

Build Your Business with Strong Brands – not a Mountain of

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By Daniel Janal

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You're having the gang over on Sunday to watch the football game on TV. Which pizza parlor do you call?

Your child needs braces. Which orthodontist does everyone in town go to?

You want to sell your house. Which Realtor do you call?

The answer is the same in each case: the one that has the best brand. Branding is important because it makes sales easier!

Realtors, dentists and restaurants all have brands. So does every small business in the world. Sure, we think that only Fortune 500 companies, like Coca Cola and Procter and Gamble have brands. But that's not true. Every company has a brand image. Whether the brand image is good or bad, or if it is well known or invisible is up to you.

If you're involved in marketing in any way, shape of form, you've heard the term "branding" but you probably couldn't define it. And if Regis asked you "Is that your final answer?" you'd probably take your money and run rather than risk losing your cash.

That's because if you asked 50 marketers to define "branding," you'd get 50 different answers. Very few people agree on what branding is, but they do agree that is important in building sales and profits.

So what are brands and why are they important to you?

Brands make selling easier!

Plain and simple.

To understand branding, we need to understand what branding isn't.

>From my studies and research that includes hundreds of interviews with top marketing managers at large and small

companies, I've come away with several conclusions:

1. A brand is not a logo, slogan, catchy saying, mission statement or publicity campaign.
2. A brand is about trust. You select a company because you trust them and the companies have credibility. These are two issues that are important to every company of every size.

When you travel along the highway and need a quick meal, do you stop at the local diner for a meal featuring the local cuisine– or do you pull in to McDonald's because you know the fries are always going to be the same?

People trust McDonalds. They will give up the chance for an innovative meal in favor of the trusted resource every time!

That's because people buy on emotion and justify with logic.

"Gee the local diner might be good, but it might take a long time and we're in a rush."

Is it any wonder why McDonald's is a multibillion-dollar enterprise?

Look at the best brands on the Internet: Yahoo, eBay and Amazon. What do they all have in common? People trust them!

In my seminars at Stanford and Berkeley, I always ask if people have bought books from Amazon. Most people raise

their hands. I then ask if anyone has ever had a problem with Amazon. In one out of three seminars, one person out of hundreds will raise a hand. But they quickly say that Amazon resolved the problem in their favor, quickly and courteously.

I then ask if people have telephones. Everyone raises their hands. I ask if people have ever had a problem with their phone company. Most people keep their hands up! You probably have the same experience. Phone companies have bad reputations for customer service.

Good companies create good brands by creating trust.

Do you need a lot of money to create trust?

No way!

Yet hundreds of companies have blown through more than a billion dollars on TV ads during the Super Bowl and other major events trying to build a brand image.

I attended a top-level seminar on branding and a venture capitalist on the panel said a consumer company must spend \$50 million dollars to build a brand identity today.

However, in my seminar on branding at Stanford, I asked the participants – all brand managers at major companies, to name 10 search engines, 10 consumer web sites, 3 pet supplies sites and 10 business-to-business web sites.

No one could!

And these are the very people who are in the industry, and are exposed to the millions of dollars of advertising to create brands!

What does this mean?

Buying your way to brand awareness does not work!

The net is littered with those failures: Dr. Koop, Priceline's grocery service and Boo.com stand out as highly publicized failures.

So, as a small company, you don't have to worry about not have a treasure chest full of cash to buy a reputation – because it doesn't work!

How do you create a great brand? That's where brand assets come in to play. Brand assets are your slogans, advertising, publicity, promotions, characters, spokes people, as well as your customer service and sales people! These tools help create a meaningful identity that creates an emotional bond with your audience that compels them to take action – and provides the logic that justifies their choices.

The Internet has a treasure chest of tools to create brand awareness, brand identity and brand loyalty including your e-mail address, website name, signature file. You also need to transmit your own personality and identity to create trust.

When you build trust, you build a great brand. If you can

do that, then you will build sales and create customers for life!

Blue Mountain Coffee Beans

By Adrian Titus

Blue Mountain coffee beans are widely thought to be the pinnacle of coffee. With unmatched taste, richness, and completeness, most who try the blue mountain coffee agree it is one of the best blends in the world. As such, Blue Mountain coffee makes a fantastic gift to any coffee lover, and it is ideal for special occasions.

Unfortunately, Blue Mountain coffee is not the easiest to get. Because of the limited area that the beans grow (the Blue Mountains in Jamaica) the quantities produced are limited. The coffee has also undergone some controversy through its life, starting with the Japanese investing heavily in the industry, causing what many believed to be an overproduction of the coffee, and a subsequent drop in it's quality. The bean was traditionally wet-processed, which took more time than the short-cut versions implemented at a growing number of mills. Blue Mountain coffee became more readily accessible, but the quality dropped.

The Blue Mountain coffee bean has since been making a come back to its previous excellence (and in truth, it was never really a bad roast) through the efforts of the Jamaican Coffee Board. They began allowing individual coffee farmers to produce their own coffee (rather than sending it through a central

processing farm) which has resulted in some distinct Blue Mountain area blends. While all the beans are Blue Mountain, there can be subtle differences depending on which estate you buy from.

Which unfortunately brings up another tricky item when buying Blue Mountain beans – many places will do something like put a small percentage of Blue Mountain beans in with another bean, and call it Blue Mountain. They can then sell this much cheaper than real Blue Mountain costs, which fools people into buying inferior coffee. The best way to protect yourself? Make sure that the coffee you buy has the Jamaican Coffee Board seal on it. You can also tell by the price – if it seems like its cheap, it probably isn't pure Blue Mountain. Just remember that you get what you pay for.

Adrian is a coffee enthusiast who maintains various sites. Check

for more information on blue mountain

coffee beans.



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