
7C BRAND BREAKDOWN

Mid-Day Squares

prepared by



eBrandBuilders

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
THE 7C METHOD	7
THE 7C BREAKDOWN	12
C1	14
CORE	14
BRAND PURPOSE	17
BRAND VALUES	18
BRAND PROMISE	20
ESSENCE	21
C2	22
CUSTOMER	22
PERSONA	24
WHAT IS THE CUSTOMER ACTUALLY BUYING?	25
C3	26
COMMUNITY	26
C4	28
COMPETITION	28
SOLENESS	30
POSITIONING	32
C5	34
CREATIVES	34

NAMING	36
LOGO	37
TYPOGRAPHY	37
COLOR	38
PACKAGING	39
C6	40
CONTENT	40
BRAND STORY	42
BRAND STORY PLOT	44
BRAND STORYTELLING	46
C7	52
CHANNEL	52
CONCLUSION	55

01. INTRODUCTION

A QUICK INTRODUCTION TO THE 7C METHOD

I spent the first decade of my career in corporate branding. I managed some of Canada's most beloved brands, and I excelled. I was making so much in bonuses that my salary was almost irrelevant. I had gotten into a comfortable groove.

But I was bored out of my mind.

Not to mention, corporate life was wearing on me. Endless rounds of acquisitions reminded me I wasn't in control of my own destiny and forced me to realize I wasn't happy. So, I pursued my lifelong dream of entrepreneurship and resigned to jump into eCommerce.

But even after managing \$100 million brands and a decade of real-life experience, the transition wasn't easy.

In my first 6 months, my newly minted eComm business failed.

6 months later, my 2nd eComm business failed.

It was a humbling experience. Especially when I looked around and saw success story after success story. I didn't understand what I was doing wrong. It wasn't a lack of effort: I was spending more hours on my eComm store than I had ever spent in the office.

Obviously, I was doing something wrong.

In other words: branding. Even after a decade living and breathing brands, I realized I was ignoring the strategy that I had built my life on.

Why? Because it simply isn't taught in eCommerce.

Oh, you'll get a lecture on how to design your store pages, and where to hire a logo designer, but a brand is more than that (as you'll discover in this Brand Breakdown).

I also noticed that while the foundational principles of branding were still working for these DTC success stories, not every brick-and-mortar branding rule still applied.

It was after I took this step back and figured out how branding had evolved online that I could apply my insight to my next eComm business.

Within 4 months, I had grown a portfolio of brands I ended up selling for 7-figures.

It made me curious... so I started taking on eComm clients, and my branding approach worked for them, too. Every. Time.

And it was then that I noticed just how many other entrepreneurs were struggling with what are essentially branding problems in their business, but they just don't know it.

And when you don't know what the root problem is, you can't find the right solution.



Founder, eBrandBuilders

THE 7C METHOD

The 7C method is the branding process I came up with. It's a step-by-step, holistic strategy that can transform any online store into a beloved brand.

It's also the culmination of years of making every mistake possible in eCommerce.

Simply put, not having a brand is the biggest, most destructive mistake made by eCom entrepreneurs.

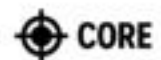
A mistake I made, and that was after I'd spent a decade in corporate branding... so it's not you.

It's a major blind spot in the eCommerce industry, but I'm hoping you can help me change that.

You'll find the full 7C method outlined in this Brand Breakdown.



THE 7C CANVAS



CORE

WHY DO YOU EXIST? PURPOSE.



WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR? VALUES.



CUSTOMER

WHO'S YOUR AUDIENCE?

HOW DOES YOUR PRODUCT ELEVATE?



COMMUNITY

WHAT CULTURAL GROUP DO WE IDENTIFY WITH?



COMPETITION

HOW ARE YOU UNIQUE?



