RETAIL BRANDS
STANDARD
INDEX

Retail Brands Standard Index V1.0

Complete Edition

2026 - 78 Avenue des Champs-Élysés, 75008 Paris

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Retail Brands Standard Index (RBSI)** is a comprehensive framework for analysing, benchmarking, and rating retail brands. It combines structured market intelligence with a rigorous scoring methodology to produce a transparent and evidence-based assessment of a brand's commercial attractiveness.

Framework Overview

- 100+ control points
- 40 Brand DNA components
- 13 analytical layers

Scoring Overview

Each brand is evaluated on a 1,000-point Attractiveness Score, comprising:

- Momentum — 400 points
- Strength — 350 points
- Cultural Bond — 250 points

The composite score is then adjusted by a standalone Risk Score, applied as a multiplicative modifier to produce the final rating.

The Methodology

The framework was originally developed by **Squarefeet** and subsequently refined through consultation with a panel of leading international experts across multiple disciplines, including retail, commercial real estate, investment, technology, data science, sustainability, and brand strategy. This multidisciplinary approach ensured that the methodology reflects a comprehensive and balanced view of the factors that determine a retail brand's commercial attractiveness and long-term performance.

The Output

The result is a standardized framework for evaluating retail brands. It enables brands to be **rated, benchmarked, compared, and continuously monitored** using a transparent, evidence-based methodology. Beyond measuring overall attractiveness, the framework provides a detailed assessment of each brand's underlying characteristics, highlighting its strengths, growth potential, cultural relevance, and risk profile.

This standard is designed to provide a common language for retailers, landlords, investors, lenders, and market analysts when assessing the quality and attractiveness of retail brands.

PART A — THE FRAMEWORK

A.1 — The Problem This Framework Solves

Every major asset class has a shared analytical standard. Real estate has cap rates and NOI. Equities have P/E ratios and analyst consensus. Credit has DSCR and debt ratings. These standards did not eliminate disagreement or judgement — they gave the market a common structure within which disagreement and judgement could operate usefully.

Retail Brands have no equivalent. A leasing director, a PE analyst, a lender, and a brand's own leadership team can evaluate the same brand and produce four structurally incomparable conclusions — not because they have different information, but because they have no shared framework for organising it. Decisions worth hundreds of millions of dollars are made from instinct, trade show reputation, and incomplete data assembled differently by every party in the room.

This is not a failure of effort or intelligence. It is a failure of infrastructure. The Retail Brands market — one of the most visible and economically significant sectors in the global economy — has never had a structured, shared, evidence-based standard for evaluating brands as commercial entities.

Three forces are making that gap no longer acceptable:

Signal abundance. The public digital footprint of every brand is now extensive enough to evaluate structurally. Hiring patterns, trademark filings, social velocity, secondary market pricing, web traffic trends, legal registrations — these are not soft indicators. They are time-stamped, sourceable, and measurable.

Institutional demand. PE funds, REITs, and institutional lenders are allocating capital to Retail Brands at a scale that demands defensible analytical standards. "We liked the brand" is no longer sufficient due diligence for a fund with LP obligations.

Market complexity. The globalisation of retail, the rise of digitally native brands, and the convergence of online and physical mean that a brand can be commercially significant in a market it has never physically entered. Any evaluation framework that requires a physical track record to function is structurally incomplete.

The Retail Brands Standard Index is the response to this gap.

A.2 — Who Built It and Why

The RBSI was initially developed by **Squarefeet**, the company behind **www.retailbrandsglobal** — an independent, AI-native brand intelligence platform that monitors Retail Brands globally, evaluating each one daily across the 40 DNA IDs of this framework to produce the Attractiveness Score.

Squarefeet built this framework as the operational foundation of the Retail Brands platform. The 40-DNA Brand Architecture, the four strategic scores, the signal taxonomy, and the Attractiveness Score are not theoretical constructs — they are the live architecture running on brand evaluations daily.

The framework is being published as a proposed market standard — separate from and independent of the Retail Brands platform — because a standard that is perceived as proprietary to one organisation will not become a standard. It will remain a product feature. The goal is a shared language for the entire market. That requires the framework to be openly documented, independently reviewed, and validated by practitioners who have no obligation to agree with it.

A.3 — The Founding Review Panel

A framework proposed by one organisation is a proposal. A framework reviewed, challenged, and endorsed by a diverse panel of recognised practitioners across every stakeholder category it serves is the beginning of a standard.

The founding review panel served three specific functions:

Validation. The framework has been built from the inside — from the operational experience of running a brand intelligence platform. That produces rigour. It does not guarantee that the framework reflects how brands, operators, investors, lenders, and analysts actually experience the problems it claims to solve. The panel validates that alignment — or identifies where it is missing.

Challenge. Every pillar, every signal category, every scoring dimension, and every foundational principle is open to challenge. The panel is not being asked to endorse the framework as written. It is being asked to interrogate it. A framework that has survived expert challenge is credibly stronger than one that has not. Disagreements documented, considered, and either incorporated or rebutted in the Version 1.0 change log are a feature of the process, not a problem.

Credibility. The retail industry will not adopt a standard because one organisation says it should. It will adopt a standard when people it respects — across the full spectrum of stakeholders — have put their name to it.

A.4 — The Founding Review Panel

The panel comprises eleven positions, each corresponding to a distinct stakeholder category and a distinct set of framework dimensions.

Name	Category & Background highlight
Torben Valsted	Independent Expert – Former EMEA Marketing Director - NIKE
Pamela Wolf	Sustainability Expert – Former Director Office of Innovation - SALESFORCE
Chris Igwe	Senior Property Advisor – Former Head of Retail CBRE – European Head of Real Estate GAP, FOOTFLOCKER
Daniel Lorenzo	Specialty Leasing Expert. International Specialty Leasing Director - NHOOD
Andrea Boris Hipeco	Mall Leasing Director – European Leasing Director – MULTI CORPORATION
ShiSh Shridhar	Data & Methodology Expert – Global Retail Startups Lead - MICROSOFT
Ghadi Ali	Nin-western market expert - Brand & Retail Expert | Jury Member
Linda Johansen-James	US Market Expert - CEO & Founder – INTERNATIONAL RETAIL GROUP
Mehdi Alaoui	Retail Real Estate & Tech Expert – Founder SQUAREFEET

A.5 — What was Being Asked of Them

Read the framework content in Part B, with focus on the sections identified in Part C as your primary scope.

The panel was asked to provide feedback addressing four questions for each section they reviewed:

1. Is the question this section is trying to answer the right question?
2. Is the scope complete — are there dimensions or signals that are absent or underweighted?
3. Is there anything actively incorrect — not incomplete, but wrong?
4. What would you add, remove, or reframe specifically?

A.6 — What Was Not Asked

They have never been asked to endorse of Retail Brands or Squarefeet as a platform or company. Their participation is an engagement with the methodology, not a commercial commitment.

It was not asked to agree with the framework as written. Disagreement and challenge are the point.

It is not a consulting engagement. No fee, no contract, no IP transfer. Their contribution is acknowledged, not purchased.

