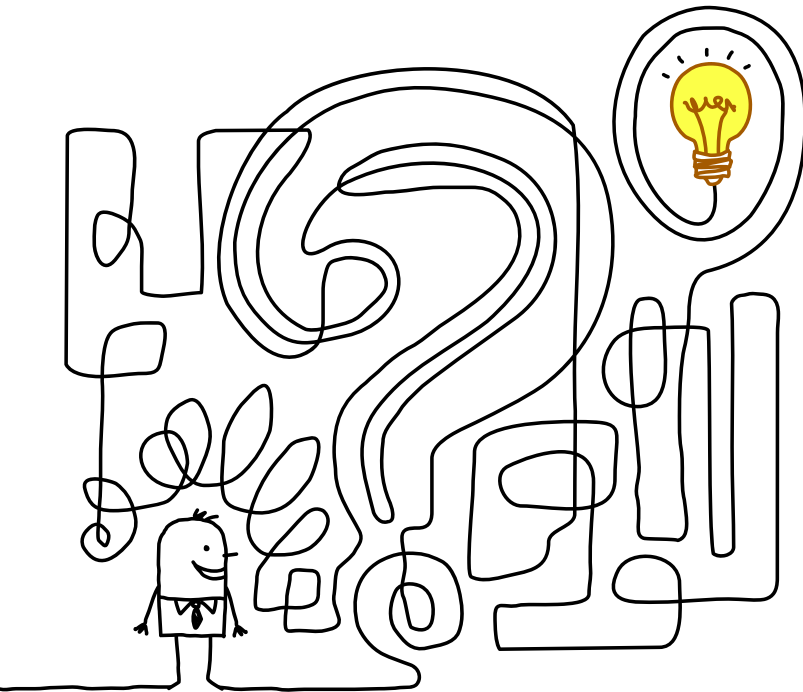




•BrandIQ: What is it? What's yours?

by Peter LaMantia





INTRODUCTION

The taxonomy of the Internet is about to change forever. The number of top-level domains (TLD) will explode from 22 generics today to more than 1,300 in this first round, and many thousands more over the next decade.

Many people fear the change and with good reason. It is difficult and costly to participate in the new domain landscape. It exposes brands to nefarious players, which can require costly risk mitigation actions to protect intellectual property and market position.



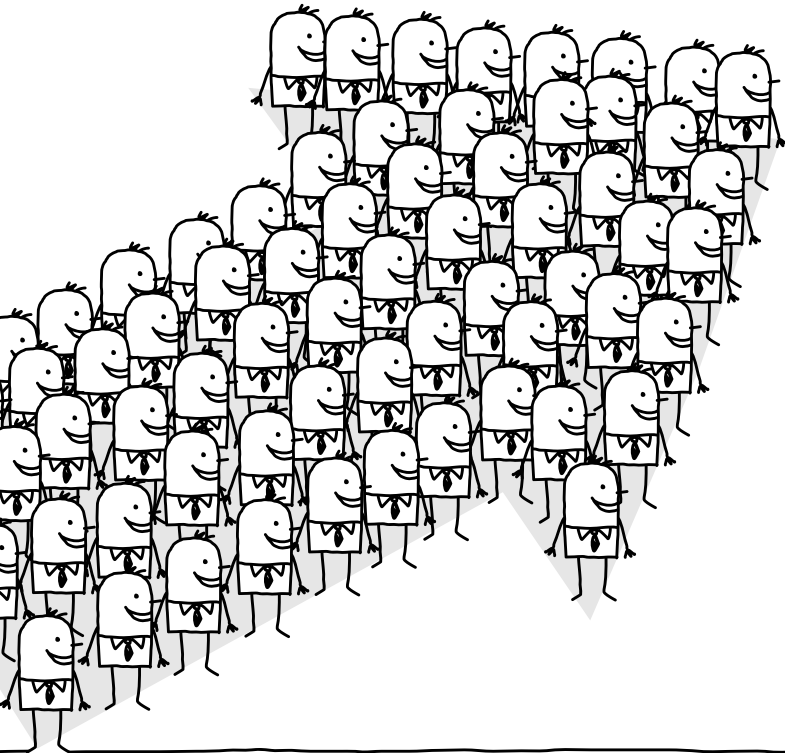
It is also one of the most dramatic and opportunity-filled changes the Internet has seen - on par with the emergence of broadband, mobile and social media. Why? The top-level domain expansion creates new digital capabilities that were previously either impossible or impractical to launch.

