

# ESTABLISHING A DISTINCTIVE BUSINESS IDENTITY



**C**reating a distinctive business identity through strong graphic design is an increasingly important component of the marketing mix. Since prospects get bombarded with literally hundreds, if not thousands, of messages every day, an attractive, memorable and distinctive identity may be the only way for your prospects to realize they have seen your message at all. Distinctive identity is created, in part, through the use of a logo, logotype, and superior artwork in all marketing tools: such as stationery, brochures, ads, and even business cards. Identity aids produce results only when given consistent and extensive exposure. Your recognition factor will improve as your identity becomes increasingly tied to your own company's name. A well recognized logo, for example, will improve response to all your marketing efforts.

## **Institutional Or Image Advertising**

Businesses that use this tool in an attempt to enhance reputation without relation to any specific service offered will almost always fail. Typical of this type of advertisement are the “tombstone type” ads with the name of the company at the top and a list of services provided under the name. Adds of this type are generally ineffective. If this type of advertising works at all, it is only after it has been used consistently for a long period of time and been supported by other marketing tools. Very often, this style of ad merely acts as a "soother," falsely convincing many service business owners that they are doing some marketing.

### **Four Elements of a Successful Promotion**

Whatever marketing tool you select, developing a successful promotion is often more art than science. However, there are some basic components of a good promotion, regardless of the media chosen.

1. The ad or promotion must have an objective. That is, it must have a purpose which can be clearly stated by the firm. This is necessary in developing any effective promotion.
2. It must have a theme. The theme must slap you in the face. What is it you want the prospect to know

or feel after being exposed to this promotion for less than a few seconds? If you can answer that question and the ad relates to the answer, it is much more likely to be successful.

3. It must maintain interest. If it has a theme, it will likely have unity and keep a reader's attention.
4. Every promotion must focus on benefits. Clients and prospects are attracted to things which have value in their eyes. Write your ad from your clients perspective rather than from yours. How do they define value? What truly motivates them to action?

## **Working with Agencies**

If you are new to marketing or if you feel that you are not large enough to hire an agency for your marketing, your business would probably benefit nevertheless from some writing assistance and/or constructive guidance from an independent, but informed, source. Very commonly, the marketing ball is picked up by someone in the business that thinks it will be fun, or it may be delegated to the youngest person on the staff. These people commonly make many errors in designing an effective advertisement, selecting media, crafting messages, and targeting markets, etc.

They can't be blamed for that because they don't have the background or experience in marketing professional services.

They can be blamed for not realizing that there is a large body of knowledge that has been developed in designing effective professional service promotional campaigns and for not being willing to seek an objective critique. If you do look for assistance, recognize that someone who is experienced in product marketing may have experience that is unrelated to marketing a professional service. Realize also that good consultants will talk about research and building long term relationships. The ones who talk about making a big splash, public relations gimmicks, and growth for growth's sake are to be avoided. Be prepared to swallow your pride a little. You will have sought assistance because you don't know it all in this field, and your own ideas may very well be totally wrong. You should be willing to listen to someone with an alternative point of view.