

BRAND STRATEGY

BRANDING: AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY

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What does every business have in common? A brand. It might not be the same for everyone, but it is a strategy they all have to employ at some point. Essentially, it will represent every positive, or potentially negative, thought a customer will have about your company.

Of course no business would want their brand to give people a negative impression. But, what do they want it to say? That's a question that you need to ask yourself. The actual answer will depend on you.

A good brand is nothing without the right strategy and a good strategy is nothing without the right brand. Could you imagine if Google had gone with a different name?

You might not become the next Google, but you still need to put in the time to build a brand that will do what you need. To do that, you will need to define your brand and, ultimately, define yourself. Start by asking yourself a couple questions:

- What is your mission? What do you hope to accomplish with your business?
- What do you want your customer to think when they think of you?
- What is your current reputation?
- What are your benefits? What are your features?

You need to take this moment and learn about your customer base. What are their needs, wants, and habits? Do not assume you already know, go out there and find out.

Once you have formulated the brand you want, it is time to come up with a strategy. You'll need to get your new brand out into the public eye and here are a few ideas to get you started:

- **Logo** The right logo can speak volumes about your business. Allow your logo to represent the message you want your brand to send.
- **Tagline** The perfect tagline will stick in your customers mind long after they stopped reading it. You want a few words or a short sentence that can tell everyone what you want them to know. Allow it to define your brand for you.
- **Integrate** You have a brand, use it. Infuse your brand into everything you do at your business, everything from the signature you use in your email to the way you answer your phone.
- **Theme** While change might be good, in general it is how consistent your look remains that will stick in someone's mind. This could be the colors that are used on the product packaging or website, the overall look and feel, or even how you place your logo on the product.
- **Stay on Track** If you stray from your brand's promise, that sparkling appearance you had will start to fade. Although it might need tweaked as time goes on, don't allow yourself to go completely off course. After all, that is how your customer recognizes you.