They were not asked for confidential information. Everything is based on the enclosed content and their professional expertise.

PART B — THE FRAMEWORK

Retail Brands Standard Index — Version 1.0 Complete technical content

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B.1 — What the Framework Is

The RBSI is a structured, pillar-based standard for evaluating any Retail Brands across its full commercial dimension. It is designed to be platform-agnostic, methodology-transparent, and expert-validated.

Its architecture has three layers:

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LAYER 1 — SIGNALS
Observable market events. Typed. Time-stamped. Confidence-weighted.
Each one sourced, freshness-adjusted, and mapped to an evaluation dimension.

     ↓ accumulate into trajectories
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LAYER 2 — INTELLIGENCE
Signal patterns interpreted. Intent inferred. Convergence detected.
A trademark filing is a data point. A trademark filing + domain registration
+ regional director hire within 60 days is an expansion signal.

↓ compressed into structured outputs

LAYER 3 — SCORES
Four strategic scores. One composite output: the Attractiveness Score.
Every score traceable back through intelligence to the raw signals that produced it.
Every score accompanied by a confidence envelope.

B.2 — Foundational Principles

The framework is built on six commitments that define its character and constrain how it can be used.

Principle 1 — Signal Over Opinion Every evaluation dimension must be answerable from observable, time-stamped signals. Qualitative judgement is not excluded — it must be anchored to something observable.

Principle 2 — Development, Not Description The framework evaluates brands as commercial entities in motion. Its purpose is not to describe what a brand is today but to understand where it is in its commercial development — trajectory, momentum, forward direction.

Principle 3 — Independence from Use Case The framework is not a leasing tool, a marketing tool, or an investment tool. It is a brand intelligence standard. What any specific user does with the output is their prerogative. The framework produces intelligence. Downstream decisions are the user's own.

Principle 4 — Hard Vetoes Are Non-Negotiable Certain conditions do not permit weighting, averaging, or mitigation by strong performance elsewhere. A brand that hits a hard veto is flagged regardless of all other scores. There is no override.

Principle 5 — Lifecycle Shapes Context, Not Score A brand's lifecycle stage — Emerging, Scaling, Mature, Plateauing, Distressed — determines the context in which scores are interpreted, not whether they score well or poorly. An Emerging brand with Momentum 280/400 is a different signal than a Mature brand with Momentum 280/400.

Principle 6 — The Framework Is Living Version 1.0 is a foundation, not a final answer. The framework is formally reviewed annually and updated as the market, signals, and expert input evolve.

B.3 — The Signal Taxonomy

Signals are the raw material of brand intelligence. A signal is a typed, observable market event carrying information about a brand's commercial state or trajectory. The framework organises signals into **12 categories, 44 sub-categories, and 62 typed signal events**, ingested from **500+ data sources**.

The 12 Signal Categories — Full Reference

SC-01 — Physical & Retail Presence *Core question: Where is the brand physically present, and* *how fast is it expanding?*

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
Confirmed Store Network	Current locations, mall, city, country, format	Google Maps · OpenStreetMap · Mall directories · Brand store locators	STORE_OPENING · STORE_CLOSING · MARKET_ENTRY · MARKET_EXIT · EXPANSION_VELOCITY
Real Estate & Property Signals	Lease signings, acquisitions, planning permissions	Land Registry UK · Dubai Land Department · Planning portals	PROPERTY_TRANSACTION · PLANNING_PERMISSION
Logistics & Operational Infrastructure	3PL partnerships, warehouse and delivery setup	Aramex · DHL · Press releases	3PL_PARTNERSHIP

SC-02 — Financial, Funding & Corporate *Core question: What is the brand's financial health and ownership trajectory?*

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
Public Company Filings	Revenue, accounts, directors, capital structure	SEC EDGAR · Companies House · Bundesanzeiger · AMF	Revenue growth · IPO filings · Annual accounts
Funding & Investment	VC, PE, funding rounds	Crunchbase · PitchBook · Dealroom	Funding rounds · PE entry · Series announcements
Credit & Financial Health	Debt stress, distress signals, ratings	Dun & Bradstreet · Experian Business · Creditreform · Orbis	Debt stress · Sale-leaseback · Credit deterioration
M&A & Corporate Structure	Acquisitions, PE entry, ownership changes	Mergermarket · Dealroom · Press	Acquisition activity · Director changes · Ownership restructure

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SC-03 — Hiring & Organisational *Core question: What does hiring reveal about future strategy?*

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
Job Postings	Store manager, expansion, VM hiring	LinkedIn Jobs · Indeed · Glassdoor · Adzuna · Bayt	STORE_MANAGER_POSTING · VM_HIRE · EXPANSION_ROLE
Leadership & Executive Moves	Executive hires and leadership changes	LinkedIn · Press	LEADERSHIP_HIRE_GCC · REGIONAL_DIRECTOR_HIRE · CFO_HIRE_IPO_BACKGROUND

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
Freelance & Consultant Signals	Retail consultants and market entry freelancers	Upwork · Malt · Toptal	FREELANCE_MARKET_ENTRY

SC-04 — Digital & Online Presence *Core question: What does the digital footprint reveal about commercial health and expansion intent?*

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
E-Commerce Performance	Traffic, search, DTC momentum	SimilarWeb · Google Trends · BuiltWith · SEMrush	Website traffic >500K/month · Search demand growth
Digital Infrastructure & Market Preparation	Domains, SSL, store locator launch	WHOIS · VisualPing	Domain registration (.ae, .sa) · Store locator launch · Arabic content launch
App & Digital Product	App rankings and integrations	App Store · Google Play · data.ai · Sensor Tower	App ranking growth · App download growth in target market
Localisation & Market Preparation	Arabic/local language, currency readiness	Custom scrapers · Halal databases	Local currency activation · Language localisation launch

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SC-05 — Physical Retail Strategy & Activation *Core question: How is the brand approaching physical retail expansion?*

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
Pop-ups & Temporary Retail	Short-term activations and test formats	Trade press · Social monitoring · Event listings	POPUP_ACTIVATION · Temporary format launch
Concessions & Department Store Entry	Department store and premium wholesale entry	Harvey Nichols · Galeries Lafayette · Selfridges · Press	DEPARTMENT_STORE_CONCESSION · Harvey Nichols entry
Franchise & Licensing	Franchise agreements, master franchise activity	Franchise Direct · Franchise Expo · Press	FRANCHISE_AGREEMENT · Master franchise appointment
Retail Events & Expansion Intent	Trade show attendance signalling expansion intent	LinkedIn event scraping · MAPIC · MECS attendee lists	MAPIC_ATTENDANCE · MECS_ATTENDANCE

SC-06 — Consumer Culture & Demand *Core question: What do consumers aspire to and demand?*

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
Consumer Demand & Aspiration	Wishlist, saves, aspiration intent	Pinterest API · Instagram Saves	Pinterest saves growth · Search demand in non-served market
Social Media & Community	Follower growth, engagement, virality	Instagram · TikTok · Reddit · Brandwatch · Talkwalker	TIKTOK_VIRALITY · Instagram engagement spikes · Brand hashtag >1M impressions
Influencer & Creator Economy	Influencer seeding and creator campaigns	HypeAuditor · CreatorIQ · Modash	INFLUENCER_SEEDING · "where can I buy?" comment spikes
Search & Discovery Intent	Search demand by geography	Google Trends · SEMrush · Noon/Namshi	Google Shopping spend ≥€50K/month in new market · Search demand spike

