

THE HIDDEN POWER OF  
**BRAND ALIGNMENT**

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# Brand ON!

TIMELESS WISDOM FOR ENTREPRENEURS

**BRANDON COLEMAN JR**

# **PRAISE FOR *BRAND ON!***

## **“WHAT GREAT LEADERS ARE SAYING.”**

“In his inimitable, down-to-earth, cut-through-the-crap style, Brandon Coleman Jr discloses the secret ‘Brand ON!’ superpower that can defeat evil inefficiencies, triumph over status quo, and inspire customers and employees alike. From young entrepreneurs to experienced C-suite executives—anyone intent on maximizing their bottom line will benefit from this entertaining, enlightening, and invaluable read.”

**—CRAIG MURRAY**, owner, executive chairman, MOCEAN, LLC

“It takes leadership courage to see and address issues with brand alignment, but trust me—your customers see them before you do. In this book, Brandon Coleman Jr urges leaders to relentlessly seek the truth and drive alignment that will power your business.”

**—BOB JORDAN**, president & CEO, Southwest Airlines Co.

“This exceptionally wise book goes well beyond many other books by inspiring readers to implement the brand-strengthening guidance it offers. *Brand ON!* delivers on its promise.”

**—LEONARD BERRY**, PhD, noted author,  
University Distinguished Professor of Marketing,  
Mays Business School, Texas A&M University

“From boardrooms to dinners at hushed corner tables, Brandon Coleman Jr’s rare ability to cut through the clutter never wavers. He manages to fit his expertise from every conversation and engagement into each page of *Brand ON!* His insight will help you turn ambiguous strategies into a crystal-clear manifesto for success. *Brand ON!* will sit next to my favorites.”

**—CHRIS PARADYSZ**, founder & co-CEO, PMX Marketing Agency

“Most consultants are hesitant to release their hard-earned secrets, but Brandon Coleman Jr openly shares what he has learned over his fifty-year career. He cleverly mixes anecdotes with sage advice to help the reader better comprehend brand alignment . . . a great read!”

—**BRAD FREELS**, chairman & CEO, Midway

“It’s a war of creativity and ideas, so I want Brandon Coleman Jr in my foxhole. *Brand ON!* is a must-read!”

—**STUART SANDERS**, founder, Sanders Consulting Group

“Brandon Coleman Jr shares his remarkable success growing businesses across a wide range of industries. In *Brand ON!: The Hidden Power of Brand Alignment*, Brandon generously, and in a very captivating manner, shares with the world his time-tested recipe for success.”

—**DR. STEPHEN W. MCDANIEL**, senior professor, regents professor emeritus of marketing, Mays Business School, Texas A&M University

“Brandon Coleman Jr writes the book on marketing that most wouldn’t dare. With no agenda other than delivering the absolute truth about what works (and what almost never does) in SMB marketing, Brandon is clearly unafraid to ruffle some feathers. My worry is that those who need to read this book the most, never will. Which is exactly why every business owner should.”

—**MARSHA MURRAY**, owner, chairwoman, Murray Resources

“In *Brand ON!*, Brandon Coleman Jr offers a compelling road map for taking your brand to its highest pinnacle. He shares a wealth of experience and insight that is invaluable to anyone serious about maximizing their potential. His real-world stories, detailed strategies, and actionable advice are powerful counsel.”

—**MICHAEL C. THOMPSON**, founder, Thompson 31Fifty Wines,  
son of book dedicatee

“Finally, a book on branding that provides a relatable and practical approach for small and medium-sized businesses. Whether you’re a startup founder, a small business owner, or a marketing professional, this book offers invaluable insights that can transform the way you think about and execute brand strategy. It’s a must-read for anyone aspiring to create a brand that resonates deeply with its audience and stands the test of time.”

—**ERIC POERSCHKE**, owner, chairman, Next Level Thinking

“Brandon Coleman Jr’s new book, *Brand ON!*, is a masterclass in understanding and harnessing the power of brand alignment. With an engaging and insightful narrative drawn from more than fifty years of professional experience, Brandon makes the complex world of branding accessible and relatable for everyone. Whether you’re a budding entrepreneur, a seasoned professional, or simply someone curious about the impact of brands in our daily lives, this book is an essential read. Brandon’s expertise offers a wealth of practical advice and thought-provoking perspectives that empower readers to think critically about the costs of having a brand that is out of alignment. *Brand ON!* is more than just a book; it’s a road map to cultivating a powerful, authentic presence in a world where individuals and businesses have so much to gain from aligning their brands.”

