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We're on the Web!

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"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."

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.

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.

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This action generates two-way communications and can often open up a dialogue with potential new prospects, alliances or partners."

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.

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.

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"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.."

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 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*** www.rayknight.com

Our focus is on *Passionately, Building Business and Brands*. We work with business owners and executives to implement practical, no-cost and low cost proven business building and business improvement strategies and tactics. ***KnightWorks*** principal is Ray Gordon Knight, C.E.O., *Chief Envisioneer Officer* who developed and tested the firm's systems and processes over a 25- year domestic and international career as both a corporate senior executive and entrepreneur with experience in over 26 industries. The firm is located in Miami, Florida and can be reached at 305-888-1905 or by email at KnightWorks@RayKnight.com