



# The Friend's Guide to Branding

*An Introduction to Brand as Friend<sup>®</sup>*



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# EVERY CMO NEEDS A FRIEND

For a CMO, the world of mass marketing can feel like a lonely place. Just take a look behind the doors of any C-suite and you'll find the chief marketing officer attempting to single-handedly uphold unbounded expectations, cope with dwindling budgets and keep up with an ever-changing marketplace filled with a dizzying array of media options.

It's no wonder chief marketing officer has become a title synonymous with extremely high turnover. And it's why every CMO needs a friend to help navigate the **constantly evolving obstacles** that stand in the way of marketing success.





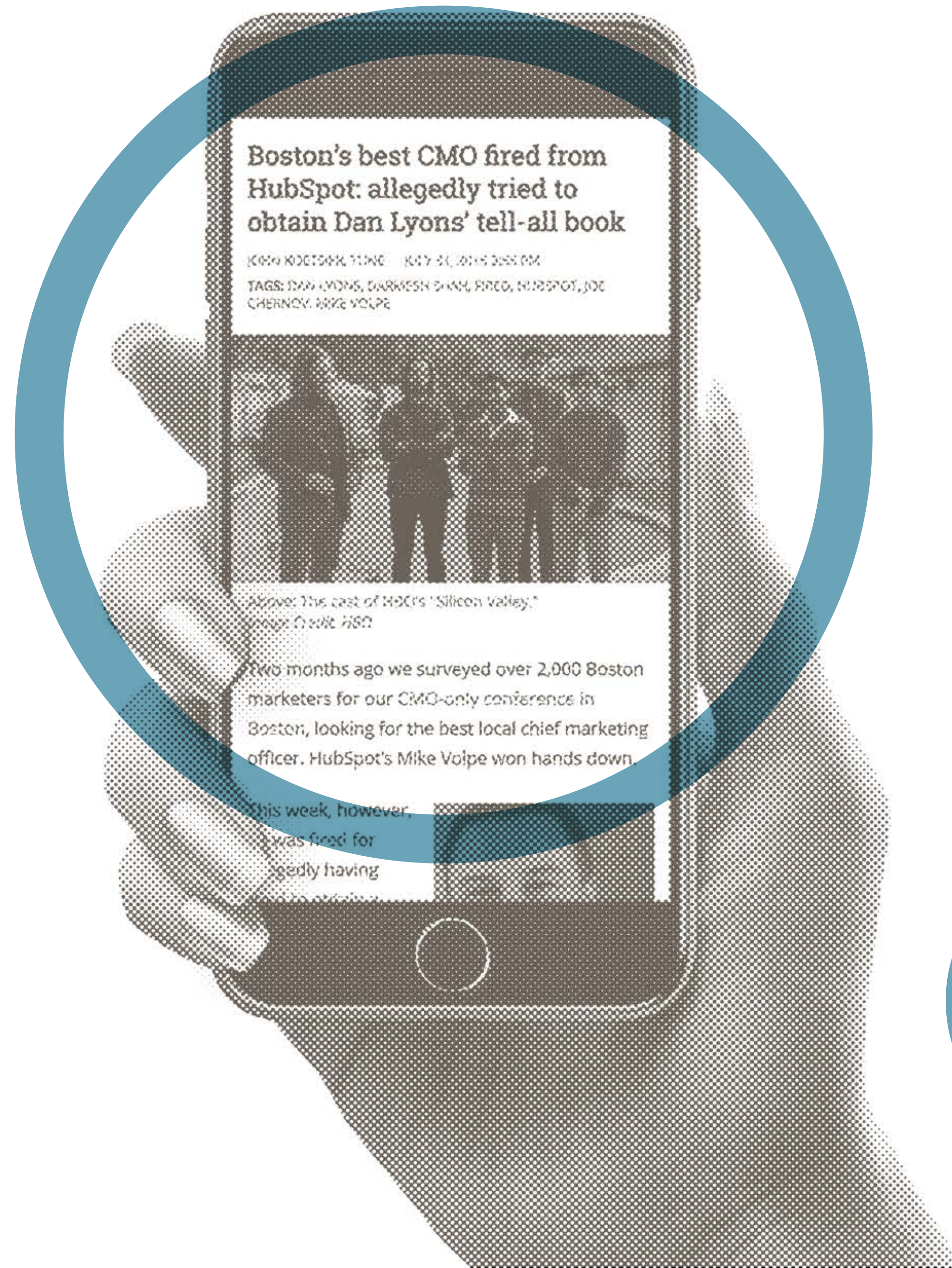
### **OBSTACLE #1: STAYING IN THE GAME**

According to an article in the March 2nd, 2016, issue of *The Wall Street Journal*, the average tenure of a chief marketing officer has dropped to 44 months — the first drop in more than a decade. We can thank factors such as retirements, a record year of mergers and acquisitions and the elimination of duplicate roles for those higher turnover rates. When you add in the decisions by CEOs and boards to simply change marketing chiefs, you have CMOs working faster and harder to ensure their success beyond the average tenure.

