

Brand: What's in a Brand?

Branding is one of the oldest means of identifying what's yours. From breakfast cereals to cars – brands are everywhere you look and have been forever.

Your brand is what you are, or at least it should be. It should not be taken lightly nor should it be created without a good deal of thought. It is your 'mark' your ambassador in your absence and should resonate with the qualities and values of your business, product or service.

As with marketing, branding has become a science unto itself and many branding practitioners earn millions in consultancy fees developing, implementing and protecting brands. But, again, as with marketing, there are some immutable basics that ought to be adhered to whatever stage of development your business is at.

Firstly, don't go cheap. There are many 'logo designers' on the internet who will show you lots of different 'looks' which can be applied to you – they can't. You are you, you are unique otherwise what's the point in being in business in the first place. This sort of offering is a bit like an arranged marriage; you don't quite know what you are getting into! Focus on selling you in the purest way possible and have real reasoning behind your brand.

Your brand, or the brand of your product or service has to have some integrity and it should be able to stand the test of time, look at Shell; the basic structure and symbolism has not changed in over 100 years. Coca Cola too is a brand that is steeped in history and remains unchanged. Why am I telling you this? Because your brand should be what you become known as. It should sum up what you are and what you do.

Secondly, whatever your identity is, it only truly works if it can be produced in one colour, you know, like a brand born of a branding iron, charred skin doesn't give much room for colour and fanciness. In much the same way, a fax machine is unlikely to do the work of Monet or Turner much justice. A sound brand identity MUST work in its most basic form.

Beyond these two fundamentals lie libraries of worthy, intellectual wisdom that will speak of Monistic brands, Endorsed brands, Pluralistic and Sub brands. Most of that written has more than a modicum truth and good sense and, when you are Unilever you will need to stay on top of all this to defend your brand to the death. For now, just make sure you invest properly and get something that fits. An ill-fitting pair of shoes will cost the same as a pair that fit and they won't ruin your feet or disturb your posture.

The importance of a good brand cannot be over stressed, we live in a world that is massively over communicated, and we are blinded by a million images everyday. The job of a strong brand identity is to impart the essence of you amid the noise and leave your customers and potential customers in no doubt as to what the brand represents – YOU.

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