

BRAND TRACKING 101

A Comprehensive Guide to Measuring Brand Health

INTRODUCTION

Organizations spend millions of dollars on marketing each year—but without clear and continuous measurement, it is unclear if those investments will pay off. Proving ROI from marketing activities and investments is difficult—40% of marketers say proving the ROI of their marketing activities is their top marketing challenge.*

The challenge becomes particularly complex when it comes to an organization's brand. Organizations with a highly regarded brand have an advantage when launching new products or services, setting pricing, and even recruiting new employees. In fact, B2B brands with strong brand identities outperform the market by 73%, and 74% of B2C marketers say brand awareness is a primary goal of their overall content marketing.**

Why is measuring brand health difficult? Brand health is impacted by a variety of factors, including the ever-changing technology buyers can use to discover, engage, and comment on an organization's brand (and its competitors). Successful brand health measurement means being able to measure the brand health metrics that matter, track brand health over time, and contextualize brand health strengths and weaknesses to adjust brand strategy.

In this guide, we review how organizations can develop a brand tracking strategy, understand the key metrics that determine their brand health, analyze brand tracking results, and continuously track and adjust their brand tracking strategy moving forward.

* Source: McKinsey & Co.

**Source: Blue Corona.

BRAND TRACKING 101

This guide will enable you to:

1. DEVELOP

Your Brand Tracking Strategy



- Define Your Goals
- Identify Tools to Use

2. UNDERSTAND

Key Brand Health Metrics



AWARENESS



IMPRESSION



PRIOR USAGE



PREFERENCE



PURCHASE INTENT



NET PROMOTER SCORE (NPS)[®]

3. ANALYZE

Your Brand Tracking Results



- Prepare the Data
- Examine Brand Tracking Results

4. TRACK

Your Brand Strategy and Adjust



- Drive Marketing Decisions
- Refresh and Restart Your Brand Tracking



BRAND TRACKING TOOLKIT

- Buyer Research
- Online Data Analysis

1. DEVELOP YOUR BRAND TRACKING STRATEGY

Brand tracking starts with clear goals that build back from your organization's needs and utilizes the right tools to assess brand health.

DEFINE YOUR GOALS

Brand tracking aims to track an organization's category and brand strength over time, visualize longitudinal trends, and highlight the impact of marketing campaigns and activities. However, keep in mind organization-wide goals can help contextualize brand tracking findings. Some common organizational goals include promoting new products or services, increasing new or recurring sales, and enhancing an organization's public image or press profile.

IDENTIFY TOOLS TO USE

In deploying a brand tracking strategy, there are a variety of tools to help uncover both the "what" related to your brand (e.g., "What segments are most aware of my brand?") and the "why" (e.g., "Why do certain segments outperform others?"). Using a mix of online feedback and open-ended responses can paint a complete picture of how buyers perceive your brand.

BUYER RESEARCH



Surveys: Collect buyer feedback periodically through online surveys.



Focus Groups: Use at the start of your research for an exploratory look into buyers' perceptions of your brand. Conduct online groups for administrative ease and lowered inhibitions in participants.



Bulletin Board Focus Groups: Ask respondents to provide 20 minutes of written feedback per day for three days on an online messaging board.



Digital Ethnography: Observe participants' online habits and experiences with a 30 minute screensharing exercise.

ONLINE DATA ANALYSIS



Social Listening: Gather candid feedback on how buyers discuss your brand on social media platforms.



Platform Analytics: Get real-time data on buyers' experience with your brand.

See the **Brand Tracking Toolkit** on page 14 for more information on how to incorporate these tools into your brand tracking efforts.

2. UNDERSTAND KEY BRAND HEALTH METRICS

When it comes to measuring brand health, the fundamental issue is knowing which metrics matter. Brand health is multifaceted, with different brand metrics capturing important and unique elements of total brand health.