## **OBSTACLE #2: MANAGING MERGERS**

Beyond their own longevity, CMOs are grappling with many difficult and challenging branding issues on a daily basis. Mergers and acquisitions pose a particular challenge, especially if brand hierarchies, product naming conventions and brand standards are poorly conceived and/or executed. What kind of brand equity does the acquired brand retain and how long should any transitions take?

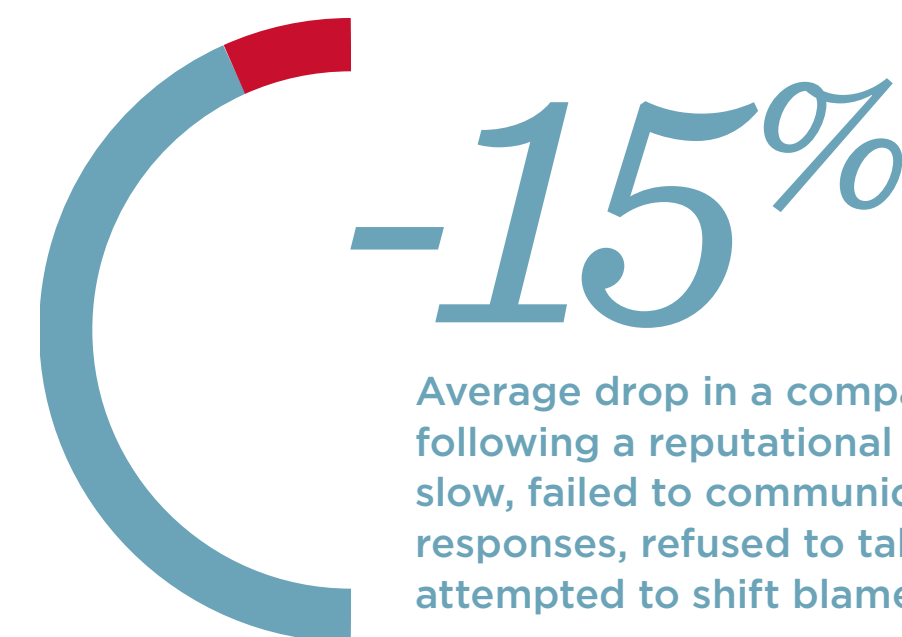




### OBSTACLE #3: DEFENDING YOUR REPUTATION

Another trial facing CMOs is managing the reputation of their brands and company. On a regular basis CMOs are not only facing mergers and acquisitions, but also a host of other potential crises that could impact their brand and their own tenure at the company. How many times have we seen a major product recall, labor issue or poor behavior by someone in a company lead to a major shakeup?

“Bad news travels fast” is an understatement in today’s digital world. Our internet-driven society spreads information — especially the negative or controversial — at near instantaneous speeds 24/7/365. With risks like this, protecting your brand’s reputation becomes demanding, complex and critical.



\*Oxford Metrica 2011 Reputation Review

#### **OBSTACLE #4: REALITY CHECKS**

It's a whole new world out there. And the digital realities of search engines, content marketing, social media, programmatic media, responsive design, etc. are enough to baffle even the most tech-savvy brand managers. It's enough to leave any CMO guessing about their impact on brand building and driving business success.





### **OBSTACLE #5: KNOWING YOUR PLACE**

CMOs regularly struggle with brand hierarchies and product naming conventions. Are you a “house of brands,” a “branded house,” or some type of hybrid? How do you assess the brand equity? Do your product names seem completely random and confuse all but the most knowledgeable of your customers? If you’re asking yourself these questions, you’re not alone.



*Since CMOs have very little time to impact their brands and are facing a host of difficult challenges, how do they effectively develop a brand strategy and evaluation criteria to propel them forward?*



*affection*

*trust*

# FRIENDSHIP

*relevance*

Think about it. Friends care about the things you care about. They say the right things at the right time. And, above all else, friends always deliver on their promises. By focusing marketing on three pillars of friendship — **affection**, **relevance**, and **trust** — we help brands develop that same kind of special relationship with their audiences, be they shoppers, influencers or clients.





*affection*

**CARING | LISTENING | SURPRISE**

When you gain affection for a friend it's because there's something about them that you like. Maybe it's their passion for helping you or others in need. Maybe it's their uncanny knack for listening and reacting accordingly. Or maybe it's the way they always manage to surprise you with something fun, exciting or entertaining.

Brands that know how to build this kind of appeal connect with people on a deeper level. They're the brands that people spend time with, advocate for, and stay loyal to.