CREATIVES

NAMING

LOGO



COLORS



PACKAGING



TYPOGRAPHY



CONTENT

STORY OF THE BRAND

BRAND STORIES



CHANNEL

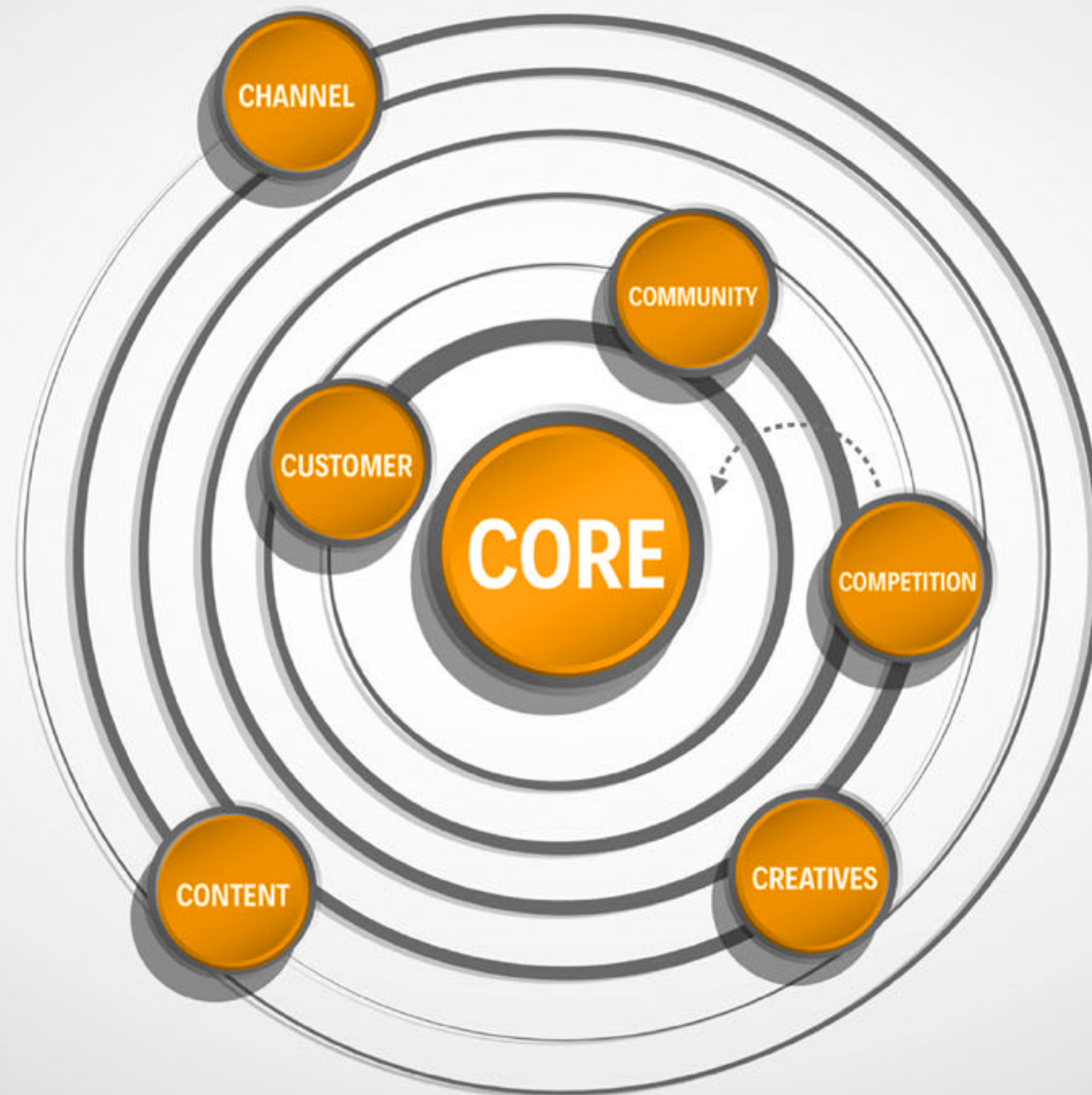
YOUR BRAND TOUCHPOINTS

OWNED CHANNELS

SHARED CHANNELS

PAID CHANNELS

THE 7C SYSTEM



THE 7C BREAKDOWN



CORE

Develop an “inside-out” strategy driven by your brand’s purpose and work your way out layer after layer leading to an external brand representation that is in perfect alignment with your internals.



CUSTOMER

The Customer persona is tablestakes. But your customers truly become “yours” only when you help them become the people they want to be. With the help of our prototyping and frameworks, learn how to create emotional resonance with your audience.



COMMUNITY

Take your strong understanding of that one customer, find 1,000 similar individuals and you have the foundation of compelling community. Explore the 9 steps that it takes to build such a follower base that transcends transactions and roots for your brand.



COMPETITION

Stop competing on price and uncover your brand’s “soleness,” with eBrandBuilders Option Planning Matrix that will allow to carve the unique appeal of your brand helping you stand-out and motivate customers to pay a premium.



CREATIVES

Anchor your creative assets in your brand purpose and strategy to create a meaningful visual identity that is an accurate representation of your brand’s core. We cover brand name, logo, color palette, typography, and packaging.



CONTENT

Content cannot operate in isolation. Explore how we use the Content Creation Framework to generate content based on everything that we have learned from the first 5C’s. Enabling you to seamlessly produce content that speaks to your customer’s interest, represents your differentiation, and picking topics is not a mystery anymore.



CHANNEL

It culminates with Channel, an intentionally designed last step in the brand building process. The selection of your brand touchpoints is a function of your brand tribe and which platform(s) houses that tribe. We delve into everything from Influencer Marketing to Facebook Advertising.

C1 - CORE

CORE

Mid-Day Squares was launched in 2018 by Lezlie Karls, her husband Nick Saltarelli, and her brother Jake Karls.

They make afternoon snack squares that combine the sweetness of chocolate with the energy boost of protein.

Or as the brand describes them: “Real chocolate top, superfood brownie bottom.”

The brand’s origin dates back to 2015.

At the time, Saltarelli was running a software company, and Leslie was working in the fashion industry.

To combat her afternoon energy crashes, Lezlie started exploring plant-based foods.

Meanwhile, Saltarelli was turning to confectionary chocolate.

In an attempt to “convince him into [her] vibe of eating,” Lezlie created the first Mid-Day Squares in their kitchen, creating a healthier snack that still satisfies a sweet tooth.

The pair eventually decided to turn their invention into a business and spent “countless hours, trials, and taste tests” to create the first flavor they’d release, Fudge Yah.

But they knew they needed more than a great product, and convinced Lezlie’s brother Jake Karls to join the team.

Jake is an expert in building and nurturing online communities and turning customers into brand evangelists.

Now with 3 flavors, and available in 2500+ North American retailers, they have a target of reaching \$100M in revenue by 2025.

This brand story probably sounds familiar.

Many eCommerce brands are born out of the founder’s frustration with a traditional category, or the solution to their problem just doesn’t exist.

But while the setup may seem like just another eComm™ pitch, Mid-Day Squares has built a brand with stand-out storytelling.

And there's nothing at all generic about their ongoing story.

Of course, the ability to tell a compelling brand story starts with total clarity about your brand identity.

Which is the first step of the branding process, C1: Core.



01 BRAND PURPOSE

Your brand's core consists of 4 core elements: purpose, values, promise, and essence.

Everything starts with your brand purpose.

Purpose describes why you're in business.

It's what motivates you every day, what's important to your brand, what you believe in, and the benefit you're committed to creating in your community.

Whether that means tackling fairing working conditions or simply serving an unmet customer need, a purpose defines your brand's larger vision.

Not only does purpose give your brand long-term direction and focus, but it's also the foundation of customer trust.

Because it's only when customers know why you're doing what you're doing that they believe what you say.

And when your purpose is genuine, you'll naturally attract customers who share your beliefs.

Mid-Day Squares' purpose is **“to make a food brand that resonates with our peoples, our vibe, and our way of living.”**

As you'll see throughout our case study, Mid-Day Squares isn't just selling an afternoon snack.

They're building a community around their brand through storytelling, and with it, a strong relationship with their customers.

Of course, the product and the brand's values are important touchpoints that rally customers to the brand.

And it's this common ground Mid-Day Squares is out to build.

02 BRAND VALUES

Paired with your brand purpose are your brand values.

These are the 3-to 5 principles that your brand is committed to following as you pursue your purpose and grow your business.

They're the rules for your brand's business practices that keep you accountable to your purpose.

Mid-Day Squares' values are **transparency, good vibes, and tastes better.**

First is **transparency.**

This is the heart of Mid-Day Squares' brand.

