



Министерство образования  
Республики Беларусь

БЕЛОРУССКИЙ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ  
ТЕХНИЧЕСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ

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Кафедра «Современные европейские языки»

Т.Н. Конагорова

# **BUSINESS ENGLISH**

## **Brand**

Пособие по английскому языку  
для делового общения

Минск 2007

Министерство образования Республики Беларусь  
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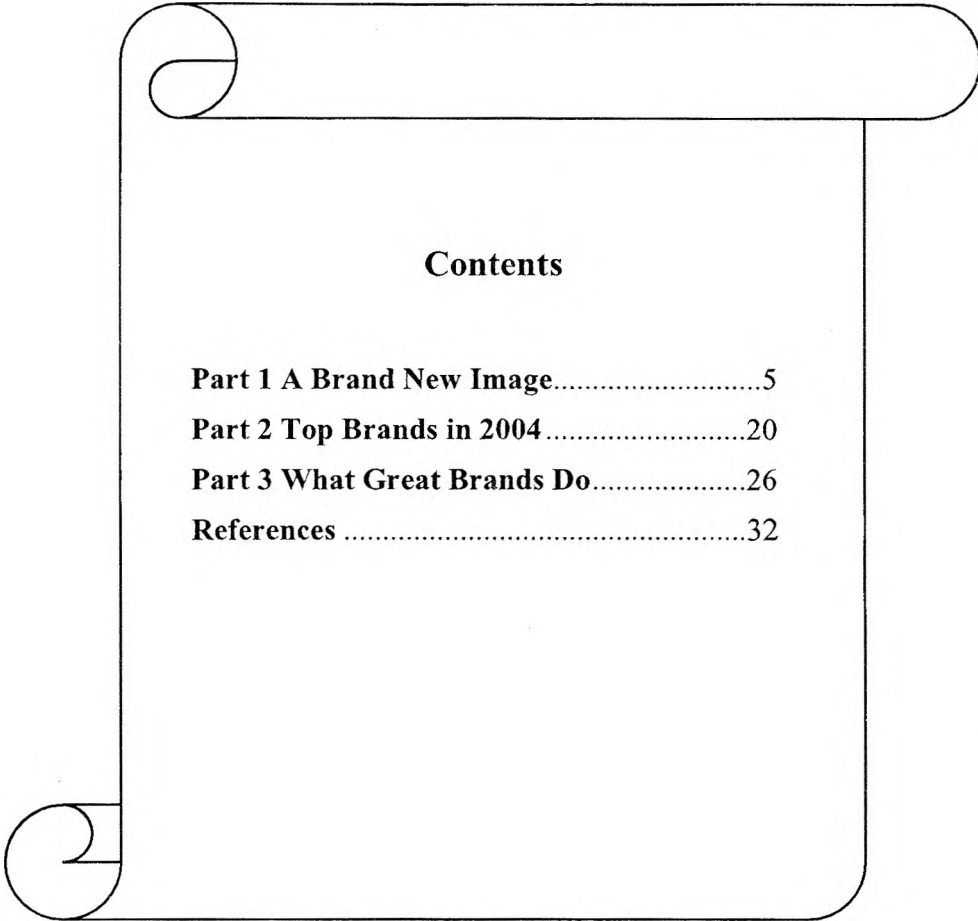
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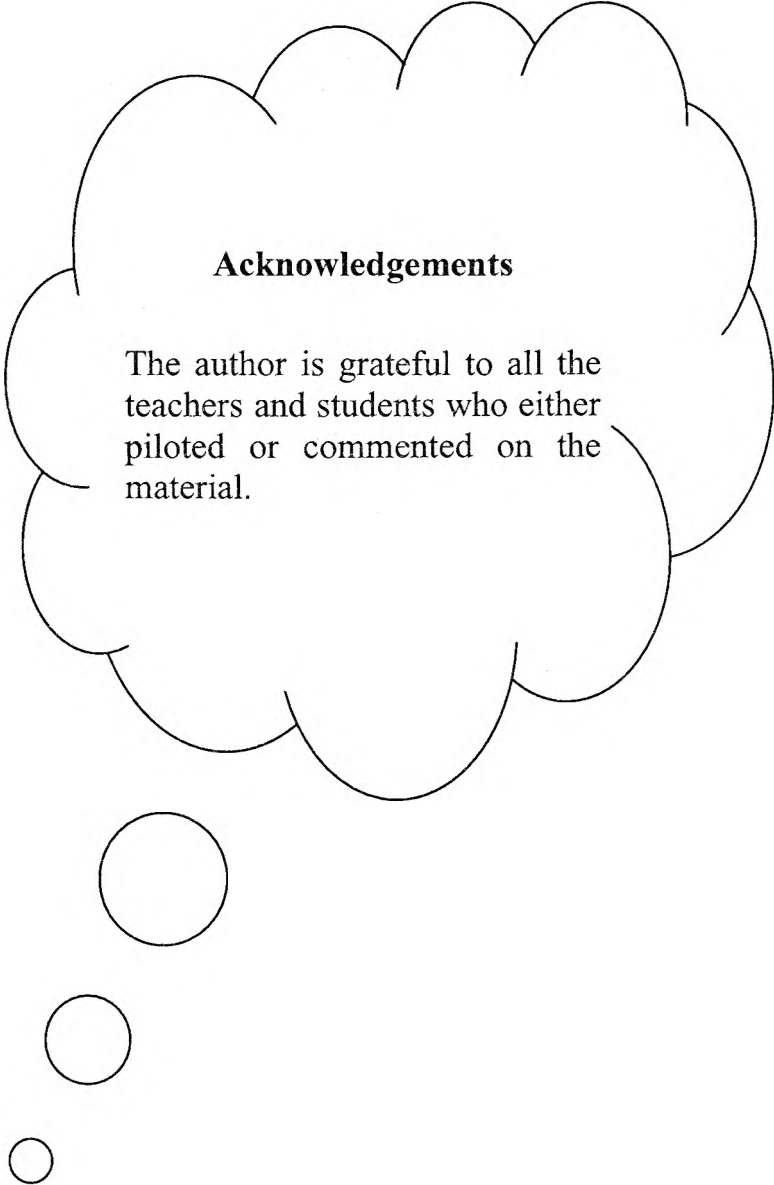
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# Part 1

