

# Identity Is Destiny

## Discussion and action guide

“I am alive”

### I The Law of Being

- ▶ Is your company led and managed as a “living being with a mind of its own,” as described in *Identity Is Destiny*, or as an inert, mechanical entity?
- ▶ What are the signs?
- ▶ What steps should be taken to either reinforce current ways of leadership—or change them?
- ▶ What can you do personally to make this happen?



Identify five to ten traits that reveal how the company has been led to date. Which ones should be reinforced, which ones eliminated?

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“I am unique”

### II The Law of Individuality

- ▶ Can you describe your company’s distinct physical, mental and emotional capacities How do they manifest themselves?
- ▶ From what you know of your competitors, how is your company as a whole—an individual in its own right—different?
- ▶ Are senior executives aware of these special characteristics? Do they refer to them publicly?

**Action** → Has your organization taken its identity into account in its differentiation efforts, or is the company focused primarily on traditional elements of differentiation such as technology, products and services and economics?

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“And I am immutable, even as I grow and evolve.”

### III The Law of Constancy

- ▶ Can you identify patterns of behavior (investment and disinvestment decisions, successes and failures) that reveal how the organization has—or has not—stayed true to its identity over the course of its lifetime?
- ▶ What do these patterns tell you about the true nature of the company—where is it naturally strong, where does its true aptitude lie?
- ▶ What are the implications for leading a successful change effort?



Develop a transformation strategy that builds on identity, rather than attempts to tear it down.

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“To truly live, however, I must express myself fully.”

### IV The Law of Will

- ▶ Does the company’s strategy appear to be a natural extension of its identity, or created largely in response to perceived financial, economic, market and competitive needs?
- ▶ Do you see situations—business initiatives, investment plans—that you believe run counter to the “will” of the institution?
- ▶ What are the potential “resource” costs of following these paths (money, time, people)?



Take a fresh look at the company’s direction (its vision, mission or purpose) and restate it so it legitimately flows from identity. Determine as a result “what changes” and “what stays the same.”

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“And in this regard I have much to give.”

### V The Law of Possibility

- ▶ What new opportunities arise in light of identity? New lines of business? New markets? New joint venture or licensing possibilities?
- ▶ What businesses no longer make sense for the company?
- ▶ What steps can you take to “reinvent” the company on the strength of its identity? What would change? What would stay the same? What would the company “look like” after the fact (business definition, brand promise, reputation, type of people)?
- ▶ What financial and/or economic yardsticks might be different if identity drove growth (payback periods, rates of return, investment levels)?

**Action** → Set up a team to identify strategic growth opportunities based on identity. Set priorities, determine their economic viability, select 2-3 for investment.

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“But to do so, I need others,  
and am most productive with  
those who need me in return.”

### VI The Law of Relationship

- ▶ Do leaders appreciate the economic interdependence of the company’s three main stakeholders—employees, customers and investors—and attempt to manage these relationships accordingly?
- ▶ Does your company’s identity inform these, and other, relationships (suppliers, unions, communities) as a means of aligning their interests to the company’s advantage?
- ▶ If yes, how is this evident? If not, what should be done to make it happen?
- ▶ Do you have a working knowledge of the identities of your key stakeholders? How well do they actually align with your own company’s identity? Does day-to-day experience indicate strong, positive alignment—or misalignment?



Assess your company’s relationships with its key stakeholders. Decide how you would change, or deepen, current relationships so they are in sync with your company’s identity.

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“To establish these relationships, I must first be recognized for who I am,”

### VII The Law of Comprehension

- ▶ Do people, inside and outside, understand how your company creates value as one enterprise? Do they have a clear, compelling picture of the whole, despite the part of the company they typically work with—or in?
- ▶ What effect has decentralization had on maintaining and communicating a one-company approach to value creation?
- ▶ What challenges does, or will, globalization pose in reinforcing the identity of your company? How does it contribute to, and detract from, building perceptions of the enterprise as one corporate being?



Charge all executives with the responsibility for communicating the identity of the company as a whole, while explaining how their particular operation fits into, and contributes to it.

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“and it follows then that I will receive in accordance with what I give.”

### VIII The Law of the Cycle

- ▶ Can you make the case that your company follows the logic of the eighth Law—that identity is the source of your company’s special contribution to customers and to society, and that its wealth has expanded proportionately?
- ▶ In your organization, does contribution (to the marketplace) usually take precedence over short term profit—or vice versa? If the latter, what are the costs, if any, of having done so?
- ▶ Do you see disconnects or similarities between how your company operates and the Laws of Identity generally? Specifically, can you point to evidence of, or obstacles to, achieving the three features of living according to identity—grand efficiency, integrity and endurance?



Adopt grand efficiency, integrity and endurance as strategic objectives, with specific quantitative and qualitative parameters. Design a plan to move the entire organization toward these goals.