

Gartner Research

Gain Leadership Support and Investment for Tech Brand Strategy

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Tech providers are increasing brand investment, but few nonmarketing executives understand the extent of investment needed for changes to the brand. Tech CMOs can use this research to convey the key aspects of brand efforts, garner the required budget and set cross-functional expectations.

Overview

Key Findings

- According to Gartner's 2023 Brand Leaders Survey, a majority of leaders (59% of executives in B2B companies, 58% in B2C/hybrid companies) report gaps in their understanding of their organization's brand strategy.
- In tech, nonmarketing executives often misunderstand the connection between brand efforts and revenue generation. They define brand strategy only as visual identity, thought leadership and awareness activities. An executive discussion outlining the extent of what a brand strategy entails, its impact and what changes may be needed is often a missed step.
- Given a lack of brand strategy understanding and the synergies that need to exist cross-functionally for a sustainable and positive brand, tech executives often starve investment in the resources, time and budget required for successful long-term brand changes while pressuring marketing for near-term results.
- It's understood that a shift in brand efforts that impact market perceptions can be a multiyear process. However, the specific cross-organizational plans to define the brand and its value to buyers (at the corporate or portfolio level) are often overlooked in the early planning stages leading to protracted results.

Recommendations

- Define the extent of changes to the brand with the broader executive team by defining enterprise goals, assessing the current state of the brand and identifying gaps relative to the business goals. Then, agree on the extent of changes to the existing brand strategy required to meet those goals.
- Frame brand discussions by outlining the key strategic areas, such as product strategy or customer success, that are not only part of the overall business strategy but also intrinsically part of successful branding. Outline areas beyond visual identity and thought leadership activity that will require alignment and agreement on scope, the extent to which each area plays into the brand and the ability to drive intended business outcomes.
- Use these discussions to outline and secure the appropriate resources and investment to make the brand strategy possible, in order to meet the business goals in an acceptable time frame. Leverage analytics to showcase brand impact on business outcomes and cross-functional performance to embed the notion that brand is a cross-functional discipline.

Introduction

According to Gartner's 2023 Tech Marketing Organizational Design Survey, investment in brand efforts is a priority for a majority (59%) of growth providers (those tech providers expecting revenue growth outside of M&A). This is in stark contrast to nongrowth providers, 21% of which plan to invest in brand. ¹

In tech, corporate, category and portfolio brands convey trust, credibility and market differentiation tied to the business value that customers are looking to achieve. To differentiate effectively, it is critical that tech CMOs secure appropriate funding and resources to support brand efforts and revenue growth strategies. One key obstacle to achieving this is that the broader executive team's view of the brand is very narrow and they discount the far-reaching enterprisewide implications of changes to a portfolio that impact the brand. This lack of understanding results in an inability to secure sufficient resource allocations.

Tech executives often fail to believe in the power of a brand. This also includes brand awareness activities, as executives don't correlate them with immediate pipeline, which is often their hallmark of successful marketing performance. Tech CMOs need to fight for the overall investment in marketing, and it's even harder to articulate the impact of brand spend.

Marketing, and in particular brand investment, are first to be cut within tech providers when executive teams feel pressure to drive better performance and reduce overall costs. This knee-jerk reaction of pulling back brand investments can have unintended consequences on overall marketing impact. In fact, according to tech marketers surveyed in organizations with \$100 million or more in annual revenue and who indicated they reduced brand awareness investment, 38% felt a negative impact on marketing performance results. ² Now these tech providers are course-correcting and increasing brand investments.

Typically, in tech, external brand activities — especially prospecting — take precedence over internal cross-function brand education and activation. Subsequently, shifts in the brand and associated market perception take longer to realize and cost more.

Missteps in brand investment make tech providers vulnerable and allow competitors the opportunity to drive greater differentiation more quickly, accelerating their revenue growth.

Tech CMOs need to holistically educate nonmarketing executives on the importance of brand (see *How to Communicate About Brand to Internal Audiences*) by articulating the impact of brand investments on cross-functional business outcomes such as revenue or growth performance (see *The CMO's Guide to Demonstrating the Commercial Impact of Brand Investments*). It's important to make clear connections between brand efforts and core business priorities, and outline changes required to nonmarketing functions to ensure a successful evolution of brand strategy. Use this research to define the brand strategy and implications and identify core areas that will be impacted by the new strategy to build the business case to secure needed investments.

