

# Google IS a great brand

 By [Walter Pike](#)

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In my opinion, Google is a great brand. My views contrast with those of brand consultant Patrick Carmody, who, in a [recent article](#) here on Bizcommunity, states that Google is not a strong brand at all but is merely “the name of a phenomenal search engine” and that it could easily be replaced by another as in the new connected world “we are loyal to a value delivery system, not a brand”.



In a [follow-up comment](#), Patrick also refers to the new [Cuil](#) search engine as an example of a how “we can shift our loyalty instantaneously and en masse from a very established global brand to a brand new brand (like Cuil)”.

[Reviews of Cuil](#) have been disappointing, although it claims to index a greater proportion of the web and organise in a more logical manner than Google. My own experience and those in my [twitter stream](#) don't bear that out: good but certainly not great is the overall verdict.

In fact, leading technology blog TechCrunch refers to Cuil having turned from [potential Google killer to Google lunch](#) in an instant. Cuil has, in fact, fallen victim to the most basic of branding mistakes by building massive hype without substance and, in my opinion, has a long way to go before it is even recognised in the same competitive frame as Google.

## Collection of perceptions

It probably worth discussing [what brands are](#). They are essentially a collection of perceptions in the mind of the customer or other stake holder. The easiest way to understand brands is to see them as “reputation”. In this way, the brand concept can be applied to anything from products and services to people.

Reputation is gathered from a number of sources, including advertising but most importantly performance, and the most powerful way of building a brand is by the consistent delivery to the customer of value. “Your brand is created out of customer contact and the experience your customers have of you.” - [Stelios Haji-Ioannou, EasyGroup](#).

In contrast to Patrick's view, I believe that Google has engaged in extensive brand building. The guiding principle from its inception has been “[focus on the user and all else follows](#)”. Brand building is not brand mantras, doctrines and advertising - these are tools to understand and spread the word. Brand building has got to do with delivering value to customers.

## Is branding changing?

The presence of the Internet, especially the social web, is often put forward as a reason that branding is changing. What is actually happening is that it is forcing brand management to be even more vigilant on how brands deliver value. The real power of social media is found in its ability to connect people and that this connection leaves a searchable history. So networks have grown, both numerically and geographically and the opinion of the more than 184 million bloggers worldwide can be easily sought out. Brands and the companies creating them are having to understand that they do no longer control the flow of information.

A recent twebinair "[Who really owns your brand](#)" and the accompanying [tweets](#) discuss this view, a view that concludes that brands are a partnership. Brands have in fact never changed in their essence; they are the opinions of the customers and other stake holders of the performance of the product or service. For a more in depth discussion, refer to the [The Economist eBook on Brands and Branding](#).

Google is in my mind without doubt a strong brand. Google is recognised as the predominant search engine in the world; it is the automatic choice for millions, the majority, of Internet users. Google is also a collection of other advanced web-based services, from superior email, document collaboration and social networking services that have certainly made it a very significant and routine part of my day.

But I'm not the only one. Millward Brown rate Google as the [biggest brand in the world](#) with a value of US\$86bn and Superbrands announced Google as the [top brand in the UK last month](#). Around nine out of 10 Internet searches in the UK are done with Google.

Patrick, I agree with what appears to be the main thrust of your article that the branding landscape is changing, but on this point. Not at all.

#### **For more:**

- Patrick Carmody: [Google killer, brand killer](#)
- Walter Pike: [Google IS a great brand](#)
- Patrick Carmody: [Brands are our frenemies](#)

## **ABOUT WALTER PIKE**

Walter has decades long experience in advertising, PR, digital marketing and social media both as a practitioner and as an academic. As a public speaker; Speaks on the future of advertising in the post - broadcast era. As an activist; works in an intersection of feminism & racism. He has devised an intervention in unpacking whiteness for white people. As an educator; upskilling programs in marketing comms, advertising & social in South, West and East Africa. Social crisis management consultant & educator. Idearogy founder

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