Of course, in terms of their product, Mid-Day Squares are always made with "real food worth putting in your body."

And product pages clearly list the "guilt-free ingredients" included.

Their squares are also vegan, gluten-free, soy-free, Non-GMO, organic, and free of all preservatives.

In fact, Mid-Day Squares need to be refrigerated to stay fresh.

But where this value really manifests is in the brand's content strategy.

We'll dive into more detail on their approach in C6, but Mid-Day Squares is open about what goes on behind the scenes at the brand.

They document everything and release video updates regularly on their social media channels.

Next is **good vibes.**

There's a serious sense of fun behind the Mid-Day Squares brand — and it's an important quality of their brand purpose.

They embrace the Willy Wonka Chocolate Factory dream.

While they never cover up the difficult or distressing moments in the brand's life, this positivity is key to their emotional connection with customers.

Spreading the "good vibes" is part of their authenticity.

Finally, it **tastes better.**

A more product-focused value, ensures the squares they sell are genuinely good.

One of the problems with protein bars is that even though they're healthy, people usually eat them out of necessity, not because they enjoy them.

By combining the sweetness of chocolate, Mid-Day Squares manage to offer the same health benefits without sacrificing taste.

It's an important part of their differentiation and means customers actually enjoy reaching for a Mid-Day Square.

Making this particular afternoon snack an easy habit to pick up.



03 BRAND PROMISE

With your brand purpose and values in place, you can now craft your brand promise.

This is where your purpose and values meet to communicate your brand's core benefit to customers.

It's what consumers can expect from your brand every time they interact with you.

It's the measuring stick customers will use to evaluate whether they're satisfied with the brand experience.

Delivering on your brand promise consistently is the foundation for building brand trust.

Mid-Day Squares' promise is **"It works and tastes f%^\$ing good."**

The brand is promising the best of a chocolate bar with the best of a protein bar: a boost in energy that tastes great.

They sell a starter pack that allows you to try all 3 flavors.

This strategy allows Mid-Day Squares to deliver on its promise to customers before they make a larger financial commitment:

"Food is all about how you feel while you eat and after you eat. Talk is cheap. We want you to try it!"

Notice, "while you eat and after you eat" covers both keys of the promise – that the squares taste great and will give you an energy boost.

You'll also notice the brand's irreverent personality in this promise – again, something we'll explore more in C6.

ESSENCE

And the final element of your brand's core is your brand essence.

As your customers get to know your brand, they will become acquainted with your purpose, values, and promise.

But when customers encounter your brand for the first time, you only have a few seconds to get their attention and communicate what your brand is all about.

Your brand essence takes the brand identity you created in C1 and distills it into 1–3 words or a short phrase.

It's an ideal tool to ensure everything your brand does and says is aligned with your purpose and values and carries the essential spirit of your brand.

Mid-Day Squares is Functional Chocolate.

It's an essence that captures their unique product and its benefits, like their tagline says, it's "everything a chocolate bar isn't, everything a protein bar wishes it was."

FUNCTIONAL CHOCOLATE

CUSTOMER

With the foundation of your brand identity in place, the next step is C2: Customer.

This is where you match your brand identity with a niche of customers who are predisposed to love your business.

Because when you know who your customers are, they're easier to find online and you can tailor your message to speak to them more effectively.

C2CUSTOMER

PERSONA

As a Millennial-led brand, Mid-Day Squares also typically appeals to other Millennials.

These are also consumers who feel they need an afternoon lift but have a sweet tooth to combat.

Mid-Day Squares is riding the wave of 2 growing markets.

Real chocolate (defined as 55% cocoa and above) is growing 44% year over year.

Plant-based protein, meanwhile, is growing 36% year over year.

Dark chocolate has grown partially on the steam of research trumpeting its health benefits, like protecting the brain from age-related stress and inflammation and boosting blood circulation to the brain.

Plant-based protein has risen alongside the demand for more vegan options.

But it also offers several benefits compared to meat-based protein.

Pound-for-pound, plant-based protein has more nutrients in fewer calories.

It's also a natural source of fiber, something missing from meat protein.

Mid-Day Squares are also tapping into the wider consumer trend toward "ready-to-eat" food and meal replacements.

These options are popular with people who work in offices and go to the gym, but also with people who like to attend festivals and other outdoor events.

Due to this, the protein bar market took a significant hit during COVID.

Another factor limiting the growth of protein bars, in particular, is the availability of protein in other forms, like energy drinks and powder.

It's a sign that protein bars are often consumed out of necessity, rather than genuine preference.

WHAT IS THE CUSTOMER ACTUALLY BUYING?

Mid-Day Squares' creation of a great-tasting protein source is a significant unmet need in the market.

And it's what customers are ultimately really buying.

The brand's essence: **functional chocolate**.

The ability to get a nutritional boost without compromising on enjoyment.

Health and fun don't have to be separate.

And you're more likely to reach for this healthier option because you actually like it.



C3 COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY

However, what hooks Mid-Day Squares customers is their unique brand community.

And translating the needs of your audience into identification with the brand.

This is where Mid-Day Squares's brand really shines.

They have actively nurtured a strong community since its launch.

They have 75K+ followers on Instagram, a very important channel for them and Jake Karls is very active on LinkedIn

It's here they build relationships with customers and investors alike.

Mid-Day Squares produces a mini-reality series following the founders and the Mid-Day Squares team through the brand's journey.

Nothing is censored, both the victories and the obstacles are published transparently.

Again, we'll get into this in more detail in C6, but this ongoing documentation invites customers into the brand.

They're able to get to know the Mid-Day Squares team and connect with them.

This is one of the advantages modern brands have over legacy brands.

As Lezlie Karls explains, "Kraft was started by a human, and that human was similar to us. But now it's a big conglomerate, and you don't know who runs Kraft.

We never want Mid-Day Squares to feel like that, even when we become a conglomerate, we want you to know us at every stage."

Mid-Day Squares isn't artificially creating tribalism around an aesthetic or an ideology, but through their authenticity.

The Mid-Day Squares community is genuinely for those who share the brand's "vibe."

C4 COMPETITION

COMPETITION

With a clear picture of your target customer and a community behind you, you're now armed with insights into what makes your brand appealing to a specific audience.

