

## **Engaging Customers through Effective Branding**

### **Understanding branding**

Branding is as much about a company's culture, values, policies and actions, as it is about visual identity. Core values should be the focal point of any action that's taken in business and equally they should form a recognisable part of the brand's identity as this will help communicate key messages to a customer. Done well, the design of a brand can help gain trust and enhance reputation.

Understanding how business ideals can be reflected in a brand identity, and how that brand identity affects a consumer, is vital.

### **What's in a brand?**

At consumer level branding is more important now than ever. Increasing numbers of customers have higher expectations and the positive messages conveyed through a brand identity can help captivate an audience and express values instantly. This is why it is essential to approach a branding exercise from the perspective of a customer – the crux of long term branding success.

In order to establish their values, a company might ask itself a range of questions such as: what do we believe in? What does our brand say about us? And more importantly, what does my customer say about my brand?

This approach of considering the end customer will encourage appropriate company naming, strengthen a brand identity and ensure the successful development of a brand across a range of material. Ultimately, it can influence the sale of a product or service.

### **Communicating a brand message**

When it comes to buying, customers consistently lean towards brands that they believe in or are familiar with. It is therefore important to be coherent with a brand image and message to ensure a customer either recognises it, or puts trust in it. As you increase your customer base and grow your business, how you answer customers' demands and expectations will reveal your business ethics.

Regular, consistent communication, with emphasis on a customer's needs, is fundamental to the creation of a positive brand image and lasting impression. A structured yet imaginative approach that involves publishing interesting articles, stories and news should surround a strong brand and reflect its values and actions. This consistent drip-feed of information over a period of time can drive your brand forward in a positive way.

### **Monitoring a brand**

Finally, it's important to monitor a brand image and analyse its effectiveness on a regular basis. Ask questions that can help identify weaknesses or strengths and provide a basis for action: does the brand image continue to be relevant? Does it stand out against the competition? Is it still viewed as being dynamic in the marketplace?

When equipped with knowledge about its brand image, a company can ensure that the identity remains creative, memorable and recognizable and be on its way to creating a successful image that creates opportunities.

After all, what your customers say about your brand is more powerful than what you say about it.