

The Relationship Marketer's Guide to

BRANDING



INTRODUCTION

If I told you that you could convince people to not only pay more for something they could readily buy for less—but insist that they pay more for something they could readily get for less, you would think I’m nuts.

But that’s exactly what happens every day.

Don’t believe me? Just take a trip to your local grocery store and watch people shop for salt, oatmeal, and other single-ingredient commodities. Inside the packaging, all salt is the same. All oats are the same. Yet most people choose a higher-priced option over the least expensive.

That’s the power of branding, and it doesn’t just impact how much people spend. It can turn customers into advocates who influence their friends, neighbors, and relatives.

Branding isn’t only for big companies like Morton or Quaker. You, too, can use it to grow your business and increase your profits.

The fact is that everyone has a brand. You can either influence how people see it or leave it to chance.

This e-book will help you understand basic branding principles and develop an action plan to advance your personal brand.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 • Understanding brand

CHAPTER 2 • How branding differs for relationship marketers

CHAPTER 3 • What makes a good personal brand

CHAPTER 4 • How to develop your personal brand

CONCLUSION • Putting your brand into action



“A BRAND IS A SINGULAR
IDEA OR CONCEPT THAT
YOU OWN INSIDE THE
MIND OF A PROSPECT.”
—AL REIS



CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING BRAND

Brand is one of the most misunderstood concepts in marketing. That may be because it is so hard to define.

To understand what a brand is, it helps to understand what a brand is not.

- A brand is not a logo.
- A brand is not a tagline.
- A brand is not a set of graphic standards.

Those are all elements of branding, but not the brand itself. (We'll get to those elements in a bit.)

- A brand is not your product or service, either. It isn't your company or even yourself.

So what is a brand then?

David Ogilvy describes a brand as “the intangible sum of a product's attributes: its name, packaging, and price,

its history, its reputation, and the way it's advertised.”

And his is not the only definition. Here's how other marketing experts describe brand:

“A brand is a person's gut feeling about a product, service, or company.”

—Marty Neumeier

“A brand is more than just advertising and marketing. It is nothing less than everything anyone thinks of when they see your logo or hear your name.”

—David F. D'Alessandro

“Your brand is the truth about you, well told.”

—Unknown

“A brand is a promise wrapped in an experience—a consistent promise wrapped in a consistent experience.”

—Charlie Hughes and William Jeanes

“A brand is a singular idea or concept that you own inside the mind of a prospect.”

—Al Reis

“A brand is nothing but an expression of the consumer's loyalty and trust.”

—Phil Dusenberry

“A brand is essentially a container for a customer's complete experience with the product or company.”

—Sergio Zyman

Not only is a brand intangible, it's personal. It lives in the heart and mind of each individual consumer and is shaped by their personal experience. For example, some people may associate an amusement park brand with fun, thrills, and family. Others may think of long lines, noisy kids, and rides that make them nauseous.

“YOUR BRAND IS THE TRUTH ABOUT YOU, WELL TOLD.”

Obviously, you want people to make positive associations with your brand. That's where branding comes in.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *BRAND* AND *BRANDING*

Branding is what we do to try to shape those feelings, attitudes, and other perceptions that make up a brand. More specifically, branding seeks to do many things, including the following:

- Establish a recognizable identity
- Differentiate your business from your competitors
- Align your brand with principles and values that your clients share

This is where those tangible assets like logo and graphic standards come into play.

But that's only a small part of branding. You need to implement strategies that move clients from being aware of your brand to seeking out your brand and becoming advocates for your brand.





CHAPTER 2

HOW BRANDING DIFFERS FOR RELATIONSHIP MARKETERS

You can find a ton of information about how the world's most valuable and recognizable brands go about their own branding. The problem is, those things aren't necessarily what *you* need to develop and strengthen *your* brand.

You probably can't afford to spend millions of dollars on advertising every year like Coca-Cola or McDonalds. Even if you can, you may not want to. Your business is vastly different than those companies, so your branding strategy needs to be different, too.

Consumer goods companies sell to mass markets. The relationship is between the consumer and the product or company, so national advertising campaigns make sense for them.