Analysis

Defining the Brand Strategy in a Cross-Functional Context

Outline the Current Context

Before defining the extent of the brand strategy changes, we assume two items are clear. First, we assume the current business and long-term goals of your organization are outlined. The context of what you are trying to achieve — revenue growth, greater retention and expansion, competitive displacement, geographical expansion, success in an adjacent market, awareness in a new market, risk mitigation from a PR crisis — sets the guardrails for any brand strategy and associated cross-functional activities.

Second, ensure a solid understanding of current brand perceptions. Knowing where it is performing well and where it is struggling — given today's offering and the markets and geographies in which we serve customers — sets additional context for the current and future brand states.

The intersection of where the brand is not performing well and where the business objectives are will highlight gaps that exist and identify which business objectives need more support from a brand perspective.

The enterprise strategy, especially in context of where the organization is today and where it wants to develop in the future, will help outline the complexity and potential areas that will need greater focus and cross-functional efforts for brand adjustments to be successful.

Scope the Brand Strategy

A change in product portfolio, an acquisition or the sunseting of a mature product all require shifts in brand strategy. The broad continuum of brand changes can be as simple as a visual identity refresh or as complex as an entire cross-organizational effort to modernize a tech portfolio and associated brand(s). Often for tech providers, as portfolios expand and global reach extends, brand strategies become more complex and impact associated go-to-market (GTM) and operating models, ecosystems and internal processes. Figure 1 depicts examples of changes impacting brand strategies. These are illustrative only and are not exhaustive. Even within each change, different investments are required depending on the significance and extent to which the brand shift impacts existing operations.

The gap between business objectives and existing brand perceptions — especially looking three to five years out — will inform the extent of the necessary brand change. Large gaps have an increasing level of complexity and resource commitment, requiring careful planning, execution and monitoring to ensure a successful brand evolution. In addition to the strategy, the maturity of the category, current brand perceptions and the competitive landscape (in terms of volume, size and strength of key players along with GTM model and ecosystem) weigh significantly into the resources required to make any brand strategy change possible.

Figure 1. Tech Brand Strategy Change Continuum — Illustrative Examples



Source: Gartner
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Along the tech brand strategy change continuum, there are corresponding initiatives relating to communications and engagement with employees, customers, partners, suppliers and other stakeholders such as investors. The more significant the brand strategy being revised, the more complex the changes to the operating and GTM model and ecosystem will be, resulting in the need for greater allocation of resources and time both within marketing and across the organization. These changes extend from informing and aligning internal staff to changes in processes and tools to support the brand initiatives.

A major failure point with tech providers is that nonmarketing executives look at brand strategy as only the resulting outputs, such as visual identity and awareness activities like ads and sponsorships. They neglect the more complex and necessary cross-functional activities required to make brand expansions successful in buyers' minds.

Another misstep is that the shift in these activities due to brand changes is assumed to be included in the “steady state” marketing investment. This means that because they impact GTM activities, executives assume that existing marketing investment can cover the changes required in GTM content, assets, campaigns, enablement and other factors.

In tech, while brand and demand generation are intrinsically linked, incremental investments are often required to successfully impact brand perception. Therefore, framing the conversation between tech CMOs and executive leaders is critical, and defining the extent of the brand shift in support of business objectives, near-term and in the future, is paramount. Establishing business strategies and aligning to the breadth of brand strategy change required to make that business strategy successful is the initial part of the blueprint for securing the appropriate resources (time, budget, talent) to effect brand change.