This is a huge advantage in determining how your brand fits into the overall market.

It's at C4: Competition where you dial in what makes your brand totally unique versus your direct and indirect competitors.

Because it's not until customers understand what you uniquely offer that they'll feel informed enough to make a buying decision.

So, you're going to need a competitive strategy.

SOLENESS

As mentioned, Mid-Day Squares discovered white space in the market between confectionary chocolate and protein bars.

Also, the fact that Mid-Day Squares use plant-based protein offers further differentiation.

Jake Karls explains the trio “jumped on this gap like sharks. We knew we had longevity because we didn’t choose a niche.

“Chocolate is a \$140 billion market... there are a lot of opportunities to grab by making changes in this saturated space.”

One of the headline benefits of Mid-Day Squares is that they curb your hunger for 3–4 hours.

The ratio of protein, fat, and fiber slows digestion.

This white space of “that 2:00 pm–er to get [you] to [your] next meal” combined with the “indulgence of chocolate” was wide open.

In addition, all their squares are “vegan, gluten-free, soy-free, non-GMO, 100% organic, and most importantly” totally without any “preservatives or anything artificial.”

So because they’re perishable, Mid-Day Squares need to be refrigerated, rather than protein bars which can be thrown into a cupboard and forgotten about.

Currently, the brand has 3 flavors with plans to roll out more, but every future product will remain a “chocolate snack” with “three components: real food, plant-based and some sort of functionality.”

Another unique feature of the brand is that Mid-Day Squares owns its manufacturing.

The team met with 26 co-packers across North America, but all of them asked the brand to change the recipe.

The square shape with a chocolate top is one of the brand’s calling cards and was exactly what manufacturers wanted to alter.

They requested either enrobing the squares in a millimeter of chocolate or changing their structure.

Instead, the brand approached the Canadian government for financial help to build a manufacturing plant and create jobs in Montreal.

This allowed Mid-Day Squares to scale from making 80 bars a day to 90,000 a day.

Of course, controlling manufacturing also allows for more precise quality control.

Beyond a better product, Mid-Day Squares’s real differentiation is in their brand community through storytelling.

They stand out not just among their category, but eCommerce brands generally – who tend to tell the same story over and over.

Few brands are willing to get as honest about the startup journey as Mid-Day Squares.

They explain, “We like to be relatable... We’ve also taken extra steps to be transparent with our customers about the production of the bars, even when it seems like it goes against our interest... but it resulted in building further trust with customers because they can now rely on us to be transparent.”

In other words, they live their values.

POSITIONING

In its positioning, Mid-Day Squares' is essentially targeting a gap in the market by catering to a need no one else was addressing.

They identified and “jumped” into a clear white space in the market.

But the brand also relies heavily on intangibles, driven by storytelling: “People come for the chocolate but they stay for the story, and that’s what’s important.”



C5 CREATIVES

CREATIVES

Entering C5, your brand now has a lot of moving parts.

Your core identity, the needs of your audience, the purpose of your community, and your unique competitive strategy.

But that's a lot of information to convey to a consumer, especially when you only have 3 seconds to capture someone's attention online.

Just like your brand essence distills your brand's identity into a single idea, your brand's creative assets – your brand name, logo, color palette, and so on – communicate your brand quickly.

It does this through the use of symbols.

The best creative assets are shortcuts that suggest your brand's identity, differentiation, and the brand experience, to customers.



NAMING

Among these symbols, the most important is going to be your brand's name.

A brand name is often the first impression customers have of your business, and it will be the most repeated and shared asset you have.

Mid-Day Squares' brand name is **descriptive**.

The product is a literal square — an important part of their differentiation, and immediately signals they aren't your average protein bar.

The name also describes the product's function as an afternoon snack.

Mid-Day Squares are your "after lunch go-to."

The logo for Mid-Day Squares features the brand name in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is set against a solid black rectangular background. The words "Mid-Day" and "Squares" are connected by a hyphen, and the overall style is clean and modern.

LOGO

Their logo is a **simple watermark**.

This allows the descriptive name to speak for itself.

It doesn't need much embellishment because the name is a clear message.

It is in upper-case, bold font that suggests the strength of the squares in flavor and satiety.

The text also leans forward suggesting it's a square that helps you get through the 2–5 pm lull.

TYPOGRAPHY

The logo uses **GT America Compressed Black** font.

This is a grotesque font, meaning it has imperfections and sometimes odd or unnatural character.

It's a font family that doesn't hide its blemishes but celebrates them.

A sentiment that aligns perfectly with Mid-Day Squares' transparency value and "come as you are" good vibes.

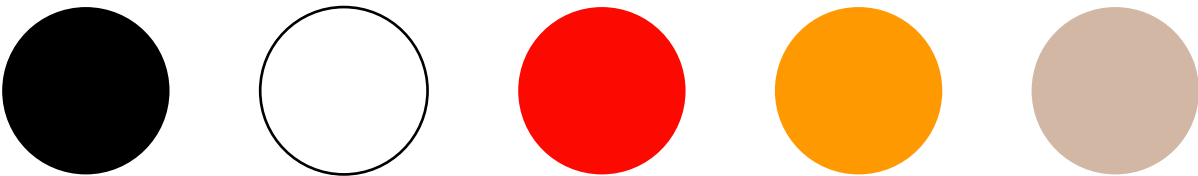
It's also indicative of the tone of their content, and their dedication to showing the good, bad, and ugly of growing a brand.

COLOR

Mid-Day Squares’ color scheme relies on black and white and uses grey–beige, red, and orange as accent colors.

Each of these 3 colors is used in their packaging and aligns with one of their 3 flavors.

The grey–beige for Fudge Yah, red for Almond Crunch, and orange for Peanut Butta.



PACKAGING

The brand’s packaging is clean and modern.

But it has also been a source of frustration for Mid-Day Squares.

An earlier iteration of their packaging earned them a cease and desist letter from Hershey, as well as another from Kellog’s.

This forced a redesign.

Their current packaging communicates the brand's differentiation.

Each package is labeled “made with real chocolate,” and the face of the bag lays out the core benefits of the square: its protein and fiber content.

The packages also clearly display their certifications like gluten–free and organic chocolate.

