

BrainTattoo™



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

T

he year is off to a big brand bang! In addition to my hometown team, the Tampa Bay Bucs, winning the World Champion Super Bowl, AMACOM, the book publishing division of American Management Association, has agreed to publish my latest book, *Brain Tattoos*.

I'm thrilled to be associated with such a respected and widely distributed publishing house. The book is scheduled to be out in mid-late 2003 and will be available at book stores around the country.

Brain Tattoos is set to be the next generation in branding books and a new term that is synonymous with business success.

The book will reveal how to brand like the big boys and girls, no matter what size a company is; include blueprints, time lines, and fill-in-the-blank success formulas; and spotlight some of the country's top emerging brands and their secrets.

For years mega-size and well-funded corporations have created brands and reaped the powerful benefits of customer loyalty, higher margins, asset development and star employee retention.

Brands are a well-entrenched part of our society, our culture and an occasional therapy session. They make the deciding process easy, they reduce buying anxiety and they build a mental bond with the folks holding the green, our customers.

Brain Tattoos is written for all business leaders and /or entrepreneurs, from the start-ups to mid-size business and nonprofit organizations to Fortune 500 firms. The book will provide fresh, new insight into proven practices.

Calling for all super brands.

If you are a super brand or know of a super brand that is worthy of some accolades and national exposure, please email me with the company's Web address. And if they don't have a Web address, their worthiness is already in question. They can be any size organization, profit or non-profit, a product, an event, a person, an ingredient, a process or service brand. They just need to be branded beyond belief and awesome.

Karen, The Branding Diva

"In Praise of the Purple Cow" Worth Reading

Shopping at airports has surely improved. I was returning from a speaking gig in Atlanta recently and noticed a purple cow on the cover of my favorite magazine, *Fast Company*. Along with my official Super Bowl Bucs cap, I grabbed a low-fat Starbucks something topped with full-fat whipped cream and the magazine.

What a treat—that is, the article inside. It's a compelling look at why being remarkable and a purple cow is the only way to go. Unless of course you enjoy being a lame, same, spitting image of one of your competitors.

If you have not read the article, you need to. It's fabulous and by the very cool change agent, author and entrepreneur Seth Godin. In fact, for a limited

time you can receive a FREE book. Just check it out, pay the minimal shipping charge and you're set. Go to <http://www.fastcompany.com/keyword/purplecow67> for more details.

If you like the way Seth's brain works, also check out <http://www.Sethgodin.com> for more significant reading and meaningful stuff.





“ Buyers will pay more
for a branded
product or service. ”

How much money
are you leaving on table?

Know Who You Are or No One Else Will

Having a brand is powerful.

It adds value to your balance sheet, attracts superstar employees and allows for greater profit margins. Your brand is like DNA. It's your unique mental mark; the sum of all your characteristics; a brain tattoo you land on your buyer, prospect, stakeholder and/or employee that creates a strong, loyal, emotional connection.

Is your brand landed or on life support with a bad HMO?

Successful branding is not just for those with trillion-dollar budgets nor is it a magic formula for the business elite. Branding is for anyone who has something other folks want and for those who can follow five straightforward steps and stick with them.

Have Clarity.

Sounds easy, yet many business leaders struggle with defining their operation in 10 simple words, which is the first step to landing a brand. (We'll cover the rest in future articles.)

- Do you know who you are?
If you polled half your staff today, would they have the same answer?
- What is your driving purpose in business?

- What do you promise to deliver?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What are your passions?
- What makes you smile?

And where do you want to be in 5 years, 10 years? If you don't know where you are going, how will you know if you get there? Set accountable goals. Do you want to build a brand and sell it? Pass it on to a family member, donate it to a charitable cause or just have fun with it? Be goal driven and the process becomes easier.

Ask your staff, ask yourself and ask your executive team the same questions. Do you all sing the same song or does someone sing in a completely different language from yours?

Now that you've done the internal check, what do the world and your market think? Do their impressions jive with your internal poll?

While taking time to think through and write down these answers may be a painful burden, kind of like a root canal, this exercise is critical to building a brand strategy and mapping out a plan for market significance and success.

Continued from page 2

Branding is about lodging a collection of positive, relevant information in the minds of decision makers and influencers. Market share is good, but today mind share is where success resides. As consumers, we are assaulted every day with more than 3,000 screaming branding messages. It's overwhelming, confusing and often annoying.