## A Brand New Image

### Warm-up

**Discuss the following questions before you read the article:**

What is a brand?

Are product names important?

Do you often buy branded goods? Why? Why not?

What is your favourite brand?

### Pre-reading tasks

**I. Make sure you understand the following words from the article.**

**brand** - a trade name or trademark

**identity** - the individual characteristics by which a person or thing is recognised

**to identify with smth.** – to consider as similar to another

**to distinguish from** – to be able to recognise and understand the difference between two similar things or people

**rival** - a person, organisation, team, etc., that competes with another for the same object or in the same field

**to generate** - to produce or create something

**to encourage** - to stimulate (something or someone to do something) by approval or help

**approach to smth.** - a means adopted in tackling a problem, job of work

**fragrance** - a pleasant smell

**to brand with smth.** - to label, or mark with or as with a brand

**promotion** - advancement, backing

**to promote** - to further or encourage the progress or existence of smth.

**prominent** – important

**to differentiate from smth.** – to make a difference

**snappy** – smart and fashionable

**to be supported by smth.** – to be given strength

**to employ** – to engage or make use of the services of (a person) in return for money; hire

**to handle** – to deal with or control a situation, a person, an area of work or a strong emotion

**creative process** – the process which characterised by originality of thought or inventiveness; having or showing imagination

**to carry out** – to perform or cause to be implemented

**launch** – the act of putting (a new product) on the market

**to launch** – to put on the market

**shortlist** – a list of suitable applicants for a job, post, etc., from which the successful candidate will be selected

**hobnob** – to socialise or talk informally

**to pep up** – to liven by imbuing with new vigour

**to reflect** – to show or express

**commodity for smth.** – a product that can be sold to make a profit

**saving** – an amount of something that you have not used or spent

**irreverent** – lacking due respect

**complicated** – difficult to understand or analyse

**to be aimed at** – to be pointed or directed

**to attract** – to draw (notice, a crowd of observers, etc.) to oneself by conspicuous behaviour or appearance

**unaware** – uninformed

**appropriately** – in a right or suitable way

**to deter from** – to persuade someone not to do something, by making them realise it will be difficult or will have unpleasant results

**to warn against** – to notify or make (someone) aware of danger, harm, etc.

**connotation** – an association or idea suggested by a word or phrase; implication

**merger** – the combination of two or more companies, either by the creation of a new organisation or by absorption by one of the others

**to occur** – to happen, take place

**take over** – the act of seizing or assuming power, control, etc.

**to juggle with** – to arrange or manipulate (facts, figures, etc.) so as to give a false or misleading picture

**to retain** – to hold in position, to continue to have something

**diverse** – having variety; assorted

**to harmonise** – to make or become fitting well

**to refresh** – to revive or reinvigorate

**to upset** – to disturb the normal state, course, or stability of

**to soften** – to appease

**retailer** – someone who sells goods in shops to customers, for their own use and not for selling to anyone else

**to survive** – to continue in existence or use after

**to regain** – to reach again

**to abandon** – to leave behind

**logo** – a trademark, company emblem, or similar device

**pledge** – a formal promise

**overhaul** – a thorough examination and repair

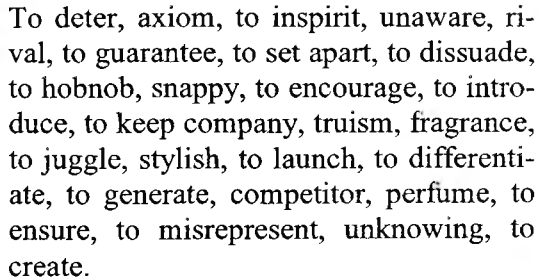
**subtle** – not immediately obvious or comprehensible

**truism** – an obvious truth

**to ensure** – to make it certain that something will happen



## II. Find 13 pairs of words which have a similar meaning



To deter, axiom, to inspire, unaware, rival, to guarantee, to set apart, to dissuade, to hobnob, snappy, to encourage, to introduce, to keep company, truism, fragrance, to juggle, stylish, to launch, to differentiate, to generate, competitor, perfume, to ensure, to misrepresent, unknowing, to create.