Just like the brand name, the packaging “explains” this new, innovative product to consumers.

So even if you first encounter the brand on a retail shelf, you’ll quickly understand what makes them unique.

The brand also has plans to change its packaging again soon based on customer feedback.

Since the beginning, Mid-Day Squares come with 2 squares per package.

Many customers reached out to request either resealable packaging or for squares to be available packaged individually.

This is an idea Mid-Day Squares is tackling next.

C6

CONTENT

CONTENT

With your creative assets in place, it's time to dive a bit deeper into your brand's communication strategy.

In C6: Content, you'll create the foundation for both evergreen and tactical content that brings customers to your brand and nurtures a long-term relationship.

We all know the phrase "Content is King."

But publishing for any brand is now table stakes.

Chances are, there's already an ample supply of articles, videos, and infographics about your category.

So, you're going to need a way to stand out.

Assuming two pieces of content provide the same level and quality of education, what makes one more compelling than the other?

Emotional relevance.

In other words, a piece isn't just informative, it's emotionally engaging.

And there is a simple difference between content that teaches and content that serves: storytelling.

There are 2 types of storytelling you'll need for your content strategy: brand story, and brand storytelling.

brand story

***brand
storytelling***

BRAND STORY

The cornerstone of your content strategy will be your brand story.

Simply put, a brand story is the story of your brand's history and origin.

Who started the brand, how they got it rolling, and why it was important to them.

Hopefully, you already sense the role a brand story plays in your strategy: it introduces customers to your brand's purpose and values.

And to reinforce the power of the 7C Method, I will place the Mid-Day Squares' Brand Story that we initially started in C1 here again. This will allow the rest of the elements to flow better and will make the upcoming explanations easier to understand.

Mid-Day Squares was launched in 2018 by Lezlie Karls, her husband Nick Saltarelli, and her brother Jake Karls.

They make afternoon snack squares that combine the sweetness of chocolate with the energy boost of protein.

Or as the brand describes them: "Real chocolate top, superfood brownie bottom."

The brand's origin dates back to 2015.

At the time, Saltarelli was running a software company, and Leslie was working in the fashion industry.

To combat her afternoon energy crashes, Lezlie started exploring plant-based foods.

Meanwhile, Saltarelli was turning to confectionary chocolate.

In an attempt to "convince him into [her] vibe of eating," Lezlie created the first Mid-Day Squares in their kitchen, creating a healthier snack that still satisfies a sweet tooth.

The pair eventually decided to turn their invention into a business and spent "countless hours, trials, and taste tests" to create the first flavor they'd release, Fudge Yah.

But they knew they needed more than a great product, and convinced Lezlie's brother Jake Karls to join the team.

Jake is an expert in building and nurturing online communities and turning customers into brand evangelists.

Now with 3 flavors, and available in 2500+ North American retailers, they have a target of reaching \$100M in revenue by 2025.

BRAND STORY PLOT

Now that you understand the importance of storytelling, the next question is how exactly to pull it off.

One of the best tools to use for your brand story is a master plot.

There are 6 different master plots relevant to branding work: overcoming the monster, rags to riches, voyage and return, the quest, comedy, and rebirth.

Each one represents a unique but deeply familiar story pattern.

And while each story told under a master plot can be vastly different (Cinderella and Citizen Kane are both Rags to Riches stories, for instance), every story within a type will carry the same core themes.

When we encounter a master plot, we already have a reservoir of associations and emotions we bring to the story.

By using a master plot to help structure your brand story, you intuitively present your brand values, and it lends greater authenticity to your purpose.

Mid-Day Squares' master plot is the **Quest**.

In this story, the hero is compelled by a vision or responsibility to journey to achieve an impossible goal.

The core quality of a Quest is perseverance — it's a story where the journey is more important than the destination.

And it's not achieving the goal that matters most, but who you must become to achieve the goal that counts.

These qualities of the Quest align perfectly with Mid-Day Squares's continual documenting of their brand story.

It's a story that evolves every day, with every decision, and Mid-Day Squares lets customers see every moment.

Nick Saltarelli has described Mid-Day Squares as “a constant battle of having to solve big problems.”

And credits the popularity of their content to the difficulty of building a brand and their honesty about it: “We were able to garner a huge audience because people were so interested in the insanity of us trying to break into one of the most competitive and saturated markets, in the most competitive area of the grocery store.

“This interest increased, even more, when we took on the insane task of building a manufacturing plant.

“That insanity drove eyeballs, eyeballs drove revenue, revenue drove growth which allowed us to invest in telling the story further.

“Moral of the story: people were interested because it was difficult, and they went on the journey with us.”

The brand story for Mid-Day Squares is a true Quest.

Of course, the qualities of the Quest plot also apply to the customer journey.

One of the product's core benefits is keeping you satiated through the afternoon, helping you persevere through your day.

