

Knigh



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KnighLine

May 2004

A Publication of KnightWorks

Volume 1, Number 9 & 10

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"With competition growing fierce in all industries, how do you stand out from the crowd—and especially, how do you do it on a limited investment?"

**Our Marketing
Strategy
Development Master**



*Our Proprietary Methodology
is a Secret*

Branding on a Budget No-Cost and Low Cost Business Building Tips

By: Ray Gordon Knight C.E.O.- Chief Envisioneer Officer

*This is the ninth in the series of articles designed to help small and medium-sized businesses improve their marketing and sales by **cost-effectively** increasing awareness, protecting their customer base and attracting new business. It is Part one of the series on branding. Prior articles are available at www.rayknight.com.*

Personal and business etiquette share a common thread—you don't accept either invitation and show up at a house or the office meeting empty handed. A key difference is that the business meeting may be critical to the survival, growth and profitability of your business or your company. What you say and what you do need to be both understood and recalled by your host. A simple, straightforward written summation of your experience, services, skills and client testimonials may be exactly what makes you and your brand stand out from the crowd.

But what do you or your company stand for? What is your brand? In this how to article, I will share proven and tested no-cost and low-cost tips on how to develop and promote your brand.

The Big Picture

Three driving trends are creating demand for individuals and businesses seeking easy and inexpensive ways to promote their businesses: corporate downsizing creating new entrepreneurial startups; companies eliminating market departments or cutting budgets; single and dual income households searching for new ways to generate income to do more than just make ends meet.

With competition growing fierce in all industries, how do you stand out from the crowd—and especially, how do you do it on a limited investment? Four options come to mind:

1. Work with a marketing company that focuses on startups, small and medium businesses guiding them to design and develop your brand and your message.
2. Develop some ideas and content and hire someone with desktop publishing (printing and copy companies offer in house or temp staff) skills to produce your preliminary tools.
3. Do-it-yourself using basic word processing software like Windows Word®.
4. A combination of the above.

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"Don't cheap out on these basic items- especially the card. Many budget conscious people make that same mistake. You only have one chance to make a great first impression."

Our Biz Dev Team



*Makes New Business Appear
Out of Thin Air*

Brand Identity Basics

1. *Creating your Brand Identity* The first production tasks are a logo, letterhead, envelope and a business card. An additional item is a second sheet for letters or more than one page in length. Focus on the logo first. The cheapest logo is no logo and just a font treatment. No cost options include typing your name or the business name and experimenting with the various fonts in your word processing program. For your other text, select a font treatment (experiment with italics, bold, superscripts and subscripts or drop caps in your font options). Select an easy to read typeface (Arial, Verdana and Times-Roman are all good) and stick with it on all your printed communications and sales tools for consistency purposes. A second option is to search online for already produced logos that can be bought for a song and customized with your name- examples are found on sites like www.designgalaxy.com. A third option is invest money with a graphic designer to produce your own custom logo.
2. *Producing your Brand Identity:* Use the Header and Footer options to place your logo and type your brand name, address, phone, fax and email and website (if you have one). Need some ideas? Go to your files or a copy or printer store and mimic what you find attractive. The cheapest way to produce your letterhead is to purchase high quality paper at the office supply store and desktop publish it yourself. Some basic word processing programs limit your ability to use the logo in your envelope production capacity. A second option is to invest some of your small budget and use the services of the local quick printer or copy store. Take your basic content to a printer and ask them to show you some card and envelope options (they will oftentimes produce the samples in order to get your print order). They may charge a small fee to take your content from a word processing program to Adobe Photoshop or another more program designed especially for print and graphic printing projects. Select an inexpensive starter package and off to the next task.

Tip: Penny Wise and Image Foolish? Remember, in many cases, until you develop other print or online image and sales tools, these items represent the entirety of your image. Don't cheap out on these basic items-especially the card. Many budget conscious people make that same mistake. You only have one chance to make a great first impression.
3. *Create a Tag Line.* That is the line that follows your brand name. Create a benefit driven tag line that clearly states what you do for your clients. Develop several options and test them with your clients or friends to see what message your various options convey about you and your business and use that line consistently in all communications.
4. *Extend Your Brand Arsenal:* Take your letterhead design and content to create a standardized template for an Invoice, Report, Meeting Recap and you can repurpose that information into PowerPoint or other presentation software to create an integrated look across all your print materials.
5. *Put Your Best Card Forward:* If networking is a key part of your business development strategy, (see KnightLine **The Three Golden Rules of Networking**) invest the time to develop a presentation card which is an oversized business card. A 3 x 5 or 4.5 x 5.5 inch card provides you more space

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"The next items that you should invest some time and limited funds in the production are a Newsletter (see prior KnightLine articles [Newsletters-Do-It-Yourself Marketing Tool](#)) or some press releases (see [Use PR: Create Awareness & Generate Leads](#)."

