

# B2B LEGACY BRANDING

A New Model for Branding & Positioning







# Introduction

B2B spends \$50 billion on marketing. But most run marketing in silos that do not integrate the brand with their culture.

**In 2021, U.S. companies spent \$285 billion on advertising.** B2B's share represents 19% of that total.\* However, experts agree that measuring B2B marketing ROI remains elusive.\*\* Why are B2B executives frustrated by marketing when they spend billions?

- Why is consumer branding being used to brand a B2B?
- Have your culture and customer really bought into your brand?
- What is Legacy Branding, and how is it different?



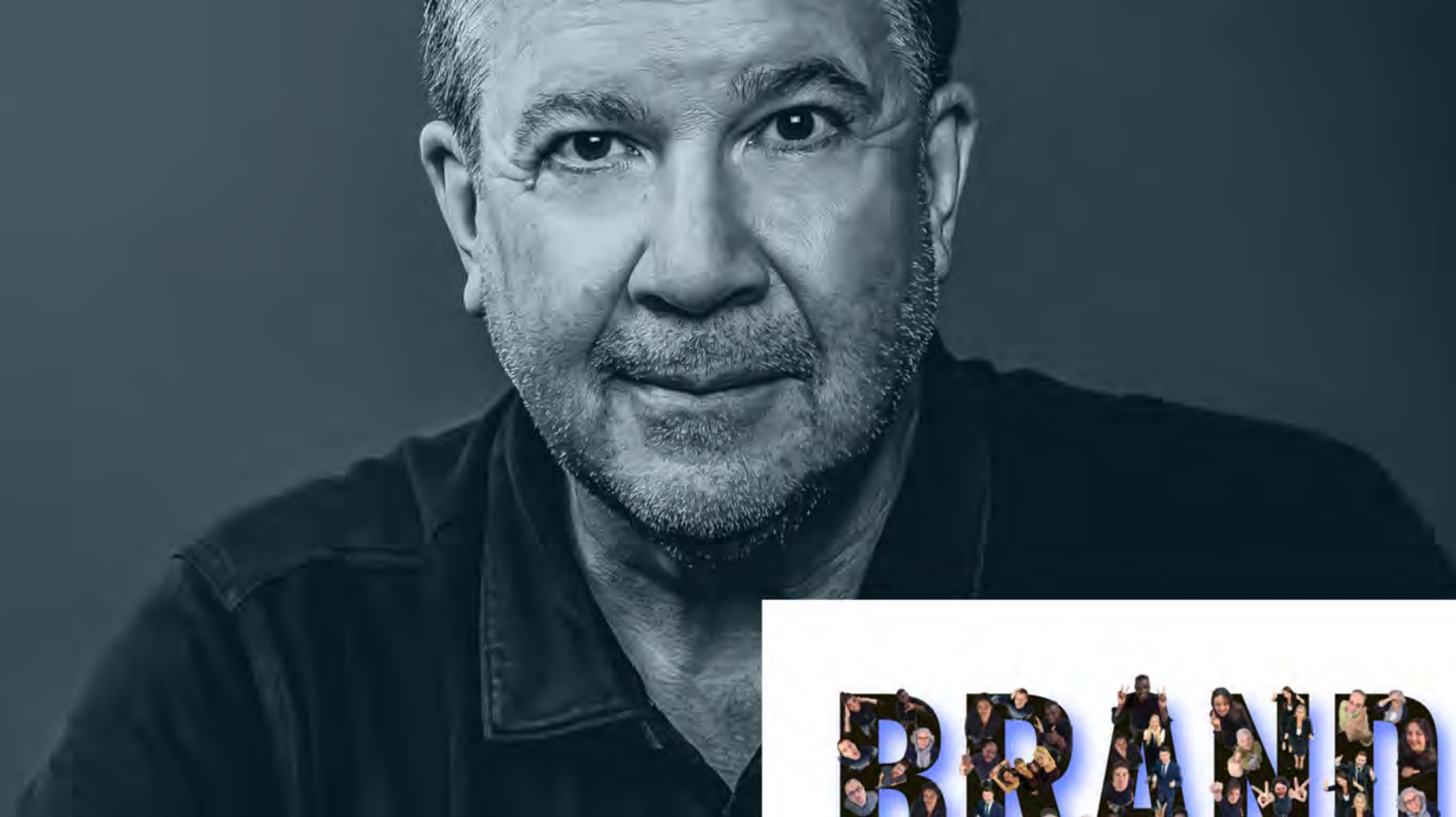
\*B2B digital ad spend in the U.S. 2015–2023, Statista Research Department, (Nov 5, 2021.)

