

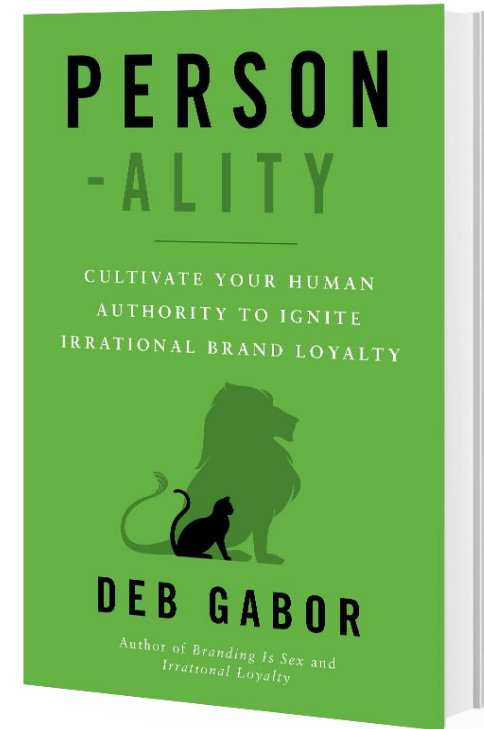
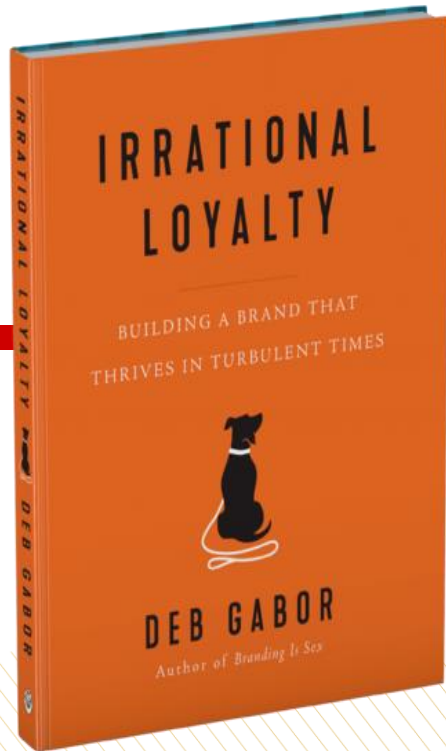
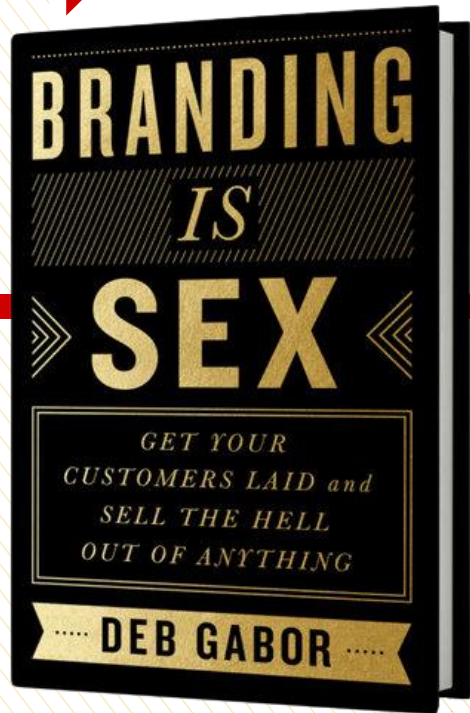


DEB GABOR

AUTHOR | CEO | BRAND EXPERT

Winning the “*UNREASONABLE*” Bid:
How Exhibition Brands Create
IRRATIONAL LOYALTY
and *STOP* Competing on Price

BORN TO BRAND



BRANDS ARE
LIKE PEOPLE

Southwest[®] 

WHAT CAN WE
LEARN FROM A
BRAND THAT
KILLED
CUSTOMER
S





WHAT ABOUT
EXHIBITION SERVICE

BRANDS
IN 2026



THE HARSH REALITY OF EXHIBITION SERVICES

Margins are compressing as clients commoditize exhibition services.

RFPs reduce complex capabilities to line-item price comparisons.

The barrier to entry keeps dropping; new competitors emerge every year.

One bad show-floor experience? You're out of the rotation.