As a relationship marketer, you work directly with your

customers. You have a relationship. Mass-market techniques like TV and radio ad campaigns aren't as good a fit as more targeted, personalized efforts.

**IN MANY
WAYS, YOU
HAVE AN
ADVANTAGE
OVER THE
BIG BRANDS.**

**YOU HAVE A
MORE PERSONAL
RELATIONSHIP
WITH CUSTOMERS.**

Have you ever noticed how many brands use people in their branding? Years after his death, Colonel Sanders is still synonymous with KFC.

Dave Thomas was the spokesperson for Wendy's for years. Many companies even create characters to be the face of the brand. Remember Frank Bartles and Ed Jaymes, with their folksy charm? Or Dunkin' Donuts' Fred the Baker? Flo from Progressive is a current example.

There's a reason these companies do this: They want to humanize their brands because people buy more often from other people.

As a relationship marketer, you don't have to spend the time and effort to invent a persona for your brand. When you deal directly with your customers, you have that naturally. All you have to do is figure out the best ways to leverage it, which we'll get into later.



YOU CAN HAVE MORE OF AN IMPACT WITH LOWER-COST BRANDING TACTICS.

Branding occurs whenever people interact with a brand. It could be seeing an advertisement, reading a review online, even using a product or service. Mass marketers can't reach out individually to customize and control those interactions. But you can.

Best of all, doing so doesn't have to cost a fortune. Conversations, updates, and follow-ups are all branding opportunities.



CHAPTER 3

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PERSONAL BRAND

While personal branding has become a hot topic, especially in the context of career development, it's not a new concept. And while some of the tools and tactics have evolved, successful relationship marketers have cultivated their personal brands since people first started doing business together.

If people don't like you or trust you, they won't buy from you. It's as simple as that. But if you can convince someone to believe in you, they'll be more likely to buy from you now and in the future—even if your pricing is higher than the competition.

So what makes people like and trust you and your brand? The answer is how you CARE...

C.A.R.E.

- Consistency
- Authenticity
- Relevance
- Engagement

Let's explore each, starting with *consistency*. Brands aren't built in a day. You have to demonstrate your key promises over and over. US President Abraham Lincoln wasn't a great orator because of one speech. He consistently enraptured his audience. Motivational speaker Tony Robbins wouldn't be where he is if he was *occasionally* inspiring and ordinary the rest of the time.

Consistency also takes focus. If you try to be everything to everyone, no one will remember anything. Focus on a specific attribute. When people think of Volvo, they think safety. Your favorite guru is known for a particular area of expertise. What do you want your brand to be known for?

Next is *authenticity*. Whatever you decide to make the focus of your brand, don't try to be anything you're not. People can spot insincerity a mile away, and nothing kills trust faster. Be authentic. Embrace your unique style and voice to stand out.

Being relevant doesn't mean you always have to be talking about your business. In fact, as a relationship

**CONSISTENCY. AUTHENTICITY.
RELEVANCE. ENGAGEMENT. CARE.**

BE AUTHENTIC. EMBRACE YOUR UNIQUE STYLE AND VOICE TO STAND OUT.

marketer, you shouldn't. It means you should be relevant to your clients' needs and preferences. You never want them to say, "Who cares?"

Relevance establishes common ground that builds rapport. And it establishes you as helpful, entertaining, informative, or whatever other trait you're looking to establish in people's minds, especially when you are engaging.

Engagement is all about value. If you can help clients in some way, they'll want to help you. If you don't provide any value, clients will ignore you.





CHAPTER 4

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

You know what a brand is, why you need to develop yours, and what will make it strong. Now you need to know how to do it. Fortunately, it's not as difficult or expensive as it may seem. We'll walk you through it.

STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE

Remember, your brand is what your audience says it is. It lives in their minds and hearts. How can you expect your branding to work without knowing who these people are?

Think about your ideal customer. Start with easy traits to define, like demographic information. Examples would be middle-aged men, women between the ages of 18–34, and so on. Then dig a little deeper.

What is their financial situation? Are there particular geographic areas where these people live or work? You may be able to find some of this information in your Google Analytics account for your website.

