

Build Your Brand, Don't Just Promote It



Everyone wants a great brand but few companies have one and even fewer *people* have one. So how's yours?

Everyone knows of many corporate brands, and everyone knows many personal brands, but you don't really care about them UNLESS your loyalty to that brand is fierce. The more loyalty you have to a brand, the more you are willing to talk favorably about it or interact with it.

And sometimes, great brands falter. Even die. How do great brands die? Poor quality, poor management, market shifts, and over the last twenty years, failure to manage your Internet presence and reputation – pick one.

The reality is that people are more likely to do business with who they know, like and trust. Or who their friends and family know, like and trust. Or even more so now, who people on the internet know, like and trust.

You are the one that cares most about your company's brand, your product's brand, and your personal brand so what are you doing to improve it? How do you build a brand?

True brand building lies in the following 5 areas of improvement, and they are critical in building a solid reputation and brand.

So ask yourself...

1. What is the quality of your products/services compared to the price of your products/services?
2. What is the availability of your products/services?
3. What is the enjoyment of your product/services?
4. How easy is it to do business with you?
5. What is the friendliness and helpfulness of your sales and service people?

**reputation is
ultimately
a measure of
trust**

Once you have answers to those 5 questions, you should work on the continuous improvement in each of those areas.

Many business owners and advertising agencies believe that the best way to establish your brand is to advertise. Advertising generates brand awareness only. Reputation is much more powerful than advertising and word of mouth advertising is much, much more powerful than any paid advertising you can buy. It's a living, walking, breathing testimonial, good and bad.

I think most businesses should reinvest the money they spend in advertising and move it to create reputation-building actions they could take in order to solidify the brand, then they could make their advertising pay real dividends.

Advertising creates brand awareness but what kind of awareness is it bringing?

Here's a challenge... The next time you see an ad, any ad, ask yourself the following questions: What do I think when I see it and does it cause me to act or ignore? Did it create a good feeling or a bad feeling? Will I recall a favorable story or a negative incident? Or will it leave me with nothing at all?

When I see or hear an ad, any brand, or advertising image, I will think or say one of following five things:

1. Something great.
2. Something good.
3. Nothing.
4. Something bad.
5. Something real bad.

In the end, reputation and word of mouth will win out over advertising every time.

Do you make a sale by advertising, or by word of mouth and your reputation? Do you make a sale by selling them on how great you are, or is the prospect buying as a result of what someone he knows said or did?

think **Reputation** instead of **Brand**

Ask yourself why you personally do business with the companies you do business with.

If a business spent as much money delivering great service as they do trying to tell everyone how great they are, maybe they could cut their advertising budget in half and invest the other half in serving customers.

I'm big on branding, and creating a great brand, but I am bigger on reputation. If the reputation is there, the brand will be bigger than the ad, and your advertising will be that much more powerful.

The best way to build a brand is build a reputation that attracts customers. Take the actions necessary, invest in the people necessary, and invest in the quality necessary to get the brand to build itself through the words and testimony of others.

Are you interested to see what people are saying about you and your brand? It's easier than ever now. There are a number of review websites available to see exactly what your customers are saying about you. And guess what? Your customers are looking at these as well.

- **Amazon Customer Reviews**
- **Yelp**
- **Google My Business**
- **Yahoo! Local Listings**
- **Better Business Bureau**
- **Glassdoor**
- **Facebook Ratings & Reviews**

If you would like more information on improving your brand and reputation, please call and let's discuss it.

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