



## THE CREATIVE EVENT AS A STEP OF THE BRAND'S DNA CONSTRUCTION: THE WAVETECH CASE

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### Abstract

The TXM branding methodology is developed and applied in the context of the Laboratory for Orientation of the Organizational Genesis (LOGO) of the Federal University of Santa Catarina. The methodology considers the Creative Event as a crucial step in identifying the Brand DNA. This event consists in a meeting where stakeholders and opinion makers of the company along with member of the laboratory participate in activities that culminate in the detection of the Brand's DNA in a co creative manner. This paper presents the project conducted with the company Wavetech as an example of the methodology application. It begins with a brief review of the theoretical concepts of branding and the basic foundations of the TXM branding methodology. Afterwards it presents the Creative Event of Wavetech and the resultant brand's DNA.

**Keywords:** branding; Brand DNA; Creative Event.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

A brand is connected to consumers when its DNA is authentic, as it is the core of its true differentiation. The DNA brand reflects the identity and personality of the company, categorizing a unique positioning that will be made throughout its life (Kotler *et al.*, 2010).

Aimed at this need, Laboratory Orientation of the Organizational Genesis (LOGO/UFSC) has aimed at providing teaching activities, research and extension related to the actions of brands. Currently, the laboratory conducts theoretical background research with pragmatic validations on the participation of design in branding processes, namely, all brand management aimed at the (re)construction and maintenance of the brands through a Loyal positioning with its audience by means of emotional and synesthetic attributes.

To ensure that this happens, the essence of the LOGO project is based on co-creation and continuity. Thus, the TXM Branding methodology (think, experience, manage) is used within the laboratory. This method has been developed in order to support companies' decision in terms of the definition of their corporate identity; from the construction or validation of their brand DNA, to communication strategies with the target audience.

This article is the first part of the TXM Branding: the *Think* stage. It contains the DNA Brand Process<sup>®</sup>, a process that culminates in a series of recommendations and guidelines for expressive actions of the brand that must always be under construction by the company. The study focuses on the presentation of the creative event, which is a meeting held as a Brand DNA Process<sup>®</sup> stage where stakeholders, opinion makers, and laboratory members diagnose in a co-creative manner the brand DNA of the company. Through a theoretical review of concepts related to branding, the exposure of the main concepts of the methodology and the creative event reporting of the Wavetech project, we sought to highlight its importance as a co-creative stage for building the brand DNA within the TXM Branding methodology.

### 2. BRANDING

The emergence of new technologies, the need to find new markets and the typical commercial pressure of the distribution logic of large hypermarkets favored the creation of new product categories and hence the brands. Electronic consumption has also given rise to many markets that now occupy a prominent place in the consumption of individuals and naturally, the whole universe of the Internet and multimedia, which did not exist 20 years ago, has contributed decisively to the increase in terms of consumption offer (Semprini, 2010).



According to the author, in this market competition, the brand represents an identity and a code of a company or a product, possessing concepts and values, as it encompasses all the physical and imaginary aspects - from its name, spelling, colors, as well as its mission, posture, service, product, and positioning. According to Batey (2008), the brand consists of a name, term, or symbol and it may consist of a design or a combination of them, seeking the identification of its products and services, differentiating them from their competitors. According to Sempriani (2006) for this study it is considered that the brand identity is composed of invariant and variants elements and two dimensions: sensory, referring to expression; and intelligible, referring to content. However, it is considered that the brand image is composed of a set of images or mental attributes as it is formed in the public mind (Costa, 2008).

Brand is the link between company and consumers; therefore, all positive or negative experiences will be stored in your memory. According to Gobé (2002), brands reach an emotional level when they captivate a unique relationship with their customers, enveloping them in very specific synesthetic qualities. The emotional factor is critical to the mental connections for the creation of meaning and the memorization of the brand experience. Consumers define their actions expectations and buying interests from them. Bedbury (2014) corroborates, stating that a brand can establish connections between its customers and products. It can generate excitement and even storytelling.

In this new paradigm of intra and interpersonal relationships in business, working with emotional experiences and finding the bases and the right strategies to achieve underpinned economic, social and cultural objectives in the 'DNA' of the corporation is paramount to allow the perpetuation of organizations. For the company's success, the current situation requires an understanding in terms of the brand as the evident internal and external characteristics of a corporation, with freedom and caution in its maintenance. It is essential for the brand to be built and rebuilt on an ongoing management (branding), but always faithful to the conditions and qualities required in its DNA.

