



Building better business in the bush

BUILDING A BRAND TO BELIEVE IN

Being a brand to believe in is a major key to business success. A brand to believe in is a brand that people care about, buy into (with their hearts and minds, not just their wallet), develop loyalty towards and ideally grow to love. That people have an emotional connection with your brand and care enough to come back next time, or even better, develop long term loyalty to your brand, should be the ultimate goal of your brand building efforts. A brand to believe in is one that's defined by an emotional promise or attitude, and consistently delivers on that promise.

Let's go back a step to define 'brand' and 'branding'.

Branding (verb) is the ongoing process of building a brand. Brand (noun) is the result of the branding effort. A definition of brand I like is: *the recognition and personal connection that forms in the hearts and minds of your customers and other key audiences through their accumulated experience with your brand, at every point of contact* (Dennis Hahn, ID Branding, www.allaboutbranding.com).

The keywords to retain from that definition are: connection, customers and accumulated experience. A brand to believe in is one that establishes emotional connections with its customers through their accumulated experience with it.

We are surrounded by brands in our everyday life. A brand could be a company (e.g. a pharmacy), a product (e.g. Colgate toothpaste), a service (e.g. Meals on Wheels), a person (e.g. Princess Diana), or a place (e.g. Ayers Rock).

Your brand is at the heart of your business and it should underpin all of your business activities. My way of looking at it is that your brand is WHAT YOU ARE and it's made up of these six elements:

1. Why you are
 - a. Your purpose
 - b. Your vision
2. What you stand for
 - a. Your values
3. What you deliver
 - a. Your products and services
 - b. How you provide value and difference
 - c. The experience you deliver
4. Who you care about
 - a. Your customers
 - b. Your community
5. How you behave
 - a. Your actions
 - b. What you say and how you say it
6. How you look
 - a. Your name and tagline
 - b. Design, including your logo



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Your brand isn't just what *you* say it is. Each of the individual elements above, and their sum total, determine how people feel about your brand, what they believe and what they will tell someone else about it. What they believe and then share can build loyalty and advocacy that adds enormous value to your brand. It's vital that you're giving them a brand story worth sharing!

Your brand story includes the stories *you* tell about your business but it's more than that; it's everything you do that adds up to what people believe about you based on the signals your brand sends. A brand story is the foundation of your brand and a great brand story will make you stand out, increase brand awareness, create customer loyalty and power profits.

Think about your favourite brand or a brand that you love. What is it about that brand that keeps you going back? What do you love about it? How do you feel when experiencing or interacting with this brand? What stories do you or would you share about it? Popular consumer brands that come to my mind are RM Williams, Smiths Chips, Coca Cola, Google, Apple and BONDS.

One of my brands of choice is Smiths salt and vinegar potato chips. Salt and vinegar chips are my true weakness and guilty pleasure in life. For me that maroon packet of salty goodness represents unwinding, the end of the day, end of the week, enjoying with a beer, holidays, and special times with friends and family. I have probably tried every brand of salt and vinegar chips on the market but I always go back to Smiths. Why? It's not even tangible really; its trust, familiarity, the sensory association I have with the packaging, perhaps even an emotional connection with the Gobbledock! Smiths gave people a great story to tell when they introduced (and re-introduced) the Gobbledock in their marketing.

You see we don't love brands for the brand itself; we love them for how they make us feel. How we feel then influences how we behave – whether we will or won't buy the product, what we'll say about it and depending on how strongly we feel, how many other people we'll tell about our experience.

Building a brand to believe in has no end. It begins with a strategy and your brand story, based on the six elements listed above. Make a start by answering these questions for yourself:

- a) Is yours a brand to believe in?
- b) Who do you care about?
- c) How does your brand make your customers feel?
- d) What experience are you creating in your customer's every interaction with your brand?
- e) What story are you giving people to tell about your brand?

KEY MESSAGES:

1. Your brand is at the heart of your business and should underpin all of your business activities.
2. For business success, it is your job to build a brand to believe in.
3. Building a brand to believe in has no end. It begins with a brand strategy and your brand story.
4. Your brand is WHAT YOU ARE. Marketing is WHAT YOU DO to encourage people to care about what you are and how you fulfil their need/want.



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MARKETING 101

It's important to comprehend the difference between 'branding' and 'marketing'. One way to think about it is: your brand is WHAT YOU ARE, marketing is WHAT YOU DO. While they are inherently different, they go hand in hand. In my experience you can't do remarkable marketing until you really understand your brand.

Marketing is all of the activities that you do to encourage people to care about what you are, experience your brand and then share your brand story. Marketing activities may include:

- Internet/interactive media: website, social media, blog
- Direct marketing: catalogue, flyer, e-newsletter
- Advertising: television, newspaper, radio, billboard
- Public relations: sponsorship, media release, launch
- Sales promotion: competition, discount coupon, sale
- Personal selling: selling via phone, face-to-face

These are all possible marketing tactics that you can employ in your business. It remains though that the most powerful form of marketing is what one person says to another to recommend your brand. These days the power of word-of-mouth communication is extrapolated from one-to-one to one-to-many at the touch of a button via social and digital media. It's more important now than ever that people are telling the story about your brand that you want them to tell!

Marketing, or even better, remarkable marketing, should stem from a solid plan and budget. However, before the tactical part of marketing planning, it is essential to grasp these underlying marketing fundamentals.

