



Three-Year Strategic Marketing and Communications Plan

April 25, 2024: Board Meeting Pre-Read

Brand Strategy

NBU Discovery + Learning Plan Overview

	NBU Brand		Customer Need State	
	NBU Audit	Community Exploration	Customer Deep Dive	Industry/Market Analysis
Research Activity	Brand Immersion	Social Listening	Customer Segments	Public Relations
	Key Stakeholder Interviews	Community Stakeholder Interviews	Message Hierarchy Study	Great Blue/Cogent/J.D. Power Winner Exploration
	Employee Workbooks		Customer Intercepts	Secondary Utility Research

For decades, we've had it good.

Off-the-chart reliability. Year after year.

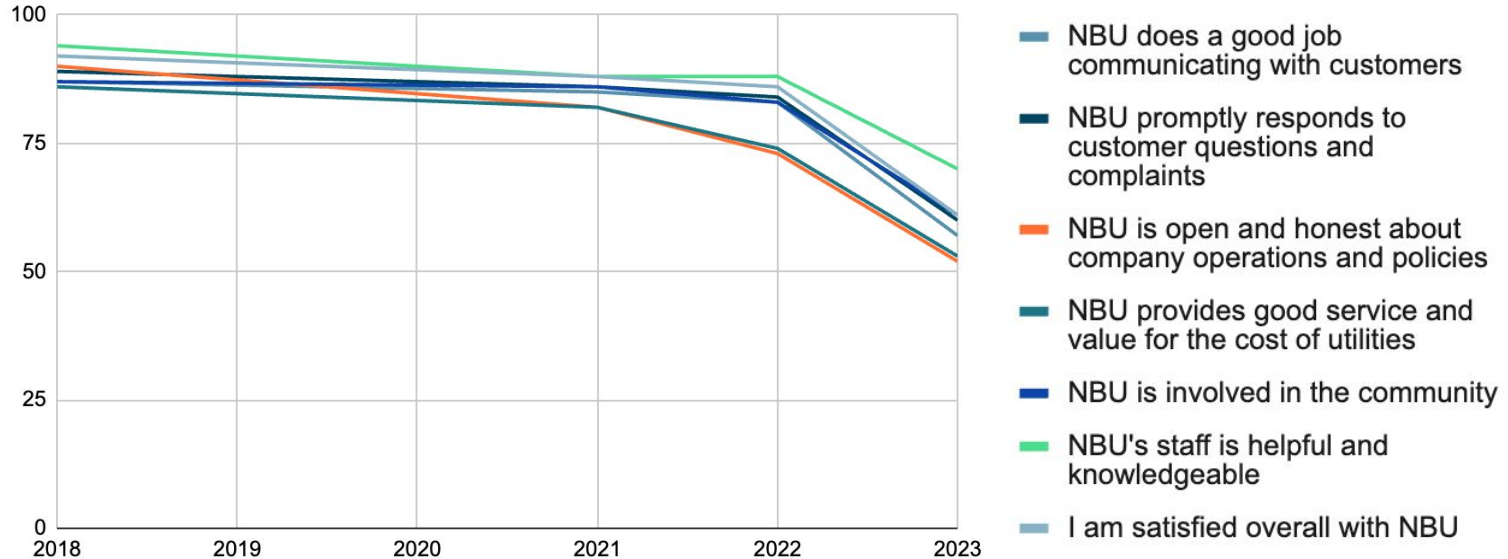
Unprecedented affordability.

Water awards.

A beacon of the community.

But the last few years have been tough.

Strongly Agree



Source: NBU Customer Satisfaction Study, GreatBlue Research, 2023

Q. For each statement please use a scale of 1 to 5 where one is strongly disagree and five is strongly agree.

What used to work doesn't seem to work anymore. And we're scrambling.

Our Mission and Vision are *internal* points of clarity, but seem to have also been serving as the foundation for our *external* communications.

“We believe we’re being transparent, we’re not hiding anything, we’re putting out all the facts—it’s just not working.”

—NBU Key Stakeholder

“The real issue is when trust is broken, do people want to listen to the facts? The first step is to regain trust and then have a conversation, but just putting out information when they’ve stopped listening; stopped reading...they didn’t get your message.”

—NBU Key Stakeholder

Source: NBU Key Stakeholder Interviews, 2024

Q. What is working/not working with communications from NBU to customers?

We've become too functional. And it's affected our relationship with residents.

We've stopped being an *emotional* part of people's lives, their businesses, and part of our unique community.

Once at the heart of the community, NBU now feels like a Cable TV provider.

Overall favorable opinion of NBU is on par with Cable TV providers.

	Streaming TV	Mobile Phone	Internet	NBU	Cable TV
Top 2 Box	55%	55%	52%	36%	36%
Extremely Positive	29%	27%	17%	15%	17%
Extremely Negative	3%	5%	5%	11%	15%

Source: Message Hierarchy Study, 2024

Q: How would you describe your overall opinion of each of the following service providers?

And no perceived void would exist if we were to “go away.”

Some nameless, careless and corporate utility would take over... and that might be okay.

A black silhouette of a tombstone with a rounded top and a rectangular base. The letters "NBU" are written in white on the front of the tombstone. A diagonal slash is present in the letter "N".

NBU

Source: NBU Employee Workbook, 2024

Q. If New Braunfels Utilities were to go away, what void would exist?

We need a shift from an ‘inside-out’ approach to an ‘outside-in’ focus.

“INSIDE OUT”

- Leading with our agenda
- Functional *only* communications
- Overcommunicating to rebuild trust –
More = confusion
- Customers as ratepayers
- Transparency = facts
- Let our employees drive human connection

“OUTSIDE IN”

- Leading with customers’ needs
- Emotional *and* functional communications
- Salient messages to rebuild trust
- Customers as citizen owners
- Transparency = empathy and honesty
- Let our “why” drive human connections

It's time to think about the New Braunfels Utilities **brand.**

The answer to *what* our brand *will be* lies in:

- What our customers want from us
- What our customers expect from us
- Our DNA
- A cohesive connection with all community key stakeholders

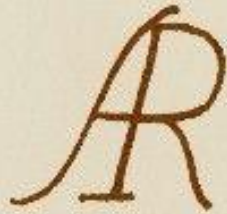
A strong brand has many dimensions

Vision • Mission • Purpose • Position • Character • Personality • Platform

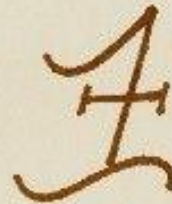
All leading to a future brand idea that will take us from where we are today, to a loved brand tomorrow.



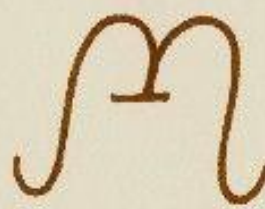
TEXAS' EARLIEST
RECORDED BRAND
JULY 1ST 1762



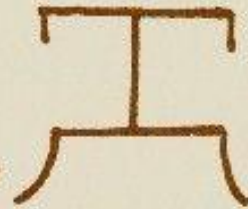
BRAND OF THE ALAMO
MISSION (COMPAÑIA DE
ALAMO DE BEJAR)
GRANTED MAY 26, 1812



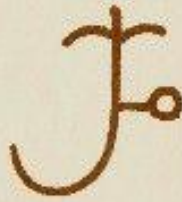
STEVE F. AUSTIN'S
SPANISH BRAND.



MISSION DE LA ESPADA
DE BEJAR
1778



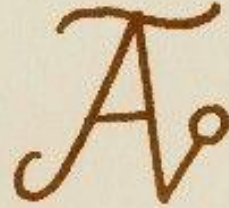
JOSE FLORES
BEJAR DISTRICT
1806



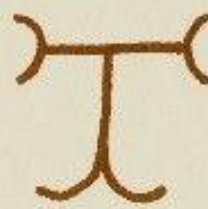
DON NICOLAS SREZ
BEJAR
1742



DON MIGEL HERNANDEZ
DE HOYOS
BEJAR DISTRICT
1765



BRAND OF THE TEXAS PATRIOT
JOSE ANTONIO NAVARRO
GRANTED NOV. 7, 1833



JOSE YBARDO
BEJAR
1806



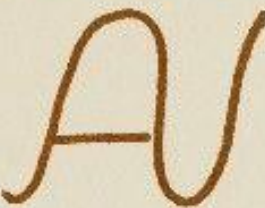
JAMES TAYLOR WHITE'S
BRAND. THE OLDEST TEXAS
BRAND IN CONTINUOUS USE.
BEGAN IN 1820. DOUBLE W.