Outline Cross-Organizational Plans

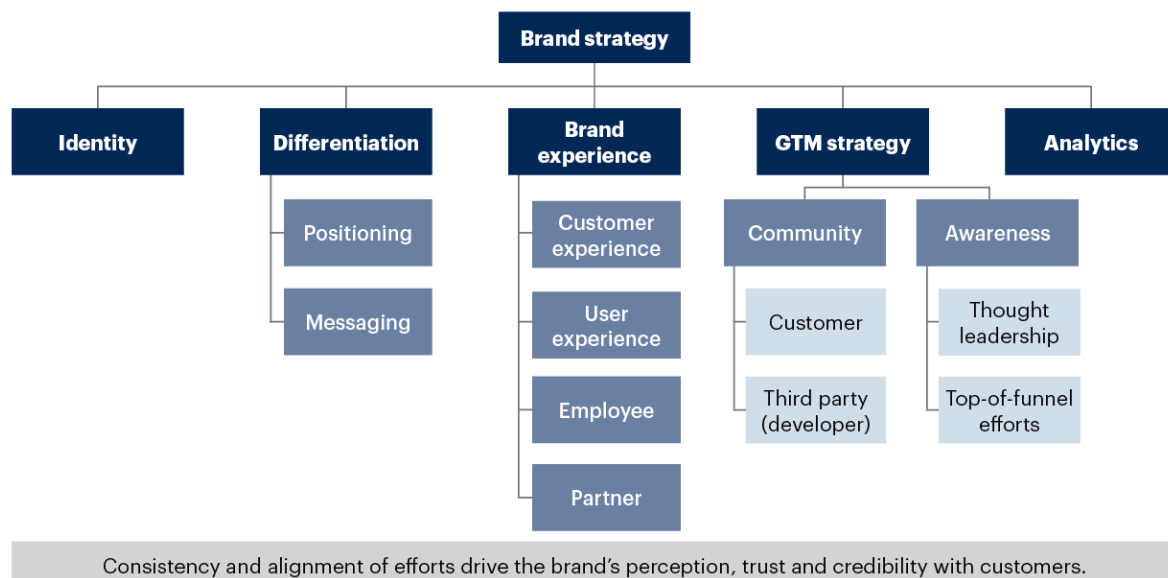
While the elements of the tech brand strategy change framework appear to be in marketing's direct remit, the implications are far-reaching and require cross-functional collaboration and alignment.

An inability to articulate key dependencies often reinforces a lack of investment for marketing to effectively drive a new brand strategy change and demonstrate value.

Several core areas need to be reviewed so that they can be appropriately prioritized and resources can be allocated. Figure 2 shows a tech brand strategy change framework that highlights the major areas that are used as part of developing and managing a brand. These should be highlighted cross-functionally to drive support for the brand transition. Because a strong brand is multidisciplinary, as these strategic areas are adjusted they will have a profound impact on the results and contributions of other functions.

Figure 2. Tech Brand Strategy Change Framework

Tech Brand Strategy Change Framework



Source: Gartner
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Gartner.

The goal of these discussions between tech CMOs and other executive leaders is to articulate the brand change narrative and build the business case for incremental investment. The following section outlines those areas of consideration, defines some example questions to prompt cross-functional discussions and gives examples of the potential impact of these discussions.

The collaboration outlined often requires one-on-one discussions with discrete functions, along with broader discussions to review and understand implications of strategy shifts. Those discussions should yield an understanding of the gaps that exist and thus the potential incremental investment required to shore those gaps.

The conversations form the framework for the business case investment in brand. And if incremental investment is not approved, it frames discussions about which activities or strategies will not be deprioritized or require reduced investment in order to provide sufficient focus for new strategies to be fruitful.

The objective for tech CMOs is to provide the blueprint for the broader executive leaders to ensure they understand the extent and implications of changes to the brand strategy and can develop the case for incremental investment.

Overall Brand Strategy

A healthy, long-standing brand allows providers to continue to meet customer needs and deliver value as they expand their product/service portfolio all while reinforcing and delivering a strong brand image, for example, a buyer's perception of a brand. This is particularly important for providers who have had M&A activity or plan future M&A activity to enhance their intellectual property (IP) or market reach, customer base, or revenue streams (see 5 Steps to Creating a Portfolio Brand Strategy to Shift Market Perceptions).

Adding or enhancing offerings should be connected to brand value. When there's a disconnect between offerings and existing brand identity, dissonance occurs, and prospects and customers alike don't recognize or appreciate the new offerings because they don't fit into the overall market perception.

Changes to brand strategy will require different resource allocations, whether that means talent shifts, changes to time and prioritization, additional budgetary investment or shifts in communications strategies. These changes will have both internal and external requirements and implications.

