

GROWTH THROUGH BRANDING EXCELLENCE



# A FRAMEWORK TO DEFINE BRAND ESSENCE

*In this primer we discuss the principles of how to think about Brand Essence and we introduce a framework that can help brand teams crystallize it.*

*We then illustrate the Brand Essence framework with a few application examples and we discuss how a Brand Essence workshop can help teams to quickly converge on a shared and clear direction for the brand.*

# DEFINING THE BRAND ESSENCE IS KEY TO BRAND'S SUCCESS



## Why You Need a Clear Definition of Your Brand Essence

- A clear definition of your Brand Essence helps you set the direction for your brand building activities and provides a frame of reference for brand communication.
- It gives guidance to internal and external teams on how to "be true" to your brand.
- It gives you a reference to judge messaging and creativity, to evaluate line extensions and new product development.



**Gilda Sala**  
is one of the founding partners at Edge+ Management Consulting

## What Elements Should Be Captured In Your Brand Essence One-Pager?

- Your Brand Essence should be able to capture in a simple way the **articulated set of elements** that build up what you want your brand to stand for in the minds of consumers.
- These elements should include:
  - The consumer element: a specific **customer insights**, a core **human truth** or an unresolved **underlying tension** that your brand helps to address
  - The brand **functional benefits**, needed to support its promise
  - The specific **emotional benefits** that you want your brand to deliver
  - The **RTB** that should be communicated to sustain your chosen positioning
- A **sharp point of difference** that your brand can own to forge customer perceptions on its value and distinctiveness
- Your brand's **values, beliefs** and **character** elements
- The **symbolic meaning** and **classic archetype** at the basis of how you want customers to profoundly connect with the brand and create an enduring bond with it
- The Brand Essence is normally captured in a **one-page document, a sort of identity card for the brand**, that is used to align all internal stakeholders on brand identity, to evaluate creative ideas, to inform decisions about media mix and touchpoints. And is also a key component agency briefs.

### THE POWER OF BRAND ARCHETYPES TO CREATE CONSUMER BONDS

Many brands are just entities we have a utilitarian relationship with: they give us some benefit in exchange for money.

But for some brands we feel connection, loyalty and true passion. They are **able to connect with us on a deeper level**.

Brands we feel such a bond with are often built with a **solid alignment to an archetype**.

Archetypes have their roots in Greek Mythology and are grounded in decades of psychological research.

