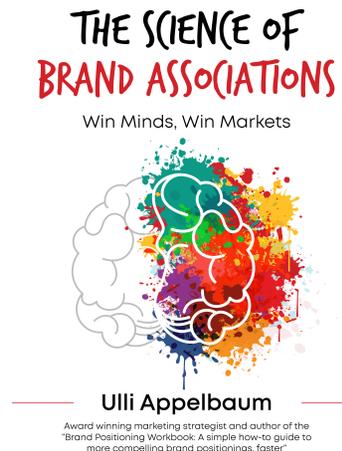


BRAND ASSOCIATION NETWORK STRENGTH SELF-ASSESSMENT SCORECARD & ACTION PLAN

Are you doing everything you can to build a strong association network around your brand? Fill out this self-assessment scorecard to evaluate your brand and discover areas for improvement!

This document is a companion resource to the book '**The Science of Brand Associations: Win Minds, Win Markets**' by Ulli Appelbaum. It allows marketers, brand managers, and strategists to assess the strength of their brand's association network using a structured, science-backed and evidence-based scorecard. Even if you haven't read the book, this guide will give you practical insights and help you identify areas of strength and areas for improvement.

If you want to learn about the science and facts behind these questions, I encourage you to grab your copy of the book today.



HOW TO USE THIS SCORECARD?

Step 1:

For each question, rate your brand on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Be honest and base your answers on the evidence you have or internal knowledge – ***wishful thinking won't help you grow your brand.***

Step 2:

Add up your total score to evaluate how strong your Brand Association Network is. Examine the various sections of the scorecard and use the **overall score interpretation guide** to understand what you are doing well and what areas you need to improve on.

Step 3:

Dive into the dimensions guide to better understand what the score for the different dimensions means and what you can do to strengthen that area.

Step 4:

Create your own action plan to improve the strength of your brand association network.

STEP 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT SCORECARD

For each question, rate your brand from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Remember, *wishful thinking won't help you grow your brand*.

Strategy	Diagnostic Question	Score (1–5)
Clarity of Brand Positioning	Is your desired brand positioning clearly articulated and aligned internally?	
Personal Relevance	Do your brand associations reflect needs or values relevant to your audience?	
Emotional Resonance	Do your brand associations elicit an emotional response?	
Repetition & Consistency	Are brand associations communicated consistently and repeatedly across touchpoints?	
Emotional Rewarding Experiences	Are brand experiences emotionally rewarding or memorable?	
Appeal to the Senses	Does your brand engage multiple senses in consumer interactions?	
Storytelling	Do you use emotionally resonant storytelling that reinforces brand associations?	
Experiences that Exceed Expectations	Do any brand touchpoints positively surprise or exceed expectations?	
Distinctive Brand Assets	Do you have unique, recognizable brand assets used consistently?	
Visual Brand Asset (New Brands)	Do you use a non-verbal visual asset that communicates your brand idea?	
Recency (Frequency & Impact)	Do your consumers see or hear from your brand more often (or more impactfully) than competitors?	
Refresh (Freshness & Relevance)	Are your brand associations kept fresh and relevant over time?	

STEP 2: OVERALL SCORE INTERPRETATION

Use the table below to better understand how your brand is doing.

Score Range	Interpretation	Recommended Action
51–60	Exceptional – You are doing everything right to build a strong, consistent, and emotionally engaging Brand Association Network. The positioning is clear, distinctive, emotionally resonant, and well-reinforced through multiple touchpoints.	Maintain your strategy but stay vigilant. Regularly audit for consistency, evolving category norms, and opportunities to refresh or deepen associations. Consider extending your brand to new usage occasions or need states.
41–50	Strong Foundation – You are doing a great job in strengthening your brand’s brand association network, but there may be a few areas that need refinement.	Identify the dimensions where you are underperforming and address them systematically without weakening your strengths.
31–40	Needs Strengthening – You are doing a few things right to strengthen your brand’s brand association network but also show some important areas of improvements.	Identify your weaker dimensions and address them systematically without weakening your strengths.
21–30	At Risk – Your brand lacks a cohesive and effective brand association network. Consumers may not clearly understand your positioning or feel emotionally connected to your brand.	Go back to basics. Reclarify your desired brand associations, understand your consumer’s needs, and build up from positioning to consistent asset use and sensory/emotional storytelling.
12–20	Critical – Your brand is fragmented, invisible, or undifferentiated in consumers’ minds. It’s likely missing relevance, consistency, and emotional connection.	Immediate intervention needed. Redefine your brand strategy, clarify the category you play in, create or refine your brand assets, and invest in emotionally rewarding, immersive brand experiences.

