

a brand model

april 9, 2001

name

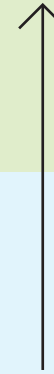
name

perception

name



brand

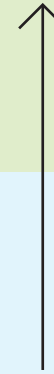


perception

name



brand



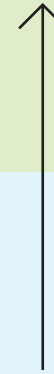
product

perception

name



brand



product

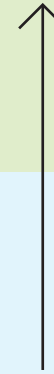
- Creation
- Price
- Placement
- Promotion

perception

name



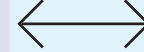
brand



product



experience



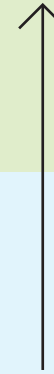
perception

Creation
Price
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brand



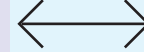
product

Creation
Price
Placement
Promotion

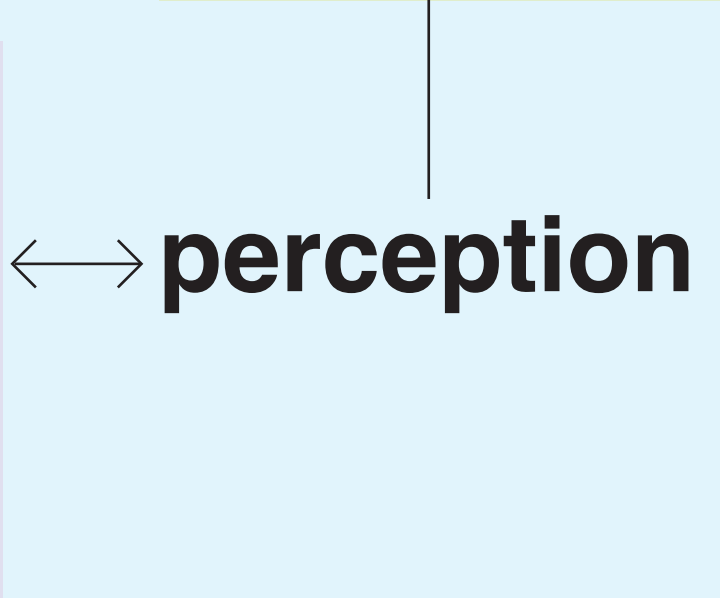
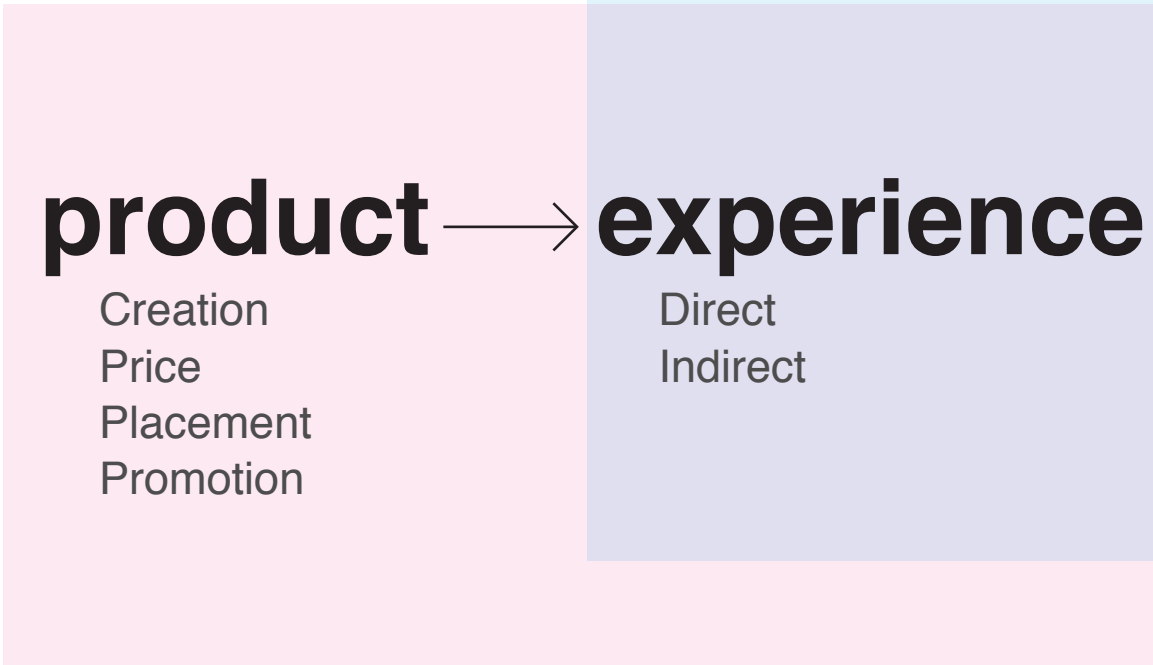
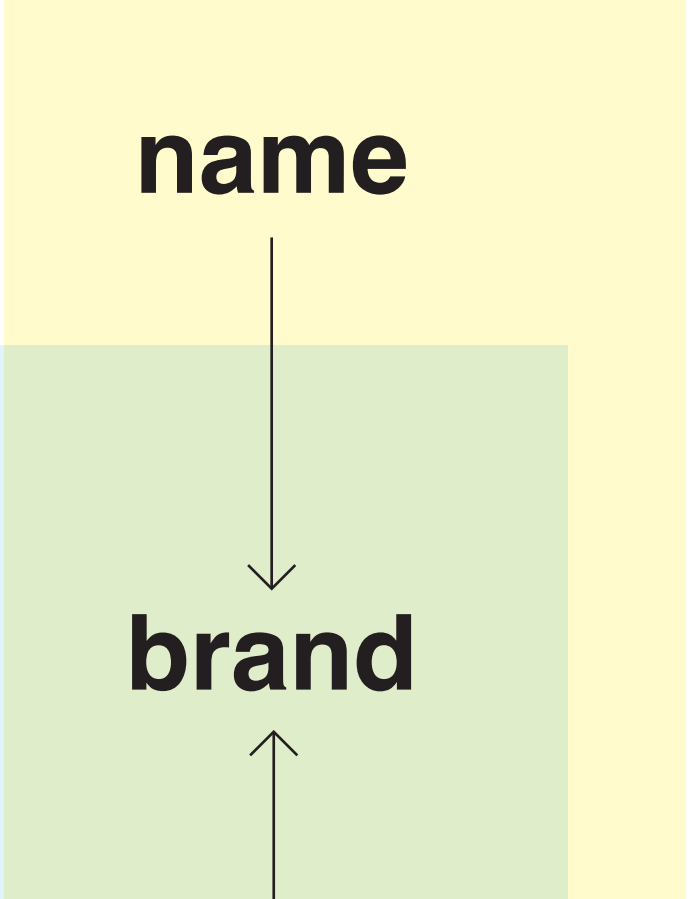
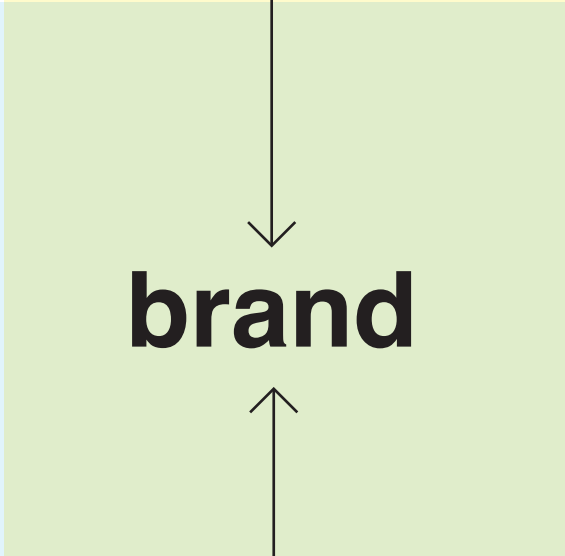
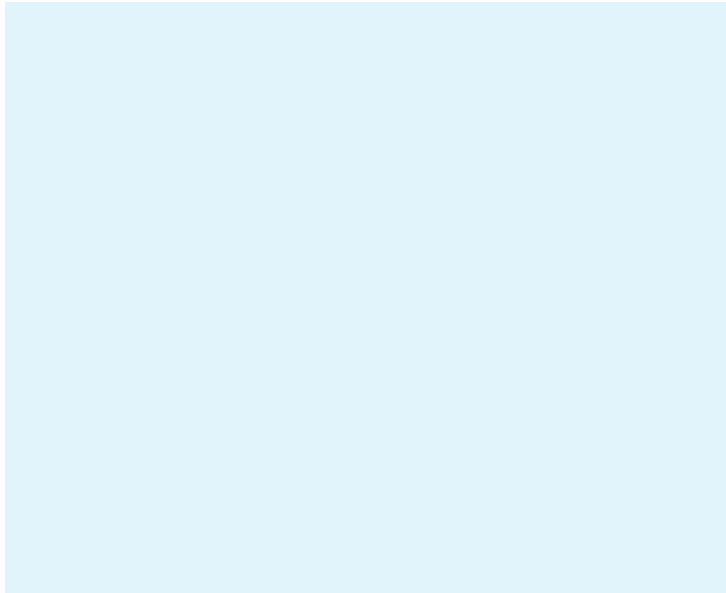


experience

Direct
Indirect



perception



promise



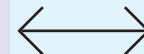
product

Creation
Price
Placement
Promotion



experience

Direct
Indirect

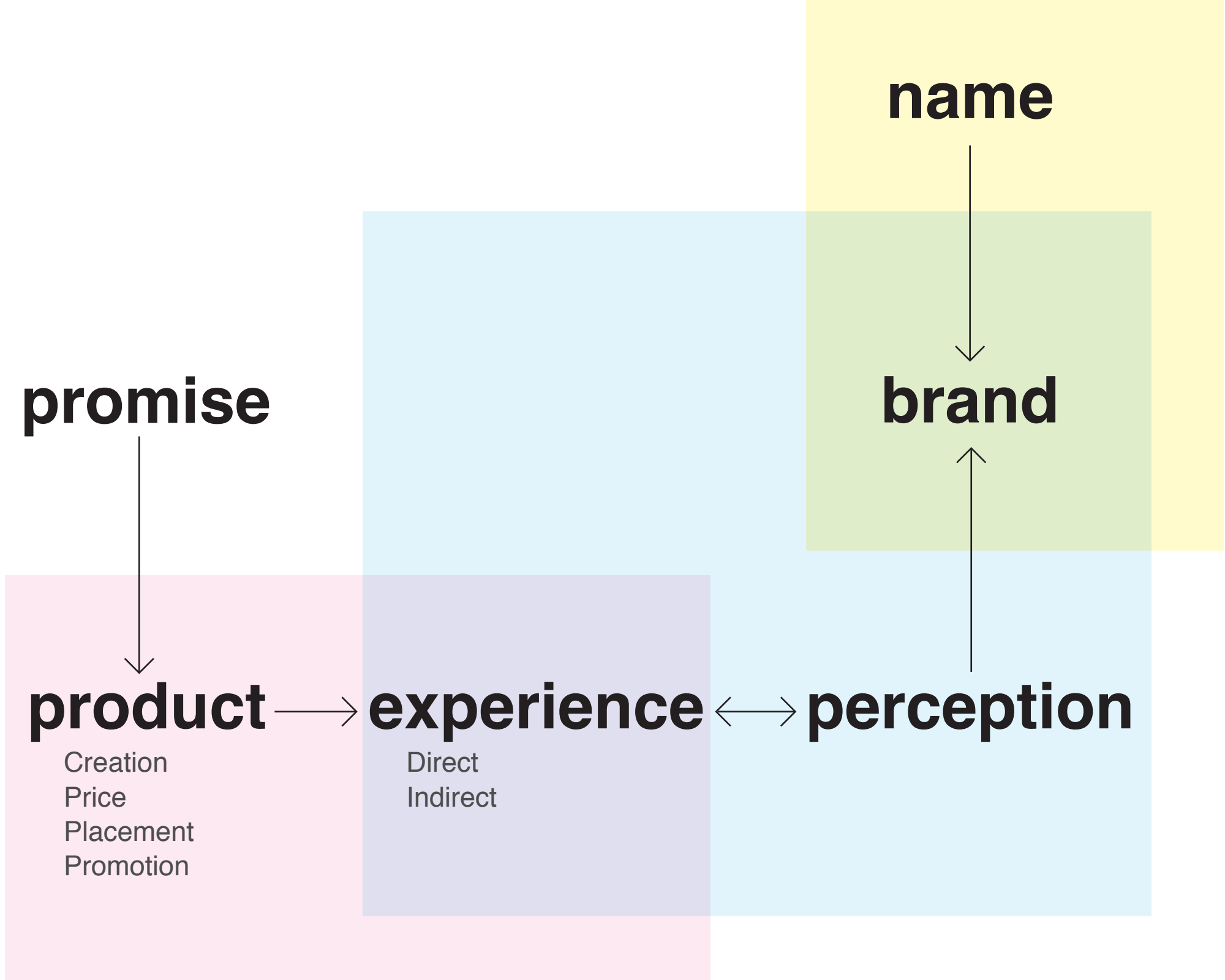
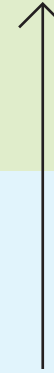


