

Does your market see you? Can they hear you?

Branding

Your statement about what you provide is your brand. Ultimately, your brand is less about what you say about yourself and mostly about what your market says about you. Let's face it, there's no amount of branding that will make the Yugo compete with BMW because the market says, "no." (*and, yes, Yugo could be competitive by raising the bar on their engineering and design, but that's not the point here.*)

► **How's your Brand?**

30,000 marketing messages a day is the current estimate for how many messages we slog through every single day. And out of all those, how many do you remember seeing yesterday? Not many. You've got to make sure your message is the one that people remember. Buyers are more sophisticated than ever and love finding and using unique, excellent products and services.

Become the "ultimate driving machine" in your industry or market niche by making sure people remember you for all the right reasons. What used to be your flyer is now your website, so create your online presence and make your offer crystal clear.

Starting with an intense brainstorming session that explores what's in the box and what's not, branding is one of the most important business development strategies you can employ. Even if you're inside an organization, people know your "brand" and you can influence and alter what people say about you. It's not magic. It's organizational savvy, it's purposeful messaging and it matters.

► **In a Nutshell**

Or a fishbowl, your brand is first what you say about yourself and then what others say about you. Often, it's the emotional connection that people make to your offer. Brand loyalty is precious.

Finding the right words to capture the essence of your offer is exponentially rewarding when it's done well. Your brand is your voice and whether it's speaking for just you or for your entire product line, is the driving force behind your marketing and sales. Brand is the emotional connection that others make with what you offer.

Jump start your branding by answering these specific branding questions: What exactly do you provide, specifically who will use your product or service, and what is it that you offer that your competitors don't? Stake a claim in your market and stand by it, then repeat it every day in everything that you do.

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