## III. Translate into Russian the word combinations from the article you are going to read

- ◆ to occur from time to time
- ◆ to generate brand loyalty
- ◆ different approaches to branding
- ◆ a snappy brand
- ◆ to employ specialists
- ◆ to carry out research
- ◆ to reflect the qualities and content of the products
- ◆ a complicated process
- ◆ to be unaware of the offered services
- ◆ to translate appropriately
- ◆ to deter from asking a particular product
- ◆ to launch a product in China
- ◆ not to be juggled
- ◆ diverse brands
- ◆ to refresh the image

- ◆ to soften consumers
- ◆ to inform retailers
- ◆ a quality pledge
- ◆ to ensure stability

**IV. Match the words in A with the words and phrases in B to have the word combinations from the article**

A	B
rival	at consumers in the USA
commodity	by catch phrases
to be aimed	the creative process of naming
to deter	with the same name
to handle	from similar products
to be supported	firms
to brand	snappy images
to generate	from buying products
to distinguish	for sale
to convey	against using some letters
to warn	brand loyalty

**Reading task**

**Split in 3 groups and read the information about different aspects of branding. Discuss with your partners which information is the most important and take notes of them. Then swap your information with the group mates who have read about other aspects of branding, using your notes.**

# A Brand new image

A brand is the name given by a business to one or more of its products. Branding gives products an identity that distinguishes them from similar products produced by rival firms. It helps to generate brand loyalty, encouraging customers to purchase particular products regularly. The demand for a product with strong brand loyalty tends to become less price sensitive, meaning that price can be increased without losing much demand. Selecting a brand name is therefore a very important part of a firm's marketing strategy.

Organisations can use a number of different approaches to branding:

- Individual or multiple branding, where businesses use a range of brand names for a variety of products. For example, Procter & Gamble relies on this branding policy for its range of fragrances, including Hugo Boss, Old Spice and Giorgio Beverley Hills. Such branding allows the firm to develop brands for particular market segments.

- Corporate or overall family branding, where all the firm's products are branded with the same name. Virgin, Kraft, Heinz, Microsoft and Ford employ this approach. This type of branding means that the promotion of one item will promote other products within the family. It can increase consumer confidence in the entire range, so increasing sales and profits.

- A mixture of corporate and individual branding, where products are given individual brand names but the corporate brand name is also prominent, e.g. Nestle and Walls.

### **How is a brand created?**

A brand name should be snappy, easy to remember, unique and convey appropriate images or values. In addition, popular brands are often supported by advertising catch phrases, such as „A Mars a day helps you work, rest and play“.

Most organisations employ specialist identity and naming consultants to handle this creative process. Brand Guardians is one such company, and has named (among others) Baars' Maidwell margarine and Pillsbury Toaster Pockets. According to its director of intellectual property, the name is the first and greatest expression of the brand:

It is vital you get it right and we carry out extensive consumer research. For a food launch we might ask for a description of the product, and get people to be wishful and tell us what they would like it to do for them. Once we have a shortlist we then go through the linguistic, cultural and legal trademark checking stages.

The Interbrand Group consultancy was responsible for the Hob Nobs biscuit name — created because the biscuits are knobbly, and because hobnobbing suggests socialising and therefore tea breaks. They were also responsible for the name of Sainsbury's Fresh Creations meal kits. Their director of naming commented that for Sainsbury's they needed “a name that expressed the fact that the food was fresh and that it was something people made themselves”.

All of the brand names mentioned so far reflect the qualities and content of their products or services. But there is another, growing band of names that say nothing whatsoever about the commodity for sale. For example, the online banks, Egg, Smile and Cahoot, have names designed to give the impression of hatching savings while reassuring customers that money matters are fun, modern, irreverent and sexy. The names also distance the products from their rather staid high-street parents, respectively the Prudential, Co-operative Bank and Abbey National.

## And the problems?

### The Internet

The process of coming up with names for new products is complex, but it is complicated further by the need for Internet-workable names. Companies using the Internet, either to sell their products or simply to provide information on themselves, must decide whether their site is aimed at existing or new customers. If it is aimed at existing customers, they will know the brand and will search the Web by the company's name — for example, tesco.co.uk. If companies want to use the Web primarily to attract consumers who may be unaware that their service exists, then a generic name is better — for example, applesandpears.com rather than bloggs-grocers.com.