*relevance*

**STORY | STYLE | CONNECTING**

Some friends are bold and adventurous. Others are warm and compassionate. And some are fun and quirky — the kind that always make us smile. Every friend has a distinct personality, a story to tell, a unique way of telling it, and a style that we appreciate or relate to in some way. It's why we're attracted to some people more than others.

The same holds true for brands. There are some brands that people feel a connection with, and many more that just don't click. The brands that people feel most attracted to are those that complement their lifestyle — and their compatibility is clear. As a result, they're magnetically drawn to each other. Brands that build upon this "magnetism" will enjoy a deeper relationship with their targets while distancing themselves from other brands in their category.



*trust*

**HONESTY | ADVISING | LOYALTY**

Friends are never fake or deceptive. They're authentic and real. They admit when they make a mistake, and as a result, we forgive them. When they give us advice, we trust their judgment. Simply put, friends always have our best interests at heart. That's why we're loyal to them and they're loyal to us.

People look to brands the same way. When your brand proves you can guide customers to the most thoughtful and intelligent choices, you become a thought leader — someone they can truly trust. And in a world where 70% of people are more likely to listen to the opinions of a stranger online than believe what a brand has to say, trust is everything.\*

\*EMA Proprietary Consumer Survey, June 2013



# BRAND AS FRIEND<sup>®</sup>

University of Buffalo Professor Dr. Charles Lindsey's white paper on the Brand as Friend Model studies the importance of brand friendship in the marketplace and the proven behavioral scientific drivers of friendship. He also explores the nature and conditions of friendship, including mutual **caring, intimacy** and **shared activity**.

According to Lindsey, "A necessary condition of friendship is that friends care about each other. Friends must be moved by what happens to their friends and feel the appropriate emotions. Moreover, in part as an expression of their caring for each other, friends normally are disposed to promote the other's good."

He goes on to add, "Entering into and sustaining a friendship normally involves considerable **trust** in your friend's goodwill towards you, and not just concerning your secrets." Friends also engage in shared activity and pursuits, which is in part motivated by the friendship itself. Lindsey provides more evidence that in addition to caring, intimacy and shared activity, **trust, honesty, advising, loyalty, listening, surprise, storytelling, style,** and **connecting** are all important factors in creating and maintaining a friendship.



**BUT HOW DOES THIS HELP ME WITH MY BRANDING CHALLENGES?**

Based on this research, we believe that whether you're a B2B or B2C brand, it pays to be a friend. And it all boils down to nine key drivers of friendship that build **affection**, **relevance** and **trust**.

Would you consider your brand a “good friend” or merely an “acquaintance”? Do customers trust your brand, but don't see you as an advisor? Do you have a story to tell, but customers don't know it? What kind of friend do you want to be to your audience?

Brand as Friend will help you understand how your brand currently resonates and provide a path forward to create an effective, motivating and differentiated brand position, as well as an integrated marketing plan to activate it and well-informed creative to bring it to life.

BRAND AS FRIEND®

*3 steps to create  
successful  
friendships*

**THE BRAND AS FRIEND WORKSHOP**

A two- to three-hour session where we'll explore your brand on each of the nine drivers of friendship. We find that it works best when we include people from marketing, sales, customer service and other disciplines who all have a stake in successfully creating friendships with customers. This allows us to gather important details about how the brand delivers on each driver today and brainstorm ideas to improve performance for the future.