perception

name



brand



promise



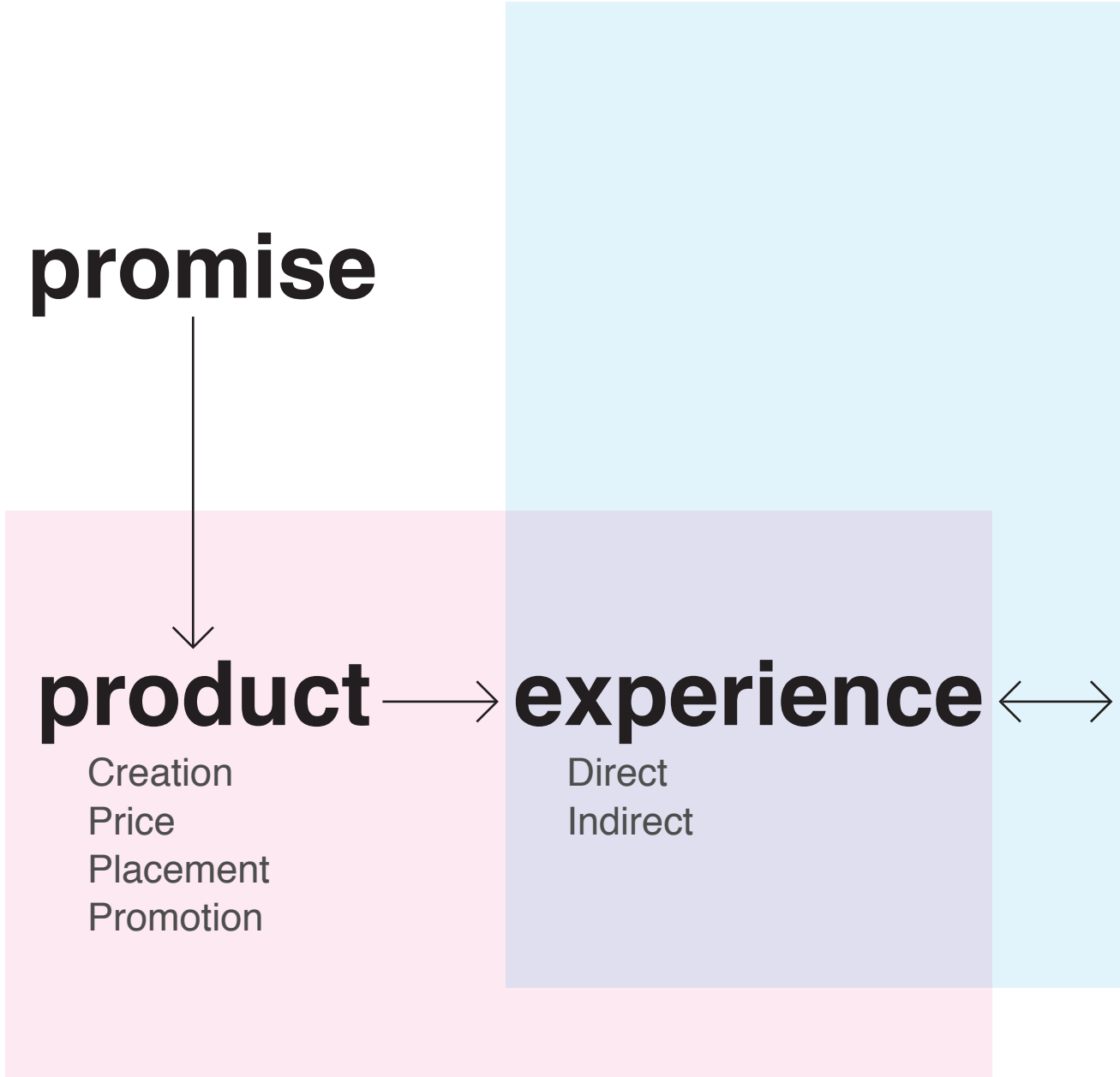
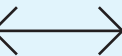
product

