

EPISODE  
**01**

**THE BRAND  
BUILDER'S**  
PLAYBOOK

**WHY IS IT  
IMPORTANT TO  
BUILD A BRAND?**

# HOSTS



**JIM**  
STENGEL

**In October 2008**, Jim Stengel shocked the marketing world by leaving his prestigious role as Global Marketing Officer at Procter & Gamble, one of the most admired brand building companies in the world. This bold move was Jim's first step on a new mission to share his passion for growing business through a focus on higher ideals.

To continue on his mission, Jim has embraced a variety of exciting roles: President/CEO of The Jim Stengel Company, LLC, host of The CMO Podcast, Author of *Grow: How Ideals Power Growth & Profit at the World's Greatest Companies*, *Unleashing the Innovators: How Mature Companies Find New Life with Startups*, Adjunct Professor at Kellogg, Northwestern, speaker with the Washington Speakers Bureau® Advisor to several companies.

x **JIM STENGEL**  
COMPANY



**RYAN**  
BARKER

**Ryan Barker** is the founder of BERA.ai, known as the “Alchemist of Brand Equity” for his ability to turn the emotional power of brands into measurable business performance. After 15 years in brand consultancy at WPP, Ryan grew frustrated by vanity metrics that won awards but failed to drive business outcomes. He saw marketers losing credibility, chasing short-term sales while neglecting long-term brand value.

Out of that conviction, he launched BERA.ai—the world's first real-time brand intelligence platform connecting brand equity to business results. Today, leading brands and private equity firms rely on BERA to predict performance, guide investment, and protect their most valuable intangible asset: their brand. Blending analytical rigor with creative empathy, Ryan's mission is simple: what gets measured, gets valued—and what gets valued, gets protected.

x **BERA.ai**



**LINDSEY**  
WEHKing

**Lindsey Wehking** is the Chief Investigative Strategy Officer at Nonfiction Research. Nonfiction explores the hidden parts of American life through immersive research. Their researchers have sat beside patients in hospitals, inmates in prison, and have interviewed Atlanta rappers while rollerblading. Nonfiction's findings have been featured by ABC News, Axios, MSNBC, Fox News, and FastCompany. Their work has inspired public service campaigns, a division at Disney, new flavors of Doritos, and a Megan Thee Stallion song.

Lindsey is the author of *The Invisible Weight*, a report and podcast on the hidden emotional experiences of pregnancy and the lack of emotional care in the U.S Healthcare system. She has also authored *America's Secret Playlists*, a report on the secret lives hidden within Spotify playlists, and *Saving America from the News*, a study of what Americans really want from journalism. Her quest for more emotional realism in research has brought her into hip hop therapy groups, sex cults, ayahuasca retreats, illegal gas station casinos, Insane Clown Posse concerts and deep into the inner lives of everyday Americans.

x **NONFICTION**  
RESEARCH

# TODAY'S GUEST



**CHRIS**  
BURGGRAEVE

**Chris Burggraeve** was the first Global CMO at AB InBev (07-12) and has 23 years of CPG experience across the The Coca-Cola Company and P&G. Since the last 13+ years, he runs his own NYC based marketing strategy advisory (Vicomte.com), became a startup/scale up portfolio investor, board member of public and private B2C and B2B companies in US/EU, and adjunct faculty at NYU Stern.

His professional passion is bringing Marketing ("Main Street") and Finance ("Wall Street") closer together. His focus is to help C-suite and Boards to create strong intangible assets, strong brands with sustainable pricing power. He is the author of "Marketing IS Finance IS Business " (2019), "Marketing IS NOT a Black Hole" (2021), and "The Ultimate CMO Guide to Scarce Board Seats (2024).

x VICOMTE

## 01

# WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO BUILD A BRAND

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

- 01. CMOs and brand builders** need to understand in a linear fashion how to measure, manage, and maximize brand in a way that it's used as a strategic asset and not an overlooked expense.
- 02. To inspire people** to have the conviction and belief in the value of brand during tumultuous times. To give people the tools to translate that value throughout an organization.
- 03. To help YOU grow your brand.**



