

Be The Brand!

By Paula Morrow

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Quick - what do you think of when you think of Nike? The swoop symbol, right? Disney: Mickey Mouse, Disney Land/Disney World and Cinderella's Castle.

Now, think Corey Rudl...the Internet Marketing Center; Ken Evoy...Make My ____ Sell products; Allan Gardyne...associate programs.

These are much more than products...these are brands and brand identities.

Have you thought about how you will brand yourself through your business?

Now, a lot of the experts emphasize the importance of your unique selling proposition (USP) in the equation. Granted, USP is a key element in building your brand.

But it's not the total picture.

If Nike had concentrated its corporate philosophy on only producing a top-quality running shoe, how different do you think the company would be today?

As we all know, Nike is much more than a shoe company. It's a sports brand: a sports promoter, a shoe and clothing company, a retail store. It closely identifies its brand with winners from the world of sports (Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan, for example).

Their goal - for you to feel that by using Nike products you too can succeed. Or at least look like your heroes.

The Walt Disney Company is famous (infamous really) for its religious zeal in enforcing its clean, wholesome, family image.

Having grown up outside Disney World in Florida, I saw firsthand the steps that Disney took to

enforce their strict standards (appearance, customer service, etc.), the real-world tests they put their employees through. And the payoff? Billions.

Everything is planned to protect the branding of the Walt Disney Company as a fun, safe, family-oriented organization.

No surprises.

Now, I'm not saying that you have to go to the extent of a Disney or a Nike, but you should put serious thought into the impression you're trying to make.

Does everything flow from your USP? From the look and feel of your web site, your business cards to your ads - are you building your brand?

Ask yourself these questions:

What does your company stand for?

What do you want to be known for?

What is your company philosophy?

Does everyone that work with/for you understand their role in building the brand or image of the company?

When someone says the name of your business, what image, feeling do you want to come to mind?

These are questions you need to address when you first start your business. Since everything builds on these principles.

What do you want to stand for?

Will you be the king/queen of the newbies? Will you be the best in associate programs, and vie with Allan Gardyne? Will you be known for software development?

What are your short and long-term plans to make this a reality?

Only after you determine what you want to accomplish, will you be able to effectively choose the right marketing plan to execute.

Once you've a plan in place, you'll have a firm grasp on how to proceed. Once you're clear, you'll find that your advertising and marketing becomes more effective.

And your customers, with a clear understanding of the company they're dealing with - will act in the desired manner - by responding with sales!

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Paula Morrow heads Ideal Marketing Corporation, specializing in information products and training for newbie netpreneurs.

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