



**Making Digital Imaging  
Simple**

*Development Notes:*

*Prepared for PixelINK*

## **Product Branding Overview**

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## 1.00 Introduction

This document is intended to provide general branding ideas for both the PL-A741 machine vision camera, and the PL-A680 Medium Resolution Microscopy camera. The ideas are presented to generate discussion leading to Industrial and Mechanical design concepts for the PL-A680 and the finalization of paint specifications and graphics for the PL-A741.

## 2.00 Existing Corporate Traits

PixeLINK 's web site is the primary source for the global traits listed here. Overall, PixeLINK 's primary value statement emphasizes *SIMPLICITY*. Front and center on the PixeLINK web site is [sic] "5 minutes to install and enjoy...real-time video, megapixel stills."

Through the "The PixeLINK Advantage" link, the web site elaborates the value proposition to include;

- Imaging solution "that work"
- Standardization via FireWire
- Uncompressed video and stills (presumably for maximum data accuracy)
- Easy expansion via FireWire daisy-chaining
- Durability in harsh and space constrained environments
- Open architecture via TWAIN and DirectShow applications
- Powerful integration via the PixeLINK open application interface
- Cost-effectiveness (as a result of the above)

## 2.10 Positioning Elements

The following points describe PixeLINK products' advantages over other competitors:

- Pixelink products are simple to connect.
- PixeLINK provides maximum data throughput.
- PixeLINK provides accurate imaging data (no loss through compression)
- PixeLINK data streams are easy to work with (standard tools and open API)
- PixeLINK products are compact and durable
- PixeLINK imaging products are perfect for OEM's

### 3.00 Customer Desired Traits

#### 3.10 PL-A741 machine vision camera

Some basic Internet research highlights the following points as common machine vision customer requirements;

- High speed capture at assembly line speeds
- High accuracy, consistent with high-end manufacturing processes
- Maximum (>99.9%) reliability
- Durability in harsh environments
- Flexibility for camera installation
- Flexibility for using different accessories (light rings, mounts, cabling)
- Flexibility in software
- Standardized network communication (Ethernet vs. FireWire)
- Ease of use in programming software.

#### 3.20 PL-A680 Medium Resolution Microscopy

Based on field observations at 3 sites, the following points illustrate primary customer product expectations:

- Need very accurate colour imaging consistent with conventional microscopy
- Need repeatable colour configuration settings
- Want maximum ease of use in hardware and in software
- Require maximum speed of gaining effective images
- Typically need to tweak image colour balance, clarity, and create B&W images
- Need to add titles and annotations to images

#### 4.00 Positioning Statements

The following statements are intended to capture the value qualities of the 2 different products:

##### 4.10 PL-A680 Medium Resolution Microscopy

PixeLINK 's PL-A680 6-Megapixel digital solution provides rapid evaluation, capture and sharing of clear, accurate microscopy data with high colour accuracy, via low-cost FireWire connected hardware.

##### 4.20 PL-A741 machine vision camera

PixeLINK 's PL-A741 Machine Vision Camera provides maximum reliability and resolution for high-speed imaging applications using compact, durable FireWire connected hardware.

## 5.00 Product Names

Currently, all PixelINK products including both cameras and OEM modules are identified with product numbers. This is not atypical of competitors, but does nothing to communicate the characteristics of the different products. I think the product numbers are fine for the OEM modules, however the camera units need to be differentiated, in the same way that Nikon use 'CoolPix', and 'CoolScope'. Consumer product camera continue to differentiate via tradenames such as Minolta's 'DivX', Cannon's 'PowerShot', and Sony's 'CyberShot'. In the machine vision space an example is Cognex's use of 'In-Sight XXX' as a tradename for their extensive line of machine vision cameras.

The following product names are intended as catalysts to explore specific product branding

### 5.10 PL-A680 Medium Resolution Microscopy

1-2-See	Micro-vision	SimFire
Arc-vision	Micro-capture	Simplimage
Cell-vision	Objectivision	Vision-path
Collabro-vision	Polar-Vision	U-Vision
Digital-vision	Pathvision	UVSee
Fluoro-see	SpectraVision	VisionPath
Laser-vision	SpectralVision	Xenovision
Mercury-vision	Simplex	Ximage

### 5.20 PL-A741 machine vision camera

AutoVision	CamC	MegaVision
C-Part	FireCam	Partvision
C-Process	FireVision	PixelFire
Cimplity	FirePix	PixelVision
Cimpix	FireInspect	Simple-C
Cimage	Industrial-C	Simspection
Cfire	MegaFire	Vision-C

## 6.00 Product Branding Option

Both the PL-A741 machine vision camera and the PL-A680 Medium Resolution Microscopy camera require some level of appropriate product differentiation. While the PL-A680 is currently in the early stages of development, the PL-A741 is at a production ready stage awaiting final considerations.