BRAND STORYTELLING

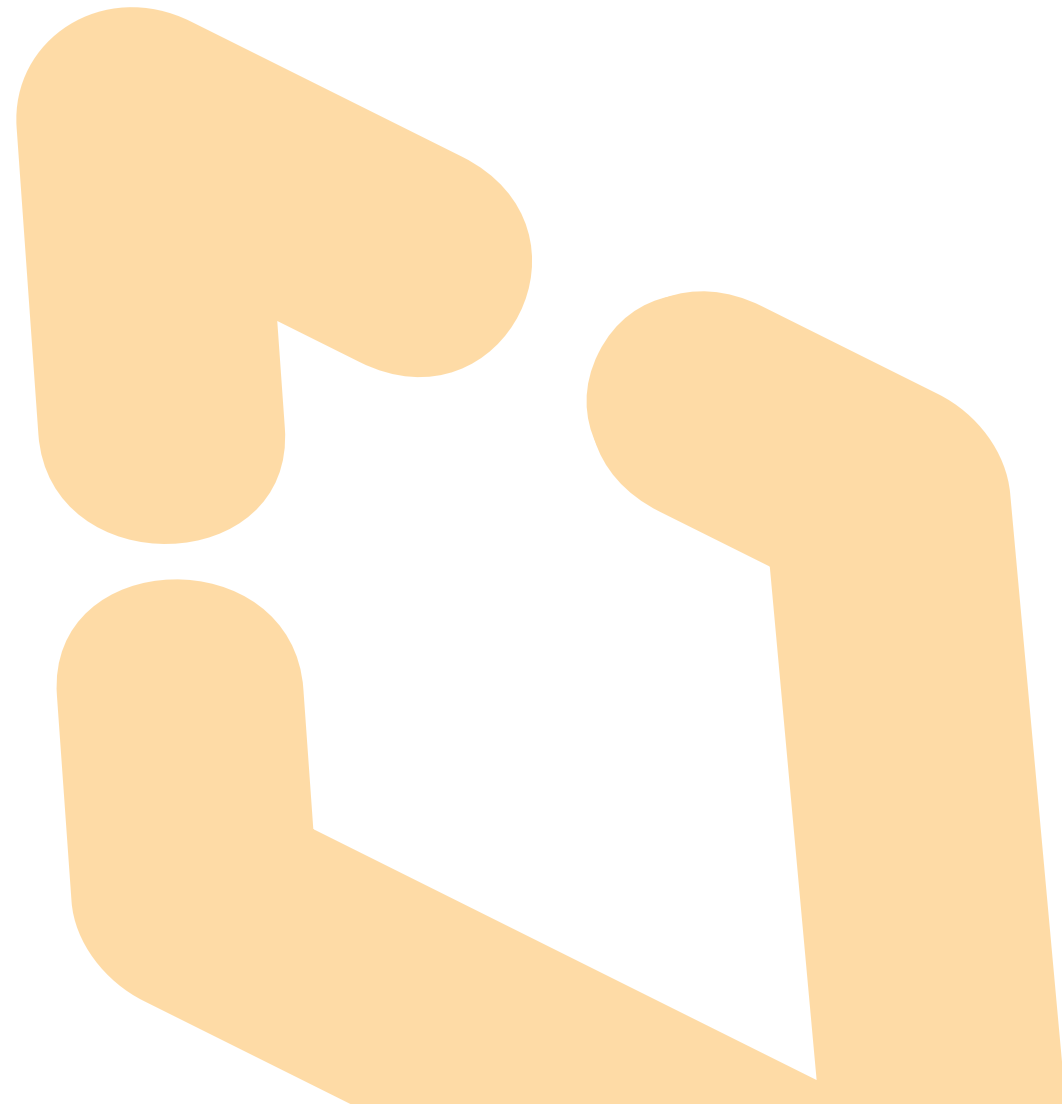
These themes will also resonate throughout your brand storytelling.

The brand story describes your brand's history and dives into your core, but storytelling is the more transient, tactical, day-to-day messaging you engage in.

Of course, your storytelling should align with the themes of your brand story and core, but overall, storytelling is far too flexible to follow a single story outline.

For instance, brand storytelling covers everything from ad copy to FAQ page answers, email newsletter content, social posts, product descriptions, and blog posts.

Instead of a master plot, storytelling leverages brand archetype and brand voice to keep your content aligned with your brand identity.



BRAND ARCHETYPE

If a master plot is a familiar story form, an archetype is a familiar character, or persona.

Intentionally aligning your brand with an archetype will give your content the feeling of a consistent, familiar personality.

It's a unique way to engage customer emotions, differentiate your content from competitors, and coordinate all of your messaging without feeling repetitive.

Mid-Day Squares' archetype is the **Joker or Entertainer**.

This is a trickster figure who doesn't take life too seriously, but highly values authenticity.

Many of their antics are motivated by the desire to help everyone around them shed their false identities and be their truest, fullest selves.

They're also a persona that revels in the present moment.

Ultimately, Jokers care about creating genuine connections.

Mid-Day Squares' transparent storytelling is all about showcasing the real people behind the brand.

In this sense, transparency isn't just about the brand's willingness to share the good and bad behind the scenes...

But the dedication to allowing every team member to be fully themselves.

On a more practical level, your brand archetype will manifest in all the content you create, whether it's written or visual.



BRAND VOICE

But when it comes to written messaging, your brand voice will be the core manifestation of your archetype.

A brand voice is a way a brand uses language to express its unique personality.

Whether you tell a lot of jokes, use slang, offer comfort to your reader, or just present the facts will powerfully reveal your archetype and identity.

True to any good Joker, Mid-Day Squares's voice is fun and playful, but also slightly confrontational.

For instance, the brand hosts a podcast called Uncensored!, where the founders discuss entrepreneurship, what's going on with the brand, and conduct interviews.

One podcast title that captures their unique voice well is: "Why Can't We Say P*ssy Like Cardi? Building a Brand by Giving Zero Fucks."

However, this irreverence doesn't come from cruelty, it's a reflection that this Joker simply knows what matters.

In a video post for Valentine's Day, "Bars Are Love," Lezlie pays homage to DJ Khaled's "Hold You Down" music video and compliments unsuspecting team members for their contribution to the brand.

For example, she tells Anthony: "You's sharp. You's efficient. You get shit done."

It's a video that perfectly reflects Joker's goal of connecting people and strengthening relationships.

What makes Mid-Day Squares's content truly unique, though, is simply their dedication to it.

Their first outside hire was a videographer to help them document everything happening in the brand.

Jake Karls has also stated that although they do have a differentiated product that people genuinely love...



Their only real uncrossable moat is their storytelling, and the relationship it has nurtured with customers.

And they “don’t talk too much about product benefits in our marketing... that comes later. What we think about, is how do we interrupt your day on your phone?”

The video series on their socials have been described as “Shark Tank meets the Kardashians.”

They recently let their creativity shine by producing their music video, complete with parody lyrics.

The video, “Chocolate Gone Crazy” is a Mid-Day Squares take on Eminem’s “My Name Is.”

Lyrics include: “Wanna see me eat squares and drip chocolate out of my eyelids?”

The song was created as a diss track in response to Hershey’s cease and desist letter over their packaging.

There’s maybe a no better manifestation of the Joker archetype than this.

Of course, they also released a video documenting the extensive, and chaotic process of its creation.

Videos also include important updates from the brand.

For instance, Mid-Day Squares used a video to explain a product shortage caused by a major equipment malfunction.

They explained what happened – a stray spatula was left on the line accidentally – and clarified what they were doing to keep up with orders.

This included explaining that they had to revert to manually creating the squares to fulfill retail orders and that online orders had to be ceased until the equipment was fixed.

