

Play it Again Sam

By Beth Brodovsky

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The marketing director for one of my longtime clients used to complain "does it have to be purple again?" What she and many others don't realize is that the color you are seeing in your sleep, your prospects might just be beginning to recognize, and if done well, associate with you.

Consistency cannot be stressed enough in brand development: whether it is a color or a font, where you place your logo, the schedule for newsletters and promotions, or the way the receptionist answers the phone. One predictable encounter after another carves your brand in the customer's consciousness.

Its Not All Repetition

One of my favorite advertisers is Target. Their commercials are fun, displaying the same flair and style that they market in their store. Interestingly, the logo and store name are not even mentioned until well into the spots, frequently displaying the signature bullseye in a pattern on a dress or as wallpaper in the background. Often it's not even red, still overtime I know it for a Target ad instantly.

Consistency is about recognition and familiarity, not necessarily duplication. When building brand we are trying to create attachment. Target has room to be very flexible, developing consistency through a certain style. Their continuous advertising allows enough repetition that we see the pattern in their message.

The Flexibility Trap

While Target takes a lot of license with consistency, you'll also notice that some things are always the same. The shape and scale of their logo, the pace of the message, the patterns created with their logo, the font for their name and it's positioning at the end of their ad.

The secret to remaining interesting while maintaining consistency is planning ahead. Before you start a brochure or an ad campaign, make corporate-wide decisions on your brand. What can change, what must stay the same? What colors or color palette will you stick with? What is the

underlying message of any marketing direction? In short, know your brand message, the key visual elements that support it and how they should be applied. As your business grows and more people handle distributing your message, your brand stays in your control.

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