



Success requires actions not accidents

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Brand Development Shouldn't Be Left To Chance?

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The whole idea behind building a brand is that you are creating an environment conducive to the formation and development of a positive reputation for your products and services in the minds of customers, prospects, employees and other marketplace participants.

That requires the communication and fulfillment of a clear, focused brand promise for an extended period of time. Introduced with impact. Established with credibility. Reinforced consistently. Serviced enthusiastically. And delivered with reliability.

But this doesn't happen by chance. Why? Because there are a number of factors working against you. Some actively and some passively, but all quite effectively. Here are four:



FACTOR 1: your competitors are against it

Your competitors are against you developing any sort of positive reputation or momentum in the marketplace. That impedes their efforts to grow and prosper. So even if they never directly attack you or dispute your claims of specific benefit, they are seldom opposed to generating a little doubt and distraction by always leading the discussion away from your strengths and toward your weaknesses. Your uniqueness will certainly not be a topic of emphasis. Your core brand promise will not be reinforced. And your case for credibility will be questioned and minimized. If you leave your brand reputation in the hands of your rivals, the most you can hope for is second best, and that's if you're lucky.

FACTOR 2: your employees are against it

Whether or not they realize it, your own employees may be working against your brand even when they are working most passionately. Under pressure to satisfy customer demands, reach new business expectations, outperform competitors or generate some market buzz, they may also



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be unconsciously short-circuiting processes that demonstrate your brand promise. Altering the core message that defines your uniqueness. Diluting the influence of your greatest strategic advantage. Focusing on what's most important to produce immediate results rather than the consistency of words, actions and decisions necessary to create an enduring brand difference. And in the process, contributing more confusion than clarity. Left to your employees, your brand probably won't face conscious opposition, but it also won't receive much long-range, intentional development either.

FACTOR 3: your clients are against it

Every client wants to be treated as your most important. You do their work first. And you give them your best effort and ideas. That's not new or surprising. Unfortunately it's also not in your best interest either. Spending all your time and energy devoted to fulfilling present priorities prevents you from focusing on the actions required to develop your brand's future potential. Like what audience adjustments are needed? What message delivery tools make the most difference. What new capabilities enhance your credibility? What relationships are critical and who can facilitate them? Left to your customers, your brand's development will drown in the daily distractions of today's demands and never grow into the promise needed for tomorrow's challenges.

FACTOR 4: circumstances are against it

Life seldom produces the ordered series of positive events necessary to introduce you to key prospects and demonstrate your greatest capabilities at the same time it is focusing attention on those contacts' deep need for your services and highlighting your competitors' weaknesses. More often than not, circumstances put you in front of a hot lead at the same time a competitor introduces a new feature. Or a major piece of new business goes to a rival because the decision-maker didn't know your brand could meet their need. You see, chance is unlikely to define a high value for you in the marketplace. Build you a consistently strong level of awareness and appeal. Or demonstrate your reliability with superior performance and attitude. You have to do it yourself.

Building a strong brand is all about clearly defining your difference and declaring your greatest benefit. It is about delivering that message to the right audience. With significant impact to be noticed, credibility to be authoritative, influence to be desirable, repetition to be remembered, and reliability to be a trusted solution.

To be a success, brand development requires a plan, a process, a commitment and a consistency. That's something chance just can't provide