Being “good at what you do” is table stakes, not a differentiator.

WHY BRAND MATTERS MORE THAN EVER IN EXHIBITION SERVICES

Functional parity is real: most exhibition contractors offer similar services.

Clients want partners that reflect well on them—that make them look good to their stakeholders.

Emotional differentiation drives retention: trust and confidence keep clients from even opening the RFP process.

Transactional relationships mean you're always re-bidding.
Emotional bonds mean you're the incumbent they don't want to replace.

YOUR COMPETITOR IS ONE RFP AWAY

Switching costs are lower than you think—clients don't owe you loyalty, they owe their stakeholders a great show.

Competitors don't just bid on your accounts—they build relationships with your clients at every industry event.

The only defensible strategy? Become the partner they'd feel bad replacing.

WHAT IS A BRAND ?

THE COLLECTIVE
EMOTIONAL RESPONSE
TO YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE



EXPECTATIONS



MEMORIES





A RELATIONSHIP

MEANINGFUL
DIFFERENTIATION



A PROMISE

Disney

amazon



THE RITZ-CARLTON

FedEx®

Google

Coca-Cola

A decorative border at the top of the slide featuring a repeating geometric pattern of stars and diamonds in a light gold color.

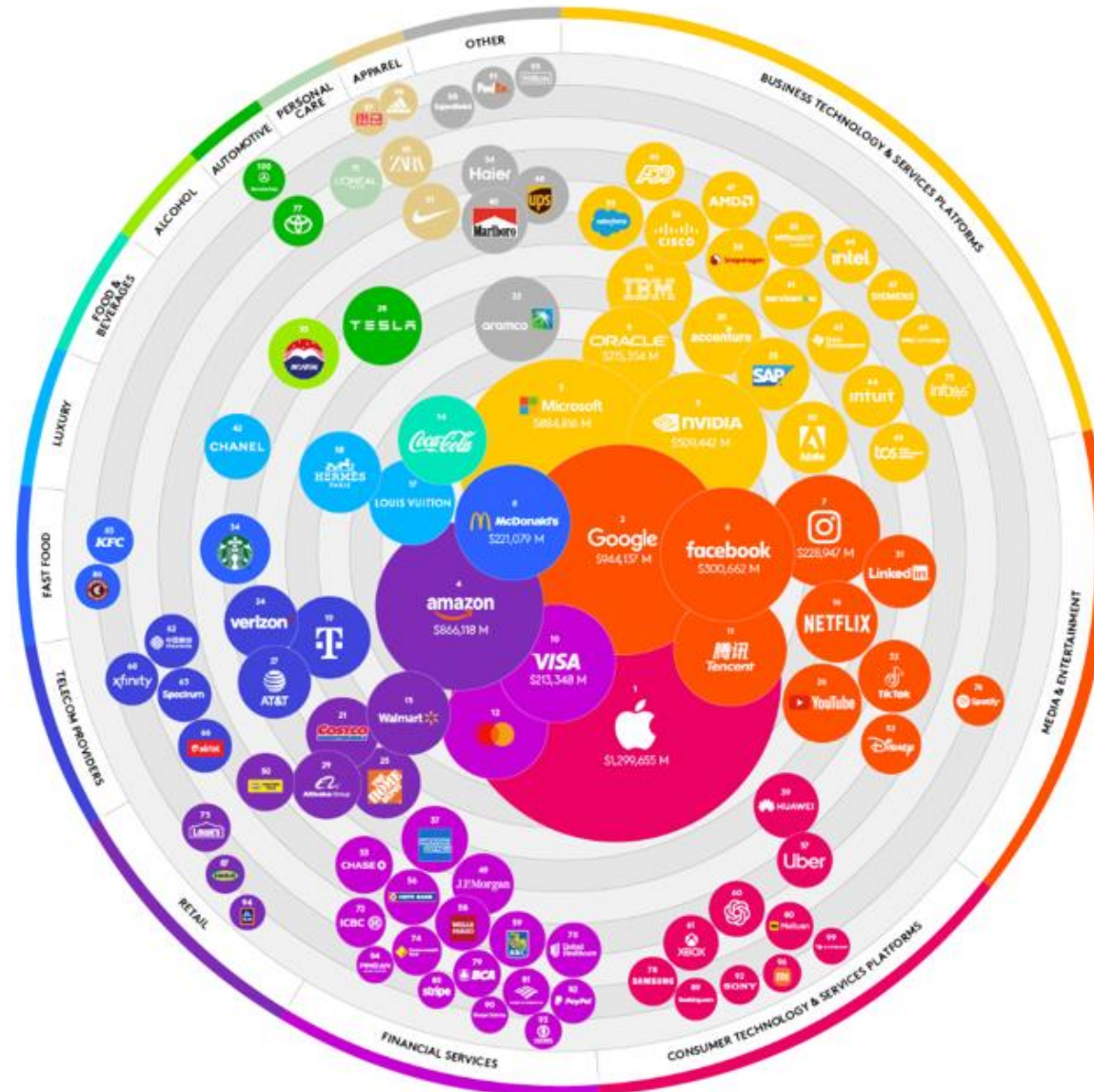
AN INTANGIBLE ASSET

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A decorative border at the top of the slide featuring a repeating geometric pattern of stars and diamonds in a light gold color.

A FINANCIAL ASSET

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2025 MOST VALUABLE GLOBAL BRANDS

