

## How to Brand Your Business Online

By Lena Rose

What is branding? *The Dictionary of Business and Management* defines a brand as: "a name, sign or symbol used to identify items or services of the seller(s) and to differentiate them from goods of competitors." But this is only one part of that intangible thing we call branding.

The definition created by Walter Landor, a branding pioneer, resonates more. He states that: "products are made in the factory, but brands are created in the mind." Your brand is indeed created by your customers' perception and boils down to the promise you make and deliver.

In the past, branding was associated with large corporations spending tons of money to create positive customer perceptions and top-of-mind awareness with their audience. It was a strategy that worked but it usually took a long time with no immediate return on investment.

Today, branding online is ideal for all businesses. Now you can spend less money and get quicker results in creating awareness for your business. But the one question that most business owners ask is *how do I even begin to brand my business online?*

You could begin by creating a memorable logo, a catchy tagline or a cohesive design that has the same look and feel -- from website to blog to e-zine and your social networking sites. But for your business to sustain its brand online and shape customer perception, you, as the business owner, must get to the heart and soul of branding by incorporating these three core strategies:

1. **Highlight Your Uniqueness.** Who are you? It's not necessary to undergo brain surgery to come up with your unique factor, your USP (unique selling proposition), UVP (unique value proposition) or simply what makes you different from others who are offering similar products or services.
2. **Go Beyond Selling Products or Services.** What are you really selling? It's not just your widget (insert your product or service instead of widget), because widgets are a dime-a-dozen and can be found at the click of a mouse. Selling widgets is like a cliché, "there's nothing new under the sun." What you want to sell is the experience only you can give. Remember, your brand is the promise you make and deliver to your customers.
3. **Make Your Business Matter.** You could have the most unique selling proposition in the world and create an unforgettable experience but if it doesn't matter to your audience - it's over. You want to create a brand that is relevant to your audience's needs. Position yourself as the go-to-source, the only solution to their problems and you create a brand that matters

When your brand delivers your unique factor, offers an experience to your audience, and is relevant, you create a memorable brand in your customers' minds that will sustain your business online.

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