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Food For Thought

"You now have to decide what 'image' you want for your brand. Image means personality. Products, like people, have personalities, and they can make or break them in the market place."

David Ogilvy
Advertising Executive

Will Work For Food

The Palazzo Time Machine

1993 - Sydney, Australia wins its bid to host the 2000 Summer Olympics. Microsoft releases the first version of Windows NT 3.1 operating systems for manufacturing. Nelson Mandela and Frederik Willem de Klerk each win the Nobel Peace Prize, and actor Angus Jones (from Two and A Half Men) is born.

1993 was also the year I graduated from design school. I had a great time in design school; I was constantly learning and surrounded by like-minded students. I was a twenty-two year old kid that had big dreams and a slightly naive sense of reality.

Thinking back to those first years out of school, I realize my fundamental design philosophy hasn't changed much: good design should be functional and useful. It should communicate and convey ideas, not get in the way of, or distract from the message.

It has been over 16 years now, and I am proud to say I have both survived and learned a lot. I have learned a great deal about managing design projects and personnel and I've learned how to help an organization move from traditional print marketing to digital and web. Having been an integral part of multiple marketing campaigns, I learned a lot about branding and establishing design consistency. I have also had the pleasure of working with many fabulous individuals, as well as some great companies.

I have put together a quick slice of my very first portfolio, right out of design school. Keep in mind, computers were fairly new to the design industry, and 95% of my designs were created by hand (Now a seemingly "long-lost-art" in these days of computer graphic programs!).

Click [here](#) to take a look back in time.
Enjoy, and no laughing! ~ Mark Palazzo



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Three Brand Identity Myths That Will Bring Your Business Down

“Brand identity” is the combination of consistent visual elements that are used in your marketing materials.

A basic brand identity kit consists of a logo, business card, letterhead, and envelope. It can be extended to include a web site, brochures, folders, fliers, or any other professionally designed pieces.

Having a brand identity is extremely important to your business' success. However, many business owners have misconceptions about brand identities that can damage the professional image of their business.

- Myth 1 -

[My cousin/coworker/friend can design my brand identity.](#)

There are some very significant areas of your business that should be left to the professionals. First of all, while your cousin may have been “great in art class,” this does not mean that he or she has the knowledge and expertise required to create great graphic designs. Designing a logo, business card, or web site is very different than painting or drawing a picture or making a collage. A designer must make a brand logo scalable, meaningful, and symbolic, as well as creating something that translates well into different mediums, such as embroidery.

Second, having a professional designer on your marketing team ensures that your projects will be a top priority. I have many clients who start their designs with a friend or relative and end up unsatisfied with the results, or “put on the back burner,” leaving their project to drag on for months. After much frustration, they hire a professional and are amazed at how quickly and smoothly their designs are completed.

Finally, would you trust a friend to do something really important for your business? Would you ask him or her to do something that requires specific skills, like making a client presentation for you or create your next product? Probably not, unless he or she is a sales professional or an engineer in your field of manufacturing. Would you trust a friend who is “good with math” to do your corporate taxes? If you wouldn't trust an amateur with an important business function, then why would you trust an amateur with your brand identity, an important key to your marketing success?

- Myth 2 -

[Designing a custom brand identity is too expensive.](#)

It's true that having your marketing materials designed can, depending on your business needs, become an expensive proposition. In the long run, it may be even more expensive if you do not have a high-quality, custom brand identity professionally designed. There are many ways a poor design can harm your business, including the possibility that potential clients will not respect your business or take your business seriously, among more professional-looking competitors. Your logo or brand may be “forgettable” and therefore not remembered the next time the public reaches for the brand of product you sell.

A strong brand identity quickly pays for itself. When you have a top-notch brand identity, new customers will contact you because they remember your logo, have held on to your business card, or are impressed by your brochure. Good brand/logo recognition translates into more sales. Your business can grow and flourish from the small initial investment in your brand identity.

Consider this: brand identity is a sustainable expense. Once you have had a timeless

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logo and set of marketing materials designed, you can use them for years to come. Once you have a strong logo, creating consistent, targeted marketing pieces and programs becomes easy to add to your existing system.

- Myth 3 -

I do not need a brand identity.

If you are a professional in business, you need a brand identity. You wouldn't consider being in business without other important business essentials—your own computer or a business name or a bank account. A brand identity is another of these basic business essentials. It's the central requirement for marketing and promoting your business.

There is nothing that looks less professional than not having a professional brand identity. If you do not establish a clean, high-quality, and consistent look and feel to your materials, you will have a much more difficult time acquiring potential clients—and signing them on to use your services. All of the Fortune 500 companies have a logo, and for a good reason: it makes them look more professional. If you want to be perceived as offering a high-caliber product or service, you need to look polished and “put together.”

The Bottom Line

Don't gloss over the importance of a professionally designed logo. It is an investment in your business and how your business will be perceived by the world. A good, professionally created logo can create brand recognition—just ask any two-year old that is driving by the “Golden Arches.” They don't need mom and dad to read the sign to tell them there is a McDonald's close by. And don't let an amateur create what will become a symbol of your product and professionalism in your field. There are plenty of other ways to let family and friends help you get your business up and running.

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