***Brands that stand for something and deliver on their promise are built to weather volatility.***

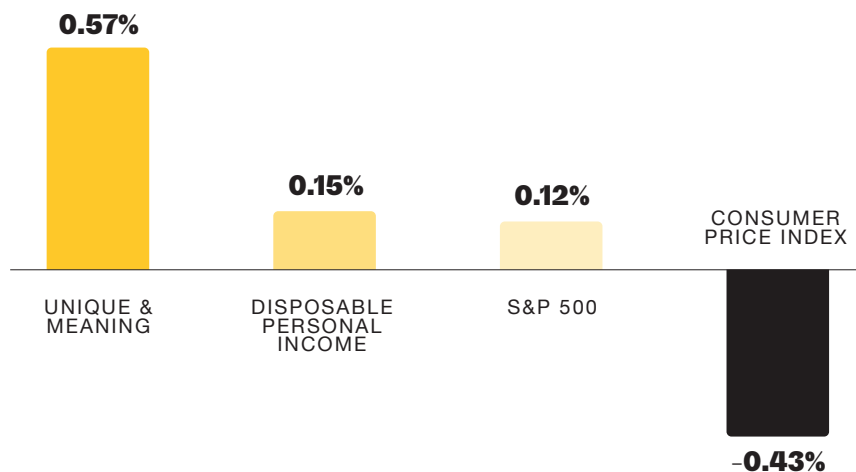
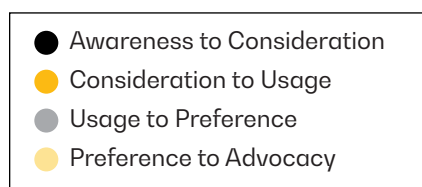
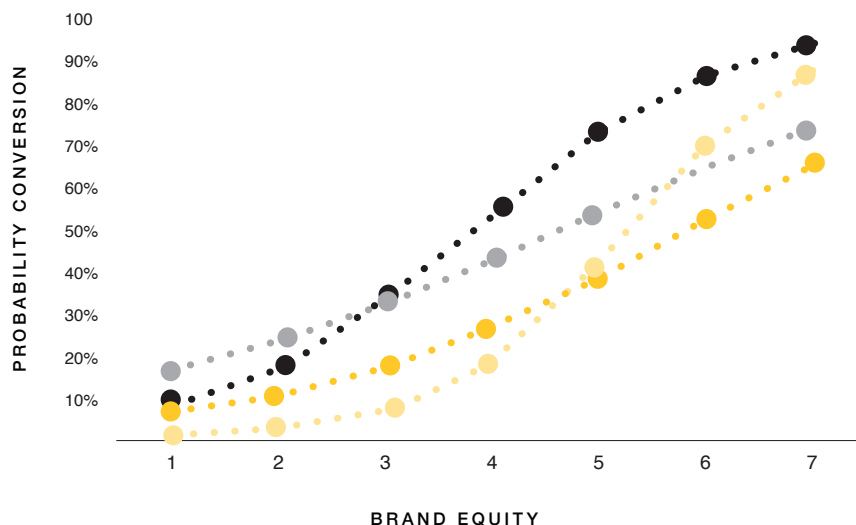
**CHRIS  
BURGGRAEVE**

## BENEFITS OF A STRONG BRAND

### BENEFIT #1

Higher brand equity scores increase conversion rates throughout the entirety of the funnel.

Source: BERA.ai



### BENEFIT #2

Increased Pricing Power: Higher brand equity reduces consumers' price sensitivity.

