

be a clever Dick and plan.

As we approach the end of another financial year and you look at your numbers, are you asking yourself what you could have done differently?

As good as we all think we are in business, there is always room for improvement and change, and no doubt one element of this is your marketing.

I'm not just talking about the activities that you do as a business, whether it be letterbox drops, email campaigns or billboards, but most importantly, the positioning of your brand and what it means to people. Once you know what your brand stands for, how you then communicate it becomes a lot easier. Dick's doing it. Have you noticed how he can now come to your house and install your TV? Finally something to stand out from JB HIFI!

So, how are you going to do things differently in financial year 2012/13? Here are a couple of key points to get you on the right path.

Competition

Communicating your brand is a battle of the mind (your client's) more than anything else. Getting in their mind first is a big step in the right direction; otherwise you're forever battling to get inside. To know which part of the mind to accommodate, you need to know what part of the mind your competition is playing in. Is it based on the audience, price, service or location? You need to be in the part of the mind that hasn't been taken by your competition. You want to be on, or towards the top of the list, if not the first. If you're not first into a market, it makes the journey a lot more difficult. No 'brand' really owns the mind space of coming to your house to help you with your TV. Clever Dick. Hopefully he can own this space.

Positioning

Communicating vagueness or ego is played out too many times in the branding space marketplace. You should be asking yourself, what is my brand really communicating? The most important thing we should be doing is owning a piece of real estate in the minds of customers and clients. This is known as the positioning of your product or service. Generally, this positioning defines what you do, as clear as day, to the marketplace. You need to ask yourself, what position does my brand own in the marketplace? Am I the cheapest in my category, am I the most expensive, am I the first, am I targeting someone that no one else has, am I targeting a region?

Consistency

So now that you have a position in the mind of your current and potential clientele, are you staying true to your brand's positioning? I often see brands embarrassing themselves by giving in to retailers or wholesalers for the sake of a one-off sale. If you're an exclusive brand, don't be loose on the discounts. If you're a cheap brand, don't try to be glamorous. Be consistent in your communication so that people remember what your brand is about. Constant, consistent reinforcement is critical to stay in the position that you belong in people's minds.

Demand

Instead of creating a line extension, and failing before you even start, create a new category and create demand for it. A new brand, a new name, and most importantly make sure it has a new focus, a clear and concise positioning for it's new audience. You need to make sure you're creating the right perceptions of this new brand and allowing it to blossom and create its own credibility and brand equity. By branding

correctly, targeting the right audience, positioning the right way, you can create a whole new customer base, and perhaps a new category in the process. Education is key in a new category. People are always sceptical of something new, so they want to hear good things from other people, not just from you.

Communicate

How you choose to communicate your brand is the easy part once your positioning is right. Now it's about reaching your marketplace at the right times and in the right places. Make it relevant, targeted and focused. This will make the communication budget work at its capacity. The new focus for Dick is now simpler to communicate...he doesn't have to find a clever way to sell TV's or AV equipment.

Innovative

Finally Dick has been! If your brand, it's look and feel, it's production processes, as well as the innovation and initiative around creating new brands is not a forefront thought within your organisation, the perception in the marketplace can be of a stale and outdated business and brand. Customers and clients are always looking for the newest of products and services, the most modern and the most efficient. You need to keep this at the forefront of your business's organisational philosophy. A brand is more than just a logo; it penetrates into all facets of your business and is perceived accordingly.

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