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SC-07 — Consumer Verdict & Brand Equity *Core question: What do consumers think the brand is worth?*

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
Consumer Sentiment & Reviews	Structured customer sentiment and satisfaction	Trustpilot · Google Reviews · TripAdvisor	TRUSTPILOT_SENTIMENT · Google Reviews ≥4.3 stars · Sentiment shift
Secondary Market & Resale	Resale pricing, demand premiums, secondary market activity	StockX · Vinted · Vestiaire Collective · Depop	RESALE_PREMIUM · Secondary market price index
Pricing & Discount Behaviour	Discounting frequency, sell-through, BNPL	Price aggregators · BNPL platforms · Discount trackers	DISCOUNT_FREQUENCY · Sell-through rate · BNPL_PARTNERSHIP

SC-08 — Press, PR & Earned Media *Core question: What narrative surrounds the brand?*

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
General Press	News coverage and media sentiment	Google News API · Google Alerts · PR Newswire	Media sentiment shift · Expansion rumour · Analyst commentary
Trade Press	Retail and fashion trade press coverage	Retail Week · WWD · FashionNetwork · Vogue Business · Retail ME	Trade press mention · Retail Gazette feature

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
Awards & Recognition	Industry awards, nominations, analyst lists	Award databases · Trade press	Award nomination · "brands to watch" inclusion

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SC-09 — Legal, Compliance & Regulatory *Core question: What is the legal standing and market readiness of the brand?*

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
Sanctions & AML	Compliance screening, AML risk patterns	OpenSanctions · Lexis Nexis · Refinitiv World-Check	Sanctions hit · AML risk pattern detected
Trademark & IP	Trademark filings and conflicts	EUIPO · USPTO · WIPO · TMview	TRADEMARK_FILING_UAE · TRADEMARK_FILING_KSA · Trademark conflict
Public Registry & Filings	Legal registrations, director filings	Companies House · Handelsregister · Infogreffe	Legal entity registration · Director filing
Market Entry Registrations	Entity creation in new markets	Dubai DED · Saudi MISA · UAE Free Zone authorities	UAE DED registration · Free zone commercial licence

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SC-10 — Supply Chain & Wholesale *Core question: How does the brand operationally enter and supply markets?*

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
Import & Export Data	Goods movement into target markets	Panjiva · ImportGenius · Customs data	UAE import activity detected · Customs shipment registered
Premium Wholesale & Department Store Entry	Premium wholesale and concession entry	Department store press · Harvey Nichols · Net-a-Porter	Zalando listing · Harvey Nichols wholesale entry
Mass Market Distribution	Marketplace and mid-market distribution	ASOS · Zalando · Noon · Namshi · Paris Gallery	Noon activation · Namshi listing · ASOS entry
Distributor Partnerships	Distributor and agent agreements	Press · LinkedIn · Trade announcements	GCC distributor appointed · Agent agreement signed

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SC-11 — Innovation & Forward Trajectory *Core question: Where is the brand strategically heading?*

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
Patent & IP Activity	Patents, product direction signals	WIPO · USPTO · EPO	Patent filing detected · New IP registered
ESG & Sustainability	Sustainability commitments, certifications	B-Corp · CDP · Sustainability reports	B-Corp certification · Sustainability report published
Academic & Trend Intelligence	Future category trends, emerging consumer shifts	Pinterest Predicts · WGSN · Euromonitor	Category trend emergence · ESG controversy flagged

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SC-12 — Cultural Relevance & Seasonality *Core question: How aligned is the brand with local culture and timing?*

Sub-Category	What It Detects	Key Sources	Example Signals
Religious & Cultural Calendars	Ramadan, Eid, Diwali, local cultural timing	Islamic Calendar APIs · Education Calendars	Ramadan campaign activated · Eid collection launched
Government & Institutional Partnerships	Vision 2030, national events, government partnerships	Vision 2030 · Dubai Tourism · Official event calendars	Vision 2030 partnership announced · National event sponsorship
Tourism & Event Intelligence	Tourism season alignment, major event activation	Tourism authority APIs · GITEX · Expo data	Tourism season alignment · GITEX activation detected

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Signal Totals

Component	Count
Signal categories	12
Signal sub-categories	44
Signal types	62
Data sources	500+

The Signal Event Model

Every signal is a typed event — not a static attribute. Each event carries:

Field	Description	Example
Signal Type	Classification within the taxonomy	TRADEMARK_FILING_UAE
Timestamp	Date and time of detection	2026-05-18 09:42 UTC

Field	Description	Example
Source	Data provider	LinkedIn
Source Reliability	Provider reliability score 0–100	94
Freshness	Days since event occurred	6 days
Confidence	System confidence in interpretation 0–100%	89%
Evidence Count	Corroborating data points	3
Visibility Type	QUIET / SEMI-PUBLIC / PUBLIC	QUIET
Intent Strength	LOW / MEDIUM / HIGH / VERY HIGH	VERY HIGH
Signal Earliness Score	How far in advance of market activity this signal typically appears	95 / 100

The 3-Signal Convergence Rule

A brand with **3 or more independent signals from different categories** converging within a **30-day window** has an **85% empirical probability of significant market activity within 6 months**. Convergence requires breadth across categories — three signals from the same category count as one.

Signals Converging	Temperature	Status
5+ signals · 3+ categories · 30 days	**HOT**	Activity imminent
3–4 signals · 2+ categories · 30 days	**WARM**	High probability
2 signals · any categories	**NURTURE**	Monitor
1 signal	**WATCH**	Log

B.4 — The Brand DNA Architecture

The Brand DNA is the evaluation framework — the structured analytical lens applied to every brand. It spans **40 DNA IDs** organised across two zones: Zone 1 is the Brand Record (DNA-00 to DNA-05, not scored — verified), and Zone 2 is **13 layers** (DNA-06 to DNA-40), covering **34 scored categories**. Layers map directly onto the four strategic scores (Section B.5) — most layers feed exactly one score, so the layer structure and the scoring structure are now the same structure, not two parallel groupings.

Note on numbering: DNA-21 (formerly a standalone "Competitive Intensity" category) was retired in Version 1.0 and merged into DNA-20. Its ID is not reused. Categories DNA-14 through DNA-24 below correct a numbering inconsistency present in earlier drafts of this document.

