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The Big-Pay Off -- Brand Value

By Beth Brodovsky

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Many CEOs and marketing directors find their time wasted evaluating marketing opportunities instead of acting on them. When every possibility is followed, a meandering trail of hit and miss effectiveness is the result. Despite significant expenditure of time and money, marketing tactics may not produce the desired gains.

What is their problem? They are missing a crucial step in the marketing arsenal -- branding. The power of branding is that it is not just for your customers. When done correctly, it also creates a roadmap for you to follow internally, streamlining your planning and decision-making processes for years to come.

Outward Brand

This is what many people relate to when thinking of a "brand:" a logo, tagline, style of advertising, product packaging, etc. These are not the brand, but rather the brand elements. To be truly branded however, all of these elements are developed based on the core value of the company. The core value will stay the same, through product changes, service changes, and staff changes.

The value of this is in attraction. If you have spent the time identifying your ideal prospect [read: most profitable] and created an emotional reason to buy [read: comes back and brings their friends with them], then all your time and money is now focused on creating interesting tactics to engage a prospect you know will be profitable, rather than baiting the hook with whatever you have and hoping you're fishing in the right pond.

The investment in developing a set message to a clear audience is rewarded by recognition, recall and referral of your brand. You can change ad campaigns, update packaging, and replace staff and if all reflect your underlying message, the brand impact will be carried over to your audience no matter how or who delivers it.

Inward Brand

Developing brand clearly improves external communication. Impressively, it can increase your internal efficiency as well.

What often bogs down the marketing process is planning, and deciding on a case by case basis what actions should be taken. We have seen marketing efforts derailed and budgets drained by everything from an aggressive ad sales person to a company executive driving past a billboard and insisting the marketing department book it.

It is so easy to latch onto what sounds like a great idea or a sure thing or to give up on a plan when no immediate results are seen. However brand marketing is not direct response, it is viral, increasing in scope and intensity the more it is replicated.

With a brand built on focus features, key benefits and a core value, it is easy to plan strategy and tactics to capitalize on your goals. And the next time someone asks you to place an ad, sponsor an event, or recommends a billboard rental, you will know if that is on your brand path or an expensive joy ride to who knows where, what we call an "off-road vehicle."

The Reward

The effort of building and maintaining a brand must be constant. Your brand provides a roadmap but the destination is ultimately having customers so loyal they always choose your company and so zealous they bring their friends along. The value is in the opinion and the action customers are willing to take because of how they feel, and in the speed and accuracy of the decisions you can make to achieve your goals.

Beth Brodovsky is the president and principal of Iris Creative Group, LLC. Brodovsky earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Communication Design from Pratt Institute, New York. Before launching her own firm in 1996, she spent eight years as a corporate Art Director and Graphic Designer, providing a sound foundation in management and organizational standards and structure. Iris Creative specializes in providing marketing and strategic communication services to clients in service industries and small businesses. For more information contact Beth at

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Creating An Unconscious Brand

By Rachelle Disbennett-Lee, MCC, MS

Creating An Unconscious Brand by Rachelle Disbennett-Lee, MCC, MS

Creating An Unconscious Brand

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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.

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