Another note-worthy video is their New Year’s post.

It was a 2021 highlight reel of all the “lowlights” of a very challenging year in the brand.

At one point each of the founders wonders about quitting, and whether the brand is even viable, or if the journey is worth it.

Although these moments are every entrepreneur’s reality, it’s a side of brands you rarely see.

Of course, the post was ultimately a celebration of the progress they made despite these challenges, and a positive outlook for 2022.

The lesson here is that people want to connect with your brand, but they can’t do that unless your brand is emotionally relevant to them.

Jake Karls has said exactly this: “When you create an emotional connection, people want to be part of it.

They want to know more.

So, you try and bring them into the ecosystem and they fall in love with the humans, not just the 3 of us, but our entire team.”

Again, for Mid-Day Squares, this community is the brand.

Their product is just the foundation.



C7 CHANNEL

CHANNEL

With that, we reach C7: Channel.

When starting an eCommerce business, it seems sensible to start your journey by setting up your DTC website and creating your various social profiles.

But without the guidance of the first 6C's, you're vulnerable to wasting time and resources pursuing channels and audiences that are irrelevant to your brand.

Not to mention, without the focus of a brand identity, it's easy to get caught up trying to optimize channels and tools that won't move the needle for you.

By building a brand first, you ensure that you choose the channels that your audience is already using and target them with messaging that stands out.

It's not an exaggeration to say Mid-Day Squares is both a product company and a media brand.

The importance of content to the brand makes Mid-Day Squares's social channels critical.

Particularly Instagram, although they also post to TikTok and LinkedIn.

The brand estimates that this content pushes somewhere between 8,000 and 10,000 people to the store locator on their website every month.

Which amounts to 100,000+ people over a year.

In addition, Nick Saltarelli has explained that "the follower concentration that Instagram provides on a city basis gives us a very strong indication of how strong the brand is in that area.

"It allows us to make decisions on where to do our distribution.

"We wait for a specific threshold to launch in physical retail in a city."

In-stores, getting the right placement was key to their success.

Originally, because the product is refrigerated, Mid-Day Squares were being shelved in dairy, beside the milk.

Once they were moved out, sales increased by 500% because customers could find the product.

Currently, Mid-Day Squares are expanding into the US.

They're looking at building more manufacturing facilities near distribution centers in major cities.

Lezlie Karls describes them as “micro plants” that would enable North America-wide coverage.

Of course, their DTC website still matters and still accounts for 40% of their sales.

Finally, like any good Joker, Mid-Day Squares is always experimenting, and are unafraid to try a new idea.

Mid-Day Squares are exploring an NFT project using VHS tapes (an intriguing combination of new and old tech).

But again, these aren't just shots in the dark, because Mid-Day Squares isn't just trying to sell a product online.

With a purpose to create a meaningful brand community, they have the foundation for a legacy.

As Jake Karls said: “If you have a great product-market fit, and you have a strategy that creates a real emotional connection, you're creating an unstoppable force.”

CONCLUSION

Building a brand inside-out means that everything you do is connected to your brand strategy and vision.

It means that all of your marketing tactics are based on who your company is, what you offer, and what makes you different from the competition.

When you build a brand inside-out, every decision you make is based on what's best for your business and your customers.

You create a company culture that reflects your brand values, and you design marketing campaigns that communicate those values to your target audience.

You focus on creating a great customer experience, and you work hard to earn the trust of your customers.

Your brand is a complex system with so many elements, nuances, and moving parts that it can often be difficult to truly understand it in its entirety.

We hope our brand breakdown of Mid-Day Squares has helped you get an idea about how every aspect complements and enhances the others, so your business runs smoothly from beginning through the end!

Now If you are looking to build your eCommerce brand into something more, now is the time to take the next step and open yourself up to new opportunities.

1. We offer a free 45-min brand strategy call where our team will help diagnose your needs and give support on how best to proceed. You can schedule yours today at eBrandCall.com or just click on the graphic below.
2. The 7C Method is a game-changing brand strategy that will help you build your dominant eCommerce brand. And if you want to delve further into it, then grab a copy of my book, [Checkout | The Step-by-Step 7C Method to Build a Dominant eCommerce Brand at eBrandBook.com](https://eBrandBook.com).

BRAND BREAKDOWN

Mid-Day Squares

CORE Purpose

Values

transparency,
good vibes, and
tastes better

"to make a food brand that
resonates with our peoples, our
vibe, and our way of living"

Promise

"it works and tastes f%\$sing good"

essence:

Functional Chocolate

CUSTOMER

as a millennial-led brand, typically
appeals to other millennials

riding the wave of 2 growing markets, real
chocolate+ plant-based protein

tapping into the wider consumer trend toward
"ready-to-eat" food + meal replacements

popular options with office workers + gym goers,
& people attending festivals + outdoor events

Actually selling

ability to get a nutritional boost without
compromising on enjoyment

health + fun don't have to be separate

COMMUNITY

nurtured a strong community since its
launch on socials - LinkedIn + IG

produces a mini reality series following
the founders and team journey

nothing is censored, both victories +
obstacles are published transparently

isn't artificially creating tribalism around
an aesthetic or an ideology, but through
their authenticity

COMPETITION

Differentiation

use of plant-based protein offers a better ratio of
protein, fat, and fiber to slow digestion

vegan, gluten-free, soy-free, non-GMO, 100% organic

free of any "preservatives or anything artificial"

owns its manufacturing, to allow for a square shape
with a chocolate top - one of the brand's calling
cards + quality control

Brand Positioning

white space of "that 2:00 pm-er to get
[you] to [your] next meal" combined
with "indulgence of chocolate"

Brand Story Plot Quest

core quality of a Quest is perseverance

- story where the journey is more
important than the destination

align perfectly with brand continual
documenting their story

a story that evolves every day, with
every decision, and brand lets
customers see every moment

