



MEASURE YOUR
DISTINCTIVE ASSETS



Ehrenberg-Bass
Institute for Marketing Science

UNDERSTANDING DISTINCTIVE ASSETS

BRAND IDENTITY ELEMENTS ARE THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Brand identity elements are anything that signal the brand name to consumers.

Examples of elements are:

- Colours
- Slogans
- Music, Sounds and Jingles
- Style of Advertising
- Logo or Symbols
- Characters
- Celebrities
- Pack Shapes

HOW DO ELEMENTS BECOME DISTINCTIVE ASSETS?

An element is only an asset if it fulfills the following criteria:

- **Unique** The element evokes the brand, and not competitors.
- **Famous** Most, if not all consumers should know the element represents the brand name.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DISTINCTIVE ASSETS

For any piece of brand communication to work, people must be able to identify the brand that is being advertised. This is a vital goal of any execution, yet figures routinely show that on average 1/2 the people who see an advertisement fail to correctly identify the brand. However there is often resistance to increasing the direct presence of the brand.

Distinctive assets provide another, creative-friendly way of signalling the brand.

Examples of distinctive assets are the Coca-Cola bottle shape, the McDonald's Golden Arches, the M&M's characters and the Garnier Fructis fluoro green colouring.

Developing a distinctive asset requires a commitment from marketers to keep these elements consistent. Distinctive elements do not become assets overnight. Instead, consumers need to learn the link between the element and the brand. This requires reinforcement and refreshment over time.

Our approach to measuring the strength of distinctive assets is consumer-based, as only consumers can tell you what, of all the brand elements you have used, are imprinted in their memory.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF DISTINCTIVE BRAND ASSETS

- Increase the brand footprint in an advertisement.
- Provide a more creative alternative to directly showing the brand name.
- Create a more neuro-rich brand within the ad.
- Improve your in-store performance by linking advertising distinctive assets to that used on packaging.

WHY ASSESS DISTINCTIVE ASSET STRENGTH?

Our approach provides an evidence-based, quantitative assessment of the strength of your distinctive assets. This can be used to:

1. Identify the distinctive assets you can use immediately.
2. Identify elements with potential to build into assets.
3. Provide benchmarks to assess the effectiveness of distinctive asset building activity.
4. Identify weak or shared elements to avoid.

"When brand owners ask me what market research they should be doing, I always reply 'first measure your brand's distinctive assets... Find out what they really are and how strong they really are... Don't assume.'"

Professor Byron Sharp



DISTINCTIVE ASSET ASSESSMENT

The Ehrenberg-Bass Institute has an empirically validated approach to assessing the strength of potential distinctive assets.

You should be benchmarking your distinctive assets if you are:

1. Thinking of changing or updating your brand's identity, and want guidance on what to keep.
2. Unhappy with your current branding/brand linkage scores, and want to improve them.
3. Planning a new creative path for the brand's advertising, and want to assess the potential of new elements.
4. Considering bringing back a historic brand element, but are unsure if it is still relevant.

Distinctive asset measurement can help in all of these situations by providing a quantitative benchmark and framework for assessing the current strength of possible distinctive assets.

TYPICAL RESEARCH STAGES

Stage 1: Audit of Brand Elements

Stage one involves an audit of the brand communication materials in the product category. This stage would also involve consultation with your marketing team.

From this brand element audit, we then compile a list of potential elements to be tested. To this list we also add:

- Historical elements - long-term packaging design or colours that have been used extensively in the past but recently replaced or altered. This may uncover some hidden gems worth revitalising.

- Ideas for the future - design elements that you would like to test in terms of their feasibility of becoming a distinctive asset.

Stage 2: Online Data Collection

The method involves asking category users which brands from a category they link to each brand element. We collect the data to assess the strength of the link between the element and each brand without priming respondents or encouraging guessing games.

Consumer's experience using the brand and the category, as well as basic demographic information are also collected. These variables add further context to findings. This approach can also be combined with a brand health assessment if you are looking for a more comprehensive read on brand equity, including salience and positioning.

