

## how to clarify your brand essence

Your **brand essence** is the overarching idea that you want people to have in their head when they think of your brand. A brand essence:

- Is:
- a single word or short phrase
  - a compelling idea
- Is not:
- a tagline
  - a product or category descriptor

examples:

- Southwest: fun
- Nike: innovation and inspiration
- BMW: performance

Clarify your brand essence with a **Brand Documentary**.

Act like a film-maker and assemble a short video of what your brand stands for. Follow these steps:

1. **Capture** video clips of "evidence" of your what your brand is, what it does, and what it stands for.
2. **Include** examples of how the brand is delivered by your employees and experienced by your customers.
3. **Film** customers as they experience your product or service – show their reactions and interactions.
4. **Interview** employees who have done something that you think exemplifies the brand -- or ask them to report on something they've seen their co-workers or strategic business partners doing.
5. **Recap** projects or company programs that exemplify what the brand is all about.
6. **Consider** including news items or coverage in the media that discuss what your brand is doing and the impact it has.
7. Once you've assembled the clips into a single video, give the film a descriptive name – that name usually points to your brand essence.

(If a video is too hard or expensive to do, make a pin-board or collage out of pictures and images.)

Or, clarify your brand essence with a **Brand Obituary**.

Pretend that upon waking today, you learn that the person "your brand" has passed away. As a reporter for the local newspaper, your job is to write an obituary for it. Follow these steps:

1. **Think** about your brand as a person – not the type of customer who buys or uses your brand, rather the type of person the brand would be if it came to life. Also think about the brand today when it's at its best – not some idealized future. And think about it as a whole – consider all that the brand entails.
2. **Write** a tribute to your brand, the person.
3. **Include** what the brand's biggest accomplishment in life was -- what will it be remembered for?
4. **Indicate** who/what the brand left behind – who will mourn or miss the brand – and why?
5. **Describe** the lessons that can be learned from the brand's life – and from its death.
6. **Indicate** who will take the brand's place now that the brand is gone – and how will it be the same – and different.
7. Once you've completed the brand obituary, write a descriptive headline for it. That should reveal what your brand essence is.
8. Also try identifying how people would feel while reading the obituary. That may also give you an idea.



All Good brand collage



Deutsche Bank brand collage

*"Dependable service"*

Mr. United Airlines died today at the age of 45 from a mild stroke caused by carrying a heavy load. He leaves behind a good middle-class American family whom he provided for dependably over the years. His commitment to his family was evident in his faithful service to his job, going to work every day even when the weather was bad or others didn't.

United Airlines brand obituary

visit <http://deniseleeyohn.com/bbb> to view Denise's "How to Build a Breakthrough Brand" video series and access other worksheets