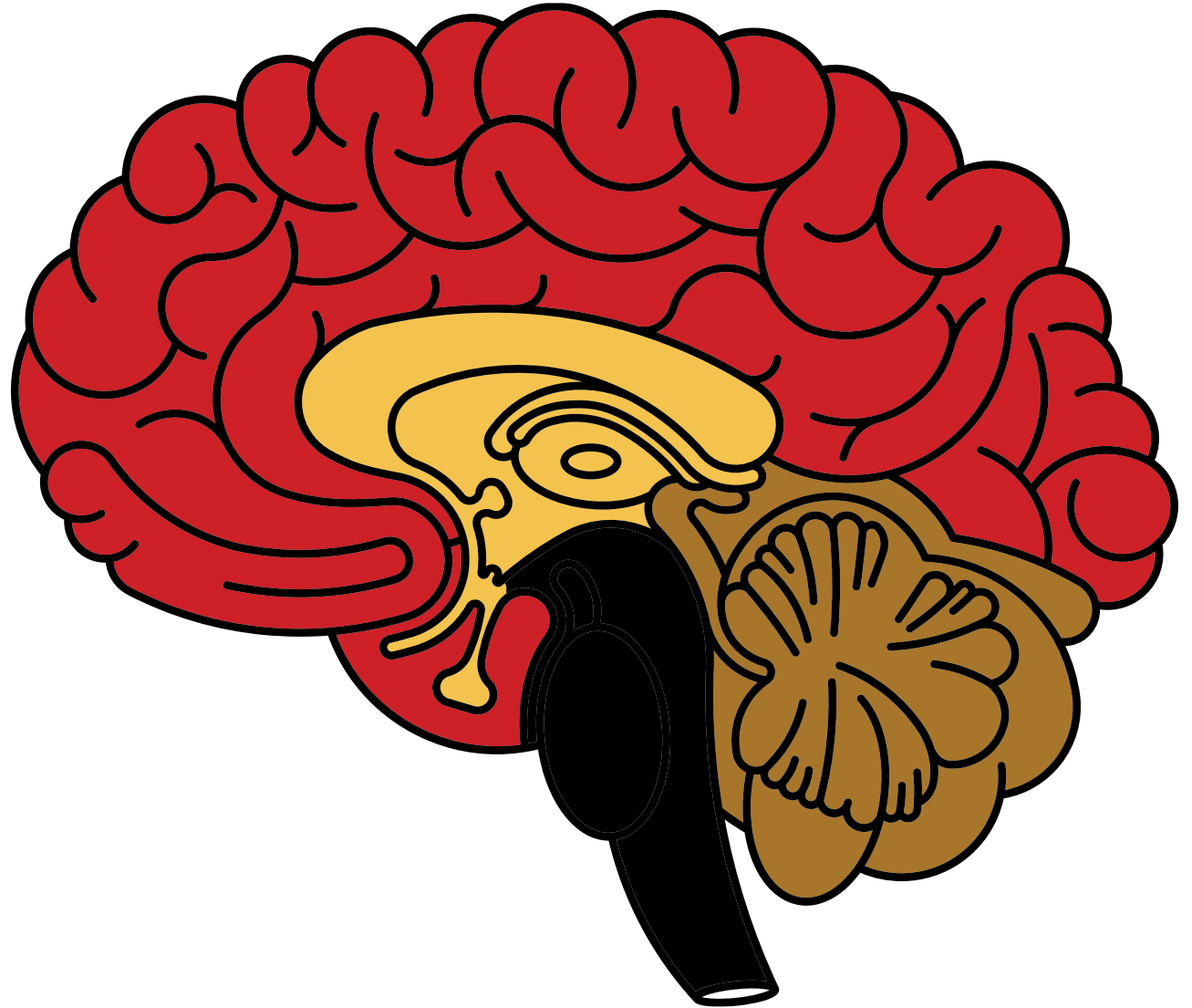
BRAND	BRAND VALUE (US\$M)	BRAND	BRAND VALUE (US\$M)
1 APPLE	1,299,655	51 NIKE	49,464
2 GOOGLE	944,137	52 DISNEY	48,665
3 MICROSOFT	884,816	53 CHASE	48,117
4 AMAZON	866,118	54 HAIER	47,578
5 NVIDIA	509,442	55 VMWARE	47,076
6 FACEBOOK	300,662	56 HDFC BANK	44,959
7 INSTAGRAM	228,947	57 UBER	44,197
8 MCDONALD'S	221,079	58 WELLS FARGO	44,196
9 ORACLE	215,354	59 RBC	44,179
10 VISA	213,548	60 CHATGPT	43,562
11 TENCENT	174,005	61 XBOX	43,047
12 MASTERCARD	167,882	62 CHINA MOBILE	41,299
13 IBM	125,973	63 SPECTRUM	40,037
14 COCA-COLA	119,979	64 INTEL	37,390
15 WALMART	119,580	65 ZARA	37,246
16 NETFLIX	115,271	66 AIRTEL	37,094
17 LOUIS VUITTON	111,938	67 SIEMENS	36,390
18 HERMÈS	109,421	68 XFINITY	36,049
19 TELEKOM/T-MOBILE	105,717	69 DELL TECHNOLOGIES	35,446
20 ACCENTURE	103,810	70 UNITEDHEALTHCARE	35,238
21 COSTCO	100,809	71 L'ORÉAL PARIS	35,090
22 ARAMCO	93,554	72 ICBC	33,915
23 SAP	92,547	73 INFOSYS	33,096
24 VERIZON	90,490	74 COMMBANK	32,093