\*\* "Old Boys Club": Barriers to B2B Marketing in Small B2B Firms. Justina Setkute & Sally Dibb. Industrial Marketing Management, Volume 102. Pages 266–279. (April 2022.)





Tim Gilbert  
Founder & CEO, Merton Way Inc.  
Creator of B2B Legacy Branding



# The bug that's crashing B2B marketing

For decades, B2B brands have been built on a fatal error. Marketing or its agency used consumer models to define the brand. Chances are, your B2B made major go-to-market decisions, impacting culture and customers, based upon a consumer branding model. These models use terms like: **brand archetypes, brand personality, and brand story.**

The root cause to this bug in the system began with psychoanalyst Carl Jung. Today's consumer branding models are built on Jung's theories: 12 key human desires and values personify a brand. You are an Outlaw, a Caregiver, a Sage, and so on. **But B2B buyers do not shop like consumers.**





# An end to romance: branding's real job in B2B

**B2B buyers shortlist vendors.** They make purchases using a process, weighing quantitative and qualitative attributes. It is not based on impulses. In B2B, committees, boards, and other influencers act as neutralizing agents in contrast to consumer buying behaviors.

**Romantic consumer branding is fundamentally flawed when applied to B2B marketing, sales, and go-to-market.** Building a B2B brand using Jungian archetypes and personality traits is the proverbial house built on sand.

Unfortunately, B2B keeps swinging a brand hammer designed to sell ice cream, soap, and binge-watching. B2B is commodities, systems, and capital goods. The duty of B2B branding is to marry the brand to the culture. Not to tell a culture to join the cult of a make-believe personality.