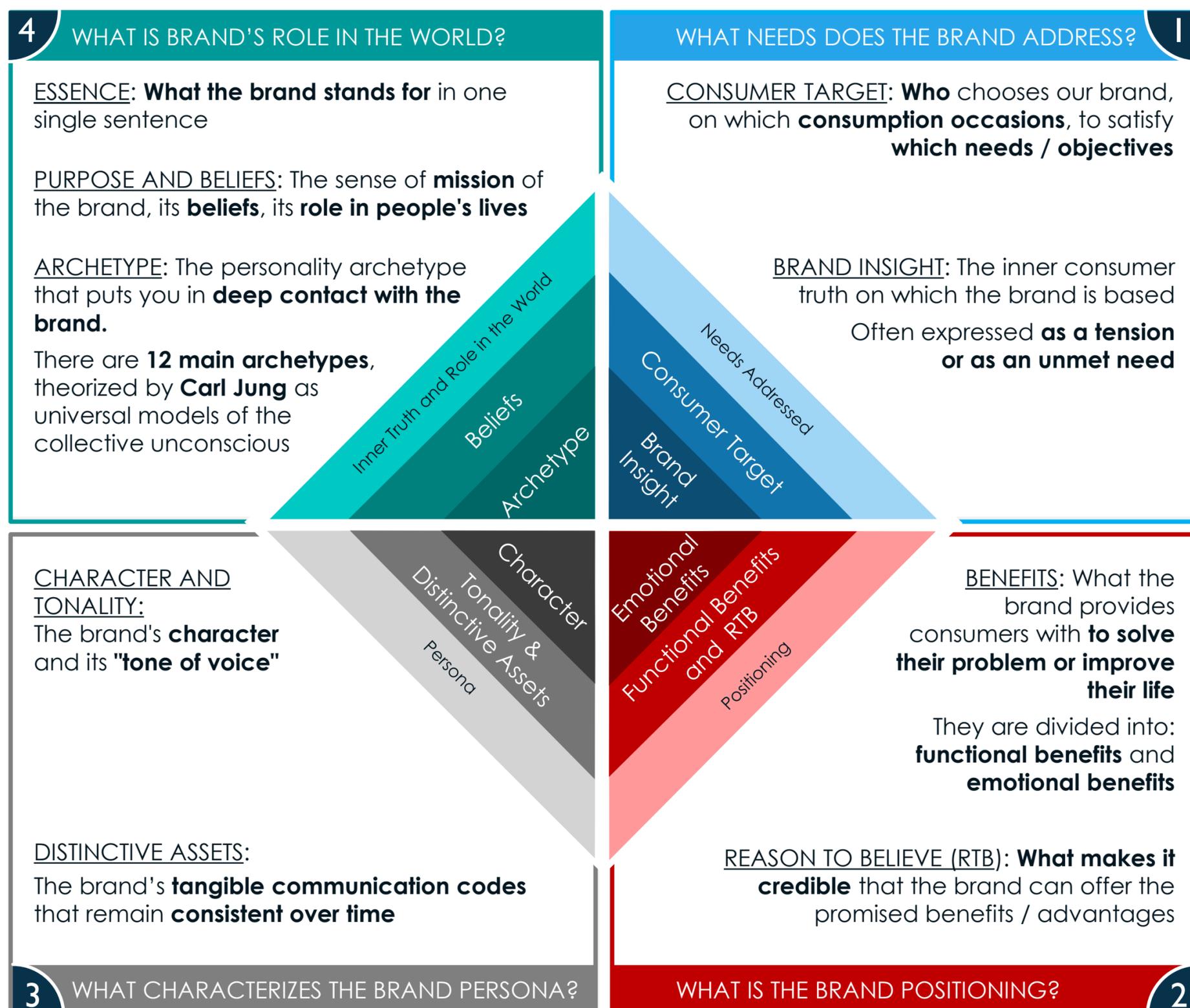
**Psychologist Carl Jung** coined the term in the early 20th century.

The **12 archetypes** most commonly used for successful brand building are: the **Hero** (Nike); the **Ruler** (Mercedes-Benz); the **Sage** (BBC); the **Creator** (Apple); the **Magician** (Red Bull); the **Jester** (M&Ms); the **Explorer** (Marlboro); the **Rebel** (Harley-Davidson); the **Lover** (Magnum); the **Innocent** (Dove); the **Nurturer** (Johnson's Baby); the **Everyman** (IKEA).

# A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK TO CAPTURE BRAND ESSENCE



- There are several alternative frameworks that you can use to define your Brand Essence. Here is **the one we normally use in our workshops**:



- The framework should be filled-in **proceeding clockwise**:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> STEP: Target and Insight;
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> STEP: Benefits and RTB;
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> STEP: Character, Tonality and Assets;
  - 4<sup>th</sup> STEP: Purpose, Beliefs and Archetype