Hanover Research's findings show that there are six key metrics that capture the full picture of brand health: awareness, impression, prior usage, preference, purchase intent, and Net Promoter Score (NPS)[®]. These six metrics roughly mirror the marketing funnel and collectively work together to identify current buyers' satisfaction, loyalty, and feelings of the brand, and prospective buyers' awareness of and need for the product.

Frequently, brand tracking will assess individual elements of brand health—from the broadest of general awareness, to the narrowest of how likely a buyer is to recommend a brand. But failure to view all of the key brand health metrics holistically means that organizations receive only a partial view of total brand health.

For a robust assessment of brand health, measure each of the key brand health metrics to understand buyer engagement with your brand.



AWARENESS

Who has heard of us?



IMPRESSION

What do buyers think about us?



PRIOR USAGE

Who is and is not buying our product?



PREFERENCE

Are we a preferred brand?



PURCHASE INTENT

Do buyers who engage with our brand intend to purchase from us?



NET PROMOTER SCORE (NPS)[®]

Who are our brand advocates?

2. UNDERSTAND KEY BRAND HEALTH METRICS

AWARENESS

WHAT IT IS

Awareness, the extent to which buyers are familiar with the distinctive qualities of a brand, is key to staying top-of-mind with buyers. Brand awareness is measured by two factors:



Unaided Awareness: Measures buyers' ability to recognize your brand without a stimulus like a logo or tagline



Aided Awareness: Measures buyers' ability to remember your brand after seeing its advertising, through previous purchases, and from word of mouth

HOW TO MEASURE

Surveys: Deploy regular surveys measuring brand awareness to collect a vast array of brand awareness data.

Social Listening: Search hashtags associated with your brand on Twitter, study the comments on your Facebook or LinkedIn feeds, and identify how often your branded content is shared to understand how buyers are talking about your brand.

Platform Analytics: Online sales channels, like Amazon, can be useful for collecting buyer comments.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Use the sample questions on the following pages as a starting point for building your surveys and focus groups. These questions can provide inspiration for what to look for in buyer comments during your online research.

Awareness

When collecting buyer feedback on their awareness of your brand, include questions on both unaided and aided awareness to determine their awareness before and after seeing your advertising.

- **Unaided Awareness:** See if your brand is top-of-mind with buyers by asking an open-ended question, not specifically mentioning your brand name.

Example: Which furniture stores are you familiar with? Please write your answers in the box below.

- **Aided Awareness:** See if your advertising is reaching buyers by listing your brand's name along with several of your competitors' to see which are familiar to the buyer.

Example: Which of the following furniture companies have you heard of?

- Ashley Furniture
- [your brand name]
- Crate and Barrel
- Pier 1 Imports
- Pottery Barn

2. UNDERSTAND KEY BRAND HEALTH METRICS

IMPRESSION

WHAT IT IS

Brand impression measures how current and potential buyers perceive an organization and which other brands or products they associate with the organization. Not only does research into brand impression help identify trouble spots in an organization's offerings, it can also determine how buyers perceive the quality of the offerings and their expectations for use. These perceptions are often heavily influenced by the media buyers consume, making it crucial for organizations to understand how buyers are exposed to their brand.

HOW TO MEASURE

Focus Groups: Live responses can be valuable for asking open-ended questions on buyers' impression of your brand.

Surveys: Compare buyer feedback across different groups and benchmark brand perceptions against your competitors.

Digital Ethnographies: Observe how participants navigate your website, asking them to share how they perceive your brand and offerings.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Impression

On a scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," ask buyers to respond to statements like:

- This brand has a good reputation
- This brand is recommended by people I trust
- The places where I can buy this brand are of high quality
- This brand's prices are competitive
- This brand's products provide good value for the money

2. UNDERSTAND KEY BRAND HEALTH METRICS

PRIOR USAGE

WHAT IT IS

Measuring prior usage gives marketers a look into current buyers who have been purchasing their products. Beyond buyer demographics, prior usage data keys organizations in to how often buyers purchase their product, the frequency with which buyers use the product, and what other products buyers use that can be cited as competitors. Prior usage data can also provide insight into buyers who display brand loyalty, allowing marketers to determine which factors best nurture long-term buyers.