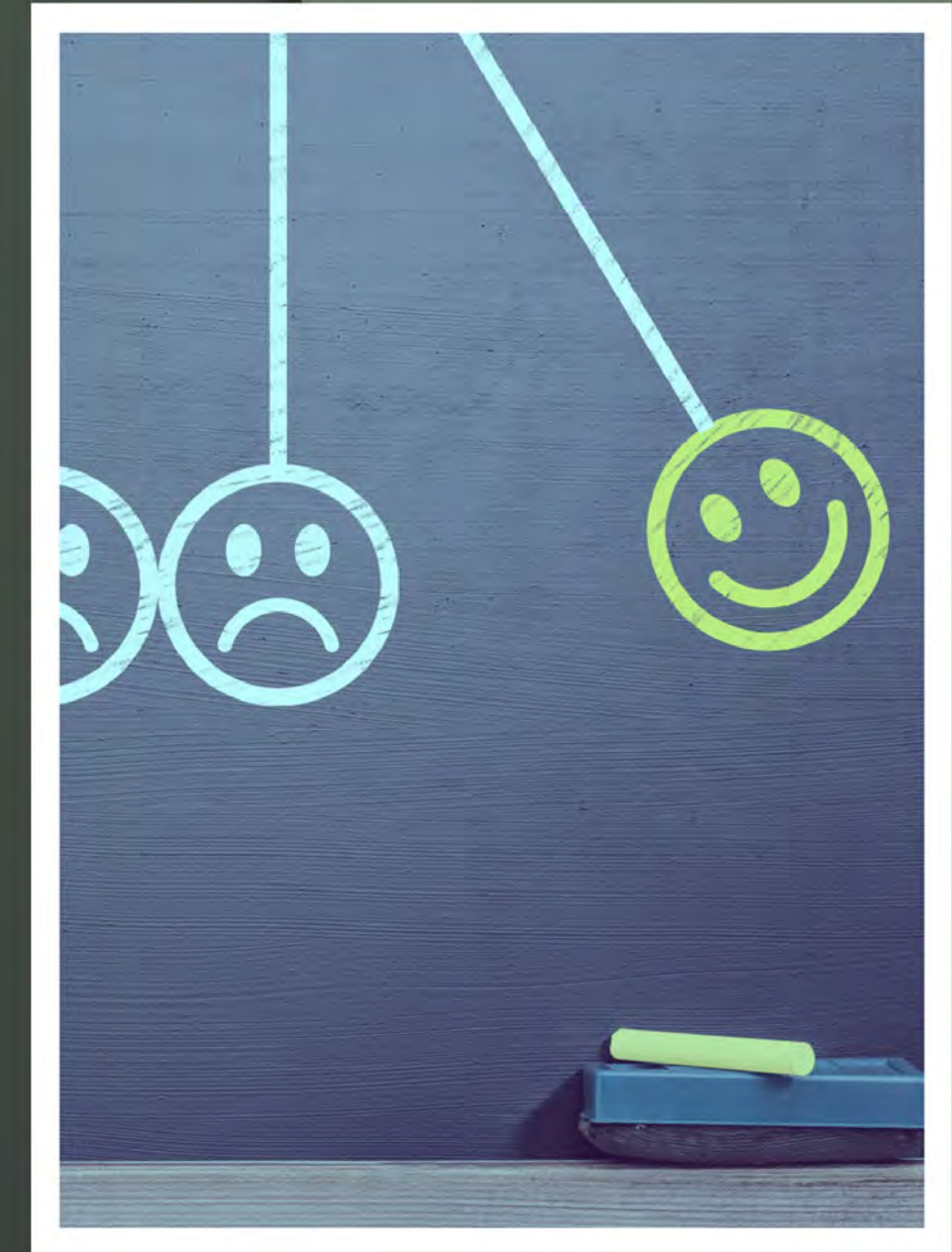
# Practical branding

B2B companies build complex software systems. They formulate food additives, design medical devices, and sell construction services to nationwide retailers.

B2B buyers are pragmatic. They use scorecards, financial analysis, and shortlist suppliers in a competitive bid. Decision-makers may even consult with investors, C-level peers, industry analysts...and their own competitors.

**B2B buyers will never, ever care if your B2B brand "looks and feels" like a Sage or a Superman.**

Your B2B must apply a buyer's logic to its brand and the culture itself. In B2B, the culture is both the product and the packaging. People deliver what the B2B promises. Not logos, not taglines. Brand equals culture.







# Introducing a B2B brand model

B2B Legacy Branding is a pragmatic, 3-step process. It gathers what internal experts, employees, and the market think, forming The Plot. The Plot unfolds into Position and Message. These are built on the plot and ensure they ring true for the B2B both inside and out.



## Plot

Interview and research B2B leaders, the buyers, and competitors. Plot the data into the framework.



## Position

Position the brand or individual solutions in their simplest terms. Base them on facts, market data, and insider maxims.



## Message

Unpack the positioning into a brief, compelling matrix of messages, per brand and per solution.