25 THE HOME DEPOT	89,230	75 LOWE'S	30,859
26 YOUTUBE	89,190	76 SPOTIFY	29,687
27 AT&T	86,878	77 TOYOTA	29,329
28 TESLA	86,043	78 SAMSUNG	29,255
29 ALIBABA	81,208	79 BCA	28,749
30 ADOBE	80,759	80 MEITUAN	27,925
31 LINKEDIN	76,856	81 BANK OF AMERICA	27,524
32 TIKTOK	75,669	82 PAYPAL	27,228
33 MOUTAI	74,446	83 KFC	26,875
34 STARBUCKS	69,732	84 PING AN	26,326
35 SALESFORCE	69,503	85 STRIPE	26,127
36 CISCO	68,268	86 CHIPOTLE	26,125
37 AMERICAN EXPRESS	65,886	87 IKEA	25,673
38 SNAPDRAGON	65,632	88 EXXONMOBIL	25,544
39 HUAWEI	64,657	89 BOOKING.COM	25,060
40 MARLBORO	64,101	90 MORGAN STANLEY	24,784
41 SERVICENOW	62,481	91 FEDEX	23,978
42 CHANEL	62,292	92 SONY	23,858
43 TEXAS INSTRUMENTS	59,865	93 AGRICULTURAL BANK OF CHINA	23,550
44 INTUIT	59,009	94 ALDI	23,286
45 TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES	57,553	95 HILTON	23,000
46 ADP	56,969	96 XIAOMI	21,917
47 AMD	56,629	97 UNIGLO	21,599
48 UPS	55,007	98 ADIDAS	21,057
49 J.P. MORGAN	50,697	99 DOORDASH	20,880
50 MERCADO LIBRE	49,846	100 MERCEDES-BENZ	20,815

