

Is Branding Relevant to Small Business?

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Entireweb, December 2, 2008

Most small business owners/operators would probably agree that developing a stand-out brand identity is an essential part of the marketing package for corporates and large companies.

Many would add that branding is not that important for small businesses and see it as an additional expense on the P&L. So they head off to the local printer or graphic designer who designs a logo (sometimes even for free) that gets used on stationary, vehicles and other marketing materials.

From our experience in this field, we find that most logos designed for small businesses are simply graphic devices and not actually brands in the true sense of the word, and portray little about the value proposition of the company, its personality and service promise.

In actual fact, development of a meaningful, representative and outstanding brand identity is just as critical for small businesses and if properly executed, can actually be a powerful competitive advantage.

For corporates, an effective and powerful brand is a 'must-have', simply in order to be in the game.

It may not necessarily differentiate them but it does at least give them parity with their competitors.

Unfortunately, some corporates still don't understand the value of a great brand and have cruddy logos that are, in short, embarrassing and doing nothing for their businesses.

But there is significant value to the small business that has the vision and commitment to invest in having a professional marketing agency develop a meaningful and appropriate brand identity.

A brand identity is more than just a visual symbol or logo design - it defines your company's unique service promise, builds lasting brand recognition and invokes positive recall.

A strong brand enhances your company's credibility by integrating your brand strategy with consistent graphic application across all market and customer contact points.

Think about this - if most small businesses have weak branding, then by developing a compelling and effective branding package you can position your company ahead of your competitors in the mind of your target market.

A strong and effective brand can definitely be a competitive advantage in the cut throat world of small business.

To develop a strong brand identity, your marketing agency needs to work closely with you to understand the needs of your customers and prospects.

They need to explore suitable graphic elements and branding metaphors for the logo device, develop appropriate colour palettes and provide guidance on how to effectively apply your branding and logo design in specific applications.

Your goal should be to ensure complete brand integrity. If the brand development process is executed correctly then your company will stand out from the mass of small businesses that simply couldn't be bothered, or more likely, don't know any better.

Professionally designed brands, usually most visibly represented by the logo device, tell the market a visual story about your company.

It speaks of attention to detail, professionalism, pride and investment in your company, presents your unique value proposition and helps you to stand out above your mediocre competitors.

About the Author: Wayne Attwell is the founder and senior brand strategist at Bold Horizon. He has over 25 years of international marketing and business experience across large corporates and SME's. Initially trained as an industrial designer, Wayne also has an intuitive feel for great design and presentation. For more marketing, brand development and internet marketing information visit www.boldhorizon.co.nz.