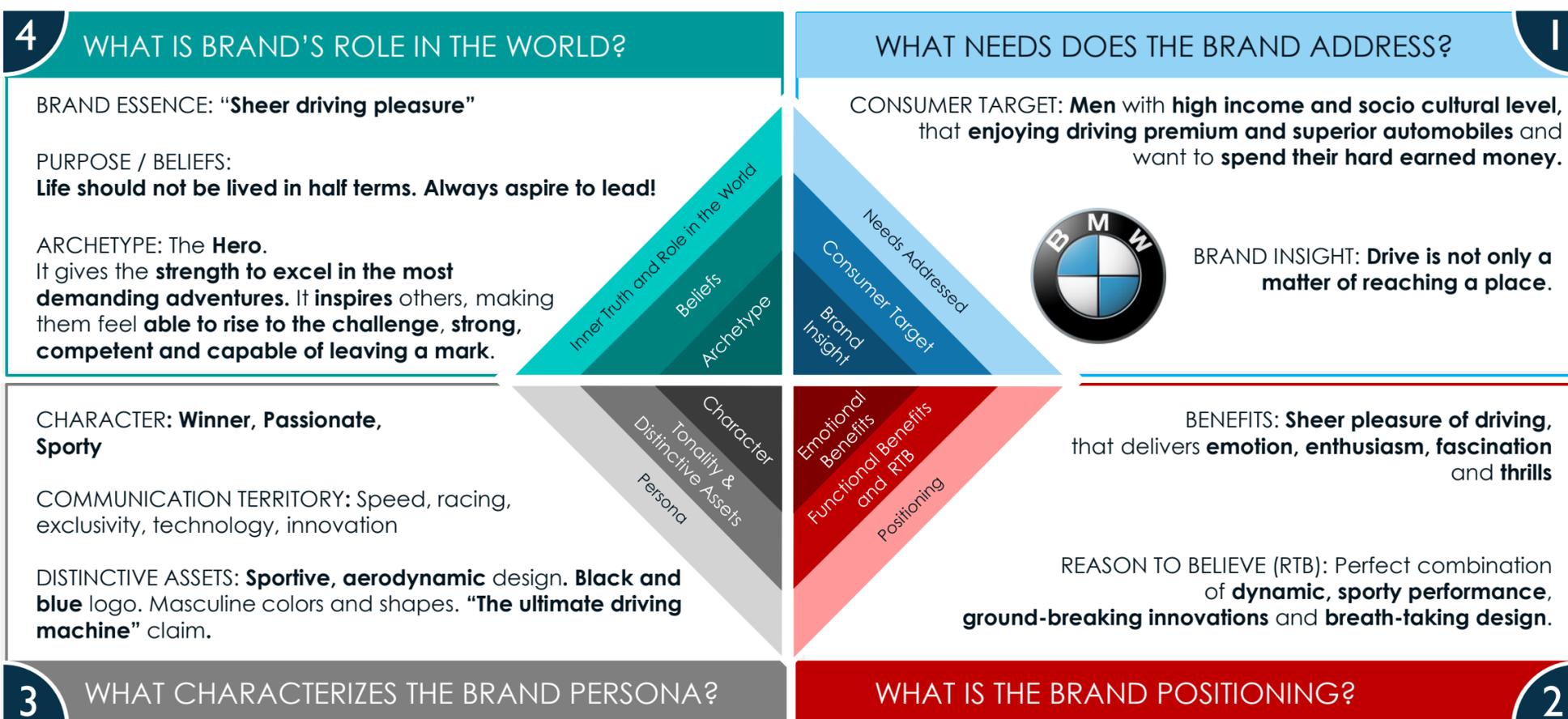
# EXAMPLES OF FRAMEWORK APPLICATION: COCA COLA – BMW