Over time, content and services will be focused around areas of interest from .club and .ski to .nyc and .london and •BRANDs. The domain name landscape will mature into an orderly table of contents in the 'book of the Internet'. It will not be a "Big Bang" change. It will take time but like all things on the Internet, will become dynamic and

ubiquitous, driven by innovative market leaders.

Brands must be ready to adapt or risk digital irrelevance. In the beginning, the complexity of change will overwhelm and disrupt current positions. It will be confusing and confounding but as we progress, learn, deploy, measure, analyze and adjust, we will emerge in a world with greater simplicity and order. It will be a better place, with new business models and more intuitive user experiences.

For brands; an owned •BRAND provides a permanent online name space with untold opportunities to operate.



A •BRAND registry offers capabilities around authenticity, security, effectiveness for marketing communications, networking, data gathering and service delivery – everything that supports business strategy objectives. It's exciting but also very hard and painful. Let's dig in.

You applied, you passed and delegation is fast approaching. **NOW WHAT?**

First, you have a massive business problem. **DEFEND YOUR BRAND.**

How are you going to protect your brand(s) in the expanding space? Innovation thinking is a luxury for you at this time. You're forced to focus on the strategies and tactics to protect



your brand across potentially 700 new top-level domains, and more in future rounds. Yikes! How much is this going to cost? Your growing dislike for new TLDs, the cost, the brand risk and the excruciating ICANN process can be messy and unwelcome.

There is a bright side. **DEFEND AND GROW WITH •BRAND INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES**

There are many new capabilities in owning a •BRAND registry. Most brands have yet to realize these opportunities since they are still in defensive mode. They have not built •BRANDIQ. Once they embrace the opportunities, they are going to welcome the ability to own a brand space, create networks they control and no one can infringe.

Brands will then realize the more a company invests in proactive innovation in the •BRAND registry, the defensive requirements start to fall away. Why? As their •BRAND presence is built, the world will know what is brand authentic and what is not. The •BRAND registry will not only be the digital anchor, it will be the only option to defend in the new domain taxonomy.

WHAT IS •BRANDIQ?

•BRANDIQ is a function of leadership digital mental cycles to gain an understanding about what it means to own a branded registry. It reflects the degree to which brands understand the use cases to support overall business objectives. It is the level of organizational or cultural commitment to permit innovation. It is also the state of execution readiness.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT?

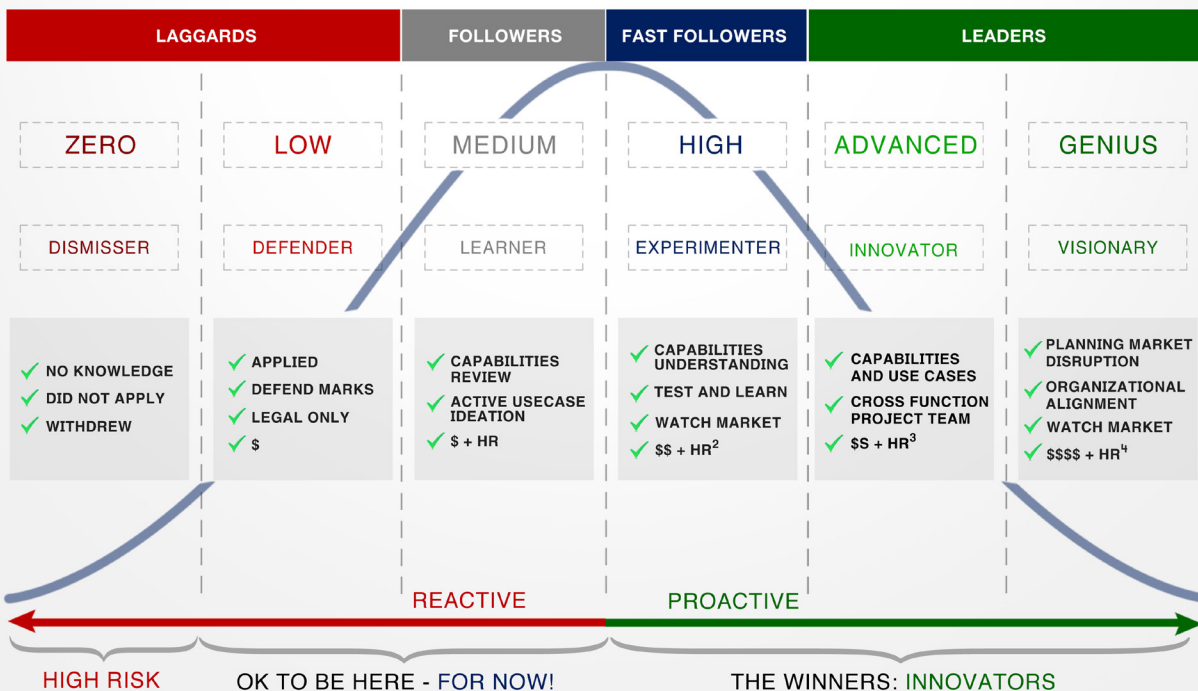
In today's competitive world, it is a rare opportunity to gain a competitive edge that can be leveraged for years. Brands that applied in the first round are about to own a •BRAND that will deliver an extraordinary opportunity to differentiate how they compete against rivals that do not own their •BRAND. In fact, competitors may not be able to challenge for two or more years, enabling smart, winning brands to seize this opportunity.





