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Why Bother Building A Brand?

By Marcia Yudkin

At a conference in Dallas not long ago, a graphic designer from Kentucky and I sat down at a table where people were exchanging business cards. I looked at his logo, and he studied the name on my card.

"I know that logo. We've been in touch in the past," I said.

"That's right. I know your name," he said.

Although we weren't able to pinpoint when or why we'd exchanged mail previously, we guessed it had been at least five years back. Neither one of us has an extraordinary memory. Rather, he had created a distinctive visual identity for his design services, and I had devoted effort to linking my name with creative marketing.

For at least five years his look and my reputation had lurked in the other's memory banks, while thousands or hundreds of thousands of other business identities had come and gone without leaving a significant trace. Why? Memorability. It illustrates a key element of successful branding.

What is Branding?

Branding is the process of creating distinctive and durable perceptions in the minds of consumers. A brand is a persistent, unique business identity intertwined with associations of personality, quality, origin, liking and more.

Although most people associate brands with big companies, the smallest of enterprises can use branding techniques with great rewards. When a home-based craftsperson ties a nicely designed tag on all her products telling the story of who she is and where her creations come from, she's branding her work. When the local market bundles groceries in bags bearing its logo instead of generic "Thank you!" or plain bags, it's branding.

Why Bother Building A Brand?

While we associate brands with national names like Crest, Huggies or Healthy Choice, branding doesn't necessarily require the budgetary resources of Procter & Gamble. Branding doesn't even require a product or a tangible delivery mechanism. When humorist Dave Barry declares in almost every column, "I am not making this up," and refers to "alert reader" so-and-so having sent in some news clipping, he is branding.

Techniques of branding include association of a company with logos, distinctive colors, slogans, musical sounds or songs, unusual qualities, mascots, packaging, a memorable name, behavioral hallmarks and much more.

Why Branding Pays Off

Time, money and effort spent on branding comes back many times over when the process plays out intelligently. Here's why:

1. Memorability. It's easier to remember the branded company than the "what's its name?" one.
2. Loyalty. When people have a positive experience with a memorable brand, they're more likely to buy that product or service again than competing brands.
3. Familiarity. Psychologists have shown that familiarity induces liking, and this makes even non-customers more likely to recommend a brand they know.
4. Premium image, premium price. Branding can lift what you sell out of the realm of a commodity, with customers willing to pay more for the well-branded product or service.
5. Extensions. With a well-established brand, you can spread the respect you've earned to a related new product, service or location more easily
6. Greater company equity. Making your company into a brand usually means that you can get more money for the company when you decide to sell it.
7. Lower marketing expenses. Although you must invest money to create a brand, once it's created you get a bigger bang for every marketing buck using it.
8. For consumers, less risk. People tend to choose the brand-name supplier over the no-name one when afraid of the consequences of a messup.

For those reasons and more, branding fattens your bottom line.

Marcia Yudkin is the author of 6 Steps to Free Publicity and ten other books hailed for outstanding creativity. Find out more about her new discount naming company, Named At Last, which brainstorms new company names, new product names, tag lines and more for cost-conscious organizations, at

<http://www.NamedAtLast.com>

Great Brands Depend on Attention to the Brand Architecture

By Richard Cunningham

Do you have the architecture in place to make sure each and every brand contact sends the right message?

Thinking in terms of architecture, a building that looks great and catches your attention is probably designed so that each component looks perfect and enhances the overall effect of the building.

In the audiobook, "Sound Advice on Brand Marketing," author Tom Miller says, "Great architecture works because of attention to detail, and great brands depend on the same level of attention." Each component of a brand that touches the customer must support and enhance the overall message.

A brand architecture also builds a connection between corporate brands, master brands, product brands, and branded features, which, according to Miller, "makes decisions easier when it comes to messaging and graphic design."

Miller suggests everyone take a fresh look at their own brand architecture, beginning with a review of all current marketing materials. "Is the message consistent? Does the look and feel convey the value of the brand? Is there room for improvement?" Once a brand is viewed as architecture, it may never look the same. Says Miller, "It may be the beginning of building your own best brand."

Tom Miller offers branding advice each week in the free audio newsletter from What's Working in Biz,

http://www.whatsworking.biz/full_story.asp?ArtID=92

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Great Brands Depend on Attention to the Brand Architecture

Creating Brand Awareness

Creating An Unconscious Brand

The Brand Called You

Why Branding Is Vital For Your Home Business Success

Free List Pro

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Name Branding Syndicator
Affiliate Marketing PLR Kit
Self Improvement PLR Kit
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