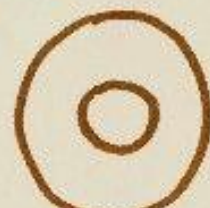
WILLIAM McFADDIN
JEFFERSON COUNTY
1837
M6



MRS. JANE LONG
FORT BEND COUNTY
1838



MATTHEW MOSS
AUSTIN COUNTY
1838
A N



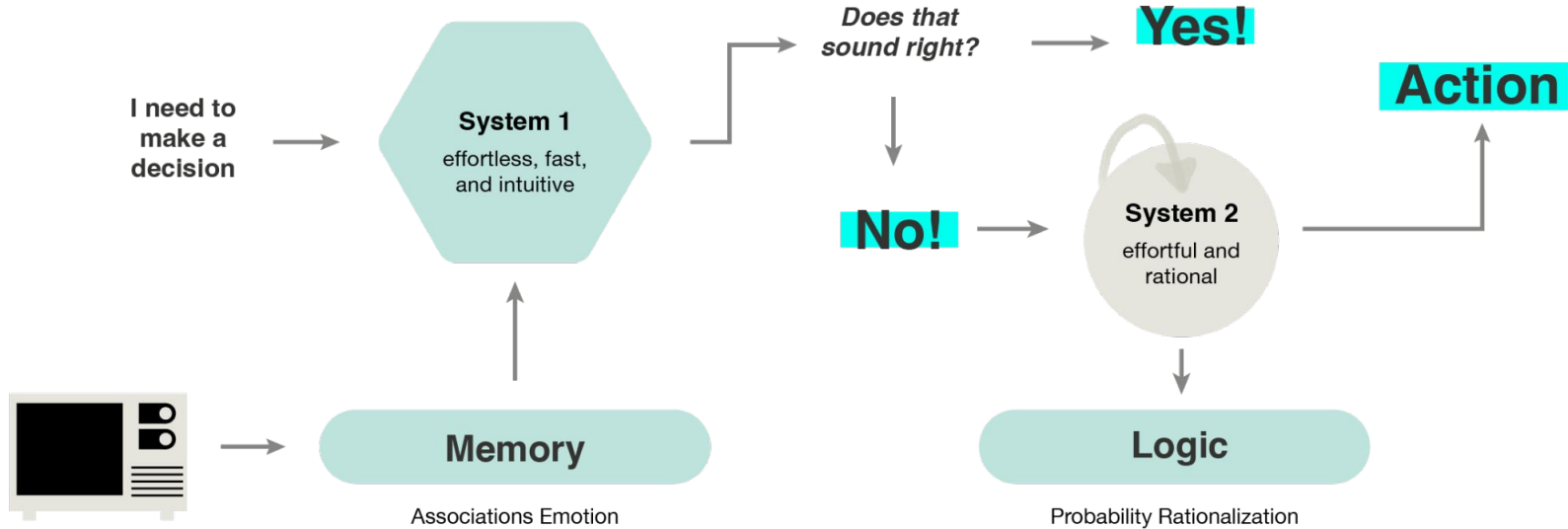
BORDEN BROS.
FORT BEND COUNTY
1839
CIRCLE O



JOHN MOORE
MATAGORDA COUNTY
1845
BOW & ARROW

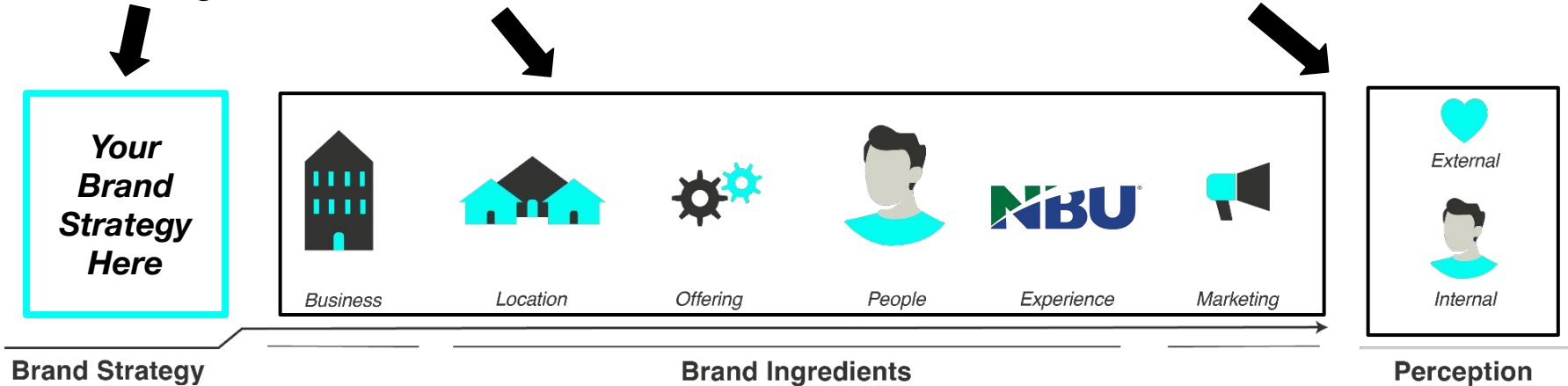
Brands give meaning to companies and impact the way we make choices

There are two ways we process information, decisions that come to us easily because they are associated with emotion and memory (as seen on the left of this chart) and those that require more effort and rational thinking, and are instead based more on logic than emotion (as seen on the right).



So, what exactly *is* a brand?

A Strong Brand has all **facets of its business** consistently aligned and influencing **consumers' perception**.

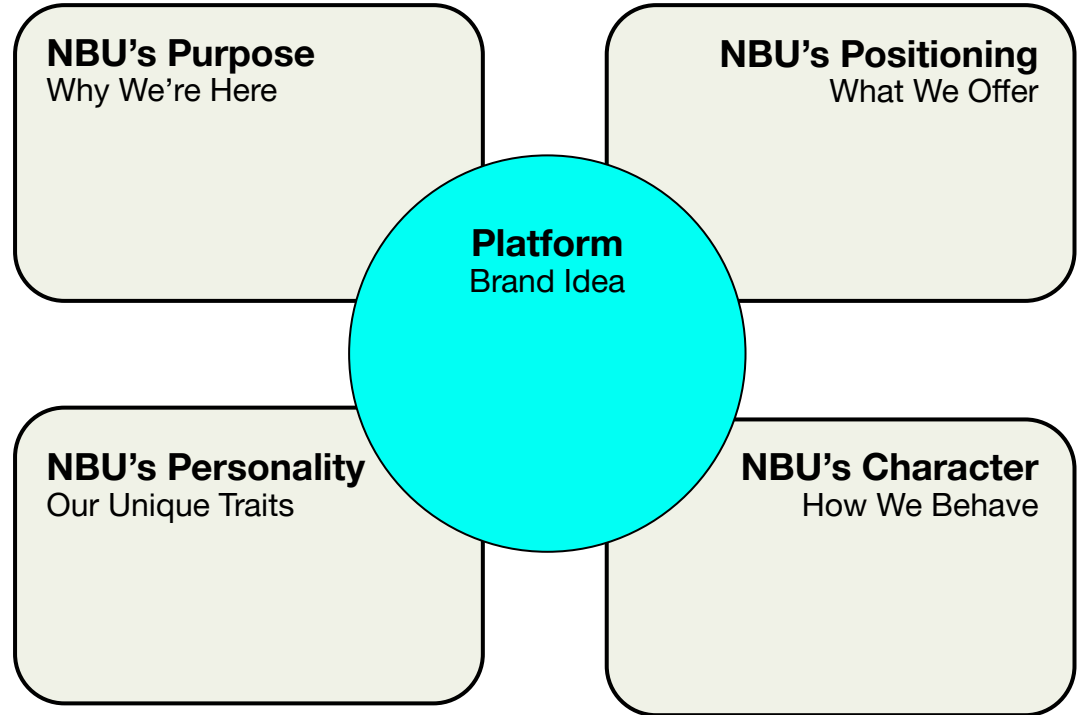


Our brand is who we are and why we matter. It's infused into everything we do so that the right experiences and beliefs are created in our outside and inside communities.

Brand Dimensions

We have our Vision and Mission in place and in action.

We're now creating the external brand components of...



Brand Purpose

Why are we here?

For whom?

Brand Purpose:

**Opportunity targets highlight
our greatest need.**

Brand Purpose:

Established residents in New Braunfels are experiencing *growing pains*, which is calling into question NBU's leadership in this changing community.

Established residents, 18–54, are our most critical audience.

Why are they important?

Because they are the backbone of the community who have seen New Braunfels at our best and therefore expect better.