### 6.10 Product Form

Product form has considerable effect on the overall branding effect of a product. Sleek. Minimalist products with finely executed, watch-like details are very different from bold, industrial, heavy-use products that resemble power tools.

### 6.11 PL-A741 Machine Vision Camera

The industrial orientation of the PL-A741 largely dictates that a 'form-follows-function' approach to packaging components will, and has yielded a very direct, functional form with little differentiating detail. Cables exit the rear facing surface opposite the lens mount. The product label is located on the underside of the unit and not visible when installed.

The industrial examples in section 7.91 show several different manufacturers' camera models. All examples, except Figure 5, are generally rectangular packages with an additional attached lens component, presumably because different lenses are used with the same body. In all cases, the required cables exit the rear face opposite the lens mount. There are subtle differences, such as the concave side of Figure 3, the ribbed sides of Figure 1, and the crisp angularity of Figure 6. Each of these takes advantage of the individual manufacturing processes, respectively extrusion, stamping or plastics, and castings.

### 6.12 PL-A680 Medium Resolution Microscopy

The form of the PL-A680 also seems largely derived from the internal components. There are generously crowned surfaces on what becomes the underside of the unit when installed on a microscope, however the back is flat and covered by a product label. Some models have the PixelINK logo positioned on a front facing surface. The required USB cables exit opposite this face.

Examples of clinical devices are shown in sections 7.92, and 7.93. All examples seem to have a higher level of formal refinement, better oriented to the highly technical equipment that these devices are united with. The end users of these devices, clinical technicians, doctors, and scientists, are all skilled professionals working with minutiae and in order to capture approval of these close-proximity devices, they must be refined and well finished. The forms of these devices are still driven by the tight technical requirements of the internal components.

The two camera devices shown in 7.94 are highlighted as they are directly incorporated into niche devices that have re-evaluated the complete product (microscope + camera) and have distinctly different form factors. They are not constrained by their previous product heritage and as such have unique forms. They appear to me to be friendlier, less clinical, and more accessible. The SONY (Figure 14) product is oriented towards electronics technicians and the

Olympus (Figure 15) is an educational device. Since one of PixelINK's main value propositions is simplicity, it may be desirable to develop a similar product character to reflect this value.

## 6.20 Product Color, and Texture

### 6.21 PL-A741 Machine Vision Camera

The industrial products in this category generally convey the attributes of durability, reliability, and ruggedness. Most devices appear to have a heavy texture, similar to an industrial powder coat. This thick coating is effective in concealing scratches and marks on the cases. It provides a low-gloss finish, non-reflective finish, which may be perceived as aiding product function.

Colours are neutral tones, often quite dark. Large multi-nationals such as SONY and Hitachi seem to have a corporate standard in neutral gray. (Figure 4, 5 and 6) Many smaller companies have black products (Figure 3), and generally add colour via product graphics and labels. Certain companies use colour for trade-dress colour (Figure 1) consistently across their whole product line to establish an association in customers' minds.

This use of trade-dress colour is extensive in motion control product categories. (Figures 16 through 20) Many companies use this element of branding to direct graphic design elements and labeling of products. It is potentially problematic where multiple companies use similar colours. Figures 18 and 19 illustrate two different company product lines with similar trade-dress. Figure 20 shows a slight variation with a graduated label which is somewhat more distinctive.

### 6.22 PL-A680 Medium Resolution Microscopy

Many clinical camera products make effective use of trade-dress colour. Zeiss (Figure 10) blatantly uses a blue finish very similar to their corporate blue; this creates a component that contrasts with the other equipment in use. Olympus has a variety of camera; their most advanced units (Figure 8) are being produced in white and match with their respective microscope devices. They also consistently add a contrasting colour element to the white trade-dress, gold in Figure 10, blue in Figure 15, which may be intended to promote certain characteristics such as 'expensive' or 'fun'.

Products range from high-gloss finishes consistent with microscopy equipment, to low-luster anodized finishes that may be perceived as precision equipment, similar to expensive machined lab components.