Branding results from the association between Marketing, Advertising and Design, dealing with administration, communication and form, respectively (Gomez, 2009 *apud* Olhats, 2012). For Martins (2006), branding is a set of actions related to the trademark office. When well planned, these actions can lead brands beyond their economic nature, making them capable of influencing people's lives.

Kotler *et* Keller (2006) relate branding to the creation of differences between brands. Consumers should be able to recognize the substantial differences between the products and services of the same category. When assigning the po-

wer of a brand to a product or service, the branding process facilitates the choice. In this vision arises TXM Branding, brand management methodology which will be presented in the next section.

## 2.1 TXM Branding

The TXM Branding methodology - called TVU Branding during the execution of the Wavetech project - developed and used by LOGO to manage brands, is concerned to reflect the company as a whole before the actual application of any relevant action for the brand, thus providing a more assertive methodology in managing the corporate image. The basic stages of the methodology, recently remodeled in order to better adapt to the branding needs of organizations, are divided into think, experience, and manage (Figure 1).

The first stage - think - focuses on thinking the brand and its concept is made in this stage. It consists of four sub stages: Brand DNA Process<sup>®</sup>, in which the brand DNA is diagnosed; the stage for defining its purpose; the positioning; and, finally, the naming stage. According to Braun *et al* (2015), during the think stage, we seek to establish the conceptual bases that will direct the development of sensory identity (its tangible part), as well as the strategies of action in the market.

Subsequently, there is the experience phase; work aimed at the expression of the brand with a view to consumer experience through senses - visual, olfactory, audible, tactile and gustatory. The identity system is built taking into account the senses, emotions, social interactions, cognition, use, and motivation.

At this stage, the perception of the public regarding the brand is also built, and at that moment the development of experiential strategies by means of the senses previously treated becomes central. Here the whole essence of the brand DNA is connected, focusing on the experience and the close contact with its consumers. Most often, the products generated are tangible by the experiential focus that this step provides.

The last stage - manage - involves internal and external strategies and it focuses on continuous brand management, corroborating lab motto ("always under construction") and the very meaning of branding, brand management. The strategies are built from the conceptualization of the brand DNA and should bring these concepts into all the different points of contact, to strengthen the presence and tell the story concisely (Braun *et al*, 2015).

This stage creates a chain of management already presented and conceptualized. Here, the study focuses and research

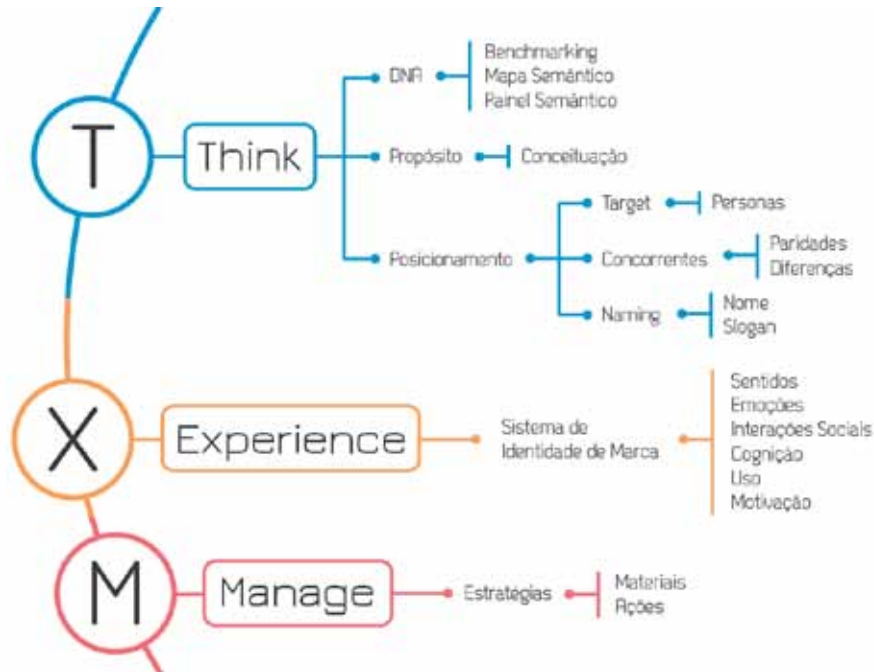


Figure 1. TXM Branding Diagram

Source: LOGO (2015)

are: (1) the brand personality; and (2) how it communicates to generate their attitude through actions planned strategically. According to Tarachucky (2015), the brand must be managed and treated as a single set of associations, representing what the company believes and promises its consumers.

