



# Insight Consulting Services Newsletter

## Practical Marketing Advice for Businesses

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### Quick Stats

Oak Brook-based McDonald's was ranked the world's sixth most valuable brand, according to Interbrand's 2010 ranking of the top 100 "Best Global Brands."

Coca-Cola was the world's most valuable brand for the 11th straight year.

Dear Peggy,

Thank you for the great feedback from the last newsletter!

I hope you find this newsletter valuable. Please let me know if you have feedback or suggestions for future articles.

At some time over the last eight years, I met you through business contacts or networking. As always, if this newsletter is not meeting your current needs, please unsubscribe at the bottom of the newsletter.

## Wave That Flag! Branding For Small Businesses



Think of your brand as a flag waving at your customers and prospects. What does it mean to them? Just as a national flag represents the values of a nation, your brand tells the marketplace what your business stands for.

The role of your brand is to increase awareness of the products and services you offer and communicate their benefits. Your brand is a combination of your logo, the key messages your business uses, the people that represent your business and the services you provide. Together, these elements provide a unified image for everything that your customers see - including people, brochures, ads, letters, web sites, and press releases.

Envision Pepsi, UPS, or McDonalds. We all know their logos and we know what those businesses stand for.

Small businesses can also build brand recognition.

**Determine what your brand stands for.** How do you differentiate your business from its competitors? What are your customers looking for? What is your vision for your business? Is it service? Low price? Breadth of product offerings? Next day delivery?

HP entered the top 10 for the first time.

Google saw a 36 percent increase in value over last year, bringing the brand closer than ever to rival Microsoft.

### Top Ten

1. Coca-Cola
2. IBM
3. Microsoft
4. Google
5. GE
6. McDonalds
7. Intel
8. Nokia
9. Disney
10. HP

**Clearly explain the value your business brings its customers.** You want someone picking up your marketing materials to feel that - yes - this business has what I am looking for. Sometimes, you are so close to your business that it is hard to take a step back and see it as your customers do. Ask these questions:

1. Do you have the right target market?
2. Does your product or service offer a benefit that your target audience really wants?
3. Does your strategy separate you from the competition?

Branding isn't something you do once and forget about. It's an on-going combination of marketing and action. It's that flag waving at your customers and prospects. You need to control what they see.

Branding is managing the thoughts and feelings of your customers to ensure that your business is the one they choose. If your desired brand image isn't what's in the minds of your target audience, you need to figure out where the gaps are and how to address them.

[Click here for other marketing tips.](#) Follow the instructions on the page to download a complete article.



## Colorful Adventures



I received many responses to my e-mail asking for referrals and interviewed several faux painters before making the decision to hire one.

In general, they looked at the room to be painted and then we sat at the dining room table and reviewed samples of different faux painting techniques, discussed color choice, discussed the couple of extras I wanted, and then I received a proposal.

One painter arrived late for the appointment. I suggested he looked at the room first and then we could talk. He walked up the stairs into the room and then down the stairs and out my front door. On the way out, he said that all faux painting had the same price and that he would call me the next day. He spent about sixty seconds in my house - no exaggeration. He called me a week later with the lowest price but I did not hire him.

Another painter whipped out his color palette and chose the color for my bathroom. When I asked if we could look at other choices, he told me that he had picked the right one.

How do these painters live their brand? Did they take the time to build relationships? Communicate the value they bring? Differentiate themselves from their competitors? Painting is a commodity business. No one wants to compete on price.

I was able to hire an outstanding painter. He was not the lowest bid, but he took the time to work with me to improve the look of my bathroom. He was a nice guy who was on time and communicated well. I have already referred him to a friend.

How do you manage the thoughts and feelings of your customers to ensure that your business is the one they choose?

Not sure the best way to brand your business? Please give me a call for a free consultation.

Sincerely,



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