The PL-A680 is based on the original family of PixelINK products. These products have a light texture, mid-luster, silver powder coat finish. It is a high quality finish that is different from the lab or industrial equipment with which it is used. This base finish is somewhat compromised by the large, black and white labels applied to the upward facing surface.

## 6.30 Product Graphics

### 6.31 *PL-A741 Machine Vision Camera*

Overall, products in this space are low-visibility items, often hidden within manufacturing spaces or inconspicuous areas. Some product use graphics to add character and recognition to the items, but often the products are not encountered during routine installation and use. The brand elements may be important mostly for sales collateral and at trade shows.

Graphics are the primary brand elements on many industrial cameras. Larger companies (Figure 4,5 and 6) do not seem to add extensive graphics. This may be unnecessary as they have mind share via form and colour. Smaller companies (Figure 2 and 3) seem to apply corporate logos and colours liberally, probably due to lack of product recognition in the space. Minimally, the application of corporate logo and product logo and name is required.

The PixelINK machine vision camera has adequate surface area for application of corporate and product graphics. This can help distinguish the product, similarly to other competitors. (Figure 3)

### 6.32 *PL-A680 Medium Resolution Microscopy*

Clinical camera devices place greater emphasis on the graphical branding elements, probably due to the high visibility of the devices. Most units attempt to orient the brand elements facing the user, however this may not be possible for units with threaded c-mounts where the actual front orientation is dependant on the CCD orientation and the microscope optics. Some models emphasize the product brand over the corporate brand (Figure 7, 10 and 11).

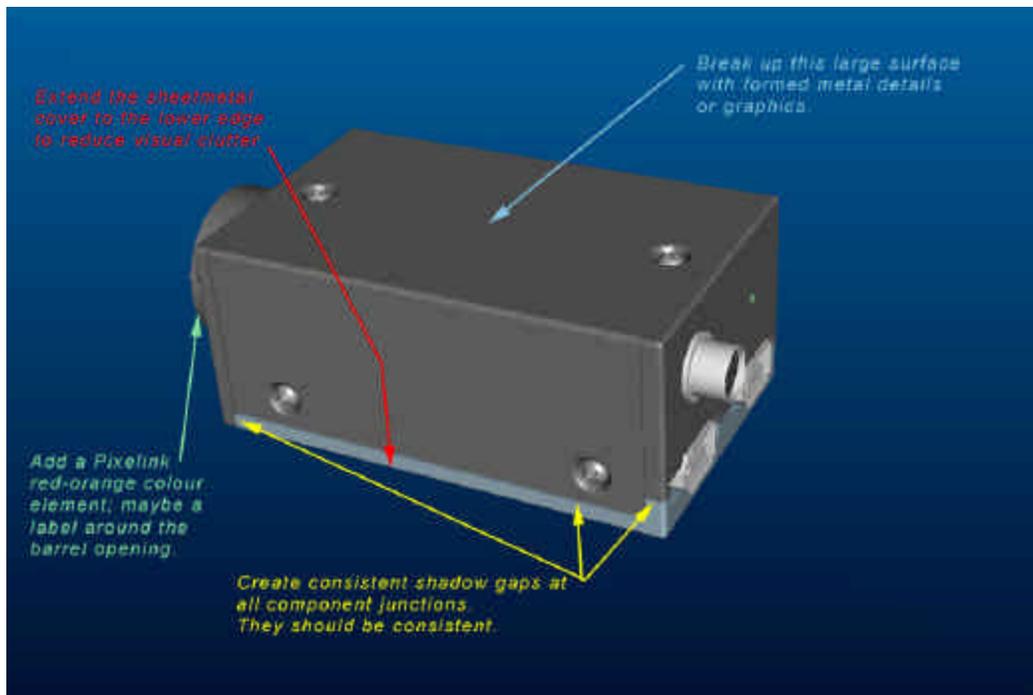
Currently the PL-A680 family of products carries only the PixelINK corporate brand on the unit. It may increasingly be desirable to emphasize the individual products within the PixelINK portfolio as the family extends into different markets. The development of individual product brand elements will allow for distinct product differentiation.

6.40 Brand Recommendations

6.41 PL-A741 Machine Vision Camera

In order to establish a robust character for the PL-A741, several steps should be taken.