.BRAND IQ

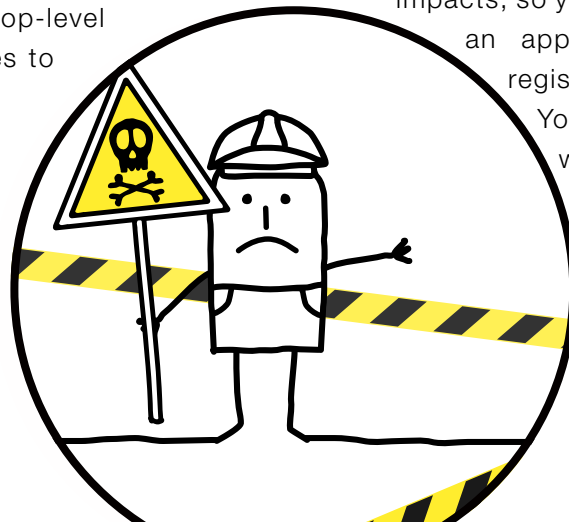
A function of leadership focus and direction, domain expertise and the commitment to invest and enculture innovation.



.BRANDIQ = (Understanding Capabilities) x (Business Strategy Objectives) = Use Case Definitions + Execution Plan

WHY DID YOUR BRAND APPLY?

There are many reasons that brands applied for a top-level domain. They fall into categories across the •BRANDIQ range based on their understanding of what the top-level domain expansion will mean to their business. In simple terms, they either applied for reactive/defensive purposes, or to drive proactive and innovative digital initiatives, or a mix of the two. Here are two perspectives on why a brand registered for a top-level domain, and how it relates to •BRANDIQ personas.



Reactive Or Defensive Motivation

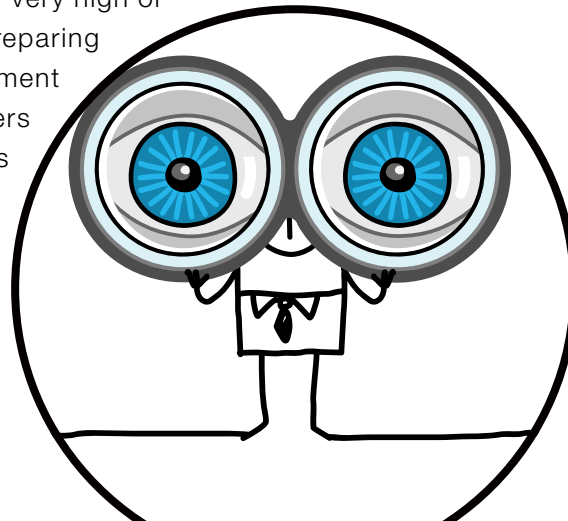
Your executive team considered the situation and recognized the business risk of not applying for a brand registry. You needed to make sure another entity did not infringe on your brand. You may have recognized there were new digital opportunities, new capabilities and significant ideas that would emerge. While there were costs involved, those costs were insignificant relative to the risk scenario impacts, so you went ahead and submitted an application to own your own registry for defensive purposes. Your •BRANDIQ was low. You would build intelligence later because, for now, your brand is safe.



