



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

nerej

What's in a brand?

May 28, 2009 - Front Section

Believe it or not branding and marketing are two separate entities. A brand signifies the meaning behind the words. Brand image, by definition, is a symbolic construct created within the minds of people and consists of all the information and expectations associated with a product or service. Your symbolic construct, or brand identity, should create an emotional connection with the target audience, uniting how you feel and how consumers feel about your company.

The way you portray your company and how you want your company to be perceived should be consistent. Integrated marketing professionals are able to assist you in doing this by determining the consumer's perception of your company and evaluating the effectiveness of your existing or potential brand. Determining the consumer's perception is often accomplished through brand equity research and focus groups. Brand equity research will uncover how favorably or unfavorably consumers view your brand, while focus groups allow companies to test new services before they are made available to the public.

Once you have determined what you want your company to mean to consumers, partnering with an integrated marketing firm will better enable you to ensure proper brand management by developing and executing strategic marketing campaigns. Strategic marketing campaigns consist of advertising, public relations, and direct marketing; just to name a few. Public relations should play an important role in generating brand recognition, creating strong public awareness, and offering legitimacy for the services that your company offers. The goal is to provide consistent messaging and constant brand interaction with your target audience. Working with a strategic marketing firm who is experienced in effective branding will help you reach that goal.

Samantha Mahoney is marketing communications manager at Millennium Advertising, Concord, N.H.