Next, try to define your ideal customers' psychographic characteristics, such as their personalities, values, and attitudes. What motivates and inspires them? What are they passionate about? This type of information is harder to gather, but it's essential to focused branding.

Take Dove, for example. Its branding work is consistently praised by experts the world over. And by all accounts, it's working. Its brand value has grown from \$200 million in the 1990s to well over \$4 billion today.

Do you think Dove's approach would work if it was targeting blue-collar

men who are concerned with removing grime? No way. Dove's branding works because it knows its target customers and is able to connect with them on an emotional level. That's exactly what you want to do as a relationship marketer.

STEP 2: MAP YOUR CLIENT TOUCHPOINTS

This step will help ensure you're providing a consistent brand experience with every interaction. And it provides a road map for optimizing that experience throughout the client life cycle. Your map may look like spokes on a wheel, a matrix chart, a pie chart, or a simple list. Whatever you decide, it's easy to do.

First, write down all the ways people come into contact with your brand. This

includes everything from business cards and stationery to word of mouth to your website. Even include phone conversations and personal meetings.

When your list is complete, try sorting it into categories such as pretransaction, transaction, and posttransaction. You can use this new tool to guide your branding efforts. Be sure to consistently maintain it by making changes or additions where necessary as your brand evolves.

STEP 3: PERFORM A BRAND AUDIT

Before you can get where you want to go, you have to know where you are. Search yourself online to see what people are saying. Conduct customer surveys or focus groups to learn about their impressions. And evaluate all the items in your new touchpoint map.

Make researching your competitors part of this step, too. What does their branding convey? How are they engaging with customers? How do you stack up against them? How do customers perceive the differences?

This reality check can be an eye-opener. But that's a

good thing. Once you know where your strengths and weaknesses lie, then you can plan accordingly.

STEP 4: DEVELOP YOUR BRAND IDENTITY

Now it's time to take all that research and use it to define what your brand is all about.

You should start this step with a brand positioning statement. It sounds easy, but it will take considerable time and effort. The temptation will be to include everything great about your brand and what it offers. Instead, you need to distill it into a concise statement that guides your efforts.

Here's one formula for creating a brand template:

- For [audience], [Your brand] is the [business category] that [unique selling proposition].

This is often followed by supporting statements that provide a reason to believe the claim.

Here are a couple of fictitious examples:

- For children who behave all year long, Santa Claus is the authority figure who makes their Christmas wishes come true.

- For residents of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, who want to be treated as more than a commission, Dan Shanner is the Realtor® who goes out of his way to make clients feel at ease, welcome, and important.

Everything else that defines your brand comes from this statement. In the Dan Shanner example, his brand identity might be fleshed

out like this: his tone should be helpful and personable; he should convey sincerity and warmth in visuals like his headshot; and his personality is friendly, likeable, hardworking, and eager to please.

STEP 5: IMPLEMENT YOUR STRATEGY

You have the framework for success; now put your plan into action. Update any materials that don't fit your new identity. Personify your brand with every client interaction. Deliver on your brand promise.

If there are any gaps in the customer experience, figure out how to fill them with a branded communication or personal interaction. Adjust where or when needed.

If you've followed all the steps until this point, then you are in good shape.



CONCLUSION

PUTTING YOUR
BRAND INTO ACTION

Branding should be a part of everything you do that touches clients. You need to eat, sleep, and live your brand. It will take time to guide clients and prospects through the stages of awareness, preference, insistence, and advocacy.

And it will be an ongoing effort. Branding is not a set-it-and-forget-it project. It requires

constant maintenance and nurturing. You'll tweak, adjust, and refine to keep up with changes in the market, new challenges, unforeseen threats, and potential opportunities.

But if you do, you will be rewarded with more repeat business, more referrals, and greater profits.



ReminderMedia has been providing unique and top-of-the-line client follow-up tools since 2003. With an established foundation in the real estate market, and products like American Lifestyle magazine, we've developed the techniques and innovations that allow clients in every industry to take advantage of referrals and repeat business like no other solution on the market.

[Click to learn more.](#)

CONTACT US:
ReminderMedia
866-458-4226
info@remindermedia.com
www.remindermedia.com

© 2016 ReminderMedia. All rights reserved.