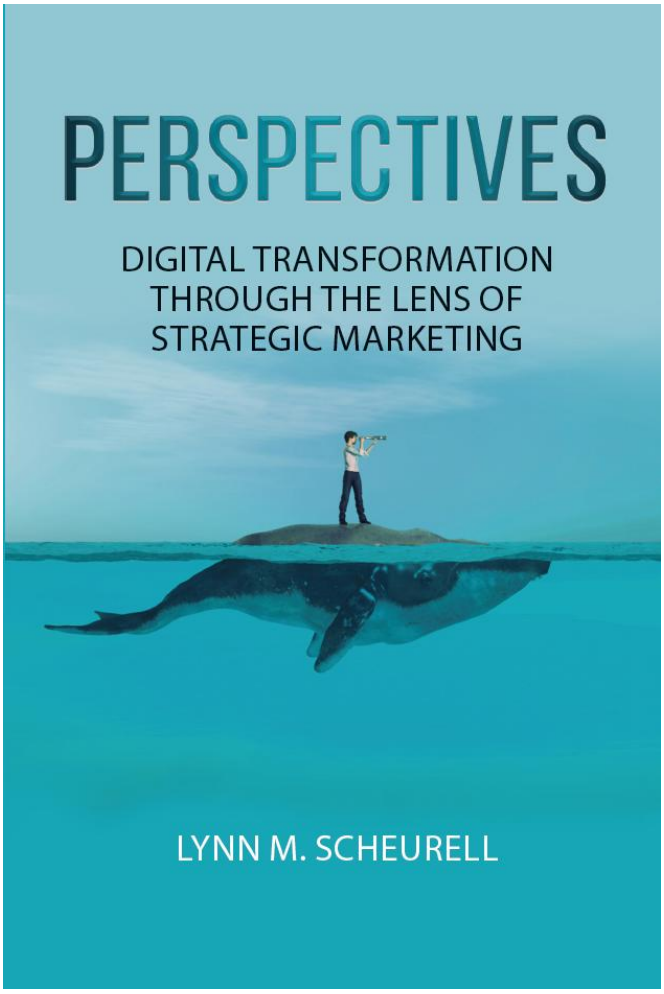

THE MARKET PERCEPTION CHECKUP

Can the market understand the company you've become?

A practical self-assessment for leaders navigating growth, change and an evolving market

A companion resource for

Perspectives: Digital Transformation Through the Lens of Strategic Marketing

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THE MARKET PERCEPTION CHECKUP

Can the market understand the company you've become?

A practical self-assessment for leaders navigating growth, change and an evolving market

Your company may be very different from the one you started with.

You've added capabilities. Entered new markets. Developed expertise. Changed your business model. Expanded what you offer or who you serve. Maybe the market itself has changed around you.

From inside the organization, that evolution can make perfect sense.

From outside, it may be harder to see.

The **Market Perception Checkup** is designed to help you step outside the organization for a few minutes and consider what customers, prospects, partners, search engines and AI systems may actually be able to understand about you.

There are no right or wrong answers.

The question is whether the signals you're sending make the company you've become **clear, recognizable and easy to understand.**

HOW TO USE THE CHECKUP

For each statement, choose the response that most accurately reflects your organization **today**, rather than where you want it to be.

3 — Yes, consistently
2 — Mostly / sometimes
1 — Not yet / unclear

Don't overthink your answers. Your first response may tell you more than a carefully considered one.

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1. IDENTITY

Do we know who we've become?

Growth can change an organization faster than its identity evolves. This section looks at whether there is a clear organizing idea behind everything the company now does.

Rate each statement from 1–3:

□ We can clearly articulate who we are beyond a list of products, services or capabilities.

□ Our leadership team would describe the company's essential value in reasonably consistent language.

□ We know what is inherently distinctive about our organization, not just what differentiates our current offering.

□ Our current brand reflects the organization we are becoming, rather than primarily the organization we have been.

IDENTITY SCORE: ____ / 12

Consider:

If you removed your products, services and industry labels from the description of your company, what would remain recognizably yours?

A PERSPECTIVE TO CONSIDER

Vision, mission, values, and purpose are critical elements of an organization's brand identity, strategic planning process, and decision-making criteria.

Perspectives, 2021

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2. RECOGNITION

Can other people understand why we're different?

Being different and being **recognized as different** aren't necessarily the same thing.

Recognition asks whether the market can perceive what makes your organization meaningful without having to study you first.

□ Someone encountering us for the first time can quickly understand what we do and why it matters.

□ Our differentiation is meaningful to customers rather than primarily meaningful internally.

□ Prospects can understand why they might choose us instead of another available option.

□ Our most important value is visible without requiring a salesperson or leader to explain it.

RECOGNITION SCORE: ____ / 12

Consider:

What does someone have to already know about your company before its value becomes obvious?