Layer	Name	DNA ID(s)	Categories	Feeds
1	Brand Record	DNA-00 to DNA-05	6 — not scored	*(unscored baseline)*
2	Brand Fundamentals	DNA-06 to DNA-13	8	Split — see below
3	Customer & Market Fit	DNA-14, DNA-15	2	Strength
4	Commercial Performance	DNA-16 to DNA-19	4	Strength
5	Physical Market Positioning	DNA-20	1	Strength
6	Experience & Innovation	DNA-22 to DNA-24	3	Split — see below
7	Lifecycle Stage	DNA-25	1	Momentum
8	Geographic Footprint	DNA-26	1	Momentum
9	Founders & Leadership	DNA-27	1	Strength
10	Sustainability & Environmental Impact	DNA-28	1	Strength
11	Supply Chain & Operations Resilience	DNA-29	1	Momentum
12	Risk & Severity Events	DNA-30 to DNA-36	7	Risk
13	Cultural Bond & Belonging	DNA-37 to DNA-40	4	Cultural Bond

Layer 2 and Layer 6 split across scores at the category level: within Brand Fundamentals, DNA-09 feeds Risk and DNA-07/10/11/13 feed Momentum while DNA-06/08/12 feed Strength; within Experience & Innovation, DNA-22 feeds Strength while DNA-23/24 feed Momentum. Full detail below.

Layer 2 — Brand Fundamentals

DNA-06 — Product Architecture *What it evaluates:* Product breadth and portfolio depth · Price positioning and market fit · Seasonality and year-round viability · Category regulatory risk · Innovation cycle length · IP ownership vs. licensed positioning. *Why it matters:* Determines commercial format, revenue predictability, and legal viability. A brand with a single SKU and licensed-only IP carries fundamentally different risk from a brand with a deep portfolio and owned IP. *Primary signals:* SC-01 (store network depth) · SC-02 (company filings) · SC-09 (trademark and IP) *Feeds:* Strength

DNA-07 — Digital & Social Presence *What it evaluates:* Website traffic volume and growth velocity · Geographic traffic concentration · Social following and growth velocity · Hashtag velocity · Social sentiment · User-generated content rate · App performance · Dark social and community depth. *Why it matters:* Online momentum is the most reliable leading indicator of physical retail demand. *Primary signals:* SC-04 (digital presence) · SC-06 (consumer culture) · SC-

07 (consumer verdict) *Feeds:* Momentum

DNA-08 — Cultural Fit & Adaptability *What it evaluates:* Modesty and dress code standards · Religious and dietary compliance · Language and communication localisation · Price sensitivity relative to local purchasing power · Colour, symbol, and imagery sensitivity · Market-specific adaptation track record across markets entered. *Why it matters:* Cultural misalignment is the most silent form of market entry failure. This is a durable, structural property of the brand — how well it has adapted historically — not a per-market verdict, which is why it now feeds Strength rather than the old per-context BIS gate. *Primary signals:* SC-12 (cultural relevance) · SC-04 (localisation signals) · SC-08 (press sentiment in local markets) *Feeds:* Strength

DNA-09 — Legal & Regulatory Compliance *What it evaluates:* International sanctions screening (OFAC, EU, UN, FATF) · Product regulatory compliance · Trademark and IP conflicts · Employment law compliance · Data privacy standing · Active litigation status · Regulatory filing completeness · Corporate governance transparency. *Why it matters:* The primary ongoing compliance category feeding Risk. Distinct from the acute, event-driven categories in Layer 12 (DNA-30–36) — this category reads sustained legal/regulatory standing, not discrete severity events. *Primary signals:* SC-09 (legal and compliance) · SC-02 (corporate filings) *Feeds:* Risk

DNA-10 — Financial Health & Stability *What it evaluates:* Revenue trajectory · Funding runway · Profitability trend · Debt-to-equity ratio · Credit risk score (D&B or equivalent). *Why it matters:* Foundation of the trajectory reading. Revenue trajectory is a leading indicator; accounts are a lagging one. *Primary signals:* SC-02 (financial and funding signals) · SC-03 (hiring as financial proxy) *Feeds:* Momentum

DNA-11 — Operational Capability *What it evaluates:* Multi-site operational consistency (banded to reward consistency across the brand's whole footprint, not single-location performance) · Fit-out and brand-standard consistency · Activation speed for new locations · Customer complaint and satisfaction record. *Why it matters:* A brand may be financially sound and digitally strong but operationally unready for physical scale. Operational failure is typically invisible until after commitment. *Primary signals:* SC-01 (physical presence signals) · SC-03 (hiring and team signals) *Feeds:* Momentum

DNA-12 — Community & Social Alignment *What it evaluates:* Verifiable social mission certification · Diversity and inclusion alignment (documented) · Ethical supply chain disclosure. *Why it matters:* Durable, structural trait — credible values held over time, not a transactional signal. Stated-but-unverifiable claims score lower than certified ones; this is distinct from Cultural Bond's loyalty/communication-pattern signals. *Primary signals:* SC-11 (ESG and sustainability signals) · SC-08 (press coverage of ESG) *Feeds:* Strength

DNA-13 — Upsell & Growth Potential *What it evaluates:* Space expansion signal strength · Category adjacency opportunity · Co-marketing and media activation readiness · Multi-market expansion potential. *Why it matters:* Identifies brands with compounding commercial value beyond their current footprint. *Primary signals:* SC-05 (retail activation signals) · SC-06 (consumer demand growth) · SC-08 (media activation) *Feeds:* Momentum

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Layer 3 — Customer & Market Fit *(footprint-aggregate)*

DNA-14 — Target Demography Fit *What it evaluates:* What demographic profile the brand typically targets and attracts — age, income, lifestyle, cultural identity resonance — read as a *consistent pattern across the brand's existing footprint*, not evaluated against any single market. *Why it matters:* Demographic targeting consistency across a brand's network is itself a durability signal — a brand whose customer profile holds steady as it expands is structurally sounder than one whose fit is opportunistic or inconsistent. (Per-centre demographic fit for a specific leasing decision is RADAR's downstream job, not this category's.) *Primary signals:* SC-06 (consumer demand) · SC-12 (cultural relevance) · SC-04 (geographic digital demand) *Feeds:* Strength

DNA-15 — Price & Spend Compatibility *What it evaluates:* The price tier the brand consistently operates at, and how stable that positioning is across its footprint — not price fit against any single market's spend profile. *Why it matters:* Price-tier consistency (or unexplained drift) is a structural signal about brand discipline and positioning durability. *Primary signals:* SC-07 (pricing and discount behaviour) · SC-06 (consumer demand signals) · SC-02 (financial positioning) *Feeds:* Strength

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Layer 4 — Commercial Performance *(footprint-aggregate)*

Four categories, evaluated together as one aggregate-footprint reading rather than four independent per-location verdicts:

DNA-16 — Footfall Generation Power: destination pull strength, incremental visit generation, cross-shopping catalysis, dwell time impact — read as a typical pattern across the brand's existing locations.

DNA-17 — Sales Productivity Potential: revenue density consistency across the footprint, replicability of unit economics, sustainable rent-to-sales benchmarks.

DNA-18 — Lease & Space Strategy Fit: the brand's typical/preferred space format and commitment-term pattern (kiosk / inline / flagship), read descriptively across its existing footprint. *(Note: routing a specific brand to a specific deal structure for a specific site is RADAR's downstream leasing logic, not a RetailHQ scoring function — this category describes the brand's general pattern only.)*

DNA-19 — Brand Maturity & Scalability: replicability of performance across locations and markets, with point bands that explicitly reward consistency (e.g. 80%+ of locations within a defined band of the network average) over a single strong average driven by outlier flagships — plus an explicit **Absolute Scale & Reach** control point, rewarding total active locations/markets independently of consistency, so that a brand operating at large proven scale is not scored identically to a much smaller brand simply because both are internally consistent.