1. Some minor shadow gap detailing should be applied to all machined components in order to reduce visible gaps due to part manufacturing deviation.
2. Extend the sheet metal cover edges all the way to the bottom of the unit to conceal the base part. This will reduce the multi-part-assembly look, giving a simpler appearance of 3-parts.
3. Break up the large sheet metal cover surfaces, either using shallow metal formed details, or via graphical elements. This will add visual detail to the basic machined surfaces.
4. Paint the unit in a light-texture dark silver or medium texture cool-gray seems to shimmer from the added texture. The colour will become the corporate standard for PixelINK industrial products.
5. Add PixelINK red-orange brand element.
6. Create and apply product brand name that can be used to differentiate this camera from other PixelINK units.



6.42 *PL-A680 Medium Resolution Microscopy*

This unit will be explored in detail as development progresses. The following elements will be incorporated:

1. The unit should have a similar, high-quality look-and-feel to the existing family product line incorporating similar colours, textures, and detailing.
2. Apply a PixelINK red-orange brand element will be incorporated to reflect the trade-dress.
3. Create and apply product brand name that can be used to differentiate this camera from other PixelINK units.
4. Incorporate PixelINK 's prime value proposition of *'simplicity'* into the product design.

**6.90 Competitive Product Examples**

6.91 *Competitive Industrial Camera Examples*



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

6.92 Competitive Clinical Camera Examples 1



Figure 7



Figure 9



Figure 8

6.93 Competitive Clinical Camera Examples 2



Figure10



Figure 11

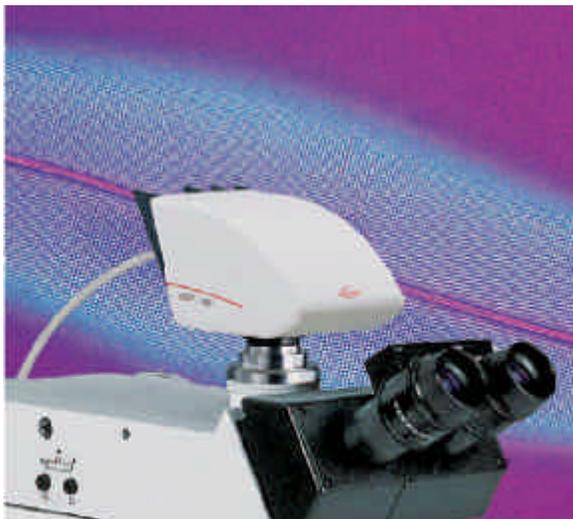


Figure 12



Figure 13

6.94 Competitive Microscope Examples



Figure 14



Figure 15

Prepared by Mike McGuire for

6.95 Trade Dress of Industrial Control Companies



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19

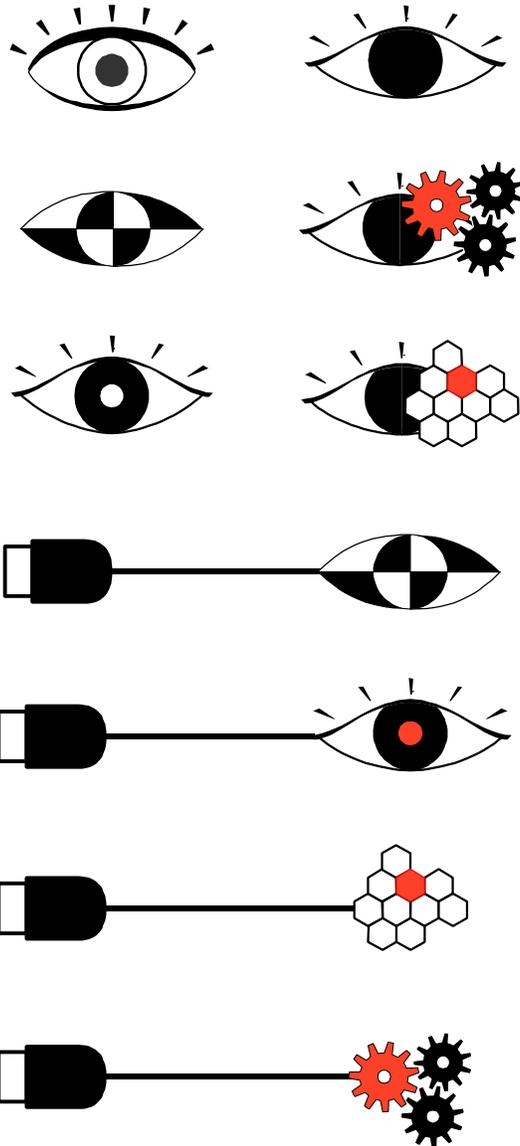


Figure 20



7.00 Product Logos

Several sample product logos are included below to stimulate discussion around the 2 different products.