STEP 3: INTERPRETATION BY DIMENSIONS GUIDE

Dive into the various dimensions that make up a strong brand association network and identify areas of improvement.

	Strategy	What a Low Score Means (1–2)	What a High Score Means (4–5)	Strategic Implications
1	Clarity of Brand Positioning	Your team lacks clarity or internal alignment on the associations you want to create.	Your brand positioning is well-defined and consistently understood across the organization.	Ensure alignment on core brand associations and codify them in strategic documents.
2	Personal Relevance	Your associations may be generic or disconnected from what truly matters to your target segment.	Your brand taps into relevant needs, desires, or category drivers for your audience.	Use consumer insight to refine your associations around relevant value drivers.
3	Emotional Resonance	Your associations are likely rational or functional, lacking emotional depth.	Your brand associations evoke strong feelings or attachment.	Introduce emotional benefits and storytelling to deepen the connection.
4	Repetition & Consistency	Messaging is inconsistent or sporadic across touchpoints.	Key associations are reinforced continuously and coherently.	Establish clear brand guidelines and asset usage rules. Audit brand communications.
5	Emotional Rewarding Experiences	Brand touchpoints feel transactional or uninspired.	Your experiences, or some of them, are engaging and foster emotional satisfaction.	Design touchpoints that surprise, delight, and go beyond functional utility.
6	Appeal to the Senses	Your brand experience is mostly visual/verbal with little sensory richness.	Your brand stimulates multiple senses to create strong memory structures.	Explore multisensory branding (e.g., sound logos, textures, smells, etc.).
7	Storytelling	The brand lacks memorable narratives or emotional arcs.	You use compelling, story-driven content to reinforce key associations.	Build a brand story that aligns with your positioning and is worth retelling.
8	Experiences that Exceed Expectations	Your customer journey is predictable, undifferentiated and mainly transactional.	You include touchpoint moments that positively surprise or go beyond expectations.	Identify key moments to “over-deliver” on brand promise and delight.
9	Distinctive Brand Assets	Your brand lacks unique codes or applies them inconsistently.	Your assets (colors, logo, tone, etc.) are distinctive and well-managed.	Audit and develop distinctive assets that act as memory shortcuts.
10	Visual Brand Asset (New Brands)	You don’t yet have a strong visual shortcut or symbol.	You’ve developed a visual icon that clearly reflects your brand idea.	Develop a strong non-verbal asset that communicates brand essence quickly.
11	Recency (Frequency & Impact)	Consumers are seeing your brand less often or with lower impact than competitors.	Your brand has a higher salience due to frequent exposure or high-impact communication.	Improve media efficiency and creative cut-through to boost mental availability.
12	Refresh (Freshness & Relevance)	Your messaging feels outdated or stale to your audience.	You maintain relevance through updated, fresh content and assets.	Regularly refresh messaging and creative to reflect changing cultural and category trends.

STEP 4: DEFINE YOUR OWN ACTION PLAN

Create your own action plan to improve the strength of your brand association network.

1. Identify the priority areas of improvement (lowest scores)
2. Define clear actionable objectives for each area
3. Determine concrete steps to achieve each objective
4. Assign responsibility
5. Add a timeline
6. Define how you'll measure progress

Example:

Focus Area	Objective	Key Action	Owner	Timeline	Success Criteria/KPI
(e.g. Emotional Resonance)	Improve emotional connection with light users	Conduct qualitative research- Refresh messaging based on emotional insights	Insights Lead	By end of Q1	Higher emotional engagement in ad testing / tracking study
(e.g. Brand Asset Consistency)	Align and refresh all brand assets	- Audit current assets use at each touchpoint- Create brand asset guidelines- Implement updates	Marketing Director	30–60 days	Consistency score in creative review > 80%
(e.g. Positioning Clarity)	Clarify brand positioning across all internal teams	- Create positioning one-pager or video- Conduct internal alignment session	Brand Strategy Manager	Within 4-6 weeks	Team alignment survey score > 90%

BRAND ASSOCIATION NETWORK STRENGTH ACTION PLAN FOR: _____

Focus Area	Objective	Key Action	Owner	Timeline	Success Criteria/KPI