Understand and communicate the brand as a living organism, with its personality and values, makes it real for its customers. "The brand is not simply an actor of the market, it must be an organizer, moved by a vision, a mission, a conception of what should become a category" (Kapferer, 2003, p.41).

This article emphasizes the think stage, which is responsible for setting the tone of the brand, at which time the story is told, in which its concept is defined, determining what it will represent, including its emotion, its DNA, and its evolution. Here the values, mission, vision and personality, in addition to who will represent it and how, will be established. With these defined characteristics, the corporate image will be transmitted and assimilated by the consumer in an effective manner. The significance of the brand is an important aspect; one generally accepted view is that it can be defined by perceptions reflected in its associations and stored in the consumer's memory.

## 2.2 Brand DNA Process®

The Brand DNA Process® is the first part of the *think* stage - corresponding to the first stage of the TXM branding

- where the brand DNA is identified and validated. It is an internationally recognized tool integration methodology in Marketing, in Design, and Advertising, allowing a relevant co-creation process for the company. Those involved in the construction and management process are heard continuously and assist on the translation of the methodology results in specific branding actions. The DNA identification provides the necessary information so that meaningful experiences are created during interactions with the brand, either with consumers in the purchasing process or in the internal labor relations (Gomez, et al., 2011).

The brand DNA method applied by Gomes and Gonçalves (LOGO, 2014) consists in the selection of four key words as the four DNA components - similar to the human DNA - and an inclusive word, whose function is to bind the other concepts and describe the brand personality. Each of the four key concepts must meet a certain characteristic of the company: technical, resilient, emotional, and marketing (fig. 2). The characteristics must interact in a specific way, helping the brand across the various situations encountered in the market. The fundamental structure of four keywords and an integrating structure, however, are not rigid; if for some reason it is necessary to adapt it to adapt a certain company, the structure can be discussed.

Among the concepts of the brand DNA, the coach refers to a rational and measurable benefit related to an important physical benefit in defining its tangibility. The resilience factor comes from features that enable the brand to constantly



upgrade, remaining active in the market. The emotional component function is to bring it closer to deciding factors of consumer loyalty. The figure is the junction of several emotional concepts already owned, that will differentiate it from competitors. The marketing feature is responsible for how it will be expressed in order to sell in the market. The integrator element has the function to interfere in the way the four concepts - technical, resiliency, emotional and marketing - act in relation to others. This element works as a sustainable competitive advantage and provides customer loyalty, principal agent of the brand enhancement (LOGO, 2014).



Figure 2. Brand DNA components  
 Source: LOGO (2014)

### 3. CRIATIVE EVENT

The Brand DNA Process® performs the diagnosis of the brand DNA for a creative event in which laboratory members, stakeholders and opinion makers of the company come together in order to generate discussions that result in the DNA of the brand in a co-creative way, by implementing the Brand DNA tool. The Brand DNA Process® stage carried out before the creative event, which is called the diagnostic phase, includes a preliminary research, initial interviews and interviews with stakeholders of the company in order to collect data for the application of the SWOT analysis tool. The information gathered during the diagnosis is essential for the team to conduct adequately the discussion on the brand DNA planned for the creative event.

The event consists of sequential steps developed based on theories of on Behavioural Economics, Co-creation Methods and Strategies to generate innovative and creative ideas,

derived from studies of Design, Marketing and Advertising (Bassotto, 2012). The authenticity of the result depends on the participation of all classes of stakeholders, comprising from customers, suppliers and partners to members of the company, from top to bottom of the hierarchy. For selecting the participants of the creative event, LOGO members who are responsible for the project ask customers to indicate stakeholders who can contribute to the co-creation of the brand. Family members, employees, former employees, among others, have participated in creative events in which the profile and the amount varied according to the reality of each company. The setting of a place and date for the creative event, as well as the invitation to the participants and the organization of a coffee break are customer's responsibility.

During the event, the participants, guided by a host (usually the laboratory coordinator, Professor Luiz Solomon Ribas Gomez) and assisted by other members of the lab, go through creative valuation processes and work together to achieve a common, open and unpredictable result by the end of the event. The steps and processes involved were baptized Brand DNA Tool, tool comprised of multiple emotional brainstorming processes.