Why this matters: Lifecycle-adjusted commercial performance is the clearest evidence of whether a brand's model actually works at scale, not just in its best locations. *Primary signals:* SC-07 (secondary market and pricing) · SC-04 (digital revenue signals) · SC-01 (comparable location performance) · SC-05 (retail activation signals) *Feeds:* Strength

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Layer 5 — Physical Market Positioning *(footprint-aggregate)*

DNA-20 — Physical Market Positioning What it evaluates: The brand's general, structural relationship with physical retail as an environment — format profile (mall / high street / mixed-use / retail park / airport), general competitive posture (anchor-adjacent clustering vs. destination-isolated positioning), and catchment-type tendency — all read as a typical pattern across the brand's entire existing network. Why it matters: This category was substantially reframed in Version 1.0. It previously existed as two centre-specific categories (Tenant Mix Impact, Competitive Intensity) that were only meaningful evaluated against one named location — that logic now lives entirely in RADAR's per-centre Context Fit Score. This category instead asks a genuinely global, brand-level question: how does this brand typically behave in physical space, full stop. Primary signals: SC-01 (competitor and store network density) · SC-06 (overlapping consumer demand) · SC-04 (online substitution signals) Feeds: Strength

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Layer 6 — Experience & Innovation

DNA-22 — Innovation & Experiential Value *What it evaluates:* Store concept innovation · Retailtainment and entertainment value · Phygital integration · Destination creation potential. *Why it matters:* Durable, structural capability — does this brand create lasting destination value, independent of any single campaign or season. *Primary signals:* SC-11 (innovation signals) · SC-08 (press coverage of store concepts) · SC-06 (consumer cultural engagement) *Feeds:* Strength

DNA-23 — Omnichannel Synergy *What it evaluates:* Click-and-collect readiness · Store-as-fulfilment-node capability · Online-to-offline conversion rate · In-store returns processing. *Why it matters:* Brands with strong omnichannel integration generate higher commercial value across every touchpoint — a live momentum signal, not a static capability. *Primary signals:* SC-04 (digital infrastructure signals) · SC-10 (distribution signals) *Feeds:* Momentum

DNA-24 — Marketing & Activation Power *What it evaluates:* Event and launch activation history · Influencer and community pull · Co-marketing capability and willingness · Contribution to commercial animation calendar. *Why it matters:* Quantifies a brand's ability to generate its own cultural momentum and earned media energy right now. *Primary signals:* SC-06 (influencer and community signals) · SC-08 (earned media signals) · SC-05 (activation history) *Feeds:* Momentum

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Layer 7 — Lifecycle Stage

DNA-25 — Lifecycle Stage Classified, not control-point-scored — a single banded value by current stage (Emerging / Scaling / Mature / Plateauing / Distressed), contributing directly to Momentum while also shaping how every other score is interpreted in context (Principle 5 still applies in full — see B.2). *Feeds:* Momentum

Layer 8 — Geographic Footprint

DNA-26 — Geographic Footprint Classified by tier (International / Regional / Local / Online Only), contributing directly to Momentum as a banded value reflecting current geographic reach and expansion trajectory. *Feeds:* Momentum

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Layer 9 — Founders & Leadership

DNA-27 — Founders & Leadership *What it evaluates:* Leadership bench strength beyond the founder · Succession planning · Founder reputation and public-profile risk. *Why it matters:* Many emerging and DTC brands are inseparable from a founder's personal brand — a strength in early virality, a structural risk at scale. This is a durability/foundation question, not a transactional or momentum one, which is why it now feeds Strength directly. (Confirmed founder-level fraud or AML violation is captured structurally by Layer 12's Risk & Severity Events, not by a veto embedded in this category.) *Primary signals:* SC-02 (corporate filings, board composition) · SC-08 (press and reputation signals) · SC-03 (leadership hiring signals) *Feeds:* Strength

Layer 10 — Sustainability & Environmental Impact

DNA-28 — Sustainability & Environmental Impact *What it evaluates:* Verified environmental certification · Emissions and material disclosure · Circularity and claims verifiability. *Why it matters:* A procurement gate for institutional partners, not a marketing layer. Unverifiable claims score lower than no claims at all — greenwashing is actively penalised, not just unrewarded. *Primary signals:* SC-11 (ESG and sustainability signals) · SC-08 (press coverage of ESG) *Feeds:* Strength

Layer 11 — Supply Chain & Operations Resilience

DNA-29 — Supply Chain & Operations Resilience *What it evaluates:* Supplier diversification and concentration risk · Disruption resilience and lead-time buffer · Ethical sourcing audit status. *Why it matters:* Supply chain failure is one of the most common and most preventable causes of brand underperformance. Read here as a momentum-relevant operational signal (is the brand's delivery capability currently sound) rather than a static foundation trait. *Primary signals:* SC-10 (supply chain and wholesale) · SC-01 (physical presence signals) *Feeds:* Momentum

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Layer 12 — Risk & Severity Events

Seven categories, each evaluating a discrete, acute risk condition. In Version 1.0, none of these function as a Hard Veto inside RetailHQ. RetailHQ is an intelligence platform, not a leasing or investment decision tool (Principle 3) — a veto presumes an imminent downstream action that RetailHQ itself never takes. Instead, each category severely depresses the Risk Score and fires an Alert (notifying the brand itself and tracked competitors in the same category). RADAR — the downstream leasing-decision system — reads these same seven categories and applies its own Hard Veto logic on top, for leasing decisions specifically.

DNA ID	Category	What It Evaluates
DNA-30	Sanctions Exposure	International sanctions screening status (OFAC, EU, UN, FATF or equivalent)
DNA-31	Product Legality	Product legally permitted status in target market(s)
DNA-32	Trademark & IP Dispute Status	Active infringement claims, disputes, or litigation in target jurisdiction
DNA-33	Commitment & Default History	Confirmed prior default on leases, contracts, or financial commitments
DNA-34	Price-Position Coherence	Structural fit between price point and stated market positioning
DNA-35	Public Controversy & AML Pattern	Confirmed ongoing major public controversy or AML risk pattern
DNA-36	Regulatory Prohibition Status	Direct regulatory prohibition in target jurisdiction

Feeds: Risk (each category severely depresses the Risk Score when triggered; does not block other scoring within RetailHQ)

Layer 13 — Cultural Bond & Belonging

The framework's most differentiated and novel layer — no comparable measure exists in conventional brand equity methodology (Kantar, Interbrand, and similar frameworks measure perception and valuation; none measure the *relational-vs-transactional* pattern below). Directly informed by qualitative practitioner research into why physical retail retains loyalty despite digital convenience: the consumer's choice is driven by cultural belonging, not infrastructure or transaction convenience. These four categories operationalise that insight into digitally observable, falsifiable signals — deliberately *inverting* what a conventional marketing scorecard would reward.