## Appendices

## Appendix 1.00 Worksheet: PixelINK PL-A680

### A1.10 Positioning Considerations

Positioning is the act of creating an image for your product relative to the competition in your target market.

### A1.11 The inherent advantage of the product you are selling.

- Simplicity:
  - ✍ Easy to Use:
    - ?? 5 minutes to install and enjoy
    - ?? One FireWire cable carries all signals—power, data, control
    - ?? Daisy-chain multiple PixelINK units or other FireWire products
- Interoperability:
  - ?? Operates with third-party applications using TWAIN and DirectShow
  - ?? Windows 98 SE, 2000, and XP support
- Increased resolution for better imaging
- “Imaging solutions that *work*.”
- Durability “[for use]... even in harsh, space-constrained environments.”

### A1.12 The non-obvious value and advantages of the product

- Allows for very fast collaboration over distances, typically via e-mail
- Allows for close collaboration around a PC screen or projector

A1.13 The needs and wants of the target markets.

- Accurate Colour Imaging
- Repeatable Colour Settings
- Ease of Use
  - ~~///~~ Matching of optics and C-mount to camera are not obvious; this is done by reseller?
  - ~~///~~ Installed by MIS; not easy to upgrade firmware; simple wizard a la Norton would do it.
  - ~~///~~ Not intuitive on how to reset white balance and colour; could there be a 'one-touch' hard key to activate a wizard for this?
- Speed of gaining effective images (foot switch?, physical controls?)
- Often need to tweak image colour balance, clarity, and create B&W images (is this all in software?)
- Need to add titles and annotations to images; this is currently being done with other software (integrate some tools?)

A1.14 The competition.

- Offer many physically similar products
- Have not seen very much software; Some online simulations allude to more comprehensive, but complicated software
- Physical packages vary visually, primarily due to manufacturing approaches
- Minimal product branding emphasized through packages (SONY detailing, some different shapes)
- Branding is primarily reduced to corporate logos (all companies)
- Some corporate colour application (Zeiss, SONY, OLYPUS, NIKON); colour range seems neutral and muted
- Most cameras seem to be derived from industrial devices and reflect this with angular shapes, extruded forms and minimal packaging
- Medical oriented devices seem to be emerging; have a very clinical appearance
- Some camera have cooling units and heat-sink fins; are they trying to show this?

A1.15 Other End User Opinions and Concerns:

- One user does not see the inherent value of saving images for the long term; does this user not have a need to collaborate

## Appendix 2.00 Worksheet: PixelINK PL-A741 Machine Vision Camera

### A2.10 Positioning Considerations

Positioning is the act of creating an image for your product relative to the competition in your target market.

### A2.11 The inherent advantage of the product you are selling.

- Simplicity:

- ~~///~~ Easy to Use:

- ?? 5 minutes to install and enjoy

- ?? One FireWire cable carries all signals—power, data, control

- ?? Daisy-chain multiple PixelINK units or other FireWire products

- Interoperability:

- ?? Operates with third-party applications using TWAIN and DirectShow

- ?? Windows 98 SE, 2000, and XP support

- ?? Hirose connection for typical machine vision control

- “Imaging solutions that *work*.”

- Durability “[for use]... even in harsh, space-constrained environments.”

### A2.12 The non-obvious value and advantages of the product

- Used for typical machine vision scenarios?

- Allows for typical machine vision control via Hirose connector

A2.13 The needs and wants of the target markets.

- High speed capture (assembly line speeds)
- Accuracy ( $\pm 0.00001$  ?)
- Flexibility
  - ~~///~~ In software
  - ~~///~~ Where units install
  - ~~///~~ Multiple unit installs (Ethernet vs. FireWire)
  - ~~///~~ For using Accessories (light rings, mounts, cabling)
- Ease of Use
  - ~~///~~ In programming software.
  - ~~///~~ Installed by MIS; how is firmware upgraded?
- "In a machine vision environment the camera needs to be fairly rugged due to shock and vibration requirements." – Jon Gallant, CMP Design

A2.14 The competition.

- Offer many physically similar products
- Have extensive software to go with products
- Tend to sell as systems; or through integrators
- Physical packages vary visually, primarily due to manufacturing approaches
- Minimal product branding emphasized through packages (SONY detailing, some different shapes)
- Branding is primarily reduced to corporate logos (all companies)
- Some corporate colour application (Zeiss, SONY, OLYPUS, NIKON); colour range seems neutral and muted
- Most cameras seem to be derived from industrial devices and reflect this with angular shapes, extruded forms and minimal packaging
- Some camera have cooling units and heat-sink fins; are they trying to show this?

