. A strong brand transcends categories through customer loyalty and builds a fan base eager to explore innovations from the brand they love. From a financial standpoint an indicator of strong branding is the ability to price at a premium compared to competitors and still gain an increase in sales or to demand lower costs from suppliers to more effectively price based on your business model.

Above all, your brand is a living entity; it needs constant nourishment and care to thrive, or else its health will suffer. A brand at peak health can be invincible and timeless. Even if a product reaches the end of its lifecycle, a strong brand can apply to a new offering and transcend that lifecycle. To build brand health you need to continually monitor your brand and make sure it is connecting its value to your audience.

To understand your brand and measure its success, you must consistently conduct research with the most relevant stakeholders. Through brand tracking studies you’re able take into account the following measures: brand awareness, brand relevance, benefit believability, brand loyalty, and brand associations.

what is **brand tracking?**



brand tracking study serves as a brand performance report card. In addition to a multitude of metrics, it can measure **brand awareness/loyalty, brand associations, and brand performance.**

These three measures give you an overview of how stakeholders perceive your brand by understanding their knowledge level of your brand and its purpose, its alignment to important metrics compared to rival companies, and the degree to which your brand meets, or exceeds, their expectations. Through brand tracking, you find out what your customers say about you when you are not in the room allowing you to more accurately evaluate your brand's health.



brand awareness

One of the most effective ways to find out how your customers view your brand and, ultimately, their likelihood to select it is through measuring brand awareness. This type of study measures how well you communicate your brand to your customers. Can your customers recognize your logo or remember your name? When asked about brands they know in a specific product or service category, is your brand top of mind? What are the perceptions of your brand? How likely are they to consider or even to select your brand? A brand tracking study can answer these vital questions by testing aided and unaided awareness.

Aided vs. Unaided awareness:

Aided brand awareness tells you how well people know your brand when prompted and how that familiarity with your brand compares to competitors. Conversely, unaided brand awareness tells you how well people know your brand without those same prompts. Both types of questions are useful depending on the objective of the study, but unaided brand awareness will be a stronger indicator that your brand is top of mind.

Aided and unaided brand awareness still only scratches the surface. A more in-depth measure of brand awareness would include measuring how many of your customers are aware of your brand benefit, brand relevance, and benefit believability.

brand relevance

Brand relevance takes the benefits of your brand one step further by asking: are these benefits still relevant to your customer now? Your brand can be associated with the same benefit consistently over the years, but if the benefit loses its relevance to your customer, then your brand loses relevance, and brand health deteriorates. Having questions that rank the importance of brand benefits will uncover which benefits are most salient to the customers. This metric should consistently be measured to keep your brand successful.



benefit believability

Finally, benefit believability can be used to keep you honest about your brand. You may believe that your brand embodies a specific benefit, but without testing your audiences it is hard to say with any degree of certainty if this is true. Market research enables you to prove this belief by asking your customers. The benefit that you want your stakeholders to perceive in your brand connects to the concept of brand purpose. A brand's purpose concisely represents the brand's story, articulating its reason for existence and its intended impact on the world. A brand's story consists of its most believable benefits. You can evaluate the believability of these benefits by asking your customers if their perception of your benefits aligns with the way you promote it. It is also valuable to compare these perceived benefits to those of your competitors. Outcomes of this research can range from small updates to your messaging, to revising your brand benefits to build a stronger brand purpose.

Addison Whitney can rebuild your brand purpose and can provide guides for better brand messaging through brand strategy. We can then test the brand purpose through market research and keep a pulse on how the market perceives the revised brand purpose.

Ultimately, tracking awareness is the first step to understanding brand health and brand equity. A strong brand should have reliable aided and unaided recall as well as highly significant benefits, which resonate with the customer. These signs of good health can build market share and real equity over time.

brand **loyalty**

Brand loyalty measures the likelihood that your customers will continue to buy your brand over competitors. You can measure brand loyalty primarily via the feedback of existing customers. For instance, respondents can be asked to rate their last experience using your brand, how likely they would be to repurchase it, and, most importantly, why they chose the ratings they did. Understanding the “why” provides keen insight by letting you hear your customers’ voices. Brand loyalty serves as a benchmark for the strength of your brand; the stronger the brand, the more likely a customer will repurchase it.