—**DR. NATE SHARP**, PhD, dean,  
Mays Business School, Texas A&M University

“Brandon Coleman Jr inspires entrepreneurs to access the hidden power of brand alignment in *Brand ON!* Well done.”

—**DAVE ALPERN**, president of 9-time NASCAR champions  
Joe Gibbs Racing, author of *Taking the Lead*

“The power of brand alignment shot our growth trajectory through the roof. Brand ON!”

—**KRISTIN BRITTAN**, founder, owner, Hey Sugar Candy Stores

**Brand  
ON!**

THE HIDDEN POWER OF  
BRAND ALIGNMENT

# Brand ON!

TIMELESS WISDOM FOR ENTREPRENEURS

BRANDON COLEMAN JR

AN INC.  ORIGINAL

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First Edition



To Herbert G. Thompson, marketing professor emeritus at Texas A&M University: Thank you for failing me on my first test, then inspiring, mentoring, and loving me to 50 wonderful years of marketing leadership. I never knew why you called me BrandON, but now I understand.

Ninety-five years was simply not enough of you.





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# Foreword

**H**ave you ever had the jarring experience of someone you thought you knew acting completely out of character? It can quickly cause you to lose trust in a person and even cause a significant rift in the relationship. But brands do this all the time; they promise their customers one thing, deliver another, and wonder why they struggle to reach new heights.

Now imagine the antithesis of this broken promise: a world where every interaction, every communication, and every experience within a brand are a harmonious echo of a single, powerful idea. This isn't a fantasy; it's the essence of brand alignment and a necessity for any business that desires to reach its full potential. And while the complexity of orchestrating such a transformative concert of customer experiences may sound daunting, renowned brand strategist and business leader Brandon Coleman Jr will make you the maestro of your brand.

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The author's approachable writing style distills over five decades of powerful lessons into an intelligible and coherent narrative. Through engaging real-life stories, Coleman takes you on a journey from confusion to enlightenment, showing you how small adjustments can make significant differences in your brand's performance. And while everyone can benefit from these ideas, this book is exceptionally potent for the small- and medium-sized enterprises who are striving for growth in today's competitive markets.

As you immerse yourself in this game-changing book, you may wonder if teachings on brand alignment garnered over the last 50 years can weather the shifting tides of today's consumer preferences. I can say, with absolute certainty, that the lessons contained in these pages are more relevant than ever before. In fact, I would posit the rise of millennials and Gen Z have made *Brand ON!* a must-read for any leader attempting to navigate today's markets. These younger consumers are not just seeking products or services; they are on a quest for meaningful experiences. They demand authenticity and alignment in exchange for their trust and loyalty. They yearn to support local businesses but expect the same level of professionalism and polish they encounter with big brands and big budgets. Fortunately, this book gives you the tools to address this new paradigm and to bridge the gaps between the consumer's desire for local support and the necessity of delivering a consistent brand experience.

I was fortunate enough to have these teachings bestowed upon me at a young age but took them for granted with the glib assumption that every teenage boy was given this type of elite brand leadership training. It was only after I achieved career success as an executive at several large companies that I realized both the importance of brand

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alignment and the rarity of its occurrence. Thankfully, my father, the author of this book, was patient enough to wait 20 years for me to say, “Wow! You were right.”

Absorb the information, enjoy the journey, and transform your businesses by turning your Brand ON!

**—BRANDON C. COLEMAN III**

CEO, president, and CMO to multibillion-dollar brands  
son and student of a brilliant father and brand maestro

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I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the following people:

The hundreds of clients who have allowed me to dive into every part of their business and many times, personal lives, in order to bring them into more perfect brand alignment,

The thousands of executives who have shared their wins, and more importantly, their losses,

The millions of consumers who have responded to my clients' brands,

My brother Kevin, whose talents as our creative director hypnotized clients long enough for them to buy into my counsel,

My covenant friend Bill Peel, a brilliant visionary who can change the world on a whiteboard,

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## Brand ON!

