

# STATE OF BUSINESS BRANDING

How Australian leaders manage,  
measure and monetise brand

Findings from 164 Australian business leaders across 12 industries (Publication November 2025)

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I've been running my own agency for over 20 years and have seen firsthand the power of brand to drive a business forward. However, the concept of brand can mean something unique to every person and is treated very differently from organisation to organisation.

For example, early on we were often approached for one-off marketing projects or website refreshes for businesses that simply didn't have the right brand foundations in place. For us this would be a wasted investment, and we ultimately rejected more projects than we accepted. From that point, we made it our mission to help leaders build holistic brands that support their business goals and deliver a return on investment.

At Tiny Hunter, we firmly believe brand isn't surface level; it's an operating system for growth that integrates strategy, culture, customer and employee experiences, and communication. It's the nucleus of a business.

A strong brand doesn't just shape perception; it builds tangible commercial advantage through pricing power, efficient customer acquisition, stronger talent attraction and retention, and long-term resilience.

With this report, my goal was to uncover how Australian business leaders truly view branding today, not in theory, but in practice. While global conversations often focus on mega-consumer brands with multimillion-dollar budgets, this research explores the current realities and future states of brand investment for local businesses across all industries and sizes, as well as where returns are being realised and expected.

I hope you find the insights valuable and that they spark reflection on the role brand plays in your own organisation.

If you'd like to discuss the findings or share perspectives, you can reach out to me directly at [jodie@tinyhunter.com.au](mailto:jodie@tinyhunter.com.au)

# Jodie de Vries

Jodie de Vries  
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# INTRODUCTION

The State of Business Branding 2026 Report brings together the voices of 164 business leaders across Australia – from founders and directors of smaller firms under \$3M in revenue, to C-Suite executives of large enterprises exceeding \$30M. Together, they represent a diverse mix of sectors: Finance, FMCG, Government, Health & Wellbeing, Manufacturing, Mining, Non-Profit, Professional Services, Retail, Social Enterprise, Technology and Wholesale, operating across local, regional, and global markets.

By capturing the voices of so many C-Suite and business owners, our aim is to understand the Australian business mindset heading into 2026. We want to explore whether branding is viewed as a critical business asset, and if so, is it being treated as such?

We set out to understand:

The key challenges and growth priorities for the next three years

Where brand fits, or fails to fit, in those strategies

How leaders perceive the value of brand

The role of branding in pricing power, talent attraction, loyalty, and long-term business value

How branding investment decisions are made, and what returns are being realised

## ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Findings are drawn from the State of Business Branding 2026 Survey, conducted April–June 2025 by Taverner Research for Jodie de Vries and Tiny Hunter. The survey captured insights from 164 Australian business leaders across 12 industries, including professional services, manufacturing, retail, tech, and health. Respondents ranged from founders and CEOs to CMOs of businesses under \$3M to over \$30M in annual revenue. Participants completed a 10–15 minute online survey exploring branding perception, investment, and impact. All responses were anonymous, with data analysed quantitatively and qualitatively to identify key themes and trends.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australian businesses heading into 2026 are cautiously optimistic. Many are consolidating after a period of structural change, while others are pursuing growth despite tighter resources and persistent cost pressures. Across sectors, leaders face similar challenges – sustaining profit in constrained markets, managing rising operational costs, and adapting to shifting customer expectations.

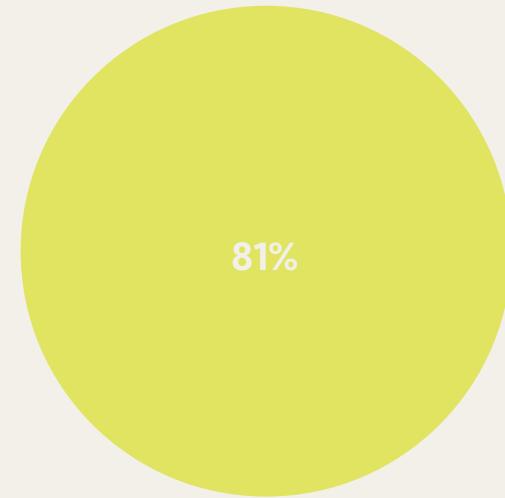
In this environment, most recognise the growing importance of customer experience, innovation, and visibility in maintaining a competitive edge. Across organisations of all sizes, **leaders overwhelmingly acknowledge branding's importance**, yet few embed it as a disciplined business practice.

81% believe branding is a key driver of competitive advantage.

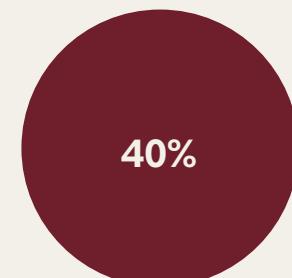
Yet 40% are unsure or don't think their brand communicates a clear point of difference.

And only 16% intend to invest in branding within the next 3 years.

**Branding remains under-managed.** 76% agree brand is a critical business asset – yet only 29% run structured brand reviews and more than one in three (36%) only revisit their branding at milestones. Branding is more often treated as a marketing exercise rather than embedded as a cross-functional discipline, and rarely approached with the structured rigour typically seen in functions such as finance, operations, or technology.



AGREE BRAND IS A KEY DRIVER OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE



UNSURE / DISAGREE THEIR BRAND COMMUNICATES A POINT OF DIFFERENCE



INTEND TO INVEST IN BRANDING WITHIN 3 YEARS

## KEY FINDINGS

### Belief in the importance of brand is high, but discipline in execution is low

Almost all leaders acknowledge branding's role in competitive advantage, but only a fraction manage it with structure. One in five handle branding ad hoc or as part of marketing and sales.

### Employer branding is undervalued

While 82% believe customer experience is directly shaped by employee experience, only 33% invest consistently in culture and engagement, and fewer than one in three embed brand into their employer value proposition.

### Brand consistency and differentiation remain a clear challenge

Just over half say their brand is consistent across touchpoints, and 40% are unsure or unconvinced their brand communicates a clear point of difference. This lack of clarity and coherence limits commercial potential.

### Planned investment is strongly lacking

Despite almost-universal agreement in the importance of branding, only 16% of businesses plan to invest in branding for growth and the majority of branding investment decisions are made based on current capacity (people, time and budget) which is a reactive and short-term approach.

### AI adoption is emerging but cautious

About 16% of businesses are already using AI to support branding, with more open to it in the future. However one in ten firmly believe brand creation requires human expertise.

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR AUSTRALIAN BUSINESSES

The findings reveal a leadership mindset that recognises the potential of brand but often fails to operationalise it.

Branding may sit in the boardroom in name, but is yet to be embedded as a central business discipline – lacking structured review, accountability, and measurement.

However, those organisations who do measure and manage brand see tangible business impact: stronger awareness, higher loyalty, pricing power, and better talent retention, demonstrating a clear commercial upside to their investments.

As AI, digitisation, and competition accelerate, the organisations that treat brand as business infrastructure will pull ahead.

The winners in 2026 and beyond will be those who:

**Elevate brand from marketing to a commercial discipline**

**Integrate it across culture, customer experience, operations, and innovation**

**Measure it with the same rigour as any core business function**

SECTION 1

# THE STATE OF BUSINESS CONFIDENCE:

## *Cautious optimism*

Australian businesses enter 2026 with cautious confidence. After several years of structural and economic shifts, many are consolidating gains, tightening operations, and refocusing on sustainable growth. Others are still navigating volatility and cost pressures that continue to test margins and resilience.

Across industries, leaders share a consistent outlook.

They see opportunity ahead, but not without challenge.