Our Savvy President



*Over 50 Years Experience in
a 25-Year Career*

to add additional content and graphics to stand out from the crowd. Don't forget that you have the option of printing on the back of the card to. You want that card to stimulate conversation and interest. You can use that space to mention products/services, clients, testimonials or to display an eye-grabbing graphic. In Miami Springs, visit [Mooving Colours](#) on Westward Drive to see how quickly and inexpensively you can produce outstanding quality presentation cards with their digital printing capabilities.

6. The next items that you should invest some time and limited funds in the production are a *Newsletter* (see prior KnightLine articles [Newsletters-Do-It-Yourself Marketing Tool](#)) or some press releases (see [Use PR: Create Awareness & Generate Leads](#)). Other tools include a *Case History* presenting a before and after perspective on your work with an actual client; a *White Paper* that shares your perspective on a particular trend, issue, challenge or opportunity; or your preliminary online branding tools of your *email address and signature* or your first or next version of your *business website*. These no-cost and low cost branding tools will be covered in Part Two of this series.

Remember: Don't let a tough economy or limited financial resources restrict you in building and promoting your brand. Use your own resourcefulness to do it yourself or to find inexpensive ways to get the job done right the first time around!

BRANDishing Weapons

Branding on a Budget Part 2

No-Cost and Low Cost Business Building Tips

By: Ray Gordon Knight C.E.O.- Chief Envisioneer Officer

*This is the tenth in the series of articles designed to help small and medium-sized businesses improve their marketing and sales by **cost-effectively** increasing awareness, building their brand, protecting their customer base and attracting new business. It is Part two of the series on branding. Prior articles are available at www.rayknight.com.*

In the first part of this series on low cost and no cost ways to develop and promote your brand, I introduced how to create and produce your brand identity; how to create a brand tag line to describe your personal or company unique selling proposition; how to design and create your brand identity basics of a corporate letterhead, various forms and Power Point® presentation, and a unique oversized presentation card. The article finished by citing the use of newsletters and public relations, both subjects of prior KnightLine articles, as additional tools in the branding and business development arsenal.

In this article, we delve deeper into brand building and introduce 5 more branding on a budget tips you can implement to promote your personal or company brand. In the fight for survival, small and medium-sized companies must use ALL tools or weapons available to them to protect the erosion of their customer base, find new qualified prospects and to build their business. This article introduces reasons, strategies and how-to tips which you can apply to discerning, developing and deploying your personal or company BRANDishing weapons to stave off the attack of your competition.

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**Our Strategic
Planning Wiz Kids**



*Putting the Guesswork
Back into the Equation*

BRANDishing Weapons

A search for **bran·dish** yielded (1) To wave or flourish (a weapon, for example) menacingly (2) To display ostentatiously (3) To trademark or distinctive name identifying a product or a manufacturer. (4) To mark to show ownership (5) To impress firmly; fix ineradicably.

A search for **weap·on** revealed (1) An instrument of attack or defense in combat and (2) A means used to defend against or defeat another.

Use Branding to Conquer Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt

Branding can build trust and can generate a credible impression about your person, product or service.

In a tight economy, businesses of all sizes often become more concerned with not making a wrong decision at the risk of making no decision at all. So many companies become all F.U.D up (filled with *Fear Uncertainty and Doubt*). Issues of trust and confidence are paramount in the buyers mind and buyers scrutinize the big picture down to the smallest details. You have to give them numerous reasons to buy rather than---- bye!

Major advertising agencies and highly-priced marketing executives invest thousands of hours and millions of dollars into the development and promotion of brands and branded solutions. They staunchly protect their turf while they attack others. They have both a defensive and an offensive strategy in play at the same time. How is an entrepreneur or small and medium sized business going to compete with that? The answer is by being creative, resourceful or more proactive than the other guy.

Branding is not just for the big boys. It is for every salesperson of any product or service and every company of any size. What is good for the goose is good for the gander. It's all a matter of scale- of economies of scale. Without the financial resources or talent pools to draw upon, you need a formula to learn how to get big brand bang for little bucks.