Source: BERA.ai within the WARC report on "Growth in brand equity leads to stronger pricing power" released in March 2025

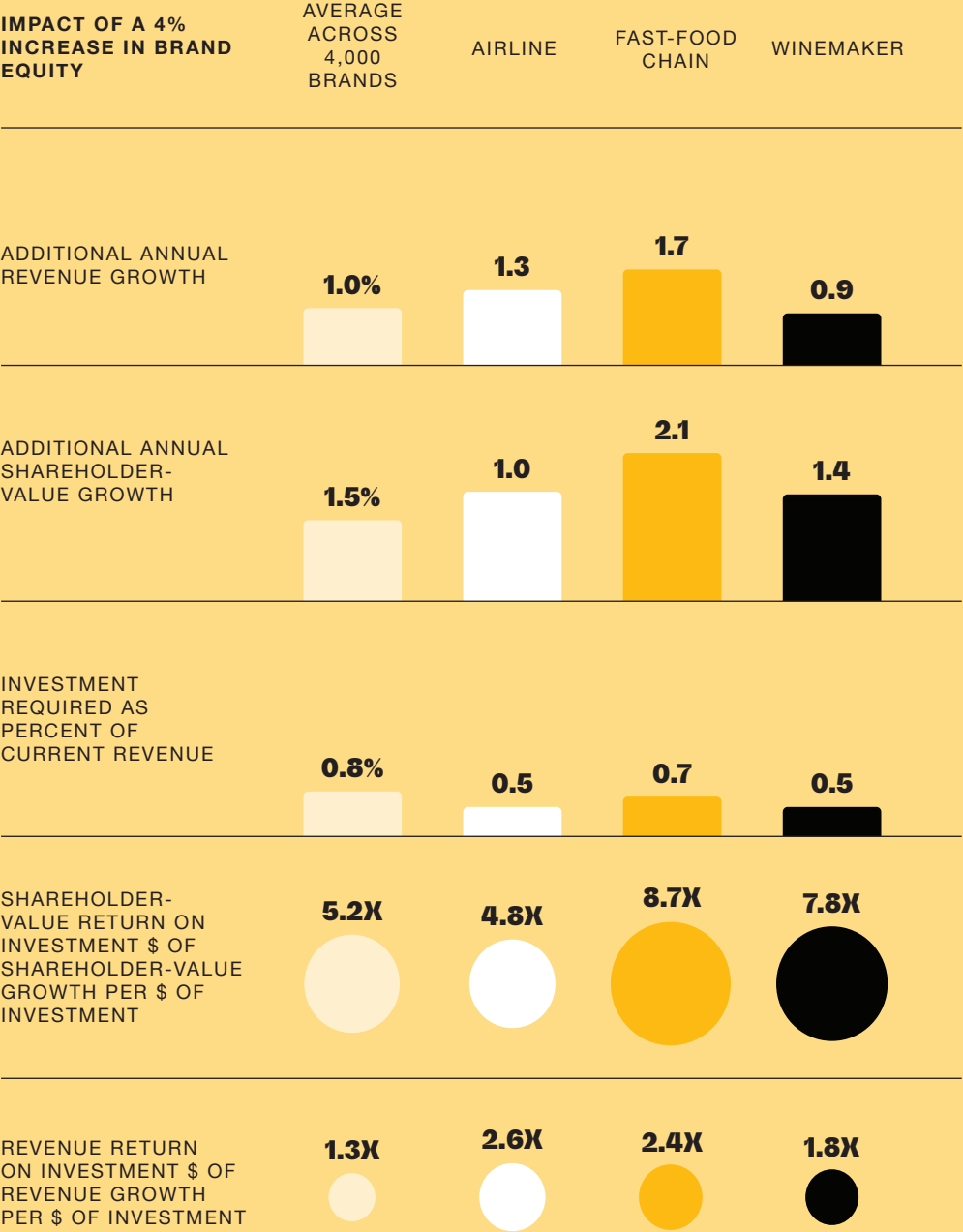
# BENEFITS OF A STRONG BRAND

CONT.

## BENEFIT #3

Revenue and value growth:  
Smart investments in  
growing brand equity offer  
extraordinarily high returns

Source: BERA.ai within the Harvard  
Business Review article on "How  
Brand Building and Performance  
Marketing Can Work Together",  
Page 11



**HOW DOES BERA.AI  
MEASURE BRAND  
EQUITY?**

Use predictive metrics that matter through BERA's FRMU framework.

