

You Need A Brand

by Angel Rodriguez

No matter what size your business, you need one voice. One voice that consistently and clearly communicates with your customers and employees. Something that binds all aspects of your business together ... you need a brand. Fortunately, you already have one. Everything you do is a message carrying your brand with it, playing a major role on how people formulate an image of your business. Your brochure, business card, advertisement or logo contribute to building your brand. You are either making a conscious effort to manage your brand, or it is managing you. So how strong a brand do you have and what is it saying about your business? Here is how to ensure you are building your brand, not dismantling it.

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No matter what size your business, you need one voice. One voice that consistently and clearly communicates with your customers and employees. Something that binds all aspects of your business together... you need a brand.

The good news is you already have one. You may recognize it as your brochure, business card, advertisement or logo. Yet your brand goes deeper than this. It extends to the font you use, the words you choose, the way you do things and much more. These and other brand gestures are found throughout your entire business – your website, brochures, letters or your verbal communication. In fact, everything you do is a form of advertisement to the outside world that contributes to the perception others have of you. By looking at all aspects of your business this way you can measure the strength of the message, image and personality of your business ... your brand objectives. In order to enhance this perception you need to be consistent across all areas of your business. If one piece is out of place it will gradually dismantle the success achieved in another area. By managing the gestures that define your brand, you manage the perception others have of you. That is to say if you are not managing your brand, it is managing you.

So how can you build a strong brand usually associated with big business? You can learn from the best there is in each field. Google, now a top 10 global brand, is very consistent and simple on their website. However, managing your brand need not require a Google sized budget. Creating guidelines to ensure consistency for your website costs little and is one example. Making an informed choice of the colors,

font and style of writing you use all help with consistency and builds your brand. In many cases less is more. A simple website with excellent content and brand management is superior than a complicated one working in isolation, effectively diluting your brand. Being selective, then consistent, is critical when it comes to creating your message, image and personality to the outside world.

Take a closer look. How consistent are the different areas of your business with your brand identity? What are they saying about your business? Most importantly, what are your customers saying about you? It is what they are saying about your brand that really matters. You can measure the strength of your brand by conducting a brand audit. Armed with this information you can eliminate or realign anything that is not supporting your brand objectives. This will help create a clear message, a strong sense of identity and greater recognition. The result is people are more willing to do business with you ...again and again. Just one benefit of having a strong brand. Now ask yourself this question. Are you currently building, not dismantling, your brand, and if so, is it being marketed in the most effective manner possible?

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