The extent to which any of these areas is impacted is determined by how significant the gaps between business and brand strategy are and how extensively the brand is evolving from its current state. Is it an evolutionary and natural expansion and enhancement of a brand, such as a product expansion intended for the same target audience, or is it a revolutionary change that's repositioning the brand entirely? Is it a major company transformation and portfolio expansion where a company is shifting from services only to a product/services portfolio?

Sampling of Overall Brand Strategy Discussion Points

- Does our brand strategy reflect today's offerings and position us to reflect our offerings over the next five or more years? (Collaborate with product strategy.)
- Will upcoming M&A activity or the product development roadmap reinforce our brand strategy or expand beyond what we're currently known for? Will it create synergy and reinforcement or create dissonance with our brand heritage and market perception? (Collaborate with corporate strategy and product strategy.)
- How significant is the brand strategy in terms of evolution? What is the expected business impact in terms of near-term revenue and future revenue? (Collaborate with sales and alliances.)

Consider the Impact — Example

A tech provider is evolving its portfolio via a product expansion that targets the same audience segment. Routes to market, channel partners and most GTM motions are already developed. The additional product introduction may only require a 5% to 15% incremental investment and may impact nearer-term activities (in the next 12 to 24 months).

In contrast, another client is repositioning a brand as the provider is shifting from services to a platform plus services model. This requires not only a new brand identity but a shift in GTM motion, new competencies and skills within both marketing and sales and significantly more investment over a greater length of time (three to five years) to successfully transition the value and perception of the brand.

Identity

In tech providers, identity is often the area that most nonmarketing leaders equate to brand — the color palette, logo — the visual representation of the brand. While critical to an overall brand strategy, it's the area that is often the easiest addressed within tech providers and is often outsourced to an agency. Most cross-organizational collaboration occurs in this area so it's mentioned here as a critical part of the overall brand strategy, but we don't go into detail about developing a brand identity.

For building the business case, as the brand strategy evolves, tech CMOs will need to assess if the current visual representation supports any shifts in the brand, and if not, then determine the extent to which the visual identity has to change. This is often closely tied to gaps between business strategy and brand strategy as outlined above.

Differentiation

Strong differentiation drives positive brand perception. Numerous factors cause a breakdown in the ability to differentiate (see Positioning Revisited). Buyers prioritize vendors who can articulate their differentiation and prove that value over time — and thus the provider builds strong brand recognition.

Within tech, there are two common issues with undifferentiated positioning and messaging:

- When a particular technology or term is hot, people flock to it — both buyers and sellers. How many providers now position much of what they do as AI or machine learning (ML)? (See Product Marketers: How to Differentiate Beyond Product Capabilities.)
- Mimicry and “me too” messaging often means providers try to catch some of the crowd by telling a story similar to the competition’s. This might work in the short term, but it seldom produces sustainable results. The “me too” messaging can make it harder for buyers to understand markets, let alone differentiation.

Developing a strong differentiated message across channels and sustainable brand positioning requires significant resources allocated to internal communications, program and campaign support, and sales/partner enablement.

Differentiation increases in significance when there are large gaps between business strategies and current brand perceptions. Strong differentiation and messaging delivered consistently across GTM activities will accelerate new brand perceptions and will also require investment to train and enable key GTM talent and processes upfront.

Sampling of Differentiation Discussion Points

- Are we starting from a point of significant differentiation or does our differentiation fall short? (Collaborate with product and sales.)
- Will the shift in brand require a stronger, more defensible differentiation as part of the brand strategy transformation? (Collaborate with product strategy and sales, see How to Test and Strengthen Differentiation — The Competitive Comparison.)
- Do we have readily available use cases and successes to drive credibility of our differentiation and showcase measurable value and impact to customers? (Collaborate with customer success and sales.)

Consider the Impact — Example

Nearly every tech provider is espousing an AI or generative AI solution, but all the hype leads to undifferentiated positioning and messaging characterizing today's buying environment. A tech provider that has been leveraging AI for several years needs to increase their awareness in terms of AI capabilities of their portfolio.

Given the current landscape, incremental investment will be needed to not only support new content and assets (from website, to sales enablement, to pitch decks) that reinforce their AI offerings, but additional investment will be required to drive third-party endorsements to establish credibility and rise above the hype — and unsubstantiated product claims — of other providers. The level of effort required to showcase differentiation will impact investment in brand efforts.

