



Branding. Where It All Begins.

Navigating the process of building a successful brand.

By Kyle Dreier, Founder - Vine Theory

There is a general misconception of what “brand” means in the context of building a company’s image in the market place. Additionally, small business owners may not fully understand the steps involved in developing a successful brand. Sadly, there are professionals trusted with a company’s brand who are ill-equipped as well. For this reason, it’s important for business owners and managers to have a better understanding of what branding can do to help a company reach its goals.

Message

Step one for any company is determining what their primary message is. What can you say that will get your potential client’s attention and move them toward purchasing from your company? *Make it unique.*

Audience

Every company wants to reach people interested in buying their product or service. Knowing who to target is a vital piece of information for developing a brand strategy. Too many times when asked “Who is your target audience?” the answer is “Everyone.” That doesn’t define a target. *Keep it narrow.*

Logo

Ask anyone what the logo is for a well known company and you’ll likely get a quick (and correct) answer. The logo is rather easy to spot as we all pretty much equate the logo with what we might see emblazoned on a billboard or product. The logo is the graphic keystone of branding, however, it is not the sole end all to a brand’s success. A logo can be a “mark” (or logo-mark) which is graphic, it can be a “logo-type” which is typographic or it can be a combination of the two. *Make it simple.*

Identity

A company identity is the graphical treatment, execution and extension of a company’s logo. One might think of this as how color is used, how other graphical content is used in conjunction with the logo and how the logo is reproduced. Is it animated? Is it used with photography? Think of this in terms of treatments used to create a graphic environment to further relate to the target audience. *Give it legs.*

Brand

In recent years, “brand” has been used very generally to describe the graphical look or aesthetic of a company. Brand is much more. Brand is the *soul* of a company. Brand is built from the ground up but culminates with the company’s image in the market place. “Image” refers to a company’s personality and the feeling or emotion it evokes in the minds of the target audience. *Make it stick.*

The consistent use of a logo and its identity further the brand recognition. Brand is built with not only

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graphical elements but also with the tone and voice a company conveys. It is a cumulative result of all these elements – plus the company’s sales and advertising copy, its product or service offerings, its employees (and their attitudes) and its execution of company policies and processes. Continuity with all these branding elements is paramount to building brand equity in the market place. Brand is the emotional response a client has before, during and after working with your company.

After all is said and done, “brand” is the heart and soul of a company which ultimately permeates everything associated with the company from the perspective of the target audience. A company’s success is dependent on this association. *Keep it consistently positive.*

Kyle Dreier considers himself the “king of continuity” when it comes to brand. With more than twenty years of communication design experience, Kyle Dreier leads Vine Theory in providing creative services rooted in sound business strategy. For more information on how your company may benefit from Vine Theory services, please visit www.vinetheory.com. Vine Theory - Think. Reach. Grow.