

# Branding For Profits

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General meaning of the Brand is quite abstract. In short, brand is the image of your product, if we speak about product branding and/or the image of your company if we deal with corporate branding or, in case with one man business, brand of personality.

Since the majority of online venture start-ups are represented by small businesses, that are 101% online and the life cycle of digital products is relatively short, it is wise to unite these branding terms into one e-business brand, that reflects market's viewpoint on your business as an unique entity.

This viewpoint exists in peoples' minds whether they are your competitors, clients, partners, friends or your own employees. That is why your brand is psychological by its nature, what creates new challenges as well as additional potential.

Strong brand in the mind of a person generates honoring feeling to your company/product or you as a company's "face".

Poor brand may represent negative impression about your product or be the result of an absence of that impression, and I should say that it is much more advantageous to offer a new brand to the market, then try to do something with bad image. Since we are dealing with psychology, it is clear that good image and reputation is very hard to build, but it is even harder to restore.

If you want to reach the heart of you customers' "likes" you need to:

- \* Offer maximum quality no matter what you offer or do.
- \* Deliver pleasure.

- \* Be innovative.
- \* Address to people's emotions.
- \* Evoke desire and interest.
- \* Provoke active response.
- \* Build trust by repeated contacts as a foundation of long-term relations.

FACTORS that would STIMULATE and REINFORCE your BRANDING:

---1. Unique Selling Proposition (USP) is number one passive "brander" for your business, where you go UP (Unique Proposition) the straight road of successful branding or making your way through a very deep forest of competing with other already established brands.

Suppose you have created new proposition, new kind of service and if you have named it, for instance, "WebSky", then all people would call it "WebSky", not "A service that offers you 1. ... 2. ... 3.... and provides 1... 2.... 3...." It would have a neutral brand from the very beginning, no need to create, imagine or popularize it among hundreds of others.

Windows is a TM and great Brand for Operation System of well-know software giant. Don't you think about what makes us pronounce "Windows" instead of "Operational system" or "OS"? The answer is simple – Windows occupies more then 60% of OS market. Microsoft's OS in the informational society plays the same role that would have played some imaginable Oil Monopoly in the former industrial society. Hopefully there is no oil monopoly but there is a monopoly of the software "fuel" which is used by majority of computer systems.

The idea behind Microsoft is also true with McDonalds, Coca Cola or Mercedes-Benz and it is on the surface – they are monopolies or, at least, oligopolies in their respective markets with their respective strong USPs and therefore strong brands.

So let us summarize this important fact – the more unique your market offer is, the more unique, easy to remember and easy to associate with your brand will be.

---2. The second thing is the size of your business in terms of financial capacity and market share. Very few people pointing to that fact, but its effect on your brand shouldn't be underestimated. No matter what product you offer to the online market, it will surely lose the brand war, if your marketing budget is \$00.00 and your whole business is located on some unknown unstable hosting as a result of funds deficit.

Everyone speaks about great brands like Coca Cola, but no one actually says, that it makes absolutely no relation to an entrepreneur, who wants to start his own small practice online.

Know your competition and develop the marketing strategy that would reflect your business capacity, needs and suit a marketing budget. The smaller your business is, the more aggressive your branding should be. Branding has a feature of building itself when your business is rapidly expanding.

---3. Corporate culture is another vital brand creator. The epicenter of your brand is the company itself; therefore the more positive and brighter the company "feels" inside, the more positive, attractive and shiny it will look outside.

If your online venture's stuff numbers you and your cat :0) you can easily build a delightful business culture but, to my regret, it won't have a big influence on outside world. What will have an effect is the popularizing of your business values through partner networks and/or clients. Friendly atmosphere that welcomes employees' or partners' creative initiative with the focus on development of personality, is exactly what makes a difference and lights a "fire" in the eyes of every person your company deals with.

---4. Know your market. This small sentence comprises an understanding of the needs of your market niche, satisfaction of your market needs via directed promotional campaigns, adopting the development plan in compliance with analysis of the strength and weaknesses of your business as well as closest competitors.

Don't devalue your brand through wrong market approach. People pay much more attention to their own needs as well as to companies that satisfy their needs. The market offers should be specific and directed to particular niche with its unique problems, joys, hopes and needs. Don't try to shoot several ducks with one shot.

Your branding campaign should reflect the market you are working with in a clear and highly beneficial way to your potential customers.

MAJOR WAYS of online branding:

1. All possible kinds of online promotion: banner impressions, classified ads, solo ads, articles submission, web-site traffic building, opt-in email campaigns, promotional joint ventures, ezine publishing, viral marketing. All these ways of branding positioning are to be niche-oriented.
2. Expand your e-business network by running

partner/affiliate programs.

3. Co-branding by means of strategic partnerships, joint ventures with the established brands in non-competing markets, for additional market and branding exposure.

4. Unique personal and/or corporate culture.

5. Informational and design representation of your business Web-site.

6. The product/service itself. It is mainly through them your clients acquiring positive or negative experience of dealing with your company.

7. Domain name, design, logo, motto, TMs, SMs are the main subsidiary representatives of your brand. That is why they should be clear and supplement each other in conveying your "message".

8. Testing and measuring the response rate of your branding efforts.

Why branding is so important? Because it, firstly, creates a platform via loyal market surroundings for easy and quick business growth; secondly, increases perceived value of your whole company. Do you want your own company to develop smoothly along with exponential growth of its market value? I do.

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Pavel Lenshin is a publisher and webdesigner, who offers  
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