

Creating a Great Brand

At a recent Breakfast Briefing, McLean Delmo Marketing Manager, Leah Taylor, discussed her ideas on branding. Here is a summary of the key points discussed.

Creating a great brand is about telling a great story

Creating a great brand is about telling a great story consistently and repetitively to a defined target market. And really great branding is about telling that story so convincingly that over time your brand story becomes part of your customers' story. So creating a great brand is about making a connection with your clients or customers and – in time – creating brand loyalty which is pure marketing gold.

The quote below from Martin Kornberger in his book *Brand Society* sums up this core theme:

'Branding turns a commodity into a cultural entity. People write the scripts of their lives using brands.'

So when you start thinking about your brand, begin with these questions:

- ❖ What is my story?
- ❖ What is the story of my organisation?
- ❖ What can I do to get my clients or customers to remember my story and to become part of the story?

Why bother with branding?

It's easy to be cynical about branding and marketing in general. Not everyone has the budget for marketing bells and whistles and large scale advertising campaigns. Many organisations have dabbled in some branding activity in the past – perhaps with mixed success. But the fact you are taking the time to read this article suggests you are willing to explore branding and the value it can create for you and your business.

The benefits of branding are clear:

- ❖ Brands sell products and services
- ❖ Brands connect you with your market
- ❖ Consumers need a reason to believe in you or your product, so branding can help them make choices
- ❖ A positive brand experience can create loyalty and trust
- ❖ Brands create value for your business
- ❖ Brands help to define who you are and what you do – but they also define who your customers are and what they do

Learning lessons from great brands

When thinking about your brand, one of the best things you can do is to look at successful brands and learn some lessons about what works.

It would only take you a moment to come up with a shortlist of some of Australia's best known brands. Such is the power of these brands that you could instantly spout their tagline or belt out their jingle. These brands are engrained in our memories and entrenched in our history. And even though many of them are no longer Australian owned, we still consider them our own and remain protective of them.

Allen's Lollies – The taste of childhood

Do you remember eating Minties as a child? Perhaps you were on a long car trip or waiting for a bus? Maybe you unwrapped the wrapper and placed the lolly in your mouth to taste the familiar sweetness – but careful not to pull a tooth on the sticky, white, sugary goodness. Did you start to tear the wrapper? When you got to the end was your torn wrapper longer than your brother's or your sister's wrapper?

For many of us, Allen's lollies were the taste of childhood. But these are not just any lollies. These are lollies that are fixed in our memory banks. These are lollies that come with 'rules for use' that have been passed down from generation to generation and are now part of our culture.

My point is that Allen's is a brand with a story. And this great brand has become part of our own stories.

Vegemite – Consistency is key

For those of us who love Vegemite – and it is almost regarded as 'unAustralian' not to – we can trust in the taste of this unusual concoction. We don't care what is in it or how it is made. We don't check on the calories contained or reach for a low fat version. For all of our lives Vegemite has remained the same. So for this brand – and many others – the consistency of the product is key.

Cadbury – Investment is key

Cadbury is a British brand, but it has a long history in Australia and we have adopted it as our own.

In 2009, Cadbury topped the Nielsen *Top 100 Brands Report* – a list of the most recognisable brands in Australia. The researchers confirmed that it was the 'unrivalled taste and unmitigated pleasure of eating Cadbury's products that encouraged Australian consumers to spend up big.'

In researching the top 100 brands, Nielsen states that there is a direct relationship between advertising spend and topping the list for brand recognition. Cadbury increased its advertising expenditure by 20% in 2009 and subsequently topped the list for recognisable brands.

However this level of advertising is way beyond the scope of most organisations in Australia and mass media advertising is certainly not the only form of marketing available to bridge the gap between a company and its consumers. The right combination of marketing elements activated at the right time will help to create a noteworthy brand. Investment does not just need to be advertising spend, it can also be time invested in planning, preparing and implementing your branding and marketing efforts.

RM Williams and Akubra – Authenticity is key

Everyone close your eyes. In your mind, conjure up a vision of the Australian outback. A stockman rides towards you and even before the red dust settles you can imagine him. He's wearing muted tones of the earth, hardwearing bush wear, broken in riding boots and a large-brimmed hat with just a tinge of sweat around the inside of the brim.

This is the story told by RM Williams and Akubra. This vision of Australia has been sold around the world for generations. And while few of us actually dress this way, we are proud of the perfect blend of rural romanticism, enduring quality and rugged toughness that RM Williams and Akubra continue to display.

A great brand knows itself and is clear on its core value position. An authentic display of the elements that are unique to an organisation - or even a nation - helps to build a strong brand.

Qantas – Maintain trust with customers and keep an eye on your competitors

Sure, the Qantas brand has its ups and downs. But it is the strength and power of the brand that has been slowly compounding over the decades that will help Qantas sustain its image in the long term.

Qantas wants to keep its customers. They know they can't do it on branding alone – but the pride we have for the brand goes a long way to sustaining customer loyalty.

In the highly competitive airline industry, the Qantas brand strives to hold true all that it stands for. While they currently seem to struggle with quality control of their planes and other factors outside of their control such as volcanic ash clouds, Qantas remains acutely aware of and swiftly reactive to the promotional activity of their competitors.

What are your competitors doing? Do you have a process to keep track of competitive activity in your industry? Is healthy competition pushing you and your brand to succeed?

A great brand makes it a priority to maintain the trust of their customers and to keep a competitive edge. And a great brand finds a way to make their customers proud.

Tips for creating a great brand

- Be clear on your organisational goals and authentic to company objectives
- Develop your story and communicate consistent key messages
- Know your customers and their perceptions, specifically through ongoing test marketing and feedback
- Consider all brand elements – remember that brand is more than just a pretty logo
- Deliver quality and relevant products and services that meet your market's expectations
- Invest in the brand in terms of dollars and time
- Be aware that brand and reputation are linked and there are many factors outside of your control that can negatively impact your brand
- Get great advice from a marketing specialist and a graphic designer and listen to their recommendations
- Think long term and be flexible – particularly in response to competitive pressures.

Conclusion

Branding is a great way to tell your story and make your customers proud. Give your clients and customers a reason to believe and make them part of the story. In time you will benefit from the brand loyalty that you need to boost sales and profits for you and your organisation.

For more information please contact Leah Taylor on 9018 4666 or email leah.taylor@mcleandelmo.com.au