That's why it is so important for a company to speak in a singular, concise voice. Translate that to nonmarketing talk: Decide on the most important stuff and say it so a child could understand it and repeat it a bunch!

Be decisive.

Now take all this data and feedback from the internal and external spheres, take a vote from your gut and make some hard decisions. Deciding on even a lame idea is a heck of a lot better than not deciding at all. Pick a single message—something you can leverage and own and something you like and will stick with.

There are lots of awesome, cool things you can promise and deliver for every Tom, Dick and Mary, but lack of definition will cost you too much and delay your hitting the home run in the branding game. Sometimes you have to be monogamous with your ideas. Pick one idea and give it a chance to mature before you ditch it for something else.

You can tout features and benefits all night long in your advertising and promotion, but your brand needs to be a simple, strong and singular message.

Once you have clearly defined your reason for existence

- *Distribute a newsletter/exzine, and name it after "Your Brand."*
- *Incorporate "Your Brand" into your staff uniforms.*
- *Send a specialty item to clients that screams "Your Brand."*
- *When it's time, host a birthday party for "Your Brand."*

and outlined your special gifts and stuff you love and stuff you hate, the next step is boiling them down to powerful words or phrases that pay. These are by-products of the "who are you" question. Consider a 10-second elevator pitch, a statement of purpose that is added to all media releases and other business documents and a snappy slogan or one-liner promise. Consistently use these words in your communications and your brand will be sprouting up soon.

A brand is a mental imprint. It starts with a clear picture from within an organization with total buy-in from the troops. Whether you are branding a company, product, service or person, assess your identity, define your goals, decide on your special stuff and what rocks your boat. This is the first step to creating and building a brand.

Creating a significant brand is a five-step process. Knowing who you are is step number one. Branding principles are universal and applicable to any size business. This article is the first in a series on building and executing a brand. Brands facilitate decision making. Brands reduce risk and anxiety. Brands give buyers choice. They are part of our fabric, culture and society. Whether you are a B2C or B2B entity and or an individual professional, brands make the difference. They are a competitive advantage in a fierce marketplace.

Land your brand and rule!



**Create
Brand
Buzz**

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 or visit her Web site at www.brandingdiva.com.

Copyright 2003 No part of this publication can be reproduced without written consent.



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, The Plan

Continued from Issue 1.

Go to www.brandingdiva.com, articles, Brain Tattoo, back issue 1.

Here's the plan:

- Start now. It takes courage, it takes planning, it's a grim dose of reality, but let me assure you, it works. Get out the files and make a list of EVERY ONE OF THEM.

- Adopt a fun approach: Have a lost and found (customer) day. Have a lost and still fond of (customer) day. Have a lost customer appreciation day. Have a "we screwed up" day. IDEA: Send a dart board with your company logo in the center and a few darts and ask them to "get it out of their system" and to please let you back in their office on the condition that they keep the darts in the drawer while you're there. Fun. Uncomfortable with fun? OK, OK...

- Adopt a professional approach: Send a letter with a peace offering. Send a card. There's a huge selection at business-greetings.com. Whether you use a fun or professional approach, you must also do the following:

- The game plan: Arrange a meeting to find out why. Find out what happened as a result of your screw up, lack of attention or lost order. Ask for another chance with conditions that you both set and agree to (sometimes in writing).

- Golden lessons: Document the "whys" and you will be amazed to find that every reason is fixable. In fact, some have already been fixed. If corrected properly, these are the most valuable resources you have for making your business better.

- Pay for victories: Offer ultra rewards to salespeople, ransoms and bounties. Pay double commission or some kind of bonus for a resurrected customer.

The Goal: You will win sales, profits and a new understanding of how to improve your business from a customer's perspective—the only one that matters.

The Bonus: Goodwill lost, and recovered. If you win the customer back, you will have recreated a story, eliminated the bad one, and replaced it with newfound testimony. Huge value.

You know the old saying. "Every obstacle presents an opportunity." Well, some salespeople may see this idea as uncomfortable or too much of an obstacle. But I promise if you can get beyond the reluctance or skepticism, you will win.

You get to steal back the business and learn the "why you lost them" lessons. You get answers and sales. You get a win while the competition gets a loss. You regain lost pride while they get a shot in the wallet. You get a commission while they get jack squat. What could be better?

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.

Sign up for Jeffrey's weekly ezine, Sales Caffeine, at www.gitomer.com. © 2002 All Rights Reserved - Don't even think about reproducing this document without written permission from Jeffrey H. Gitomer.