

# BrainTattoo™



Stick it where it counts. A blend of branding and other beneficial babble from Karen Post • • • • • Issue one

I was recently on a plane returning from a speaking gig in Seattle. After I chatted for hours with an educated woman sitting next to me, she inquired, "Karen, what do you do for a living?" I explained, "I am a national speaker and consultant on branding." Her face lit up and she replied, "What a coincidence! That's what my boss has been doing for 40 years. What kind of cattle do you have?"

At that moment I knew the world needed to know more about branding—the kind I do landing Brain Tattoos™ (mental imprints about companies, products and services) on buyers and prospects.

For more than 20 years I've been planting serious ink on the minds of consumers. Having founded an ad agency at the age of 22 and working with some great companies, associations and professionals, I've seen a lot—the good, the bad and the absolutely awful.

Branding is not rocket science unless of course you are NASA. It is in its purest, simplest state "what your market thinks about you, how they feel about you and what they expect from you." It's the sum of all you do. It is the mental relationship with anyone who cares about your existence.

Every company, product and person has a natural brand—the one they are born with when they are created and named. However, only a select few can really soar with this "go with the flow" formula. Big brand winners leverage their natural gifts, stay true to their values and consciously live by a branding mindset.

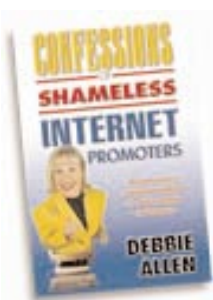
Through our branding history, we have all witnessed Fortune 500 companies with gigantic budgets create brand nightmares. We have also seen start-ups with more debt than a small county hit a brand home run and now the rich founders are playing golf in Tahiti. Go figure. . . . There is not a perfect roadmap or magic potion to pour on your business plan. In fact, I believe there is nothing all so new about branding. What I do believe and have a strong conviction about is there are some very simple guidelines to follow and a serious attitude we all must embrace to be brand champions and masters of the Big Brain Tattoo™.

My goal with the Brain Tattoo™ newsletter is to exchange meaningful branding scoop and protect you from the poop, share interesting ideas and have some fun. After all, we all have seen a few brands we would call "a joke"!

Send this to a friend

Book the diva to speak

SAVE \$10 TODAY  
Order the featured  
resource package



For a limited time,  
order my new book  
and receive  
the Land the Brand  
book FREE!

## Hot off the Press Confessions of Shameless Internet Promoters is now available!

Discover the best-of-the-best online marketing strategies and secrets to success from the world's top Internet marketing gurus. Including yours truly, The Branding Diva, Moi! and 48 other contributors from around the world confessing their deep dark secrets to online success.

These innovative online marketing strategies and secrets are now available to you. You will begin making TONS of money from the Internet and create TONS more online branding/marketing opportunities practically overnight!

### Karen, The Branding Diva

*Meet Dave. He was an educated CEO who never quite got that his product was not a point of difference in his brand (see more on page 3). Dave is survived by two storerooms of tired brochures with the headline "We Have Superior Products" and a truckload of business cards with no personality and enough brand-bland words to fill a small dictionary.*

*Poor Dave.*



# A Quick Quote: “Don’t Quit.”

Branding takes time and resources. If you don’t have either, go straight to Monster.com. Many branding leaders give up on their brands too early. If your brand has a promise, personality and purpose that enough people want and will pay for, live by these five steps, stay in the game and breathe brand. If you get bored, get excited about something that’s not working or take up stand-up comedy.


1)  
Know who you are  
and where you  
want to go.

2)  
Don’t follow  
the pack.  
Be unique.

3)  
Connect with those  
who want what  
you have.

4)  
Deliver a great  
experience.

5)  
Speak loudly even  
when you whisper.



Damn.  
I got passed up  
again for that higher paying,  
more fun job.  
I’m getting sick and tired  
of not being noticed.  
I know I’m smart  
and sexy.

## No Brand. No Banana.

There are plenty of smart and sexy monkeys out there.

For any professional, a strong identity and a distinct market position are key factors in achieving optimum business success. Your Brand Moi™ can supersede academic credentials, experience and even your skill sets as a competitive edge. The power of perception allows you to make a unique mark in the minds of your industry, peers, customers and prospects.

