CELL BRIEFS · NO. 11 · DECEMBER 7, 2026

Brand Equity

A book and an article that made the brand an asset.

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Be

BRAND EQUITY

FAMILY	12 · Brand and Market-Based Assets
ERA	4 · Orientation and Relationships (1990s)
BLOCK	IN · Inputs
TIER	3 · Landmark
ROLE	Defining statement (Aaker also a measurement source)
LINEAGE	Cell 2 of 5 in the Brand and Market-Based Assets column

ANCHOR WORKS

Aaker (1991), *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name*, New York: Free Press.

Keller (1993), *Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity*, Journal of Marketing.

BY THE NUMBERS

5 curated links out, three to marketing-finance

30 anchor works cite it, across nine families

36 years with no Core cell between brand image and this one

98 th percentile of citations per year among 1990s works (Keller)

RELATED CELLS

Bi Brand Image · **Pa** Positional Advantage · **Ma** Market-Based Assets · **Bp** Brand Portfolio

Next in the series: **Ct** Commitment-Trust, **Ps** Competitive Positioning, **Lo** Learning Orientation.

WHAT IT IS

Aaker defined brand equity as the assets and liabilities linked to a brand's name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value a product provides, and grouped them into awareness, associations, perceived quality, and loyalty. Keller defined customer-based brand equity as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand. One definition starts from the firm's assets, the other from the customer's memory.

THE LINEAGE



The column has no cell in the 1970s or 1980s: 36 years separate Brand Image (Gardner and Levy, 1955) from this cell. After it the block alternates between Inputs and Formulation Content, three changes in five cells, as the brand is treated in turn as an asset to hold and a choice to make.

WHERE IT TRAVELS

Five curated links out, level with Service Quality and behind only Market Orientation, Marketing Mix, and Positional Advantage. Three go to the marketing-finance column (**Market-Based Assets**, **Productivity Chain**, **Performance Outcomes**); the others go to **Customer Equity and CLV** and **Customer Experience**. Two deep-dive mentions add sustainable advantage in services and perceived brand globalness.

WHAT IT RESTS ON

One curated link in, from **Positional Advantage** (Pa): the brand as an asset that yields position. Keller cites seven other anchor works, among them Aaker and Keller (1990) on brand extensions, Day, Shocker, and Srivastava (1979), Park, Jaworski, and MacInnis (1986), and Zeithaml (1988). Aaker's book has no reference list in the citation data.

DESCENDANTS YOU WOULD NOT GUESS

Thirty anchor works in nine families cite the cell, half of them outside the brand deep dive: **Market-Based Assets** (Srivastava, Shervani, and Fahey, 1998), **Satisfaction and Firm Value** (Fornell et al., 2006), **Strategy Domain** (Varadarajan, 2010), **Corporate Associations** (Brown and Dacin, 1997), **Marketing Resource Redeployment** (Capron and Hulland, 1999), **CRM Roadmap** (Boulding et al., 2005), and **Long-Term Strategy Effects** (Ataman, van Heerde, and Mela, 2010).

THREE THINGS THE CELL DOES NOT SHOW

1. **Two definitions, one cell.** Aaker counts assets from the firm's side; Keller measures knowledge from the customer's side. The cell holds both, and the deep dive adds a third: brand value estimated from scanner data (Kamakura and Russell, 1993).
2. **Most of the citation weight is Keller's.** Keller (1993) is cited by 26 anchor works and Aaker (1991) by seven. By citations per year the article ranks second among the 26 Core works of the 1990s, behind Morgan and Hunt (1994).
3. **The measurement story is in the deep dive.** Brand Equity Measurement (Ailawadi, Lehmann, and Neslin, 2003; Keller and Lehmann, 2006; Yoo and Donthu, 2001) follows this cell there, then the alignment of consumer- and sales-based equity (Datta, Ailawadi, and van Heerde, 2017). The open position: brand equity measured from digital traces (D12-O2).

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