

Good (and Bad) Branding Advice That Can Make (or Break) Your Success

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There's a plethora of branding advice out there, and if you're lucky, some of it will come from *actual* experts – people who have been there, done that and learned things the hard way.

But not all branding advice is *good* advice. In fact, some of it is quite the opposite. It is sometimes challenging to sift through the clutter to find valuable tips and tricks, so let's start by debunking some branding myths while validating some branding virtues.

First choices vs. changing things later

Someone's gut instinct can be a big factor in branding and design, but should it be?

It's easy to get attached to the very first iteration of your brand's new logo design, especially if you had a hand in designing it yourself. But the first iteration isn't always the best iteration or even the most accurate for your brand. Blindly devoting yourself to the very first choice without allowing room for variation and exploration in the design is definitely not sound advice.

On the other hand, neither is the tendency to rush into making the decision with the idea that you can always change the

design later. Visuals make an impact, and they last in the public consciousness. If you launch with a hastily-chosen logo, that's likely what your audience is going to remember – no matter how quickly you change it afterward.

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Good feedback vs. harsh criticism

"Be true to yourself, no matter what anyone else says" is common advice. Usually accompanied by the line "follow your heart." Well, the sad fact is that our hearts are easily misled, and our judgment isn't always the best – especially if emotions are involved. Feedback is a valuable part of ensuring the best branding possible.

On the other hand, neither the customer nor the critic is always right. If you listen to every single nitpick, no matter how minuscule or personally motivated, you'll never get anywhere. Get a variety of outside opinions on your brand so that you can garner high-quality insight.

Change vs. consistency

Some advice, especially from a marketing standpoint, suggests that branding and creative elements should be changed with every new initiative. Keep it fresh! Keep it light! Look at Google's logo changes!

That's all fine, but Google still has a cohesive branding strategy and has built in the daily changes in its logo to further the aim of the overall brand identity. That's different than just changing everything for the sake of change. Consistency is important in establishing a brand.

On the other hand, stubbornly clinging to a branding strategy that may not be doing its best work isn't a great idea either. Be consistent and willing to adapt. Focus on your promises and

values as a brand and let them influence the individual branding decisions.

Related: Branding Is Indispensable. Are You Using It to Your Advantage?

The importance of social media

It can be difficult to keep up with the next big social media application (or how we're supposed to use it to spread the word about our brand). If a new social network can be here today and gone tomorrow, is it really all that important?

In short, yes. One of the most valuable outlets for establishing and marketing a brand, social media allows for close communication between a brand and the target demographic. It allows you to spread the word, tell your story and build communication and loyalty. Social media is never a bad idea for a brand.

On the other hand, social media isn't the be-all and end-all for branding, especially if you stick to a platform that is falling out of favor or which doesn't help you to connect with your target audience. Research the demographic for your social media platform, be choosy about which platforms you use, practice cohesive and consistent branding across the board, and social media will reward you with more opportunities.

Related: Branding Is More Than an Accessory: It's the Foundation

The key to good advice

It's a good idea to take advice with a grain of salt. There's always going to be someone out there with a completely different experience than your own. That being said, the odds are that you'll find someone whose circumstances mirror your own and whose advice you can really trust.

Ultimately, what makes advice good advice is whether it works for you or not.

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