	Male	Female	18–34	35–54	55+	Lived in New Braunfels <3 Years	3–6 Years	7+ Years	Own Home	Rent
NBU FAVORABILITY (Top 2 Box: 36%)										
Extremely Favorable Positive	14%	18%	0%	13%	20%	19%	11%	12%	11%	25%
Favorable (Top 2 Box)	35%	39%	12%	25%	48%	42%	32%	32%	32%	44%

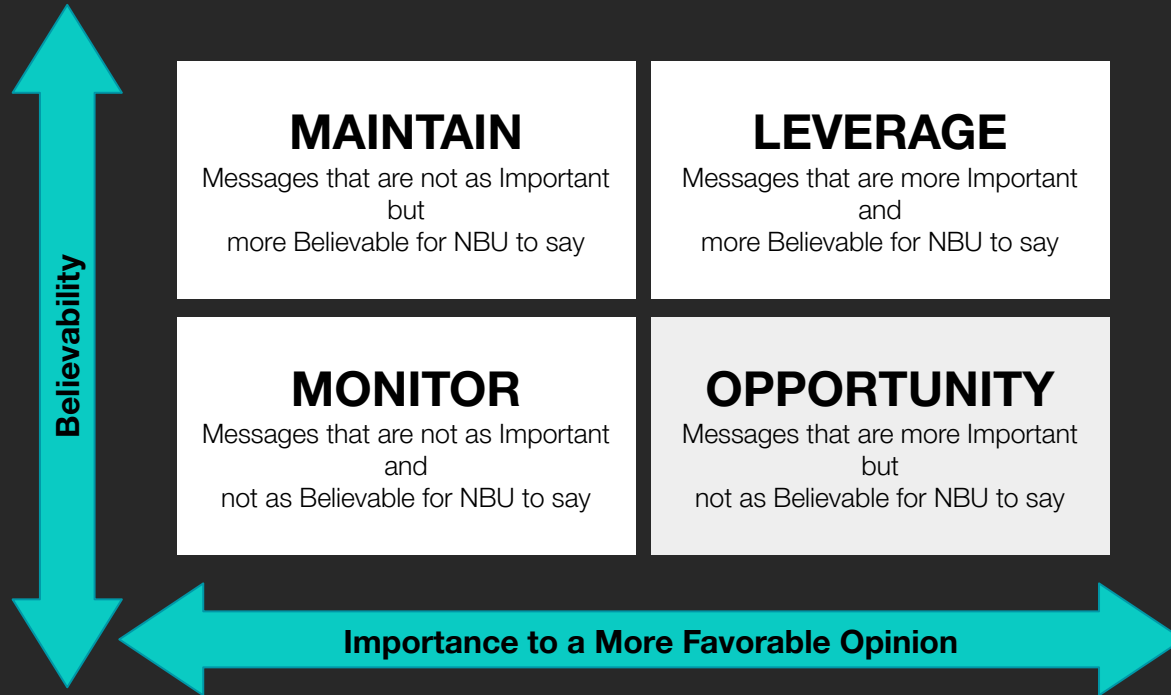
Source: Message Hierarchy Study, 2024

Q: How would you describe your overall opinion of each of the following service providers?

New Braunfels Median Age: 35.1 y/o [Datausa](#)

We tested 42 messages for potential customer connection.

The results were analyzed and plotted in four quadrants. Each quadrant represents a different engagement potential for NBU.



Brand Purpose:

Connecting with customers = focusing on what's important to them.

These messages are highly important, but not currently believable from NBU

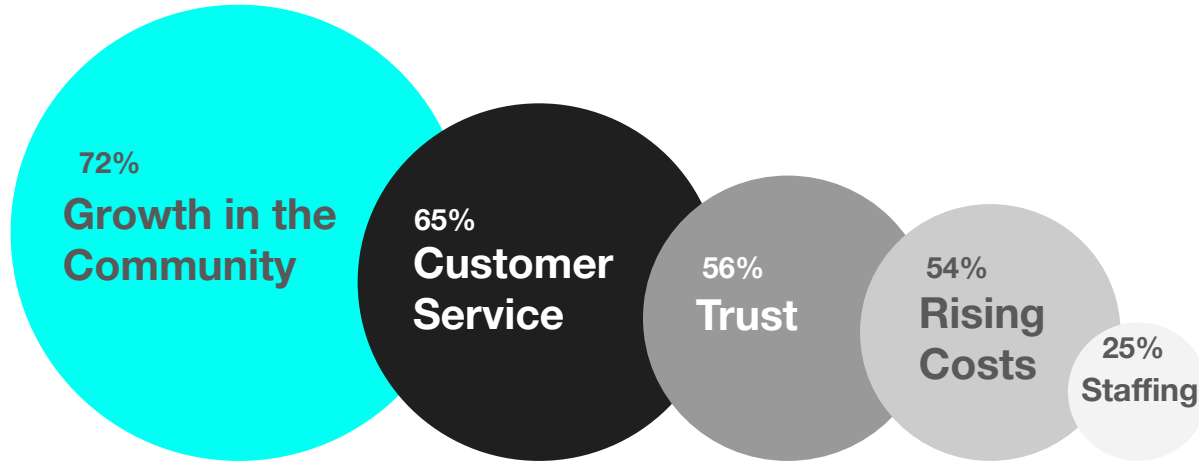


Source: Message Hierarchy Study, 2024

Q: Please read the statements below and tell us how believable each is to you/how each impacts your overall opinion. New Braunfels Utilities...

Brand Purpose:

According to NBU employees, growth is the #1 challenge facing NBU.



Challenge #1

“Keeping up with the current growth of the town and maintain the current infrastructure.”

Challenge #2

“Serving our customers with Amazon-like customer service.”

Source: NBU Employee Workbook, 2024
Q. What are the most difficult challenges facing NBU?

Brand Purpose:

Customers think we've stopped caring.

We haven't come alongside them in this growth journey.

Brand Purpose:

Through our hard work, we actively care for every household and business in New Braunfels, because we're the human utility.

We do what we do for our employees

We do what we do for our residential customers

We do what we do for our commercial customers

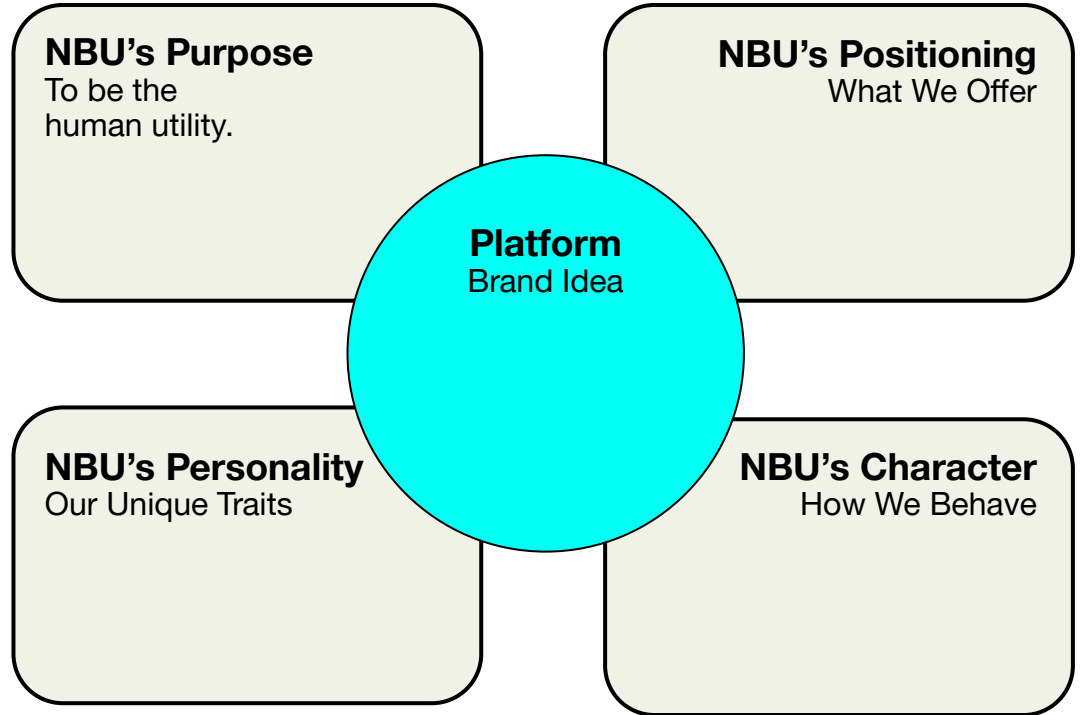
Brand Dimensions

Brand Purpose:
To be the human utility.

Brand Position:

Brand Character:

Brand Personality:



Brand Position

What do we offer customers?

Brand Position:

Because we're already delivering on Reliability, Safety, Customer Service and Responsiveness, we have permission to do and be more.