Stage 3: Interpretation of Findings and Recommendations

We plot the Fame and Uniqueness scores on our Distinctive Asset Grid (see next page) developed by Assoc. Professor Jenni Romaniuk. On this grid, we create both brand and element profiles. Brand profiles examine different types of potential assets for a single brand. Element profiles compare competitive brands on specific elements, such as colours. These different perspectives then feed into the recommendations for using, avoiding and investing to build distinctive assets.

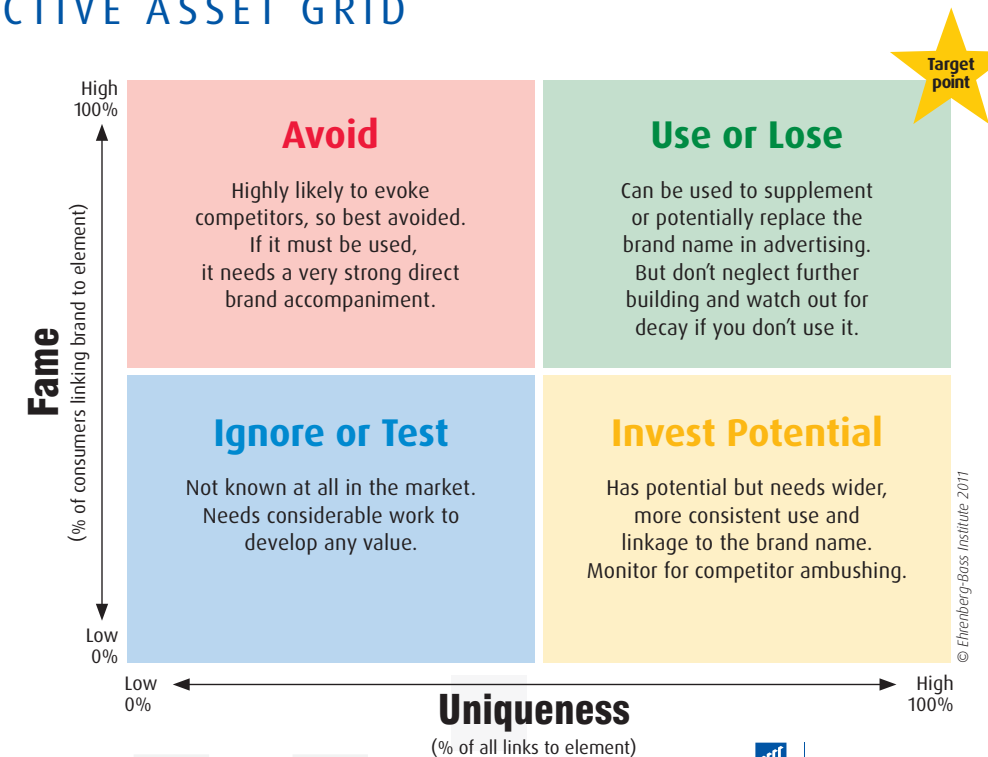
WHAT YOU WILL RECEIVE

A comprehensive report discussing the relative merits of brand elements across the category, and tailored advice depending on the objective for the distinctive asset measurement.

This can include:

1. A list of distinctive assets that can be used in advertising to replace the brand name.
2. A list of investible elements and their benchmark position, with advice on how to build them.
3. A list of elements to avoid and where in your current communications these might need to be replaced.
4. The non-negotiable elements of packaging that should not be changed.