# Positioning starts with Plot

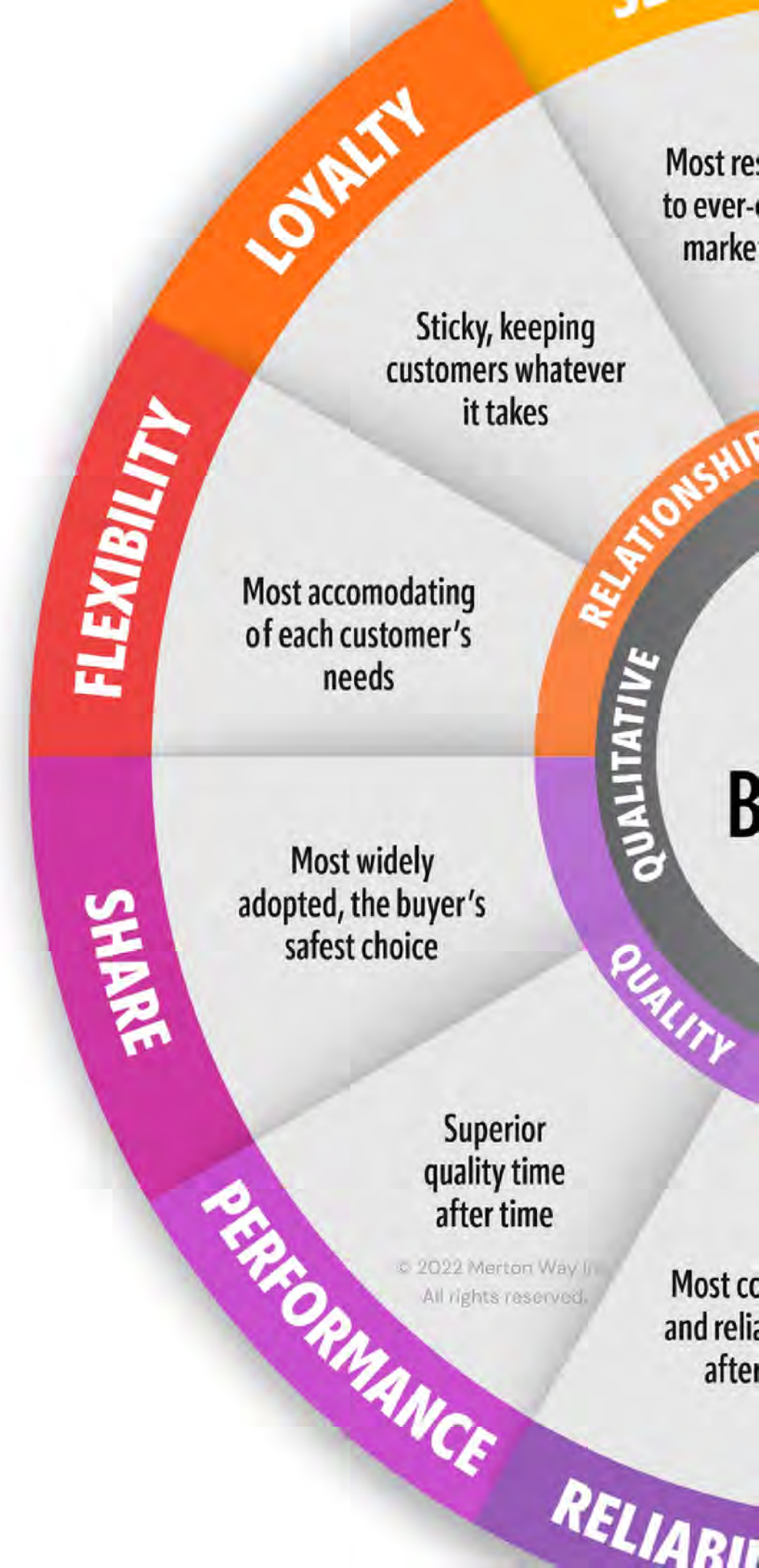
B2B Legacy Branding expresses the vision and advances key differentiators

This new model uses language that buyers and sellers share in common in B2B. Rather than psychology and myth, the B2B brand and culture get rooted in a common lexicon. By integrating input that is concrete and uniform in its meaning, we now know what people inside and outside the B2B really think and what they value.

For example, we might interview 100 executives, employees, and customers. Force-ranking their feedback may tell us that your B2B brand represents:

1. Innovation (leader in R&D)
2. Flexibility (able to handle change or unique requirements)
3. Share of market (a "safe bet")
4. Reliability (delivers on time, on budget, on spec)

Which one fits best? Why? How does picking one impact your messaging and sales? And what do these 100 people say about your competitors...?







# Legacy Brand framework

360-degree view of your place in your market

In truth, B2B buyers are human. Sometimes their reasoning is **Quantitative**. Other moments, **Qualitative**. Buyers weigh what they know (or what they suspect) to eliminate one vendor and continue purchasing from another. But generally, they are not impulsive.

The B2B brain consciously or subconsciously buckets suppliers into one of four quadrants: **Time, Cost, Quality, and Relationship**.