Proactive Innovation Motivation

It was clear you needed to protect your brand and apply for a TLD. It was a no brainer but you went beyond that. You committed funds and smart people to apply their digital thinking caps. A team of digital experts explored how owning a •BRAND registry provided new capabilities. They built a plan by mapping those capabilities to overall corporate objectives. You are an exception because you see the opportunity, and you have high, very high or genius •BRANDIQ. You are preparing to innovate digital engagement experiences with customers directly and through partners and channels. It doesn't mean

it will be easy. In fact, it will be really difficult to deal with the ICANN process and managing the defensive imperative. It is hard but fun, and the digital team is excited. Everyone wants to work with a leader. You are a leader.



WHERE IS YOUR ORGANIZATION ON THE •BRANDIQ CURVE?

Your organization is represented somewhere on the •BRANDIQ bell curve. Use this as an exercise to discover where you sit. Then, identify where you want to be as an organization. You can then work to fill the gaps with your team to get there. Let's look at the personas of each organizational state. Which is most like your brand? Which one sounds most like where you want to be?



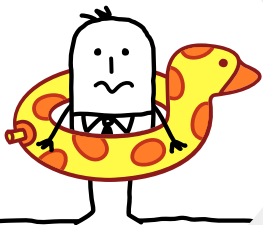
1. THE DISMISSER

You missed it or considered applying but you did not recognize the risks of not applying, or you applied and then withdrew because no one else applied for your name.

You chose the status quo, think you can apply for a top-level down in a few years. But you are not free and clear. You need to execute a strategy to defend your brand in the expanded domain space. Since you don't have an anchor •BRAND registry to establish authenticity, your only choice is defend aggressively. We will see you in the next round.



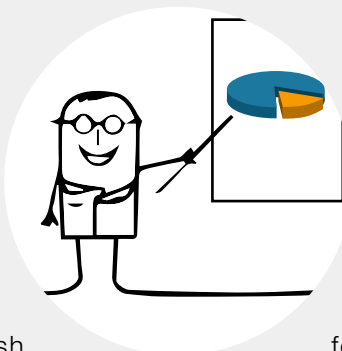
2. THE DEFENDER



Your legal counsel recognized the risk and created a business case to apply. They were on the ball and wise to push

it forward. Now, you are in a defensive mindset trying to work through how to best protect your marks with all the open TLDs coming to market. It is painful, expensive and difficult to execute. You are not enjoying this change. The ICANN process and rules are becoming the bane of your existence. You are firmly in a defensive mindset as the most urgent/important priority. In this state, it is difficult to see the opportunities for innovation.

3. THE LEARNER



Your legal counsel recognized the risk and created the business case and your senior executives agreed. Your business applied mostly for defensive purposes but one or more executives saw the potential

so they dedicated limited resources to think it through. It is early days and the immediate priority is creating a fullsome new gTLD defensive strategy, along with a plan to gain an understanding of new capabilities and how they can be applied to overall business objectives. While your major focus is being defensive, you are thinking about next steps on how •BRAND can be applied to innovate and drive business value.



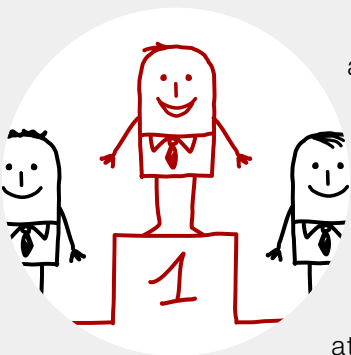
4. THE EXPERIMENTER

Like all, the biggest motivator in the beginning was defense but you possessed internal expertise or advice that opened your eyes to the new capabilities and how it could drive forward your business. You have advanced your •BRANDIQ through the formation of a TLD team. You are in full motion, working through what and how you will deploy innovative digital programs based on your •BRAND capabilities. You have autonomy; you have preliminary budgets and a team. You believe in a 'test and learn' approach with a keen eye on the entire market to prepare yourself to be a fast-follower when you see innovations aligned with your

business. You are in a good position by recognizing the multi-year potential of •BRAND.

