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## **Strong branding – a key to your success**

Dean Parker

Qantas, Coca Cola and Nike are powerful players with a strong, consistent brand. A strong brand is what helps them attract customers, keep customers and continue to grow. A strong brand will help you too.

A strong brand presents your business as reliable, credible and trustworthy. It shows you are serious about your product or service. If customers are choosing between two identical products, what is going to influence their decision to purchase? Price? Not always, people will pay more for the same product if they trust the brand. Quality? Maybe, but not always detectable within a packaged product or service. Branding? Of course! Comparing a product with a strong professional brand against a product with a weak, unattractive or out-dated brand can influence customer purchase decisions.

Most business want to promote themselves as a quality, professional provider. In many cases, their brand does not support this image. Your brand is one of the first things potential, existing and even lapsed customers see. It appears on your advertising, packaging, website, business cards, letter heads and invoices. Promotional material with a mis-match of layouts, colours and designs sends a negative, unprofessional message to customers.

Organisations with strong brands can charge a price premium for the near identical products. Look at the cola aisle of your supermarket, there's dozens of brands offering the same product. The best-selling brand commands the most shelf space and is the most expensive. What's the one thing that differentiates it from all the other products? A strong, recognisable brand.

Some businesses fall into the trap of still using a brand [or logo] that was designed many years ago. Others may use a brand [or logo] they designed themselves. Old or self-designed branding and logos need to be reviewed and updated to ensure they present your product or service as professional and reliable.

Now's the time to implement and maintain your strong brand strategy. Start by having a professional graphic designer create or update your logo. That's the easy part. The hardest part is continuing to present your brand in a consistent manner. Here's where a professional marketing consultant will help. They'll work with you to advise the best way to ensure your brand is always professionally and consistently positioned. They'll create simple guidelines and templates which show you and your staff how to present your brand. They'll educate your staff on the importance and benefits of your new brand policy.



Brand guidelines will help increase sales and reduce various business expenses. Designing time by graphic artists for promotions, website and any other documentation is reduced when brand guidelines are available. New promotions or updates to existing documents can be completed in-house, as the guidelines provide clear direction for staff to follow.

Employees feel proud working for a company that has implemented branding guidelines. The improved customer perception of the organisation will reflect positively on your staff and their attitude towards the organisation. It makes them look more professional.

With your new brand and guidelines in place, you've suddenly increased customer perceptions of your offering and leaped ahead of your competitors. You've created a valuable point of difference that will help increase your sales and keep existing customers – and that's what it's all about.

\* ENDS \*

*Dean Parker combines 15 years of marketing experience with a Masters of Marketing degree to help small/medium business owners maximise their profit.*

*Four P's Marketing Solutions assists small business with all marketing activities including planning, corporate branding, website content, trade shows, advertising and various promotional strategies.*

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