



BRAND RANCH

BRAND & MARKETING CONSULTANCY

BRAND DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

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Dear Readers:

Thanks for your comments on our last issue – “*Ten Tips for Building your Brand in 2008.*” The economic woes continue to dominate the headlines in most business publications. From the failed investment firms, banks, and retailers, to the building products companies – the future will be kinder to those that have a strong, well thought out business strategy, and brand structure that is executed with calculated, aggressive, and meticulous tactics.

In every recession in history, the brands that survive and grow do not panic and abandon their business/brand strategies, but rather are assertive and continue to invest in the long-term programs that will benefit them when the economy turns around, such as:



Things to Avoid:

- **Laying off talent** – it’s too hard to find great assets (you will only be giving them to your competition).
- **Cutting back on technology** – this helps your business become more efficient and effective.
- **Reducing risk** – innovation requires taking chances and dealing with failure. Resist the temptation to become more conservative.
- **Stop New Product Development** – this hurts companies when growth returns and they have fewer offerings in the marketplace to attract consumers.
- **Cost cutting management** – you must have stable leadership and a philosophy that looks beyond the soft quarters.
- **Retreat from expansion** – emerging new markets are sources of new revenue, business models, and talent.
- **Replacing innovation as a key strategy** – you cannot cut your way out of a recession. By turning defensive, you eliminate innovative thinking and opportunities to grow which are keys to gaining market share during softer times.
- **Performance metrics change** – you must still collect critical data/information. You can’t manage what you don’t know – where and how your business is performing.

Businesses and brands that have done their homework and invested during the prosperous times will be able to not only survive, but flourish during the slower economic times. Make sure you have your business and brand synchronized for success!

Enjoy the issue,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael'.

Michael Blanck
President



POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE VISION STATEMENTS:

GOOGLE

Sergey Brin & Larry Page

“Google provides access to the world’s information in one click.”

CISCO

John Chambers

“Cisco changes the way we live, work, play and learn.”

DISNEY

Walt Disney

“We are about family fun.”

MICROSOFT

Bill Gates

“We’re going to put a computer on every desk in every home.”

COLD STONE CREAMERY

Doug Ducey

“The ultimate ice cream experience.”

WAL-MART

Sam Walton

“Low prices, every day”

VISION – A KEY TO SUCCESSFUL BRAND DEVELOPMENT

The founder of any business, whether it be small or large must begin with a VISION. What is it that will capture the imagination, interest, and attention of your prospective customer and give him/her the motivation to engage your brand? In addition, it must inspire employees, investors, business partners, suppliers, etc. It is the single most important message to articulate and communicate to everyone that comes in contact with you and your business.

Many people mistake vision for mission statement. The Vision describes a future identity and the Mission describes why and how it will be achieved.

A vision statement outlines what a company wants to be:

It concentrates on the future; it is a source of inspiration; it provides clear decision-making criteria.

A vision, in the broad sense of the word, is a dream. A vision statement can be the word picture of a dream, of guiding members of an organization or owner. This dream for the organization should consist of certain characteristics for it to be effective for the organization’s performance. The purpose of the Vision is to inspire, energize, motivate, and stimulate creativity; not to serve as a measuring stick for success.

A Vision is the road map to the future – it should be:

Futuristic

A VISION should map the desired outcome for the organization years in the future. This can be from five-to-20 years.

Proactive

As part of any good strategy, the VISION should be able to address an issue or achievement before it surfaces. It should be proactive, rather than reactive.

Challenging

A VISION for a business organization should not be an easy task to achieve. Though it should be a stretch task, it should not be unrealistic as well. If it becomes unrealistic, the organizational members will lose morale and motivation to achieve the vision.

Motivating

Motivation is an essential part of good organizational performance. It is so, in the case of a good vision as well. The statement should be highly motivating. It should encourage people to strive to perform at their highest level, resulting in an organization of superior performance and success.

Visioning is the first step in strategic planning and the development of a brand position. When all members of a business share a common vision, it is easier to set goals and advance the organization in a common direction. A vision can also motivate and empower employees. Visioning skills are used by leaders to pull people towards themselves, and their ideas, through the creation and communication of a vision. Without a strong vision, strategic plans cannot be properly delineated since there is no guiding principle or ideal to plan.

A VISION is simply an aspiration, or a description of a desirable world that exists within the imagination. A strong vision inspires people, brings meaning to their work, mobilizes them to action, and helps them decide what to do, and what not to do in the course of their work. An effective vision strikes a chord in people and motivates them by tapping their competitive drive. It arouses a desire for greatness, or interest in doing the right thing; tantalizes them with personal gain, or appeals to their need to make a difference in the world and work for a



One of the great quotes in business history went something like this, “If you don’t know where you are headed, then any road will get you there.” This specifically relates to one of the key factors in building a successful brand and business – VISION.

winning organization of which they can be proud.