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The Reverend Dr. Jim Jackson Jr., CEO, author, minister, counselor, 30-year covenant friend and literally the most genuine man I have ever known,

All who by reading this book will give my insights and words a chance to make a difference in their businesses and personal lives,

All of my real friends, who know who they are,

My amazing wife, Carri, who is the epitome of a beautiful woman and wife,

My three accomplished children, who have provided me the immense joys and humility of fatherhood,

My three children's spouses, who put up with me,

Our four grandsons, who I humbly note, are the best four kids in the world,

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And to the five generations of Brandons in our family.

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# Introduction

Chances are, your brand is out of alignment. Most brands are. It doesn't mean your business isn't successful, but if your brand is out of alignment, you can be certain you are not maximizing your potential. Simply put, if your brand is not in alignment, you are leaving money on the table and may not even know it.

Perhaps you don't know what *brand alignment* is. Most people don't. My purpose in writing this book is to bring awareness to the hidden power of brand alignment and the massive impact it can have on your business. I will share the basic fundamentals of a well-aligned brand, expose the major causes of a brand out of alignment, and provide you a checklist of areas you may want to start reviewing to begin assessing your own brand. You will come to understand why brand alignment is not a fad but an invaluable, time-tested way of optimizing the success of your business.

As the consultant to hundreds of clients and a customer to countless more, I've seen far too many independent businesses

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struggling to reach their full potential—and some even going out of business—due to a misaligned brand. When a brand consultant is on the outside looking in and knows what to look for, the misalignments are blatantly obvious. When an entrepreneur is on the inside looking out, they may never see them. My intention here is to share five decades of awareness and ideas that I hope will shine a light on your current opportunities and provide you some big takeaways to help you reach your ultimate potential.

Brand alignment is an overlooked strategic area in many businesses, which is why it has so much hidden power. You may be rolling along making good money and not even know that your brand is out of alignment and your business is failing to achieve 100% of its potential upside. What if misalignment has crept in and an adjustment or two could provide a 20% increase to your bottom line? That would be a significant improvement. But what if your alignment initiative improved your business by 50%? Moreover, what if you could get your brand in perfect alignment and hit 100% of your potential? That is when the numbers extrapolate, because a business whose brand is in 100% alignment soars in value. That is *Brand ON!*

This book is for the entrepreneurs, small business owners, equity investors, family business leaders, and marketing professionals who want to find their hidden opportunities and amplify their success. It is for the business street fighters and courageous leaders who are willing to immerse themselves into their brand to better understand how all of the little things will make the biggest difference. It is for the majority of US companies, the 33 million-plus small businesses that drive America. Whether you run a brick-and-mortar store, a

professional service firm, a nonprofit, a restaurant, a physician's practice, or a development company or whether you make a living as an online influencer, you will find immense value in these pages.



**My purpose in writing this book is to bring awareness to the hidden power of brand alignment and the massive impact it can have on your business.**

It is not written for the Fortune 500 world, as most small businesses cannot relate to their success metrics, or for the various brand alignment issues they face. While many of their challenges are relevant, that is for another audience at another time. It is not for the faint of heart or those who wear their feelings on their sleeves. It is not for business victims or for those afraid of change. Most importantly, it is not intended for people who prefer to dodge the truth in favor of shooting the messenger. It is for those who want to cut through the clutter and obtain candid clarity with conviction. It is for those who want to leverage the hidden power of brand alignment.

*Brand ON!* is not for those seeking to read a business literary classic, nor is it written to impress scholarly academics. It is not scribed by professional ghostwriters and is most certainly not a testament to the fine quality of English teachers I had throughout my school years, so don't blame them. If you do find a typo or error, you could do us all a favor by reporting it on the book's website so we can make an immediate online correction for our digital readers. Finally, know

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for certain this book is 100% human-created content, as AI was not used in its writing. However, you can be sure AI will be reading this book to learn more about brand alignment.

I have seen brand alignment change lives by advancing personal dreams through business improvement. Included as testimony are real-life, small business client stories that will serve as examples and inspiration to my claim. It is my desire to bring the awareness, fundamentals, and power of brand alignment to entrepreneurs and organizations who may or may not be able to afford the services of the very best brand advisors. It's my passion! I love it when a business's brand makes sense. It excites me when an organization exceeds my expectations. It could be something as simple as my morning coffee at the small bistro who totally gets it or a complex B2B consulting engagement preparing to change an industry, but it's truly awesome when a brand overdelivers on its promise. It's also very rare.