- Creation
- Price
- Placement
- Promotion



experience

- Direct
- Indirect



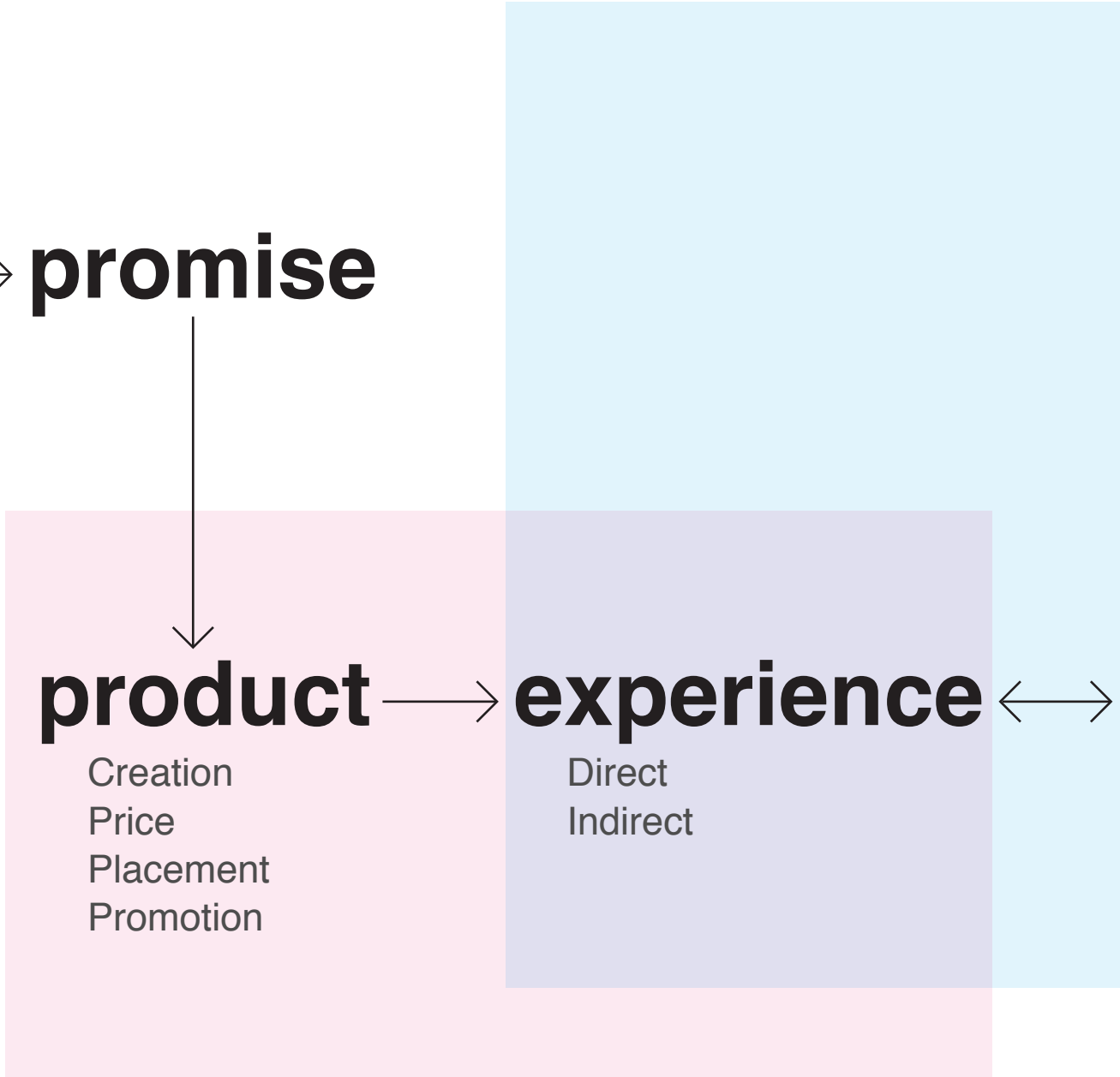
stewards → **promise**



product → **experience** ↔

Creation
Price
Placement
Promotion

Direct
Indirect



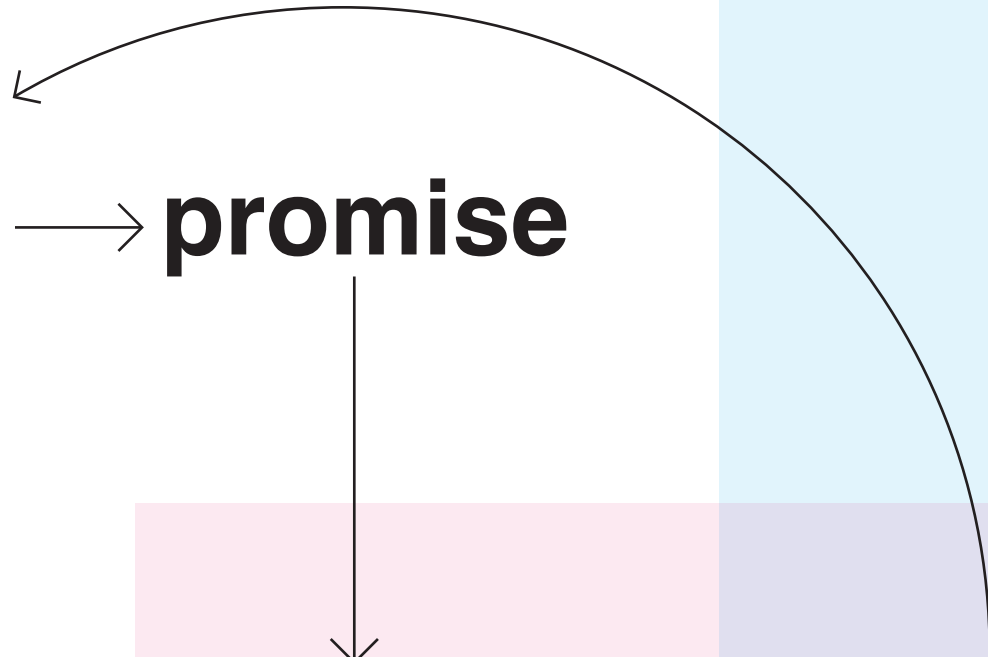
stewards → **promise**

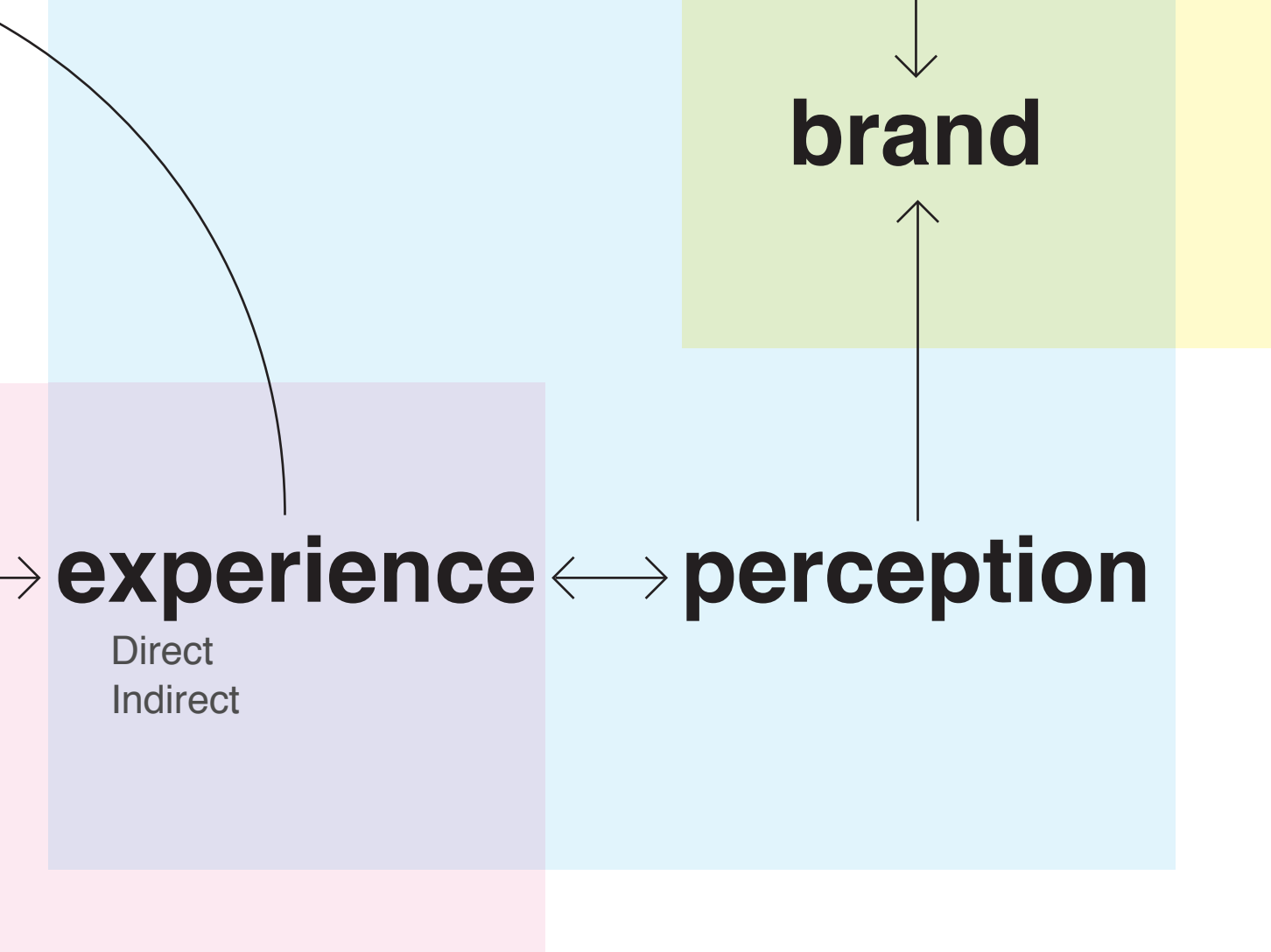


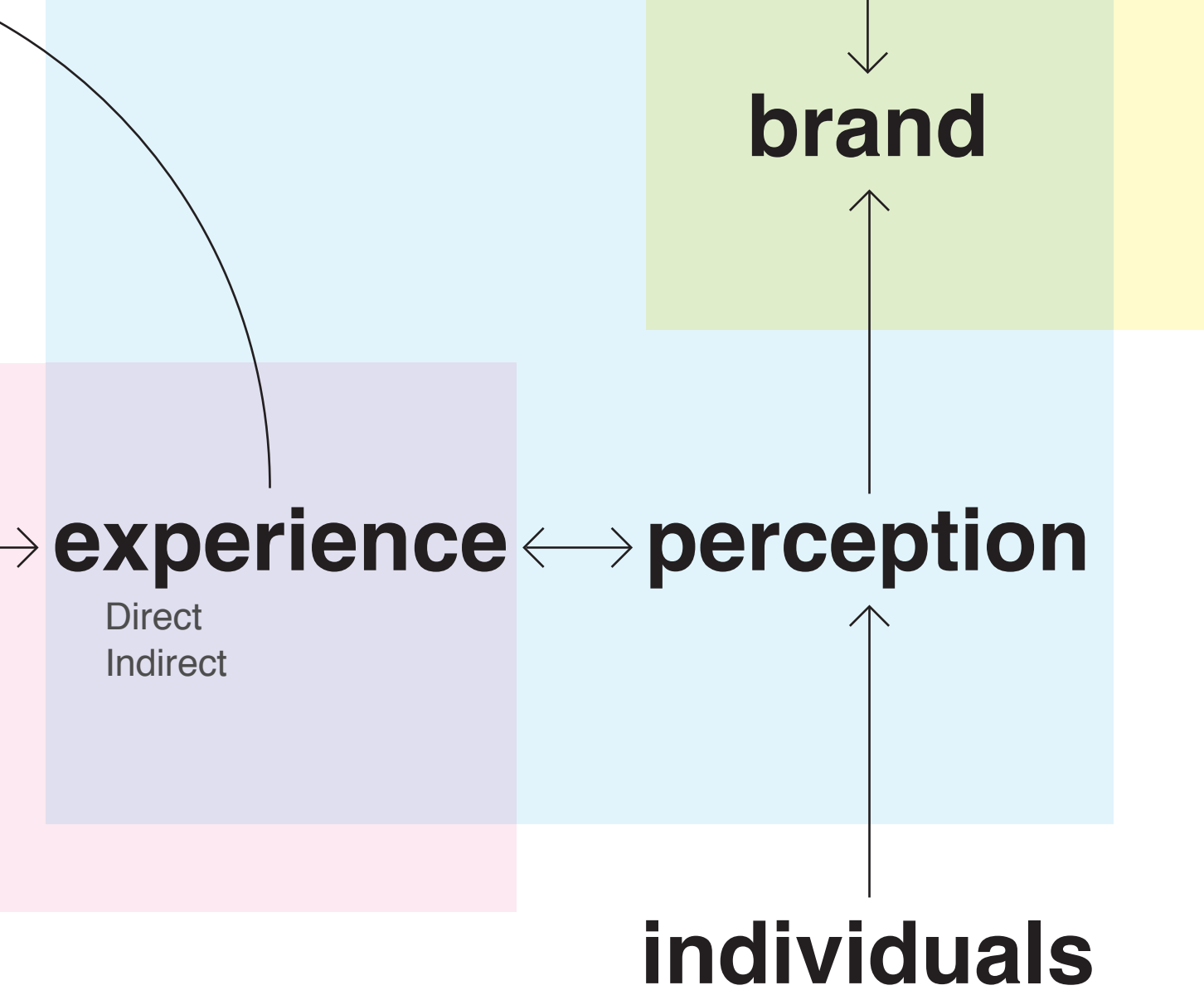
product → **experience** ↔

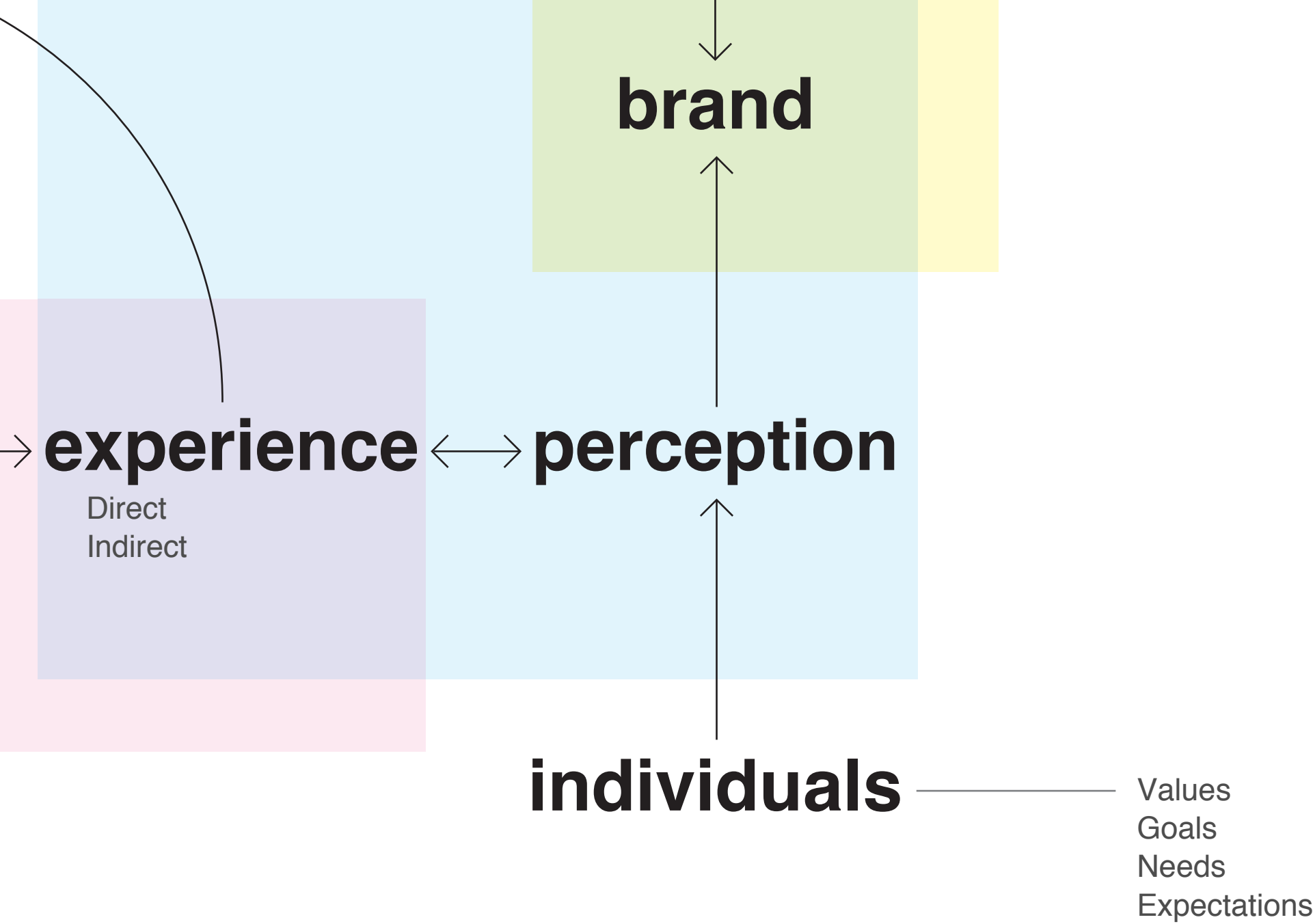
Creation
Price
Placement