HOW TO MEASURE

Platform Analytics: Tracking studies or custom research can measure online buyer activity, evaluating how buyers interact with the brand and purchase the product.

Surveys: Survey feedback provides insight into how and when the buyer uses the offering.

Bulletin Board Focus Groups: Ask previous buyers to provide feedback on their purchase and use on an online messaging board.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Prior Usage

- **Purchase Activity:** Have you purchased this this product before? When and how many times have you purchased it?
- **Actual Usage:** If you have purchased this product, how frequently do you use it? How many users in your household or workplace interact with this product?
- **Timing of Usage:** When did you purchase this product? When do you use this product?
- **Audience:** How do you expect this product to address your needs? Are you using similar products from other companies?

2. UNDERSTAND KEY BRAND HEALTH METRICS

PREFERENCE

WHAT IT IS

Brand preference evaluates how likely a buyer is to continue buying your product and serves as a good marker for the health of your brand. If buyers are satisfied enough that they purchase your product or service long-term, it can be concluded that your brand is healthy and strong in buyer preference.

HOW TO MEASURE

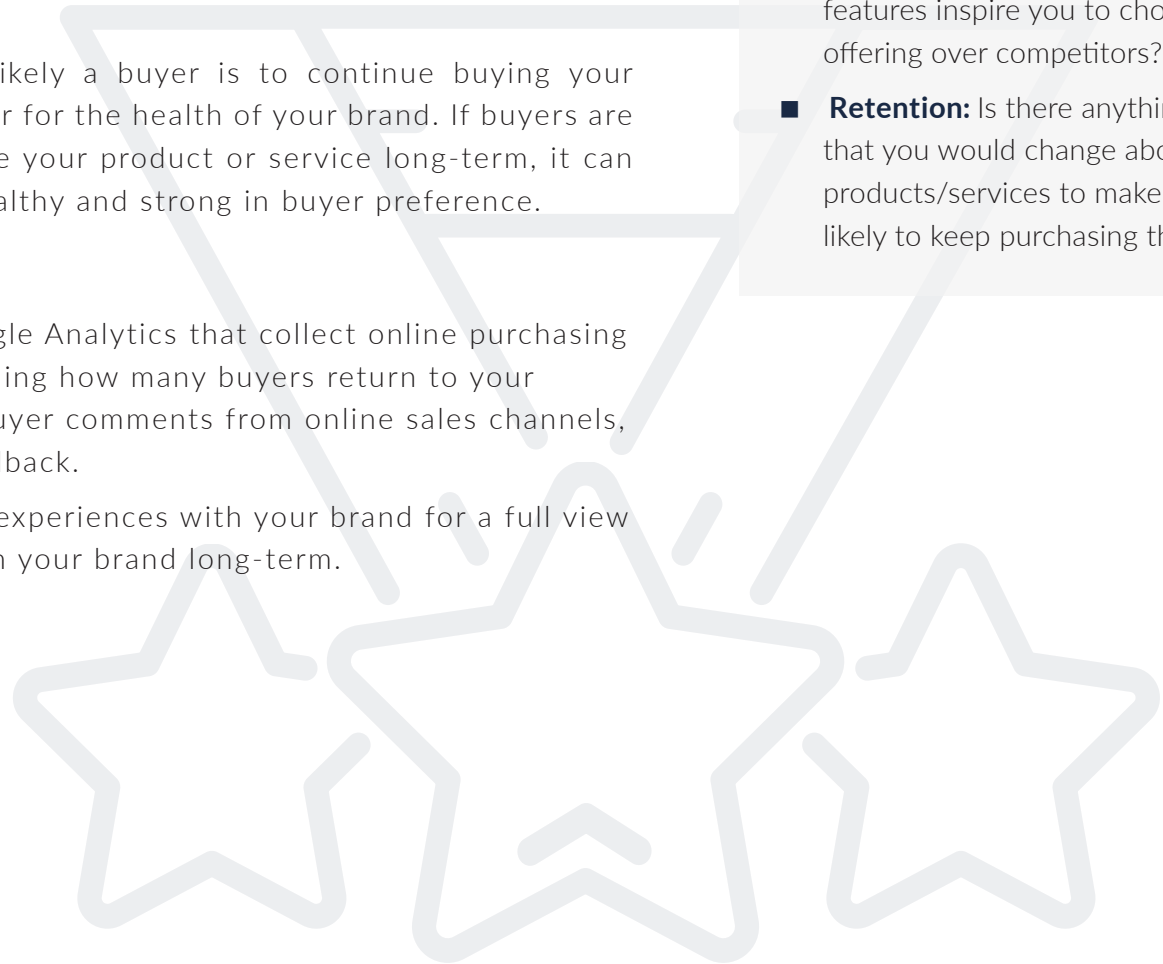
Platform Analytics: Tools like Google Analytics that collect online purchasing behavior can be helpful in determining how many buyers return to your organization. Consider collecting buyer comments from online sales channels, such as Amazon, for additional feedback.

