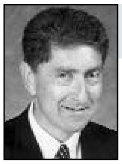
MARKETING/POSITIONING

Brand Lock and Key

Take 10 steps to build brands.



by Ira Kalb

THE CONCEPT OF BRANDING goes back to ancient times when people in positions of power labeled their possessions to identify them. As commerce developed, certain brands evolved to represent quality, recognition, relationship, ownership, and trust—with the goal of making purchase decisions easier and increasing sales.

Today, there is still much confusion about what branding is, as 90 percent of brands are not successful. Too many marketers try to develop and execute branding strategies without understanding the concept of branding.

Branding is made up of two basic building blocks: corporate image and product image (or positioning). Both are comprised of two sub-components that can be called the *lock* and *key*. The lock is the market segment that has an unfilled need, and the key is the image of the product that is created to fill that need better than competitors.

Building Better Brands

To build a brand, follow 10 steps:

Step 1: Do a SWOT analysis. Do an internal analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses and an external analysis to identify opportunities and threats. Match strengths with opportunities.

Step 2: Define your marketplace. From this analysis, define your marketplace—the one that incorporates the most promising opportunities that your strengths allow you to pursue.

Step 3: Identify company-wide locks. Identify the market segments that have needs your organization can fill better than your competitors.

Step 4: Determine how you are known in that market. What image, if any, does your business have in the market? Simple research—asking people what first pops into their minds when they think of your organization—will help you identify how you're perceived.

Step 5: Create corporate-level key. If you need to create a corporate image either because you are new or your image is not working—you first need to establish your mission statement. Make sure you: 1) identify the most promising locks, or target market segments, your strengths enable you to pursue; 2) make it clear to those segments what your company does; and 3) communicate clearly what is unique about your company and why they should do business with you.

Step 6: Create corporate identity tools. These tools include: name, logo, color, type font, and corporate slogan. Include your corporate identity in your product image, unless doing so would hurt the image of your company. For example: Disney uses the corporate brand only on movies deemed wholesome for kids.

Step 7: Identify the product locks. For each of your goods and services, identify the target market segments with unfilled needs that you can fill.

Step 8: Create product keys. Create unique (do-not-duplicate) keys for each product. Uniqueness minimizes competition and enables you to charge whatever is necessary to satisfy the expectation created by the image. Avoid having the image of one product overlap with others in the product line.

Step 9: Communicate. Once keys are created for the locks, execute the strategies in all marketing communications. Have someone who understands the branding process direct those who will be implementing the communications strategies.

Step 10. Measure and analyze results. Once implemented, results should be measured and analyzed to determine what is and is not working and why.

If you can execute this procedure, the rewards can be dramatic. For Coca Cola, Disney, and Microsoft, the return has been as high as $100 billion. SSE

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ACTION : Implement these 10 steps.

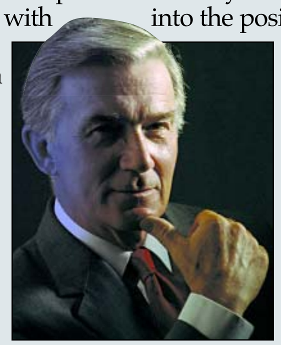
COMMUNICATION/PRESENTATIONS

Aura of Leadership

Speak like a leader.

by Tony Jeary

YOU CAN DEVELOP a hard-to-define aura of leadership—that sense of confidence and control that true leaders project. The aura of leadership creates an emotional connection with your audience that helps you build trust, loyalty and a spirit of collective purpose toward a common goal.



There are three steps to create this aura:

1. Grow, don't squeeze, into the role. Leaders know that their audiences tend to read hidden meanings into their words and gestures, and this awareness can make them self-conscious, especially in sales presentations. They say or do things they otherwise wouldn't, sending out mixed signals and causing confusion.

Don't assume that in order to achieve the results you want, you must camouflage your true self. If you do, you'll spend a lot of time trying to look and act how you think a leader ought to look and act. You'll try to squeeze yourself into a suit that doesn't fit, a persona you can't comfortably wear—and, when you step to the podium, the seams start to show.

2. Say what you mean, and be who you are. To communicate more effectively and connect more meaningfully with audiences, you must learn to project more of your true self. The greatest orators are completely themselves. They don't pretend to be someone else. They don't parrot other people's words. They are who they are, they say what they mean, and their power comes from the courage to be themselves.

Most professionals who find themselves in a speaking situation don't get there by accident. Their skills got them into the position. Poor public-speaking skills are rarely "the problem." The problem is usually the idea that they don't deserve the opportunity, or that by opening their mouth the world will discover what a fraud they are.

3. Avoid all-too-common hobgoblins. Some minor skills polishing may help you focus on things you can change to improve your delivery, but the real benefit is that it can give you the crucial boost in confidence that allows you to speak and move naturally, be comfortable in your own skin onstage, and project your unique, true self to audiences who are hungry for it. SSE

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ACTION : Practice public speaking.

Sales and Service

Excellence

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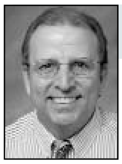
Customer-Centricity

You must avoid business Karaoke.



by Mike Trotter

Customers are more than annoyed at a person (or company) who says one thing and then chooses to do another. At Purdue University's Center for Customer-Driven Quality, we have coined the phrase "Business Karaoke" to describe companies that tell you how important the customer is—but then proceed to build multiple barriers for those "valued customers."

These barriers come in the form of busy call centers that cannot handle the volumes of customer contacts, emails sent to hundreds of companies that never get a real response, storefront employees who do everything in their power to offload a customer to someone else, and finally the one barrier that we all have come to hate: "Sorry, this is our company policy."

Becoming truly customer-centric is not easy, and it's not cheap. Because companies are comprised of multiple groups that have differing measures of success and thus create a complexity to working together, we should start with a definition of Customer Centricity.

Let's start by asking: "What do customers value?" They, of course, value high quality products and services. Beyond that, they value access to the company. Customer access is the single most important issue once a prospect becomes the beloved customer.

The customer wants access through the telephone, through the Web site, and through storefronts. They want consistent, simple answers on first contact. The people who staff and operate all of these access channels are continually asked to do more with fewer resources, get customers to use self-service, and keep customers happy. The volumes increase because we rarely do anything to understand the reasons and eliminate the need for specific types of customer contacts. The complexity increases because we take the simple tasks and either automate them or send them offshore, never recognizing that complex tasks take more time to resolve that simple ones. If Access Channel Management were easy and simple we would all be experts at it and customers would not complain about how they are being handled.

Five Factors of Customer-Centricity

At our Center for Customer-Driven Quality, we have developed a five-part definition of customer-centricity:

1. The customer is the heart of the business. Customer centricity is a convergence of all company resources on the customer. As we look at the business battleground today, companies are trying focus on what will help them acquire customers, increase the wallet share of existing customers, and retain customers. In annual reports, the media, and elsewhere, we read about how important the customer is and what companies want the customer to know and believe.

However, when we look at the business through the eyes of the customer, we see a much different picture. Through the telephone, we see compa-

INSIDE