**Familiarity:** Consumer knowledge and understanding beyond mere awareness

**Regard:** How much consumers like and respect a brand

**Meaning:** Perceived Cultural Relevance to consumers' lives

**Uniqueness:** Perceived differentiation from competitors

The combined metric that captures these 4 variables is referred to as "Brand Love".

**THE 5 P'S OF  
MARKETING**

Also referred to as brand levers—how people experience a brand and how a brand's positioning is realized. There are five brand levers:

**01. Product – Solve the Real Problem**

Your product isn't just what you sell—it's the promise you keep. Great brands obsess over utility and emotional resonance.

*Ask: Does this make life meaningfully better for my customer?*

**02. Price – Signal Value, Not Just Cost**

Price tells the market what your brand is worth. Strong brands earn a premium not because they're expensive, but because they're irreplaceable.

*Ask: Does our pricing reflect confidence in the value we create?*

**03. Promotion – Tell the Bigger Story**

Promotion isn't about shouting louder—it's about shaping meaning. The best brand builders create narratives that make customers proud to belong.

*Ask: Are we connecting head and heart with every message?*

**04. Place – Meet Customers Where It Matters**

Distribution is brand experience. Being in the right channels—digital, retail, cultural—signals relevance and accessibility.

*Ask: Are we frictionless and present where our audience expects us?*

**05. People – Bring the Brand to Life**

From the front lines to the boardroom, people are the brand. Every interaction is proof of who you are.