5. THE INNOVATOR

Yes, you wanted to defend but it was a less important consideration than others along the IQ curve. You plan to build awareness of your •BRAND as the authentic destination. Your organization will be a leader. You plan to use it to differentiate your digital marketing with exciting and innovative content distribution strategies. You have a vision, funding, a team and outside expertise to support the development of an execution plan. Your internal cross-functional team is excited and preparing a launch. It is advancing and you are working through the difficult details, not the least of which are the challenges with ICANN related items such



as contract and/or timing. Luckily you have high-level support and permission to innovate. Your teams love it because the top-level domain landscape is new, bold and uncharted. You attract top digital talent to the project.

6. THE VISIONARY

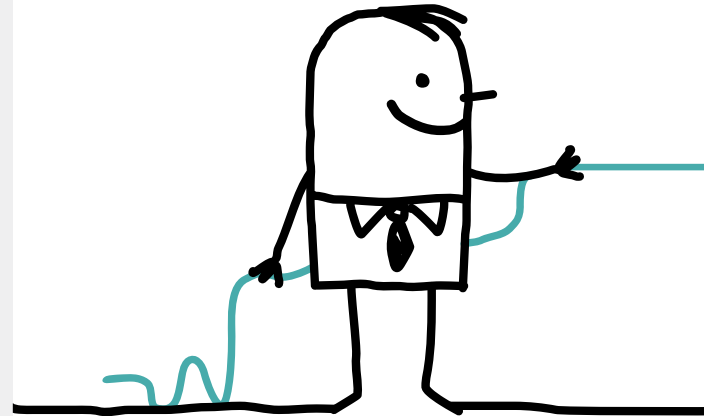
Sssshhhh, you are changing everything. Your organization is well advanced with genius •BRANDIQ. The name space gives you the opportunity to take control of your digital voice, own the dialogue, distribute content that is consistent and true to the brand on a network of names you create, control and have visibility

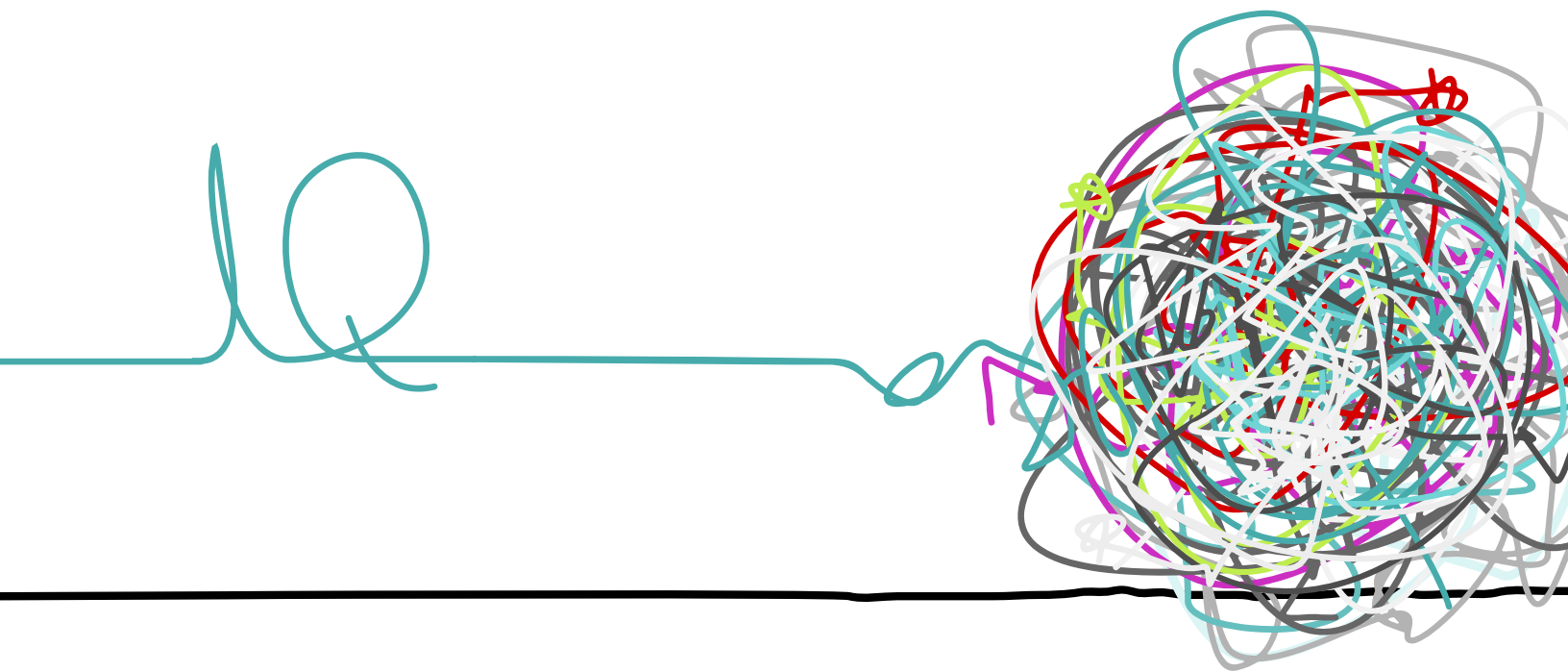
over. It is an opportunity to build better affinity relationships with customers, and motivate the customers' authentic voices into their social circles to drive advocacy generating business growth.