The meetings begin with a presentation of LOGO, a brief explanation of the purpose of the event and its steps, a theoretical presentation of the brand DNA concepts, as well as some practical examples for using the process. Bassotto (2012) points out that this time is important so that there are no misunderstandings regarding the event. With the conclusion of the introductions, the stage of the process that precedes the brainstorming starts. At this stage, the activities implemented are intended to promote casualness, relaxation and intimacy among those involved. Before the start of activities a coffee break is offered to participants. This occasion is important as it creates an opportunity for people who are not known to have a first informal contact before the beginning of the group activities.

After the coffee break, the first activity is the display of a cartoon. Carrilho (2012) explains that the animation is intended to bring participants to exercise creativity and detach themselves from the most programmatic reality. Moreover, it should be noted that the purpose of the exhibition is relaxation, not the interpretation or analysis. Bassotto (2012) highlights that the cartoon must have an engaging plot, yet simple. By referring to childhood situations, the video leads most people to become emotional, and triggers memories of childhood, and feelings of freedom, of an imaginary world without limits.

Then the participants are divided into small teams and it is requested that each one shares a secret or curiosity about themselves with the team. This activity increases the integration and privacy of those involved, making them more



comfortable for the next steps of the event. According to Bassotto (2012), the technique is based on the principle of reciprocity; when one party shares something, the other feel motivated to share something as well, in order to prove their sense of community and acceptance. These exercises prepare the group for the brainstorming process, creating an environment free from inhibitions and criticisms, opening the minds of participants and making them lose their fear of making mistakes, leaving their ideas flow and suspending immediate assessment (King et Schlicksupp 1999 *apud* Olhats, 2012).

After the participants are prepared by the deconcentrating activities, they move to the creative event stage, which effectively aims at defining the company's brand DNA in question. To this end, tools have been developed adapted from SENSE<sup>®</sup> methodologies, by Marc Gobé (2001, 2010), and ZMET<sup>®</sup>, by Gerald Zaltman (2014) and the brainstorming creativity technique, by Alex Osburn. SENSE<sup>®</sup> - Sensorial Exploration and Necessary States Evaluation is a visual process that identifies the product's and customers' profile. This process analyzes the competition and develops a multidimensional, emotional, visual and sensorial vocabulary that works as a basis for the design process.

ZMET<sup>®</sup>- Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique is a technique that is based on neuroscience, semiotics and in Carl Jung's ideas, using metaphors and images to interpret the structure of meaning in thought and feelings of consumers in respect of a given topic, as a brand. The process consists of asking users to select images of materials that they have at home representing their thoughts and feelings about the topic at hand. Deeper questions are asked in order to explore the metaphors, their meanings and relationships between things (Batey, 2010).

The brainstorming creativity technique, created by Alex Osborn, was described in his book "The Creative Power of Mind", released in 1953. It allows a large number of ideas to be generated in a short time. The brainstorming session of the creative event aims to raise as many adjectives for a period of 20 minutes. Adjectives can be positive or negative and should not be thought of as a reference to the company concerned, serving only as a way to refresh the memory of the participants for the subsequent selection of metaphors for the brand DNA.

In this activity, teams should already be separated to share the secret or curiosity. One of the components of each group is responsible for noting down the adjectives raised, and for moderating the brainstorming, seeking to encourage the participation of the entire team. It is important to have freedom of expression, without criticism, and that all individuals remain focused on the activity. A large number of concepts arise with the construction of which has already

been released by the others; therefore, the best ideas begin to emerge at the end of the sessions. By the end of the brainstorming session, it is requested that one member of each team reads aloud the adjectives collected. At this time all participants must pay attention and select four to six adjectives that describe the attributes of the brand in question. The selection of adjectives is not limited to the list raised by the brainstorming and should not be connected to the particular concept of brand DNA, a matter which will be discussed in groups later.

For Desgrippes *et* Gobé (2007 *apud* Olhats, 2012), the brainstorming for adjectives explores a variety of meanings associated with the brand, identifying key attributes that contribute to an emotional connection between it and the client. After the participants select and write their adjectives in Post-it<sup>®</sup>, a panel where similar ideas are grouped is organized. They are worked out until there are seven or eight adjectives, selected by a higher frequency and relevance. After defining these adjectives, the discussion regarding the brand DNA starts. At this time the participants debate about the remaining adjectives aimed at defining the memetic metaphors. At the end, five adjectives are selected by the group, one for each concept of the brand DNA: marketing, technical, resilient, emotional, and integrator.

