

Welcome to The Building Blocks of Branding!

Liz Goodgold

Brand Blogging With a Difference

I'm thrilled to start my weekly blog at The Mogul Mom. Every Tuesday, I'll write about marketing and branding, but with a big difference. Every entry will answer the key question in marketing: *"What's in It For Me?"*

Instead of just telling you about branding (can you say "boring?"), I will give you examples, advice, lessons, action items, and suggestions that can actually help you start or boost your business.

So, Just What is Branding?

Branding is fun, hot, and creative. It is not difficult, it is not complicated, and you can do it! I believe that once you grasp the key concepts, you'll smack your hand on your forehead and exclaim, "I get it!"

Let's start by talking about what *branding isn't*: it isn't a hot iron searing into your hide (although with the proliferation of outrageous tattoos, that might someday be true). And it isn't your logo, Web site, TV commercial, or slogan. It is, rather, the sum total of all of these marketing messages, including unintended ones delivered via blogs, e-mail messages, social networking, and voice mail greetings that influence how others see you.

Aha! Your brand is not what you say it is. It's what others say it is. Branding is perception.

You might walk around like William Hung believing you are destined to be a rock star on American Idol (remember "She Bangs"?), but in reality you can't carry a tune. In fact, Hung became famous not because he can sing, but because he can't!

Expanding Upon The Differences

Your goal is to find the background, nuances, specialty, or way of doing business that sets you apart from your competitors and then exploit, promote and publicize these differences (your brand) into every single customer or prospect touchpoint.

If you are a dentist, for example, you can create your point of different based upon these options:

- Your Target Customer - children's dentistry
- Your Way Of Doing Business - sedation dentistry (that has my name on it!)
- Your Atmosphere - gentle, soothing (ex: Gentle Dental)
- Your Background - dental surgeon with over 20 years of experience

Quality, Service and Price are NOT Points of Difference

As you're determining your brand DNA, it's important to dig beyond the obvious. Your key points of difference cannot be price, quality, and value. In fact, I assume you have all of those traits before you even consider being in business!

Here's a company that doesn't get it: **JC Penney**. In its latest series of ads, the retailer does a good job of connecting with the customers by talking about the concern with price. But, then they tout that JC Penney is all about price, value, and style. Ugh! If you were starting your company and came to me with a business plan, I wouldn't sign off on it because it lacks a brand and a personality!

Of course, compared to you and me as entrepreneurs, they have more dollars, bigger budgets, and investors behind them; we cannot afford to make this type of mistakes. You and I need to focus on the things that really set us apart.

Hot Examples

I have had the pleasure of working with so many "momtrepreneurs" and helping them discover their brand. Here are a few hot examples:

- Photographer [Kristen Peelle](#): She is correctly positioned as a high-end, exclusive photographer; we simply burnished her image by demonstrating to her clients and prospects that taking good photographs to exceptional images is her specialty. This is expert who not only takes out ugly "exit signs" or water sprinklers that taint a photo, but also nips in waists, eliminates unusual clothing issues, or takes out a few wrinkles. Voila!
- [Mary Berney](#) created The Dating Café, but our challenge was to communicate how her events, targeted specially for singles over 40 is better and different than just going to a bar. She now fully explains how she provides different and structured ice-breakers that start a meaningful conversation.

Find a Target and Stick with It!

Many marketers will tell you to define your target customer by age, gender income, or zip code. I would also advise you to target by your prospects' mindset. In other words, get into their head to determine if they consider themselves health-minded, eco-conscious, frugal, a competitor in any circumstance, etc. This additional layer will help you create better copy, promotions, and marketing that will appeal to them.

Determine who Your Target Isn't

Just as important as determining who your target is, create a list now of who your target *isn't*. Perhaps you've already developed a screener for clients you accept. Good for you! Knowing who should never be your client or customer will help keep you branded: delivering special experiences to a specific target.

Until next week.....Liz

Meet Liz Goodgold



Speaker and author Liz Goodgold is a considered a fireball of energy with over 25 years of experience in marketing and branding. She is the author of *RED FIRE BRANDING: Create a Hot Personal Brand and Have Customers for Life* and *DUH! Marketing*.

Liz has worked for such major clients as Quaker Oats, Times Mirror, and Arco Oil as well as with small business owners and start-ups. Her specialized, one-on-one branding and coaching programs spark new ideas that deliver sure-fire results.

An often quoted expert, Liz has appeared in over 500 media outlets including ABC, NBC, CBS, PBS, CNBC, CNN, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The New York Times*. She also was the branding columnist for *Entrepreneur* magazine reaching over 1 million readers per month.

Sign up for her FREE Hot Topics newsletter jam-packed with advice on building your brand at www.redfirebranding.com or email her your questions at Liz@redfirebranding.com