

Business vs. brands

Andrew Scott founder and CEO of Purplex, full-service marketing agency, gives his insights into how great brands make better businesses

There are over 15,000 businesses in British glass and glazing. How is yours standing out?

Over the last three decades, I've seen an incredible number of companies rise and fall. Some that started as tiny one-man bands are now multimillion-pound global corporations. Others launched, limped along for a few years, then disappeared off the face of the earth – getting bought out, merged, or just going bust.

What sets these two types of business apart? They were all offering broadly the same products and services in the same industry. But some thrived, and some sunk.

Why? It all comes down to branding.

Trusted brand – the silent seal of approval

The average person is exposed to 5,000 marketing messages per day – which makes having a powerful, recognised brand so vitally important.

Audiences naturally gravitate towards brands they trust. Apple is the strongest brand in the world, closely followed by Google – when was the last time you Asked Jeeves?

Lead the generation?

There's a critical difference between businesses that focus on lead generation and brands that focus on lead generation. Leads are obviously crucial. They're the lifeblood of any company. But lead generation on its own is a dangerous and risky business.

Without a strong brand, just focusing on lead gen is like throwing mud at a wall and hoping it will stick. You could spend a million pounds on Pay-Per-Click advertising – but consumers would still choose a company they know and trust more than you.

For your lead generation efforts to be effective you also need to spend time and money building your brand.

Network, network, network

Companies are increasingly reliant on a narrow range of marketing channels. But today, brands need to 'be' where their clients are, wherever and whenever they are – and this means taking a much wider and more integrated omni-channel approach.

How to build a brand

Building a trusted brand means investing in traditional marketing. When planning a branding campaign, it's important to ask yourself a few questions:

- What does my business do?

If you had 10 seconds to explain your product to a potential customer, what would you say to them?

- What are my competitors doing?

There's a famous quote from James Caan: "Observe the masses and do the opposite". When it comes to your branding, do something different – find a way of setting yourself apart from the other businesses in your niche.



Andrew Scott

The USP

Ultimately, all businesses want leads. But how do you want to be perceived? Why would customers choose you over the competition? Do you offer the best service or value? Are you incredibly charitable? Are your products better than anyone else's? Are you growing?

Once you've found your USP, then you can get to work executing the PR campaigns, sponsorships, advertising and brand awareness initiatives that will make you stand out from the crowd.

The edge with a cause

Sponsoring award schemes and good causes, having a regular presence in the press and generally getting yourself in front of your prospects as much as possible will build brand awareness and trust – giving you that critical edge over your competitors. □

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