DNA-37 — Transactional Behavior Pattern *What it evaluates:* The ratio of a brand's outward communication (email, SMS, ads) that is values/culture-led vs. discount/product-push-led, and the cadence/intensity of promotional outreach. *Why it matters:* High-frequency discount messaging and a communication style led by price rather than values is scored *down*, not up — the inverse of a conventional marketing-efficiency scorecard. *Primary signals:* SC-06 (social/community content analysis) · SC-08 (press/messaging analysis) *Feeds:* Cultural Bond

DNA-38 — Loyalty Program Quality *What it evaluates:* Whether a brand's loyalty mechanism is structured around access, community, and discovery (private events, early access, genuine member experiences) vs. points/cashback/discount-tiering. *Why it matters:* A loyalty program built on discounts buys repeat purchase; a loyalty program built on belonging earns it. These are different mechanisms with different durability. *Primary signals:* SC-05 (loyalty/CRM-adjacent signals where available) · SC-06 *Feeds:* Cultural Bond

DNA-39 — Voluntary Attachment *What it evaluates:* Secondary-market resale premium (resale price above original retail = strong signal) and unprompted return/repeat-engagement rate with promotional periods stripped out. *Why it matters:* This is the market voting independently of the brand's own messaging — nearly impossible to manufacture, which is exactly why it's a strong signal. *Primary signals:* SC-07 (secondary market and resale pricing) *Feeds:* Cultural Bond

DNA-40 — Brand Interaction Depth *What it evaluates:* Community/event participation signal · direct response quality (personalised vs. templated/bot replies) · user-generated dialogue depth (genuine back-and-forth vs. one-way broadcast) · founder/team visibility in consumer-facing interactions. *Why it matters:* Measures whether a brand maintains a genuine, human-feeling two-way relationship with consumers, or only broadcasts to them. *Primary signals:* SC-06 (social interaction analysis) · SC-08 *Feeds:* Cultural Bond

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Risk & Severity Events — No Longer a Veto Inside RetailHQ

Version 1.0 retired the prior Hard Veto mechanism as it applied within RetailHQ specifically. The same seven underlying conditions persist, now as DNA-30 to DNA-36 (Layer 12, above), and they remain genuinely severe — they are not softened, only correctly scoped:

1. International sanctions screening hit (OFAC, EU, UN, FATF, or equivalent)
2. Product legally prohibited in the target market
3. Active trademark infringement in the target jurisdiction

4. Confirmed prior commitment default history
5. Price point structurally incompatible with market positioning
6. Confirmed ongoing major public controversy or confirmed AML risk pattern
7. Direct regulatory prohibition in target jurisdiction

Within RetailHQ, triggering any of these severely depresses the Risk Score and fires an Alert — it does not block scoring on any other dimension, consistent with RetailHQ's role as an intelligence platform rather than a decision system (Principle 3). Downstream systems that *do* make decisions — RADAR, for leasing specifically — read these same seven categories and apply their own binary Hard Veto on top, scoped to their own decision context.

B.5 — The Four Scoring Dimensions

The 40 DNA IDs feed into four strategic scores. Each answers a distinct commercial question. Three combine additively; the fourth — Risk — applies as a multiplicative modifier rather than a blended ingredient, because "is this brand attractive" and "is this brand safe to engage with" are different questions that a single weighted average would otherwise flatten into each other. This separation is itself a Version 1.0 correction: the prior architecture blended a risk/compliance dimension (BIS) directly into the same average as growth and equity signals, which made it structurally impossible to distinguish a brand that was risky from a brand that was simply mediocre.

RISK

Is it safe to engage with this brand? **Layers fed:** Layer 12 (DNA-30–36) · DNA-09 **What it reads:** Legal standing · sanctions and compliance exposure · active disputes · default history · regulatory standing **Role in the framework:** Standalone 0–1000 score, applied to the composite as a multiplicative modifier — never blended additively. A brand can be highly attractive and still carry elevated risk; the architecture lets both facts stand simultaneously instead of averaging them into a misleading middle value.

MOMENTUM

Is this brand growing, stable, or declining — and at what velocity? **Layers fed:** DNA-07, 10, 11, 13, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29 **What it reads:** Financial health · hiring velocity · digital growth · operational capability · omnichannel synergy · marketing/activation power · lifecycle stage · geographic reach · supply chain resilience **Role in the framework:** Momentum merges what were previously two separate dimensions (Brand Momentum and Market Expansion) — both were ultimately answering "is this brand moving," from two angles (scale/revenue vs. geography) that shared underlying signal categories and didn't warrant separate top-level scores.

STRENGTH

Is this brand built to last? **Layers fed:** DNA-06, 08, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 27, 28 **What it reads:** Product architecture · cultural fit and adaptation track record · community/social alignment credibility · footprint-aggregate customer fit, commercial performance, and physical-market positioning · innovation and experiential value · founders & leadership · sustainability **Role in the framework:** The durable, structural half of what was previously folded into Brand Equity — everything that doesn't move quarter to quarter but determines whether the brand is built to survive past its current trajectory. Absolute scale (total locations/markets) is an explicit control point within this score, added after a comparative test case (a very large, highly consistent brand vs. a smaller, equally consistent one) exposed that consistency-only scoring couldn't distinguish proven scale from proven-at-whatever-scale-it-happens-to-be.

CULTURAL BOND

Does this brand earn genuine belonging, or does it just transact? **Layers fed:** Layer 13 (DNA-37–40) **What it reads:** Transactional behaviour pattern (discount/product-push vs. values-led communication) · loyalty program architecture (access/community vs. points/discount) · voluntary attachment (secondary-market premium, unprompted return rate) · brand interaction depth (genuine two-way engagement vs. broadcast) **Role in the framework:** The most distinctive and novel score in the framework — no comparable measure exists in conventional brand equity methodology. Deliberately kept as its own isolated score, covering only 4 categories against Strength's 13, rather than folded into a broader "equity" blend, because differentiation rather than breadth is the point. Every control point in this score is the *inverse* of what a conventional marketing-efficiency scorecard would reward: high discount frequency and aggressive retargeting score down, not up.

The Attractiveness Score

Attractiveness = (Momentum + Strength + Cultural Bond) × Risk modifier

Calculated on a 0–1000 point scale at every level — score, category, and control point — so that weight percentages map directly to point ceilings (e.g. a 35%-weighted category has a 350-point ceiling). The Attractiveness Score must never be displayed without all four component scores visible alongside it; composite-only display is architecturally prohibited, because a single number can represent very different underlying brand profiles (e.g. operationally fragile but culturally beloved, vs. genuinely middling across the board) while looking identical.

Base weightings across Momentum, Strength, and Cultural Bond, and the exact mechanics of the Risk modifier (including whether it carries a floor below which Risk alone cannot suppress an otherwise-strong composite), are explicitly Founding Review Panel calibration territory — the mechanism is locked, the numbers are not.

The Confidence Envelope

Every score — Attractiveness and each of the four components — is accompanied by a confidence envelope. A score without its confidence envelope is an incomplete output.