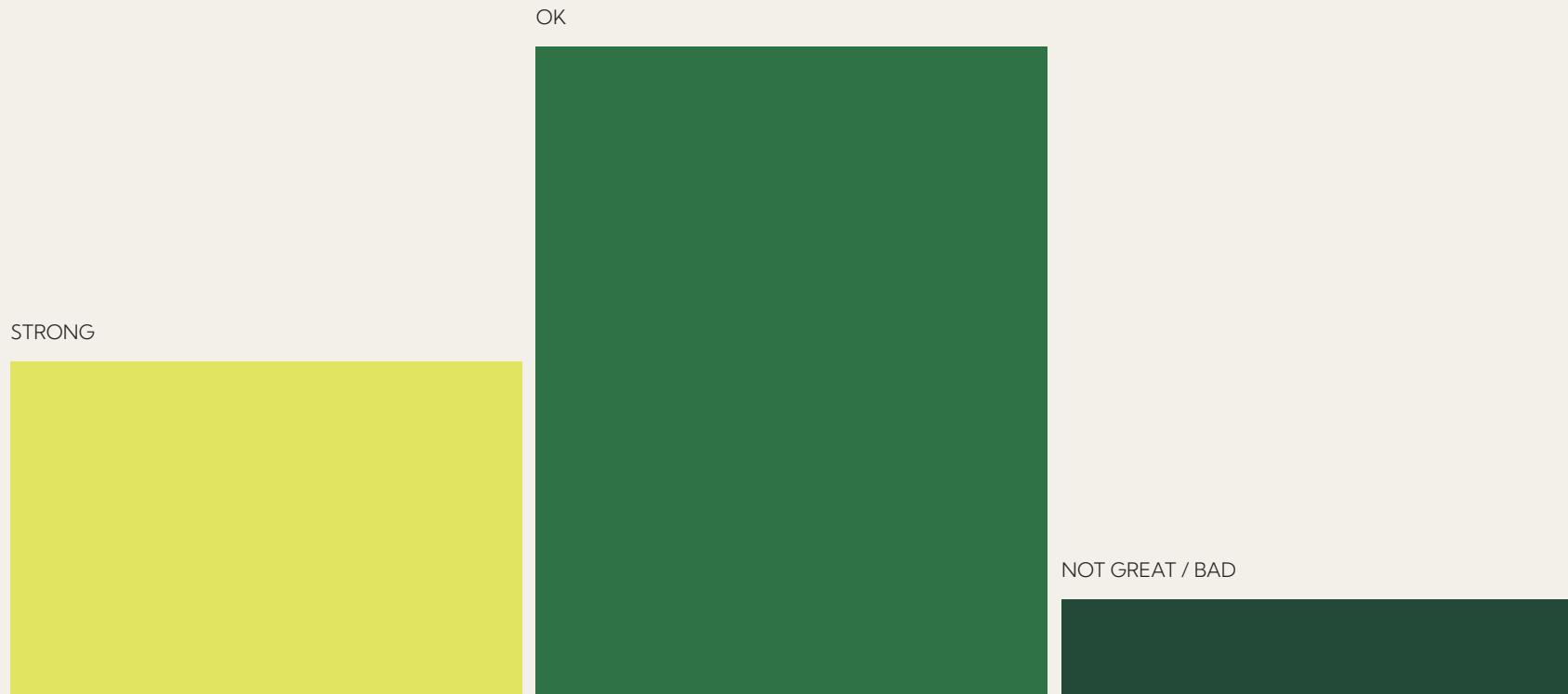
Most are maintaining a steady footing, prioritising customer retention, talent, and operational efficiency while keeping an eye on innovation and visibility. This balance of optimism and restraint defines the current business climate – progress pursued with pragmatism.



## BUSINESS CONFIDENCE AND PERFORMANCE

When asked to assess their current business performance, most leaders described it as stable rather than exceptional. 60% rated performance as "OK," 31% as "strong," and 9% as "not great." Larger businesses reported higher confidence overall, but caution persists across all revenue levels.

### CURRENT BUSINESS PERFORMANCE



**INSIGHT** - Confidence is steady but not expansive.

Looking ahead, optimism remains tempered. 32% of respondents expect conditions to improve within 12 months, 34% anticipate stability, 27% to improve in the longer term, and 8% expect decline. Confidence tracks closely with current performance – those already performing well are the most optimistic about the year ahead.

#### **CONFIDENCE FOR NEXT 12 MONTHS**



## WHAT'S HOLDING BUSINESSES BACK

When asked to identify their biggest challenges, **customer acquisition** stood out as the clear front-runner, followed by **team management**, **scaling**, and **marketing**.

The top pressures point to a capacity gap: many leaders know where they want to grow but lack the time, talent, or systems to accelerate. Balancing delivery with demand will be one of the defining constraints for 2026.

### TOP BUSINESS CHALLENGES



RESPONDENTS WERE ABLE TO CHOOSE MORE THAN ONE CHALLENGE. THIS GRAPH REPRESENTS THE PERCENTAGES OF BUSINESSES WHICH CHOSE EACH CHALLENGE

**INSIGHT** - Growth remains the goal, but acquisition and people are the pain points.

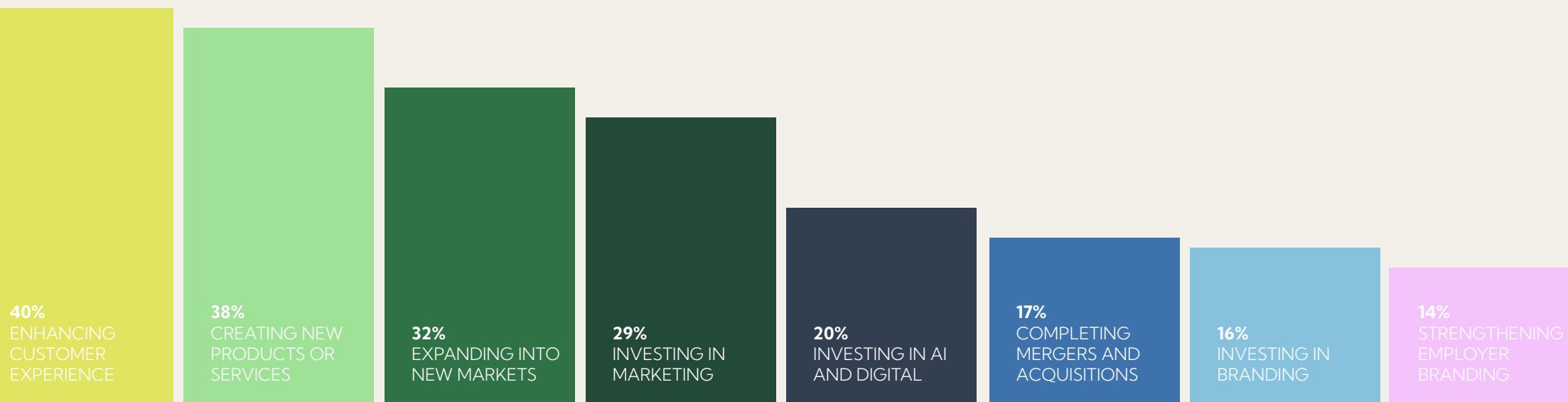
*Growth ambitions are strong, but many lack the capacity and systems to deliver on them.*

## WHERE GROWTH WILL COME FROM

Over the next three years, Australian businesses plan to invest in the fundamentals that drive sustainable growth. **Customer experience** (40%), **product and service innovation** (38%), and **market expansion** (32%) lead the list of priorities.

While these focus areas show a shift toward longer-term thinking, **investment in brand** (16%) and **employer brand** (14%) remains limited. For many, branding remains positioned as a marketing cost rather than a strategic asset that connects positioning, culture, and customer experience.

### GROWTH PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 3 YEARS



RESPONDENTS WERE ABLE TO CHOOSE MORE THAN ONE PRIORITY. THIS GRAPH REPRESENTS THE PERCENTAGES OF BUSINESSES WHICH CHOSE EACH PRIORITY

**INSIGHT** - Leaders are focusing on customer experience, innovation, and efficiency.

*Businesses are improving  
what they have before  
expanding further – but too  
few see brand as part of that  
foundation.*

SECTION 2

# THE STATE OF BRAND GOVERNANCE:

## *Ownership without discipline*

Across Australian businesses, there is strong recognition that brand matters – yet wide variation in what that actually means.