CREATIVES

Naming

Descriptive

product is a literal square - their
differentiation, & immediately
signals not your average protein bar

describes product's function
as an afternoon snack

Colors

relies on B&W and uses
grey-beige, red, & orange as
accent colors

each of these 3 colors used
in packaging + aligns with
one of their 3 flavors

grey-beige for Fudge Yah,
red for Almond Crunch, &
orange for Peanut Butta

Logo

Simple Watermark

bold font suggests strength of
squares in flavor + satiety

text also leans forward
suggesting helps you get
through the 2-5 pm lull

Typography

GT America Compressed

grotesque font, meaning it has imperfections +
sometimes odd or unnatural character

font family that doesn't hide its blemishes
but celebrates them

sentiment aligns perfectly with brand's transparency
value and "come as you are" good vibes

Packaging

clean and modern

current packaging communicates
brand's differentiation

"explains" new, innovative
product to consumers

CONTENT Brand Story

Mid-Day Squares was launched in 2018 by Lezlie Karls, her husband Nick Saltarelli, and her brother Jake Karls. They make afternoon snack squares that combine the sweetness of chocolate with the energy boost of protein. The brand's origin dates back to 2015. At the time, Saltarelli was running a software company, and Leslie was working in the fashion industry. To combat her afternoon energy crashes, Lezlie started exploring plant-based foods. Meanwhile, Saltarelli was turning to confectionary chocolate. In an attempt to "convince him into [her] vibe of eating," Lezlie created the first Mid-Day Squares in their kitchen, creating a healthier snack that still satisfies a sweet tooth. The pair eventually decided to turn their invention into a business and spent "countless hours, trials, and taste tests" to create the first flavor. And they convinced Lezlie's brother Jake Karls, an expert in building online communities, to join the team. Now with 3 flavors, and available in 2500+ North American retailers, they have a target of reaching \$100M in revenue by 2025.

Brand Story Archetype

Joker or Entertainer

trickster figure who doesn't take life
too seriously, but values creating
genuine connections

brand's transparent storytelling is all
about showcasing the real people
behind the brand

Brand Voice

fun and playful, but also
slightly confrontational

Brand Storytelling

Uncensored - Podcast

one podcast title that captures their
unique voice well is: "Why Can't We
Say P*ssy Like Cardi? Building a
Brand by Giving Zero Fucks"

irreverence doesn't come from
cruelty, it's a reflection that this
Joker simply knows what matters

CHANNEL

Shared

Marketplace (Amazon)

PR (Forbes, Techcrunch, Business Insider)

Wholesale (Whole Foods, 2500+ other stores)

Paid

Instagram

TikTok

LinkedIn

Owned

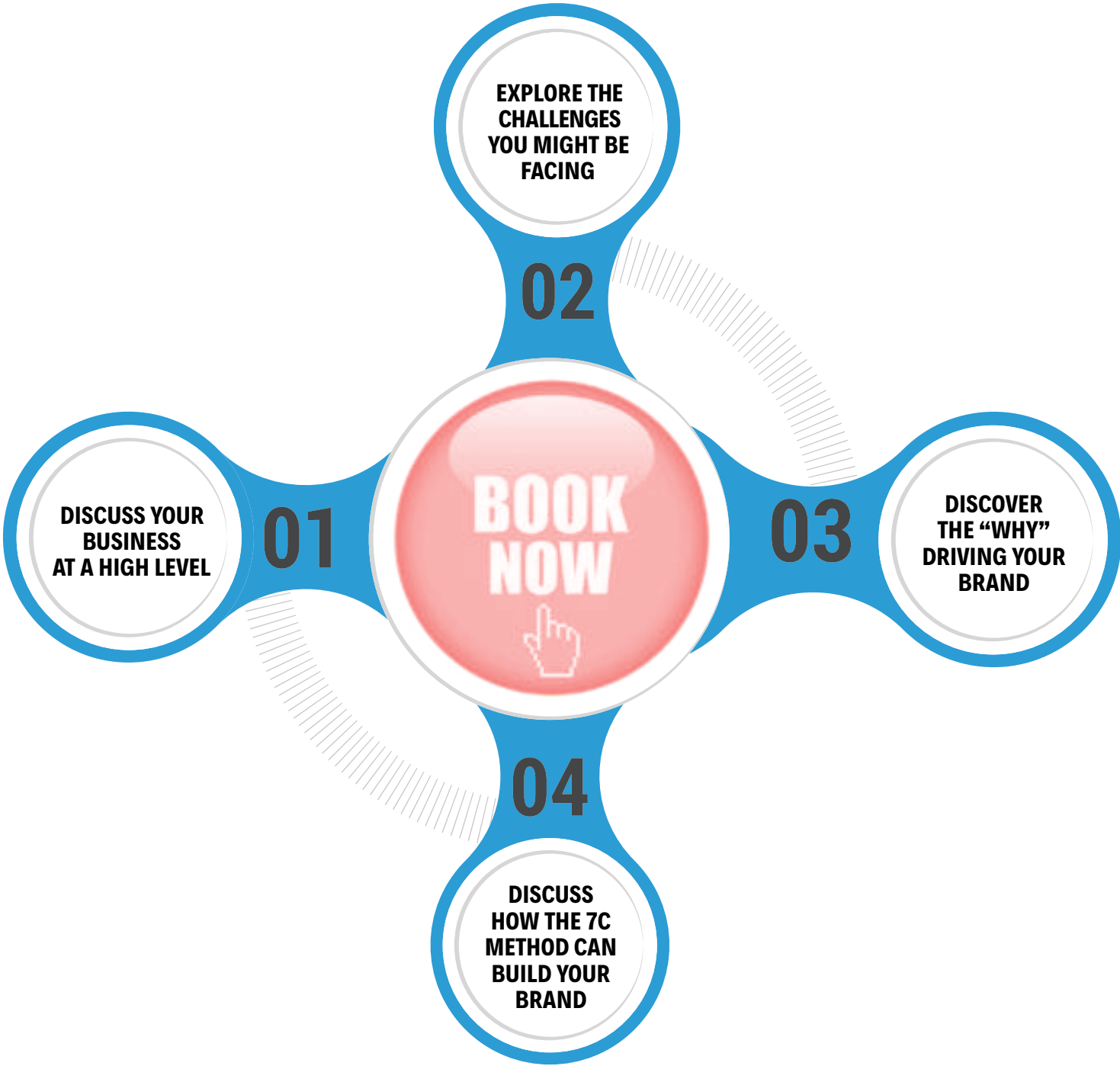
DTC



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Brand is Bottom-Line.**