Field	Description
Confidence Score	Overall confidence 0–100%
Evidence Count	Total signal events supporting this output
Source Reliability	Weighted average reliability of contributing sources
Freshness Index	Recency weighting — older signals decay
Volatility Flag	Whether inputs are subject to rapid change
Historical Accuracy	Back-tested accuracy for this score type/category

An Attractiveness Score of 686/1000 with Confidence 91% is a fundamentally different reading from the same score with Confidence 54%.

B.6 — The Brand Profile Standard

A full brand evaluation produces a structured profile in two zones.

Zone 1 — Brand Record (Not Scored — Verified)

Domain	What It Captures
Brand Passport	Trading name · parent entity · brand status · country of origin · price tier · business model · positioning · industry segment
Company Record	Legal entity · ownership type · key investors · funding stage · revenue estimate · employee count · last audited accounts
Audience Profile	Primary age range · gender skew · income bracket · lifestyle cluster · purchase motivation · brand loyalty profile · basket size · purchase frequency
Digital & Commercial Profile	E-commerce platform · app metrics · social following across all platforms · marketplace presence · influencer strategy · SEO performance
Retail Footprint	Total store count · countries present · formats operated · expansion status · pipeline openings · key partners
Store Directory	One record per location: city · format · operator · size · opening date · lease dates · status

Zone 2 — Lifecycle Stage and Geographic Footprint

Lifecycle Stage is set before scoring begins. As of Version 1.0 it both shapes how other scores are interpreted and contributes a direct, banded point value to Momentum — it is no longer purely contextual.

Stage	Operational Profile	Signal Pattern
Emerging	0–2 locations · DTC-first · High momentum · Low revenue base	Social spike + hiring signal + Store Locator launch
Scaling	3–15 locations · Active expansion · Revenue >20% YoY · Funding confirmed	Funding round + multi-market hiring + press momentum
Mature	15+ locations · Established multi-market · Revenue 5–15% YoY	Stable signals · Selective new openings · Strong benchmark depth
Plateauing	Flat or declining revenue · Store rationalisation · Some exits	Declining hiring + closure signals + flat social + reduced ad spend
Distressed	Declining revenue · Lease defaults · Active risk flags	Credit deterioration + negative press + litigation signals

Geographic Footprint Tier contextualises operational credibility.

Tier	Description
International	Present in 3+ countries · Established cross-border infrastructure
Regional	Multiple cities within 1–2 countries · Active expansion
Local	Single city or country · Limited geographic spread
Online Only	No physical locations · DTC or marketplace only

B.7 — The Temperature System

Temperature compresses signal convergence into an urgency indicator. It answers not "how good is this brand?" but "how much is happening with this brand right now?"

Temperature is driven by signal convergence, not score levels. A brand can have a high Attractiveness Score and a WATCH temperature. A brand can have a moderate Attractiveness Score and a HOT temperature.

Temperature	Trigger	What It Means	Response Window
HOT	5+ signals · 3+ categories · 30 days	Market activity imminent	24 hours
WARM	3–4 signals · 2+ categories · 30 days	High probability within 6 months	72 hours
NURTURE	2 signals · any categories	Brand developing — monitor daily	Weekly
WATCH	1 signal	Log and auto-monitor	Monthly
ALERT	A Layer 12 Risk & Severity Event (DNA-30–36) crosses severity threshold	RetailHQ fires an Alert to the brand and tracked competitors; downstream decision systems (e.g. RADAR) may additionally apply their own Hard Veto for the specific transaction in question	Immediate

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B.8 — Stakeholder Applications

Each stakeholder uses different dimensions of the framework with different priorities.

Retail Brands use Strength as an external structural mirror against a market standard rather than internal narrative. They use Cultural Bond to benchmark competitor relational equity on the same axes — distinguishing genuine consumer belonging from transaction volume. They use Momentum to evaluate growth and expansion readiness and identify which specific categories are holding back trajectory. They use a verified Attractiveness Score, always shown with its four components, as a negotiating tool in conversations with operators and investors.

Shopping Centre Operators & Landlords use the Temperature system as a proactive sourcing engine — HOT and WARM brands represent the market's 6-month activity pipeline. They use

Momentum to distinguish genuine expansion readiness from ambition. They use Momentum's trajectory reading as an early warning system for the existing tenant portfolio — signal deterioration precedes financial underperformance by 6–12 months. They use DNA-20 (Physical Market Positioning) to understand a brand's general competitive posture before evaluating site-specific fit through RADAR.

Investors & PE use Strength and Cultural Bond together as a live proxy for intangible brand value, including private and emerging brands that Kantar and BrandZ structurally exclude. They use Momentum to read commercial trajectory before the accounts confirm it. They use lifecycle stage classification to calibrate investment thesis, holding period, and exit multiple logic. They use Risk & Severity Events (DNA-30–36) as a pre-investment screening layer before financial analysis begins.

Lenders & Banks use Momentum as a continuous early warning system — financial health trajectory, hiring signals, and digital momentum all precede revenue impact by 6–12 months. They use the Distressed lifecycle signal pattern as a structured credit review trigger, not a default indicator. They use Strength as a continuous monitoring signal for intangible collateral. They use Risk & Severity Events as structured credit facility conditions.

Retail Analysts & Market Researchers use the Attractiveness Score as a reproducible, citable data point traceable to defined inputs — always read alongside its four components, never alone. They use lifecycle stage distribution across a category as a market health indicator. They use Cultural Bond trajectory as a category momentum signal that precedes trading data. They use the signal taxonomy as a structured research input across all 12 categories — enabling earlier, deeper market analysis than survey or transaction data allows.

Specialty Leasing Professionals use DNA-18's footprint-aggregate format/commitment pattern as one input into routing brand stage to deal structure — RADAR applies the actual per-site routing logic on top. They use SC-05 signals (pop-up, concession, franchise, event attendance) to identify brands in active physical activation mode. They use the Temperature system to prioritise the Emerging brands most likely to convert from short-term to permanent formats.

DNVB Operators and Founders use DNA-07 and Cultural Bond to understand how their signal footprint and relational pattern translate into a commercial intelligence profile visible to operators, investors, and partners. They use Momentum to identify the specific operational signals that determine physical expansion readiness. They use lifecycle stage to contextualise their Momentum score — Emerging and Scaling stage brands with strong digital momentum and low physical track record are evaluated differently than Mature brands.

Franchise & Licensing Professionals use SC-05 signals and Momentum to understand which brands are approaching franchise-led expansion and at what stage in the intent trail. They use DNA-29 (Supply Chain & Operations Resilience) and DNA-11 (Operational Capability) to assess whether a brand's supply chain and team infrastructure supports franchise deployment. They use DNA-08 (Cultural Fit) to pre-screen for the market-specific adaptation requirements that franchise agreements must address.

B.9 — What the Framework Does Not Do

It does not make leasing decisions. Leasing systems that consume RBSI outputs apply their own site-fit logic — footfall counts, void analysis, tenant mix modelling, lease economics — on top. The framework evaluates brands. Site decisions are downstream.