Most leaders define brand through reputation and identity rather than strategy, and while ownership often sits at the top, day-to-day discipline remains inconsistent.

The result is a landscape where understanding of the power of brand is high, but alignment and market differentiation are uneven.



# HOW LEADERS DEFINE BRANDING

Most leaders articulate branding clearly. When asked to describe what it means, the majority spoke about **reputation**, **differentiation**, and **connection** – showing a sound grasp of the concept itself.

## BRAND IDENTITY AND REPUTATION

Branding as how a business is perceived: its credibility, consistency, and reputation built through experience.

**“It’s how our customers perceive us and what they associate with our name.”**

– CEO, Professional Services

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## DIFFERENTIATION AND MARKET POSITIONING

Branding as a competitive tool, articulating value and positioning.

**“Branding is how we position ourselves to be chosen over competitors.”** – CEO, Technology

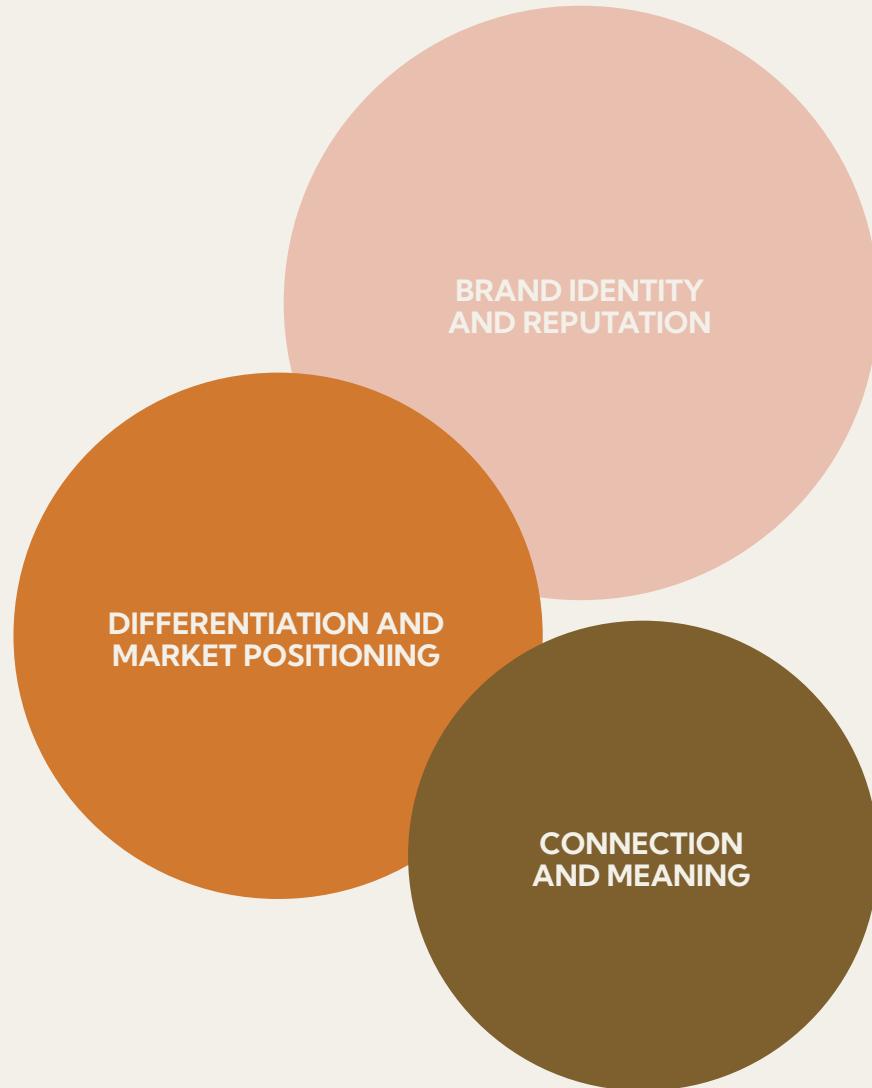
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## CONNECTION AND MEANING

Branding as emotional connection and story.

**“Branding is the emotional connection people have with your story.”** – Owner, Hospitality

Overall, business leaders describe branding in credible, business-minded terms. Where gaps begin to appear – as explored in the sections that follow – is in how consistently that understanding is embedded and managed across the organisation.



Australian leaders know what brand means. The challenge is putting that understanding into consistent practice.

## BRAND AS A KEY COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Eight in ten leaders (around 81%) believe branding is a key driver of competitive advantage, and only 4% disagree.

This strong consensus shows that Australian businesses conceptually understand brand as a strategic asset, not just a marketing tool.

However, **the disconnect appears when we look at implementation**. Despite this near-universal belief only 29% of organisations run structured brand reviews and only 16% intend to invest in brand as a growth driver in the next 3 years.

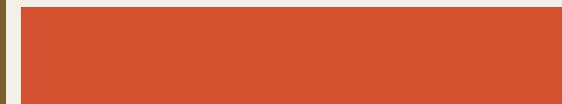
**81%**  
SEE BRANDING IS A KEY DRIVER OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE



**29%**  
RUN STRUCTURED BRAND REVIEWS



**16%**  
INTEND TO INVEST IN THE NEXT 3 YEARS



**INSIGHT - Leaders believe in brand as a competitive advantage – but few manage it like one.**



*Consistency builds  
recognition, but  
differentiation builds choice.  
Too few Australian brands  
achieve both.*

## HOW BRAND IS MANAGED

While most leaders believe in brand's importance, few manage it with formal systems or consistency. Just 29% integrate brand into structured strategic reviews. Many revisit it only during milestones such as rebrands or mergers, while one in four handle branding on an ad hoc basis, or believe it's just for marketing and sales.

These results highlight a **lack of rhythm and accountability** in how brand is governed.

Without clear ownership and consistent review cycles, even well-defined brands risk drifting off course as markets, teams, and priorities evolve.

