

# 6 LESSONS IN BRANDING FROM SUPERHEROES



**Superheroes are an excellent lesson in marketing.**

You'll know when they've been done successfully, because they're the ones you can call to mind in an instant.

From Spider-man to Batman, Superman to Iron Man, Captain America to The Flash, there's plenty to be learnt from them.

## BRAND IDENTITY



When it comes to superheroes, we understand their branding and brand essence easily. They have an easy-to-follow and credible story created about them, and this narrative plays out in every action they take, word spoken, and so forth. **It translates into a compelling brand, where there is a clear audience, personality and promise.** In the case of Batman, the primary target audience are the criminals rather than the victims of crime. However, in Superman, he aims to continually inspire the public, and this is his main audience. With Batman, his brand promise is to seek vengeance against criminals, and this is something that his audience understands. It also makes him stand out against his competition. Batman is a hero, but one that is dark, vengeful and vulnerable. His aesthetic represents this. However, for Superman, he is representative of invincibility, light, and justice.

## MAKE CONNECTIONS!



**What is a brand without its audience?** Each superhero has their own core audience – typically you will be a fan of one type of character but not of all, and the same goes for business. If you want to buy a product, you will typically go to one brand rather than flit between all types operating in your sector. It's about connecting beyond your competition. One of the key ways to build up these connections is to be relatable; to find something that connects you with them. Maybe it is something that would be mutually frustrating or enjoyable. Likewise, using language that they are familiar with is key. Superheroes rely a lot on the imagination and although this isn't something an audience is familiar with, it allows them to go to a place they'd like to visit. This comes through knowing their passions, interests and desires – often through market research, talking with them, and getting to know them.

## CONSISTENCY IS KING



Branding works best when it is consistent. **It helps to build a strong picture in the audiences' minds over time, and helps them to recognise a brand when they see it.** Being memorable is crucial to good branding, and they should be able to recognise you from something as simple as your brand colours or your logo. Ideally though, they should spot you even without this. Just seeing an advertisement or brand video should be enough for them to recognise it is your brand.

## MEMORABLE IMAGERY



As with the symbolism, when you think of each superhero you can conjure to mind how they look. **They each have a very distinctive identity, separate to their competition.** There's a great deal of differentiation, and this distinctiveness really helps in their branding. Batman is much darker and more mysterious, Captain America is quite 'millennial' and fresh, Superman is very strong and has bold colours, and Iron Man is more high tech and modern.

## SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE



**Superheroes are strongly defined by their symbols.** They each carry with them strong logos – and this is what helps to keep them identifiable, especially in the products sold in their name. For example, Spider-man has the spider and its web. Batman has the yellow bat on a black background. The Hulk has the colour green and a muscly body. Captain America has the silver and blue star in a red circular darts-board style target/shield logo. Superman has the red "S" in a yellow diamond. Instantly these logos make you think of the superhero, and this is a sign of strong and cohesive branding.

## BRAND ASSOCIATIONS



Along with a clear brand identity, there are also plenty of strong associations that we summon to mind when we think of these superheroes, as well as feelings and images. For example, with Superman we think of his core colours – red, blue and yellow. We think of his cape, him flying and of key characters like Clark Kent and Lois Lane. With Batman, the most immediate connection is Robin. The words carry an immediate connection together. We also think of the Joker, Batmobile and Gotham City. **These words in themselves carry their own meanings and have separate brand identities.** With Spider-man, we think of red and blue. He is connected with being a journalist.

**So there we have it...**

**Whether you're launching a new business venture, looking for branding tips for your next exhibition stand, exploring how to make your exhibition stand design go viral or just looking at changing your business cards, we really can learn a great deal from the Marvel & DC Superhero worlds!**

**Get in touch**