The definition of the brand DNA is the last step to be held during the creative event; however, the methodology also provides for the participation of stakeholders and opinion makers involved in the event, in the DNA validation, and building of the semantic panel and semantic map. The members of the Laboratory come in contact with the participants requesting the sending of images representing each of the components of the DNA. A brief questionnaire that checks the perception of stakeholders and opinion makers on the DNA defined in the event is still applied. The uploaded images are used as a basis for building a semantic panel, visual solution that expresses semiotically the sentiments about the brand (Gobé, 2010). The semantic map, in turn, graphically represents the relationship between the essential and the secondary components of the DNA.

After the DNA components are defined and expressed visually and graphically, the final stages of Brand DNA Process<sup>®</sup> start. The benchmarking tool is applied as a reference for each of the concepts of the DNA and, finally, is described in the recommendations for the company to integrate in all its aspects and strategies.

#### 4. THE WAVETECH CREATIVE EVENT

Founded in 2012 by the partners Alexandre Ferreira and Guillaume Barrault, both electrical engineers, Wavetech is a technology company that operates in the areas of Bioen-



gineering and acoustics. In July 2012 it was selected to be part of the Business Center for Advanced Technology (CELTA) in Florianopolis. Currently this is the only national company to develop a chip for hearing aids. As future goals, the company plans to invest 30% of its turnover in research and development and, through the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), create a center for bioengineering and underwater acoustics in the state. In addition, it expects to develop a cochlear implant, with the aim of controlling the whole process of implants and overcoming the chip provider condition.

In the company there are only male employees of the engineering area and it has a strong relationship with the Federal University of Santa Catarina. Among employees, there are four graduate students of the control and automation engineering course of the university, and one is an electrical engineer graduated from the same institution. The partners also have close ties and training by the Federal University of Santa Catarina, and Guillaume currently runs his post-doctoral research at UFSC. André also started the Master's degree in Electrical Engineering in the same university.



**Figura 3:** criative event of the Wavetech Co.  
 Source: LOGO (2014)

The creative event of the company Wavetech (Figure 3) occurred on October 17, 2013 at the company headquarters, located in the Technological Park Alfa, in Florianopolis. The company's employees and the two partners participated as stakeholders, totaling seven people. In addition, the event included three laboratory students. The event was led by Professor Luiz Solomon Ribas Gomez, whose function was to manage the event and ensure co-creation through stimulating the participation of officials and employees of the company. According to the proposal of the tool, the creative event starts with the theoretical setting of the event. This explanatory stage sets out the objectives expected from the meeting. On this occasion a brief theoretical explanation of

the metaphor of the brand DNA, DNA concepts, and some practical examples for using the process are also carried out.

After the expository and explanatory stage led by the professor leader of the laboratory and the end of all doubts, the second stage of the tool, which was the leisure activity, was initiated. As explained previously, this activity aims to create a relaxing environment conducive to the subsequent exercise in creativity. In the case of Wavetech, a quick cartoon which lasted about six minutes was displayed. The film presented was the episode "The Niagra Falls" of the cartoon Woody Woodpecker (available in [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgCONa\\_pUtl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgCONa_pUtl)). The animation caused some mild laughter and created a more peaceful atmosphere followed by coffee break, which promotes conversation and integration among participants.

Typically, the members of the creative event are divided into groups of four or five participants for the integration stage. However, in the Wavetech event there was no division due to the small number of people involved. In order to generate complicity and intimacy between a great team, the requirement for exchanging secrets between participants was performed. When participants were more comfortable, relaxed, and integrated, the brainstorming stage has started. The activity lasted the 20 minutes prescribed in the methodology. During this period about 35 adjectives written on Post-it® were generated. The moderator of the brainstorming session was Professor and Lab coordinator, which ensured that all participants contributed with adjectives.

After the brainstorming, all the adjectives generated were read aloud. At the time of reading, participants were already on alert to select which would be related to the Wavetech. The ones that had higher recurrence were: effective, novel, dynamic, bold, and complex. All these adjectives assisted in a better understanding of the brand and generated discussion points on crucial aspects of the brand and the company. Discussions were facilitated by the preparation of the laboratory team, which in earlier stages of the process were able to list characteristics about Wavetech.