**INSIGHT** - Brand strategy exists in some businesses, but overall discipline is lacking.

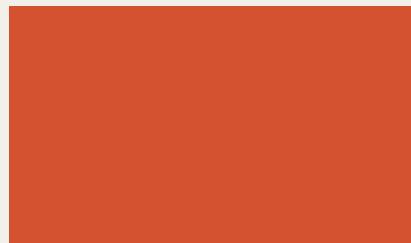
**36%**  
REVISIT ONLY  
AT MILESTONES



**29%**  
RUN STRUCTURED  
BRAND REVIEWS



**27%**  
MANAGED AD HOC  
OR FOR MARKETING



**8%**  
UNSURE/DON'T KNOW HOW TO  
INTEGRATE INTO OPERATIONS

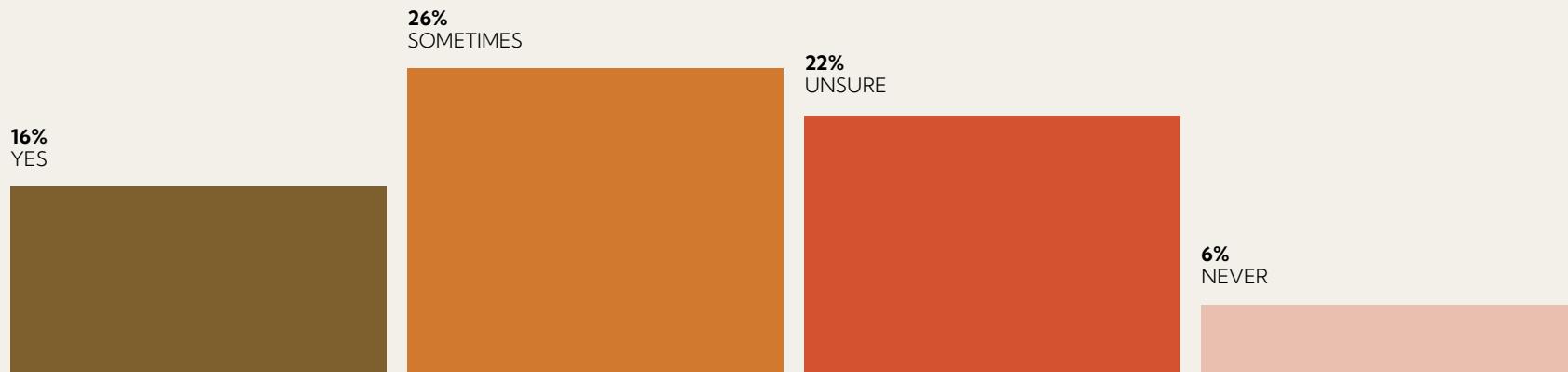


## BRAND VALUATION IN MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS (M&A)

Among respondents involved in mergers or acquisitions, only 16% said brand value assessment is a standard part of due diligence. About a quarter consider it "sometimes," and 6% never include it at all.

This omission highlights a significant blind spot. Even as leaders recognise brand as a key competitive asset, many fail to measure or account for its contribution when evaluating business value. Untapped intangible value – reputation, trust, customer loyalty – often goes unrecorded, and therefore under-protected, during acquisition.

### BRAND VALUE AS PART OF THE M&A PROCESS



**INSIGHT** – Brand is overlooked in moments that matter most.

## BRAND Maturity BY BUSINESS SIZE

The data reveals a clear relationship between company size and brand discipline. Smaller businesses show high conviction but limited structure. Larger organisations demonstrate more rigour, but less agility.

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**SMALLER BUSINESSES** (under \$3M) rely on intuition and energy.

They strongly believe in **brand as a growth driver**, yet often manage it informally or reactively. Brand work is typically triggered by milestones rather than embedded in long-term strategy.

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**MID-SIZED ORGANISATIONS** (\$10M–\$20M) are the most cautious.

They balance operational focus with brand awareness but often **delay deeper investment** until external pressures demand it.

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**LARGER BUSINESSES** (\$30M+) show the most structured brand management, with clearer ownership and stronger governance. Their focus on systems and compliance can make them **slower to pivot**, but also **more consistent** in delivery.



Brand discipline tends to grow with size, but agility often fades. The most effective organisations combine both – structured strategy with entrepreneurial speed.

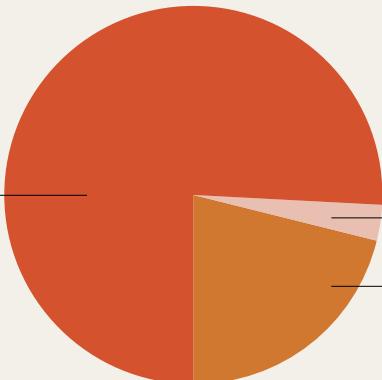
## SMALL BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

### BRANDING IS IMPORTANT TO BUSINESS SUCCESS

76% Strongly agree

3% Strongly disagree

21% Agree



### WE HAVE A BRAND STRATEGY THAT GUIDES DECISION MAKING

61% Yes, basic

9% No plans at this time

18% Yes, comprehensive

12% No, but planning to create one

### ASPECTS OF BRANDING THAT ARE MOST CHALLENGING

20% Creating visual identity elements

28% Measuring brand effectiveness

16% Standing out from competitors

5% Maintaining brand consistency

14% Attracting the right customers

8% Defining brand values and personality

8% Developing consistent messaging

T  
H

Smaller businesses (under \$3 million revenue) overwhelmingly believe branding drives success: 97% say it's important.

Yet only 18% of businesses have a comprehensive brand strategy, and most rely on basic or informal approaches. Their greatest challenges include measuring effectiveness (28%), creating visual identity elements (20%), and standing out from competitors (16%).

This suggests strong intent but limited resources and expertise.

*Smaller businesses often operate with fewer resources but strong belief in brand potential. Building greater brand maturity could help convert that belief into competitive strength.*

## SECTION 3

# THE STATE OF BRAND VALUE:

*Recognised potential,  
untapped returns*

Australian business leaders recognise brand as a powerful source of value, but few have the frameworks to manage or measure it effectively. Across industries, belief in brand's importance is near universal – yet structure and discipline lag behind.

For most organisations, brand management remains instinctive rather than systematic. Measurement is inconsistent, investment reactive, and review cycles irregular. Yet those organisations that do track brand ROI report clear benefits across awareness, loyalty, acquisition, and even pricing power.



## CLARITY, CONSISTENCY AND DIFFERENTIATION



**INSIGHT** - Leaders feel confident in their brand identity, but consistency and distinctiveness lag behind.

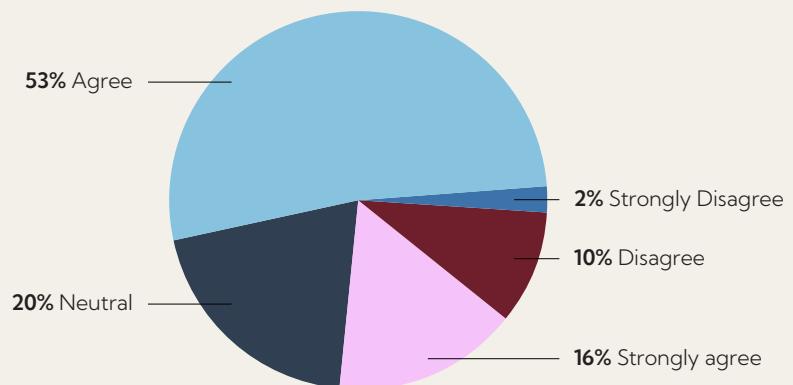
Brand clarity is strong in principle but uneven in practice. Around **69%** of leaders say their company understands its brand identity, yet only **55%** agree that it's expressed consistently across all touchpoints.

Perhaps most concerning, around **40%** of leaders don't believe their brand clearly communicates a point of difference. In competitive markets, that's not a soft issue – it's a commercial risk. *Differentiation is the foundation of pricing power, loyalty, and long-term success.*

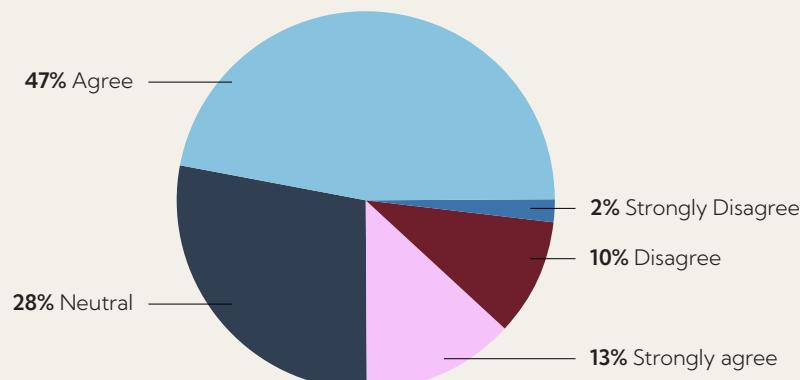
This suggests that while most organisations have internal clarity, many still struggle to translate that into a consistent and distinctive market presence. A well-defined identity without differentiation risks blending in – and that lack of distinctiveness limits growth.

