Building Your Brand in Rural Business

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A Brand is:

- a connection between you and your customers
- what consumers know and believe and think and feel about your business, its products, services, and the experiences you provide
- what you stand for and your reputation
- your company’s face in the marketplace
- the emotional impact your company makes on your customers or potential customers
- your way of differentiating yourself within the marketplace
- your promise
Building Your Brand

Start with an understanding of your business, ask what you want the world to know about it, then polish your vision and make it crystal clear:

• **Who are you?**
  • List your company values.
  • Do people know about your business values?
  • Have you created a relationship you can foster?
  • Have you made a connection or bond with your customer?
Building Your Brand

• What are your strengths?
  • What value or benefit does your product or service bring to the customer?
  • Do you have specialty products or services that put you ahead of the market?
  • What makes your product unique?
  • How does your price point fit the market – service and quality only go so far?
  • Can you show through pictures or description the emotional factor of why you are better?
Building Your Brand

- **What have you done?**
  - This is a chance to tell your story
  - Talk about less visible activities such as stewardship, community involvement, and charitable contributions
  - These can help you make a connection to the value system of your customers
Building Your Brand

- **Translate.**
  - Develop ways to convey your brand values
  - How can you add a personal touch to gain customer’s loyalty?
  - Do you have a guarantee?
Communicating Your Brand

• Create brand unity and pride of brand
  • Top to Bottom: Think, Say, Do
  • Elevator speech
  • Practice, practice, practice
  • Include all levels in this brand unity

• Share your story
  • Create advocates from customer
Brand Development & Design

• Brands are a means of nonverbal communication
• Consider what colors, designs, and images best express your business:
  • attitude and/or philosophy
  • emotion
  • presence

• Employ those colors, designs, and images throughout your business to consistently convey your brand

• Create a logo and/or image(s) to associate with your company
  • Use it everywhere
  • Use it consistently
Tips for Using Your Brand

Your media presence should reflect the same colors, design elements, and images you have chosen to convey your brand

• Keep your profile names and custom URLs the same for all platforms to unify your brand:
  • Website: www.yourbusinessname.com
  • Email: email@yourbusinessname.com
  • Facebook: www.Facebook.com/yourbusinessname
  • YouTube: www.YouTube.com/yourbusinessname
  • LinkedIn: www.LinkedIn.com/in/yourbusinessname
  • Twitter: www.Twitter.com/yourbusinessname
Tips for Using Your Brand

• Even traditional media should reflect your brand
  • Business cards
  • Newspaper ads
  • Radio spots
  • T-shirts and other memorabilia
  • Signs on buildings or vehicles or on farm/ranch entrance
Tips for Using Your Brand

• Convey your brand when communicating with customers:
  • Greet customers the same way, whether they are face-to-face, on the phone, or online
  • Personalize the customer experience
  • Provide great customer service when asked for information or contacted about an issue
  • Provide confirmation of sales
  • Follow up with current customers
Tips for Using Your Brand

• Use your “elevator pitch” — a 30-second speech that sums up your business — when meeting potential customers.

• Incorporate the power of your customers’ voices
  • Reflect the positive comments from customers on your marketing materials
  • create a reward for brand advocates
Brand = Reputation + Customer Experience

- Customer experience includes:
  - The experience your customers had the first time you had contact with them
  - Your customer’s experience during their last interaction with your company
  - All of their experiences in-between

- Have you asked your customers about their experience or how they liked your product?

- Customers who have good experiences are more likely to be
  - Repeat customers
  - A spokesperson for your company, both online and off
Consumer Choice

• Customers discuss their experiences with others.
  • (12 million viewers watched the “United Breaks Guitars” video on YouTube)

• Potential customers use these conversations and opinions to make buying decisions
  • Jupiter Research has found that people are:
    • 3 times more likely to trust peer opinions over advertising when making purchasing decisions
    • Going to the Internet to find these opinions

• Have you solicited reviews or testimonials?
What Are People Saying?

• Check out your reputation by doing a search on your business name
  • Search different search engines and mapping sites like Google, Yahoo, and Bing

• Did you know people were talking about you?
• What did you find your online reputation to be?
• Do you like what you are reading?
• What can you do about it?

• Give Google correct/current information
  • Claim your Google Place for Business
What Are People Saying?

• Check on review sites such as YELP! and TripAdvisor
  • Monitor the sites where customers are talking about you
  • Join in the conversation, not as a method of selling yourself
    but to show you care about your customers after the sale
  • Find ways to encourage satisfied customers to share their
    experiences online
  • If there are negative comments, make sure you address
    legitimate problems and let folks know that you have
    worked to correct the situation

• Set up alerts to help monitor online traffic about your
  brand, your business and your product/s
Brands, just like reputations take time to create or change.

Be consistent in what your business stands for in all that you do.

• http://go.unl.edu/agritourism
• http://go.unl.edu/directmarketingfood