

BRANDING e-document

“WHO ARE YOU?”

the Who, 1976

A company with a strong brand knows who they are and presents that image to prospects with consistency and efficiency. Is your product fun or serious? Does your company compete locally or globally? Is your company culture corporate or easy going? Is your service targeted to adults or children? Does your logo, marketing collateral and Web site reflect this?

Strategic branding is the foundation that gives your marketing efforts muscle. If you have a strong brand, then you will have a strong marketing program. If you have a weak or diluted brand, then all the time and resources you put into your packaging, brochures, Web site etc., will have limited success in helping you reach your objectives.

We've had clients tell us “we want to look like everyone else in the industry”. They thought this would give them credibility, when ultimately it leaves them lost in all the other mediocre and diluted messages out there. Good thoughtful design/branding programs are what give companies credibility, and that includes a unique voice with a unique message.

What is a brand? It is everything a prospect associates with a product or service. It is the personality of your company, an image of who you are and what you represent in the minds of the public and your employees.

How does successful branding influence a prospect? By embedding a consistent message in their mind that is easily recalled through the clutter of messages a person receives everyday. Branding makes an emotional connection with prospects, and that connection is what will make a prospect choose your company over another.

How is a brand message delivered to prospects? Through simple, strong and consistent communications. Vehicles for delivery include corporate identity, marketing collateral and Web sites.

Why is superior graphic design important in branding? Because more than 65 percent of daily communication is nonverbal. So it is not just what you say, but how you say it. A targeted design campaign from a professional firm will get your message across and promote that emotional connection that gives brands vitality.

BRANDING VEHICLES

Brands are fueled by everything associated with a product or service like logos, packaging, collateral, advertising etc. Branding, done right, will return profit for companies at all stages and of all sizes. It will help you find new customers and it will help you keep them. Outlined on the next page are the core services MUELLER offers its clients, and how they affect a company's brand.

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Corporate Identity

If branding is the foundation of the marketing process, corporate identity is the foundation of the branding process. Many companies sink their marketing budgets into programs that include advertising, Web design etc. But, this can be a misguided use of resources if the company's corporate identity is not in order. A brand's vitality is dependant on it's logo; the prime identifier.

Your logo should be a unique identifying mark that establishes immediate and credible recognition for your company. It should express your corporate culture and convey you as a leader. So many corporate logos are not unique. These "cookie cutter" logos do not leave a viewer with an impression that will allow them to recall one company over another. At the same time, a logo should be simple and versatile. Simplicity allows a viewer to get your message quickly and remember it, while versatility allows your company to easily apply its logo to varying situations.

Marketing Collateral

Once the foundation of your brand is established through your corporate identity, effective marketing collateral can be developed to reinforce and elaborate on your brand.

Is "print" dead? Absolutely not. The printed word often carries more weight, and some still don't trust the web or electronic documents. A successful company has printed materials to support its branding messages to prospects. Printed materials offer:

Dimensionality - Is your brand message larger than a 17 inch monitor? A 2 foot long quad fold might help.

Tangibility - The weight of the paper stock in your hands, how a brochure unfolds, the embossed letters... These may seem insubstantial, but they carry powerful messages about a brand.

Credibility - Many people don't trust what they read on the internet. If it is important enough to print, it must be worth reading.

Accessibility/portability - Not everyone has a computer handy at all times. Printed materials are easy to take with you and pass on to others.

Web

To maintain credibility in the market place, a company must have a strong and engaging Web site. Whether it is strictly informational, or a tool to sell your products directly to consumers, the branding delivered by Web sites is paramount. Web sites offer:

Interactivity/user engagement - Navigating around a Web site engages a prospect in the brand of a company. They take part in the experience by making decisions, and if your site is well designed, they can find the information they need quickly without wading through the information they don't need.

Expandability - Content is easy to update and edit. Fresh content keeps prospects returning.

Versatility - Web sites can include pdf documents, interactive multimedia demos and other rich media. This makes for a more immersive environment while providing versatile ways to present your brand.

Accessibility - I know we said accessibility for print materials, but the Web offers a different kind of accessibility - A Web site is available 24 hours a day, and accessible to anyone with a Web enabled computer.

The bottom line is this: For a company to be competitive, they need both print (marketing collateral) and electronic (Web) representation and support. And for these aspects of a marketing campaign to be successful, they need to be based on a strong foundation of corporate identity. All elements of a marketing program must have a strategic and targeted message that is consistently conveyed throughout all materials.