Five Brand Building Tips

Here are five more proven effective tips on how to create low-cost and no cost additions to your branding tool kit.

1. White Papers

White Papers are a multi-purpose brand building tool. A White Paper can accomplish the following:

- Promote your brand
- Provide value to clients, prospects and your peers
- Demonstrate your expertise
- Share your viewpoint/philosophy about a particular topic
- Promote the benefits of your product or service
- Present a case history from your experience

Here is a five-step process to create your White Paper. (1) Start by summarizing the topic, situation, challenge or issue. (2) Proceed to paint a verbal picture of the repercussions or ramifications of that subject. (3) Introduce alternative ideas and viewpoints. (4) Summarize your observations and conclusions. (5) Promote the availability of the paper in the various ways outlined in this and prior KnightLine how-to articles.

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Our Research Meister



*No Cost Low-Cost Data
Drives Our Clients'
Competitors Crazy*

Recently, I added this tool to my arsenal by taking the lessons and insights gained through a research project undertaken for a client in the healthcare industry. In order to make some strategic decisions regarding their marketing operations, the firm wanted to know how companies in their and other industries were protecting their brands. The client was seeking to learn how to divide responsibilities of the headquarters corporate marketing department and the decisions/actions undertaken at outlying offices. Realizing through my research that there was a shortage of information readily available on the subject, I deleted the name of the client and "sanitized" the information by removing any proprietary information from the document, produced the White Paper and promoted it's availability in a "Pull" email.

A "Pull" email is one where you mention the availability of the White Paper and have people email you a request for a copy. This action generates two-way communications and can often open up a dialogue with potential new prospects, alliances or partners. Of course, I later will add the document to my website. (Want a copy of that White Paper, email me with subject line WHITE PAPER please. (You didn't think I'd miss that opportunity, did you?)

In this example, I earned some money, learned some new information, helped the client solve their problem and created a new branding tool all in one-- at no cost! You can do it too.

2. *Empower Your Email Signature*

Odds are email has become a key component of your communication channels to clients, prospects, friends and family. Take the time to access the Options part of your email screen and formulate your own email signature to send your brand message out in every communication. Consider adding your name, title, company name, phone number(s), web and email addresses and your personal benefit - driven branding tag line.

I recently heard from an associate in MENG, the elite professional group of senior marketing executives, Marketing Executive Network Group (www.mengonline.com) about his discussion with the head of a large company who really recognized the power of an email signature. He shared how the executive had added the line "Make sure to try NEW [Insert Product X name] here" and within a month, thousands of people in the company had "ads" attached to their signature lines. The company has maybe ~100,000 employees. If each person only sends 25 emails outside the company per week, they could be reaching $100,000 * 25 * 52 = 130$ million messages a year.

3. *Your Email Sales Agent*

Another strategy is to insert an OFFER into your email signature like "Get 2-hours of consulting FREE" or Buy 1 (product or service) by Friday and Get 1 at 50% OFF.

4. *Harness the Power of Your "Email-Mercial" (email commercial)*

Millions of individuals have taken advantage of free email services and have addresses at @hotmail.com or @aol.com. How can you turn your email into an email commercial? By reserving your own website domain, buy it online at sites like Register.com you can reserve your website name and create a professional-quality site with easy to use editing tools and update your own pages in seconds with new content for as little as \$3.27 a

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month! Recognize that every one of those hundred or thousands of emails you send can be a FREE PROMOTION of your brand and create a positive impression that you take the web seriously in your marketing efforts. As an example, my new email address KnightWorks@RayKnight.com promotes my company, my brand and my name every time I hit send or reply. Creating your own name's domain name is both easy and inexpensive.

5. Your Email Benefit Statement

Don't have your own domain yet, you can still create multiple addresses for FREE on Hotmail.

Get creative with your email address by adding a benefit-driven word combination in front of your personal or corporate domain name to reinforce the value you bring to the table like MoreSales@yourdomainname.com for a marketing/sales service firm or Betterhealth@yourdomainname.com for a doctor or nutritionist or health food store or IncreasedReturns@yourdomain.com for a stockbroker, financial adviser or banker.

So, you don't have to have a large budget or hire an advertising agency to start building your brand---just be resourceful, roll up your sleeves and follow the tips included in these articles. And remember to give yourself a pat on the back for the initiative you demonstrated and the new BRANDishing Weapons you have in hand.

Want to learn more about branding. Just search for brand development on your search engine or check out this great resource site www.warc.com.

