**Brand Under the Microscope: Microsoft**

When you think of great branding, you’re much more likely to think of Apple than Microsoft. Actually though, Microsoft has done a lot right with its branding over the years and has recently seen a very impressive turn in its reputation.

What’s more, is that we can actually stand to learn quite a lot from where Microsoft has gone *wrong* as well as where it has gone right. So read on and let’s take a look at the best lessons from Redmond.

**The Early Days**

In the early days, Microsoft was actually something of a rock star and could do no wrong. They managed to make Windows a very enticing property and many people describe it as being the first software to achieve household name status.

One of the (many) things that Microsoft did right to ensure this, was creating the ‘Startup Sound’ for Windows 95. Music legend Brian Eno was called in to create a piece of music that would be ‘inspiring, universal, optimistic, futuristic, sentimental and emotional’.

The result was the chime that millions of people heard when they turned on their computer and which became synonymous with the brand. This was a musical expression of a mission statement!

**Where Things Went Wrong**

Unfortunately though, a few missteps led to the company damaging its reputation over time and being seen as ‘old hat’. Among other things, late entry into the tablet space helped to cause this, along with failed software launches like Windows Vista.

But what Microsoft did right during this time was to have some segmentation in its branding. Windows and Xbox existed as separate standalone brands that therefore allowed the company’s gaming division to thrive even when the rest was suffering.

More recently, Microsoft have begun turning things around. They’ve done this through the release of some beautiful hardware (like Microsoft Surface), their ‘Metro’ design language and exciting projects like the HoloLens.