Promotion

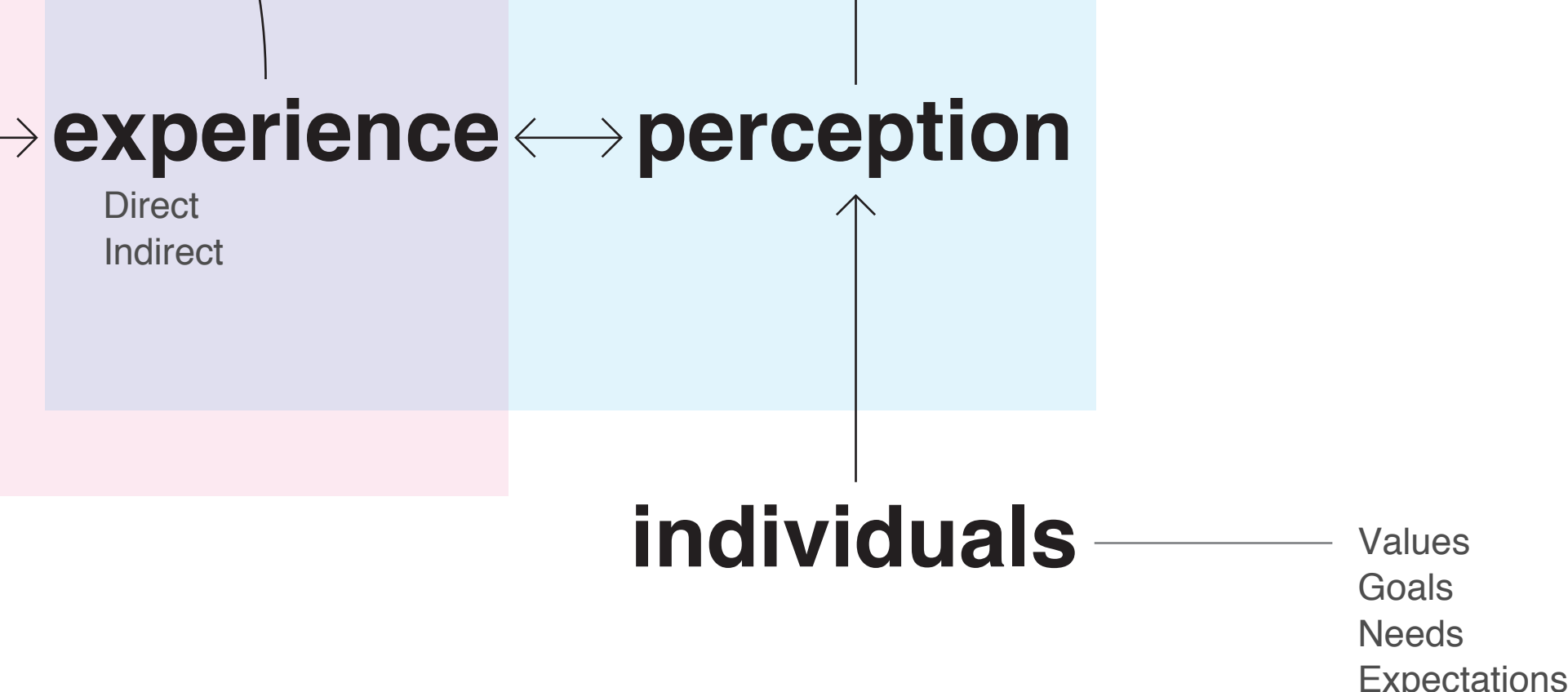
Direct
Indirect











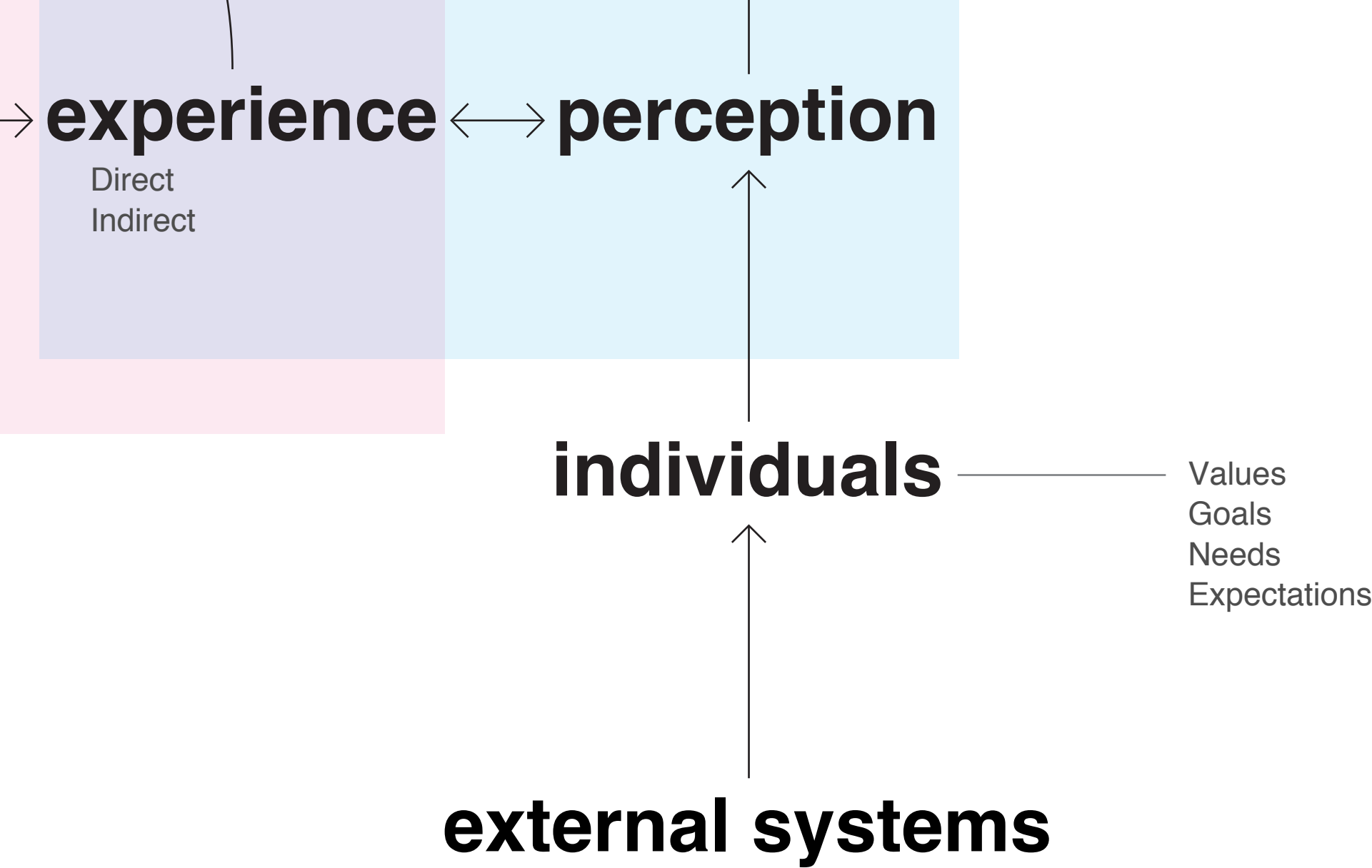
experience

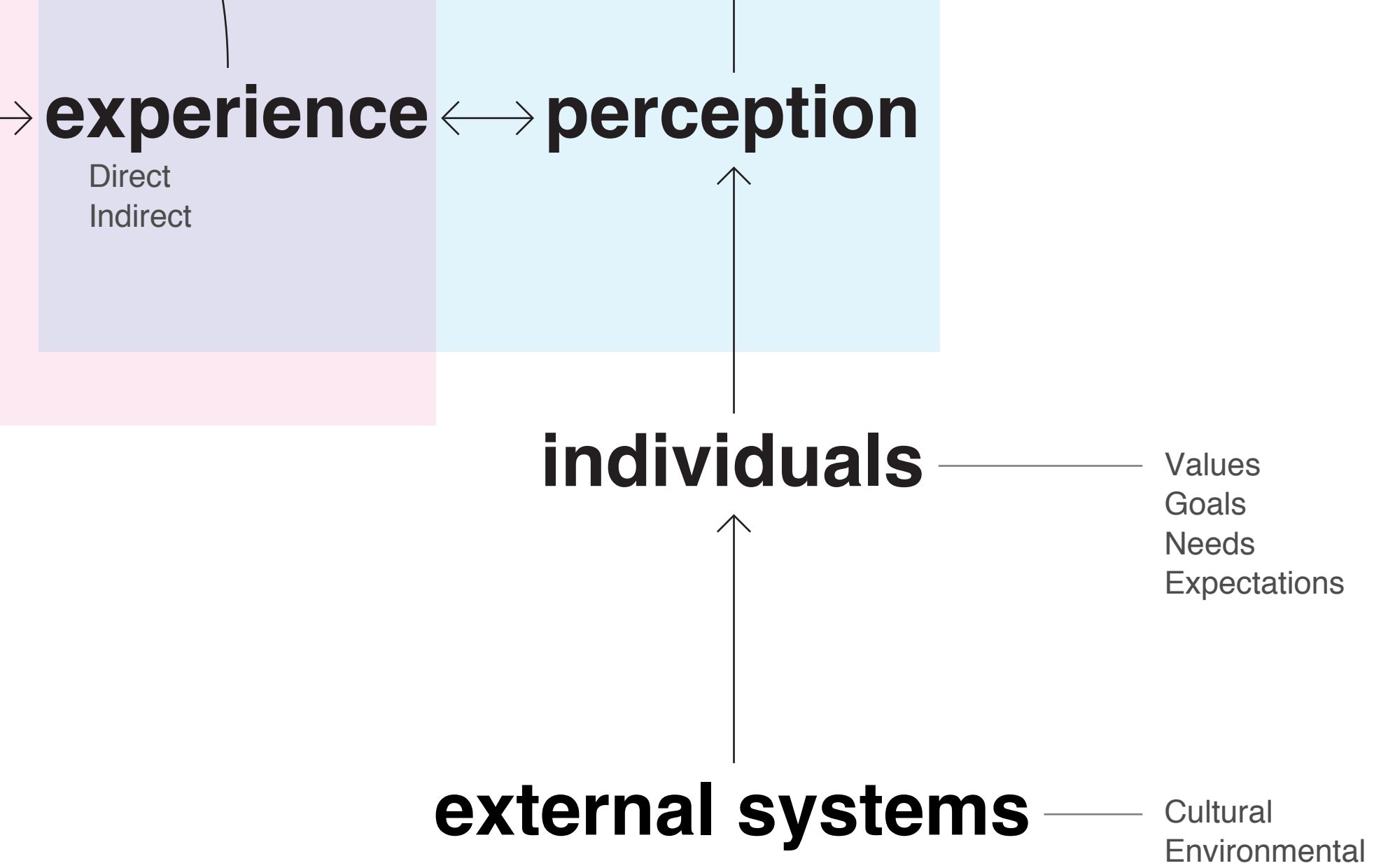
Direct
Indirect

perception

individuals

Values
Goals
Needs
Expectations

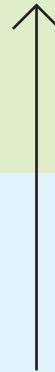




name



brand



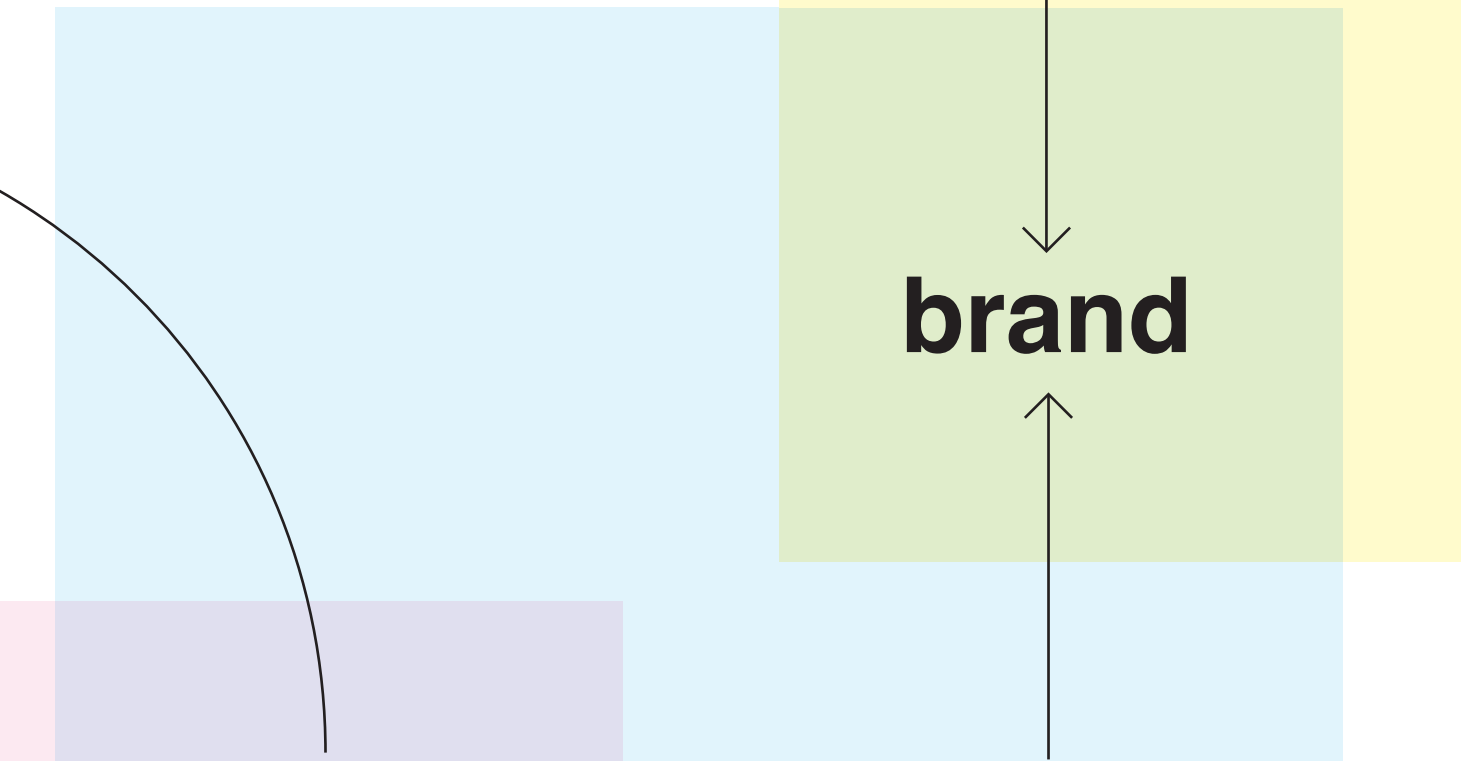
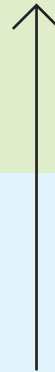
symbols



name

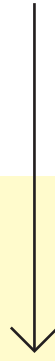


brand



symbols