In the latter example, additional investment needs to be allocated because the plethora of providers hyping AI capabilities makes buyers unable to discern real value from those products that fall short. Alternatively, if the provider has built brand recognition about their AI offerings, it stands a much better chance of being heard through the “noise” and building continuing momentum for their brand.

Brand Experience

Customer centricity is paramount to delivering a brand experience that reinforces and supports your brand strategy and identity. Overall brand experience is developed through buyer journeys, customer experience (CX), user experience (UX), partner experience and even employee experience as employees are advocates of your brand.

Is the brand experience positive, negative or neutral? Does your communication strategy regarding your brand reinforce existing customer brand perceptions or create dissonance? (See Increase Brand Loyalty by Integrating Customer and Brand Experience.) Identifying intersection points of how, for example, UX impacts overall brand experience is important, especially if tech providers are making more far-reaching brand shifts (see Drive Growth by Aligning Brand, Customer Experience and User Experience).

According to Gartner's 2023 Tech Marketing Organizational Design Survey, 52% of tech marketing leaders had greater influence over customer experience efforts. ¹ Tech CMOs and their teams need to ensure that the new brand message is consistent across all customer touchpoints, including materials, website customer service interactions and product interfaces. Employees need to be enabled to deliver a new brand experience through a new employee experience (see [How to Strengthen Employees' Brand Alignment](#)). The same goes for all partner and digital (nonhuman) experiences; they need to coincide with and reinforce a new brand experience.

Buying experience, onboarding experience and product experience are critically important for a successful brand strategy that results in buyer image and perception shifts. The more aligned the organization is cross-functionally to deliver a positive, cohesive and consistent brand experience the more likely that organization will be able to drive awareness and positive buyer and market perception. It will also be more likely to deliver against business objectives like revenue and share growth, customer retention and expansion (see [Case Study: Brand Activation Through Customer-Journey-Based Brand Promises](#)).

Sampling of Brand Experience Discussion Points

- How can we enable our brand to better adapt to changing market trends and customer expectations through our engagement? (Collaborate with customer success.)
- How much do customers trust our brand, and what factors contribute to this trust or erode that trust? Does the brand experience match the brand? (Collaborate with community participants.)
- How does our brand influence each stage of the buying journey? (Collaborate with product, sales and customer success.)
- What are the most critical touchpoints where our brand can enhance customer experience, and which experiences particularly engage customers? And alternatively, are there pain points in the customer journey that negatively impact brand perception and may need to change? (Collaborate with GTM stakeholders across marketing, sales and product.)
- Are there opportunities for co-creating brand experiences with our customers? (Collaborate with strategic alliances and partner leaders.)

Consider the Impact — Example

A tech provider's past perception was as an organization that was slow to adapt and also challenging to do business with. Through recent executive leadership changes and new investors, the company revitalized their product portfolio and downstream GTM processes and buyer journey support. The intention is to have the rebranded company reflect speed and ease of use. Not only will this require new GTM activities in driving net new sales, but investment and focus will be required to update existing customer engagement methods, including communication and outreach, service and support systems, contract and billing processes, and updated customer success activities.

While many of these efforts and activities are known, they're not embedded into a business case when marketing is asking brand investment. While execution may occur in nonmarketing functions (like sales, presales engineering and customer success), marketing often develops the enablement, support, content, artifacts and often new processes.

Community

Closely tied to brand experience are a branded online community presence and events. Community participation plays a crucial role in a tech provider's ability to successfully transform its brand — whether this is your own customer community, third-party online community or developer community, or all three.

Active communities build enhanced trust and credibility. Engaged community members can become brand advocates, endorsing the transformation and lending credibility to the process. Their positive word of mouth can significantly boost trust among other customers. Community members can provide valuable insights into their needs, preferences and pain points. This feedback can inform decisions and ensure the brand transformation aligns with customer expectations.

Engaging the community in co-creating aspects of a brand, such as new features or services, ensures that the changes are relevant and beneficial to users. This can also mitigate brand risk by demonstrating transparency and openness, which helps to build and maintain trust. Engaging with the community helps tech providers stay attuned to emerging trends and shifts in customer preferences, ensuring the brand remains relevant especially when market dynamics are in flux and buyer behaviors are changing.