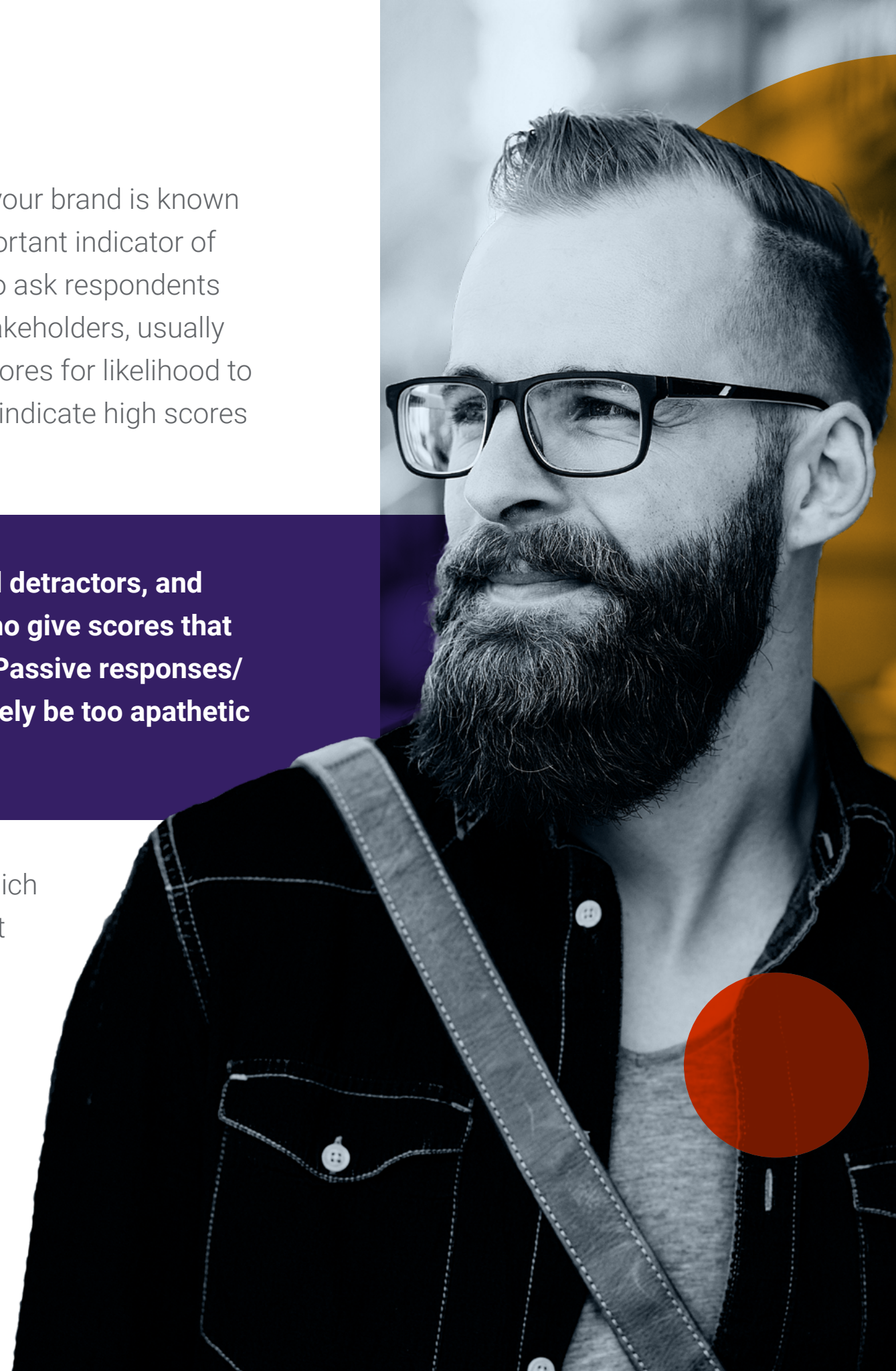
One marker of a powerful brand is a customer’s willingness to select your brand despite it being more expensive than competitor brands. With strong brand loyalty, price becomes less relevant to the customer’s decision-making process, which creates a path to stronger brand equity and positive brand ROI. The likelihood to recommend your brand to others also serves as a reliable indicator of brand loyalty. You can reveal your biggest cheerleaders, or promoters, as well as your biggest detractors by asking the likelihood of a customer to recommend your brand.