THE HUMAN BRAIN

NEOCORTEX - RATIONAL/THINKING

LIMBIC - WHY

REPTILIAN - AUTOMATIC RESPONSE



98%

OF WHAT THE BRAIN DOES
HAPPENS OUTSIDE OF AWARENESS

95%

OF DECISIONS HAPPEN OUTSIDE
OF THE NEOCORTEX



**A
BRAND**
is a
STORY

The background is a solid red color. On the left side, there is a vertical black line. To the left of this line, there is a pattern of thin, parallel diagonal lines. The rest of the background is covered with a repeating pattern of the text 'DES GABOR' and a logo consisting of a stylized 'DG' inside a square.

**YOUR
BRAND**

IS

**YOUR
STORY**

Y

The background is a solid red color. On the left side, there is a vertical black line. To the left of this line, there is a pattern of diagonal red lines. The rest of the background is covered with a repeating pattern of the 'DES GABOR' logo, which consists of the brand name in a sans-serif font next to a stylized 'DG' monogram inside a square border.

BRAND
OR
BE BRANDED



AIRLINES · 5 days ago

United flight attendant who forced dog into overhead bin 'lying,' owner's daughter says

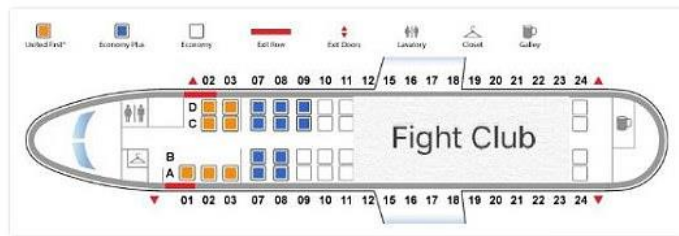
United Airlines mixup accidentally sends dog to Japan



McNeil
@Reiflog_18

Follow

United Airlines is pleased to announce new seating on all domestic flights- in addition to United First and Economy Plus we introduce....



RETWEETS
36,464

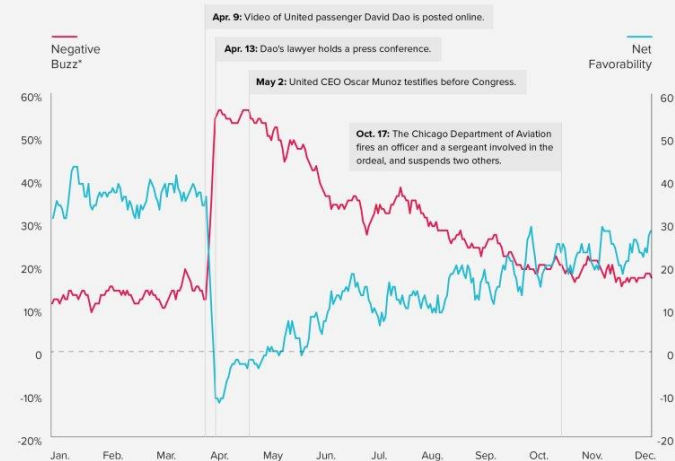
LIKES
54,614



8:13 AM · 10 Apr 2017

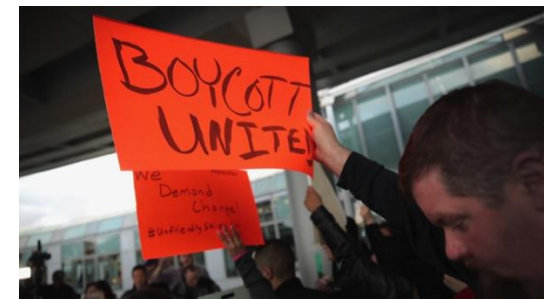
United's Favorability Nosedives, Rebounds After Video

United Negative Buzz* vs. Net Favorability in 2017



MORNING CONSULT

Polls conducted from 01/01-12/07, among a national sample of 112,804 U.S. adults, with a margin of error of +/-0.3%.