### Language and culture

A major problem for organisations that trade globally is finding names that translate appropriately.

One way to avoid language and translation difficulties is to invent a completely new word, such as Toyota's Avensis. But there are problems even here. For example, firms must be careful which letters they use. The sounds for R and L, for instance, can be confusing and difficult for Asian customers to pronounce, which might deter them from asking for a particular product. Studies by Interbrand Group, which has offices in 22 countries, also warns against using the number 8 when launching a food product in China, because it has connotations with death.

The fact that many cultures read from right to left can also cause difficulties with names and packaging. Interbrand's director of naming recalls the story of a washing powder that used three cartoon images on its packaging — the first illustrating a dirty shirt, the second the shirt going into the washing machine, and the third a clean shirt. When the packaging was launched in China it was read the other way around.

## Mergers

One of the most difficult naming processes occurs when a new company is created by a merger or take-over. Egos in each of the original companies must be juggled with the need to retain the goodwill and brand loyalty associated with the companies that have joined forces.

When Guinness and Grand Metropolitan came together, responsibility for creating a name for the new company was given to identity and branding consultancy Wolff Olins. The merger had formed a global group with a market capitalisation of £24bn, and the name had to unite a diverse portfolio of food and drinks brands such as Burger King, Haagen-Dazs, Baileys, Smirnoff, Gordon's Gin, Malibu, and Guinness. The consultants decided a name was needed that expressed the themes of „everyday“, „everywhere“ and „leisure“. The result, Diageo, was based on the Latin for day (*dies*) and the Greek for world (*geo*). The name suggests that every day, around the world, millions of people enjoy Diageo brands.

### **What about a brand change?**

When companies decide they want to change the name of a particular product - to harmonise its global image, or simply to refresh the image — they risk upsetting loyal consumers. One example of such a change was Mars' decision in the mid-1990s to change the name of its Marathon bar in the UK to Snickers. Snickers were first manufactured in 1930 and are now the number one selling candy bar in the United States. Mars had to decide whether to spend months softening up UK consumers for the change, or employ a short, sharp, shock advertising campaign informing consumers and retailers about what was happening, but stressing that everything else about the product remained unaltered. The decision made was a risk, but naming experts say that although there was some initial opposition to the change, the product itself was popular enough in the UK to survive the change. Many have followed in its footsteps, including Oil of Olay (formerly Ulay) from Procter & Gamble.

Marks & Spencer recently announced a new look with the intention of regaining its popularity with shoppers. As part of a new brand identity, the company has abandoned the St Michael logo on its labels, changing it into a quality pledge for consumers called the St Michael Promise. This will appear as a circular design on food and clothing labels, with wording inside the circle explaining the guarantee and giving a customer service hotline number.

However, brand consultants warn that for the image change to have any effects, Marks & Spencer needs to back it up with improvements in products and service. They warn that many big companies have spent millions of pounds on rebranding exercises that failed to translate into increased profits. For example, Pepsi spent £330m to relaunch the soft drink in a blue can in 1996, using stars such as supermodels Cindy Crawford and Claudia Schiffer and tennis champion André Agassi. But the following year sales fell by 13%. Similarly, the airline BA suffered when it introduced a new 'ethnic' design on the tail fins of its planes. On the other hand, British Telecom's relaunch as BT is an example of an image change that was successful because it was backed by an overhaul of the company's services.

### **Conclusion**

Competitive advantage used to come from the simple ability to produce products efficiently and effectively. Now it comes from something infinitely more subtle, mysterious and difficult to control — image. A truism of marketing is that image endures long after the reality that brought it about. However companies choose to do business in future, whether online or through traditional stores, the competitive nature of retailing will ensure that the name of a product or business will remain key to its long-term success.

## Comprehension check

**After you have swapped the information with another group, do the following check-yourself exercises:**

**I. Say whether the statements are true or false. Correct the false ones.**

- A brand is a postcard.
- Branding gives products an identity that distinguishes them from similar products produced by rival firms.
- The demand for a product with strong brand loyalty tends to become more price sensitive.
- Corporate branding allows the firm to develop brands for particular market segments.
- A brand name should be snappy, easy to remember, unique and convey appropriate images or values.
- The process of coming up with names for new products is very easy.
- The fact that many cultures read from right to left cannot cause difficulties with names and packaging.
- One of the most difficult naming processes occurs when a new company is created by a merger.
- Overall family branding is the same as multiple branding.