People live from their perception. Every one of us perceives things in our own unique way and that perception becomes our individual reality. Our perception influences how we feel both before and after experiencing a brand. What we perceive shapes what we believe and how we will act as a result, including what we will say. Firstly, it's imperative to understand how your brand is perceived. Secondly, in the branding and marketing work that you do remember that people's perceptions is their own reality, which can change with every interaction they have with your brand!

People buy how your product or service makes them feel. What's going to make me walk across the street to buy from your pharmacy instead of the competing pharmacy or the supermarket? Sometimes there is no room to differentiate on price, products or packaging. The difference you can create is the way that I feel when I experience your brand. The desired feeling might be safe, supported, informed, content, cared for, loved, happy. Learn how your customers feel and more importantly, how they want to feel. Find ways to invoke an emotional response in your marketing. Change how people *feel* rather than appealing to what they *think* through the promotion of facts, figures and features.

Your customer is the hero of your business. Seth Godin, dubbed as one of the world's greatest marketers said: *"You don't find customers for your products; you find products for your customers."* Your customers are the hero of your business, not your products or services. Of course it's essential to have great products and services but it's even more essential to know your customers (and prospective customers) deeply. Who are they? What do they want from you? How will they benefit from your products/services? How do they want to feel when they experience your brand? Why would they choose to do business with you?



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Think different, not always more. We live in a time of 'more' - having or wanting more money, more apps, more travel, more freedom, more choices, more individuality, etc. The same doesn't need to apply to your marketing. When you start to think 'more' – more ads, more catalogues, more of the same – ask yourself about 'different' instead. Steve Jobs, the incredible man behind the Apple brand, identified that it's not about being better than your competitors, it's about being different. How can you create difference for your customers and the community of people that care about your brand? Strive to be remarkable (worthy of remark) and create difference in people's lives, and they will do your marketing for you.

Identify and tell your stories. The art of storytelling is as old as time and sharing stories is one of the most natural human instincts we possess. It's fundamental to the way we communicate, yet storytelling has been sorely underutilised in marketing... until now. Simple stories that create an emotional connection can be used to grow your business, build your profile and help you stand out from the crowd. Every brand has a unique story to tell and when you go looking for them, there are many hidden stories to be shared from within your business. Examples include: your 'why' story, your business story, your passion story, and stories about your customers and products. The more your stories resonate with your audience, the more likely they will be remembered or shared. Harness the many communication mediums available to you to be brave and share your stories!

KEY MESSAGES:

1. People buy how your _____ makes them feel. Find ways to change how they feel, not what they think.
 2. People live from their perception.
 3. Understand your customers deeply – make them the hero of your business.
 4. Think: different not always more. Strive to be remarkable.
 5. Be brave and reach out: find and tell the stories in your business!
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PLANNING FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS

So how do the six elements of a brand and the five marketing fundamentals translate to what you should be implementing in your business day-to-day?

Firstly, you need to truly understand your brand. Start with truth telling from these challenging questions.

- a) What business are you *really* in?
- b) What do your customers want from you?
- c) How do they want to feel?
- d) What do people believe about your brand?
- e) What do you *want* them to believe?
- f) What kind of experience do you want to deliver to your customers and community in every interaction with your brand?
- g) What experience are they having now?

Secondly, remember that your brand and marketing go hand in hand and they should not be treated exclusively. WHAT YOU ARE should shine through in all of your marketing activities to become a brand to believe in.

Lastly, have a plan. I recommend developing a brand strategy around the six brand elements, and creating a simple marketing plan. The power of these documents lies mostly in going through the thinking to craft them. Keep them simple, keep them living (i.e. review and update regularly) and from these documents have a straightforward system to ensure you are implementing the actions arising from them, and living your brand day-to-day.

Note: Orana Mall Pharmacy, 2011 Pharmacy Guild Pharmacy of the Year, has a clip on YouTube which is a terrific example of a brand story and using video as a marketing tool:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xG7wSrfau7Q&feature=share>

CASE STUDY

A brand to believe in - Boost Juice

The Australian company Boost Juice Bars is an example of a brand to believe in. Boost's website states: "Our goal is to become one of the world's most famous and loved brands."

The website also says: "Boost was never simply about the healthy and great tasting juice or smoothie – the brand is based on the entire "Boost Experience" which takes place every time a customer enters a store. This experience is a combination of a fantastic product, served by positive and energetic people who greet you with a smile, in a bright colourful store environment with fun music to match." I challenge you to develop this level of clarity around your brand.

When I think about why I would travel a couple of extra blocks to seek out a Boost Juice over a juice I could get at the cafe next door, I realise that, without even knowing it, I want to engage with their brand - I want the "Boost Experience." This is why after 13 years in business Boost now has over 250 stores in 14 countries. The values of their brand underpin *everything* they do. When I read their website, drink their



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juices or visit their stores I clearly and consistently experience their values, their philosophies and vibe. The Boost website text is written by Janine Allis, founder and Managing Director of Boost Juice Bars, in such a way that I feel the authenticity of their brand, I feel connected to her and what her brand stands for.

I particularly love this (also from their website): "...the entire way we conduct our business has been developed around the customer to ensure we are giving them what they want, and not just what we think they want or what we want to give them." BANG, Janine just hit the nail on the head. To build a brand to believe in you must know what your customers care about and for them to care about you, you must care about them.

Boost Juice: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evs_8NVPaIY&feature=share

KEY MESSAGES:

1. Your brand should resound (shine) through in all of your marketing.
2. Where to start – truth telling from challenging questions.
3. Have a plan! A simple, rough plan is better than no plan at all.
4. Just do it!