

Beyond the logo

There are enough vacuum cleaners to suck the universe into oblivion — yet only one Hoover. Such is the power of branding.

While brand is one of the most bandied about terms in big business, it is one of the least understood by small business, according to Bold Horizon senior brand strategist Wayne Attwell.

"Most small and even some medium sized businesses use the term 'brand' interchangeably with 'logo'. In reality, a logo is just the graphic device that represents the company or product."

Yet, for small businesses, he says the distinction is integral. "Development of a meaningful, representative and outstanding brand identity is just as critical for small businesses and if properly executed, can actually be a powerful competitive advantage.

"We find most logos designed for small businesses are simply graphic devices and not actually brands in the true sense of the word, portraying little about the value proposition of the company, its personality and service promise."

Attwell says a true brand brings meaning and relevance to your product and occupies a particular position within the mind of your customer or prospect. "A brand identity is more than just a visual symbol or logo design — it defines your company's unique service promise, builds lasting brand recognition and invokes positive recall.

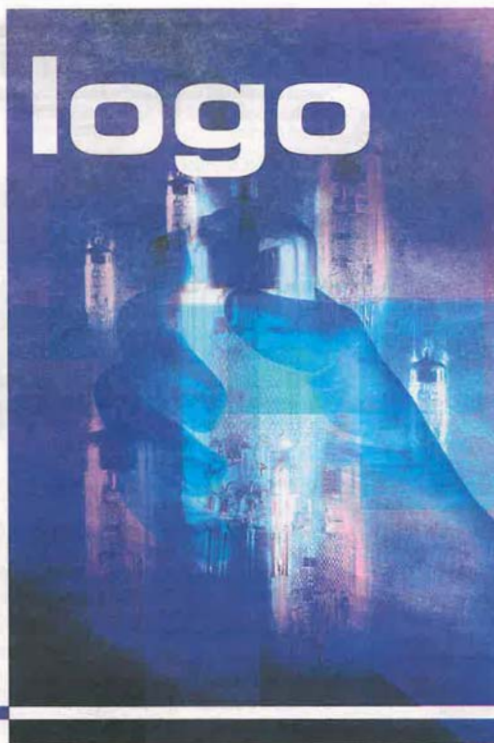
"It speaks to your market in ways that are less obvious, using non-verbal cues, metaphors and other subtle, albeit powerful tools."

A strong brand enhances your company's credibility by integrating your brand strategy with consistent graphic application across all market and customer contact points.

"If most small businesses have weak branding, then by developing a compelling and effective branding package you can position your company ahead of your competitors in the mind of your target market.

"A strong and effective brand can definitely be a competitive advantage in the cut-throat world of small business."

So with that knowledge in hand, where do you go next? While Attwell suggests using a trained marketing professional, it can be done independently. The first thing to do is understand the needs of your customers and prospects to decide on the image you wish to convey to them. Then you need to explore suitable graphic elements and branding metaphors for the logo device as well as appropriate colour palettes.



Grab hold of your bright ideas and use them to build your branding power

"Your goal should be to ensure complete brand integrity. If the brand development process is executed correctly, then your company will stand out from the mass of small businesses that simply can't be bothered, or more likely, don't know any better."

Confident branding and a strong branding strategy communicates a message that attracts the target audience you want to attract —

a message that creates confidence in your brand while differentiating between you and your competitors.

"Brands tell the market a visual story about your company. It speaks of attention to detail, professionalism, pride and investment in your company, presents your unique value proposition and helps you stand out above your mediocre competitors."

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