



Guide

How to maximise your brand



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Consumers are bombarded with brand messaging; whether it be through advertising, sponsorships, at point of sale or via social media. So how do you get the most out of your brand and make sure it's the one that stands out from the crowd?

In this guide, we focus on ways to help you maximise your brand's potential in an increasingly competitive marketplace, and one in which customers are ever more sophisticated at avoiding marketing messages.

Your business brand is much more than just a logo, label, or letter-heading. It is at the very heart of what you and your business represent.

It sends out a vital message as to what your business is about and why it can make a difference to the market, creating an interactive dialogue between you and your customers.

A strong brand presence is as relevant to a small, independent company, as it is for a large international organisation.

Obviously the scale of the message and how it is delivered will be different depending on the organisation; giants like Coca-Cola and Nike are going to approach it somewhat differently to most businesses in the small and medium enterprise sector.



However, the same central principles and values will apply irrespective of the size of the company.

Brand communication should be an extension and, indeed, a reflection of your overall corporate strategy. Remember that the impact of communication will be greatest where the message is in line with the existing opinion, beliefs and disposition of your consumers.

“Stand out from the crowd.”

Ultimately the yardstick of success in terms of any branding initiative will be its ability to increase your market-share over your competitors.

Below, we look at various ways to enhance and maximise your brand.

Shape your story

Your brand should be a reflection of your company's role in the marketplace. You must always stress what is compelling about the brand to the widest possible audience.

- Define what your business stands for; be committed to your positioning and ensure values are aligned with your target audience.
- A strong brand story will drive business decisions and marketing communications alike. Once you know what you wish to say, make sure you say it in a unified way across every platform – that is how you build an influential, respected brand image.
- Don't be afraid to give your story a little personality, as that is what drives people to connect with your brand on a personal and emotional level.



Communicate your identity

Communicating your brand effectively is key to ensuring that your business stays ahead of its competitors.

In an uncertain economic climate there will always be financial restrictions on SMEs. However, developing the brand image should always be part of the budget plan, no matter how limited that budget is.



A smart communications strategy that includes a combination of channels such as advertising, PR, direct mail, email marketing and social media will generate awareness and build brand loyalty. Make sure this is carefully planned to reach the right people, with the right messages at the right time.

It's important to ensure that all brand communication delivers a clear, and competitive consumer benefit, making people feel that the brand is relevant and important to them.

Deliver your promise

Maximising the strength of a brand depends on a number of factors. Arguably the most important is being able to deliver on the promises you make to your customers.

Fancy words and slogans won't count if your product or service doesn't actually deliver what it says on the tin.

Customers will always appreciate – and remember – your brand if it continues to follow through on what it has promised.

Customer loyalty is a precious commodity that can be increased by adding value on their behalf to your product.

Take time to understand your customer

If your organisation is to be successful, your brand must have the ability to strike a chord with potential customers and to do that, you must understand your customer and what motivates them.

If you don't know who your customers are, you won't know how to reach them with your brand. You could waste money advertising in the wrong places or misjudge their reaction to any brand awareness campaign. Knowing your customer is paramount to getting the most out of your brand.

Put yourself in their shoes, if you were the customer, what aspect of the brand would be most important to you? Take time to speak to them, get feedback and show that you're listening – it'll go a long way.

For more information, please call Close Brothers Commercial Finance on +353 (1) 901 5261 or visit www.closecommercialfinance.ie