DISTINCTIVE ASSET GRID



JOHNNIE WALKER RED: IT'S NOT ALL IN A NAME



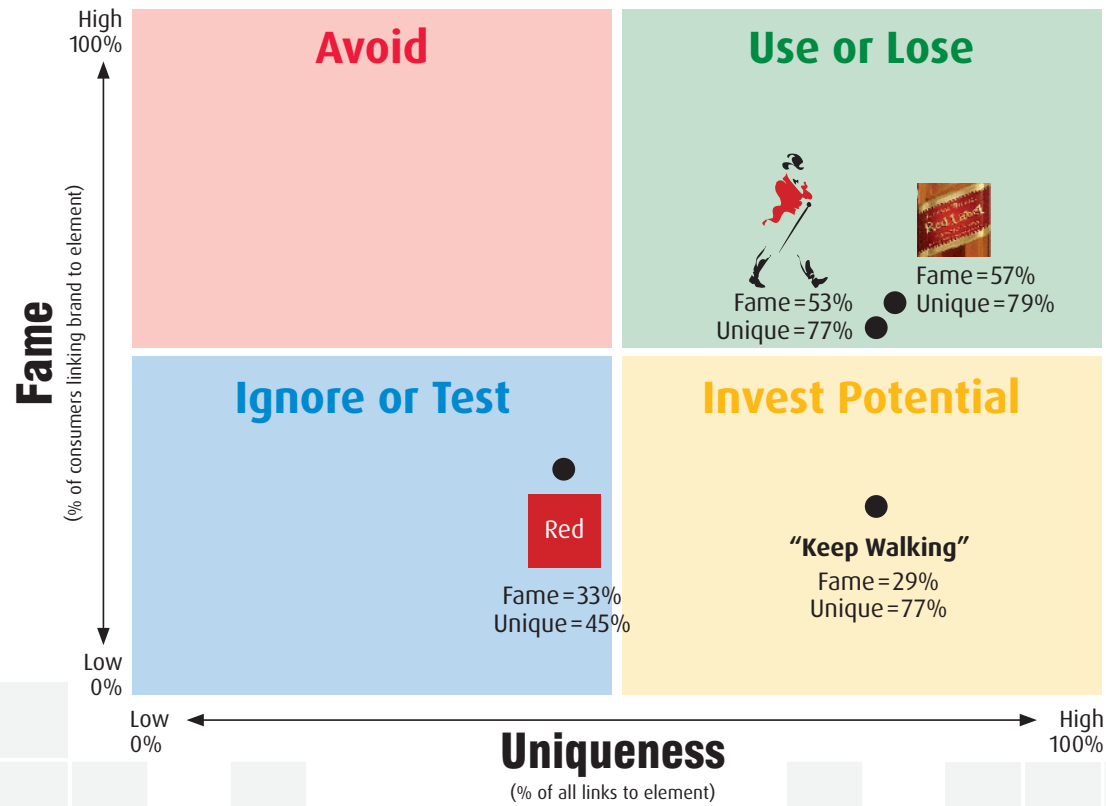
Johnnie Walker is a global whisky brand, with a campaign that encourages whisky drinkers to “Keep Walking”. We examined how this campaign translated into distinctive assets for the brand in a European market.

Our assessment found that the strongest distinctive asset is the bottle label, which is linked to Johnnie Walker Red by 57% of whisky drinkers, at a level of 79% uniqueness. This is a reflection of brand history and consistency. The image of the man walking is a close second, with 53% fame and 77% uniqueness.

These are the two usable assets for Johnnie Walker in this market.

“Keep Walking” as a tagline is in the investible category. It has good uniqueness (77%) but lacks fame (29%). Therefore this is not yet ready to replace the brand name.

Despite the name, the colour red lacked a strong presence for the brand. It lacks uniqueness and therefore is best avoided as a branding element.



SHAPE AS A DISTINCTIVE ASSET

The physical dimensions of a product or its packaging can be particularly useful for brand recognition. Examples include Toilet Duck toilet cleaner with its ‘beak like’ bottle neck or the triangular Toblerone box. Having a distinctive shape helps consumers identify the brand on our very cluttered supermarket shelves.

Can you name these three brands based purely on the product’s shape?



1. Absolut Vodka, 2. Coca-Cola, 3. Frangelico

DO YOU KNOW THE STRENGTH OF YOUR BRAND ELEMENTS?

Brand elements and distinctive assets play an important role in determining a brand’s long-term health. These elements should be nurtured over time and not left to chance or intuition.

Take guesswork out of the equation and let our team analyse your brand’s distinctive assets.

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