# CLARITY, CONSISTENCY AND DIFFERENTIATION

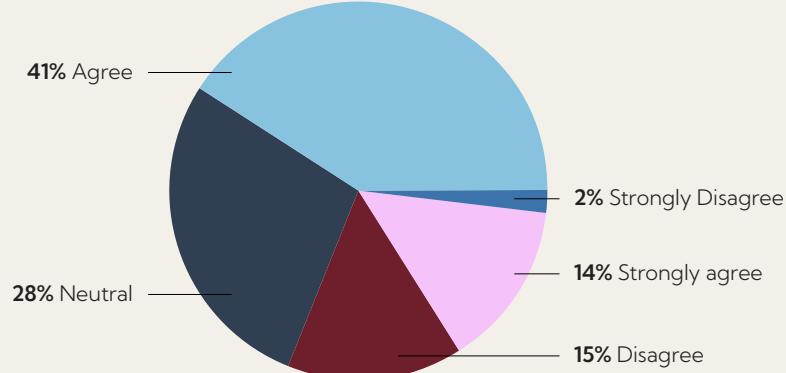
OUR BRAND IDENTITY IS STRONG  
AND UNDERSTOOD ACROSS THE COMPANY



OUR BRAND CLEARLY PRESENTS  
A POINT OF DIFFERENCE



OUR BRAND  
IS CONSISTENT

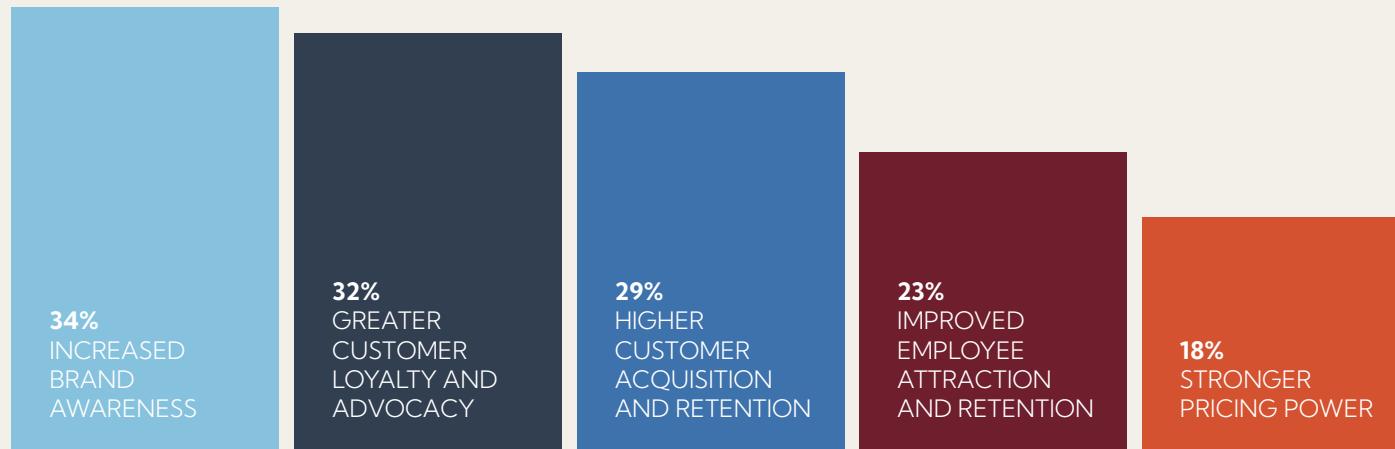


## WHERE BRANDING DELIVERS ROI

For organisations that actively invest in branding, the impact is tangible. Only one in ten businesses (13%) do not track brand ROI at all. Among those that do, **awareness** and **loyalty** dominate as the most visible outcomes, while **pricing power** and **internal brand benefits** are less frequently recognised but equally valuable.

The data confirms that branding delivers commercial results – but also reveals how narrow most organisations' measurement lens remains. Awareness and perception are tracked as a typical measurement in marketing, yet brand's influence on efficiency, sales conversion, or enterprise value often goes unmeasured.

### HOW BUSINESSES MEASURE BRAND IMPACT



RESPONDENTS WERE ABLE TO CHOOSE MORE THAN ONE MEASUREMENT. THIS GRAPH REPRESENTS THE PERCENTAGES OF BUSINESSES WHICH CHOSE EACH MEASUREMENT.

**INSIGHT** - Branding delivers measurable returns, but most track too narrowly.

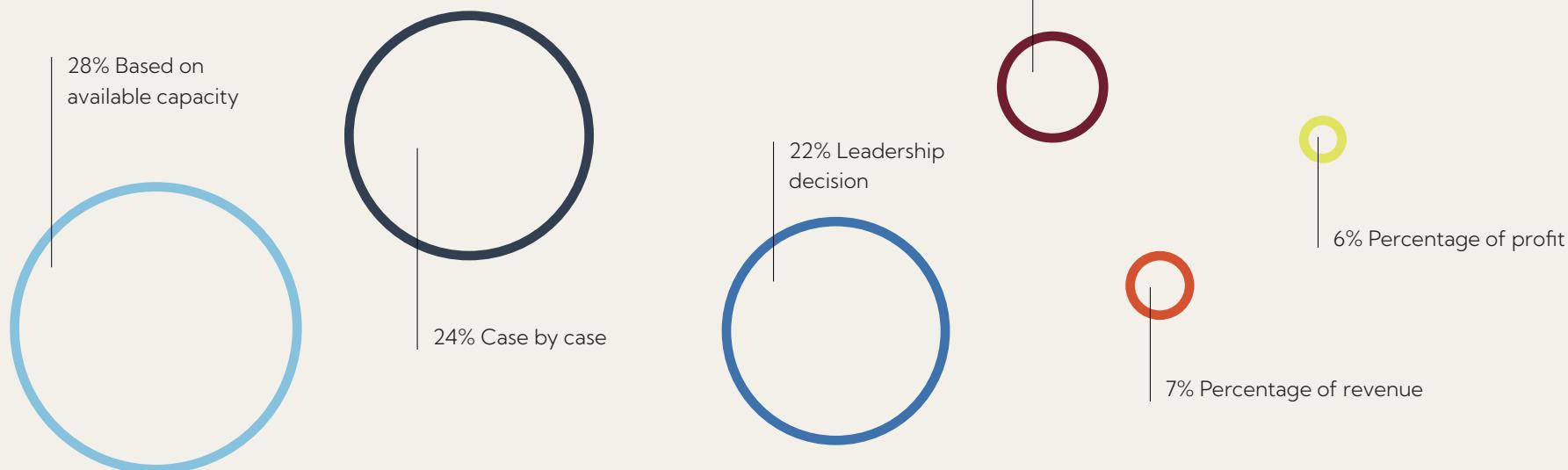
## INVESTMENT MINDSET

When asked how brand investment decisions are made, responses reveal a largely reactive mindset with 28% basing spending on available capacity (people, time, budget), 24% deciding on a case by case basis and 22% by the leadership team.

Few businesses treat brand spend as a strategic allocation. Instead, it is governed by convenience and immediate priorities rather than long-term performance goals.

This **ad hoc approach undermines consistency** and makes it **harder to track ROI** – reinforcing the cycle of under-management seen throughout the data.

## HOW BRAND INVESTMENT IS DECIDED



**INSIGHT** - Brand investment is driven by capacity, not strategy.

# BRAND PRIORITIES BY INDUSTRY

Different industries bring different motivations and mindsets to branding. Some see it as growth infrastructure; others treat it as reputation insurance.

**FMCG** leads the way, linking brand strength directly to commercial growth. These businesses rebrand most frequently to support expansion and evolving consumer demand.

**Finance and Government** take a more conservative approach, viewing branding as a trust and compliance tool. Their focus is on modernisation and clarity rather than innovation.

**Manufacturing** combines strong product confidence with weaker differentiation and employee engagement. Many rely on heritage and quality but underinvest in brand storytelling.

**Health & Wellbeing** shows the highest alignment between employee and customer experience, reflecting purpose-driven cultures where brand is lived as much as communicated.

