

A Quick Lesson on Branding

Do your potential customer's know you exist, do they know what you really offer and do you remind them often? This is basically what "Building A Brand" is. A brand is the essence of who you are as a company. It is your core values and the communication of those values to your customers and community.

Your brand is your story and stories are meant to be told. Do your customers know your story? Do their experiences with you provide credence to that story? A well- designed and consistently presented brand program is important to the long term success of your company.

A properly designed and executed brand initiative will go a long way in marketing your company. Your brand is represented by anything your customer experiences with you from physical spaces that your customers visit, to your employees who work on customer's projects/products to marketing messages they see.

Brand experiences happen everyday for every type of business, large and small, from the local coffee shop, to the utility and the credit card company. If you think of the actual companies who you do business with, you will have some thought about your experience with them. This reaction is a reflection of their brand. Was it a positive reaction? If companies want to succeed a customer's reaction must be a positive one.

Getting Started

Developing your brand starts with Socrates guiding rule, "Know Thyself." What emotion are you evoking from your customer. Trust, happiness, piece of mind, are examples of the motivators that bring people to you and if that emotional commitment is a positive experience they will return. Know who you are and then you can define the brand elements to reinforce this.

Who are you really? Analyze each aspect of the customer experience; how is the phone answered, how are people welcomed into your place of business, how you deliver your product/service, and how you resolve issues. Once you know what the customer really experiences, you will see where you stand out and where improvements are needed. Often the core values of your business will become more defined and an accurate mission statement will develop.

Putting It Into Practice



From here you will decide how to convey your values to your customer. Develop a marketing plan, a logo, collateral material, website and communications plan, both internal and external that will communicate your brand.

Train your staff to handle customers in a manner consistent with your core values. Provide your staff with the same marketing materials your customer receives and provide them with training materials they can refer back to.

Evaluate your website and physical building to make sure they reflect your brand. Use them as an opportunity to tell your story. Displays, case studies, and video are great tools that can be used to tell your story.

Consistently reinforce your story through communications with your customers by e-mail, newsletters, mail, presence at industry events, and involvement in the community. This unified brand experience will provide a sustained return on investment. Over time customers will begin to form a memory of you, which stays with them.

Size doesn't matter. Large companies spend millions on advertising and national event sponsorships to raise their brand awareness and small companies can utilize the same mediums on a smaller scale, such as more targeted segments and sponsoring local events.

"Building Your Brand" is not a one-time project. You must maintain your brand and continue to reinforce it to your audience through your actions and communications. Over time your story will continue to evolve. Recognize the change and use it to your advantage.

Patricia Klavora
Marketing 360
marketing_360@sbcglobal.net
440-729-3773
www.marketing360group.com

Outsourced Marketing Management - Finding, Obtaining and Retaining Customers