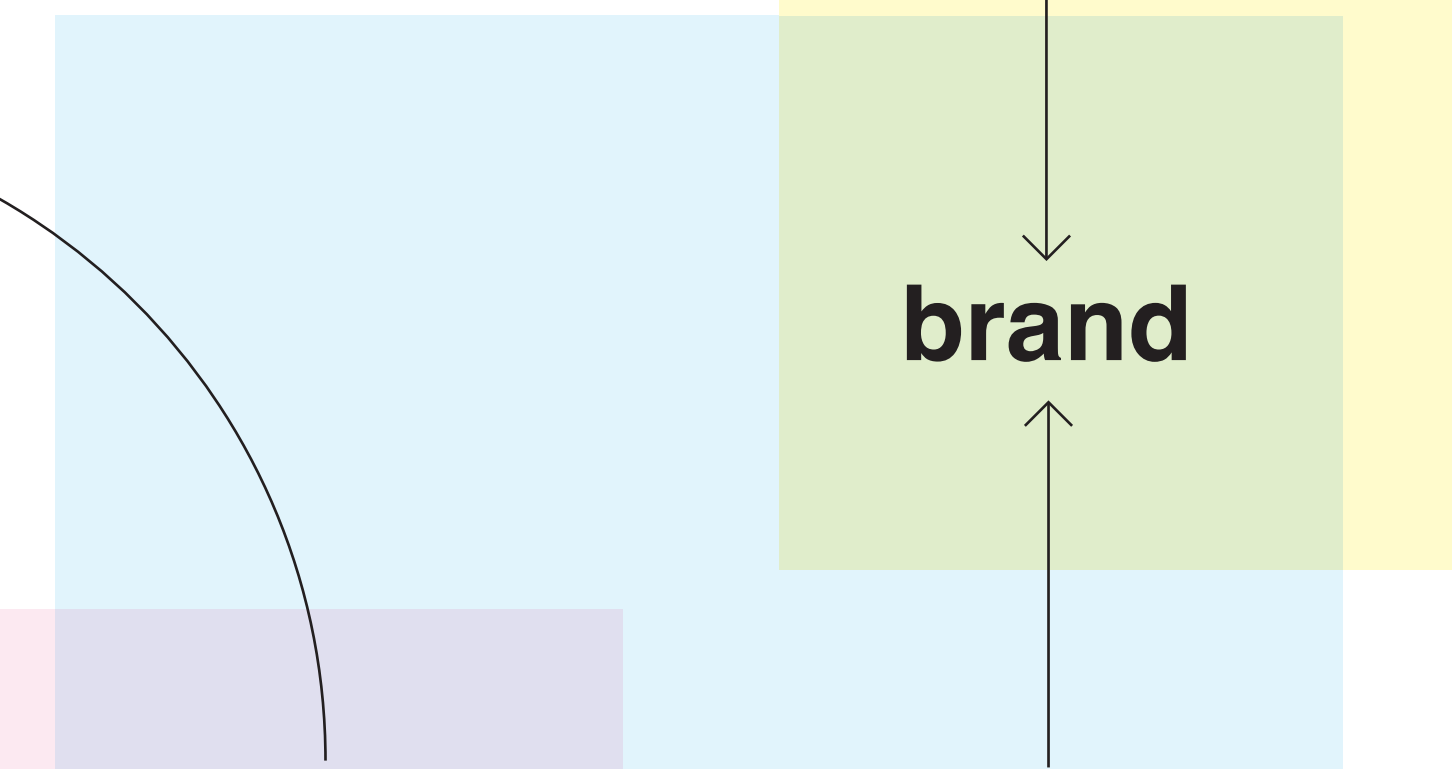
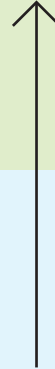
Graphic Devices
Trade Dress
Spokesmen
Words
Sounds



name



brand



symbols

Graphic Devices
Trade Dress
Spokesmen
Words
Sounds

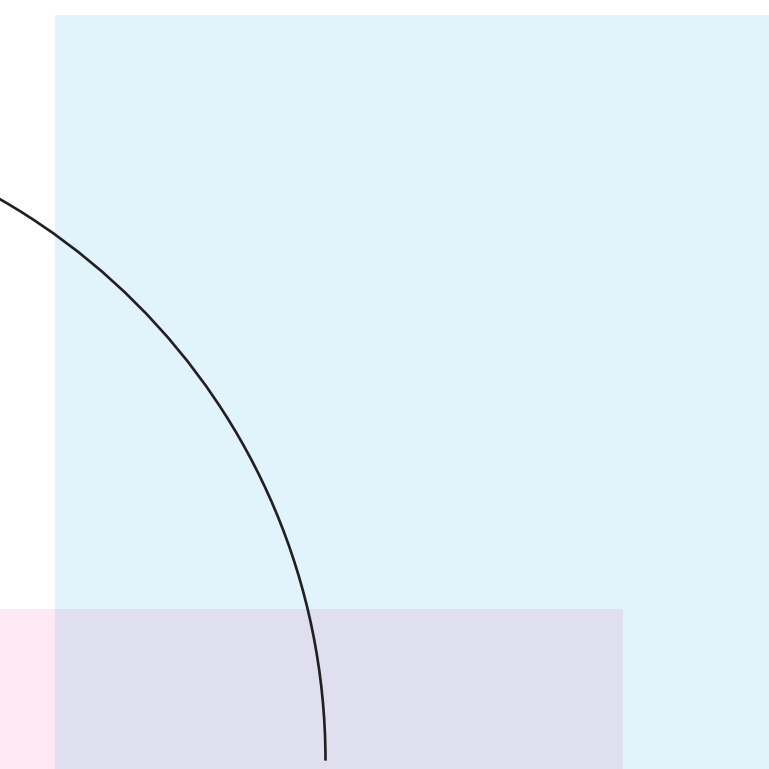
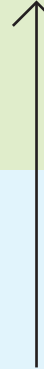


name

Existing Words
Coined Words
Abbreviations
Hybrids



brand



symbols

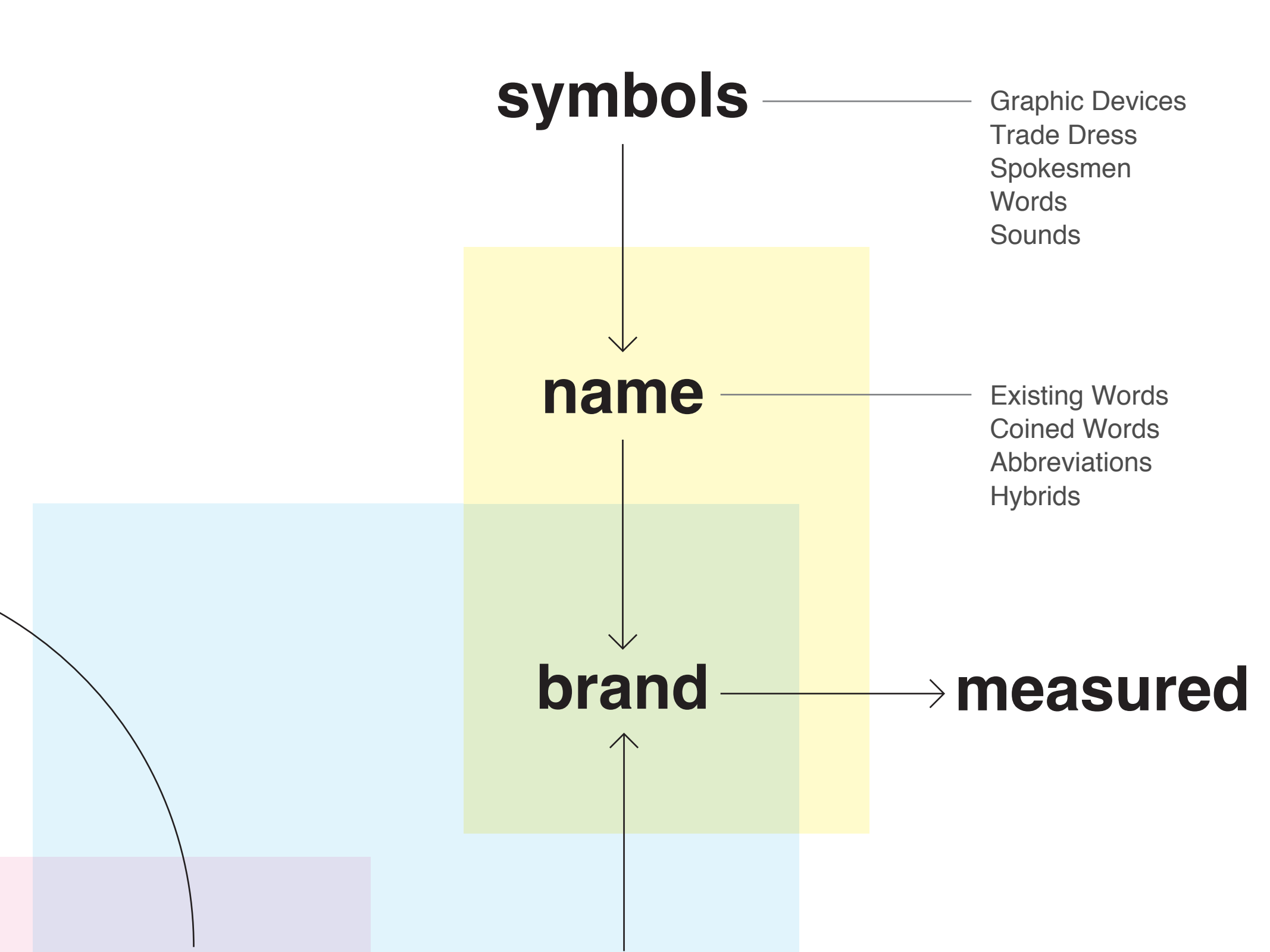
Graphic Devices
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name