A PERSPECTIVE TO CONSIDER

When this buyer thinks of my company's solution, I want them to think: _____.

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3. COHERENCE

Are we telling one recognizable story?

Every interaction teaches the market something about your organization.

When those signals reinforce one another, understanding becomes easier. When they conflict, customers have to interpret the company for themselves.

□ Our website, sales conversations and marketing communicate the same fundamental value.

□ Leaders across the organization describe the company in ways that reinforce rather than contradict one another.

□ What customers experience after choosing us supports the expectations our brand creates beforehand.

□ New products, services, acquisitions or initiatives strengthen our larger story rather than making the company harder to understand.

COHERENCE SCORE: ____ / 12

Consider:

If someone encountered your company through three different channels today, would they believe they had encountered the same organization?

A PERSPECTIVE TO CONSIDER

Make sure your colleagues, staff, and leadership also know the positioning statement so they can reinforce it in conversations.

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4. RELEVANCE

Does our story reflect where the market is going?

A company can remain highly capable while the way it presents that capability becomes less relevant.

Relevance isn't about chasing trends. It's about making sure the market can connect what you do with what matters now and what is emerging next.

□ Our positioning reflects the needs and priorities customers have today.

□ We understand how expectations in our market are changing.

□ Our language has evolved as our customers, category and competitive environment have evolved.

□ Our brand gives us room to grow into what comes next without losing what makes us recognizable.

RELEVANCE SCORE: ____ / 12

Consider:

Is your market encountering the company you're becoming—or a description of the company you used to be?

A PERSPECTIVE TO CONSIDER

The market doesn't wait—there are expectations from future and current customers, as well as competitors, that will dictate the pace of change.

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5. DISCOVERABILITY

Can machines understand us, too?

Your market increasingly encounters interpretations of your company before encountering the company itself.

Search engines, AI systems, recommendation platforms and other intermediaries use the signals available to them to determine what your organization is, what it's known for and when it may be relevant.

□ Our website clearly communicates who we are, what we do, who we serve and why it matters.

□ Important information about us is reasonably consistent across the digital places where our company appears.

□ Search results generally reflect the organization and expertise we want the market to associate with us.

□ An AI system summarizing our company would be likely to describe us accurately and distinguish us meaningfully.

DISCOVERABILITY SCORE: ____ / 12

Consider:

If an AI system had to explain your company to a prospective customer without your participation, would you trust the explanation?

A PERSPECTIVE TO CONSIDER

Being where the customer is already looking is key to the 'new' customer experience narrative.

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WHAT DOES YOUR SCORE TELL YOU?

Add your five section scores.

IDENTITY: _____ / 12
RECOGNITION: _____ / 12
COHERENCE: _____ / 12
RELEVANCE: _____ / 12
DISCOVERABILITY: _____ / 12

TOTAL: _____ / 60

50–60 | STRONG

Your market signals are reinforcing one another.

Your organization appears to have a relatively clear relationship between who it is, what it communicates and what others are likely to perceive.

Look at your individual section scores. A lower score in one dimension may reveal where future growth could begin creating friction.

35–49 | MIXED

Your company may have evolved faster than its story.

Some signals are working while others may reflect different stages, priorities or interpretations of the organization.

The opportunity isn't necessarily to communicate *more*. Look for the places where clearer architecture could help existing signals reinforce one another.

20–34 | FRAGMENTED

The market may be doing too much work to understand you.

Your company may have considerable value that isn't yet easy to recognize from the outside.

Look for the greatest gaps between your section scores. Those differences can reveal where the organization you know internally and the organization people perceive externally may be separating.

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BEFORE YOU DECIDE WHAT TO FIX...

A low score isn't necessarily a marketing problem.

It may be telling you something more interesting.

Ask yourself:

Where did I score lowest?

What has changed in the company that our current story may not fully reflect?

Where might people be misunderstanding us today?

What do we know about our value that the market may not yet be able to see?

If one thing became clearer, what might become easier?

A PERSPECTIVE TO CONSIDER

Transformation changes more than what a company does. It can change what the company has become.

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YOUR COMPANY HAS ALREADY BECOME SOMETHING.

The question is whether the market can see it.

Markets form perceptions from the signals available to them.

Those signals come from far more than marketing: leadership language, positioning, customer experience, digital presence, thought leadership, search results, sales conversations and increasingly the information AI systems use to interpret and recommend organizations.

When those signals reinforce one another, a company becomes easier to understand.

When they don't, even an exceptional organization can become difficult to recognize.

Perception Architecture™ is the discipline of identifying and intentionally shaping the signals and structures that influence how an organization is understood, valued, and chosen as it evolves.

If this Checkup surfaced something worth exploring, you can learn more at:

YourBrandArchitect.com

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