## II. Select the best completion of the sentences

- ❖ Popular brands are often supported by...
  - a) consumers
  - b) advertising catch phrases
  - c) some specialists
- ❖ Corporate family branding means that the promotion of one item will...
  - a) convey appropriate image
  - b) lower the demand for products
  - c) promote other products within the family
- ❖ The names distance the products from their rather staid high-street...
  - a) rivals
  - b) customers
  - c) parents
- ❖ The process of coming up with names for new products is...
  - a) complex
  - b) easy
  - c) circular
- ❖ Companies using the Internet must decide whether their site is aimed at ...
  - a) existing customers
  - b) new customers
  - c) existing or new customers
- ❖ One way to avoid language and translation difficulties is...
  - a) to retain an old name
  - b) to invent a completely new word
  - c) to use a dictionary
- ❖ When companies decide they want to change the name of a particular product they ...
  - a) risk upsetting loyal consumers
  - b) use the Internet
  - c) employ specialist identity and naming consultants

### III. Answer the questions

- What is a brand?
- What does a brand name give products?
- What approaches to branding can organisations use?
- What does each of them mean?
- What is a marketable brand name?
- Do most organisations employ specialist identity and naming consultants? Why? Why not?
- Why is it vital to carry out extensive consumer research?
- What problems arise in the time of selecting names for new products?
- What does the word 'merger' mean?

### IV. Complete the summary of the article

An important part of marketing is branding. A brand is a ... given by a business to its products. Brands help to ... a particular product from ... ones. Moreover, they generate brand ... .

There are ... main approaches to branding. One is ..., the other is ... . ... branding means that different products of the same manufacturer are given different names. ... branding means that all products of one manufacturer are given one family name. But, sometimes these approaches are combined and every product of a manufacturer is given its ... name and a ... name as well.

Selecting a brand name is a very important part of a firm's marketing strategy. A brand name should be ..., ... to ..., ... and convey appropriate ... or values.

There are some problems in choosing a brand name. The first one occurs when a company uses the Internet, either to sell the goods or to ... information. Businessmen should decide whether their site is aimed at ... or ... customers. If the site is aimed at existing customers, they will search the Web by the ... . If the site is aimed at attracting new customers, a ... is better.

The second problem is vital for companies that trade globally. It is language and culture differences. The sounds for R and L, for instance, can be ... and difficult for Asian customers to pronounce, which might ... them from asking for particular product. The number 8 has ... with death in China. And the fact that many cultures read from right to left can also ... difficulties with names and packaging.

One of the most difficult naming processes occurs when a new company is created by a merger. It is necessary to retain the ... and ... of the companies that have joined their forces.

When companies decide to change the name of a product, they risk ... . It is a risk, but it can bring profit.

Nowadays it is evident that the ... of a product or business is a key to its long-term ... .

### Talking point



### Debate

**Split in 2 groups: those who think that both manufacturers and consumers benefit from branded goods and those who believe that there is no need in branded goods, especially for consumers. Make a list of arguments to prove your point of view. Then start debating, using your arguments and the following expressions of disagreement and giving your opinion.**

Giving your opinion	Disagreement
I think ...	Just the other way round.
I suppose ...	I've got some reasons to disagree.
I believe ...	On the one hand ...
I guess ...	On the other hand ...
If you ask me ...	Well, I'm not so sure.
The way I see it ...	I disagree, I'm afraid.
Well, I must say ...	I can't agree with ...
From my point of view ...	I'm not at all convinced ...
As far as I'm concerned ...	That's not the way I see it.
In my view/opinion ...	
(Personally) I believe ...	
It seems to me ...	



## Writing

**Now write a composition in which you state your opinion on branded goods.**

- Start with an introductory paragraph.
- State the opposite view to your own. Use expressions like: *Some people believe ...* and *They argue that ...* to make it clear that you do not share their arguments.
- Now state your point of view. Support your opinion with arguments.
- Conclude by stating what you want.

## Part 2

### Top Brands in 2004

#### Pre-Reading Activities

##### A: Brainstorming

Armani, Coca-Cola, Nokia, Honda.... These are **brands** that are famous around the world. A brand is a type of product or service made by a particular company. The Armani, Coca-Cola, Nokia and Honda brands are recognised in most places in the world. Even if people can't afford to buy these products, they are able to name them.

Work in small groups. Make a list of all the world famous brands you can think of. Write down the names of as many as you can think of in a list. Which countries are they from?

Use that list to make another list of the **ten** brands you consider to be the most famous and rank them from **one** (*most famous*) to **ten** (*least important*).

##### B: Vocabulary

Here are some phrases describing people who use computers, especially the Internet. See if you can match them with their meanings using your own knowledge and the terms themselves.

##### Terms

1. net-head
2. casual surfer
3. tech savvy

##### Meanings

- a. knowing lots about computers etc
- b. a person who uses the Internet occasionally
- c. a person who uses the Internet all the time

## Reading Activities

### A: Ordering Ideas

Read Part One of the article and match the ideas below with the paragraphs in the article:

1. Over 4,000 Interbrand users voted in the brand poll.
2. Google has said nothing about its possible plan to float.
3. Google and Apple are both popular with people who have a good knowledge of technology.
4. Google was named Global Brand of the Year for the second year in a row.
5. Google may achieve brand loyalty similar to Apple.
6. Apple Computer Inc. was ranked second in the poll.
7. Google is trying to improve its search technology.
8. Google may be planning to float on the stock exchange.