Personal branding, just like big company branding, starts with a value-based strategic scheme and is followed by a tactical action plan. This is where many professionals can sink their brand in a minute if they don’t adhere to their brand plan with passion and commitment. Remember, audiences derive their impressions from what they see, hear, read, experience and even smell! All your points of contact with your target market should pass your strict brand standards code. And don’t try to be all things to all people. Stick with your core purpose.

- **Small names are big.**

If you’re serious about building a powerful Brand Moi™, I would start with your professional name. Can people pronounce it? Does it have a meaning that would hurt what your brand promises? For example, I would consider a name change if your name were Tom Paine and you practiced dentistry. If your brand plan includes achieving celebrity status in your industry or in a mass market, short, memorable names are best.

- **What they see they believe.**

Next I recommend auditing your graphics and visual presentations. This includes every piece of correspondence that you can control. If you are an independent professional, this means your Web presence, business cards, letterhead, thank-you cards, proposals, advertising and all business forms. If you work for a company that has its own brand, this may mean internal communications and personal correspondence to your customers and peers. Your wardrobe and personal appearance express your brand every day. Make sure it’s saying what you intended.

Brand Moi™ is essential. If you compete with anyone for anything, you need a brand. Just like the products on the grocery store shelves, it’s a cluttered, aggressive environment. It’s human nature to gravitate to people you like, trust and can relate to. Connect to their souls. Stand out. Be heard.

**Make your mark and tout the very unique and special being you are!**



# In a Sea of Sameness, Brands Must Stand Out

**J**ust like a cattle brand, a commercial brand denotes a difference. Management guru Tom Peters says, “Be distinct or be extinct.” Marketing veteran Jack Trout proclaims, “Differentiate or die” to survive in our era of killer competition. I say, “Run like the rest and you too will be road kill.”

A strong brand is the bond to the buyer. It must be relevant, distinct and memorable. In a society of so many choices, being different can be the determining factor in the decision-making process. Today in all industries there are many similar business models, products and services—all paddling for survival in a sea of sameness. Cover the logo on an ad and you often have no idea what company placed it. The same thing happens with company names, brochures and specialty items: Many look like twin sisters with the same focus on features, no benefits and promises, cookie-cutter language and nothing that sets apart the brand. Yet many wonder, “Why is our brand so weak?”

As business leaders and entrepreneurs, we must have the courage to be different, leave our comfort zones and stay committed to our brand difference over the long haul. Brands are not built in a day; many take years.

So how does a company, product or service stand out and land a brand? You must first completely understand the true meaning of the words *distinctive* and *unique*. I travel around the country and speak to high-level business leaders about their brand difference. Many contend that it's their “service and product” that set them apart. Ironically many times their competitors sing the same song, and both are lost in the deep sea of sameness, getting nowhere.

In most cases, service and product alone are not strong points of difference in a brand. And even if they were, most buyers are so jaded by this proposition it's a very hard sell. Brand positioning with the lowest price is also a dangerous avenue to take. Today's buyers hear this claim too often and are very skeptical.

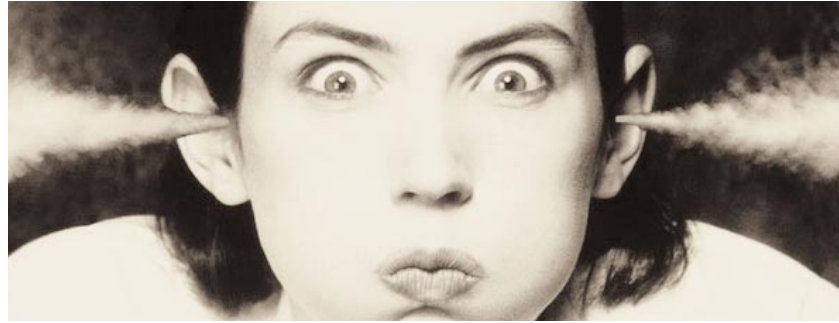
Depending on your circumstances, one or a combination of the following can be the starting point to distinguishing your brand. Once you decide on your unique, strategic direction, the tactical execution must be redundant and consistent or the brand is doomed to fail. Brand uniqueness positions need to be authentic, an extension of your

core values and something that can be delivered with integrity. Here is a partial list of differentiating possibilities for your brand.