A vision is an idealized picture of the future organization and it expresses the organization’s reason for existence. Visions grab people and then bring them into the fold. When a leader’s vision is effective and strong, employees and stakeholders get caught up in what they are doing, absorb the vision, and commit themselves to the goals and the values of the leaders.

A good vision:

- Identifies direction and purpose
- Builds loyalty through involvement
- Sets standards of excellence that reflect high ideals and a sense of integrity
- Is persuasive and credible
- Inspires enthusiasm and encourages commitment
- Is well articulated and easily understood
- Is ambitious and calls for a shared commitment
- Challenges and inspires people to align their energies in a common direction (focus)
- Fits with the unique culture and values of the business
- Results in efficiency and productivity
- Reflects the company’s unique strengths

Most businesses are actually founded on a vision. Most leaders have a clear picture of what defines their existence. The vision of many businesses starts with a set of strong personal core values of the founder, who then drives those values throughout the organization.

Perhaps one of the finest illustrations of a vision that was wonderfully crafted and perfectly executed (and it is all about the

execution) was the vision articulated by Lee Iacocca when he was chairman of Chrysler Corporation. Iacocca’s vision was:

“Quality, hard work, and commitment – The stuff America is made of. Our goal is to be the best. What else is there? If you can find a better car, buy it!”

In this simple to understand statement, Iacocca set out a clear vision for his business and provided an ideal all employees could strive to achieve. He built loyalty, set a high standard of excellence, and gave his floundering organization a strong sense of purpose and direction. His vision was largely responsible for the historic turnaround of the Chrysler Corporation in the 80’s.

Communicating the vision is achieved, when the vision is driven deep into the organization, and when it is communicated to all the far reaches of the organization. Superb alignment to a vision can be seen when a visitor or customer to your business can infer your vision, without having to read it on paper, based solely on the actions and behaviors they observe.

Effectively communicating vision is more than placing a vision statement on the wall in the lobby of your offices. Effectively communicating the vision means the business lives the vision it espouses; that the business means what it says and it practices what it preaches. Corporate executive and employees must “walk the walk” and “talk the talk”. This is part of a sound vision and foundation for any leading brand.

This vision/brand positioning should permeate every department, and every decision made at every level of management.

- Human Resources – who you hire, what type of benefits will be offered, incentives, job descriptions, etc.

- Research & Development – what new products/services your team focuses on and begins to invest money (keeps you focused on the core competencies of the company).
- Distribution – where and who you partner with to sell and offer your brand (you won’t see a Rolex wrist watch at K-Mart). A great example was when Sears bought K-Mart – Nike pulled all its product from the stores.
- Packaging/Pricing – how do you take your brand to the marketplace...based on your target customer/consumer.

Vision is such an integral part of your brand platform and architecture that without a clear view of where and what you want to become when you grow up, you will not have a clear and concise structure or foundation from which to build and grow.

A recent study will demonstrate the power of a vision:

Restaurants are notorious for being very difficult to start and operate successfully for any length of time. In fact the failure rate over a five- year period is over 95% - this is important to understand.

When asked to describe their brand/ concept the failed restaurant owners would respond by saying - “vegetarian food” or “seafood” – when pressed, they couldn’t expand their description beyond food production or type. In contrast, the successful restaurant owners could describe, in great detail, an entire operating philosophy encompassing everything from the ambiance, the service, the décor, the pricing, the total consumer experience – not just the food. It is imperative to be able to articulate the entire process before you venture into any business.

IMPORTANT CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

THESE IDEAS AND INSIGHTS ARE NOT ONLY IMPORTANT FOR NEW BUSINESSES, BUT ALSO COMPANIES THAT ARE LOOKING TO EXPAND, GROW OR VENTURE INTO NEW AREAS OF THE FIELD.

- Experience in the business you are starting or developing
- Clear knowledge and understanding of what the consumer wants/needs/demands
- Information about the competitive set in the category
- Critical factors for success and failure in the segment
- Trends (short and long term) that will and are affecting the business climate
- Make sure you develop a flexible business plan – key word here is flexible
- Develop tracking metrics so you know what is working and not working
- You must become a learning organization if you want to survive in a very competitive marketplace.
- If you don't have the skill and knowledge in certain areas of business – hire professionals that can assist you in these areas. However, if you hire them, listen to them and follow their advice. Otherwise, save your money.