### Part One

<b>Google Tops Global Brand Poll – Again</b> By Trevor Datson	
<p>a. LONDON Tue Feb 3 (Reuters) - The Internet <b>search engine</b> Google Tuesday was named Global Brand of the Year by consultants Interbrand for the second year running.</p> <p>b. While Apple Computer Inc. was once again in second place in Interbrand's Brandchannel ranking of high-impact brands, nostalgia-driven small car Mini <b>zoomed</b> up the list to third place from 11th.</p> <p>c. Google, whose minimalist interface and lack of advertising links</p>	<p>f. Interbrand, which conducted its poll of over 4,000 users via its brandchannel.com Web Site, said Google would have to stick to its policy of offering a "clean, friendly but credible" path to accessing the Internet as it plans to go public.</p> <p>g. „The brand managers should concentrate on protecting these qualities. If it can maintain its reputation as an expert search engine, it will join the ranks of exceptional brands like Apple, where consumer</p>

have made it a firm favourite among net-heads and casual surfers alike, is said by bankers to be planning a share listing that is likely to raise \$4 billion for the Mountain View, Calif., based firm.

d. The company, which offers speedy searches in 97 languages including the fictional Klingon tongue of Star Trek fame, has denied all comment on the **flotation**, and was hardly more **effusive** on its latest **accolade**.

e. „It's always great to be recognised by our users. But if you talk to our technicians, they'll tell you we still have work to do to make our search technology better,“ a Google spokeswoman said.

loyalty ranges on **fanatical**.”

h. It's probably no coincidence that both Google and Apple – which topped the poll in 2001 and has occupied the No. 2 slot since then – both appeal strongly to a tech-savvy segment that would figure strongly in any Internet poll.

**Glossary:**

**search engine** - a website that gathers information about webpages (there are different ways of doing this) and enables people to type in words to search for sites containing those words

**zoomed** - went very fast

**flotation** - offering a company's shares for public sale

**effusive** - enthusiastic

**accolade** - award or honour

**fanatical** - extremely supportive

Article © 2004 Reuters Limited. Lesson © 2004 www.english-to-go.com

## B: Scanning

Read Part One again and find the following information:

1. What are the following?
  - a. Google -
  - b. Interbrand -
  - c. Brandchannel -
2. Where is Google's headquarters?
3. Which brand was second in the poll?

### C: Complete the Table

Read Part Two of the article and complete the following details:

#### The Mini

Owned by:
First produced:
Reasons for popularity:

#### Information about the poll

Brand ranked fourth in poll:

Brand ranked fifth in poll:

Number of people and countries in poll:

Criterion used to rank the brands:

#### Part Two

<p>Perhaps more surprising is the strong showing by Mini, whose third place knocks U.S. soft drinks giant Coca-Cola – unquestionably the world's most valuable brand – into fourth.</p> <p>Owner BMW has taken care to keep Mini, whose design is strongly <b>redolent</b> of the classic British small car that first saw the light of day in the late 1950s, at arm's length from both the parent brand and from Rolls Royce, which it also owns.</p> <p>„The <b>nostalgia</b> factor coupled with modern day capability and comfort helps Mini in traditional markets</p>	<p>„This is a <b>vindication</b> for a brand that has poured a lot of resources into improving the quality, scope and distribution of its product on the world stage,“ Rusch said.</p> <p>The Brandchannel poll attracted responses from 4,010 people in 85 countries. The sole criterion on which brands were ranked was „impact,“ which could be positive or negative.</p> <p>Following are the top 10 global brands as ranked by the poll: 1. Google 2. Apple 3. Mini 4. Coca-Cola 5. Samsung 6. Ikea 7. Nokia 8.</p>
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<p>such as Europe," Brandchannel's Robin Rusch said, adding that in the U.S. it was seen as a <b>cool</b> alternative to the "parking lot size vehicles" now crowding the roads.</p> <p>Fifth in the global ranking behind Coca-Cola was Samsung Electronics, the South Korean maker of memory chips and consumer electronics.</p>	<p>Nike 9. Sony 10. Starbucks.</p> <p><b>Glossary:</b>  <b>redolent</b> - making one think of something  <b>nostalgia</b> - longing for the past  <b>cool</b> - fashionable  <b>vindication</b> - support</p>	
<p>Article © 2004 Reuters Limited. Lesson © 2004 www.english-to-go.com</p>		

### D: True, False or not Given

Read the whole article again and mark the following statements „T“ if they are **true**, „F“ if they are **false** and „NG“ if the information is **not given** in the article:

1. The Mini has become very popular.
2. Coca-Cola makes more money than the other brands listed in the poll.
3. Google is liked mainly by people who use the Internet all of the time.
4. Google doesn't like to praise its own achievements.
5. Google is likely to win next year's poll as well.
6. BMW has spent more on marketing the Mini than its other cars.
7. The reputation of Samsung products has improved.
8. The poll was conducted in the U.S. and Europe.