- There are many more.
- Your credentials
  - Your physical characteristics
  - Your mental attitude
  - Your heritage
  - Your size
  - Your leadership in your industry
  - Your expert team
  - Your special ingredients
  - Your speed of action
  - Your personality
  - Your style
  - Your innovation
  - Your technology
  - Your lack of something
  - Your pioneer status
  - Your speed to market
  - Your geographical location
  - Your niche markets
  - Your social consciousness
  - Your environmental position

Think about some of the most memorable brands of our time. What distinct mental image comes to mind? Volvo: safety. UPS: the brown guys. Southwest Airlines: no frills and casual. The more unique the brand position, the more protection you have from competition and the tighter your connection will be to your customers. This applies to any size and type of business.

Successful branding sometimes takes a radical shift in thinking by the organization's leadership. Branding is not merely the logo, some catchy tagline or the creative pastime for the marketing department. Branding is the heart and soul of an organization. Your brand should stand for something, and be authentic and uniquely yours. It should be woven into every important decision and resonate through every point of contact with a company's market. Having a strong point of difference in your brand category is a major advantage in landing a successful brand.



# Don't Lose it. Use it.

*As a national speaker, I have been fortunate to work with and build some great friendships with an elite group of talented and very cool business experts. I invited my pal Jeffrey Gitomer, the selling guru and funny man to contribute to this edition of the Brain Tattoo™. I hope you enjoy his insight.*

Guest Column

## Bringing Dead Customers Back to Life

You lost a customer. You've probably lost lots of customers. You don't want to think about them. It's painful. In fact, you're reading this and have already had a few instant thoughts about this one or that one. Makes you mad, doesn't it?

They're dead and buried in that great customer graveyard in the sky. A graveyard full of unfulfilled promises, screwed up deliveries, missed deadlines, wrong billing, crappy service... want me to keep going? Two more thoughts: lost revenues and lost profits. More? One more thought: lost commissions. That one hurts. Especially the ones "you were counting on." The ones you "already spent." Makes you madder, doesn't it?

Well I have great news. Keep thinking about them. They're gone, but not forgotten. Dead, but not buried. I challenge you to re-connect with them as soon as possible. They have money waiting for you.

TRUE STORY: A newly hired sales regional manager for a fortune 100 company noticed two file drawers marked Code 99. When she inquired as to the meaning, a rep told her, "Those are the customers who hate our guts. They have sued us, left our machines on the curb, bad mouthed us, and said they never wanted to see us again." She emptied the drawers, and divided the files among the sales team with the directive to visit each customer, meet with the decision maker and find out what happened. That's all. No sales pitch.

RESULT: The results were staggering. More sales-per-lead than any program they had run in the past five years. Many of the old (angry) people were not there any more, making the initial conversation much less painful, and the bad memories dim or lost. From there they discovered that there were opportunities. Sales opportunities. And the customers appreciated the straight-forward courage.

NOTE WELL: All customers are not lost from screw-ups. Often someone came in and stole them. Either by lower price, or just by a better salesperson.

NOTE REAL WELL: I am NOT recommending that you go in with price concessions. Bad precedent for a new beginning. Bring something to the table besides "low price" and you'll walk away with profit. There's a thought.

**Want a customer-zombie approach process that will wake up the dead? Stay tuned. Jeffrey's plan will be in the next issue of Brain Tattoo™**

Jeffrey Gitomer, author of *The Sales Bible*, and *Customer Satisfaction is Worthless, Customer Loyalty is Priceless*. President of Charlotte-based Buy Gitomer, he gives seminars, runs annual sales meetings, and conducts internet training programs on selling and customer service. He can be reached at 704/333-1112 or e-mail to [salesman@gitomer.com](mailto:salesman@gitomer.com). Sign up for Jeffrey's weekly ezine *Sales Caffeine* at [www.gitomer.com](http://www.gitomer.com).

© 2002 All Rights Reserved - Don't even think about reproducing this document without written permission from Jeffrey H. Gitomer and Buy Gitomer • 704/333-1112

### About the Branding Diva™

Karen Post, The Branding Diva™, is an author, national speaker, consultant on branding/marketing issues and a stand-up comedian. For nearly 20 years she has provided branding counsel and communication programs for individuals, start-ups; local, regional, and national companies; politicians; and nonprofit organizations.

For more information contact Karen Post at 813.250.1730 or email her at [kp@brandingdiva.com](mailto:kp@brandingdiva.com) or visit her Web site at [www.brandingdiva.com](http://www.brandingdiva.com).  
Copyright 2002 No part of this publication can be reproduced without written consent.