Surveys: Question buyers on their experiences with your brand for a full view into how likely they are to stay with your brand long-term.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Preference

- **Reason for Purchase:** Why do you return to purchase our offerings?
- **Product Features:** What product features inspire you to choose this offering over competitors?
- **Retention:** Is there anything that you would change about our products/services to make you more likely to keep purchasing them?



2. UNDERSTAND KEY BRAND HEALTH METRICS

PURCHASE INTENT

WHAT IT IS

Purchase intent measures how likely buyers are to make a purchase from your organization. While a buyer may engage with a brand by visiting its website or following its content on social media, it may not mean the buyer is intending to make a purchase. They may perceive the quality to be subpar, feel misled or uninformed by the messaging, or otherwise do not believe the offering will meet their expectations.

HOW TO MEASURE

Platform Analytics and Social Listening: Online research gleaned from buyer feedback forums and social listening can provide insight into how buyers feel the product will deliver and how confident prospective buyers feel about purchasing the product. It can also help identify specific messaging or campaigns that may inspire more buyer confidence in the brand or offerings that could promote more purchases.

Surveys: Survey previous buyers to understand why they made the purchase, what brought them to your product, and if they intend to purchase from you again. Also include potential buyers to understand what would inspire them to purchase from you, and question buyers who decided not to purchase your product to understand what factors dissuaded them.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Purchase Intent

- **Ease of Purchase:** Does our messaging provide enough information to educate you on the product? Is the purchasing process straightforward or would you change any steps?
- **Ability to Meet Expectations:** Do you believe this product will meet the expectations set by our marketing and advertising?
- **Performance:** Do you think this product will meet your needs? Does it appear high quality and/or effective at meeting its purpose?
- **Reliability:** Does this product look like it will deliver a quality experience over and over?
- **Appearance:** Does this product look attractive to you? Is there anything you would change about its look or feel that would inspire you to purchase it?

2. UNDERSTAND KEY BRAND HEALTH METRICS

NET PROMOTER SCORE (NPS)[®]

WHAT IT IS

Employing a Net Promoter Score (NPS)[®] framework can help organizations gauge the loyalty and satisfaction of their buyer relationships. The more loyal a buyer is to a brand, the more they will demand it, driving up the brand's value and improving public perception. Organizations benefit financially from a high NPS by being able to charge premium prices and often see long-term success as buyers are more willing to forgive any bumps in the road. By cultivating loyal, lifelong buyers, organizations reap the benefits of increased sales and new buyers driven to the brand by positive word of mouth.