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brand

measured



symbols

Graphic Devices
Trade Dress
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Sounds

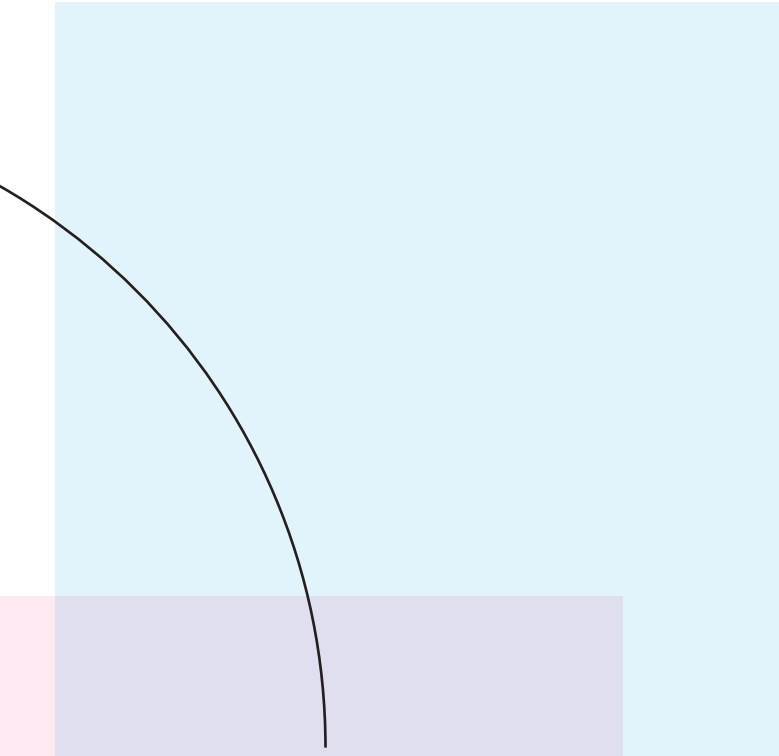
name

Existing Words
Coined Words
Abbreviations
Hybrids

brand

measured

Position
Reach
Reputation



symbols

Graphic Devices
Trade Dress
Spokesmen
Words
Sounds

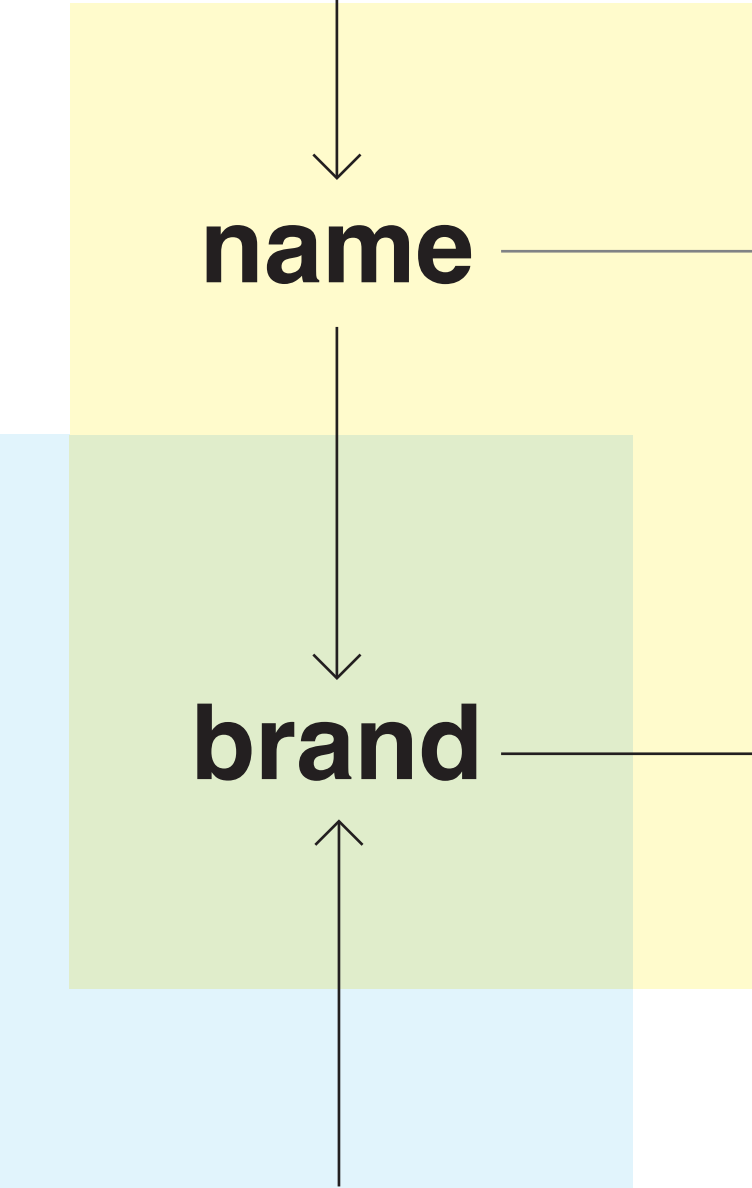
name

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symbols

Graphic Devices
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name

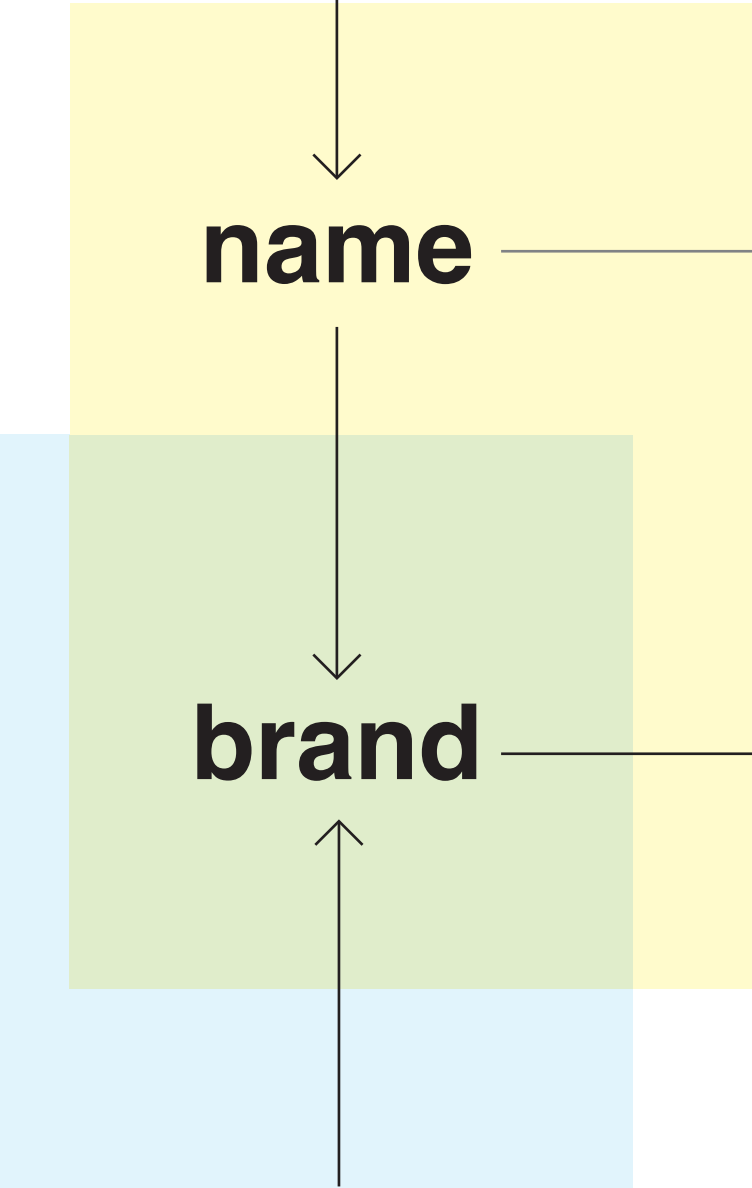
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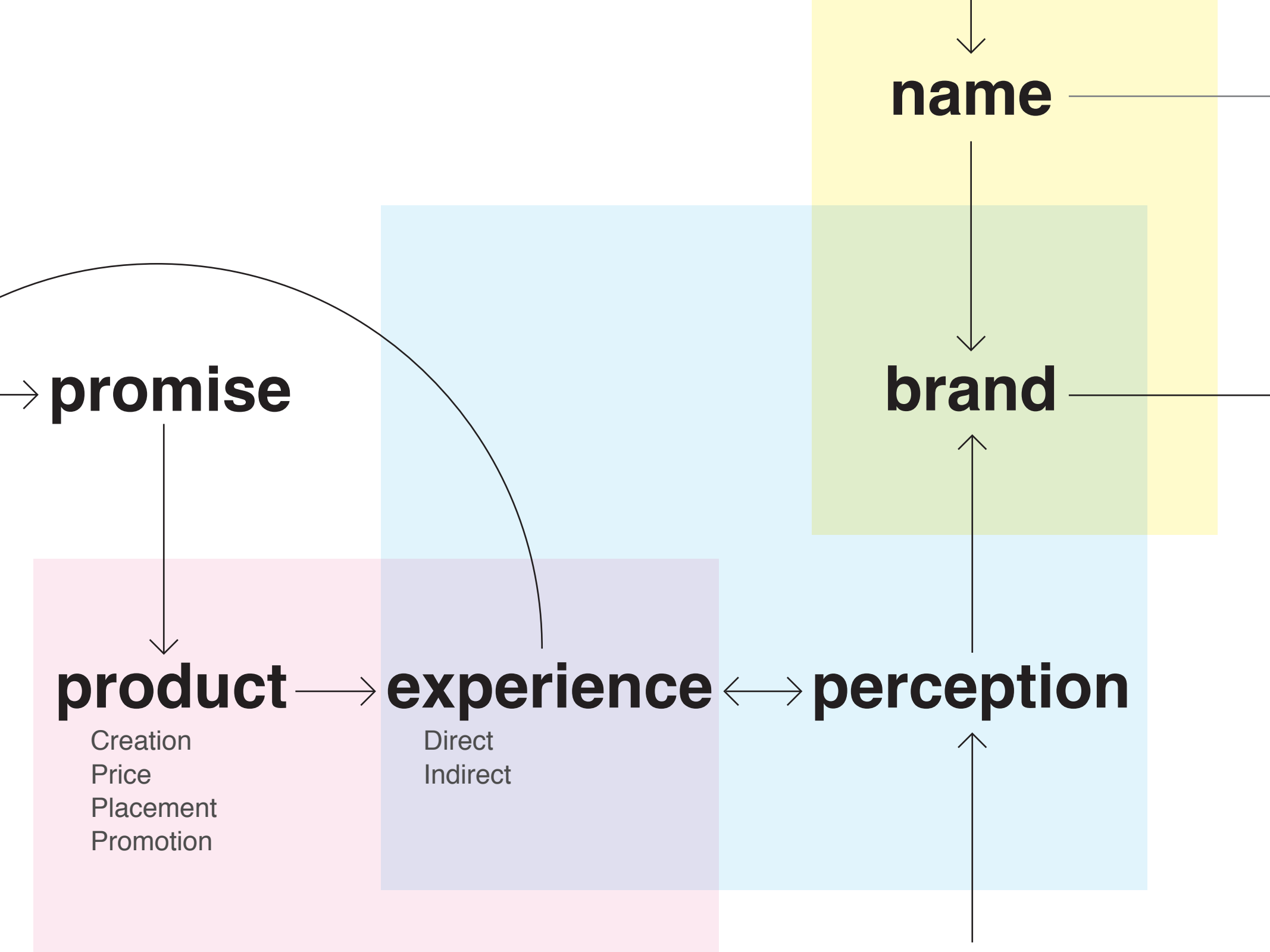
brand