A2.15 Other End User Opinions and Concerns:

- No notes

### Appendix 3.00 Basic Approach to Product Branding

- A3.10 Meet with target market customers and gain insight into how end users work with similar existing products or related products in other categories. Ask specific questions that you think may be important. Document with photos, video and notes how individual users take you through a typical procedure and note the sequence of steps they have to go through.
- A3.20 Perform positioning research in order to collect basic information about what attributes are most important to all customers, internal, external, and end user, about the proposed product. Ascertain how present competitors are thought of in fulfilling those same attributes. Also work with existing teams such as Marketing, Sales, and Customer Support who should already have similar information. Beware of biases!
- A3.30 Examine the existing public corporate depiction (product, print, web-site, other media) and distil value propositions and brand positioning elements.
- A3.40 Creating a positioning statement that states the major way your new offering will differ from competitive products or services, while voicing unique benefits.
- A3.50 Creating a product name that reflects your product strategy, brands your product and positions it in the collective minds of your prospects and customers.
- A3.60 Explore product and graphic options that can help to elicit distinct brand emergence. Include the use or non-use of corporate colours. Explore varied appropriate and typical forms, often driven by manufacturing process and assembly requirements; also provide non-typical or transitive formal options (ie. borrowed from other product categories).
- A3.70 Create a product logo that reinforces the product name and provides a visual signature for the product in keeping with your positioning strategy. This product logo should be consistent with the product positioning statement, and many if not all, conceptual product forms.
- A3.80 Develop corporate product and graphic standards documents to help internal and external team members and suppliers develop product components, artwork and promotional materials in a consistent and professional manner. Articulate how the product identity aligns with the corporate identity and the identities of other products.
- A3.90 Writing a competitive comparison manual to help sales personnel distinguish and present product strengths relative to competitive products.

## Appendix 4.00 Overview of Branding<sup>1</sup>

### A4.10 What is a brand?<sup>1</sup>

If you ask ten marketing people or brand managers to define the word "brand" you will likely get ten different answers. Most of the answers you receive, hopefully, will have some common themes. In my own experience and study of brands and branding there is one definition of "brand" that seems to most succinctly define exactly what a brand is.

*The definition of brand: A brand is an identifiable entity that makes specific promises of value.*

In its simplest form, a brand is nothing more and nothing less than the promises of value you or your product make. These promises can be implied or explicitly stated, but none-the-less, value of some type is promised.

### A4.20 What is brand awareness?<sup>1</sup>

Brand awareness is vitally important for all brands but high brand awareness without an understanding of what sets you apart from the competition does you virtually no good. This distinction as to why your brand is unique in your category is also referred to as your Unique Selling Proposition (USP). Your USP tells your target market what you do and stand for that is different from all of your competitors.

### A4.30 What is brand equity?<sup>1</sup>

Brand Equity is the sum total of all the different values people attach to the brand, or the holistic value of the brand to its owner as a corporate asset.

Brand equity can include: the monetary value or the amount of additional income expected from a branded product over and above what might be expected from an identical, but unbranded product; the intangible value associated with the product that can not be accounted for by price or features; and the perceived quality attributed to the product independent of its physical features. A brand is nearly worthless unless it enjoys some equity in the marketplace. Without brand equity, you simply have a commodity product.

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<sup>1</sup> [Building A Strong Brand: Brands and Branding Basics](http://www.davedolak.com/whitepapers/dolak4.htm), by Dave Dolak, Copyright 2001, Dave Dolak  
[<http://www.davedolak.com/whitepapers/dolak4.htm>]

#### A4.40 More things to know about brands<sup>1</sup>

A brand is more than just a word or symbol used to identify products and companies. A brand also stands for the immediate image, emotions, or message people experience when they think of a company or product.

A brand represents all the tangible and intangible qualities and aspects of a product or service. A brand represents a collection of feelings and perceptions about quality, image, lifestyle, and status.

It is precisely because brands represent intangible qualities that the term is often hard to define. Intangible qualities, perceptions, and feelings are often hard to grasp and clearly describe.

Brands create a perception in the mind of the customer that there is no other product or service on the market that is quite like yours. A brand promises to deliver value upon which consumers and prospective purchasers can rely to be consistent over long periods of time.

End of Document

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