These messages are highly important, and already believable from NBU

NBU BELIEVABILITY

LEVERAGE

(More Important, More Believable)

- Provides reliable energy needed to power my business and keep my family comfortable
- Places safety and security as the highest priorities for every employee and customer
- Has 24/7 phone and email support for outstanding customer service
- Fixes it fast and keeps me informed every step of the way when there's an outage or interruption
- Ensures I know what to do if an electrical or water emergency occurs
- Responds to customers with speed and agility

Weaker Correlation

IMPORTANCE TO MORE FAVORABLE OPINION

Stronger Correlation

Source: Message Hierarchy Study, 2024

Q: Please read the statements below and tell us how believable each is to you/how each impacts your overall opinion. New Braunfels Utilities...

Brand Position:

“At a minimum we need to take care of our customers’ needs, **but really we want them to love us, to completely trust us.**”

—NBU Key Stakeholder

Source: Key Stakeholder Interviews, 2024, NBU Employee Workbook, 2024


Trusted brands do four things to show love:

Source: NBU Employee Workbook, 2024

Q. When you think of strong companies or organizations in our own backyard of New Braunfels, which ones come to mind? What do you most admire about them and why?

VALUE BEYOND COMMODITIES

Getting involved and doing things for the community,
because locals care about their town.




“They always go above and
beyond for the community.
Not just in NB, but in every
town they’re in.”

—NBU Employee

THEIR SCRIPT IS OUR SCRIPT

Care about people and then DO something to show that care. Treating everyone like an individual. No empty promises.

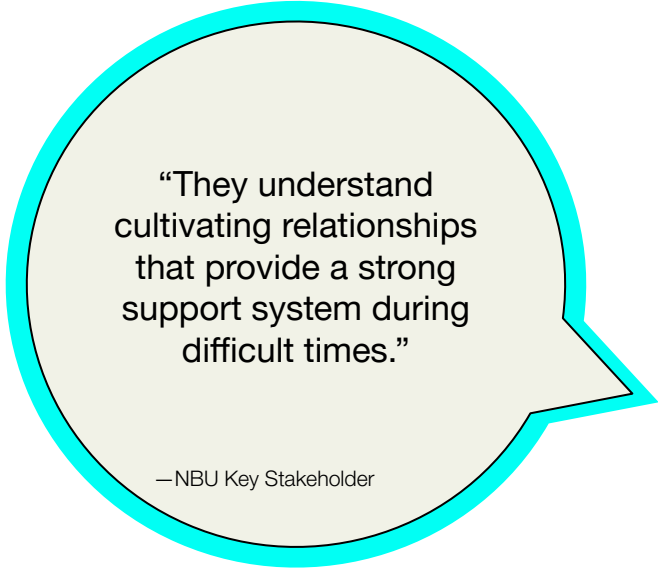


“They go off script and do whatever it takes to connect on the customer’s level.”

—NBU Employee

DOUBLE DOWN IN MOMENTS OF NEED

Show up as your most supportive, best self when you're the most needed.




“They understand cultivating relationships that provide a strong support system during difficult times.”

—NBU Key Stakeholder

DON'T SNEAK IN— BE INVITED IN

Create interactions and experiences that people want you to be a part of.



“They don’t treat them like customers, they make everyone feel equal like one of the family.”

—NBU Key Stakeholder

Brand Position:

We're being asked, even expected, to get out of JUST our utility lane and provide more meaningful engagement with New Braunfels.

These messages are less important, but currently believable from NBU

NBU BELIEVABILITY

MAINTAIN

(Less Important, More Believable)

- Provides safety precautions for customers when near power lines and waterways
- Showcases how hard employees work to restore power in the event of a power outage
- **Is an important part of the fabric of the New Braunfels community, and what makes us unique**
- Shares expert advice so that me and my family are safe around power lines and waterways
- Is innovative in anticipating modern customer energy and water demands
- Illustrates how I, as a customer, can conserve energy in my home or business
- Partners with the community to volunteer, support charities, and build a better future

Weaker Correlation

IMPORTANCE TO MORE FAVORABLE OPINION

Stronger Correlation

Source: Message Hierarchy Study, 2024

Q: Please read the statements below and tell us how believable each is to you/how each impacts your overall opinion. New Braunfels Utilities...

The community is asking us to do more than provide ‘essential services’; they’re asking for us to help them love the place and the people in it.

- Demonstrate that we are in it with our customers.
- Communicate that we are a leader that has the community’s best interest at heart.

Brand Position:

“Growing up, I cared for my utility because they took care of my family and my community... I was taught to look for the NBU guys if you couldn’t find a policeman or a firefighter.”

—New Braunfels Resident

Source: Key Stakeholder Interviews, 2024, NBU Employee Workbook, 2024
Q. What is the one thing you love about NBU?

Brand Position:

Our brand position must meet our customers where they are, based on what they currently find meaningful about us...

The confidence to believe in New Braunfels again.

For our employees

For our residential customers

For our commercial customers

Brand Dimensions

Brand Purpose:

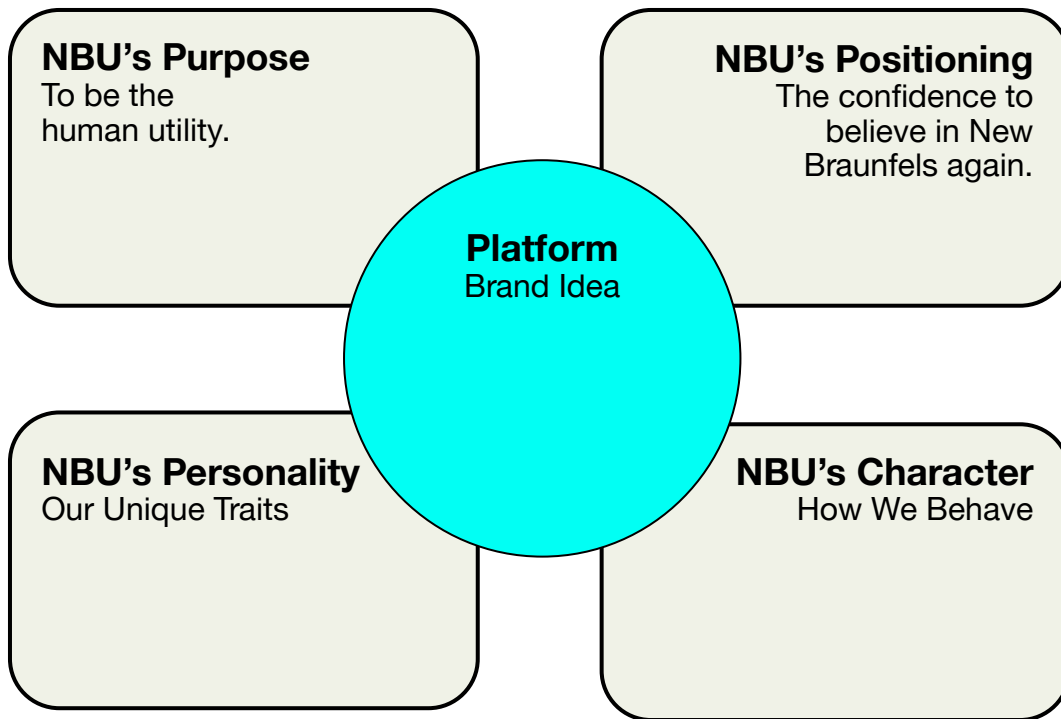
To be the human utility.

Brand Position:

The confidence to believe in New Braunfels again.

Brand Character:

Brand Personality:

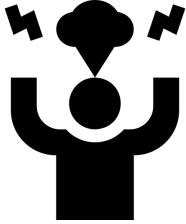


Brand Character

How do we behave?

Currently our employees are *just* as frustrated with customers as customers are with NBU.

Brand Character:



**NBU employees are tired
of being mistreated**

“But when I am getting yelled at, customers make me feel a little scared. I know they are just frustrated, but they’re angry.”



**This has led to
an US vs. THEM**

“Consumer and developer customers all seem to be unhappy with NBU. NBU customers seem to feel unheard and uncared for.”



**And feelings of less
friendliness and empathy**

“We struggle to provide understandable information to our customers. It seems that currently nothing I say helps.”

Source: NBU Employee Workbook, 2024

Q. How would you define our New Braunfels Utilities brand today?

Brand Character:

Frustrations being felt by everyone can be turned around by getting to know each other.

Brand Character:

“We’re disconnected. I think there is a large portion of our customers who don’t know anything about us as a company other than we send them a high monthly bill for services “anyone” can provide to them.”

– NBU Employee

Source: NBU Employee Workbook, 2024
Q. What are key challenges facing NBU today?