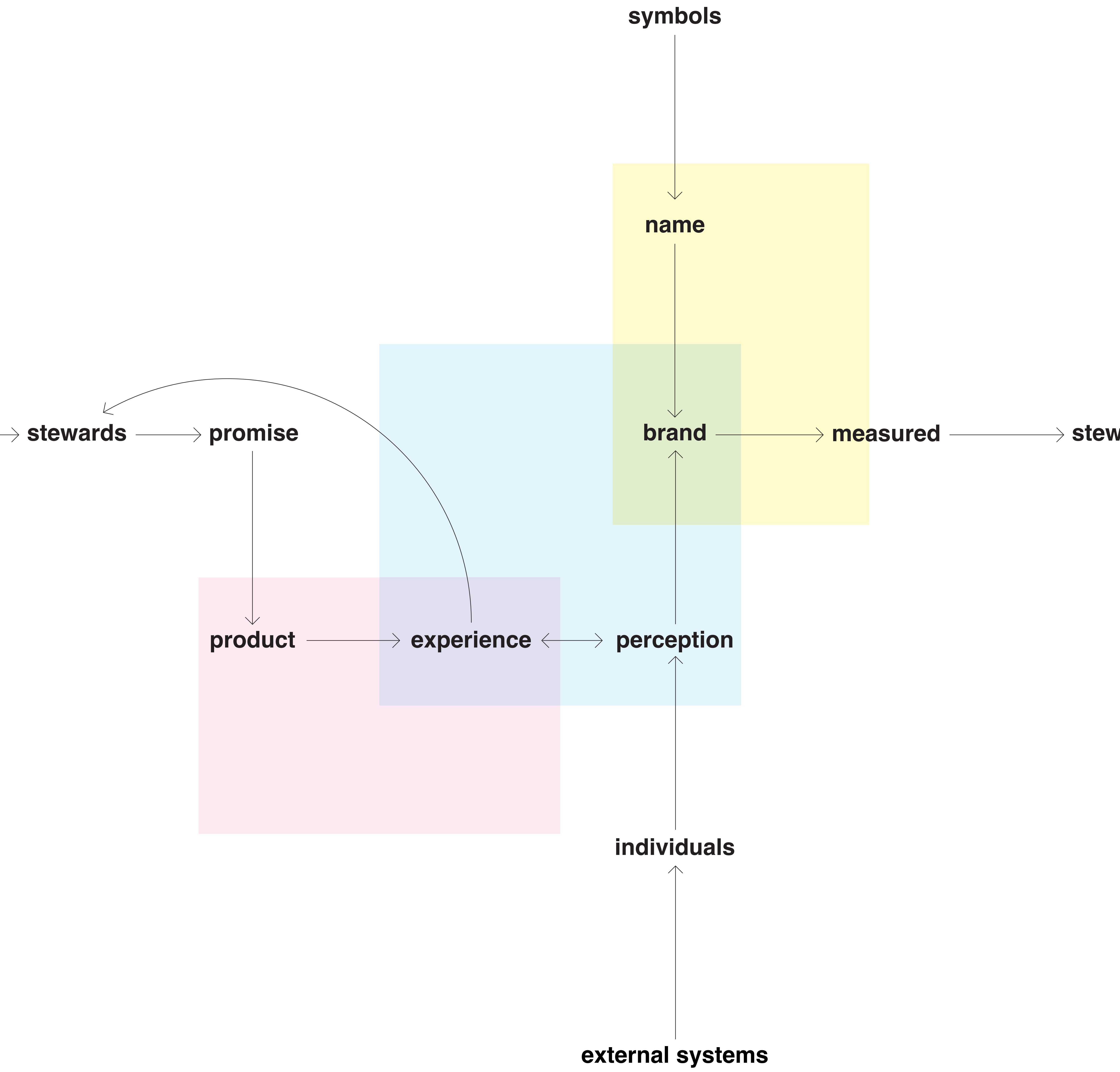
measured

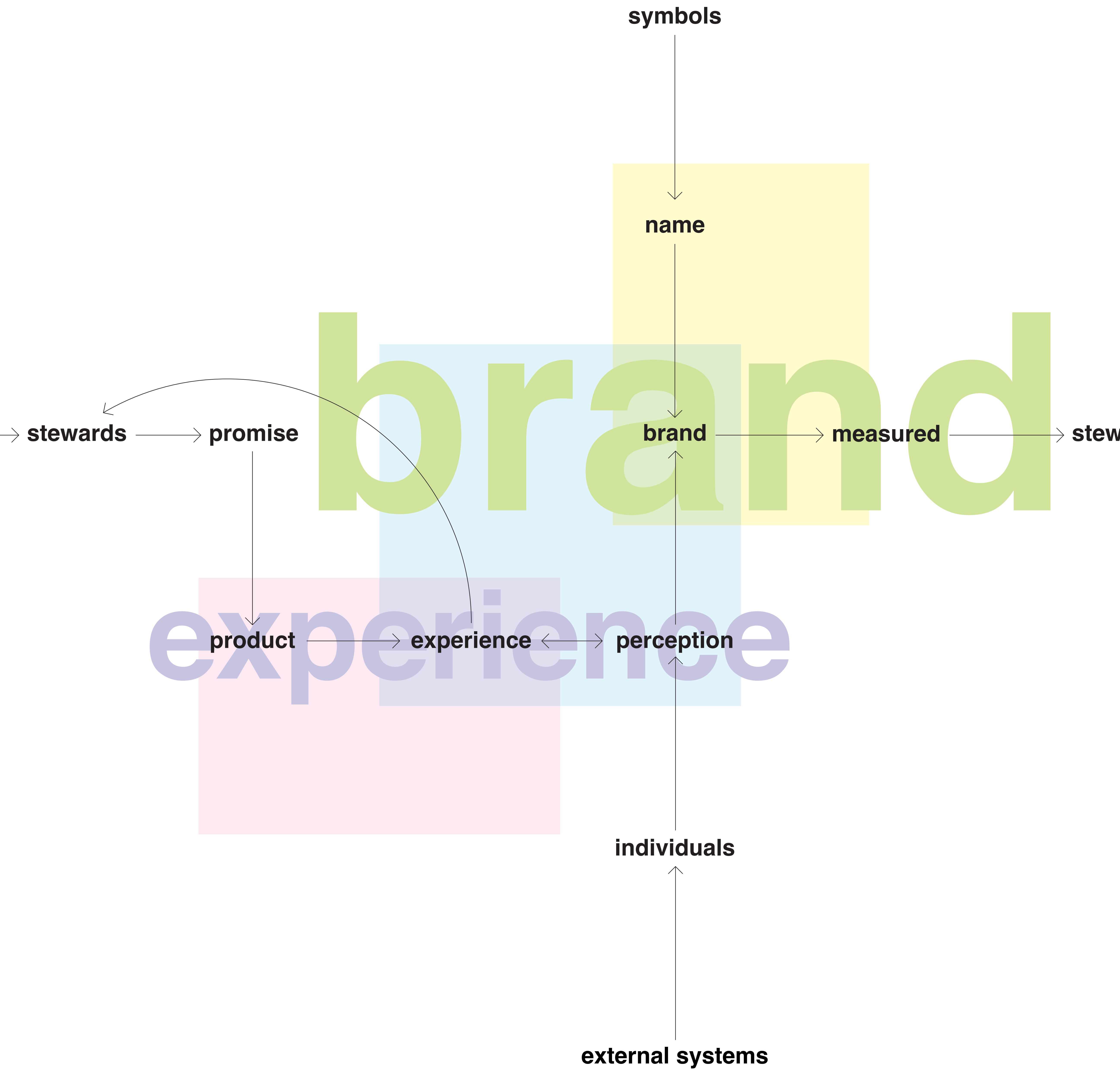
Position
Reach
Reputation

stewards









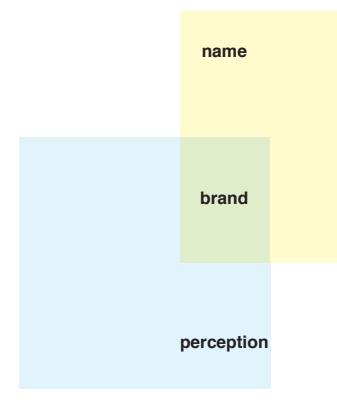
a model of brand

Overview
This diagram is a model of brand, a term often used in business, marketing, and design. The diagram defines brand by mapping related concepts and examples.

Concept maps¹
Concept maps are webs of linked terms that help us visualize our mental models and clarify our thinking. In concept maps, verbs connect nouns to form propositions. Examples and details also accompany the terms. More important terms receive typographic emphasis; less important ones and examples are grayed back and pushed to the periphery.

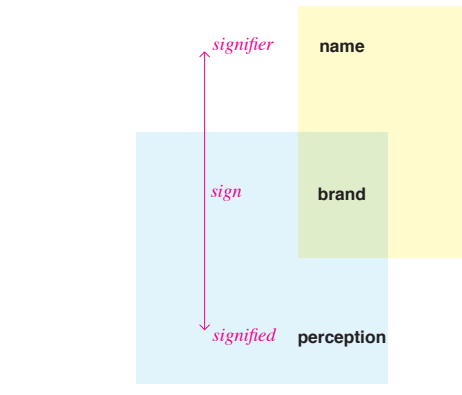
Organization
The diagram attempts to present a comprehensive model of brand. It is framed around four main ideas:
1) a brand is more than a name or symbol
2) creating a great customer experience is the essence of good branding
3) perceptions of a brand can be measured
4) brands are a form of sign

More than a name or symbol
People speaking informally about brand often use the term to mean the name or symbol of a company. While this shorthand is convenient, it misses an important truth. A brand is at least two things: a name and a perception of what the name means.

