

Everything a business manager needs to know about a **Brand Launch Strategy**

By Stuart Fuller

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Summary

Launching a new Brand or Product in today's fast-moving economy and generating the right amount of positive attention has never been more difficult or problematic for organisations.

Brand awareness is no longer gained through just focusing efforts on a small number of mainstream media channels but through a mix of specialist on and offline publications, blogs and Social Media networks which can be helped or hindered by a succession of rumours from self-titled experts. This is commonly referred to as an OmniChannel strategy.

Many brand holders create the hype of a new product, service or identity long before it is actually launched, using social media as a cost-effective mechanism to test market and build initial awareness.

Introduction

Do you as a Business Manager understand what you need to consider from a digital perspective when your organisation is planning on launching a new brand? With so many channels to the target audience, so many points of dilution and so many variables involved in maximising the impact on potential customers, it is now vital to ensure that all aspects of a brand launch process, particularly in relation to a consistent digital presence, are properly researched, decided and executed in a policy that is written in conjunction with all internal and external stakeholders.

Through its Brand Launch Service, BrandShelter is able to provide a holistic view of the digital asset landscape, answering many of the above questions and creating a business plan for an organisation which should form an integral part of any brand launch strategy.

Whether launching a new brand, product or service, it is often necessary for organisations to keep its plans under wraps until the last conceivable moment. Whilst many companies will work with specialist branding and PR companies, the first steps in understanding the digital landscape can be completely quickly, ensuring that unnecessary and often expensive work isn't carried out on the preparation for a brand launch. The BrandShelter Brand Launch Service provides that essential initial overview and allows the organisation to make the necessary decisions early in the launch path.

Today's digital world is full of opportunities, but also inherent risks, some of which are hidden to brand holders.

All of our activity online today can leave a trail or a digital footprint. Prior to launching a new brand, the focus is on restricting the visible footprint, which can inadvertently provide an awareness of what is being planned, eroding competitive advantages and enabling pre-emptive cybersquatting unless the necessary steps are taken.

As a specialist provider of Domain Name and Brand Protection services, BrandShelter is acutely aware of how digital footprints are created and the impact they have. The 'Brand Launch Service', aims to help our customers to achieve their launch goals whilst retaining the integrity and anonymity of the customer and the entity to be launched.

Why do organizations need to have a new Brand Launch policy?

Domain names are digital assets of a business. An asset is defined as a resource with economic value that an individual or corporation owns or controls with the expectation that it will provide a future benefit. By using a domain name, an organisation creates not only an online presence but also in many instances a revenue stream. Think about the cost of registering Amazon.com or Apple.com? Now think about how much revenue either of those two domain names produces on a day/hour/minute/second basis. A domain name may only have a monetary value of a few pounds but it has the power to deliver thousands if not millions times more if used by a business.

With the launch of any new entity, product or brand it is essential that an organisation has properly researched the digital landscape to understand the availability of these assets, and key questions are answered before the brand is finalised and costs are committed, such as:

- Are there other organisations currently utilising the proposed term?
- Is the term in use in other market segments or geographies?
- Does it translate into other common languages and if so what are the meanings?
- What are the availability of the digital assets?
- Are the social media handles available? If not how are they currently being used?
- Does the potential cost and effort of securing the required digital assets from third parties make it uneconomic?
- Is there any prior use for exact match or confusingly similar logos for the brand?
- Is the brand or term trademarked in any territory

The key aspects of a BrandShelter Brand Launch Policy

BrandShelter's understanding of and extensive capability for searching and analysing the digital landscapes, puts us in a unique position to assist brands with the online and offline launches of new products, brands and entities. Our team of intellectual property experts has decades of experiencing in working with brand holders to develop digital strategies that balance the risk and

reward of the every-expanding digital landscape. This means we are the partner of choice for many global organisations when considering a new brand launch.

Step 1 - Concept investigation

The concept investigation determines the availability of the digital assets that support the launch of a new brand, entity or product as well as any existing context for the term in relation to both trademark registrations, social media and other relevant intellectual property.

Step 2 – Portfolio definition

Once the proposed name(s) option(s) for the new entity have been confirmed, BrandShelter will work with the organisation to determine the ideal portfolio of digital assets required for the launch, including the domain names, mix of Social Media handles and trademark categories.