In tech, community engagement can be owned or managed by subject matter experts (SMEs) who sit outside the marketing function, but community involvement and oversight is often the purview of marketing or product marketing teams. In fact, consider the implications of hiring sites and online talent communities on a company's brand perception and hiring.

Sampling of Community Discussion Points

- How do members of the community perceive our brand? (Collaborate with community participants or collaborate with HR/talent teams for employer brand perceptions.)
- How does our brand identify and align with the community's needs and interests? (Verify findings with customer advisory board/technical advisory board members.)
- How actively are community members engaging with our brand? (Collaborate with product and strategy.)
- How does community play a role in the sales process — for acquiring customers and expanding relationships with existing ones? (Collaborate with sales, product and customer success.)
- If strong community interest and engagement impact sales, what communication channels, frequency and governance of the community will be required based on the breadth of the brand shift? (Collaborate with sales and field teams.)

Consider the Impact — Example

A tech provider wanted to leverage a developer community to support the growth of its technology platform business and ecosystem. It needed to reach and engage developers (builders) so that they would evaluate and implement the provider's platform. The team needed to develop new content, enable and train new SMEs, and build brand advocates (see Case Study: Forming a Developer Community to Advance Product- and Community-Led Growth (Twilio)).

In an example like this, the argument needs to be made to invest in brand GTM motion to support this community expansion, but it also has a brand component as active communities drive brand preference. If a community is unaware of a brand, or has a negative brand perception, more investment (time, resources, budget) will need to be allocated and built into the business case. Consider the impact of community when securing investment for a brand shift and how you will need to support existing communities or build new ones.

Awareness and Thought Leadership

The areas above that have strong cross-functional tendencies will inform the extent to which providers need to drive awareness. Additionally, the organization's penchant for being first to market or attaining a leadership position will impact the level of investment required in these areas. To execute a successful brand strategy and understand the level of awareness efforts required, it's critical to understand the current brand perception and the requirements to adjust those perceptions (see 2024 Tech Marketing Benchmarks Survey: Demand Generation Insights). Consider the impact your awareness campaigns and thought leadership content need to have on the market and buyers by assessing current brand equity.

Because these areas are often associated with demand and pipeline generation in the broader context of GTM activity and campaigns, resources are usually pulled from existing investment. In tech, top of the funnel awareness and thought leadership activities are intrinsically tied to later demand generation activity. Therefore, nonmarketing executives may assume that existing investment may be enough. Often though, even with small brand changes, marketing is underresourced and even incremental "asks" put pressure on teams. Building the business case for incremental brand investment to support these efforts will alleviate the issue of starving some areas to fund others.

Sampling of Awareness and Thought Leadership Discussion Points

- How well-known is our brand within our target market(s) and industry? And how does that recognition compare to our competitors, both existing and new ones, as part of a broadened portfolio or expected future revenue streams? How significant a change do we want to make from where we are today? (Collaborate with sales and product strategy.)
- How influential is our brand in shaping industry conversations and trends? (Verify information with third-party influencers, collaborate with product and strategy.)

- What areas of expertise does our brand have the most authority in? (Verify formation with third-party influencers, collaborate with sales and customer success.)

Analytics

Since tech marketers have a hard time justifying and defending brand investments and a tough time proving ROI in general, a key part of this business case development is outlining the potential business impact of brand investments. It's critical to assess and articulate the current state — and tie it back to business outcomes and performance.

As brand activities get underway, there will be a need to showcase progress of impact across employees, partners, customers/users and eventually market perception, including influencers and prospects. This not only shows progress but reinforces the fact that building a sustainable brand is a cross-organizational objective that requires cross-functional coordination and investment.

Include a variety of KPIs for brand awareness and health — though not too many — to accurately provide context for the current status of brand awareness and perception. Allow key metrics to reinforce the narrative around the initial reason for the brand shift and the progress you've made.

These brand KPIs may change over time as awareness increases, advocacy becomes more important, and your brand equity changes and matures. Metrics may include brand recall and recognition, social media reach and impressions, content performance, customer engagement, sales and conversion metrics, retention and loyalty, and market position (see *A New Way to Measure Brand Health: From Brand Strategy to Business Outcomes*).