## E: Meanings in Context

Use your understanding of the article to help you choose the correct meaning for each of the phrases from today's article below:

1. *for the second year running*

(Part One of the article)

- a. Something has continued for two years.
- b. Something happened this year and last year.

2. *minimalist interface*

(Part One)

- a. A simple design.
  - b. A very small screen.
3. *fictional tongue* (Part One)
- a. A language that is not real.
  - b. A very difficult language.

4. *first saw the light of day*

(Part Two)

- a. It happened very early.
- b. It first became known publicly.

5. *at arm's length* (Part Two)

- a. Close to.
- b. Not close to.

6. *parking lot size vehicles*

(Part Two)

- a. Very large vehicles.
- b. Vehicles that are easy to park.

## F: Thinking Carefully

**Use the article and your own ideas to answer these questions.**

1. Why is it not surprising that Google and Apple came first and second in this poll?
2. „*The sole criterion on which brands were ranked was „impact“.....*“ What does this mean?

## Part 3

### What Great Brands Do

#### Additional Reading

##### Pre-reading

1. Read only the title of the article. Predict and write down five vocabulary items you think the article will contain. Note the words down in English.
2. Skim the article quickly looking for key words. Write down what the main theme of the text is.

##### While reading

3. Is the author trying to persuade or inform us?
4. Define any new key words.
5. Write down the main idea of each paragraph, using only one sentence for each main idea.
6. Divide the article into sections. Is there an introduction? A conclusion? If yes, where?

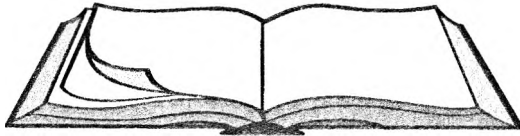
##### Post reading

7. Write one sentence reporting something you learned from the article.
8. Critical reaction: whose interests does the article reflect? Which company, country, government, social group, etc?
9. Indicate your interest in the article. Use a scale from 1 - 5 (1 - very boring, 5 - very interesting).
10. Were there any paragraphs you had difficulty understanding? Which ones?
11. Try to work out why you had difficulty. What was the main reason?

- lack of previous knowledge on the topic
- a grammatical problem
- inefficient reading strategies
- difficulty in recognising and understanding the main points
- etc.

12. Estimate your comprehension of the article (50 %, 70% ...)

## What Great Brands Do



A great brand is hard to find. „I walked through a hardware store last night and I came across 50 brands I didn't know existed,“ says Scott Bedbury. „They may be great products, but they're not great brands.“ Scott Bedbury knows brands. The man who gave the world 'Just Do It' and Frappuccino shares his eight-point program to turn anything – from sneakers to coffee to You – into a great brand.

### **1. A great brand is in it for the long haul**

For decades we had great brands based on solid value propositions – they'd established their worth in the consumer's mind. Then in the 1980s and 1990s, a lot of companies sold out their brands. They stopped building them and started harvesting them. They focused on short-term economic returns, dressed up the bottom line, and diminished their investment in longer-term brand-building programs. As a result, there were a lot of products with very little differentiation. All the consumers saw who had the lowest price – which is not a profitable place for any brand to be.

Then came Marlboro Friday and the Marlboro Man fell off his horse. Today brands are back stronger than ever. In an age of accelerating product proliferation, enormous customer choice, and

growing clutter and clamour in the marketplace, a great brand is a necessity, not a luxury. If you take a long-term approach, a great brand can travel world-wide, transcend cultural barriers, speak to multiple consumer segments simultaneously, create economies of scale, and let you operate at the higher end of the positioning spectrum – where you can earn solid margins over the long term.

## **2. A great brand can be anything**

Some categories may lend themselves to branding better than others, but anything is brandable. Nike, for example, is leveraging the deep emotional connection that people have with sports and fitness. With Starbucks, we see how coffee has woven itself into the fabric of people's lives, and that's our opportunity for emotional leverage. Almost any product offers an opportunity to create a frame of mind that's unique. Almost any product can transcend the boundaries of its narrow category.

Intel is a case study in branding. I doubt that most people who own a computer know what Intel processors do, how they work, or why they are superior to their competition in any substantive way. All they know is that they want to own a computer with „Intel inside.“ As a result, Andy Grove and his team sit today with a great product and a powerful brand.

## **3. A great brand knows itself**

Anyone who wants to build a great brand first has to understand who they are. You don't do this by getting a bunch of executive schmucks in a room so they can reach some consensus on what they think the brand means. Because whatever they come up with is probably going to be inconsistent with the way most consumers perceive the brand. The real starting point is to go out to consumers and find out what they like or dislike about the brand and what they associate as the very core of the brand concept.

Now that's a fairly conventional formula – and it does have a risk: if you follow that approach all the way, you'll end up with a narrowly focused brand. To keep a brand alive over the long haul, to keep it vital, you've got to do something new, something unex-

pected. It has to be related to the brand's core position. But every once in a while you have to strike out in a new direction, surprise the consumer, add a new dimension to the brand, and reenergize it.