HOW TO MEASURE

Surveys: Survey buyers who often return to your site or promote your brand to understand their complete level of satisfaction with your brand.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Net Promoter Score (NPS)[®]

NPS[®] is measured by a single question that determines buyers' satisfaction level with your brand or organization. Researchers should ask the following question, providing a 0-10 scale where 0 is "Very Unlikely" and 10 is "Very Likely":

- Considering your complete experience with our company, how likely are you to recommend our products to a friend or colleague?

3. ANALYZE YOUR BRAND TRACKING RESULTS

After you have collected results from your brand tracking, it is time to prepare your data and analyze your brand tracking findings.



1. PREPARE THE DATA

Make sense of your raw data by following these three steps:



VALIDATE

Analyze your data to ensure that the collection was performed correctly and without bias. Confirm that respondents completed the full interview or survey and that the data was correctly collected.



CLEAN

Review your data to check for errors and remove any invalid respondents; for example, respondents filling in fields incorrectly or skipping them. Conduct rigorous data cleansing to ensure that data are included from serious and qualified study participants only.



CONVERT

Group and assign values to your raw data to convert it into a meaningful and readable form. Evaluate open-ended responses for salient themes, relevant relationships, and unifying narrative; model quantitative data via descriptive and statistical analyses.



2. EXAMINE BRAND TRACKING RESULTS

Study your brand tracking results to connect metric performance with business initiatives, activities, or organizational strengths and weaknesses. Key questions to ask when studying the brand tracking results include:

- Which metrics performed the strongest? The weakest?
- Are the results evenly spread or are there certain segments that are stronger or weaker (e.g., age, gender, location)?
- Was there an inflection of results based on any marketing campaigns or sales promotions?
- If tracking over time, what direction are brand metrics trending? Are there macro trends that might impact your brand?

4. TRACK YOUR BRAND STRATEGY AND ADJUST

Take your brand tracking findings and drive marketing decisions, including paid, earned, shared or owned campaign investments to inflect metric performance or plans for ongoing tracking to study your brand health over time.



1. DRIVE MARKETING DECISIONS

Use the findings from your brand tracking to drive key marketing activities and investments. For example:

If your results indicate low awareness levels

Investigate paid advertising options and media coverage to boost your brand

If your results indicate low preference levels

Unpack the open-ended results and consider focus groups to identify what changes in product may be needed

If your results indicate a low likelihood of buyers to recommend your brand

Investigate ways to drive loyalty such as loyalty programs or brand ambassadorships that can spark viral social media



2. REFRESH AND RESTART YOUR BRAND TRACKING

Review your brand tracking results with a eye towards what questions or approaches could change in subsequent rounds. If you are using a survey, which areas could benefit from additional clarity, such as from a focus group? Brand tracking should drive actionable insights and continual brand tracking can improve the quality of findings. Some brand tracking frequencies include:

Annually	Best for companies with brands that do not change often or frequently, especially highly seasonal businesses, e.g. retail
Quarterly	One of the most common tracking frequency that captures the results from most marketing campaign activities
Monthly	Best for companies with clearly defined monthly trends, such as marked purchasing windows that open and close quickly
Daily	For highly competitive markets with heavy marketing resourcing, daily tracking can track changes at a rapid pace

BRAND TRACKING TOOLKIT

BUYER RESEARCH



SURVEYS: Question current and potential buyers periodically through online surveys to gather feedback. Ensure that respondents do not overlook your survey by keeping it short, direct, and by offering incentives for completion.

STRENGTHS: *Cost efficient, puts the researcher in control of the questions asked, gathers a vast amount of data from a wide range of participants*

WEAKNESSES: *Respondents may answer dishonestly or not think through the questions, which can affect the validity of the data*



FOCUS GROUPS: Focus groups can be used at the start of your research for an exploratory look into buyers' perceptions of your brand. While in-person focus groups have traditionally been the norm, online focus groups provide administrative ease for connecting with a geographically dispersed population, and participants may feel less inhibited in sharing their true opinions.

