Journal your brand

Use this journal to take notes, complete tasks, get creative, or just doodle in it (that's still being creative).

Session 6; Brand architecture
How can you introduce new products and services without confusing people?

© PIN Creative 2025

Journal your brand

Untangle Your Brand
Session 6; Brand architecture

Introducing new products and services

(without confusing people)

What to expect	3
What is brand architecture?	4
6.1 Your brand summary	5
6.2 Organise, clarify rationalise	6
Different approaches	7
6.3 What's right for you	8
Naming hierarchy	9
Visual style	10
Stop, keep, start	11
Notes, ideas, sketches, doodles	12

Navigate through this document by clicking on the section titles above. If you're using the live Word version, you may need to update the table of contents via the references tab and select 'update page numbers only'.

© PIN Creative 2025

Back to contents

What to expect

This session explores brand architecture and how businesses can introduce new products and services without confusing their audience. As brands grow, they often expand their offerings, enter new markets, or acquire other businesses. Without a clear structure, this can lead to confusion and weaken brand recognition.

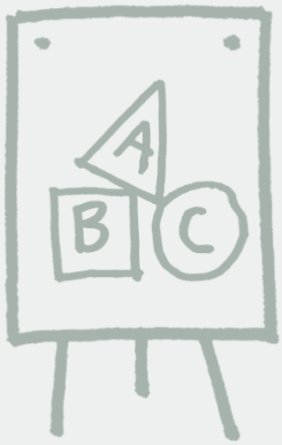
You will learn how to organise and rationalise your brand portfolio, choose the right approach for you business. By the end of the session, you will have a clearer understanding of how to build a strong, scalable brand architecture that aligns with their audience and business objectives.

By the end of this session, you will:

- Understand the principles of brand architecture, including its role in maintaining clarity and consistency across a growing portfolio of products and services.
- Apply strategic thinking to organise, clarify, and rationalise their brand portfolio to improve customer understanding and engagement.
- Evaluate different brand architecture models—monolithic, endorsed, branded, and hybrid—and determine the most suitable structure for their business.
- Reflect on your current branding approach, identifying areas for improvement and considering the long-term implications of their brand architecture decisions.
- Engage in practical exercises to map out a brand hierarchy, define a clear naming strategy, and develop a cohesive visual style that supports business growth.

Remember to complete the quiz and feedback form using the links provided. Your input is valuable for improving your experience, reviewing your progress against the original learning objectives, and enhancing the course overall.

Session 6 Quiz; test what you've learned
Session 6 Feedback; provide input to improve the session



© PIN Creative 2025

Back to contents

What is brand architecture?

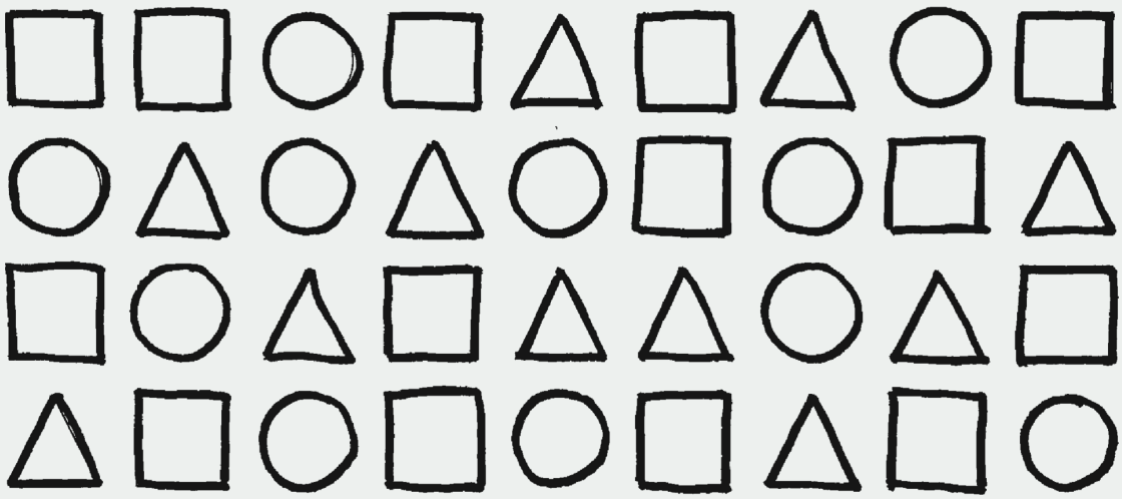
Brand architecture defines the hierarchy and relationships of all your brands, products and services so that your audience understands your offer more clearly.

As your business grows, you are increasingly likely to sell a variety of products. This may start off simply, with variations of your core product (such as different flavours of crisps). Eventually, you might develop entirely new products aimed at different audiences (some more luxurious, some more basic). Finally, you may acquire other companies and their brands (or someone might acquire your brand!!!).

Even though some of this might seem a long way offer, having a plan and building your approach earl will ensure you have less to untangle later.

Before you start though, you must have;
a) a clearly defined brand (what/how/why)
b) a visual identity that is flexible to use, but with fixed consistent elements

The following pages will give you an idea of what to consider when deciding what approach is right for your business.



