

What do you expect your brand launch to achieve? After you set your branding priorities (drawing from the list in the preceding section), you need to set objectives for what you want your brand launch to achieve. The more clearly you establish quantifiable outcomes for your brand launch, the more quickly you win buy-in from shareholders, funding partners, top-level executives, and the staff who will help you make your new brand a success. If you're starting a new business or brand, you're starting from zero, with no existing brand awareness, emotional connection, credibility, brand differentiation, or sales momentum. Therefore, setting objectives is a matter of determining how quickly you intend to reach certain levels of success in each priority area. If you're realigning or rebranding an existing brand, begin by assessing your pre-launch situation in each of the brand functions. Your existing success levels become the benchmark against which you measure the success of your brand launch. Chapter 3 can help as you determine your current success levels. For help conducting research or enlisting professional assistance, turn to the research sections in Chapter 4. When you know your benchmarks, you can set your brand launch objectives by defining the increases you intend to achieve above the pre-launch level in each priority area. In either case, be realistic about how much change you can effect over the brand launch period and how much it will cost in terms of marketing investment to gain the level of awareness and sales motivation you set out to achieve. The market adopts change incrementally, which is a nice way to say slowly, so set your objectives with your eyes wide open about the momentum you're likely to achieve. Aim to monitor your success not just at the completion of your brand launch but several times over the next year. Doing so allows you to measure how your brand is doing in terms of increases in sales, distribution, market share, and pricing, and also in terms of consumer awareness, preference, perceived value, perceived point of difference, satisfaction, and desire to purchase, repurchase, or refer to others. Depending upon the size of your organization, you can conduct this research on your own following the survey and interview advice in Chapter 4, or you can turn to the professional assistance of a research firm. You can find research firms through major city phone directories or by asking for referrals from advertising agencies and branding firms. What about timing? If your brand launch will gain momentum with a tie-in with a major conference, trade show, or industry event, or if it will benefit from introduction at a certain date for some other reason, make that date clear when you launch the brand internally. It's easy for people in your company to get complacent about something that seems like an aesthetic change, but if they realize that, on a certain date, the curtain needs to rise and the brand needs to be ready to go in order to achieve awareness and momentum, they'll step on board with a greater sense of mission. What's your message? Before unveiling your brand internally or externally, be completely certain about the single message you want the market to take away from your brand launch program. By clarifying your brand introduction message in advance, all brand communications — formal and informal, from the CEO to the frontline staff — align, contributing to a strong, clear impression. To .create your message, follow the framework shown in Figure 9-1