*Ask: Do our teams embody the values our brand promises?*



**Brand is not an expense —  
it's one of the most important  
assets a business owns.**

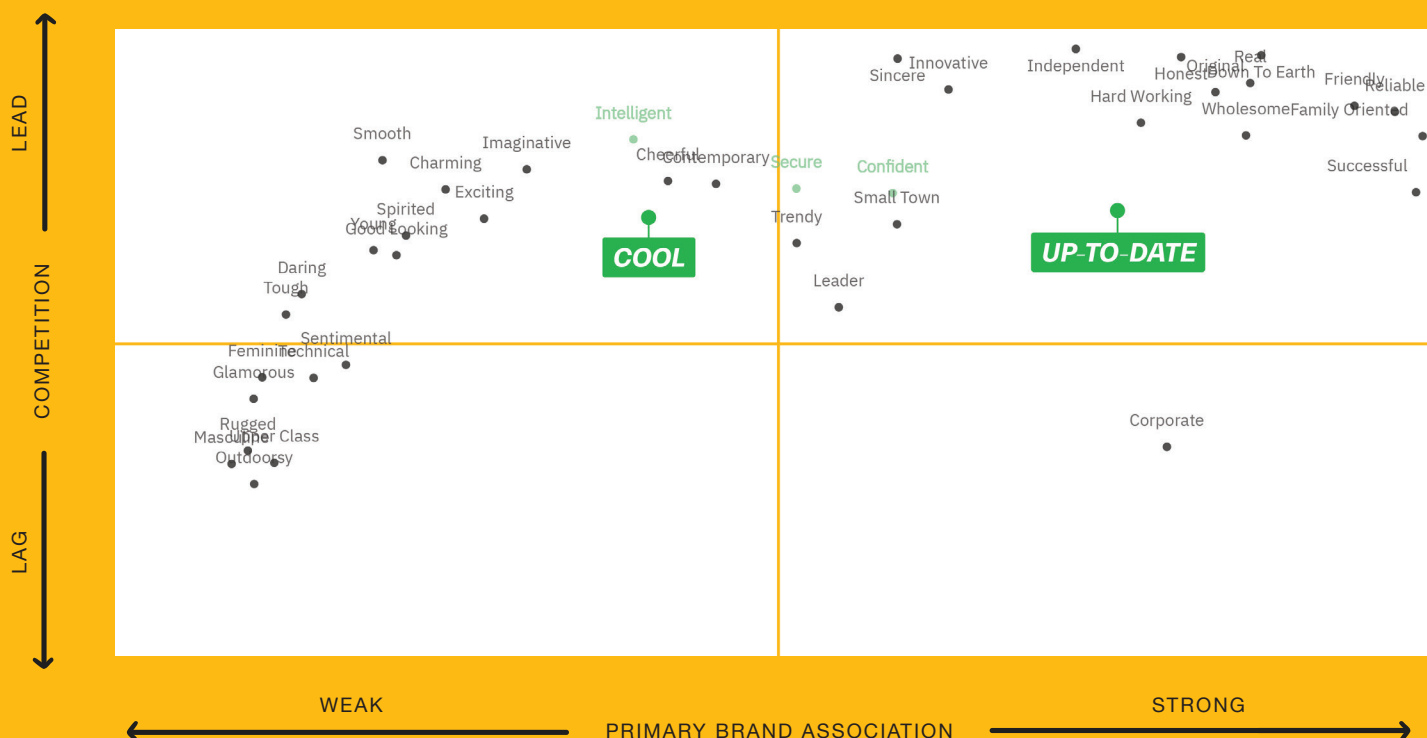
**RYAN  
BARKER**

# Playbook Proof

This is where theory meets tangible results. In this section, we showcase a key visual directly from the BERA platform—the hard data and actionable insights that prove the value of the strategies discussed in this week's episode.



● Top Drivers of Primary Brand



BERA.ai utilizes DNA charts to visualize high associations to the brand in relation to their competitive set. The above example showcases Aldi's against their competitors. "COOL" is one of the primary, most impactful drivers for the brand.

# COMMON MISTAKES THAT KILL BRAND VALUE

Treating brand like a campaign.	—————→ ○	Brands are built over years, not quarters.
Chasing short-term sales.	—————→ ○	Hitting Wall Street numbers today while mortgaging tomorrow's growth.
Cutting brand spend in downturns.	—————→ ○	Recovery costs multiply. It's the most expensive "savings" you'll ever make.
Over-relying on performance marketing	—————→ ○	Great at harvesting demand, terrible at creating it.
Measuring activity, not impact	—————→ ○	Vanity metrics don't move markets—or enterprise value.
Splitting brand & performance into silos.	—————→ ○	When the left hand ignores the right, efficiency and growth collapse.
Forgetting alignment with strategy.	—————→ ○	A brand that doesn't ladder up to business goals becomes decoration, not a driver.

## EPIISODE TAKEAWAYS

Whatever the business objective is, KPI agnostic, you need to prove brand contribution to that metric. ***Brand is everyone's responsibility.***

**Brand doesn't work in a silo.** You have to bring everyone in and commit to their mission.

Understand your ***pricing flexibility*** and are you on the same page as your team.



