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## The Importance of Small Business Branding

Editors Association of Canada

June 3, 2012

The Centre for Excellence in Communications

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Slide 2

## Brands?



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Slide 3

## Small Business (and Personal) Branding

- ☐ Perception
- ☐ Differentiation
- ☐ Promise
- ☐ Performance

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### What is a Brand?

- Client or customer's perception of product, service, company or organization and the way that it is unique and distinctive in offering more than others



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### What is a Brand?

- The proprietary visual, emotional, rational and cultural image that you associate with a product, service, organization or institution

- Nike
- Roots
- Canadian Tire
- Editors Association of Canada
- Canada Revenue Agency
- CEC
- You... your company



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### What is a Brand?

- A symbol bringing associations and images that represent a promise to target audiences



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### What is a Brand?

More than visual representation and expression through logos and other elements

The promise of the organization, product or service and its ability to deliver on the promise

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### Branding

- The process whereby markets/audiences develop a perception of an organization, product, service or individual
- The process of developing a brand for an organization, product, service or individual
- The process of deliberately establishing a brand in the marketplace/among audiences

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### Purpose of Small Business or Personal Branding

- To market and position your company or yourself
- To stand out amid the clutter
- To be clear on what you want your clients (and others) to think of when they see/hear/read your company's or your name
- To ensure your clients see what you want them to see about your company or you

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### A Small Business or Personal Brand

- Your promise and ability to deliver on the promise
- Your brand image
  - ▣ What does your brand mean to your clients
  - ▣ How are you perceived
- Your brand identity
  - ▣ Your (company's) name and visuals
  - ▣ Symbol of differentiation from competition

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### Developing Your Brand

- A step by step process
- Based on questions and answers = research
- Making the abstract concrete
  - ▣ Why am I doing this?
  - ▣ What do I want to accomplish?
  - ▣ Where am I know and where do I want go?
  - ▣ Who else is doing this and how?
  - ▣ How do I want to be seen/positioned?
  - ▣ How can I get there?
  - ▣ 100+ questions

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### “Know Thyself”

- Why are you developing a brand?
- What do you want?
- What are your values?
- What is your personality?
- Who are you and what do you represent - your attributes?



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### “Know Thy Product”

- What are your talents, expertise and experience?
- What are you offering?
- What benefits do you provide?
- Where is your value-added?

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### “Know Thy Market”

- What is your market/who is your audience?
- What challenges and opportunities exist?
- What is your competition and how are they doing?
- What do you want to achieve and how will you measure success?

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### “Know Thy SWOT” Analysis

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| <b>Strengths —</b><br>What do you do well?<br>What unique resources can you draw on?<br>What do others see as your strengths?   | <b>Weaknesses —</b><br>What could you improve?<br>Where do you have fewer resources than others?<br>What are others likely to see as weaknesses? |
| <b>Opportunities —</b><br>What good opportunities are open to you?<br>What trends could you take advantage of?<br>How can you turn your strengths into opportunities? | <b>Threats —</b><br>What trends could harm you?<br>What is your competition doing?<br>What threats do your weaknesses expose you to?             |

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## “Know Thy Brand”

- Define your brand and write a succinct description
  - ▣ What is your value proposition
  - ▣ What makes you different
  - ▣ What makes you unique
  - ▣ What is your promise

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## “Know Thy Brand”

- ▣ Are you a brand that emphasises quality versus price?
- ▣ Or do you emphasize price?
- ▣ Or service?
- ▣ Speed?
- ▣ Nimbleness/agility?
- ▣ Special skills or niche?
- ▣ Combinations?



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## ”Know Thy Positioning”

- Desired and undesired perceptions – you will be positioned
- Creating “mental shelf space”
- Means of differentiating
- “Top of the mind” perception

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## Positioning

**Key questions**

- How are you perceived now?
- How do you want to be perceived?
- What makes you “You” - original, unique, positive?

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## Develop your Positioning Statement

- Succinct statement of those characteristics that make you unique and identify you to the world – who am I? What do I offer? Why am I different from others?
- Essence of what you seek to be in the minds of markets/audiences - how will they benefit?
- Your guide to acting/communicating/messaging
- Link to your brand promise, image and identity

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## The Positioning Statement

Gates Smith is a skilled editor who helps textbook writers and publishers ensure their products are accessible to the intended readership and stylistically elegant within cost requirements.

Gates Smith is intimately familiar with the publishing process and its challenges, has edited over fifty texts for a range of publishers, is sensitive to the needs of both authors and publishers and always respects deadlines and budgets.

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## Steps to Small Business Branding

1. Develop your positioning based on research (SWOT)
2. Be clear on your brand promise (*know your business*)
3. Develop your “about” one-pager (*know your audiences*)
4. Create visual identity, web presence and marketing tools
5. Develop your branding strategy and action plan
  - a) Specific objectives, market “niche”, marketing mix - 4Ps
  - b) Market targets, priorities and approaches
6. Network, network, network (online and offline) !!!
7. Be consistent and persistent
8. Be in touch

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## Tips for SB Branding and Marketing

1. Social Media marketing and networking (getting noticed)
  - Create content through blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc.
  - Join online communities, business forums, chat rooms, etc.
  - Integrate SM with web site, email signature and traditional marketing tools
  - Create web site links and associations
2. Traditional marketing and networking
  - Create “face-to-face” opportunities
  - Join professional communities (IABC, CPRS, CSTD, etc.)
3. Integrate and ensure consistency between online and offline activities and marketing tools

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## Common Branding and Marketing Mistakes

Thinking that:

1. Our business sells itself
2. Our business is like many others
3. Over-promising will get us work
4. We do not need professional “visual” identity
5. We are spending too much time on this
6. We need to worry only about getting the job done
7. Our clients know who we are and what we do

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## Your Elevator Pitch

30-60 Seconds to Tell me Everything!



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## The Elevator Pitch

“An elevator pitch is a concise, carefully planned and well practiced description of your company that your mother should be able to understand in the time it would take to ride up an elevator.”

“An elevator pitch is not a sales pitch. Don’t get caught using the entire pitch to tell... how great your product or service is. (They) are buying your company, not the product.”

Robert Pagliarini  
SeekingCapital.com

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## The Elevator Pitch – Key Questions

- What is your product and/or service?
- What is your market and/or audience?
- Who are the person or people behind your organization?
- What is your competitive advantage?
- What benefits do you provide?

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### Small Business Branding is

- Commitment
- Constant
- Hard to achieve
- Easy to lose
- The owner
- The way relationships are built and maintained
- The way you do business and treat people
- How you establish rapport at an individual level
- The levels of trust and comfort

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### Success in Small Business Branding

“Success – 80% is turning up” – Woody Allen



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### THANK YOU!

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