STRENGTHS: *Gain detailed information on individual and group feelings; saves time and money compared to individual interviews*

WEAKNESSES: *Can be difficult to recruit a range of participants as well as control and manage a group*



DIGITAL ETHNOGRAPHY: Digital ethnographies are among the most clear-cut methods for gathering buyer feedback. Using a 30 minute screenshare exercise, moderators observe participants' online habits and experiences, typically focusing on a specific website or platform.

STRENGTHS: *Explore perceptions of the online process and ease-of-use of the online interface*

WEAKNESSES: *Only the technologically equipped can participate*



BULLETIN BOARD FOCUS GROUPS: Bulletin board focus groups use an online messaging board system where respondents provide 20 minutes of written feedback per day for three days. Moderators can explore reactions to a particular concept/idea and explore a group's shared experience with the brand.

STRENGTHS: *Convenient for the busy/time-poor population; reach geographically dispersed audiences*

WEAKNESSES: *Respondents may not be comfortable typing out their answers or may find it more cumbersome than providing verbal answers. Only the technologically equipped can participate*

ONLINE DATA ANALYSIS



SOCIAL LISTENING: Utilize social listening with social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube for valuable, candid feedback on how buyers discuss your brand and your competitors.

STRENGTHS: *Cost effective, gain insights from buyers who talk candidly about the brand/product*

WEAKNESSES: *Only gathers data from social media users, potentially skewing data toward a younger sample of buyers*



PLATFORM ANALYTICS: Use tools like Google Analytics frequently to provide real-time data on how buyers interact with your product or service, the types of messaging that promote buyer reactions, and the purchasing journey buyers experience.

STRENGTHS: *Cost effective, yields quantifiable data*

WEAKNESSES: *May miss insights from buyers without online access*

ABOUT HANOVER RESEARCH

Hanover Research provides high-quality research and analytics delivered through a cost-effective subscription model that helps executives make informed decisions, identify and seize opportunities, and heighten their effectiveness.

OUR BENEFITS



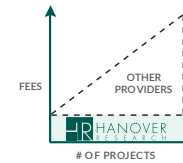
EXPERT
200+ analysts with advanced multiple methodology research expertise



FLEXIBLE
Ongoing custom research agenda adapts with organizations' needs



DEDICATED
Exclusive account and research teams ensure strategic partnership



EFFICIENT
Annual, fixed-fee model shares costs and benefits

HANOVER'S CORPORATE SOLUTIONS

MARKETING

- Brand Strategy
 - Brand Perception Assessment
 - Competitive Brand Benchmarking
 - Brand Value Proposition Testing
 - Campaign Testing
 - Content Marketing Support
- Buyer Insights
 - Buyer Segmentation Analysis
 - Voice of the Buyer Analysis
 - Win/Loss Analysis
- Product Innovation
 - Buyer Needs Analysis
 - Product Concept Testing
 - Product Portfolio Rationalization
 - Qualitative Message Testing
 - Price Optimization
- Pricing Strategy
 - Pricing Data Analysis
 - Price Sensitivity Survey
 - Win/Loss Analysis
- Consumer Journey
 - Attitude, Awareness & Usage Engagement (AAU)
 - Buyer Segmentation
 - Path to Purchase Analysis
 - Satisfaction & Loyalty Tracking

STRATEGY

- Market Entry
 - Market Identification and Sizing
 - Market Trends
 - Value Chain Analysis
 - Competitor Profiling
- M&A Opportunity Evaluation
 - Target Identification
 - Target Prioritization
 - Target Profiles

SALES


- Sales Enablement
 - Drivers of Sales Analysis
 - Territory Potential Analysis
 - Prospect Scoring Model
- Channel Partner Effectiveness for Distributor and Dealer Sales
 - Buyer Satisfaction Analysis
 - Messaging Calibration
 - Performance Management Scorecard
 - Territory Potential Analysis
- Channel Partner Effectiveness for Retail Sales
 - Market Trend Analysis
 - Consumer Validation Analysis
 - Category Gap Assessment
 - Sell Story Presentation Support

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