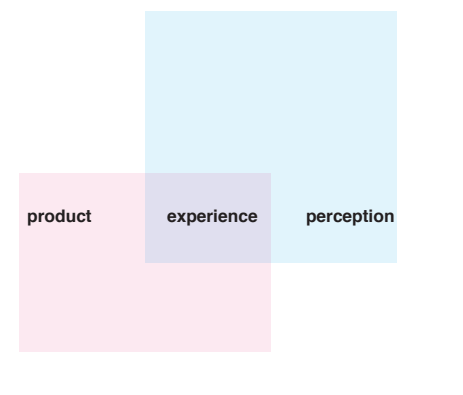


Measuring brand
An important aspect of managing a brand is measuring it. The diagram contains a section on measuring brands. People who understand brand development often disagree on how to describe and measure it, and experts often use different terms. I propose three terms: position, reach, and reputation. These three dimensions seem to cover the subject as simply as possible.

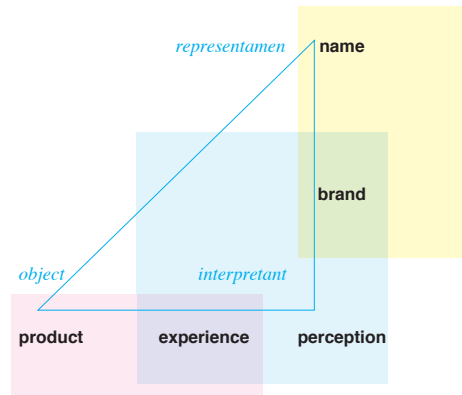
Brands as signs²
The idea that a brand is both a name and a perception parallels Saussure's model of a sign. Saussure describes signs as having two aspects: signifier and signified. A brand name is a signifier and the perception of what it means is the signified.



Creating a great customer experience
Of course, perception of a brand does not arise on its own. Rather, it grows out of experience with a product. Here, product is used in a broad sense incorporating the results of many activities commonly associated with marketing. Likewise, experience means here any point at which contact is made with a potential customer.

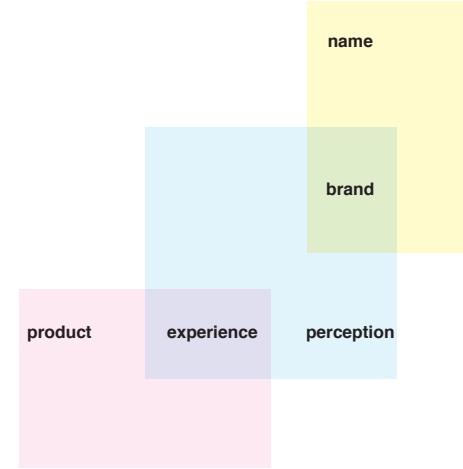


Peirce suggests a more complex model of signs. His model has three parts: object, representamen, and interpretant. The concept of brand as formed by the triad: product, name, and perception, parallels Peirce's three-part model.



In this model, a brand manager (or steward) is responsible for any item which comes into contact with customers. By controlling all the touch points, the manager tries to ensure that customers have a great experience.

To complete the framework of the model, the set of terms related to brand must be linked to the set of terms related to experience. Perception, common to both sets, is the link.



through observation and analysis, user experiences can form the basis for improving products and may even shape the stewards' goals and values

symbols can be

graphic devices	logos logotypes crests monograms flags	typographic geometric representational	graphic devices may be deployed as static identity systems with fixed rules Target United Airlines
trade dress	package graphics package form	Tiffany's blue box Gateway's spotted box Coke's hour-glass bottle L'eggs shell carton	kinetic identity systems ³ with rules allowing variation MTV MIT Media Lab
product form	uniforms	iconic products such as Apple iMac Volkswagen Beetle Boy Scout uniforms the Swiss Guards' uniforms	
form of buildings	form of vehicles	iconic buildings such as McDonald's stores with golden arches Transamerica's pyramid tower Cushman cars driven by meter maids the brown UPS trucks	
spokesmen	celebrity endorsers founders / managers	Bill Cosby for Jello Martha Stewart for herself Dave Thomas for Wendy's Bill Gates for Microsoft	
invented characters		human-like figures, based on the product the M&Ms men animals — Morris The Cat people — Cap'n Crunch magical creatures — Keebler Elves	which inhabit real or fantasy worlds
masots		the GOP elephant	
words	abbreviations slogans jingles tag lines	Coke for Coca-Cola GM for General Motors MSFT for Microsoft FDR's "Happy days are here again" Wrigley's "Double your pleasure; double your fun" Nike's "Just do it"	
sounds	anthems auditory icons theme music	The Star-Spangled Banner Intel Inside TV ad signature AOL's "You've got mail" Dolby THX's "sonic boom" telephone dial tone Henry Mancini's Pink Panther theme	

symbols do not represent brands directly; instead, symbols call to mind the name of a brand which in turn calls to mind an associated perception

most brand names and symbols can be converted to property by applying to a government to establish trademark ownership;

once the government approves a trademark application, a trademark owner may prevent other people from using the trademark without permission

represent

can be

represents

can be

builds

interpretant

existing words	things (or ideas) people (often founders) places (often of origin)	describing products analogies for products superlatives and qualities unrelated to the product surnames first names groups specific spot city or town region country continent larger still	Digital, Huggies, Newsweek Oracle, Pampers, Sprint All, Best, General, Paramount, Apple, Camel, Frog, Thrasher Dell, Ford, McDonald's Aldus, Ben & Jerry's Quaker Oats, Roman Meal Parliament, Wall Street Journal Catalago, Corning Eastern, Great Plains British Airways North American Van Lines Global, World, Universal
coined words	analogous arbitrary		Ampeg, Compaq, Navistar Formica, Kodak, Xerox, Unix
abbreviations	contractions acronyms initials		Fiberglas, Intel, Mobil, Wal-Mart Alcoa, Nabisco, NYNEX, Texaco CBS, KFC, IBM
hybrids			Bell Atlantic, Union Pacific

signifier
a brand name is a signifier; signifiers are those things we hear or see that bring to mind the signified

most products or aspects of a product can also serve as signifiers of the brand

sign
brands are signs; signs are the combination of a signifier and a signified; one cannot be thought of without the other

signified
our perception of a brand — the experiences and expectations we associate with it — are its signified

the signified is co-created by both brand stewards who provide products (and messages about them) and individuals who experience the products

stewards imagine promise

brand stewards hold the brand in trust, both for the financial owners and also for the emotional owners — those people who experience the brand

a brand steward is anyone associated with the development or sale of a product, including:
senior management
brand managers
product managers
marketing managers
engineers
designers
factory workers
salespeople
customer support people
sales partners

brand stewards shape products by managing marketing and development which may include these steps:
perceive audience
understand needs
analyze options
what's delightful
what's viable
what's buildable
choose direction
define big idea or concept
design prototype
test
iterate
build
release

brand stewards have goals for their brands often, an important goal is to influence perception of a brand in a way that induces
purchase
joining
adoption

goals for brands may be expressed in
business plans estimating
sales
market share
profitability
return on investment

positioning statements which describe product benefits
unique selling propositions
desired brand attributes
desired brand personality

brand promise is the audience expectation of a brand that is desired by the brand's stewards; sometimes thought of as brand identity

guides

product delivers experience

product

experience

perception

product is used here in a broad sense and incorporates the traditional four Ps of marketing: product, price, placement, and promotion

creation of the product
designing the product
function and behavior
skin and form
interface
packaging
manufacturing the product
assembly process
quality control
providing customer service
guarantees and return policies
phone centers
web sites
price of the product
setting the suggested retail price (SRP)
creating volume discounts
creating special offers

placement of the product (controlling the distribution process)
opening direct showrooms
Sony
Nike
opening a web site
opening a store-within-a-store
Ralph Lauren

promotion of the product
through public relations activities
press releases
analyst briefings
launch events
by creating and running paid advertising
TV
radio
print
outdoor
online
by developing word-of-mouth
through other viral activities

under a homogeneous master brand employed where products change frequently and must work together
IBM
Microsoft
Sony
in a mixed brand family which may indicate confusion about strategy
for example, General Motors' brand family
Buick
Chevrolet
GM Truck
Saturn
in a heterogeneous brand system employed for commodities to increase shelf space and sales
for example, Procter & Gamble makes both Tide and Cheer but does not identify them as coming from P&G

as a co-brand simple co-brand
American Airlines MasterCard
an ingredient brand
Intel inside on a Compaq Computer
a provenance brand
Appellation d'origine Contrôlée
Made in Japan
an endorsement brand
Underwear Laboratories
a compatibility brand
MacOS

brand building begins at any point of contact with a potential customer
leaving any contact to chance creates a risk of a poor experience
direct experience considering a purchase
visiting a point of sale
purchasing a product
setting up the product
using the product
maintaining the product
displaying the product
indirect experience what friends say
what competitors say
what the stewards say
e.g., ads, PR
how others use the product
e.g., buy, display, etc.
how others react to display of the product

the experience people have with a product shapes their perception of a brand
while experience shapes perception
perception also shapes experience
likewise an individual's values, goals, needs, and expectations also shape perception of experience;
for example, in a blind taste test Pepsi beat Coke
in a labeled test Coke beat Pepsi

a product may be related to more than one brand;

can teach

develop

brand perception is the audience expectation achieved by the brand's stewards; sometimes thought of as brand image

brand perception is the audience expectation achieved by the brand's stewards;
sometimes thought of as brand image

influence

individuals
individuals compare their needs with their expectation of one or more brands in a category;
they decide which brand most closely matches their needs;
if there is a match, they may
purchase
join
adopt
use
display
if there's not a match, they may look for new options or modify their expectations

individuals

external systems

external systems play a role in shaping individual's

values
goals
needs
expectations
(external systems also affect brand stewards)
cultural systems such as language
political systems
economic structures
available technologies
the physical environment
natural resources
weather
disasters

values	Maslow's ⁵ list of human needs	Maignowski's ⁶ list of human needs and responses
expectations	physiological safety and security belongingness and love esteem cognitive self-actualization	metabolism — commissariat reproduction — kinship body comforts — shelter safety — protection movement — activities growth — training health — hygiene
the physical environment	weather disasters	

acknowledgements:
Ric Grefe, Director of the AIGA, suggested this project after discussions at the AIGA "Advance for Design" special interest group meeting in Santa Fe in the summer of 1999.
I distributed early versions at the Design Management Institute Branding Conference in the summer of 2000 and then distributed more finished versions at the summer 2000 Advance for Design meeting in Tallurde.
The AIGA published that version in its journal, Gain, in the fall of 2000.
Many people have contributed to the ideas presented here. I am especially indebted to Gaynelle Grover
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Paul Pangaro
Beverly Volz

partial list of sources:
1 Joseph Novak and Bob Gowin Learning How to Learn, 1985
2 Ferdinand de Saussure Course in General Linguistics, 1959
Charles Sanders Peirce Philosophical Writings of Peirce, 1986
Umberto Eco A Theory of Semiotics, 1979
3 Chuck Byrne "Kinetic Identity," P Print Magazine, May/June 1987
4 Jack Trout and Al Ries, Positioning The Battle for Your Mind, 1993
5 Abraham Maslow Motivation and Personality, 1954
6 Bronislaw Malinowski A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays, 1944

I hope that you find the model useful. I invite feedback. You can reach me via email at info@dubberly.com

- Hugh Dubberly