To be a Cost leader, maybe you achieve lower prices with steep investments in machinery, supply chain, and stiff negotiating. These tactics come at a cost. Do clients really value you for lower prices? Or do they say, "You can do better," because you taught them to?

The Legacy Brand system is more than logos or better copywriting. It unites your culture on the basis of objectivity vs. subjectivity.







# The wheel at work

Differentiation in Legacy Branding's wheel

The computer and device market has blurred B2C and B2B. But three leaders all position on TIME in the upper right quadrant.

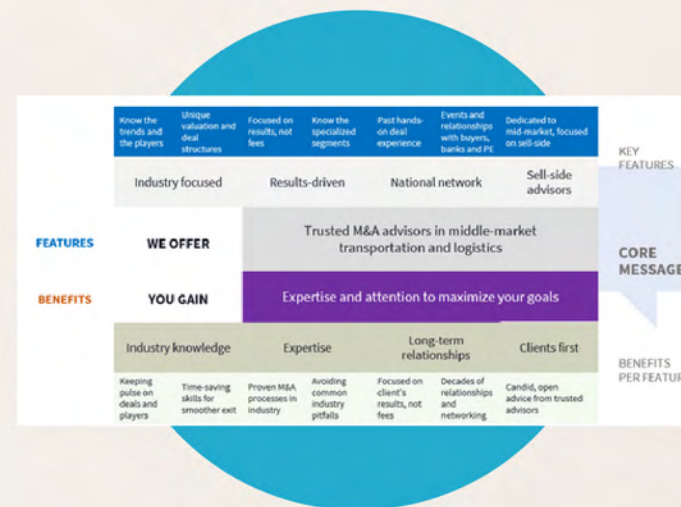
Michael Dell built his brand on Speed, shipping product to suit and "just in time." Big wins with government keep Dell's brand in the top three.

Apple is an Innovator. Digital and media companies pay more because Apple has cool interfaces, fast processors, and platform integration that seems to generate more time.

Lenovo's market share has grown since spinning off from IBM. They tout Variety, offering many models and configuration as a one-stop-shop for business-ready equipment.

Acer and ASUS began as "value" brands. So, are these Price or Value leaders? Either way, they positioned on COST in the blue quadrant (the wheel's lower right).





# Position

With its Plot crisply narrowed and defined, we move into positioning the brand. Positioning is a concise, brief argument for the brand promise.

# Message

Based on the Positioning, the company, culture, and its solutions build messaging matrices. These are like rivers and tributaries that feed Plot and Position.





# Legacy Brand Outputs







# About

Tim Gilbert & Merton Way

Merton Way grew out of doing turnarounds for technology, education, and PE- and VC-backed portfolio companies. 70+ clients have been B2B.