In a more acute way than for most municipal utilities, there is no discernible difference between NBU and the community of New Braunfels.

Brand Character:

Characteristics that are authentically shared with our customers are those brand characteristics that will create relationships and prove our difference.

Lead by Example

Everything we do is with our customer and community in mind. From improving the bottom line of our business customers, to improving the lives of our residential customers, we don't do anything without asking how our work can have a positive impact.

Exuberant

Confident, friendly and engaging in everything we do, NBU reflects the best of our community through our actions and words. We love where we live and work, and we want everyone to know how lucky we all are to share this great Texas town.

Superhero

When someone calls the help desk in need of assistance, or even just sees someone in an NBU uniform, it means something more than just being an employee. Everything we do is with intent, and we leave every engagement in a better state than when we entered it. We do everything we can to make the community thrive.

Brand Character:

Collaborative solutions are less important than leading by example (modeling).

These messages are not important to customers, and are simultaneously not currently believable from NBU.

NBU BELIEVABILITY

MONITOR

(Not as Important, Not as Believable)

- Partners with me on solutions for my personal/business energy use
- Partners with you to identify unique and personalized solutions for your energy use
- Understands that having access to renewable energy sources is important for the future of New Braunfels
- Provides access to renewable energy sources customers can use (like hydro power, wind power and solar power)
- Is equipped to meet increasing use of electric vehicles

Weaker Correlation

IMPORTANCE TO MORE FAVORABLE OPINION

Stronger Correlation

Source: Message Hierarchy Study, 2024

Q: Please read the statements below and tell us how believable each is to you/how each impacts your overall opinion. New Braunfels Utilities...

Brand Dimensions

Brand Purpose:

To be the human utility.

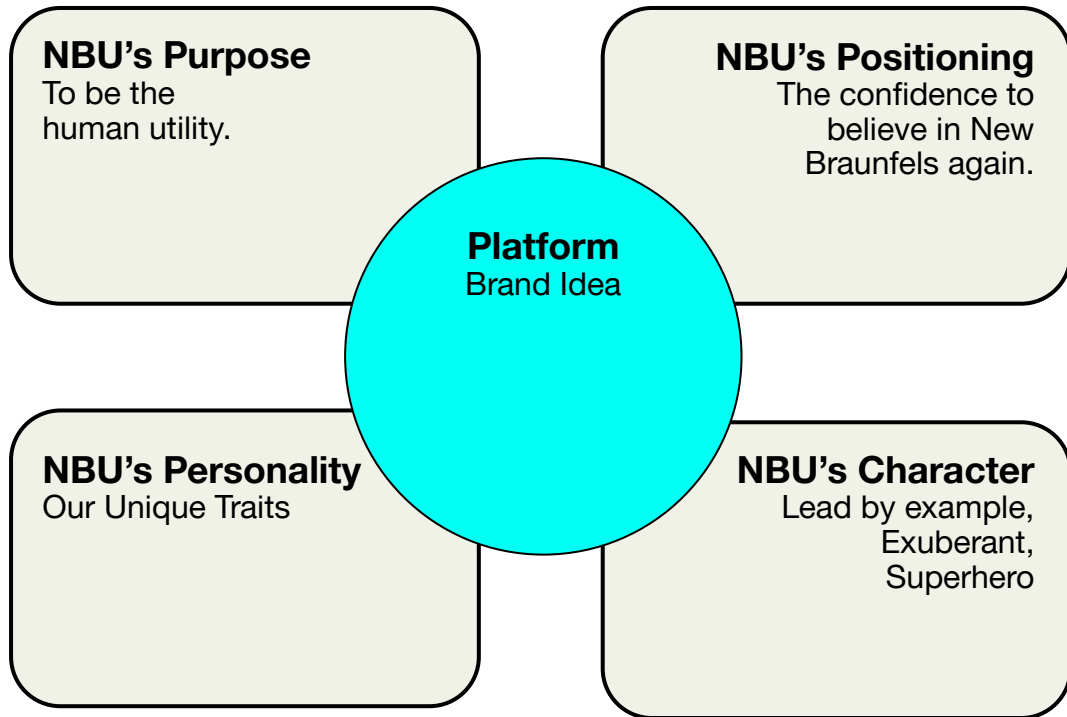
Brand Position:

The confidence to believe in New Braunfels again.

Brand Character:

Lead by Example, Exuberant, Superhero

Brand Personality:



Brand Personality

How are we unique?

Brand Personality:

Modern brands are like people.

People have depth and character and so too do strong brands.

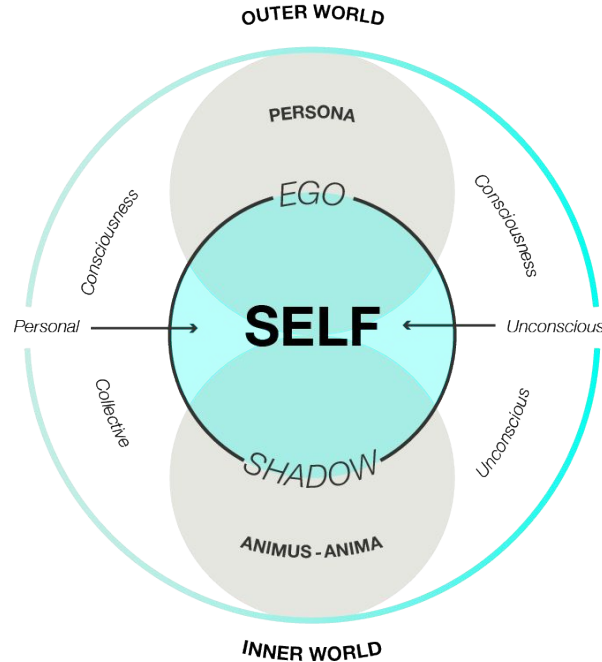
The best brands are personified, with their own unique personality.

Like a person, you can respect, like and even love a brand.

Therefore our Brand Personality is built from NBU's BRAND CHARACTER + NBU's BRAND PERSONIFICATION.

Also, known as a Brand Archetype.

