

elevation!

conscious brand elevation strategies
to catapult business growth



elevating conscious branding in business™

www.BrandDimensionsGroup.com



6 MYTHS OF BRANDING SERIES ARTICLE

By Suzanne Tulien, Principal,
The Brand Dimensions Group, LLC

This begins a series of articles to identify and demystify the myths some organizations have about branding. We have identified **6 myths** that seem to be commonplace with some of our clients prior to working with The Brand Dimensions Group. This article is written to provide our readers a more holistic view of the branding process. It will help clarify the ambiguity of the strategic process and principles of branding so that you can begin shaping your brand strategy. Why not leverage your efforts, catapult, and sustain your business growth through conscious brand management!

MYTH #1: My Brand Is My Logo

Many organizations believe that once their corporate identity (logo) is designed and put on a business card and stationery, a brochure is composed and printed, their website is up and running, and an ad is submitted to a magazine or newspaper, then their branding is DONE. Phew! Well, that couldn't be further from the truth. In fact, most of that effort was Marketing, not Branding (see previous Elevation newsletter, Vol. 1, Issue 1 on the BDG web site – this needs to have a link to the website). Remember, "branding" is the process of creating and living the message. Your brand is a PERCEPTION (the message) that lives in the minds of your market and is defined by their experience with you, your products, and services. So, it is a PROCESS that continues in a consistent, distinctive and relevant way throughout the life of the business.

Imagine yourself an alien that just landed on earth. As you traverse across America, you start noticing this common, yet strange symbol of a green circle with white lettering within the rim and an illustration of a two tailed mermaid, or siren, representing the 'seduction' of the product. You have no clue as to what it represents to the beings living here on earth. Why is this symbol EVERYWHERE? What does it mean? Your curiosity finally hits critical mass

continue article...

BRAND ELEVATION SERVICES

WORKSHOPS & TRAINING

BRAND CONSULTING

BRAND-RELEVANT GRAPHIC DESIGN

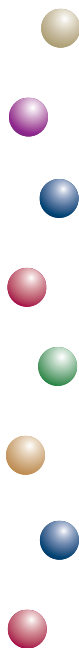
BRAND LEADERSHIP COACHING


PROTECT YOUR LOGO'S VISUAL EQUITY:

One of the most powerful representations of your brand (beyond the actual experience) is your distinctive visual "look." How are you protecting its consistency and integrity?

Create and publish an official brand identity graphic standards manual. These standards include specific, approved layouts for the logo, color schemes (PMS, CMYK & RGB builds), placement restrictions, signage layouts, approved font usage, do's and don'ts with the official representative graphic.

Your manual should be available for those employees in charge of marketing, advertising, overseeing design of internal & external collateral materials, designers, and printers to educate all involved of the visual standards required to promote the consistency, relevancy, and distinctiveness of the icon — not to mention, continue to build brand recognition & equity.





as you pass the millionth green circular symbol and you decide to satiate your curiosity and enter.....What you experience from the moment you open the door, to the robust aroma of Italian espresso, to the sounds of contemporary blues or jazz music, to the deeply rich colors and art of the décor, to the light hum of customers conversing as they relax in the cushion chairs, to the pleasant, warm greeting of the barista, to the taste of the rich, unique flavor of the product as the whipped cream topping leaves a mark on your nose...IS THE BRAND OF STARBUCKS®. All the stimulated information you took in, through your senses, within those few moments of transaction, is the brand of Starbucks.

You see how the logo, in and of itself did not create any sort of relationship or emotional connection to the actual meaning of the brand. It was your EXPERIENCE of it that created a brand relationship and provided meaning to you. Now, imagine leaving Starbucks and continuing your journey, and the next time you see the green, circular logo with the mermaid, you now have a reference of the experience you FELT, and a concept of what Starbucks means to you.

TRUTH #1:

Your brand is a PERCEPTION based on emotion and defined by others EXPERIENCE with you, your products and services.

Today, it is your "Brand" that is becoming the key source of differentiation that guides your customer's purchase choices. But now you know your Brand is not just the creative design of the icon or font treatment of your corporate identity (logo)...it is so much more than the aesthetic 'look' in your signage, website, collateral, print ads or stationery. Your logo is only a symbol that represents or identifies the brand which is:

- the [experience] of a relationship with your customer
- the [experience] of a promise to your customer
- the unique source of products and services
- the single concept that you own inside the minds of your market
- the sum total of each customer's experience with you and your organization

Source: Brand Aid by Brad VanAuken, 2003 AMACOM

So now, when you hear other organizations say that they've just branded themselves and bought a logo design, or revised their web site look, you know that what they did was a mere attempt to express their "brand" through a specific and unique look. True branding did not take place if they did not perform the due diligence necessary to document and articulate who they are as a brand (BRAND DNA). Can each and every one of your employees articulate the brand promise? Do they know what to do to "operationalize" that promise in everything they do?

Branding is a conscious, deliberate and continual process that creates powerful experiences (through specific systems and processes, leadership, and culture) for the employee and the customer. It starts from the **INSIDE OUT** with the internal brand strategies that enable your employees to deliver on your Brand Promise. These strategies encompass who and how you hire and orient your employees, your training and development, how you reward and recognize employees to reinforce the desired behaviors; and how these strategies **set the stage for creating and delivering powerful brand experiences** for your customers.

A truly successful brand understands who they are at every level and assures that the brand is expressed and "lived" through every customer touch point, every action the business takes, and considered in every decision. It is a powerful, holistic process that requires conscious attention from everyone in the organization that lives and breathes the brand. Conscious branding can catapult and sustain business growth in every type of economic climate.