Additional metrics that are key to tech marketers understanding a holistic picture of the current brand state include:

- Brand advocacy and influencer metrics: For example, tracking mentions and endorsements. They also include items such as employee advocacy metrics that show how employees share and promote the brand.
- Customer journey analytics: Customer touchpoint analysis that highlights which touchpoints are the most influential in the customer journey, aligned with path analysis that measures the paths customers take from first contact to conversion.

- Customer experience metrics: Analyze support tickets and trends in volume of support inquiries, as well as resolution showcasing efficiency of customer service.
- Internal brand alignment metrics: These include employee engagement and satisfaction measures, along with training and adoption rates in terms of how employees are adopting the new brand guidelines and practices.
- Innovation and adoption metrics: This data showcases how customers are using new products or new features, as well as the uptake of new features or services.

For tracking a successful brand strategy, tech providers should use a variety of analytics to measure the impact and effectiveness of their efforts. Showcase how these measures track over time and ultimately tie to overall business objectives.

Sampling of Analytics Discussion Points

- Have there been changes to customer health scores? (Collaborate with customer success teams.)
- Has there been a shift in customer engagement or utilization when looking at customer journey analytics? (Collaborate with customer success product/product-led growth teams.)
- Has there been an increase in third-party coverage and mentions impacting sales conversations? (Collaborate with SDRs/BDRs and sales teams.)

Build the Business Case for Brand Investment

Within the tech space, the complexity of multistakeholder buying groups, lengthy sales cycles and undifferentiated competition make building a long-lasting differentiated brand a constant challenge. Business strategy drives product strategy and roadmap, whether that's expansion and evolution by organic or inorganic activities, which in turn shape the brand and its value to customers.

Identifying every customer-facing activity and effort as a way to either build and reinforce brand — or erode brand trust and value — when “brand” is not top of mind for many nonmarketing leaders is critical in creating synergy for your brand's value across all organizational activities. Often, many of the activities required for the brand are swept into the overall marketing investment and the extent of what is required to make brand changes is not carefully considered and thus not properly invested in.

For example, if a tech provider is expanding both geographically and into the enterprise market, it will require a change in sales methodology and competence, a new GTM motion in terms of driving demand, new approaches for cross-sell, and new ways of managing and retaining enterprise clients. What often occurs is that investment is based on the existing GTM motion, when in fact this shift directly impacts brand — the CX, UX, community, ecosystem, GTM motion and other brand elements. Tech providers shift perceptions to support the expanded brand and experiences but often lose valuable ground to make that shift, leaving them vulnerable to competition.

The sample discussion points above enable tech CMOs to outline early on the expected gap between business objectives and existing brand and the required cross-functional alignment. That coordination and collaboration will enable tech CMOs to build a more compelling case for incremental investment to accelerate success with the brand changes that will enable providers to achieve their business objectives (see Quantifying Marketing Effort and Investment for Brand Transformation in TSPs).

Tech CMOs need to properly scope the rationale and dependencies of the brand strategy and shift by:

- Outlining with business strategy and intended business outcomes.
- Identifying gaps between the business strategy and current brand strategy and perceptions.
- Using those gaps to build a business case for the resource (time, people) allocations and investment needed for changes to the brand to realistically achieve the intended business outcomes.
- Engaging in ongoing dialogue and reprioritization of efforts to gain alignment through these exercises while also showcasing through data the impact of brand efforts on business objectives over time.

Evidence

The 2023 Gartner Brand Leaders Survey. This survey was conducted to explore brand leaders' and teams' strategies, abilities and performance outcomes. The research was conducted online from October through November 2022 among 411 respondents from North America (n = 228), Western Europe (n = 153) and the Nordics (n = 30). Respondents were required to have responsibility for setting brand strategy and orchestrating its activation. Forty-six percent of the respondents came from organizations with at least \$2 billion or the equivalent in annual revenue. Respondents came from a wide variety of industries, including financial services (n = 53), healthcare (n = 48), consumer products (n = 49), retail (n = 55), manufacturing and natural resources (n = 45), IT and business services (n = 32), media (n = 45), technology products (n = 51), and travel and hospitality (n = 27). Disclaimer: The results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.

