

## **Branding Your Business: How to Increase Visibility in a Busy Marketplace**

Business branding is the process of altering your customer's perception so your competitor's product will be associated with your brand name. For example, when someone needs a tissue, they ask for a Kleenex. Or when they need photocopies, they ask for Xerox copies. How about needing a Band-Aid instead of a bandage?

It's true that people prefer certain brands, and they're willing to pay more for them. Look at Starbucks: customers will drive out of their way for their morning coffee, and pay a premium price to boot!

Business branding is a big business. Today's marketplace is noisy: there are so many competing products and services, that if you're not careful, you'll get lost in the sea of noise with everyone else. There are 7 simple things you can do to build your business brand, and drive customers to your product or service.

1. Your business brand is a promise to your customer that they can trust you and depend on your product or service. You must deliver on that promise time and again to build your business brand.
2. Tie your brand to your function or niche. This means you might have more than one brand. Take a look at Pepperidge Farms. They have a different brand for each type of item: Bagel Bites, Boston Market, Classico, and Ore-Ida, among others.
3. Be unique. If you have a distinct product or service, that will help set you apart. But even if you have something standard that numerous companies sell, you can still be unique. Have unsurpassed customer service. Have top of the line quality. Think of your key selling points and use them to your benefit.
4. First impressions really do count. Have an outstanding logo. It needs to be memorable and easily recognizable so that when people see it, they immediately know who you are. Have a great website. Make sure it's easy to navigate, and isn't cluttered with irrelevant items. Come up with a tagline that relates your product or service to your business brand. Think Nike and "Just Do It."
5. A quick way to build your business brand is to move people toward you through testimonials and recommendations. Use any associations you can, especially if you happen to rub elbows with a celebrity. People love to follow whatever is currently popular to be "in". And your business brand can go viral through word of mouth.
6. Come to the market with credentials that matter in your niche. Tout your awards and recognitions. Let people know if you've been mentioned in any articles. Professional certificates should be advertised.

7. Get out in the community. Sponsor events if you can. Be sure that with your sponsorship, you can hang banners, distribute flyers, have a booth, and have your logo on the tee shirt.

Remember that building your business brand is a full-time effort, and an ongoing process. You've got to keep your business updated, put out fresh new ads and content, and always exceed customer expectations. Business branding is necessary, and building your business brand is a critical component to competing in today's busy marketplace.