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THOUGHTS ON CREATING A POSITIVE BRAND IMAGE

By Steven Presar

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For any business to become truly successful, it needs to create positive brand recognition for its product.

This is especially true in small businesses, where there may be thousands of similar companies vying for the customer's attention. The easiest and most fruitful way to think of a brand is as an IMAGE that the audience remembers.

This means that successful branding of a service or product is a matter of creating an image that is Positive, Relevant, and Memorable.

First and foremost, you want to create an image of your product or service (or company, for that matter) that is positive.

You want to create an emotional association (such as happiness or fun) with the product. According to researchers, there are two basic ways that you can create these associations.

The first way is through direct experience. In this approach, a customer's experience with the product or service impacts on the way that they see it — i.e. a positive experience means a positive association. This can be very important if you are trying to reach repeat customers.

It is usually hard to use direct experience to brand a product or service using just a web site. However, remember that a person will often judge your company based on their experiences with your web site. Therefore, it is very important that you make

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their experience a favorable one — one where they can get their information quickly and easily.

A second approach to branding that can be used more easily in a web environment is to create indirect associations. This can be done in a number of ways. The words you choose to describe your products, the name you give them, and the graphics/pictures that you use on your web site can help to create an emotional association.

The first step is to determine what qualities you wish to project — do you want to focus on the reliability of the

product, or the speed, or the money possibilities?

Once you have made this basic, vital decision, then you need to look for words, descriptions, and graphics that will project these same qualities. If you look at the naming of car models, you can see some good examples of this — A Dakota, for instance, creates an association of wild ruggedness, while a Mustang projects the image of spirit and speed.

Remember that there are also many other factors that will also indirectly affect how your company and product are branded.

The way that you interact with your customers is one of the most important of these. Make sure that your company reflects the same qualities that you want to have associated with your product or service.

Otherwise, you may be sending your customers conflicting messages. For instance, the name of your product might be CHEETAH, but if it takes three weeks for you to respond to emails, your brand will probably NOT be associated with speed!

Branding your product or service can be a difficult process. Often, it will take many repetitions of a message before a brand becomes recognized. It is therefore very important that you put thought into the process before you start selling your image.

Steven Presar provides news and articles regarding starting or maintaining a small business at <http://www.Agora-Business-Center.com> And works with individuals and small business owners who would like to grow their business on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.Alliance-Internet-Marketing.com>

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 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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