The Intersection of Commercial Brands and Human Psyche: Jungian Archetypes



The Intersection of Commercial Brands and Human Psyche: **Jungian Archetypes**

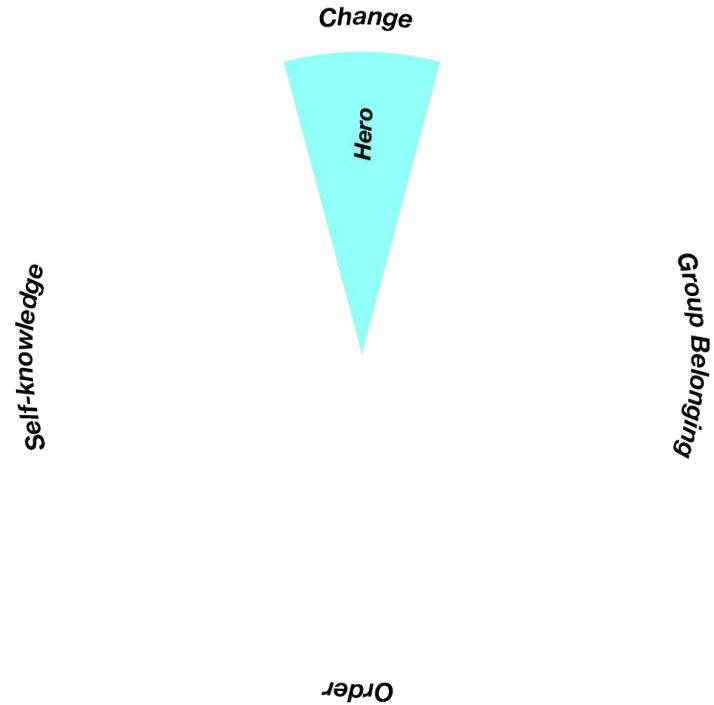
Self-knowledge

Change

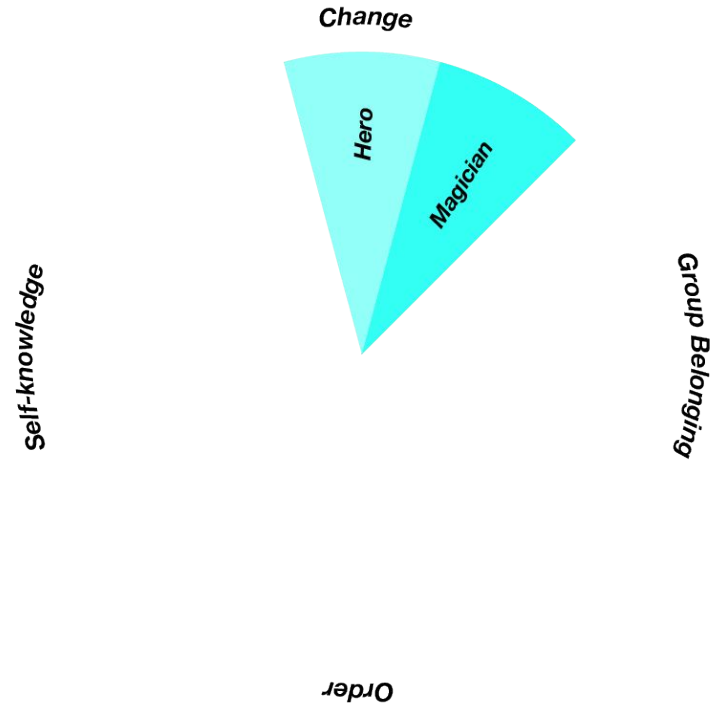
Group Belonging

Order

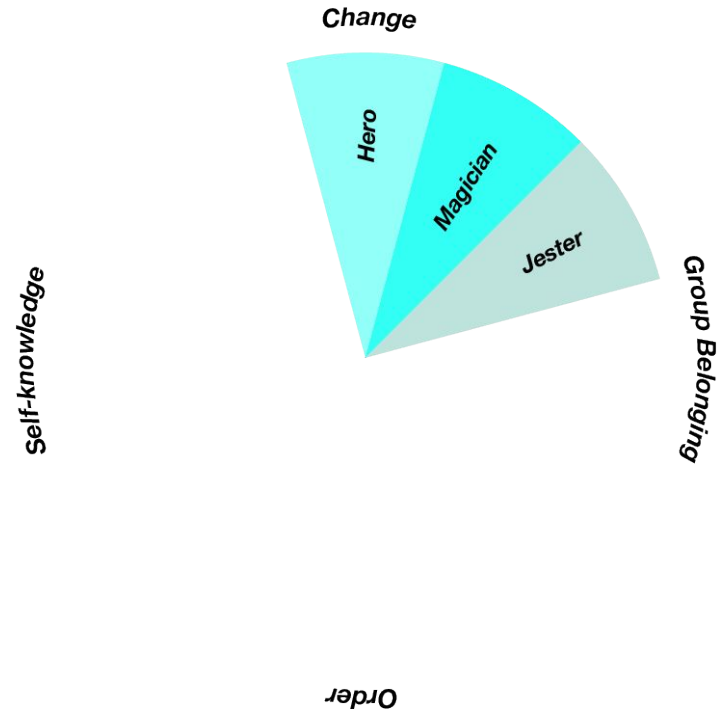
The Intersection of Commercial Brands and Human Psyche: **Jungian Archetypes**



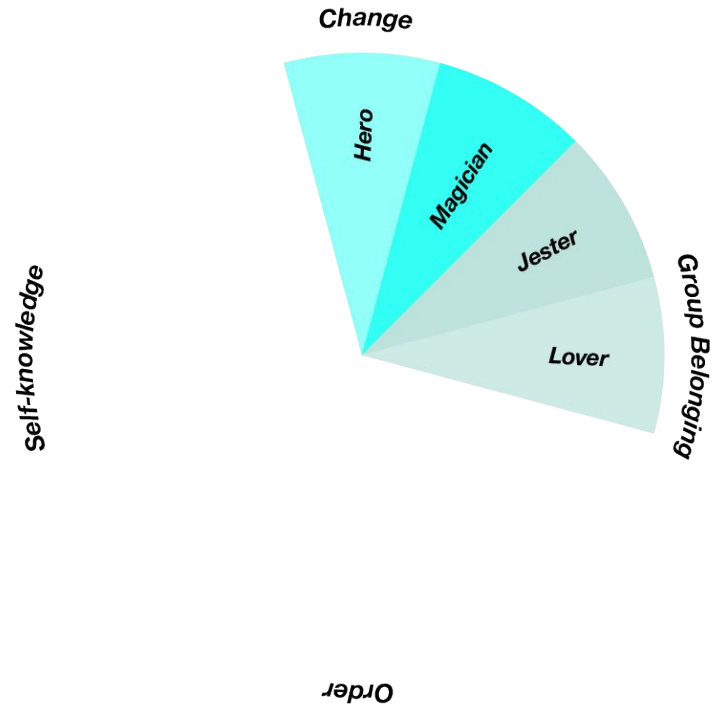
The Intersection of Commercial Brands and Human Psyche: Jungian Archetypes