## THE COCA COLA BRAND



## THE BMW BRAND



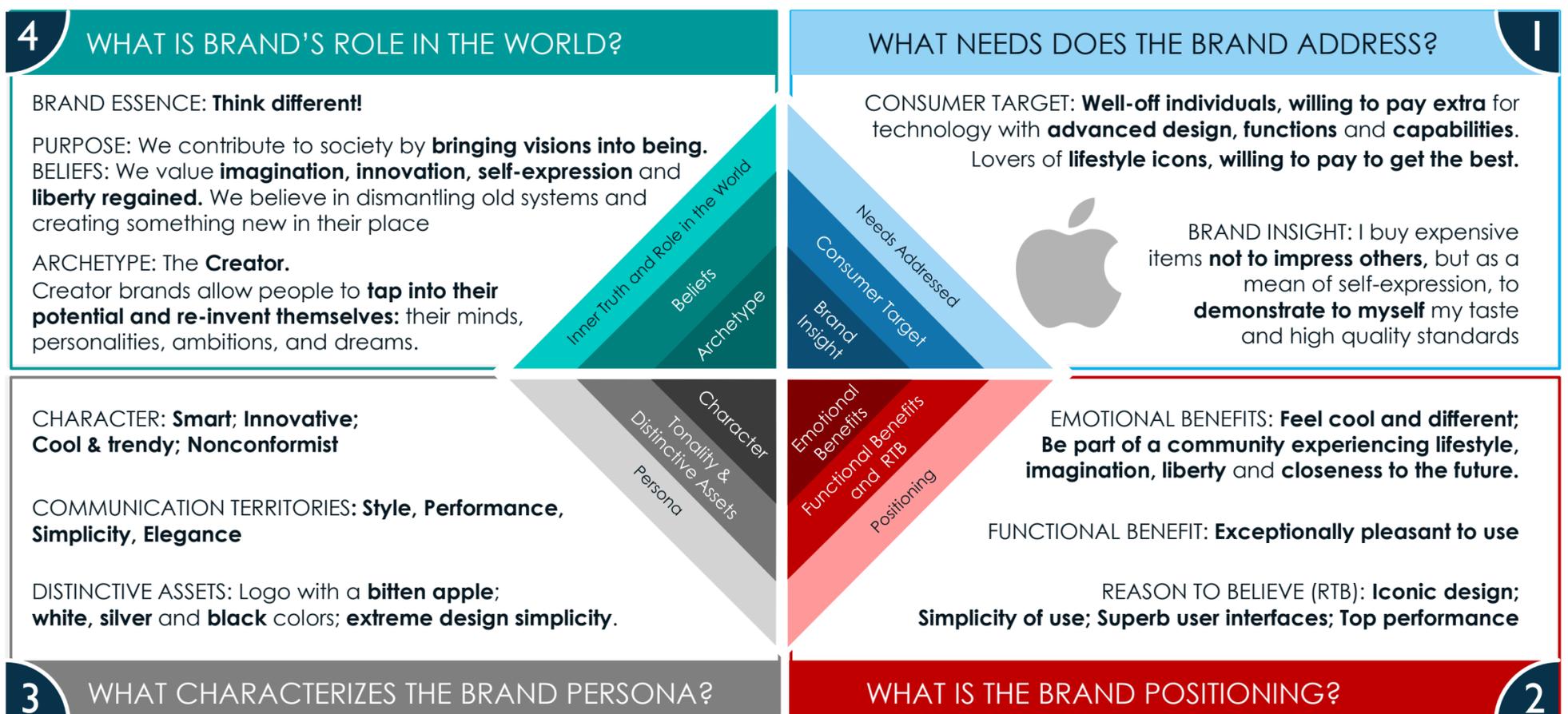
# EXAMPLES OF FRAMEWORK APPLICATION: IKEA – APPLE



## THE IKEA BRAND



## THE APPLE BRAND



# BRAND ARCHETYPES DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES



## About Archetypes:

- Brand archetypes are at the basis of what makes us **connect with brands**, letting us think **we've always known them**
- Archetypes are personality characters rooted in **Greek Mythology**, and have been used in storytelling for centuries. Today they are largely used in **movies and advertising** (e.g. The Sage → Yoda; The Hero → Gladiator; The Explorer → Indiana Jones; The Rebel → Jack Sparrow; ...)
- Archetypes correspond to **basic human desires**. They are **instinctive and primitive**. And we all relate to them. **Each basic human desire matches with a specific archetype** (e.g. Liberation → The Rebel; Intimacy → The Lover; Enjoyment → The Jester; Belonging → The Everyman; ...)



