

Five Ways to Promote Your Unique Business Identity

By Brett Krkosska

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Where's the Beef?

These words became a national catch phrase in the mid 1980's and catapulted the Wendy's hamburger chain into the limelight as a major player in fast food sales.

Wendy's credits the "Where's the Beef" ad campaign with a 31% jump in sales and a 24% boost in year-end profits.

Not bad for a campaign built on a three-word ad slogan.

Granted, you may not have the budget to build a brand awareness campaign as Wendy's did, but you certainly should practice advertising strategies that are built around your own unique business identity.

Identify Your Uniqueness

If you haven't yet put a finger on the distinct quality that sets your business apart from your competition, then you need to get busy. You only need one quality. Just one.

This unique quality that sets you apart from the herd is your brand. It is the essence - the fabric - that runs through your operation. It speaks to consumers instantly about the nature of your service or product, your reputation, your commitment, your uniqueness.

Once identified, you must be able to clearly communicate your brand to consumers. There are two easily recognizable ways to do this: with your logo and tagline.

A branded business has a memorable logo. A straight-forward example is Ford's blue oval, while a more abstract example is the Nike checkmark. Your logo is the visual component of your brand.

The next component is a written or verbal one. It is referred to as your tagline, and it reflects the exact position you are assuming in relation to your customer, your product, and your competitors. Specifically, it clearly defines the quality which differentiates your business from competitors while extolling the benefit your customer will enjoy.

Coca Cola's statement of being 'The Real Thing' is a classic example of positioning in relation to a

competitor. Clearly, if they're the real thing - the original - then the other guy isn't. But does this mean anything to consumers? The benefit to the customer is kind of murky.

For the small business owner it's better to go with a more narrowly defined tagline that clearly denotes uniqueness. The sandwich shop Quizno's exemplifies this with their tagline 'Oven Toasted Tastes Better'.

Five Ways to Promote Your Unique Identity

Your logo and tagline are valuable property. Make them a visible thread that runs through all your promotions. Here are five great ways to get your brand name out there in front of consumers:

1. Give Away Something People Will Expose To Others

Instead of just giving away a freebie that has a one-time use, provide a valuable service or product that will get used or seen by other people. I use this strategy by providing free newsletter templates. At the bottom of the templates you'll find my brand. It's great exposure and a wonderful traffic-generating tool.

Free eBooks, free email, free websites, free pens, free t-shirts, free baseball caps... all these are great examples of things people use and expose to others. Take a good look at your own products and services. What can you give away?

2. Encourage Interactivity

We are social creatures. Everyone likes to be included -to have the opportunity to put in their 2 cents worth. Encourage people to get involved with your business. Invite questions, ask for feedback, run a contest, sponsor teleclasses or chat sessions, or moderate a discussion board. For every person you make a connection with, you have created the opportunity to ignite a word-of-mouth campaign that stretches through everyone they know.

Take a peek at Pepsi.com for a look at brand marketing through interactivity. On their home page they are actively recruiting every carbonated beverage drinker on the planet to "make a difference" and become a Pepsi Advisor.

Strawberry/Kiwi Pepsi. What do you think? Pssst... tell your friends!

3. Brand Your Digital and Print Communications

If you type it, write it, or touch it... brand it. If you're within breathing distance of it - try to brand it. Leave evidence of your unique business identity everywhere you can. Your website, all your outgoing postal mail, and all electronic mail should include your business name or logo, your tagline, email address, website URL, phone number, and mailing address. And a handy supply of business cards is a must any time you leave the office.

4. Give Away Your Knowledge

Writing articles and making them available for reprint is an especially powerful method of spreading your name. Published articles often remain in the public eye for years. I have dozens of articles on numerous sites, all of them tirelessly promoting my business without any effort on my part. One article in particular that was published in Success Digest over 3 years ago still brings in traffic to this day.

5. Make it Easy For Others To Toot Your Horn

Word-of-mouth referrals are the best kind of exposure you can get. There's nothing more powerful than a personal endorsement from a satisfied customer. Make it easy for people to tell their friends and family about your product or service. Rarely a day goes by on my site that someone hasn't emailed a friend using my handy online referral form. This is a branding tool that every business should employ.

In the end, the name of the game is repeatedly exposing consumers to your unique business identity - your brand. The above strategies are viral marketing tools in that they are far-reaching and long-lasting, and that's a great combination for long term business success.

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