

Branding Has Strong Roots in Scottsdale

By Sandy Doubleday

There's nothing new about branding in Scottsdale. It has a long, solid history that dates back to early Scottsdale ranching days when a good, clearly recognized brand was coveted and passed down through the family. In time, a particular brand's reputation came to represent a certain level of quality that a potential buyer could depend on when purchasing a horse or cow with that mark.

That quality might range from so-so to excellent, and the brand made a definite business difference in how individual animals were priced, how they were sold, and how they were perceived by buyers.

Branding products and services today is pretty much the same. A clear, distinctive logo or trademark should reflect the values and characteristics of a business and its products. Color, type, and design visually depict the dependability and quality of what is being offered for sale. In successful branding campaigns, this creative look is carried through in advertising and printed marketing materials for the life of the business or organization.

Whether starting a new business or breathing renewed life into a more mature one, branding sets the tone and the perception. Familiar logos such as Pepsi, Apple computers or Ford trucks, for example, are recognized brands that tell a familiar story on sight. Consumers readily know the level of consistent quality they can expect, how products will be priced and sold and generally how they are perceived in the marketplace.

When a business person hands someone a business card or a product hits a shelf,

each is judged by that first impression. To work successfully, that card or product must look professional and be able to hold its own among the competition.

Cricket Bo, principal of The Cricket Contrast in North Scottsdale, is one of many professionals in the Valley who provide marketing counsel to businesses, government entities and nonprofit organizations. Below she shares tips on how to approach branding, what to expect from the process, and the benefits for both new operations and more mature business which might need an overall facelift or a way to introduce new products and services.

Q: *What should branding do for a business, government agency or nonprofit organization?*

A: Your brand is like your name. When people recognize it, they respond. Your brand should set your product or service apart as special, different than your competition. It instantly communicates the core values of what you are offering and influences purchasing behavior to buy or not to buy.



*Branding means good business!
Cricket Bo helps her clients develop brands that work.*

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Q: *What should you considered when creating a brand?*

A: First, consider what your customers need instead of what you want to sell. Many people start a business with a global view. They want to be everything to everybody and meet every need. The most effective products or services focus on one or two specific attributes. This is what differentiates them in the marketplace. What is the single most important point that you want people to know and remember about your product or service? Effective branding sets you apart. It creates the idea in the customer's mind that there is no other product quite like yours. Building a strong, easily recognized brand is the only way to cut through the clutter of all the hundreds and thousands of messages that people receive daily.

Finally, your brand should be professionally developed and communicated to ensure that it authentically supports what you say it does.

Q: *What are the steps to getting the right "look" for your products and services?*

A: Determine who your target audience is. How does this audience perceive products and services such as yours? How do you want them to perceive you? Expect your thinking to change as you focus. That's okay, because it's part of the process of moving from what we want to what the customer wants.

Q: *What should a branding package include, and what would you expect a typical project to cost?*

A: A strong, memorable logo or trademark and a crisp descriptive tagline establish the visual base for your product or service. These should be simple and clear such as FedEx: Overnight Delivery. You'll need business cards and, perhaps, packaging, letterhead, envelopes and mailing labels as well as folders, brochures, fact sheets. You'll also need electronic graphics for emails, websites and social marketing. Your logo should look as good for black and white applications as it does in color.

Some parts of a branding package such as business cards and packaging must be printed professionally to make the right impression. Other pieces which may change more frequently such as fact sheets can be produced in small quantities on most personal printers

and still look good if they conform to an established basic design and color scheme.

Cost for a branding package ranges from \$3,000 to \$30,000 depending on the product or service and the scope of distribution.

Q: *What can startup operations with smaller budgets do effectively?*

A: It's important for businesses to commit to branding as well as a marketing budget from the beginning just as they commit to a telephone system. Establishing an initial look is more important today than ever, even if the different parts are executed in stages as the business becomes more profitable.



The logo and tagline for CareCards which benefit a local charity represent clear, consistent and memorable branding.

Sufficient dollars should be set aside for public relations and advertising which do their work over time. Public relations promotes recognition of your products and services by others and has great credibility in the marketplace. Advertising is your insurance that you can maintain visibility on a consistent basis. If you don't utilize the opportunities for visibility that are available to you, someone else will come along and use it.

It's hard to put a dollar value on the consistent vision a memorable brand provides for any organization. When the branding process is done thoughtfully and well, as a necessity and not a discretion, it communicates a clear message, it positions a business or an organization in the marketplace, and it sells products. Over time, the value becomes obvious.

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