

# From Vow to 'Wow' – the Value of Voltage

Peter Walshe, Millward Brown

*The vital sign of life for successful brands*

In the competitive world of brand attraction, consumers' wallets are being wooed as never before by ads, telesales, attractive offers at point of sale, pop-ups and Google listings, viral and buzz marketing and a plethora of activity at all potential 'touchpoints'.

The brand 'promise' is alive and well. But as with all vows and promises, some turn out to be false, some overblown, some just the same as others. How is one to know the truth?

Part of the answer lies in the brand itself. Jealously guard all that the brand stands for, carefully communicate this in a unique and refreshing way, and ensure the product lives up to (and even exceeds) the promise. Simple to say, difficult to do – but easier to achieve if there are good diagnostics about the brand and its competitors.

## A visit to the BRANDZ™ clinic

A healthcheck is available from BRANDZ™ where the brand relationship can be investigated.

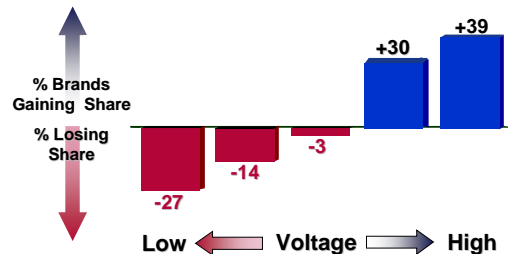
- Who knows about me?
- What is my promise?
- Does my product live up to it?
- What advantages do I have?
- What is unique about me?
- What is my 'character'?

And crucially what is my **Voltage**?

Voltage is a one number summary of the brand's ability to convert more people than its competitors from just knowing something about the brand up to a higher level of 'Bonding'.

## The Voltage thermometer

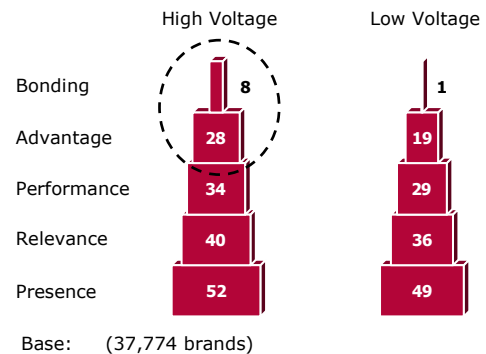
The overall temperature of the brand is measured by Voltage. Brands with higher Voltages have a much greater chance of growing their share at the expense of competitors as the evidence below indicates:



The top 20% of brands have an average Voltage of +6.9, whilst the bottom 20% score on average -3.6. (Temperatures range from the 'hottest' to the 'coolest' between +20 to -20 across more than 37,000 measures since 1998.)

## It is not about brand size

Big brands can be weak and small brands can be strong. In fact the average size ('Presence') of brands with high Voltage is only marginally bigger. The key difference lies in those who make it up to Advantage and Bonding:



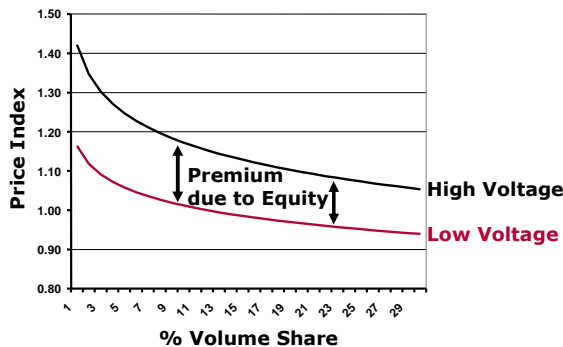
### Getting the brand promise

Consumers of brands with higher Voltage (the brands that convert better to Advantage and Bonding) 'get' the brand promise and are much more likely to repeat purchase or to switch to that brand from another. And users will recommend the brand more:

	Brand Voltage™				
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Consider	73	91	106	<b>111</b>	<b>120</b>
'Get' promise	26	55	101	<b>128</b>	<b>190</b>
Advocate	73	83	100	<b>110</b>	<b>134</b>

Index on average = 100

Understanding what the brand stands for, why it is different and why it represents better value than others, is the driving force behind the consumer relationship. And brands with stronger relationships sell disproportionately more **and can command a price premium:**



The basket of brands with high Voltage consistently outperforms the low Voltage brands whether they are small (left side of chart) or bigger (right side). Scale and competition might reduce prices but the premium remains if Voltage is strong.

### Push and Pull

The power of the brand also ensures it is both heard more as well as attracting more active interest.

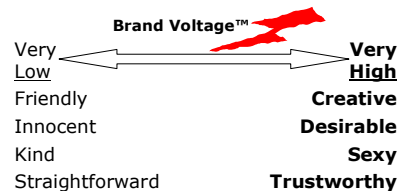
For all the brands in BRANDZ™ we ask whether consumers have heard, seen or read anything about them recently (total communications awareness) and we ask whether they have looked or searched for any information about the brand recently. These give us measures of brand 'push' and brand 'pull'.

Because high Voltage brands are more considered and advocated, they are also more in the front line of consciousness for consumers. So we see that they are both more noticed for their communications as well as being more attractive propositions to go and search out:

	Brand Voltage™				
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
'Push'	78	82	100	<b>112</b>	<b>128</b>
'Pull'	71	80	102	<b>113</b>	<b>134</b>

Index on average = 100

The final element is the character of the brand where we see almost identical indices. More character equates with more Voltage and vice-versa. The aspects of character that correlate with brand strength are very revealing:



So don't be vapid, vile or verminous. Look after your Voltage and be vital, valuable and victorious. Make your brand vow a 'wow'.

*BrandZ is the WPP global brand equity study available to clients and potential clients via WPP owned companies. It is validated against sales and quantifies and diagnoses the strengths and weaknesses of brands.*

*Peter Walshe is a Global Account Director of Millward Brown, the leading international brand and communications research consultancy.*