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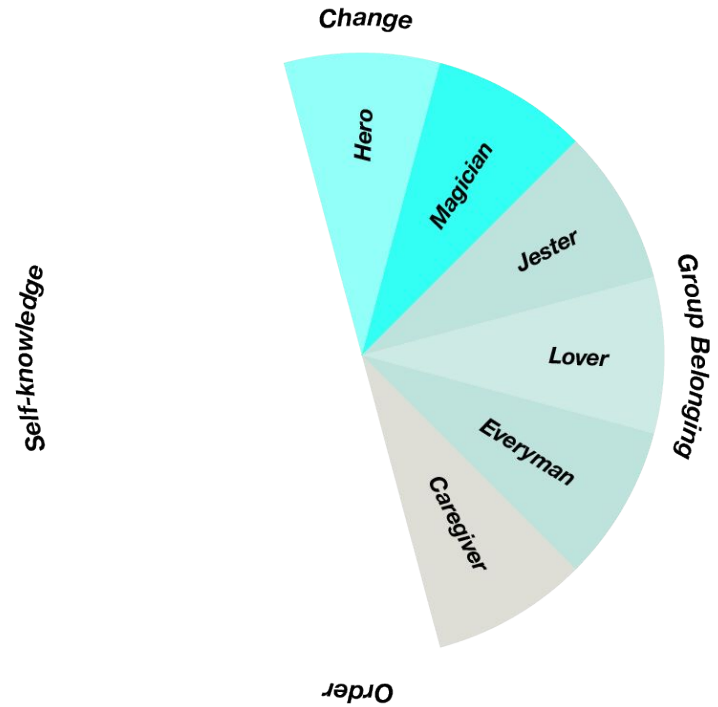
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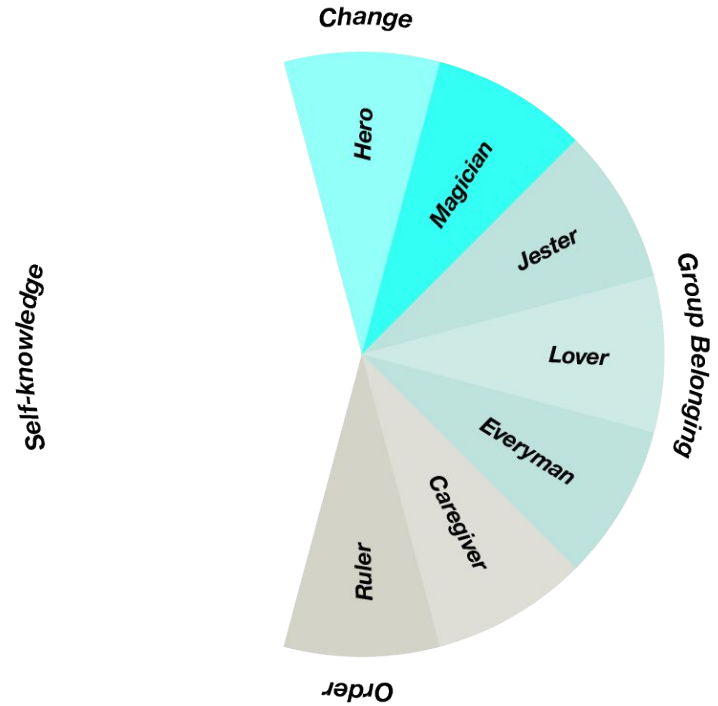
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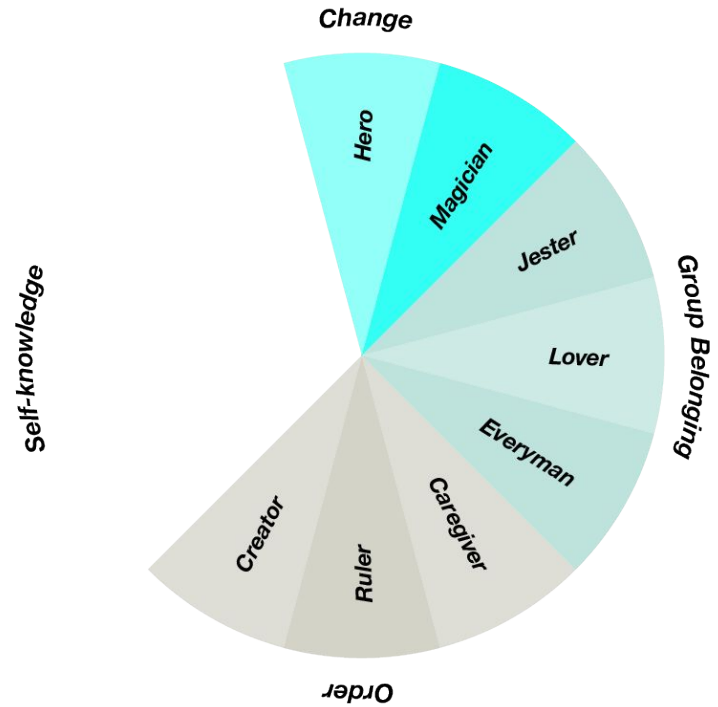
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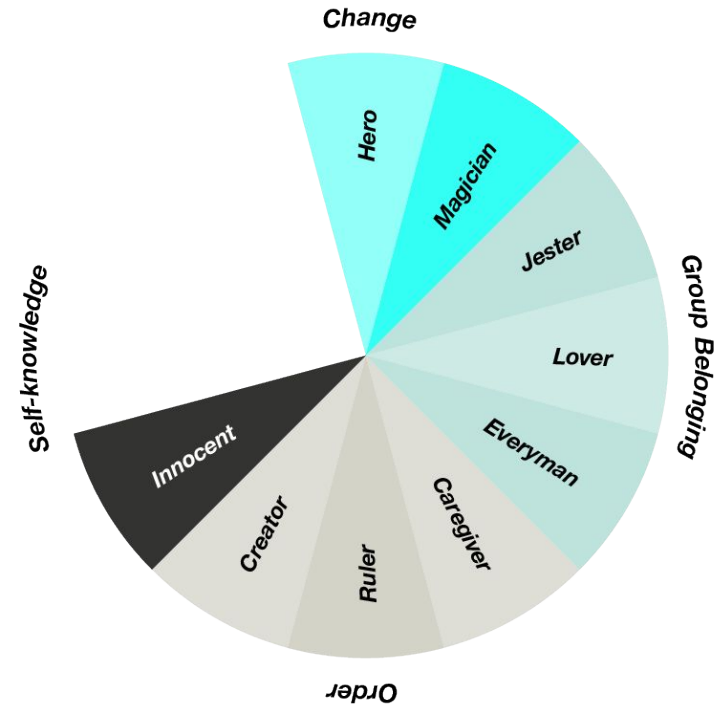
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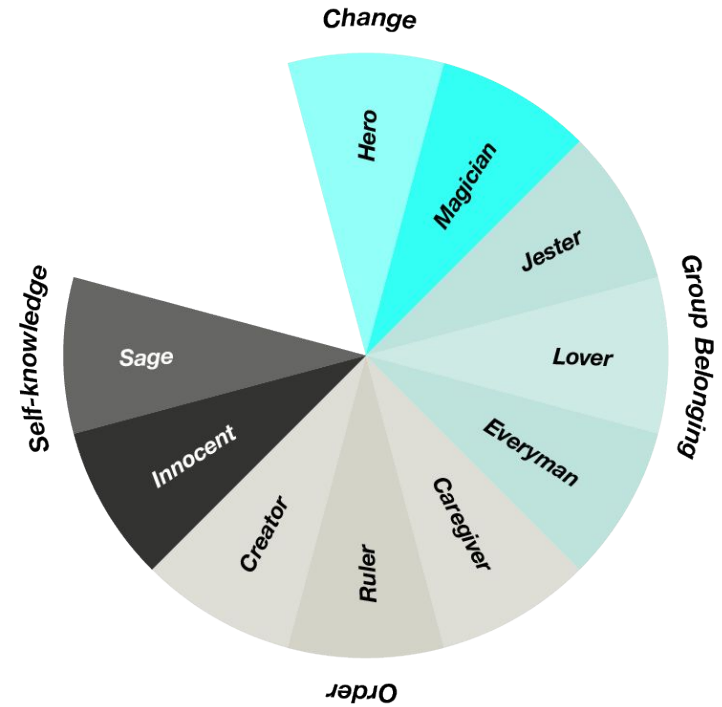
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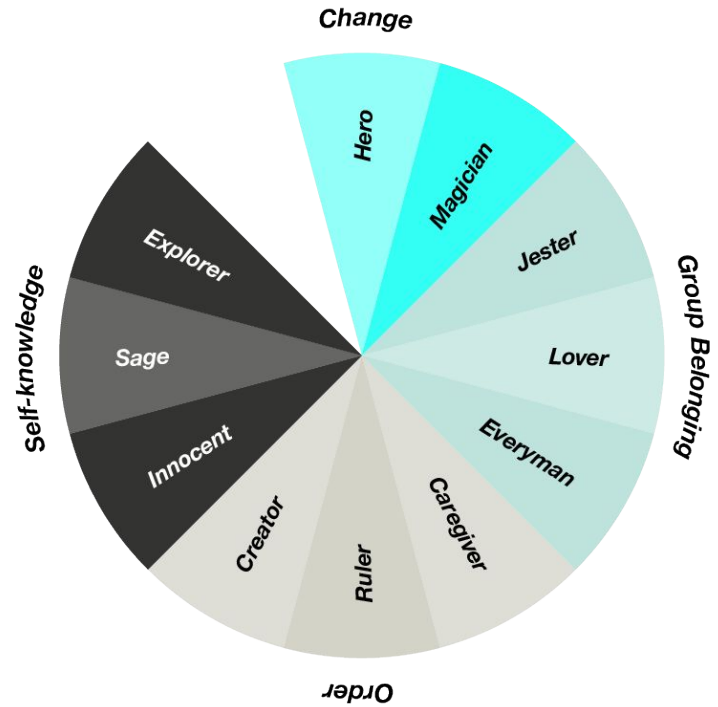
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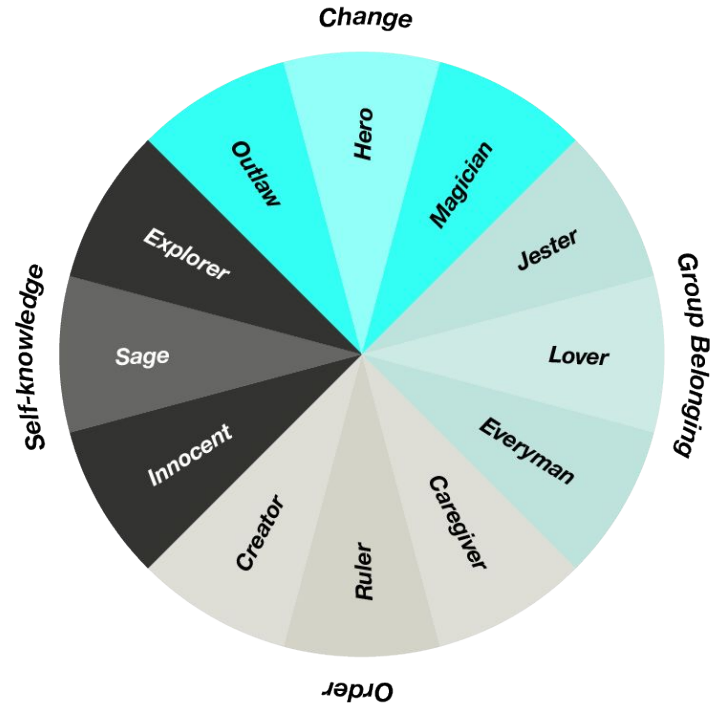
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The Intersection of Commercial Brands and Human Psyche: **Jungian Archetypes**

