

Revealing the Roots: The Process of Building Brand

By Beth Brodovsky

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How is branding different than marketing?

Branding is not so much different from marketing as it is an element of marketing. We think of marketing as a tree; the brand is the roots, holding the tree in place and providing constant energy. The leaves are the tactics, reaching in various directions and changing with the seasons, the trunk is the marketing strategy, connecting the brand and the tactics. In this way, brand is positioned as the basis for any marketing initiative.

Building a Brand

Creating a brand involves a process that demands attention to detail and diligence in carrying out to achieve results. While this may seem difficult, the end result of the branding process is the establishment of a system, and a structure that actually simplifies the marketing process.

Our process serves to match the work a company does best with an audience willing and able to buy, and proceeds to develop a program of visual and verbal messages that reflect the experience the company wants to deliver. Branding is about developing a pull rather than a push, identifying a core value that resonates with your audience and attracts the business that is desired.

Understand the current perception of your company:

Effective brand marketing starts by gathering information. What is known and thought now both inside and outside your walls? Do you know who your competitors are and what their brand is? Why do clients choose-or not choose-your company? What do clients value most about your firm? Both quantitative and qualitative information is needed to get a clear picture of your company's, and your industry's, place in the mind of your audience.

Evaluate what you do best, what is special and unique:

Having gathered information, both internal and external feedback is reviewed. It is time to compare the needs that exist in the market with the strengths your firm has or wants to develop. This process identifies the most marketable elements to a given audience, the focus features.

Align this strength with the appropriate audience:

With a clear picture of the features your company can deliver well, and an understanding of who would value these features, key benefits are defined and linked to a feeling, the core value, to create further focus. The purpose of brand is to create a durable connection and build recognition,

recollection and referrals.

Choose how you will show, tell, and organize to convey the alignment:

The visual image, verbal message and experience that will be delivered must be developed to communicate your brand perception. While staff, headlines and images may change from year to year and campaign to campaign; this structure creates a stable base that allows for flexibility without veering off course.

Deliver a well-defined image, message and experience with diligence, consistency and repetition: Educate everyone on your brand so that each staff member becomes a "Keeper of the Brand." The biggest problem with maintaining brand is lack of consistency. A new marketing director, eager designer or outside consultant bored with what has been done and wanting to put their own stamp upon the company can quickly derail a brand. While you can't change your logo every year, regular evaluation of the tools employed to convey your message is vital in keeping both your audience and your staff engaged.

Strong roots are needed to keep a tree healthy, and essential in surviving a storm. When growing your brand, be thorough in discovery, objective in the definition of position and consistent in delivery, and the process of building brand will be time well spent in attracting and maintaining the kind of clients that will grow and sustain your business.

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