© PIN Creative 2025

Journal your brand

Back to contents

6.1 Your brand summary

After creating your Brand Doughnut, the main areas to focus on for brand architecture are the offer, mission, and core. Before you start, create a summary of the defined brand below.

What (offer)
Products and services
a business sells

How (mission)
Unique approach
a business makes

Why (purpose)
Difference you make,
the big vision

© PIN Creative 2025

Back to contents

6.2 Organise, clarify rationalise

To make life easier, review your current product mix and different brands and names. Focus on these areas.

Organise the basic relationship of your portfolio; brands, names, companies, divisions, products, services. Try listing all your products, what is the logical order to arrange them? What order do you want your customers to find them?

Rationalise the offer so there is less confusion, making it easier for your customer to find what they need. With your list of products, where is there and overlap between what you're offering. Which are similar? Which are more distinct? What could you get rid of? What should you add?

Clarify everything through a consistent and meaningful approach to names, labels and messages that inform the audience. Page 8 explains what to think about in terms of product names. But what descriptive terms do you use? Are they consistent? Are they helpful to your audience?

© PIN Creative 2025

Back to contents

Different approaches

Most businesses will adopt a monolithic approach when they start. It's the easiest and cheapest option; however, it can also be limiting. The appropriate approach will depend on several factors, particularly the audience and the offer [see page 7 for a guide].

Below are the different approaches and the benefits (and weaknesses) of each.

Monolithic
All the same
[like FedEx]



Positive
+ Powerful parent brand
+ Visual consistency
+ Greater visibility
+ Clarity
+ Easy to manage

Negative
– Difficult to differentiate products/services

Endorsed
Stick on anything
[like Virgin]



Positive
+ Parent brand enhances products and services
+ Flexible and easy respond to market

Negative
– Conflict between parent brand and sub-brand personalities
– Expensive to maintain
– Can be confusing

Branded
Own it all
[like Unilever]



Positive
+ Each brand has its own personality
+ Flexible and easy to respond to market
+ Brands can compete

Negative
– Parent brand is low-key & diluted
– Expensive to promote and maintain

Hybrid
A little bit of everything
[like Google]



This approach is generally adopted by the larger brands that grow through acquisition and have an incredibly powerful parent brand. Each business unit has the approach that best fits the offer/audience. Often a transition strategy is adopted, whereby a business may be endorsed before becoming full integrated.

© PIN Creative 2025

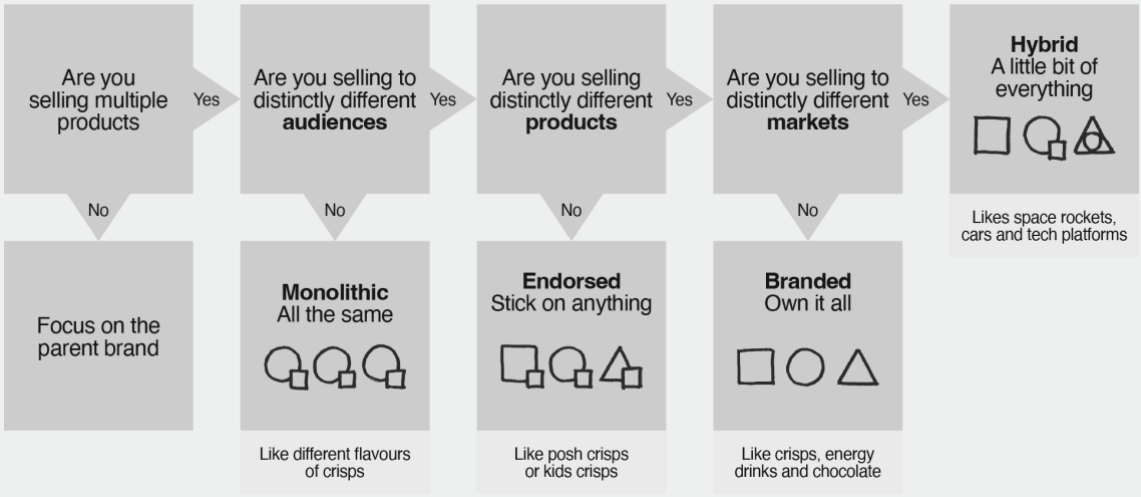
Back to contents

6.3 What's right for you

Choosing the right option for your brand architecture will require considering several factors, including known aspects such as audience reach and the profitability of a particular product or service. Generally, start simply and adopt a monolithic approach; you can always develop a more sophisticated strategy later.

The decision tree below will help you. Just remember that you are selling different flavours of the same thing, complementary products that are sold on the same shelf or competing products that will fill the shelf. While providing your customers with a choice, ultimately, they'll be buying your stuff and not a competitor's.

Decision tree



What are the implications of each approach for you?

Monolithic	Endorsed	Branded

© PIN Creative 2025

Back to contents

Naming hierarchy

Naming is important to consider. Are you creating a suite of products that share a similar format and subject matter?

Which is the most important name for customers?