Step 3 - Landscape audit & review

BrandShelter will undertake a series of searches across the stated portfolio of digital assets to determine the availability of the relevant domain names, Social Media handles and, if required, a perspective on the digital footprint relating to the proposed brand / service name, including the existence of exact match trademarks, to look for prior and existing usage of the terms online across multiple channels.

Once complete, BrandShelter will review the data with the organisation to determine whether the launch plan is still feasible and what, if any, correct action needs to be taken. BrandShelter understands the importance of digital assets to organisations and so it is essential when considering a new brand launch that critical steps are taken to ensure a successful launch.

The Detailed Brand Analysis is a bespoke piece of work to confirm availability of securing the digital assets, and what action needs to be taken should registration of domain names and social media handles not be straight-forward.

Step 4 - Availability / budget required for 3rd party registrations

Once BrandShelter have created the inventory of required digital assets and understood their current availability, we will work with the organisation on setting the budgets for securing each of the third party registered domain names necessary for the launch. For any assets that may be challenging to secure, our domain name experts will determine a 'likelihood of success' to ensure that a clear decisions can be made as to how to proceed with the project and what the associated risks would be of not securing the domain names.

Step 5 - Definition of recovery plan

A domain name recovery plan is created so that the required digital assets are recovered at 'reasonable costs' and the price and ability to recover are not affected by market knowledge of the project.

Once the feasibility study has been carried out and associated costs have been defined, BrandShelter would propose a recovery plan detailing the priority in which digital assets should be recovered (i.e. securing key assets such as a .com domain name), before the next phase of the plan is undertaken. These milestones are especially important for ensuring that information is not placed into the public domain, such as a trademark or patent applications, until it is appropriate.

BrandShelter's team of domain name experts will attempt to recover domain assets either based on a pre-agreed budget per domain or overall project budget on an anonymous basis. Once secured the domain names would be migrated to a BrandShelter account and Whois information updated as necessary.

The Chinese Perspective

Due to the nature of the trademark landscape in China, additional steps need to be taken to protect any brand in the Chinese market, irrespective of whether the brand, product or service is going to be directly sold into China.

It is important to use a trademark lawyer to ensure that the relevant brand names are filed – China operates on a first-come, first-serve basis meaning that a third party could register the trademark, without any claim, if they discover the planned launch.

It is also vital to ensure that any brand protection solution monitors the most popular Chinese marketplace websites such as TaoBao and TMall after the brand has been launched for potential infringing material. BrandShelter's Marketplace Monitoring solution will provide the necessary monitoring solutions for brand holders, as well as being able to take the necessary steps to mitigate the risks.

Summary

Launching a new brand is a complex process that requires the collaboration of not only internal resources but also external stakeholders. The BrandShelter Brand Launch Consultancy service creates a templated plan for the eventuality of brand growth for any organisation. Balancing the right approach in creating a landscape assessment with the approximate costs involved in acquiring existing digital assets means that the ongoing success of any brand launch needs to be underpinned by an ongoing brand monitoring programme, covering domain names, social media and intellectual property infringement. Reputation monitoring, such as Social Media monitoring, can give any brand holder insight into negative sentiment or discussion in public forums, whilst a more detailed Digital Risk Management tool can help a brand understand the hidden dangers that exist in the deepest and darkest corners of the internet including data leakage and potential protest or disrupting tactics against the brand.

Our approach is based on a trusted methodology that will ensure brand holders are armed with the facts to make a decision on a brand launch.

Why use BrandShelter?

For over a decade, BrandShelter has been working with some of the most recognisable brands on the planet, to deliver domain name, security and brand protection solutions, advice, and create effective and risk mitigating policies. Our priority is to help our clients meet their digital and business objectives, using our industry expertise and knowledgeable staff to craft solutions that deliver.

About BrandShelter

BrandShelter manages hundreds of thousands of domain names for organisations across the world, providing expert guidance and a range of value-added products including SSL, Registry Locks and Brand Protection services. With global customer support desks, enterprise and premium DNS solutions and flexible billing options, BrandShelter is the natural choice for ambitious brands wanting to secure their online presence whilst taking advantage of the opportunities the global digital economy brings.

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