**Technology** is the most experimental, showing openness to AI and digital branding but less alignment around consistent brand identity.

*Industry culture shapes brand behaviour. Fast-moving sectors use brand as a growth engine; regulated industries use it as a safeguard.*

## REBRANDING AND RENEWAL

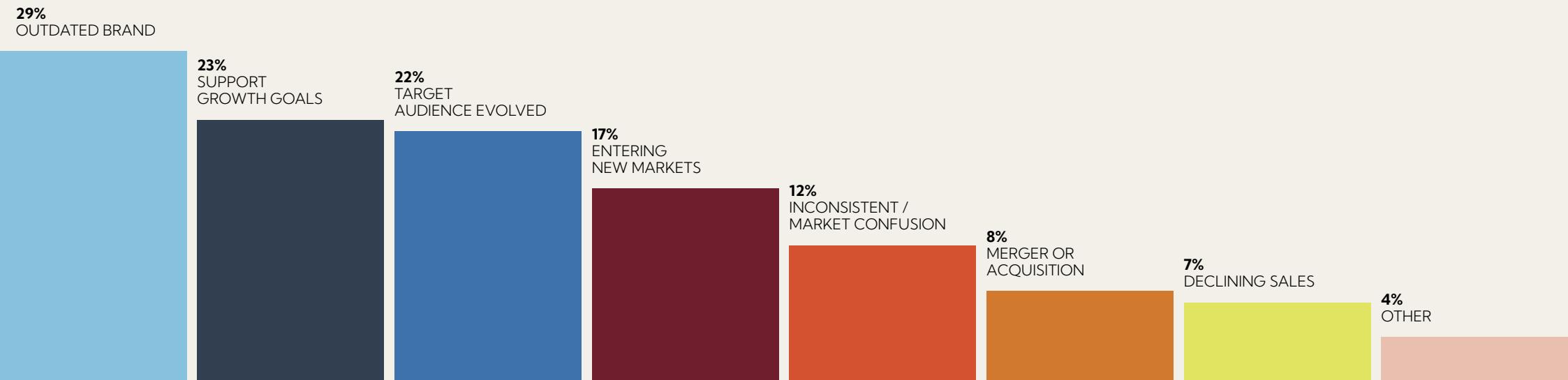
Rebranding activity appears driven more by growth and relevance than by recovery. Around two-thirds of organisations have refreshed their brand or positioning within the past five years – most often to modernise outdated identities, support expansion, or reflect evolving audiences.

One in ten businesses have never revisited their brand identity or strategy, showing how inconsistent brand stewardship remains.

Given the constantly evolving needs of customers, even small shifts could help these businesses differentiate more clearly and grow their sales with the right brand investment.

Rebranding is often delayed in a tight market – precisely when clarity and customer connection matter most.

### MAIN REASONS BUSINESSES REBRAND

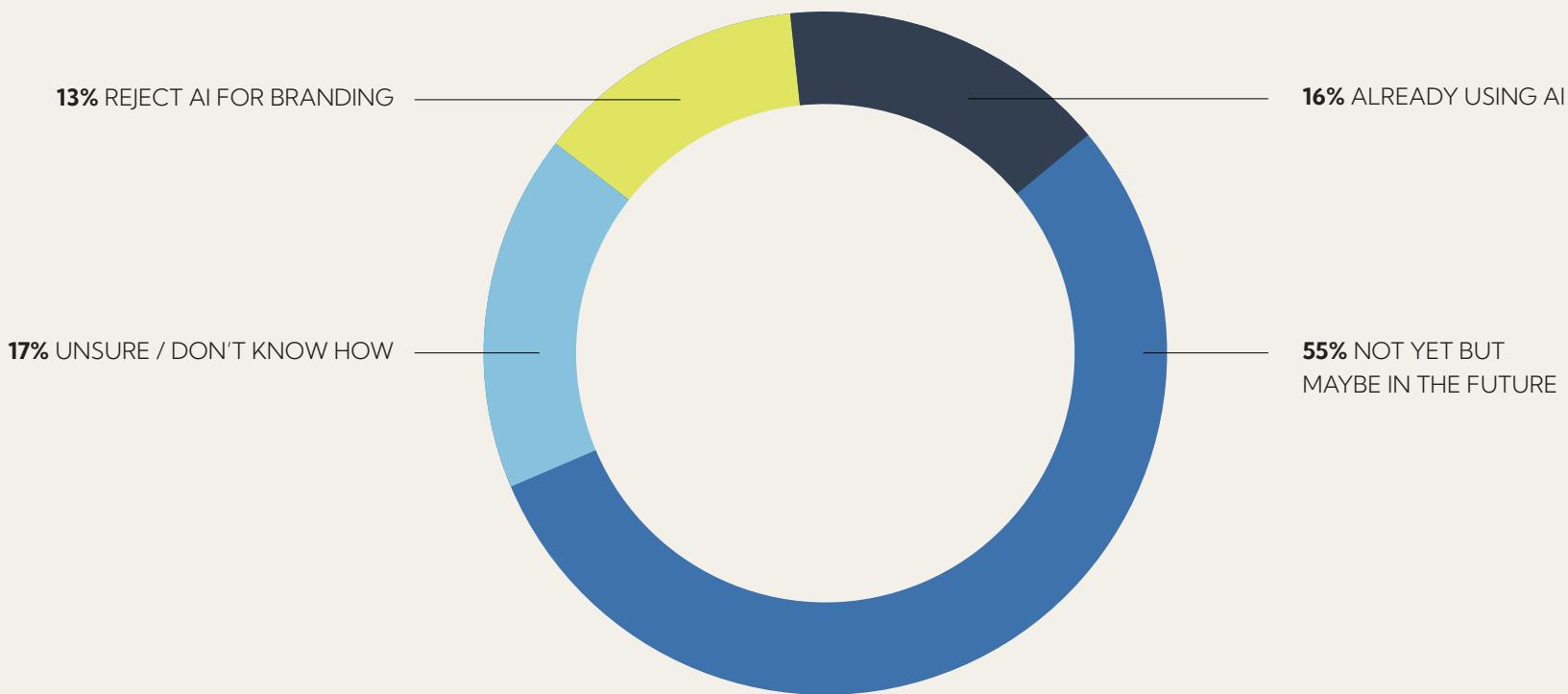


RESPONDENTS WERE ABLE TO CHOOSE MORE THAN ONE REASON. THIS GRAPH REPRESENTS THE PERCENTAGES OF BUSINESSES WHICH CHOSE EACH REASON

## RISE OF AI IN BRANDING ACTIVITIES

AI adoption is **beginning to influence** how organisations build and manage their brands, though **confidence remains cautious**. Most leaders are open to experimenting with AI – 16% already use it, and more than half say they may in future – while a minority reject AI for branding outright, believing it “cannot replace human experts”.

**INSIGHT** – Businesses are open to AI, but human strategy still leads.



Most businesses are open to AI's potential to support branding but are adopting cautiously. Some reject it outright, citing the irreplaceable role of human creativity and strategic judgement.

## SECTION 4

# STATE OF EXPERIENCE:

## *Strong belief, inconsistent investment*

A brand's true strength is reflected not only in how it looks or communicates, but in how it's experienced by the people who represent it.

Most leaders recognise this connection between brand, culture, and experience, yet few invest in it with the same focus they apply to external marketing. While belief in the importance of brand-led culture is strong, structured programs to engage employees, build alignment, and measure impact remain inconsistent. This section explores how businesses are managing brand from the inside out, and how employee experience is increasingly recognised as a key driver of customer trust, loyalty, and advocacy.