IRRATIONAL LOYALTY *in ACTION*

Every employee empowered to spend up to \$2,000 per guest to solve a problem, no manager approval needed

Brand promise isn't about amenities, it's about how guests feel

Commands 40–60% premium over competitors, and guests pay it gladly

Service culture becomes brand identity, not marketing, but behavior

Created loyalty so deep, clients don't even consider alternatives



THE RITZ-CARLTON

THE *RITZ-CARLTON* EFFECT



THE RITZ-CARLTON

Consistently ranked #1 in luxury hospitality: two
Malcolm Baldrige Awards

40–60% price premium over comparable luxury
hotels

Guest return rate near 80%: guests don't even shop
alternatives

Brand built on service culture, not marketing spend

Proved that empowered teams build emotional
bonds that pricing can't break



YOUR BRAND
MATTERS



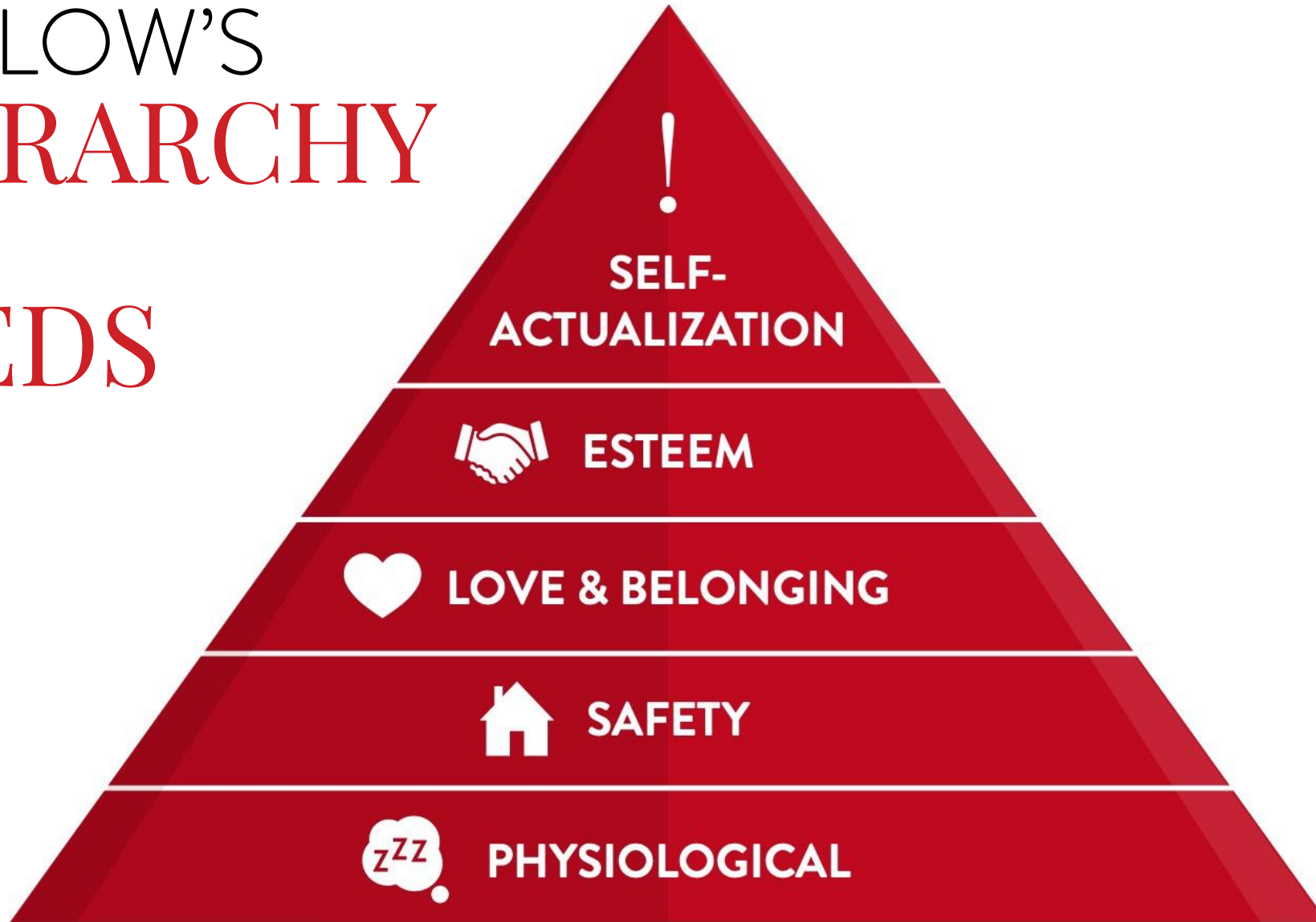


**YOUR
BRAND**
IS NOT
**ABOUT
YOU**

The background is a solid red color. On the left side, there is a vertical black line. To the left of this line, there is a pattern of diagonal red lines. The rest of the background is covered with a repeating pattern of the text 'DES GABOR' and a logo consisting of a stylized 'DG' inside a square.