¹ **2023 Gartner Tech Marketing Organizational Design Survey.** This survey explored which organizational designs, cross-functional alignments, influences, strategies and brand efforts impact tech providers that are experiencing growth; where adjustments to drive efficiencies are being made; and the reasons behind some of those adjustments. The primary research was conducted online by an external partner in April, May and June 2023. In total, 201 respondents answered the survey. Qualifying organizations were providers of technology and telecom products and services (software, professional/managed services, and hardware) with estimated enterprisewide annual revenue of \$100 million and above in North America (n = 163) and Europe (n = 38). Qualified participants were senior leaders in their organizations, whose job titles included C-level executive and equivalent (n = 73), SVP/EVP/head of function/general manager (n = 77), and vice president and equivalent (n = 51) in the marketing function. Almost all the survey participants were no more than one level away from the most senior marketing executive within the company. All organizations focused on businesses as their primary customers (including B2B, business-to-business-to-consumer [B2B2C] and business-to-business-to-business [B2B2B]). Disclaimer: Results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.

² **2024 Gartner Technology Marketing Benchmarks Survey.** This survey was conducted online from January through March 2024 among 244 respondents. Respondents came from technology-focused organizations located in the U.S., Canada and the U.K. with more than \$10 million in annual revenue. Among the total respondents surveyed, 154 came from organizations with \$100 million or more in annual revenue. Respondents were required to have knowledge of the marketing budget and spend (for the company or business unit) and the marketing campaign/program tactics. Quotas were established to guarantee a good distribution in terms of countries, product offering (software, technology services and hardware), customer type (B2B and B2B2C) and company size (annual revenue). Disclaimer: The results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.

Acronym Key and Glossary Terms

Brand identity	Brand name: Choose a unique and memorable name that reflects your company's values and offerings. Logo and visual identity: Create a professional and distinct logo and color palette that represents your brand. Tagline: Craft a concise and meaningful tagline that communicates your value proposition.
Brand messaging	Value proposition: Develop a clear and compelling value proposition that explains how your tech solutions solve specific problems for your target audience. Messaging architecture: Create a consistent messaging framework that encompasses your brand's mission, vision and core messaging pillars. Content strategy: Plan content that educates, informs and engages your audience across various channels, such as blogs, whitepapers, webinars and social media.
Brand positioning	Positioning: Clearly define what sets your tech solutions apart from competitors. Highlight key benefits, such as efficiency, innovation or cost-effectiveness. Target audience (ideal customer profiles and personas): Identify your ideal customer personas, including industry, job titles, pain points and needs. Market research: Conduct thorough market research to understand your competitive landscape, market trends and customer preferences.
Brand trust and credibility	Highlight certifications, awards, third-party (analyst) endorsements and customer testimonials to build trust and credibility. Ensure data security and compliance with industry regulations, especially if your tech solutions handle sensitive information.
Brand voice and tone	Define your brand's voice (e.g., authoritative, friendly, innovative) and tone (e.g., formal, conversational) for all communication materials. Ensure consistency in communication across all touchpoints, from website copy to customer support interactions.
Community building	Foster a community around your brand by engaging with customers and industry peers through social media, forums and user groups. Encourage knowledge sharing and networking within your customer base.
Customer experience	Focus on delivering exceptional customer experiences through user-friendly interfaces, responsive customer support and effective onboarding processes. Solicit and act upon customer feedback to continuously improve your products and services.
Measurement	Establish KPIs to track brand awareness, customer satisfaction

and analytics	and conversion rates. Regularly analyze data to make data-driven decisions and refine your brand strategy accordingly.
Thought leadership	Establish your company as an industry thought leader by creating insightful content, participating in industry events and engaging in meaningful discussions. Showcase your expertise through case studies, success stories and whitepapers that demonstrate the impact of your solutions.
Visual branding	Develop brand guidelines that specify logo usage, typography, color schemes and imagery to maintain a cohesive visual identity. Apply these guidelines consistently to all marketing collateral, including your website, presentations and marketing materials.

Recommended by the Authors

- Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.
- 2024 Tech Marketing Benchmarks Survey: Brand Investment and Metric Insights
- 5 Steps to Creating a Portfolio Brand Strategy to Shift Market Perceptions
- Boost CX Maturity and Investment to Improve Revenue Growth

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