

Enhancing Your Brand Can Energize Sales

11:44 EST Thursday, December 05, 2013

WILMINGTON, Mass., Dec. 5, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- With the economy still sluggish following the 2008-09 recession, marketing professionals recommend that businesses "buff up" their brands to help energize sales.

(Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20131204/NE27484>)

Among other things, a brand includes your business's logo, color schemes, and how they're visually expressed in all communications ? from ads and marketing materials, to signage and fleet vehicles, to even the way company employees are dressed. When strategically designed and maintained, your brand can project an image of professionalism, help differentiate you from your competitors, attract new customers, and better position your company for bottom line success.

Two examples of continually buffed up and well communicated brands are Nike and its "speedy" swoosh logo, and Mercedes Benz and its silver, three-pointed star. When the Nike swoosh is seen in ads or on footwear, thoughts of performance enhancing athletic apparel are reinforced in a customer's mind?ready to surface when it's time to purchase such products. Likewise, when the Mercedes silver star appears in marketing materials or as hood ornaments, immediate thoughts of luxurious automobiles with technical superiority enter a customer's mind.

Denise Lee Yohn (<http://deniseleeyohn.com/>), a brand-building expert who has served as a consultant to such companies as Sony, Dell, and Covad communications, says relevant and compelling brands can help counteract "the downward pull of a tough market by (allowing businesses) to sustain price premiums and higher margins? because its offerings are perceived to be differentiated and of higher value." Such brands, she adds, "must be more than a vision" and must help effectively communicate what a business does in order to have a positive impact.

Effective brands inevitably capture customer attention and project a desired business message, says Adam Soreff, Director of Marketing at UniFirst Corp. (www.unifirst.com), a provider of customized uniform and workwear programs to businesses throughout the U.S. and Canada. "In today's post-recession era, buyers are intent on receiving maximum value for every dollar spent. They're also looking for clear differentiation for products and services when determining who they make their purchases from. And that's where good branding comes in. It helps create a more positive business image that leads to a higher degree of buying confidence and customer loyalty."

All branding should be consistent and be promoted wherever any aspect of a business' operations come in direct contact with customers. "But not all customer 'touch points' are created equal," Soreff says. "Some play a more significant role in branding than others. For example, studies have shown that customers interacting with employees in branded uniforms perceive the business to be of a higher caliber and, as a result, they become more likely to buy from those particular businesses. Additionally, another recent study showed that staff clothed in custom branded uniforms can actually have a greater advertising impact on customers than even traditional roadside billboards."

Soreff says one widely recognized example of how custom branded uniforms can help attract and keep customers was provided not that long ago by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) when it changed the standardized work shirts worn by its 48,000 airport screeners.

At a time when travelers were still experiencing reservations about the safety of air travel (post 9-11), the screeners, who had been wearing plain white shirts with embroidered cloth badges, were routinely receiving little respect or cooperation, and lots of complaints, from the air-flying public, according to Soreff. "But once the TSA issued new authoritative-looking royal blue shirt uniforms for all its screeners?ones that were personalized with custom metal badges and wearer name and rank emblems?traveler attitudes became more positive and behaviors changed."

News reports following the TSA's brand buffing and uniform changes showed airport screeners were given greater respect from travelers because they looked more "police like." As a result, the airport screening process became easier and more efficient. "Air travelers became confident that flying was again safe and a viable option," Soreff says. "And that was good news not only for airline ticket sales, but for the thousands of businesses that rely on air travel."

About UniFirst UniFirst (NYSE: UNF), a North American leader in the supply and servicing of uniforms, workwear, and protective clothing, outfits more than 1.5 million workers each business day. The company's most popular brands include UniWeave®, SofTwill®, UniWear®, and Armorex FR® UniFirst also offers Facility Service programs including floor mats, mops, and restroom products. For more information, contact UniFirst at 800-455-7654 or visit www.unifirst.com.

SOURCE UniFirst