

Purpose

The Wharton Global Youth Explore Business mini-site *Brand Identity: Inside the Iconic Levi's Brand* is a detailed case study of one company's brand and business experience – through the eyes of its former CEO. Get your students thinking about brand before you dive in!

Set the Stage

Introduce the concept of “brand” as **a distinctive identity that evokes certain thoughts and feelings**. While this concept is particularly useful for marketing, brand or branding is not unique to marketing. Oprah Winfrey is a brand, as is Dwayne “the Rock” Johnson. Each of these names signifies distinct feelings, ideas and associations all over the world.

For marketing, the importance of branding lies in **the ability to streamline efforts to reach the customer and to increase profits**.

Brand strategy is an extension of branding. It is how companies communicate the ideas associated with a brand to their target customers.

Activity

Equipped with these basic definitions, as a class discuss a brand of your choice. You can decide on a celebrity brand or the brand of your school or a popular product.

Together, brainstorm and write down four words that describe the brand you choose:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

When a brand is created, it can be a challenge to sustain it. What are some of the ways the brand you chose to discuss has had to work to stay vibrant? You want to get students thinking about **how a brand has built and sustained its meaning in consumers' minds**.

Prepare to Launch the Mini-site Discussion

Now, transition to an introduction of **Levi Strauss & Co.** As a class, you are about to do a deep dive into the business behind one iconic brand, Levi's jeans, with the help of the Wharton Global Youth Program Explore Business mini-site on the *Iconic Levi's Brand*.

What is the Wharton School? The Wharton School, also referred to as just Wharton, is the business school of the University of Pennsylvania, a private Ivy League university based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Wharton is a world leader in business education and a hub for academic research in all areas of business.

What is the Wharton Global Youth Program? Wharton Global Youth introduces high school students (yes, even though the program is located at a university!) to business and finance education through summer programs, courses, competitions and content, like its Explore Business mini-sites. Global Youth's work targets high school educators and students.

What is the *Brand Identity: Inside the Iconic Levi's Brand* Mini-site? Lots of fascinating conversations happen around the Wharton School campus, as professors gather research and connect with companies to better understand how they operate. Often, professors work closely with the business world -- both as advisors in their scholarly areas, and as observers who want to gather insight about corporations and CEOs in action.

The Inside the Iconic Levi's Brand mini-site is built around a conversation between Wharton retail and marketing professors, Barbara Kahn and Americus Reed, and Charles "Chip" Bergh, former CEO of Levi Strauss & Co., who retired from his position in January 2024, after years of turning the business and the brand around. The mini-site is designed to go deep on a variety of marketing and branding topics -- everything from understanding a "brand guy's" career to new brand and marketing strategies and customer research. It was created specifically for high school students to learn about business.

Have students fill out the **KWL Chart** on the next page to document what they know and what they would like to learn about brands, Levi's, retail and leadership...and return to it after they have *Explored Business* with Wharton Global Youth to take note of what they learned.

Additional Resources

Before digging into this multi-layered Levi's case study, consider discussing these readings as a class:

- [NYT: Levi's Wants You to Rethink Your Denim Shopping](#)
- [Chip Bergh's Farewell Letter to Levi Strauss & Co.](#)
- [Chip Bergh's Bio](#)

KWL Chart



What I Know

What I Want To Know

What I Learned

K

W

L