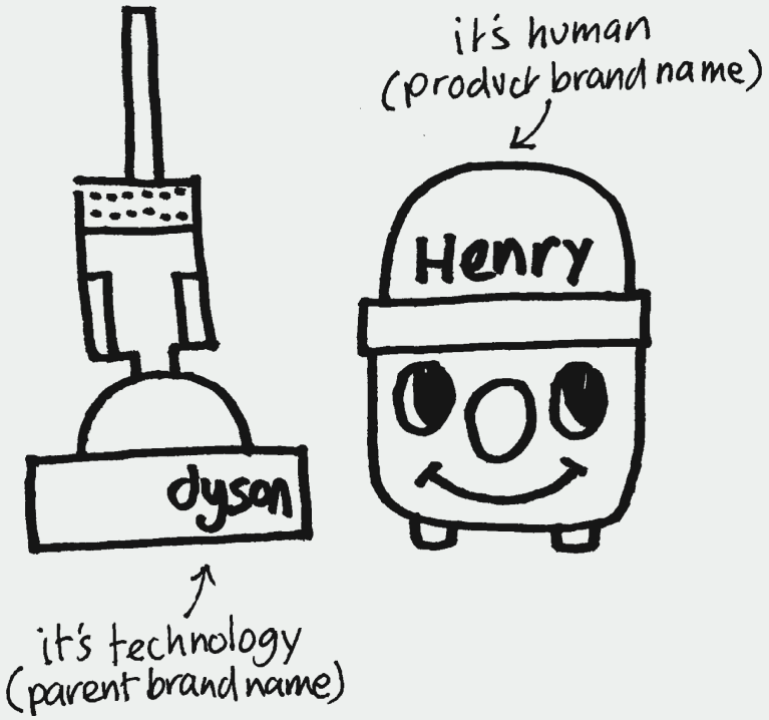
The brand name—typically when you've established brand awareness and significant loyalty, such as Dyson—or the product name itself—usually when you've gained fame for a product that customers adore, like Henry or Hoover.

Descriptions are always helpful in reminding people of the unique benefit and what makes the product different. Categories should be self-evident, but remember that brands like Apple lead with their category. There is no brand name. Just a symbol of a piece of fruit, followed by the words iPhone, Mac, iPad, Music, or whatever they decide to do next.

Remember that once you've established a set of principles, you must follow them consistently; otherwise, you will create greater confusion.

Vacuum cleaner examples

Brand name	Dyson	Numatic	Techtronic Industries
Product name	DC39	Henry	Hoover Helix
Unique benefit	Animal Plus	Plus	Pets Bagless
Category	Vacuum cleaner	Vacuum cleaner	Vacuum cleaner



© PIN Creative 2025

Back to contents

Visual style

Depending on the approach you adopt, you can utilise your brand elements (typeface, colours, imagery, and icons) to establish a distinctive look and feel for your family of brands.

Monolithic
A monolithic style employs the parent brand identity as the primary element, with the 'sub-brand' names indicating the various offerings. The typeface should remain consistent with the parent brand, though additional colours may be necessary to introduce a degree of personality (such as the different colours used to distinguish crisp flavours). Establishing colour coding can be challenging, so do not depend on customers to grasp your colour coding immediately. They may understand it over time. There remains confusion between 'salt'n'vinegar' (which ought to be blue) and 'cheese'n'onion' (which should be green!). Apple exemplifies a monolithic approach; they simply utilise a symbol alongside a word. Straightforward.

Focus on the parent brand logo, use naming to make it clear what your product is.

Endorsed
An endorsed brand will utilise the parent brand in a significantly reduced relationship to the product name. This approach allows for greater flexibility and fosters personality through other elements such as type, colour, and imagery. Altering fonts and image styles can significantly impact your desired audience. The parent brand must be substantial enough to function effectively at smaller sizes and should not depend on colour for prominence. Different brands may adopt similar styles in various countries (Walkers in the UK or Lays in other regions). Ultimately, it's about what works best for your audience.

Focus on creating the right personality with fonts, colours and imagery. The more you use from your parent brand, the greater relationship with the parent brand.

Branded
Anything goes, and you'll be creating an entire brand for the product, with a new brand core, new messaging, and a new visual identity. It takes time (and money), but you can really begin to dominate a market. Typically, the parent brand remains invisible (merely a line of text on the back of a packet or the footer of a document), although some of the larger brands (such as Unilever) are enhancing their visual presence by using their symbol as a signal that the various products in the market carry their seal of approval. There may be one brand that is dominant and connected to the parent brand, which is often the most well-known brand (like PepsiCo or Ford).

Focus on the market and differentiating each product from others. You're creating a whole new brand.









© PIN Creative 2025

Back to contents

Stop, keep, start

After completing this session, what are the key things you should change immediately? What's working well, and what needs to start happening?

Remember to complete the quiz and feedback form using the links provided. Your input is valuable for improving your experience, reviewing your progress against the original learning objectives, and enhancing the course overall.

Session 6 Quiz; test what you've learned
Session 6 Feedback; provide input to improve the session

I will **stop** doing

I will **keep** doing

I will **start** doing

© PIN Creative 2025

Back to contents

Notes, ideas, sketches, doodles

© PIN Creative 2025