Your competitors missed it. By the time they have an opportunity to do the same, you will be miles ahead in traction and learning. You will use names to deliver enhanced services based on common names you decide in a space you control. You will invest in your own network where ROI will have multi-year residuals. You will let the market know that if it is not name •BRANDV; beware. Yes, you will have pure mark protection in the expanded domain, but you do not intend to spend 10s, if not 100s of thousands, on a broad defensive protection strategy as you have in the past. It simply

will not work. Instead, you plan to invest to build your owned name space network where customers, partners and channels will come to trust and value it. Ssshhhh! This will be fun and your people will be driven to lead and participate in something new and exciting. You will attract the best creative and digital talent and leave your competitors battling for defensive relevance.

6. THE VISIONARY





WHAT ARE THE •BRAND CAPABILITIES AND USE CASES HIGH IQ'ERS WILL LAUNCH?

USE CASE	PROBLEM	CAPABILITY/ USE CASE	VALUE
customer •brand	Relationships	Customer centric named experience	Affinity- Advocacy
channel •brand	Oversight Insights Performance	Channel centric content distribution to points of presence	Consistency - Control
marcom •brand	Memorable response ROI	"Key message •brand"	Response ROI - Branding
service •brand	Discovery & delivery	Branded IP services discovery - content - device	ARPU - New biz model



New capabilities and resulting use cases of a well run owned private •BRAND registry are far reaching. There is no doubt that as the name space expands, owning a •BRAND and managing it well will be a critical success factor for online digital strategies.

In essence, capabilities center around control, visibility, digital automation and how they can be applied to any number of business priorities.

Once you establish your •BRAND, it becomes your blank canvas. Capabilities will be both nuanced and, overtly obvious and nearly

limitless. Using a few simple named examples, you may see in the future include: run.nike, drive.bmw, johnsmith.rogers, promotion.yahoo, broker.metlife, partner.ibm, employee.bloomberg, dealer.ford or product.target ... it goes on and on and the subject of another e-book.

Whatever your situation, there is a •BRAND use case to support your business. As you consider the following, we look forward to providing more thoughts on the capabilities and use cases in future publications.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In 2014, the domain name space will experience a massive shift that will continue to have a major impact in the coming years. As brands recognize the opportunity to take control over their brand and protect against nefarious players, they will realize that in the future, owning a •BRAND registry is a business imperative and a natural evolution of the online world.

Today, we have covered the expanding domain names space and how it will impact digital marketing for brands. We discussed two motivational camps on why brands applied for their •BRAND name. We have learned about the •BRANDIQ curve, which plots organizational

understanding of capabilities, use cases development, commitment of resources and preparedness for launch. We defined what each organizational persona looks like from Laggard to Fast-Follower to Innvoator to help brand owners understand their position and chart their goals. Finally, we touched on some •BRAND capabilities and use cases that we will see brands deploy over the coming months and years.

We hope you found this ebook interesting and we look forward to seeing your •BRAND go live.

All the best,
Peter LaMantia, CEO Authentic Web Inc.

ABOUT AUTHENTIC WEB INC.

Authentic Web is a platform company serving the closed •BRAND registry market. Our **Brand Registry Asset Manager (BRAM™)** platform is specifically designed for brand registries. We help you along the •BRANDIQ curve to the point of launch and ongoing registry management.



Control and visibility in the management of a BRAND registry.



Affinity relationships, drive brand advocacy actions.

Registry management complexity made **EASY** and **EFFECTIVE**.

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