An actionable output from measuring the likelihood to recommend your brand is known as a net promoter score (NPS). A net promoter score can be an important indicator of brand loyalty. The first step to determining a net promoter score is to ask respondents how likely they would be to recommend a brand to other relevant stakeholders, usually on a 0-10 scale. The percentage of respondents who indicate low scores for likelihood to recommend is subtracted from the percentage of respondents who indicate high scores (i.e., top two scores) to come up with a net promoter score.

Those who give low scores for likelihood to recommend are called detractors, and those who give high scores are called promoters. Respondents who give scores that fall in between the detractors and promoters are called passives. Passive responses/percentages are not used in the calculation of NPS, as they will likely be too apathetic to impact your brand positively or negatively.

An initial brand tracking study can set up a benchmark NPS from which your brand can be measured in future tracking studies to give insight into the evolution of your customers' loyalty to your brand over time.

Brand loyalty can also have implications on how receptive your current customers would be to new offerings under your brand name. Apple is an exemplar of this ability. The ability to move existing customers to different product offerings shows that the brand is not only healthy; it is limitless.



brand **associations**

Brand associations measure the perception of your brand in terms of associated images and traits. This metric tracks the personality of a brand and helps you understand what makes your brand unique and sets it apart from the competition. For this reason, it is crucial not to test generic traits that can broadly apply to any brand in your product category.

Meanwhile, discovering how important an attribute is to your audience tests attribute importance. The combination of asking if your brand conveys specific attributes and understanding the importance of those same attributes will give you a holistic picture of your brand's personality. You can also have unaided questions to discover brand association. Open-ended questions allow your customers the freedom to express their unbiased feelings on your brand and can lead to unexpectedly powerful insights.

Taking the concept of unaided responses one step further, we can tap into social media listening. Social media listening allows us to be as comprehensive as we can, and due to the wealth of resources we have at our disposal, we're able to supplement our primary research with this secondary data. By understanding how your customers are interacting with your brand on their own time, we're able to obtain a more vivid image of where you live in their minds.

Understanding how your brand performs on the attributes that matter is crucial for brand health. This knowledge can lead to better, more targeted messaging or protocol, and an overall insight into how your stakeholders see your brand vs. how you want them to view it. For a brand tracking study to effectively measure brand associations, the design of the research must consider your more unique and insightful attributes. Working with Addison Whitney, you will be able to co-create a survey that captures the more unique characteristics of your brand to gain relevant and actionable insights.



Focus on measuring unique characteristics and the relevance/ importance of those traits and images. Asking your audience how closely your brand embodies an attribute is considered attribute performance."

long-term brand investments for **long-term growth**

Similar to a person going to the doctor's office for an annual physical, your brand's vitals need to be checked consistently via brand tracking studies. If you stop going to the doctor's office for a few years, then you may have a condition that goes undiagnosed. In the same fashion, going years without brand tracking can lead to an ailing brand. Having a robust and healthy brand takes constant evaluation and implementing improvements where needed.

When you put brand tracking into practice, there is a set of general guidelines. You should conduct a brand tracking study consistently, and it should maintain a static form, measuring the same metrics over time to ensure that results are comparable over time. Of course, a brand tracking study can still be customized to address a specific need or new challenge that arises. It is never too late to begin monitoring aspects of your brand that gain relevance over time.

Brand tracking is a long-term investment, which means that it can often go overlooked. One perceived drawback is timing; it takes time to craft and conduct a customized brand tracking study for your brand for the first time. Thus, short term sales efforts often take priority over long-term brand investments. However, while you may see a revenue uptick in the short-run, you run the risk of losing market share to a better-researched competitor in the long-run.

It's also important to remember that the majority of the timing investment happens at the very beginning of this engagement; every subsequent survey will build on the last, effectively reducing the time per study the longer this overall engagement lasts. Investing in your brand will help you strengthen its connection to its audience. This connection can lead to better long term ROI through gained market share, loyalty, and tailored pricing strategies.

When crafting the most suitable brand tracking study for you, Addison Whitney works as a dedicated and passionate partner, putting your stakeholders and you at the core of our design. The Addison Whitney market research team will work relentlessly to design an instrument that addresses your brand's health needs so that you can thoroughly examine the heart of your business.



it takes strategy
and creativity to
build a great brand.

**we
have
both.**

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For nearly 30 years we've been creating brands that have a powerful impact on the world. Our sole purpose is working closely with you to build something that matters. A brand with a clear and meaningful purpose. That's our passion. Our commitment.