



Business Strategies

You Can Do Better

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By Michael Hammond

What's in a brand? A brand is the idea or image of a specific product or service that consumers connect with, by identifying the name, logo, slogan, or design of the company who owns the idea or image. Branding is when that idea or image is marketed so that it is recognizable by more and more people, and identified with a certain service or product when there are many other companies offering the same service or product.

Marketing professionals work on branding not only to build brand recognition, but also to build good reputations and a set of standards to which the company should strive to maintain or surpass. Branding is an important part of Internet commerce, as branding allows companies to build their reputations as well as expand beyond the original product and service, and adds to the revenue generated by the original brand.

When working on branding, or building a brand, companies that are using web pages and search engine optimization have a few details to work out before being able to build a successful brand. Coordinating domain names and brand names are an important part of finding and keeping visitors and clients, as well as branding a new company. Coordination of a domain name and brand names lends identification to the idea or image of a specific product or service, which in turn lets visitors easily discover the new brand.

Branding is also a way to build an important company asset, which is a good reputation. Whether a company has no reputation, or a less than stellar reputation, branding can help change that. Branding can build an expectation about the company services or products, and can encourage the company to maintain that expectation, or exceed them, bringing better products and services to the market place.

In the article entitled "6 Tips to Building a Stronger Brand Using New Media," written by Margaret Garvin, she emphasizes that branding has always been important, but it's never been

as essential as it is now. Thanks to the Internet, your potential customers are being flooded with dozens — if not hundreds — of different buying opportunities every hour.

While quality, cost and execution will all play a role in a customer's decision, trust remains the key way to win the sale. Branding is one of the most important things you can do to win trust, so it's important you do it right.

Here are simple tips for marketing your brand with new media.

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1. Spend Moments On Execution, But Months In Prep.

For your company's branding to really work, it will need to be more than just a name. A logo, tag line, tone of approach and color scheme can be important.

Consistency in these choices is just as important as the choices themselves. A decision to change any element of your business brand can undermine a lot of hard work, so be willing to take your time — months, if needed — to decide exactly how you want to present your brand.

Actionable tip: Consider creating a comprehensive brand uniformity guide where your branding elements will be standardized.

2. Monitor Your Brand-Related Queries.

Whatever people are searching about your brand on Google indicates what they think about it and, importantly, what problems they have. Moreover, if too many people are searching [your-brand-name scam], this phrase will show up in Google Auto-suggest results as others.

Monitoring what people are searching and where your own site ranks for different search



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phrases is crucial. You can use various keyword research tools in combination with keyword position monitoring software.

3. Kiss Still Applies.

The famous battle cry of “keep it simple stupid” is thoroughly embedded in the jargon of every salesman. This lesson doesn't start and end on the sales call, though. Simplicity has been shown to be more effective in branding efforts as well, especially since it makes your company more memorable.

4. Get Into Social Media and Interactive Content.

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Ello . . . I could go on for hours. There are tons of social media sites, and people age 18 to 34 actually spend more time on these sites than they do watching TV.

Obviously, you need to get your company onto these sites; however, your work won't end there. You need to post regularly, add valuable content and use as much interactivity as you can by putting out videos, interactive presentations, editable infographics, and so forth. Rich interactive designs have been the hottest trend for a few years now.

For instance, Target successfully reached out to college students with their “Made for U College Styler” and ServiceNow captured the attention of their target audience with an interactive quiz.

Interactivity doesn't have to be expensive or complicated. Smartketer claims that something as simple

as animating your banners can significantly improve your campaign performance.

5. Be Consistent With Your Branding.

Whatever the details of your company, you need to repeat yourself for your brand to stick. Did you catch that? You need to repeat yourself for your brand to stick.

If you're not consistent from site to site, customers won't recognize your brand, won't build trust, and your efforts will end up fairly impotent. So, keep in mind: You need to repeat yourself for your brand to stick.

Brand consistency requires scalable team collaboration. Make sure you have tools in place for your whole company to be aware of your branding efforts.

6. When In Doubt, Hire Out.

How much is a good-looking logo worth to your company? What about the creation of the right tag line or company motto?

If you're not sure you can come up with something really solid on your own, then employing a copywriter, graphic designer and brand strategist is a very wise move.

Branding is a constant effort that gets reinforced with every move you make, and doing so carefully is just one more aspect of “smart business.”

By being consistent, memorable, and just a little bit omnipresent, you can build a brand that separates you from your many, many competitors. ❖