***Brand health today,  
revenue tomorrow.***

**CHRIS  
BURGGRAEVE**

CONTACT

**BERA.ai to activate  
your playbook!**

SHARE

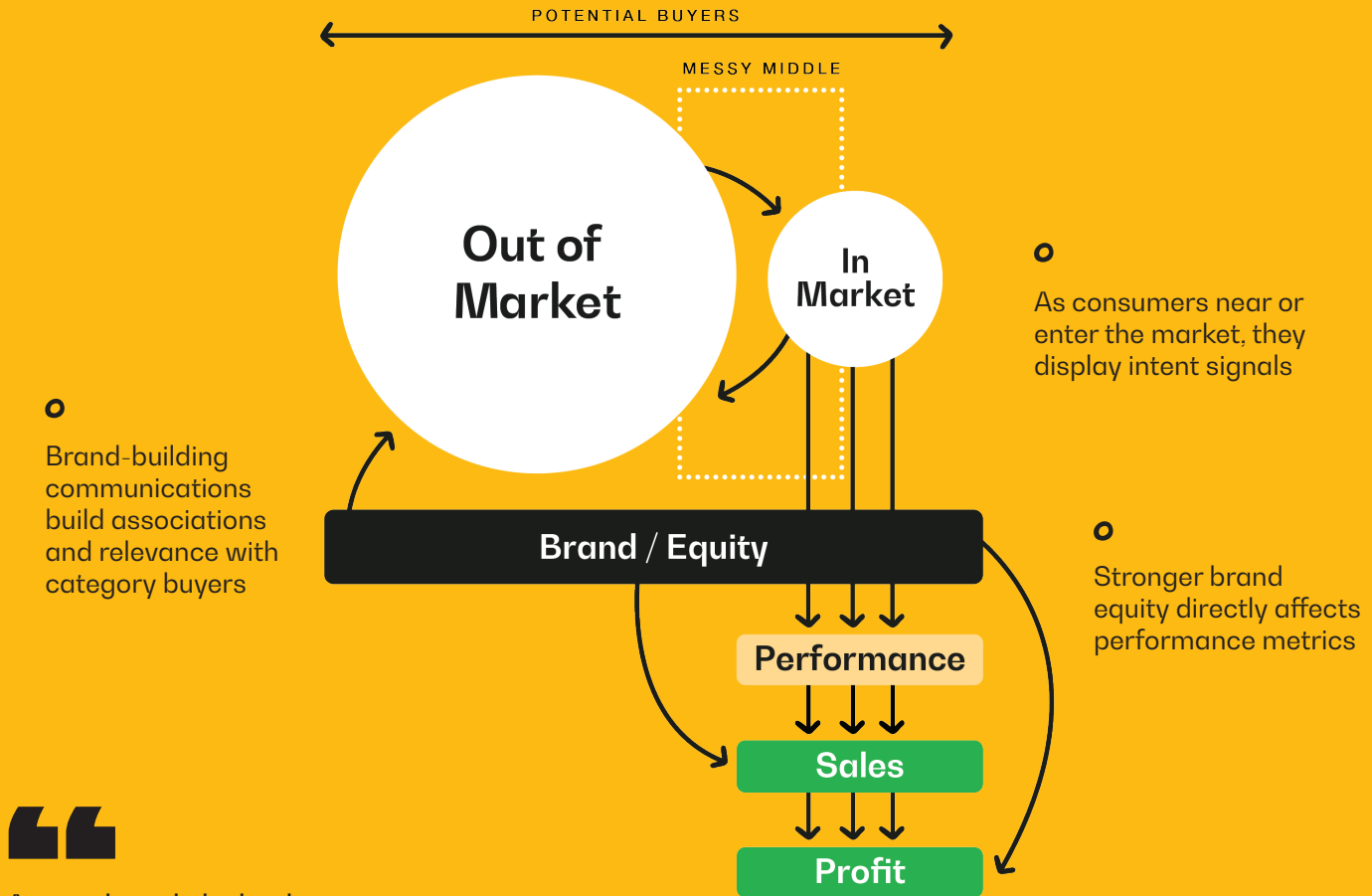
**Your thoughts &  
questions on our  
social posts!**

LISTEN

**To the full episode  
at BERA.ai/podcast**

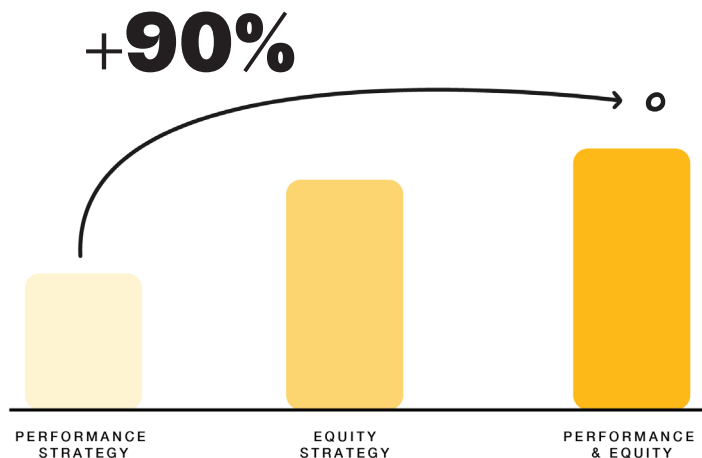
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A great brand playbook is a compass, not a straitjacket.

**JIM  
STENGEL**



## THE BRAND ADVANTAGE

Median revenue ROI increase when moving from a performance strategy to a mixed approach

## THE PERFORMANCE PENALTY

Median revenue ROI decreased when moving from a mixed to a performance strategy.

-40%