The construction of metaphors stage aims to help define only five of the concepts to be filtered, the essential components of the enterprise. Thus, DNA and its elements are used as a metaphor for the brand attributes. As corresponding to the elements: adenine, cytosine, guanine and thymine, the Brand DNA Process® created categories: resilient, marketing, technical and emotional; besides the integrating concept, which is the concept that interferes with the way the four DNA components interact. The resulting adjectives in each category were as follows: for the resilient category we have the proactive quality; for marketing, versatile; the adjective adaptive corresponded to the technical category; the emotional component of the brand is simplicity; and fi-



nally, the category of integration presented two adjectives: daring and bold.

After the predefinition of these fundamental concepts in the creative event, it was possible to follow with the Brand DNA Process® in the DNA construction phase. This stage consists in the contact with the stakeholders present at the event by members of the Laboratory for confirmation of the adjectives chosen as representatives of Wavetech. Five of the participants agreed with the DNA defined on the date of the event and one person proposed change of the concepts. The questionnaire data were analyzed according to the picture obtained from Wavetech throughout all stages of the Brand DNA Process® that were developed until the creative event, and according to the similarity of the responses received. Finally, the following adjectives are assigned to the components of the DNA of the Wavetech Brand:

Emotional component: Simple

Marketing component: Versatile

Technical component: Adaptive

Resiliente component: Proactive

Integrator component: Bold

The subsequent stages to the Brand DNA Process® involve creating a semantic map, semantic panel, benchmarking and describe the brand DNA's recommendations. The map, benchmarking and panel help in understanding how the brand operates and manifests itself through imagery, verbal and market references. As for the recommendations, they represent the opportunities raised during the construction process of the Wavetech DNA. The aim is to assist the company in the DNA integration and adaptation of coherence in strategies with the validated DNA, so that the process of building and brand management - branding - managed by the laboratory and conducted in co-creation with Wavetech stakeholders produces results effective.

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The brands represent companies and products, and express a set of values and concepts. In contemporary times, the increased consumption offer also promoted the growth of products and brands offering. To be connected to customers and consumers, a brand should monitor its physical and imaginary aspects and invest in emotional levels, so as to captivate them with typical experiences of the brand.

In the search for knowing the intrinsic values of its brand, the Wavetech Company sought the Organizational Genesis

Orientation Laboratory by means of CELTA - Entrepreneurial Center for the Elaboration of Innovative Technologies. For six months the laboratory staff applied the methodology to guide Wavetech shares in synchrony with its authentic Brand DNA. This article aims to specifically present the stage of the creative event as decisive for the definition of the brand DNA by means of the TXM branding methodology (called TVU branding during the execution of the Wavetech project).

Overall, the creative event of the Wavetech Company, held in co-creation with the company's stakeholders and the LOGO/UFSC team, consistently followed the methodology and its own proposed guidelines for the event. One of the few points of difference corresponds to the non-division of the group into teams due to the small number of participants. The interference, however, did not influence the activity significantly. In the brainstorming stage, the Group generated a satisfactory number of adjectives.

Regarding the DNA of the brand, the simplicity of Wavetech was diagnosed in the emotional category, because its commitment provides satisfaction in terms of communication and sharing to future customers. The concept of resilience is proactivity. The characteristic of suitability of the product to customer needs also proposes a strategic practice: the customization made to a client can generate news and updates to other clients of the company. The adaptability of Wavetech emerges as a **technical** element, since the mantra of the company is to seek the new and offer new customer-focused experiences. The versatility corresponds to the way the company presents itself **in the market**. Wavetech delves into segments where their customers are located, which facilitates the creation of specific solutions for each audience, making it versatile in the sectors in which it operates. Finally, the concept of bold is shown as an integrating component of the brand DNA.

The concepts discussed were corroborated by the participants of the creative event at a later interview managed by the logo team responsible for the project. Thus, it can be considered that the activities of the creative event had a highly satisfactory result and unveiled the brand DNA consistently with the characteristics of Wavetech Company.

The success of any TXM branding methodology depends on the success of the think stage, which is grounded in the Brand DNA Process®, more specifically through the Brand DNA Tool and by the brand DNA results questioned in the creative event. Subsequent stages of the process focused on making the brand recognizable DNA, using it strategically to generate experiences and to manage the actions of the organization. In this market marked by relationship (PERASSI, 2001), it is essential to identify the DNA of the companies, the principles and appropriate strategies for the successful accomplishment of their goals.



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