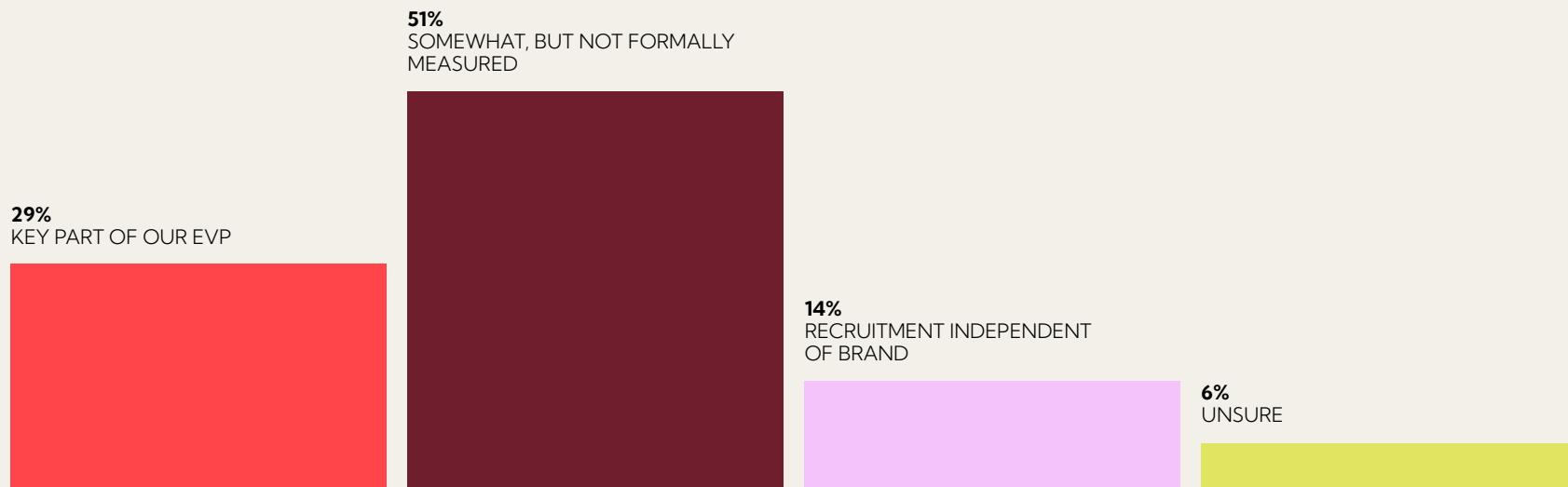


## EMPLOYER BRANDING

Many organisations link branding with customer acquisition and market share, but far fewer see it as a tool for attracting and retaining talent. Only 29% say brand is a key part of their Employer Value Proposition (EVP), while half acknowledge the connection but admit it is not formally measured.

This underinvestment represents a clear opportunity. Employer branding is not an HR initiative; it is culture strategy. A strong employer brand attracts aligned talent, reduces turnover, and builds credibility that extends beyond recruitment into every customer interaction.

## HOW BUSINESSES CONNECT BRAND WITH TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION



## **INSIGHT** – Employer branding is an untapped opportunity for growth.

## EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE AND BRAND ALIGNMENT

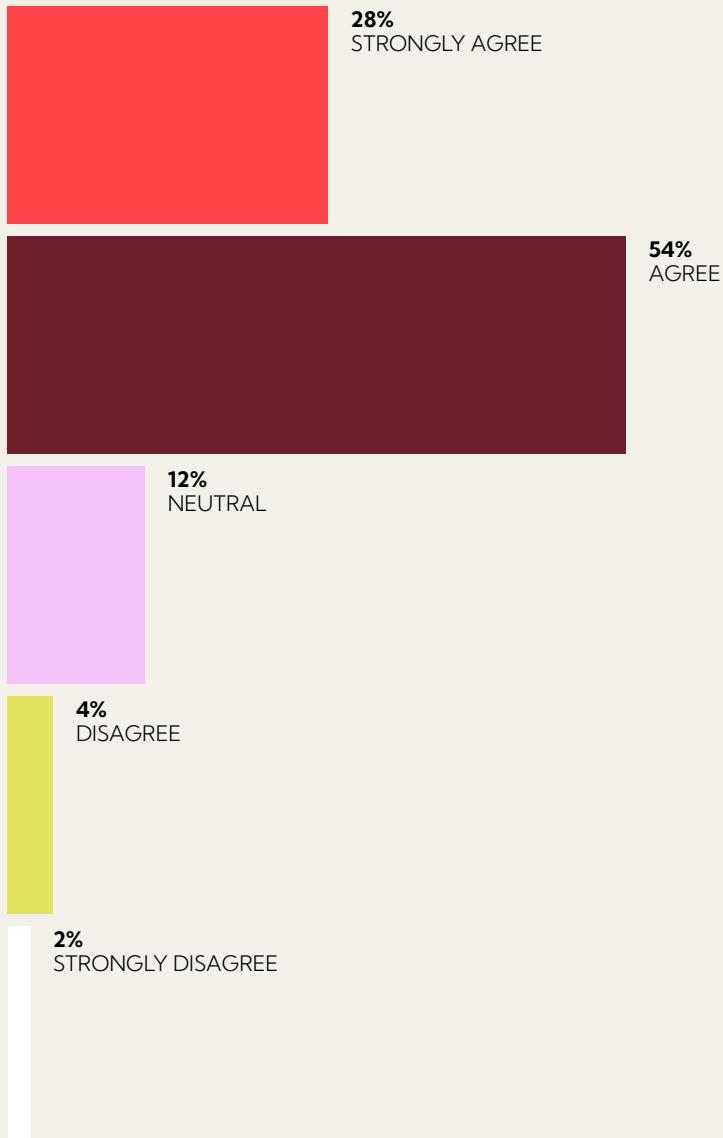
Employees bring a brand to life in ways marketing alone never can. Their behaviour, service and communication shape how customers experience the brand every day. Most leaders recognise this link: 82% agree that customer experience is directly influenced by employee experience.

Yet fewer than half invest consistently in culture, engagement or training. The belief is there, but structured systems to embed it are not. While leaders see employees as the face of the brand, many still treat culture programs as discretionary rather than essential to performance.

Businesses that close this gap between belief and investment are likely to strengthen both employee advocacy and customer loyalty, turning culture into a measurable driver of brand success.

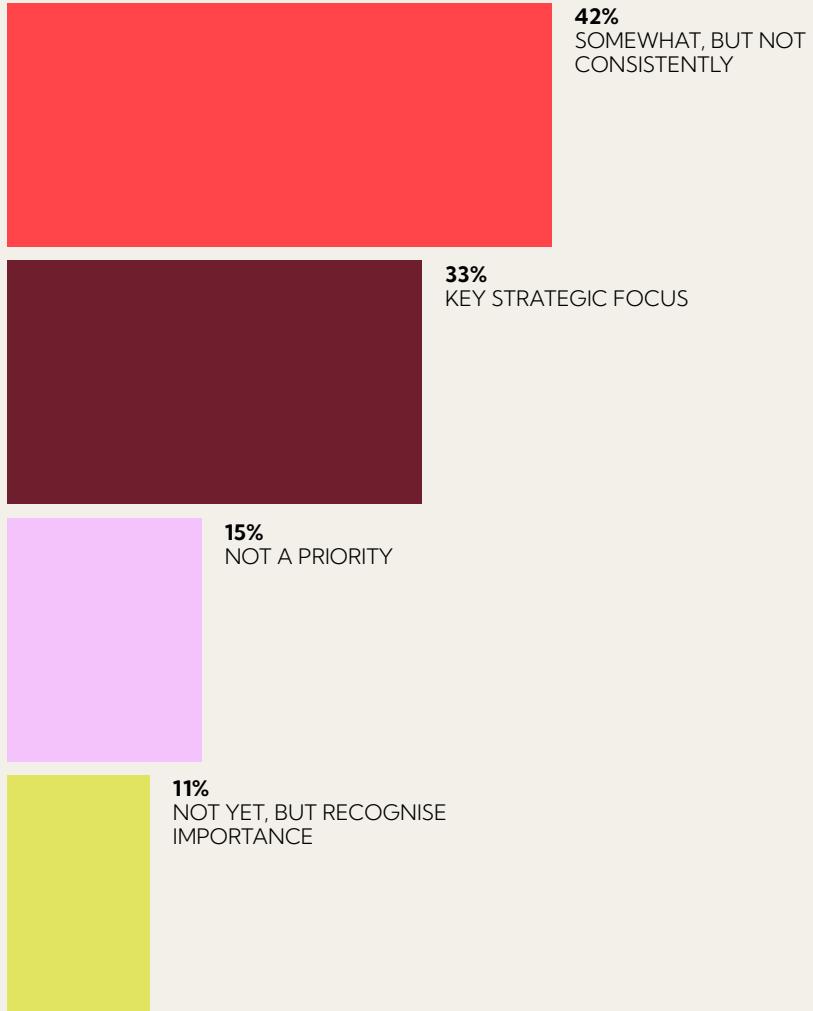
**INSIGHT** – Leaders believe employees shape customer experience, but investment lags.

### CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS DIRECTLY INFLUENCED BY EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE



*Employer branding*  
and an investment in  
employee experience  
is a *major opportunity*.  
Attracting and retaining  
*market-leading talent*  
*changes everything*.

#### BUSINESS INVESTMENT IN EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE





CONCLUSION

# BRAND AS A COMMERCIAL DISCIPLINE



Leaders increasingly want branding to deliver real business outcomes: credibility, sales, pricing power, efficiency, talent attraction, and loyalty.

While Australian leaders overwhelmingly believe in the value of branding, too many still rely on inconsistent execution, short-term fixes, and ad hoc investment. This brand investment gap reveals a disconnect between understanding the power of brand and committing to the structure and consistency required to realise it.

The challenge, therefore, is not conviction but execution. Many organisations are stuck between aspiration and action. They know what branding should deliver – trust, growth, loyalty – but struggle to measure ROI, to embed brand as a strategic pillar, and to allocate investment with intent.

The businesses that will thrive in 2026 and beyond will be those that elevate brand into a disciplined system for growth. That means integrating brand into culture, strategy, and decision-making, and measuring its impact against metrics that matter – from sales efficiency to employee retention.

In a market where confidence is split, competition is intensifying, and resources are stretched, clarity and consistency of brand will be the ultimate differentiators.



# RECOMMENDATIONS TO CLOSE THE BRAND PERFORMANCE GAP

Most leaders understand the importance of brand, but few embed it as an active business discipline. To close this gap businesses should focus on six interconnected priorities.

## 1. Audit and roadmap: Know where you stand before you move

Before investing further, clarity is key. Conduct an objective brand audit to understand where your brand stands across perception, performance, consistency and internal alignment. Review your ideal customer, competitors and market to understand where you sit, what needs improvement and what the goals are to deliver on commercial outcomes.

## 2. Brand foundations: Align purpose, positioning, and identity

Your brand's strength lies in its foundation, the strategic core that defines who you are, why you exist, and what sets you apart. That means clarifying your purpose, defining a positioning that resonates with your most valuable customers, and expressing it through a distinctive identity system that people instantly recognise.

Differentiation and distinctiveness are both born here – in a foundation that balances meaning and memorability. When these are clearly defined, your brand becomes the north star for every decision and interaction across the business.

## 3. Enablement and integrity: Equip your team to deliver consistently

Even the best strategy fails without the tools to bring it to life. Enable your people and partners with the systems, templates, and training they need to apply the brand with confidence and consistency.

This is where integrity lives, in the day-to-day execution that builds recognition and reinforces trust. A strong brand influences the micro decisions – by everyone, every day.

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO CLOSE THE BRAND PERFORMANCE GAP

## 4. Management and measurement: Take a disciplined approach

Treat brand as a managed asset, not a marketing cost. Establish structured brand reviews alongside financial and operational ones, and measure brand health through three key dimensions:

- \* **Perception** – awareness, trust, relevance, and differentiation.
- \* **Performance** – pricing power, customer acquisition, retention, and market share.
- \* **Internal alignment** – employee understanding, engagement, and advocacy.

Tracking these consistently connects brand effort to business outcomes, keeps leaders accountable for long-term performance and supports the case for investment.

## 5. Embed from the inside: Activate brand through culture

Employees are the first expression of a brand. Align internal culture, recruitment, and leadership behaviour with your external promise. When employees understand and live the brand, customers experience it more authentically. Embedding brand in culture turns it from words on a wall into the daily rhythm of the business.

## 6. Guardianship and optimisation: Keep brand evolving

Strong brands are never static. Establish clear governance – who owns the brand, how it's reviewed, and when it evolves. Regular brand audits, consistent training, and creative optimisation protect against drift and keep relevance alive. The goal is not just consistency, but continual evolution in line with strategy and customer needs.

*The choice for leaders  
is clear: bring their  
understanding of brand's  
importance into alignment  
with how it's managed in  
the business day-to-day in  
order to maximise return on  
investment.*

# METHODOLOGY

*The State of Business Branding 2026* report was commissioned to explore how Australian business leaders view, invest in, and operationalise branding as a strategic asset. The research sought to quantify perceptions of branding effectiveness, challenges in execution, and links between brand strategy, talent, and business growth outcomes.

## SAMPLING AND FIELDWORK

**Population:** Senior business decision-makers across Australia, including Founders, CEOs, Managing Directors, CMOs, and senior HR and Marketing professionals.

**Sample size:** n = 164 completed surveys.

Industries represented: 12 categories including Professional Services, Manufacturing, Retail, Wholesale, Tech, Health & Wellbeing, Finance, Non-profit, Social Enterprise, Government, Mining, and FMCG.

**Company size:** Respondents ranged from businesses with under \$3M annual revenue to over \$30M.

**Geographic coverage:** All respondents operate in Australia, with a subset also marketing in New Zealand, broader Australasia, or globally.

**Data collection method:** Online self-completion questionnaire distributed via email invitation and professional networks.

**Fieldwork dates:** April–June 2025.

**Conducted by:** Taverner Research on behalf of Jodie de Vries and Tiny Hunter.

## QUOTAS AND REPRESENTATION

No formal quotas were set; however, sampling ensured representation across major B2B and B2C sectors. Approximately 70% of respondents identified their organisations as primarily B2B, 15% as B2C, and 15% as mixed. Industry distribution and company size were monitored to ensure diversity of business types and maturity levels.

### Questionnaire design

The survey was developed by Jodie de Vries. It contained:

- \* 10 demographic and business background questions
- \* 7 sections exploring business growth, branding perception, investment, talent, competitive strategy, with both structured (multiple choice, scaled) and open-ended questions for qualitative insights.

All wording was tested for clarity and neutrality prior to launch.

The survey took approximately 10–15 minutes to complete.

## WEIGHTING AND ANALYSIS

Data were unweighted, as the goal was exploratory insight rather than national projection.

Percentages are based on total responses to each question (excluding “Don’t know” or blanks).

## CONFIDENTIALITY

All responses were anonymous. No individual or organisation is identified in the reporting of results. Respondents who opted in to follow-up were contacted separately for potential qualitative interviews.



# BY

Hopefully you've found both insight and inspiration within these pages. If you have any questions or comments I'm always happy to chat. Whether it's to share your experience or discuss your own brand just reach out.

If you would like to get tailored insight into where the gaps and opportunities are in your own brand right now you can also complete the Brand Strength Quiz I've designed. It's fast, free and actionable.

## » **Launch the Brand Strength Quiz**

You can reach me directly to continue the discussion, or if you want a specific sector report examining what your peers are doing, at [jodie@tinyhunter.com.au](mailto:jodie@tinyhunter.com.au)

Happy brand building,

**Jodie de Vries**

Founder & Brand Consultant | Tiny Hunter

