

Brand Lo-o-o-o-o-ve...?

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Brand Lo-o-o-o-o-ve...?

By John Jordan

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So... how have you been building your brand lately?

Now, I'm writing this in my best Barry White voice... "How's your Brand Lo-o-o-o-o-ve, baby?"

It may sound obvious, but increase Brand Love by branding better.

Branding your business better will help you increase awareness, attractiveness, and affection of your prospects (so they become customers), current customers (some people call them clients), and employees (yup, they need to be sold on you, too).

"Huh? I've heard of brand awareness, and brand attractiveness I understand, but affection? Brand Love? Is this guy smoking banana peels?"

OK, I admit, that term may be hard to take— at first. But, haven't you expressed to someone that you love something? "I love that soda." "I love their pizza." "I love that store."

See? You've been enamored with a brand before. And there's a very good chance you still are. So are other people.

Why would you say you "love" soda, pizza, or a store? Because an important nerve of yours has been hit. Some might call it "the Sweet Spot." And it may not be all that obvious what that Sweet Spot is.

A soda tastes best to you over all others by itself. Or it may go better with certain types of food you enjoy. Perhaps your favorite pizza place makes the best tasting pizza. Maybe you enjoy the surroundings and atmosphere as much as the food.

When you think about your favorite shop, maybe you think they always have just what you really want. Maybe you get treated like royalty. Or you feel good you can afford what they have, or because you can get a lot without spending much.

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Thankfully, somebody has probably said, "I love that..." about your business. If they haven't, you probably haven't been open very long— or will be open for much longer. Think of the last referral that came in. They probably did so because someone had high praise for you.

Now... the trick is to find out what was so praiseworthy, and effectively communicate it to similar prospects.

How to do it? Just ask for feedback.

Talk to your clients/customers about their experiences. Usually, they will have good things to say. Or at least they may buffet some less-than-glowing reviews with some good stuff. Speaking of "less than

glowing," when asking for feedback, be prepared for "warts and all."

In fact, ask for it.

When it's really bad, you'll hear it right away. But when there are minor slip-ups, or things your business may NOT be doing, those can easily fall through the cracks. Always stress you want candid, HONEST answers. If you're not willing to search out the "bad stuff," it will only get worse, and small problems can grow exponentially.

Or somebody realizes how you're underserving the market and takes advantage before you do.

So, ask your clients questions casually. Or even print up 100 or so quick response cards with three to five questions. With only a couple of well-worded questions and space for their own additional thoughts, you may not only get good feedback, you might gain insight about your market, operation, or clientele that takes business to the next level.

Watch for more from me on this topic.

Creating An Unconscious Brand

By Rachelle Disbennett-Lee, MCC, MS

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Creating An Unconscious Brand

Branding is a big topic in today's business world. Everywhere we look we can see examples of branding. Just think of companies like McDonald's, Coca Cola, and Toyota. These companies work hard to create and maintain their brand images. Branding is actually somewhat of a recent phenomena in business. It was started back with Proctor and Gamble when they decided to name one of their soaps Ivory. Naming the soap proved to be an excellent idea to the detriment of their other soap products. People stopped buying the generic soaps and began buying Ivory. Because of the success

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of Ivory, P&G realized the importance of branding and began a branding revolution. Moreover, branding is not just for companies; individuals have their own brands too.

You may not think of yourself as a brand, but you are. Most of us do not work at creating a specific brand like the big name products that we have all come to know and love. But, it doesn't matter. We are creating a brand everyday, consciously or unconsciously. Unfortunately, most of us are creating our brands unconsciously.

Everything we do, say, wear, every expression and even things we don't say and do create a brand. We cannot not communicate our brand because it is part of who we are. We might have a brand as a trustworthy person, or a good friend, or perhaps something not as positive such as someone who is always late. Our brand is communicated everyday by every action we take.

Stop creating an unconscious brand. Your brand is important because it says who you are and what you stand for. It communicates a great deal of information about you and can help or hurt you. Instead of being oblivious to the brand you are creating, begin taking charge of your brand. Your brand lets others know what you stand for, what they can expect from you and what kind of person you are. Make sure it communicates accurately.

Coach Lee is a Certified Master Coach specializing in working with business owners and professionals in being more profitable and productive while staying sane and balanced. Coach Lee is the publisher of the award winning e-zine, 365 Days of Coaching, because life happens every day. Visit Coach Lee at her websites coachlee.com and 365daysofcoaching.com. True Direction, Inc. Copyright 2003

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