



ON TARGET

Quarterly Marketing Bulletin

in association with

The McAlpine Partnership - *graphic design consultants*

Issue 5/2004

Making Your Mark with BRANDING

Branding is often misunderstood and perceived to be one of the most whimsical areas of marketing - we've all heard the complaints about the huge creative agencies that charge the earth, "just to produce a new company logo". The reality, however, is that effective branding (or re-branding) is a delicate skill and that, in return for some initial investment, it really can help businesses to secure their long-term viability in the marketplace.

The object of branding is to produce positive and lasting associations between a specific creative image or design and the unique benefits of your product or service offerings. In short, your brand should instinctively conjure up positive connotations of value. Various marketing techniques are then utilised that help stimulate your customers to buy your products routinely in the future.

Global companies take branding very seriously presenting them with a distinctive commercial advantage. All it takes is a quick look at The Coca-Cola Company and Pepsi-Co for the benefits to become evident. Both companies have been in direct competition for years, each trying

to establish a stronger and stronger brand image. The result is that, thanks to their distinctive bottles, colours and logos, Coca-Cola & Pepsi are now amongst the most instantly recognisable products in the world.

So whilst many think branding is simply about dreaming up a new corporate logo without any due consideration, in reality it involves many integrated marketing functions and has implications for the entire marketing mix. Above all else, branding decisions should be made only when there is a detailed understanding of customer needs. Persistent advertising, supported by proper product placement, good product design and appropriate pricing are all just as important as memorable logos and slogans.

So the next time you're launching a new brand, remember to fully research your market. Spend some time looking at benefits of your product, consider customer perceptions and whether your brand is one that consumers will naturally identify with.

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STEP BY STEP

#4: Creative thinking techniques - word association

In last issue's **Just Try It Out!**, Graham looked at **Brainstorming**, and we promised you some tips on how you could create some new ideas. Now I'll talk you through an idea generation technique that really works.

Step 1 - Pick a word, any word...

Word association is a great way to get started, and the more random the starting point, the better. Why not open the dictionary at a random page and choose any old word. You might like to do this a few times until you have four or five words to work with.

Step 2 - Two heads are better than one

And two or three groups are better than one large one! If your brainstorming buddies are many, split up into a few smaller groups. More ideas will be generated this way.

Step 3 - Say what you see

The next step in this process is to elaborate on each random word in turn without trying to fit them into your business objectives at the moment. You may know an interesting fact about the word, or want to describe the ideas it provokes. Develop these as far as you can within your group, so that you have a paragraph's worth of something to say about each word.

Step 4 - Make the connection

Bring the groups together and share your ideas. You may want to create more ideas at this stage too. Take each description or story in turn and try to associate it with the business issue facing you. This can seem quite impossible at first, (how can a fishing village custom be appropriate to a bakery shop?) but persevere and you'll be surprised where it can take you (olde worlde traditional theme... hairnets for H&S... start a new line in sushi...)

Step 5 - Be choosy

When you have linked your stories to your business and have come up with lots of new ideas, it's time to sort through them and weed out the plain impractical, and identify the strong potentials. After some more idea development and research in to their feasibility, you'll be ready to put a brand new idea into practice.

There are lots of other idea generation techniques to explore. Let us know if you'd like to hear about them, and we'll include another one in an upcoming issue.

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Who We Are and What We Are Doing...

AME Marketing is an independent full service marketing consultancy firm based in Prestwick, Ayrshire. We work with a diverse client base throughout the West of Scotland.

ANALYSING & MONITORING EXPERIENCES

Our new approach to client feedback is now in place. In addition to following up with all our clients at the end of a project, a staff member who was not involved with the delivery of the project will contact our clients by telephone to gather feedback from the experience. We will listen carefully to your comments, both good and bad, and use the information to refine our procedures to continually improve our service to you.

AMAZING MANDOLIN ENSEMBLE !

Our Marketing Manager, Lynn is a member of *Da Capo Alba* guitar and mandolin orchestra. In October 2003 they were winners of a national Banjo, Mandolin & Guitar Federation competition. The Orchestra was awarded the Federation Cup for Musicianship and the John Alvey Turner shield for Presentation, Professionalism and Performance. *Da Capo Alba* is Scotland's first guitar and mandolin orchestra and is based in East Kilbride Arts Centre. They are currently recording their second CD.



Marketing Myths Debunked

THE MYTH:

Market research is a waste of time because marketers know instinctively what customers want.

THE REALITY:

Marketers are less clairvoyant than some might like you to think. The truth is that all major marketing decisions are (or should be) based on research data – everything from helping to

identify which products should be brought to market, or finding out the most feasible advertising media, to developing a new brand image, for example.

It can be dangerous to act on plain intuition, so be very wary of those that promise the Earth without substantiating their claims with supporting research-based evidence.

Alignment

A good layout will enhance the natural flow of information resulting in a more focused and organised communication. Leave it to your web graphic designer to prove that the old adage is true... there is a place for everything and everything has its place!

Repetition

Repetition is good! Repetition is the key to consistency. Your web graphic designer knows that visitors to your site will appreciate consistency in design from page to page. Consistency breeds a sense of harmony and accord. Repetition is the key to consistency. Repetition is good!

Typography

Your preferred font says a lot about you. Elegant? Professional? Renegade? Wacky? Your web graphic designer will know instinctively what is right for you and will certainly avoid the appearance of having one too many personalities and limit the number used on screen.

But it doesn't end there, of course. Good web graphic design should augment and facilitate the functionality of your web site by immersing the audience in the entire web browsing experience. That is where you come in. You'll know what features your customers are looking for more than most and if you're unsure just ask them. Take the time to work in partnership with your web graphic designer and together you can produce something that your customers will get value from and go a long way to achieving your own on-line business objectives.

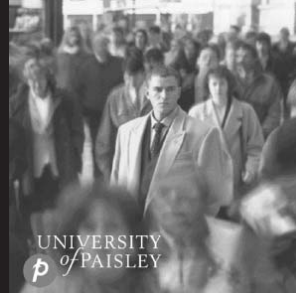
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The Marketing for Profit programme is a highly practical series of twelve short training workshops offered by Impact Communications in association with The APL Business Centre. The training starts on the 16th February at The APL Business Centre, Stevenston and is designed to meet the real needs of businesses in the modern marketplace and includes:

- Improving how your business sells
- Improving your returns from advertising
- Enhancing your business profile through public relations
- Using direct mail to build your business
- Making the most of the Internet for your business
- Developing a marketing plan

For more information and to request your application pack please
contact Helen Gibson on: **0845 601 5712**

email us at helen@impactscotland.com or visit our website

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