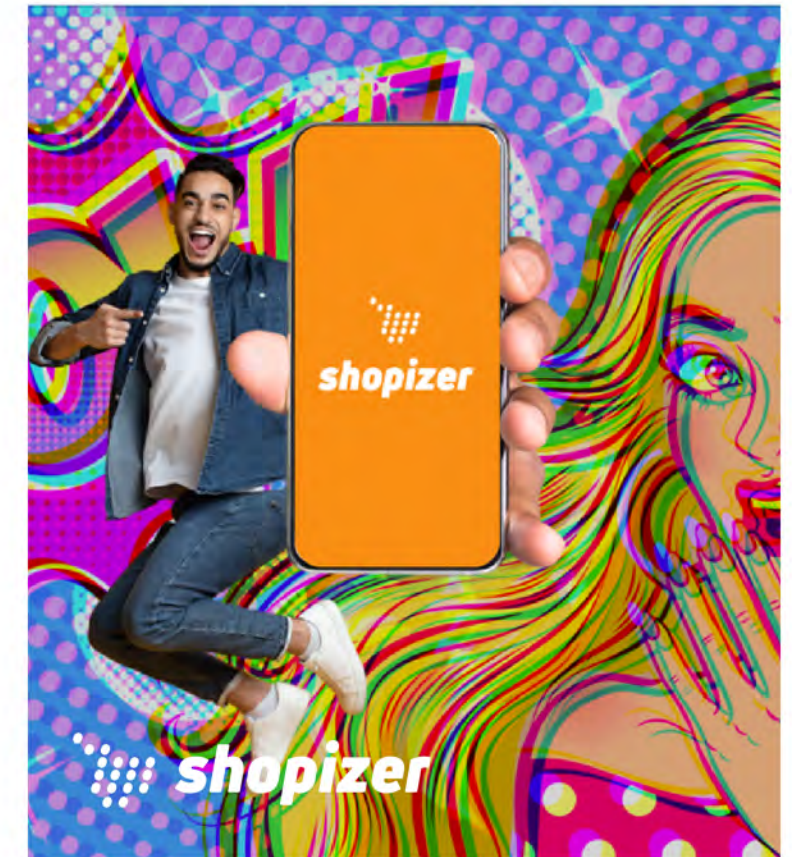
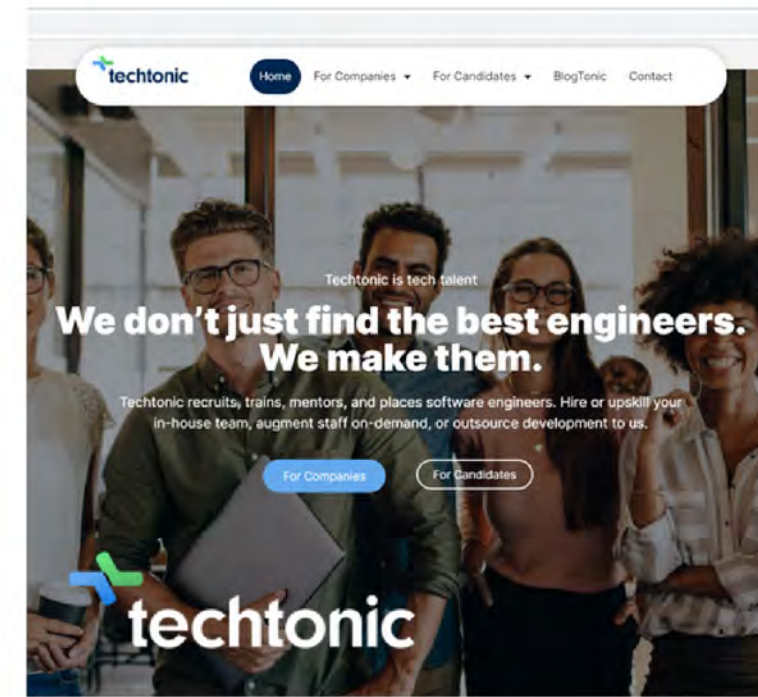
Before founding Merton Way, Tim held global roles at IBM, Anthology, Kaplan, and a division of Toyota. He is founder of iVideosongs.com, a 7-figure music education and publishing company, launched as an experiment in 2019 to see what an Amazon seller could do with \$5,000.

Merton Way is a Denver agency and consultancy focused on B2B positioning, branding, web development, and go-to-market strategy. Tim developed Merton Way's B2B Legacy Branding system over the course of 20 years, implementing the model at both small and global B2B brands.





# A few of our clients







# Testimonials

What B2B leaders say about Merton Way



David Meek, Founder  
Global Educational Technologies

"The marketing masters of how  
to position and grow a brand."



Nicole Craine, CEO  
Tectonic

"Practical and results-driven."



Arun Dendukur, CTO  
Cloud Evolution

"Knows high tech, the heart  
and mind of the technology officer."



Greg Hall, CEO  
The Beam Team

"Our people believe in the new  
brand and rally behind it."





## Contact

**B2B BRAND OWNERS: FREE 15-MINUTE CONSULT**

<https://calendly.com/go-merton-way/15-min>

**NEW CLIENT INQUIRIES**

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**OTHER INQUIRIES**

<https://www.mertonway.com>





 Merton Way

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LET'S TALK ABOUT HOW LEGACY BRANDING  
ENGAGES YOUR PEOPLE AND CUSTOMERS IN  
WAYS THAT WILL TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS.

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