## **THE BRAND AS FRIEND SELF-ASSESSMENT**

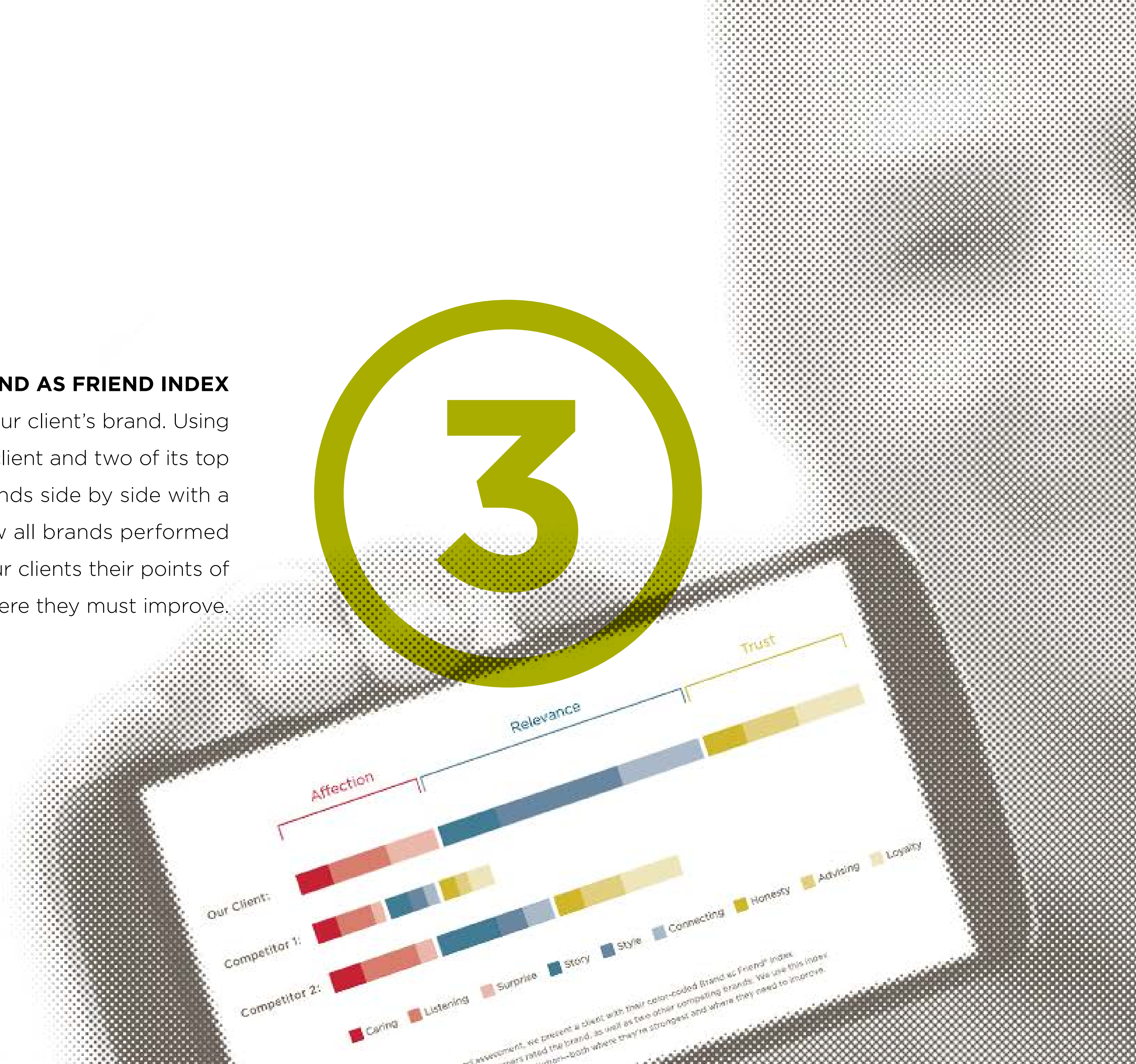
Next, we ask Brand as Friend Workshop participants to take a quick, 20-question online survey. Each question asks them to consider how they themselves view and value the brand experience. Scores are calculated for each driver, indicating how well our clients think they perform, as well as providing an overall Friendship Score that paints a picture of how our clients think their brand stacks up.





### THE BRAND AS FRIEND INDEX

Next, we look at how customers themselves feel about our client's brand. Using the same key questions, we ask customers to rate the client and two of its top competitors. The Brand as Friend Index compares brands side by side with a simple, color-coded graph that shows us precisely how all brands performed against the drivers of friendship. We use this to show our clients their points of differentiation, both where they are the strongest and where they must improve.



*The chart below illustrates that we're a better friend because we significantly outpace competitors on Affection, Relevance and Trust. Honesty and Caring are areas that we can improve to extend our advantage.*

Affection

Relevance

Trust

Our Client:



Competitor 1:



*We need to heighten emphasis on Story, the only driver where we lag behind a competitor.*

*By exploring new avenues that provide heightened transparency, we can deepen the driver of Honesty.*

Competitor 2:




Caring   Listening   Surprise   Story   Style   Connecting   Honesty   Advising   Loyalty

## **MAKE IT HAPPEN**

The ideal Brand as Friend score should reflect a balance of affection, relevance and trust. Once we see how your customers perceive your brand relative to its competition, we can create a brand road map and recommend the most effective strategies to create stronger, longer-lasting bonds in the key areas that customers value the most.

With all the challenges facing CMOs, from a historically short tenure to reputation management, a thoughtful and concise approach to branding and planning is key. Brand as Friend provides the necessary inputs to objectively look at a brand and provide a differentiating lens and compass.





*To see how your brand measures up, take the online Brand as Friend self-assessment, and share it with your colleagues. Once the results are in, we'll send you a customized report and contact you to discuss the findings and implications for your brand.*

**TAKE ASSESSMENT NOW**

A collage of smiling faces, rendered in a halftone dot pattern, set against a solid red background. Several large, thick, colorful circles (purple, cyan, yellow, green) are overlaid on the faces, some partially cut off by the edges of the image.

*Looking to make friends? Contact:*

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