Ask your team to reflect on your brand's archetype and to spell it out clearly. This will massively improve the power of your communication!

# ORGANIZING A WORKSHOP TO GET ALIGNMENT ON YOUR BRAND ESSENCE



## A BRAND ESSENCE WORKSHOP HELPS YOU SET THE DIRECTION FOR YOUR BRAND AND CAPTURE ITS TRUE MEANING

### WORKSHOP OBJECTIVE

Build **a view of the brand** that is **shared among all relevant stakeholders** within the company

### WORKSHOP OUTPUT

A **one-page brand essence document** that specifies the consumer **target**, the **insight**, as well as all the elements of the brand **essence** and **positioning**

This document has **a series of important uses** for the company:

- **Aligning** all internal employees **on the brand identity**
- Serving as a key component of **agency briefs**
- Helping to assess **creative ideas**
- Informing decisions about **media mix** and **touchpoints**

A **TWO-DAYS** facilitated and interactive session, in which the team agrees upon all relevant aspects that build the equity of the brand

### RECOMMENDED STEPS

- 1 Workshop Preparation**
  - Carry-out an **internal brand audit** with all relevant stakeholders to **collect inputs** regarding their **brand vision** and **perceived challenges**
  - Share material / questionnaire to **stimulate reflection in advance** to the workshop
- 2 1st Day of Workshop**
  - Invite all relevant **internal stakeholders** and a number of **external thinkers** (e.g. agency strategic planners and creatives)
  - Share ideas, discuss and reach consensus on: **Target, Insight, Functional Benefit, RTB**
- 3 2nd Day of Workshop**
  - Share ideas, discuss and reach consensus on: **Emotional Benefit, Brand Character and Communication Territories, Essence, Beliefs, Archetype**
  - The **brand identity one-pager is shared at the end of the day**, so it can immediately be used for communication development

Edge+ Consulting has a long experience in the organization and facilitation brand essence workshops

# ABOUT EDGE+ MANAGEMENT CONSULTING



## EDGE+ MANAGEMENT CONSULTING

- Edge+ is a **boutique advisory** of senior consultants with extensive previous experience in **primary international consulting companies** or in C-Level managerial roles
- Our teams are **lean** and **senior-heavy**, mostly staffed with experienced resources with **15+ years** in their field
  - This allows us to be **immediately productive** and to deliver **top-quality** results in a **short time**

## A LONG TRACK RECORD OF IMPACT

- We have a long track-record of **measurable impact**
  - Significant influence on **revenue acceleration** → we have consistently supported clients to **exceed their growth targets**
  - Sustained **performance improvement**
  - Successful **cultural change** in organizations

## FLEXIBLE MODEL AND PROJECT DESIGN THAT MEETS YOUR BUDGET

- Our **flexible model** ensures that our clients get exactly the support they need. **No unnecessary analyses and no heavy teams**
- We work with clients to **design project plans that meet their budget**, leveraging client's internal resources and our consulting network

## GILDA SALA



Gilda has **25 years** of experience in **strategy, marketing and innovation** consulting.

Her work focuses on **helping clients achieve organic growth**.

She has led more than 100 projects for major global corporations, with a **long track-record of measurable impact on the top-line**.

She works in different geographies throughout Europe and in the US.

Prior to starting her consulting practice, Gilda worked for more than **15 years with primary strategy consulting companies**, such as Monitor Deloitte, Bain & Company, Roland Berger Strategy Consultants.



**edge+**

management consulting

[www.edgeplusconsulting.com](http://www.edgeplusconsulting.com)

Contacts: Gilda Sala

[gilda.sala@edgeplus.it](mailto:gilda.sala@edgeplus.it) – tel: + +39 335 6140396

Piazza San Fedele 4, 20121 – MILANO ITALY