In the next KnightLine article on branding on a budget, we will explore how to maximize the impact of your website domain name and how to use testimonials to build credibility in your brand and add dollars into your bank account.

About *KnightWorks*

KnightWorks integrates with "C" Level executives and business owners to build and improve their businesses by creating and implementing strategies to **energize their companies externally and internally**. I work with their team or alone and **take ACTION** to solve problems & chase opportunities.

Working together we **acquire new clients, launch new products and services, forge alliances and partnerships and enhance skill levels of marketing, sales & service executives & staff.**

KnightWorks is a Miami-based **business development agency** that combines a **strategy consulting practice**, an **integrated marketing agency** and a **strategic selling service** through one central source, Ray Knight.

Learn more about my experience, view work samples and read client testimonials at my site

www.RayKnight.com

Ray Knight Chief Envisioneer Officer

*Knight
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Ray Knight



Our Board of Directors



*Actively Engaged Driving
KnightWorks' Growth*

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Industry: Business Insurance/Financial Services
Timing: < 30 days **Budget:** < \$5,000
Client Situation: Client seeks new online strategy for core business of retail store insurance to leverage *Quick Quote* technology.

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Ray Knight



Solution: Use existing design template to launch consistent online brand integration of sister companies and to reduce start up time and costs.

Methodologies: 1/ Research of online marketing of insurance to business. 2/ Development of generic solution site www.RetailStoreInsurance.com 3/ Creation of online ad, multiple hard and soft offers and online direct marketing copy. 4/ Creation and testing of online forms for lead capture.



Industry: Personal Development Seminars and Individual Coaching/Training Sessions
Timing: 30 days to launch site **Budget:** < \$4,400
Client Situation: Corporate Exec starts 2nd career as Entrepreneur to follow her inner voice and pursue her dream.

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Solution: Develop and launch an English and Spanish website as cornerstone of integrated marketing campaign. Link the sites together to cater to bi-lingual audience and develop English and Spanish domain names for promotion and tracking purposes.

Methodology: 1/ Review business plan. 2/ Research competing sites. 3/ Locate source of applicable royalty-free images. 4/ Secure & post client's bi-lingual content. 5/ Set up multiple domains, hosting & email.

Testimonial: "Ray Knight shows commitment to understanding a client's business from the onset, and then strives to implement this in the ensuing Internet presence. As he develops the overall structure of the website, Ray keeps in mind the client's strategy and applies his creative outlook to execute it. He moves fast to ensure everything is done in a timely manner. Ray is very professional in his work and in his customer service."
Beatriz Orive President Mayan Link, Inc.

See: www.Awakeningthesoul.net and www.despertandoelalma.com



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Industry: Marine and Aviation Insurance

Timing: Various Projects with 2 week, one month and several month timeframes and deadlines

Budget: Various projects quoted individually over a six-month period

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Client Situation: Established brand with multiple product lines seeks external marketing resources to integrate with existing in-house staff and develop year-end marketing strategies for new product launch.

Solution: Implement a marketing and strategic planning discovery process to define and prioritize short and intermediate term business plan and marketing plan issues and opportunities.

Methodologies: 1/ Comprehensive analysis of existing marketing strategies and channels. 2/ Intensive interviews of CEO and executives to assess and prioritize opportunities. 3/ Multiple Product Line Analysis and short term action plan developed. 4/ Event Show marketing product introduction strategy created and launched within 2 weeks of event. 5/ Sales Training session for existing and new sales and service team for event 6/ Corporate SWOT analysis leads to expansion of assignment to develop corporate business plan for 2004 and shepherd an organizational development process to assist company in moving to next level.

Industry: Executive Seeking SVP Global Sales-Marketing post with Corporate Travel consortium
Timing: 4 days-over weekend to interview with new CEO after referral to firm by inside executive
Budget: < \$2,500

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Client Situation: Longtime employed SVP suddenly in job market with no recent job hunting experience and no knowledge of the current state of the market for Sr. manager job seekers. Needs strategy to stand out from the crowd and sell his experience and his vision to the targeted company.

Solution: Develop *Professional Profile* Selling Tool and accompanying customized Power Point using transferable Case History experience to demonstrate credentials, contacts and go-forward plan. Role play on presentation.

Methodology: 1/ Analysis of target company website. 2/ Extraction of key case history selling stories. 3/ Secure Brand selling stories logos. 4/ Intensive candidate interviews and new content development. 5/ Std. Resume reformulation.