My business life began at six years of age, selling snow cones and lemonade and holding carnivals in my backyard for neighborhood friends. It progressed to starting two small businesses while I was in college, one manufacturing collegiate-branded fishing lures and the other selling creative T-shirts. Before I graduated, I was generating marketing and advertising programs for local businesses, ultimately leading me on a journey to creating and counseling hundreds of brands in most every industry imaginable for the next 50 years.

At twenty-four years of age, I founded, developed, and (twenty years later) sold a strategic marketing firm considered by many to be a pioneer in the brand consulting space, long before the Deloitte and McKinseys had entered the fray. I later started a brand alignment consultancy, served on numerous boards, received some awards, and

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was named an Outstanding Alumnus by my university's business school, where I also served on the Dean's Advisory Board for 25 years. More importantly, I have experienced many business and life failures throughout my journey, which have provided lasting value to my clients and mentees and which, hopefully, will provide similar value to you as well.

During that time, I generated the notes that served as the foundation of this book, capturing the essence of the challenges, victories, and defeats of many different organizations, leaders, families, and entrepreneurs. I will share some of their stories and endeavor to make you aware of the power of brand alignment and communicate its complexities in the simplest form possible.

It is important to note right up front that brand alignment is timeless. What you will discover in these pages is as relevant today as it was with my first client 50 years ago. Sure, the tools, processes, and messaging evolve daily, but the art and science of brand alignment is an excruciatingly nuanced concept that has not changed one bit in five decades. Customer expectations and engagement change, but the need to align your brand for success does not.



### **Brand alignment is timeless.**

While you will not be reading this work to learn all of the detailed intricacies and applications of branding, you will be gaining an astute awareness of the fundamentals of brand alignment, which will enable you to make an immediate positive impact on your business.

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If you want to maximize your potential, this book will help you do just that once you apply your newly found knowledge to every aspect of your brand. As you do so, note that marketing and branding strategies always include disclaimers, so you might find a few unique exceptions to what I write, but there won't be many.

We will not spend much time addressing the tools or tactics of branding, such as preferred media strategies, social media trends, artificial intelligence, design styles, planning analytics, content development, SEO, research metrics, creative approaches, performance dashboards, event management, or myriads of other planning, activation, and measurement choices at your disposal. Counsel on which mix and application of these is best for your specific business change constantly as they fluctuate with marketplace dynamics and unexpected disruptions. However, you can be sure none of them will ever reach their full potential without proper brand alignment fundamentals because brand and commerce are so inextricably intertwined.

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**Brand and commerce are  
inextricably intertwined.**

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You will enjoy being able to read this book in short order and immediately benefit from your newly acquired insights. I will take you from fog to clarity and share what it's like to experience aligned brands. I will expose the deepest potholes that destroy brand alignment and challenge you with questions about your own brand.

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Please don't put the book down too early when you think it's going to keep relentlessly pounding on you. I will enthusiastically get you on the road to total success and promise to instill hope and opportunity in your future. I'll address your most pressing questions and maybe even make you laugh a little along the way. My sincere desire is to make an immediate positive impact on your business and your life by helping you identify the hidden power of brand alignment as you begin to turn your *Brand ON!*

## **WHY HE WROTE THE BOOK.**

With a legacy spanning half a century in strategic brand consulting, Brandon Coleman Jr is inspired to generously share his invaluable insights and experiences with entrepreneurs everywhere. Driven by the belief that his God-given purpose is achieving yours, Brandon has embarked on a mission of philanthropic knowledge transfer to share the incredible stories that have shaped his journey and the success of hundreds of clients. Not afraid of straight talk and willing to give away his secrets, Brandon opens up on the inside scoop in the world of marketing and branding.



# About the Author

**BRANDON COLEMAN JR** is a renowned branding legend with the acute ability to cut through clutter to amplify others' potential. His gifted awareness and enthusiastic, all-in spirit have fueled exponential success on thousands of brand alignment engagements across many different industries spanning five decades. Brandon has the accolades and notoriety that come with launching, leading, and ultimately selling, one of the most successful mid-sized strategic branding firms in the country. He is a born visionary entrepreneur, noted speaker, author, and outstanding alumnus of Mays Business School at Texas A&M University, where he served on the dean's advisory board for twenty-five years. With a propensity for straight talk and genuine love for seeing others reach their dreams, Brandon is driven by an unselfish desire to make an immediate positive impact on your business and your life. He is a skilled storyteller who writes with a generous blend of creativity, candor, and character in a conversational manner you will find enlightening, entertaining, and inspiring.

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