**YOUR
BRAND
IS
ABOUT
THEM**

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



DEFINING
**CORE
BRAND
DNA**

BRAND VALUES PYRAMID



**Self-expressive
benefits**



**Emotional
benefits**



**Functional
benefits**



TODAY'S OPTIONS

ARE

PACKAGES
TOMORROW'S STANDARD EQUIPMENT



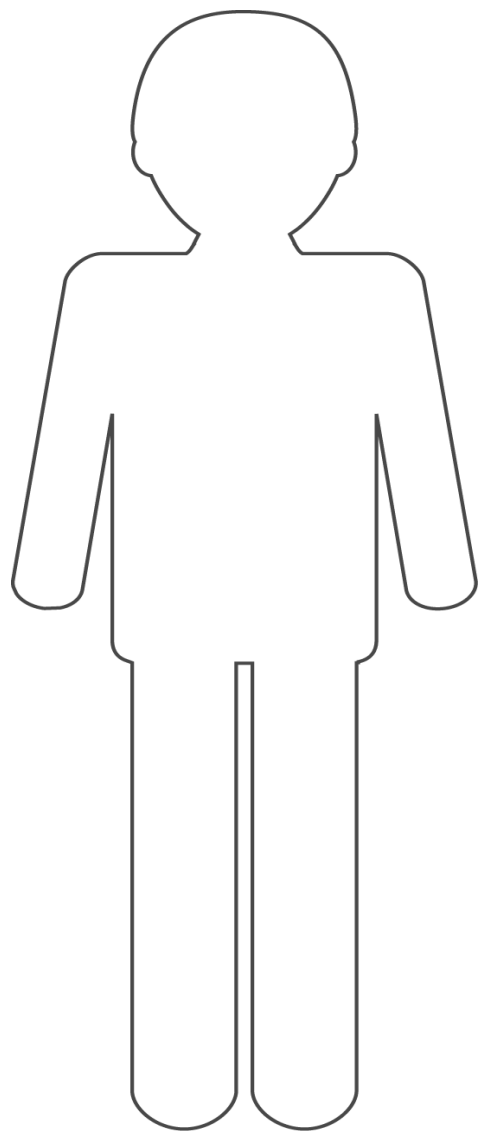
THE IDEAL ARCHETYPE CUSTOMER

WHO IS THE CUSTOMER
WORTH THE
OVER THE LONG HAUL?
MOST

WHO IS THE CUSTOMER WHO IS
MOST PROFITABLE
AND
A DELICIT TO SERVE?

WHO WILL KEEP BUYING FROM YOU
**AGAIN AND
AGAIN?**

WHO IS YOUR
BRAND'S
CHAMPION?



What do they LOOK like?

What is their DAY like?

What keeps them UP AT NIGHT?

What are they AFRAID OF?

What are their GOALS?

What are their CHALLENGES?

What makes them feel SEXY?







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BRAND SWAGGER QUESTIONS

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WHAT DOES IT
SAY ABOUT YOUR
CUSTOMER

THAT THEY USE YOUR BRAND

WHAT IS THE
ONE THING

CUSTOMERS GET FROM YOU THEY CAN'T GET FROM ANYONE ELSE?





HOW DO YOU MAKE YOUR CUSTOMER

THE HERO

IN HIS OR HER OWN STORY?



BRAND™ Archetype

HOW TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE
IN YOUR CUSTOMER'S STORY





JESTER



CAREGIVER



RULER



MAGICIAN



HERO



HOW WILL YOU

TRANSFORM

YOUR BUSINESS?





LET'S START SOMETHIN !

G
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deb@debgabor.com