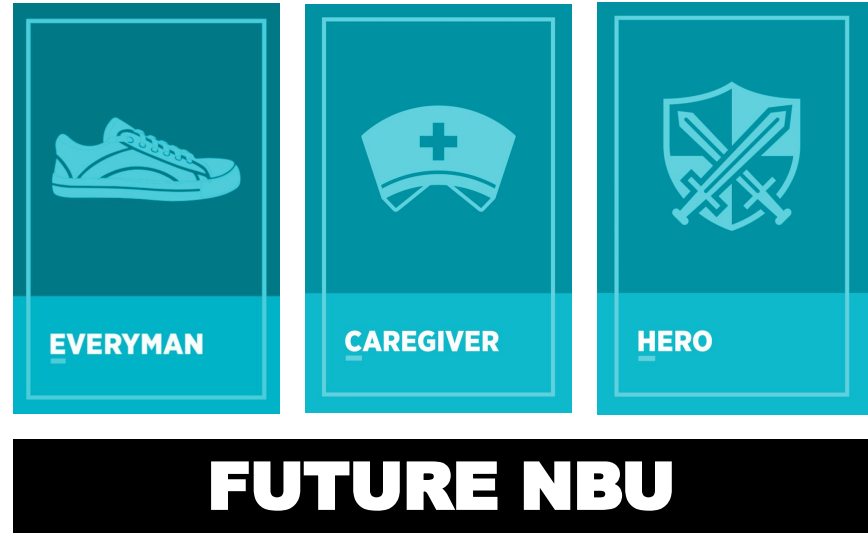


ARCHETYPAL PERSONALITY	DESCRIPTION	HELPS US...
The Hero	Proves self through amazing physical acts. Strong, but uses a controlled strength to benefit others.	Act courageously
The Caregiver	The protective nurturer and gentle provider: Helps others by providing for their needs. Much respected and trusted, icons of home, security and continuity.	Care for others
The Outlaw	Rebel, outlaw, rogue: Achieves freedom (from the establishment) through defiance, disobedience and nonconformity. Enjoys being a little bit bad. Often admired; may be intimidating because they're not for everyone.	Break the rules
The Everyman	Good old boy, girl next door, average joe, down to earth. Bonds with others by being humble, hardworking and friendly.	Be okay just the way you are
	Intellectual solutions to problems, expert advice, serious objective tone. Finds truth through research, objectivity.	
ARCHETYPAL PERSONALITY	DESCRIPTION	HELPS US...
The Innocent	Achieves a pure life by always doing the right thing.	Retain and renew faith
The Innocent	Achieves a pure life by always doing the right thing.	Retain and renew faith
The Magician	Creates transformation, overcomes the impossible, creates delight with his/her imagination and cleverness.	Effect transformation
The Ruler	Leader, part of the establishment, sets the rules that others play by. Powerful.	Exert control
The Jester	Element of energy and fun, overthrowing the established way of doing things, speaks the truth when no one else does, adds levity to tense situations.	Have a good time
The Creator	Nonconformist, not motivated by fitting in but by self-expression.	Craft something new

Brand Personality:

ARCHETYPAL PERSONALITY	Examples
The Hero	
The Caregiver	TOMS
The Outlaw	HARLEY — DAVIDSON
The Everyman	
The Sage	Google
The Lover	CHANEL
The Explorer	patagonia [®]
The Innocent	
The Magician	
The Ruler	 Mercedes-Benz
The Jester	<i>Old Spice</i>
The Creator	

Brand Personality

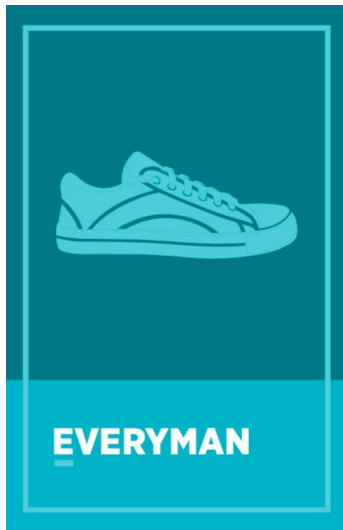


Brand Personality

ARCHETYPAL PERSONALITY	DESCRIPTION	HELPS US...
The Everyman	Good old boy, girl next door, average joe, down to earth. Bonds with others by being humble, hardworking and friendly.	Be okay just the way you are
The Hero	Proves self through amazing physical acts. Strong, but uses a controlled strength to benefit others.	Act courageously
The Caregiver	The protective nurturer and gentle provider: Helps others by providing for their needs. Much respected and trusted, icons of home, security and community.	Care for others

Brand Personality

We're among the most visible people in the community. Let's be the most approachable.



Relatable

We're hardworking, reliable, get the job done right. As our community changes, one thing doesn't—our commitment to doing what's best for the people we serve.

Relatable for NBU

IS:

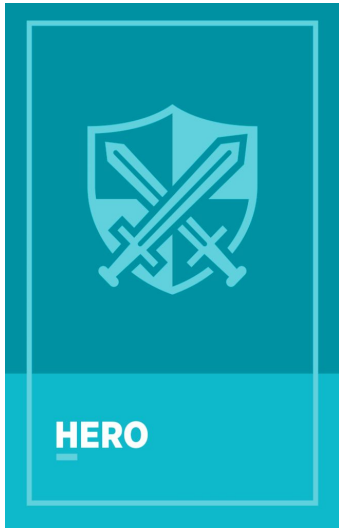
Thoughtful
A Role Model
Responsible

IS NOT:

Arrogant
Complicated

Brand Personality

Let's return to the beacon for the community we once were.



Focused

It's part of our long-standing DNA to look for ways to be a north star within our community. In times of immense change our customers are looking to us for courage and confidence to lead the way into the future and unify New Braunfels.

Focused for NBU

IS:

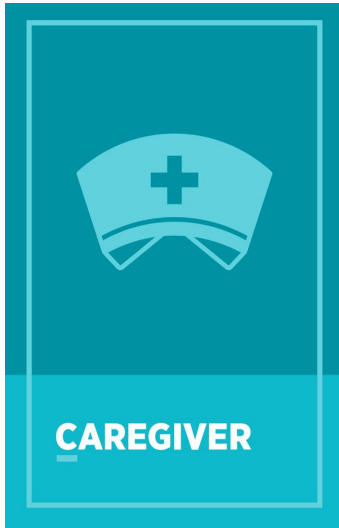
Courageous
Unifying
A Leader
Confident
Action-oriented

IS NOT:

Controlling
Shy/Timid
Inconsistent

Brand Personality

Our community needs a hug.



Caring

We have our customers' best interest at heart at all times. We do what we do not because we have to, but because we *truly* care. We are New Braunfels and New Braunfels is us.

Caring for NBU

IS:

Supportive
Relationship-focused
Listens
Committed
A Leader

IS NOT:

Selfish
Rigid
One-dimensional

What makes us, us? What are our personality traits?

Relatable, Focused, and Caring.

For our employees

For our residential customers

For our commercial customers

Brand Dimensions

Brand Purpose:

To be the human utility.

Brand Position:

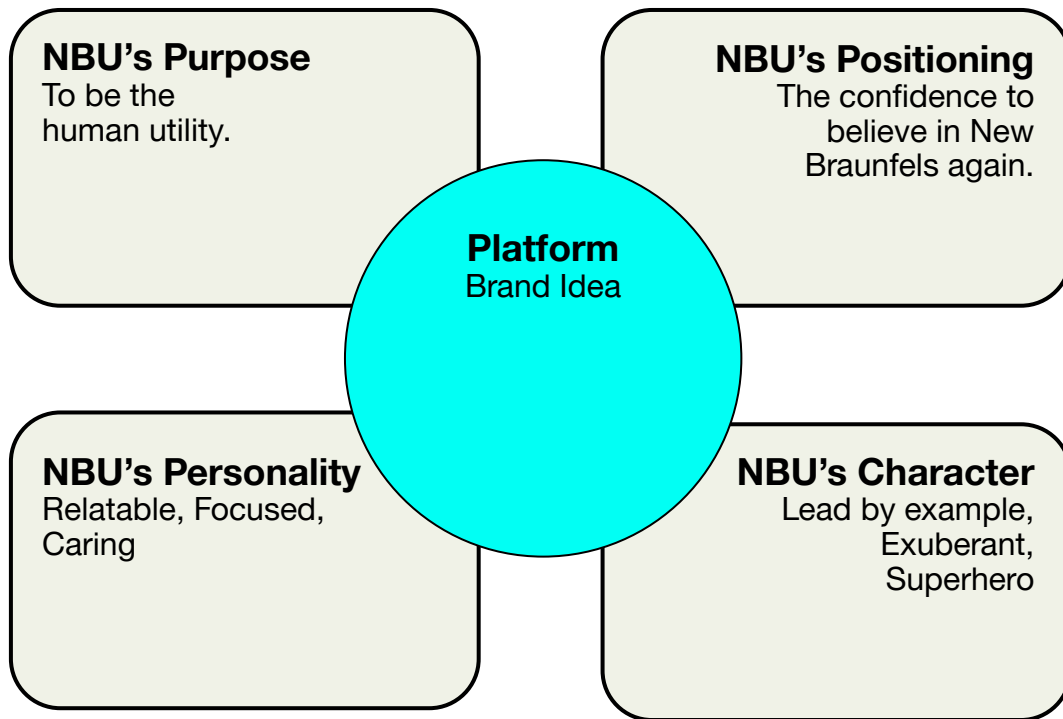
The confidence to believe in New Braunfels again.

Brand Character:

Lead by Example, Exuberant, Superhero

Brand Personality:

Relatable, Focused, Caring



Thank you.