It does not value companies. BEV is a relative index score, not a DCF model, a transaction multiple, or an audited financial valuation. It informs valuation thinking; it does not replace it.

It does not predict consumer behaviour. It reads signals of consumer activity and translates them into intelligence about equity and demand. It does not model individual purchase decisions or produce market size estimates.

It does not replace expert judgement. It structures and evidences analytical judgement. An analyst who uses the framework well reaches better conclusions faster. The framework does not produce conclusions on its own.

B.10 — Governance and Versioning

Annual review cycle. Formally reviewed once per year, incorporating: validated outcomes from the prior year's brand intelligence record, expert practitioner input, and market development considerations.

Version numbering. Major versions (1.0, 2.0, 3.0): structural changes to pillar architecture, scoring dimensions, or foundational principles. Minor versions (1.1, 1.2): signal taxonomy, source methodology, or weighting parameter updates. Patch versions (1.1.1): corrections to definitions or examples.

Editorial note on this document's own versioning: the scoring rebuild reflected throughout this brief — the move from BIS/BMS/MES/BES to Risk/Momentum/Strength/Cultural Bond, the layer restructuring, and the retirement of in-platform Hard Vetoes — constitutes a Major Version change by the framework's own rule above. This document's cover still reads "Version 1.0" pending a decision on how that's presented to the Founding Review Panel: as the actual Version 1.0 they're being asked to review (treating the prior BIS/BMS/MES/BES draft as never having been circulated), or as a transition from an internal v1.0 to v1.0 that the panel sees the result of. That decision should be made before this brief is circulated, not left implicit.

Backward compatibility. Where a version change affects score comparability, a compatibility note is published. Historical scores are never retroactively revised — the version under which they were produced is always recorded.

Public change log. Every version change is documented publicly: what changed, why, and what evidence or expert input prompted it.

APPENDIX — FRAMEWORK NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

Component	Count
Signal categories	12
Signal sub-categories	44
Signal types	62
Data provider categories	12
Data sources	500+
Intent Trails	5
Brand Record objects	6 (DNA-00 to DNA-05)
DNA IDs total	40 (DNA-00 to DNA-40; DNA-21 retired/merged

Component	Count
	into DNA-20)
DNA Layers	13
Scored categories	34
Control points	Indicative and expandable per category — not a fixed framework-wide total (see B.4)
Strategic scores	4 (Risk · Momentum · Strength · Cultural Bond)
Composite score	1 (Attractiveness Score)
Composite scale	0–1000 points (also expressed as %)
Risk & Severity Event categories	7 (DNA-30–36 — depress Risk Score + fire Alert in RetailHQ; read by RADAR for its own downstream Hard Veto)
Confidence envelope fields	6
Lifecycle stages	5 (DNA-25)
Geographic footprint tiers	4 (DNA-26)
Temperature tiers	4 + 1 alert state
Framework version	1.0 *(see editorial note, B.10)*
Founding Review Panel seats	11

GLOSSARY

Attractiveness Score. Composite of Momentum, Strength, and Cultural Bond, scaled by the Risk modifier: (Momentum + Strength + Cultural Bond) × Risk modifier. The single authoritative intelligence rating for any brand evaluated under this framework — must never be displayed without its four component scores visible alongside it. Replaces the retired Composite Retail Score (CRS).

Brand DNA. The complete evaluation framework: DNA-00 to DNA-40, organised across Brand Record (Zone 1, DNA-00 to DNA-05, unscored) and 13 Layers (Zone 2, DNA-06 to DNA-40). 34 scored categories. DNA-21 was retired in Version 1.0, its content merged into DNA-20.

Brand Record. The factual, non-scored baseline established before scoring begins. Verified, not evaluated.

Confidence Envelope. The six-field structure accompanying every score: Confidence Score · Evidence Count · Source Reliability · Freshness Index · Volatility Flag · Historical Accuracy.

Cultural Bond. Strategic score answering "does this brand earn genuine belonging, or does it just transact?" Fed by Layer 13 (DNA-37–40: Transactional Behavior Pattern, Loyalty Program Quality, Voluntary Attachment, Brand Interaction Depth). The framework's most distinctive and novel score — deliberately inverts conventional marketing-efficiency scoring (high discount frequency and aggressive retargeting score down, not up). New in Version 1.0; replaces part of the retired Brand Equity Score (BES).

Founders & Leadership. DNA-27. Layer 9 category evaluating leadership bench strength, succession planning, and founder reputation risk. Feeds Strength.

Hard Veto (retired within RetailHQ in Version 1.0). Previously: one of seven blocking conditions flagging a brand regardless of scores. As of Version 1.0, the same seven conditions persist as DNA-30–36 (Risk & Severity Events, Layer 12) and severely depress the Risk Score plus fire an Alert — they no longer block scoring within RetailHQ itself, consistent with RetailHQ's role as an intelligence platform rather than a decision tool. Downstream decision systems (e.g. RADAR, for leasing) read these same categories and apply their own binary Hard Veto, scoped to their own decision context.

Lifecycle Stage. The brand's current commercial development position: Emerging / Scaling / Mature / Plateauing / Distressed. As of Version 1.0, both shapes interpretation of all other scores (Principle 5) and contributes a direct banded point value to Momentum.

Momentum. Strategic score answering "is this brand growing, stable, or declining — and at what velocity?" Fed by DNA-07, 10, 11, 13, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29. Merges the retired Brand Momentum Score (BMS) and Market Expansion Score (MES), which were found to be answering the same underlying question — is this brand moving — from two angles (scale/revenue vs. geography) that shared signal categories and didn't warrant separate top-level scores.

Risk. Strategic score answering "is it safe to engage with this brand?" Fed by Layer 12 (DNA-30–36) and DNA-09. Applied to the Attractiveness composite as a multiplicative modifier, never blended additively — a brand can be highly attractive and carry elevated risk simultaneously, without one masking the other.

Signal. A typed, observable market event carrying information about a brand's commercial state or trajectory. Time-stamped, sourced, confidence-weighted.

Signal Convergence. Three or more independent signals from different categories within a 30-day window. Triggers temperature elevation. Requires breadth across categories, not volume within one.

Strength. Strategic score answering "is this brand built to last?" Fed by DNA-06, 08, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 27, 28. The durable, structural half of what was previously folded into the retired Brand Equity Score (BES) — covers product architecture, cultural fit, footprint-aggregate commercial performance, physical market positioning, founders, and sustainability. Includes an explicit Absolute Scale & Reach control point (total locations/markets), added in Version 1.0 after testing exposed that consistency-only scoring couldn't distinguish a brand proven at large scale from one merely consistent at whatever scale it happens to operate at.

Supply Chain & Operations Resilience. DNA-29. Layer 11 category evaluating supplier concentration risk, disruption resilience, and ethical sourcing audit status. Feeds Momentum.

Sustainability & Environmental Impact. DNA-28. Layer 10 category evaluating environmental certification, emissions disclosure, material sourcing and circularity, and claims verifiability — with confirmed greenwashing penalised. Feeds Strength.

Temperature. The urgency indicator: HOT / WARM / NURTURE / WATCH / ALERT. Driven by signal convergence, not score levels.

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