Of course, the other side of the coin is true as well: a great brand that knows itself also uses that knowledge to decide what not to do. At Starbucks, for instance, we were approached by a very large company that wanted to partner with us to create coffee liquor. I'm sure Starbucks could go in and wreak havoc in that category. But we didn't feel it was right for the brand now. We didn't do a lot of research. We just reached inside and asked ourselves, „Does this feel right?“ It didn't. It wasn't true to who we are right now.

#### **4. A great brand invents or reinvents an entire category**

The common ground that you find among brands like Disney, Apple, Nike, and Starbucks is that these companies made it an explicit goal to be the protagonists for each of their entire categories. Disney is the protagonist for fun family entertainment and family values. Not Touchstone Pictures, but Disney. Apple wasn't just a protagonist for the computer revolution. Apple was a protagonist for the individual: anyone could be more productive, informed, and contemporary.

From my experience at Nike, I can tell you that CEO Phil Knight is the consummate protagonist for sports and the athlete. That's why Nike transcends simply building shoes or making apparel. As the protagonist for sports, Nike has an informed opinion on where sports is going, how athletes think, how we think about athletes, and how we each think about ourselves as we aim for a new personal best.

At Starbucks, our greatest opportunity is to become the protagonist for all that is good about coffee. Go to Ethiopia and you'll immediately understand that we've got a category that is 900 years old. But here in the United States, we're sitting on a category that's been devoid of any real innovation for five decades.

A great brand raises the bar – it adds a greater sense of purpose to the experience, whether it's the challenge to do your best in sports and fitness or the affirmation that the cup of coffee you're drinking really matters.

### **5. A great brand taps into emotions**

It's everyone's goal to have their product be best-in-class. But product innovation has become the ante you put up just to play the game: it's table stakes.

The common ground among companies that have built great brands is not just performance. They recognise that consumers live in an emotional world. Emotions drive most, if not all, of our decisions. Not many people sit around and discuss the benefits of encapsulated gas in the mid-sole of a basketball shoe or the advantages of the dynamic-fit system. They will talk about Michael Jordan's winning shot against Utah the other night – and they'll experience the dreams and the aspirations and the awe that go with that last-second, game-winning shot.

A brand reaches out with that kind of powerful connecting experience. It's an emotional connection point that transcends the product. And transcending the product is the brand.

### **6. A great brand is a story that's never completely told**

A brand is a metaphorical story that's evolving all the time. This connects with something very deep – a fundamental human appreciation of mythology. People have always needed to make sense of things at a higher level. We all want to think that we're a piece of something bigger than ourselves. Companies that manifest that sensibility in their employees and consumers invoke something very powerful.

Look at Hewlett-Packard and the HP Way. That's a form of company mythology. It gives employees a way to understand that they're part of a larger mission. Every employee who comes to HP feels that he or she is part of something that's alive. It's a company with a rich history, a dynamic present, and a bright future.

Levi's has a story that goes all the way back to the Gold Rush. They have photos of miners wearing their dungarees. And every time you notice the rivets on a pair of their jeans, at some level it reminds you of the Levi's story and the rich history of the product and the company. Ralph Lauren is trying to create history. His products all create a frame of mind and a persona. You go into his stores and there are props and stage settings – a saddle and rope. He's not selling saddles. He's using the saddle to tell a story. Stories create connections for people. Stories create the emotional context people need to locate themselves in a larger experience.

### **7. A great brand has design consistency**

Look at what some of the fashion brands have built – Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein, for example. They have a consistent look and feel and a high level of design integrity. And it's not only what they do in the design arena; it's what they don't do. They refuse to follow any fashion trend that doesn't fit their vision. And they're able to pull it off from one season to the next.

That's just as true for strong brands like Levi's or Gap or Disney. Most of these companies have a very focused internal design process. In the case of Nike, between its ad agency Wieden & Kennedy and Nike Design shop, probably 98% of every creative thing that could possibly be done is handled internally, from hang tags to packaging to annual reports. Today Nike has about 350 designers working for it – more than any company in the country – to make sure it keeps close watch over the visual expression of the brand.

They're what I like to call „impassioned environmentalists“ with their brands. They don't let very many people touch them in the way of design or positioning or communication – verbal or non-verbal. It's all done internally.

### **8. A great brand is relevant**

A lot of brands are trying to position themselves as „cool.“ More often than not, brands that try to be cool fail. They're trying to find a way to throw off the right cues – they know the current



vernacular, they know the current music. But very quickly they find themselves in trouble. It's dangerous if your only goal is to be cool. There's not enough there to sustain a brand.

The larger idea is for a brand to be relevant. It meets what people want, it performs the way people want it to. In the last couple of decades there's been a lot of hype about brands. A lot of propositions and promises were made and broken about how brands were positioned, how they performed, what the company's real values were. Consumers are looking for something that has lasting value. There's a quest for quality, not quantity.

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