

Preliminary Branding Concepts

The aim of a good branding campaign is to make your company, product, or both instantly recognizable to your target market and beyond. Great branding insures that as you are recognized, the individual also conjures up positive images about your product or service - images that you instilled through your creative and penetrating branding campaign.

These positive perceptions become linked to your company or product and are reinforced continually through advertising, public exposure, industry exposure and community involvement. The core of your branding campaign is positioning and planning, while it manifests itself through graphics, copy, image and performance. What is the power of branding? Just think of what comes to mind when you see the Nike, McDonald's, Disney or Coca Cola logos. That's branding - at its best.

Branding encourages consumer preference, buyer loyalty and helps position your company for leadership. Branding is what creates the advantages of your product and their preference for your product in the mind of your customer. It may not matter that you are the best if your competitor is perceived as the best. In the world of the Internet names like Yahoo! and Amazon come to mind. Are they the best at what they do? What has driven them to leadership is the buyer perception that they are, which created a consumer preference for them, which in term secured them success.

Here are Tudog's branding hints. Maybe next time you'll hear our name you'll associate it with these helpful hints.

1. Start with Your Message - Determine how you want your company to be perceived and then create your message around it. Nike wanted to be associated with athletic prowess. They used athletes as their messengers. Decide your positioning and then create the mechanisms to transmit that message.
2. Everything is Branding - All messages coming from your company need to be unified around the positioning you have suggested. You cannot brand successfully if you are trying to transmit different messages to different audiences. If you have different markets you are trying to entice, find the common message that speaks to all your markets. Branding is effective only if your company is committed to building its reputation around the chosen position over a long period of time.
3. Create an Emotional Connection - Part of your message, whether through text or graphic, should stir a positive emotion. Consumers relate to products on an emotional level and often associate life experiences or moods with products. That's why Coke wanted to teach the world to sing, why McDonald's told you that you deserve a break today, and why Nike tells you to just do it.
4. Have a Prominent Symbol or Mascot - A branding element, like a logo or a mascot is helpful because it provides consumers with the reference element they use to make the associations. So when you see Mickey Mouse you automatically make associations, just as you do when you see the yellow arches. In advertising the use of characters is a very effective branding tool, such as Mr. Clean or the Pillsbury Dough Boy.

5. Invest in Repetition - Branding is only successful if people have the opportunity to be exposed to the brand being promoted. Whether online or through traditional advertising, you need to get your name in front of people. In addition to advertising, you can sponsor events that are consistent with the message and emotion you are trying to promote. You can also engage in a variety of guerilla branding tactics that get your name and the perceptions you want before the public. Point is, branding only works if people are exposed, over time, to your message.

6. Fulfill Your Promises - Branding is all about perceptions and if you create the wrong perception, or fail to live up to the perceptions you successfully create, you will suffer from a negative backlash you may never be able to overcome. Never make promises you can't fulfill and never try to associate yourself with a negative emotion.

Branding is a core component of every marketing effort. No marketing campaign is successful without branding. As marketing hounds, Tudog actively promotes branding as a key feature in our marketing philosophies. As such, there's sure to be a lot more about branding in these pages in the future. Stay tuned.