

THREE VISUAL BRANDING SECRETS

To Make Your Business Memorable

By Karen Saunders

Have you ever asked yourself why a competitor's business gets more attention than yours? The answer just may have to do with the elements that go into how memorable the business is. And that has to do with branding.

But exactly what is branding, anyway? Think of branding as predefining what a company is all about in the minds of its clients. Good branding differentiates your products and services in a positive way that really sticks in the minds of potential customers.

Let's say you are traveling around town in your 15 year old compact car with its miniscule trunk and long lost shocks. There is no way this vehicle can haul the two tons of flagstone you want for your patio, let alone manage the turf, trees, soil and other materials you will need for your backyard landscaping project. It is definitely time for a new set of wheels, but whatever you buy has to be sturdy and commodious. You ponder the possibilities. Almost immediately the perfect vehicle comes to mind, you make a u-turn, and you head to your local Chevrolet dealer to look at Chevy trucks, unconsciously singing the words "like a rock," under your breath. Why did you think Chevy truck?

- Attractive, easy to read, and memorable logo;
- Great tag line; and
- Consistency of product marketing design elements.

Assuming your own product is fabulous, it all comes down to image. Graphic design can play a huge part in that image. But

what are some key things to consider?

A Great Logo is Key.

You have already given a great deal of attention to your company name and believe it speaks to who you are and what you do. Great! Now you need to wrap a graphic image around that name to carve out a prime piece of real estate in the mind of your target customer. That is exactly what a great logo can do.

Keep in mind that a powerful logo:

- has a strong, balanced image with no little extras that clutter its look;
- is distinctive and bold in design, making it easy to see at a glance;
- has graphic imagery that looks appropriate for your business;
- works well with your company name;
- is done in an easy to read font;
- communicates your business clearly; and
- looks good in black and white, as well as in color.

A Distinctive Tag Line is Key.

A tag line is a three to nine word phrase that accompanies your logo. It expresses your company's most important benefits and/or what you want your customers to remember about working with you. Think of it as the words you want to linger in your target customer's mind about you and what you have to offer.

Great tag lines appear to be effortlessly created because they just seem to flow. In fact, creating and refining one takes time, just like designing a great logo. The benefits of taking the time to craft a great tag line lies in its stickiness. Great tag lines stick in your memory.

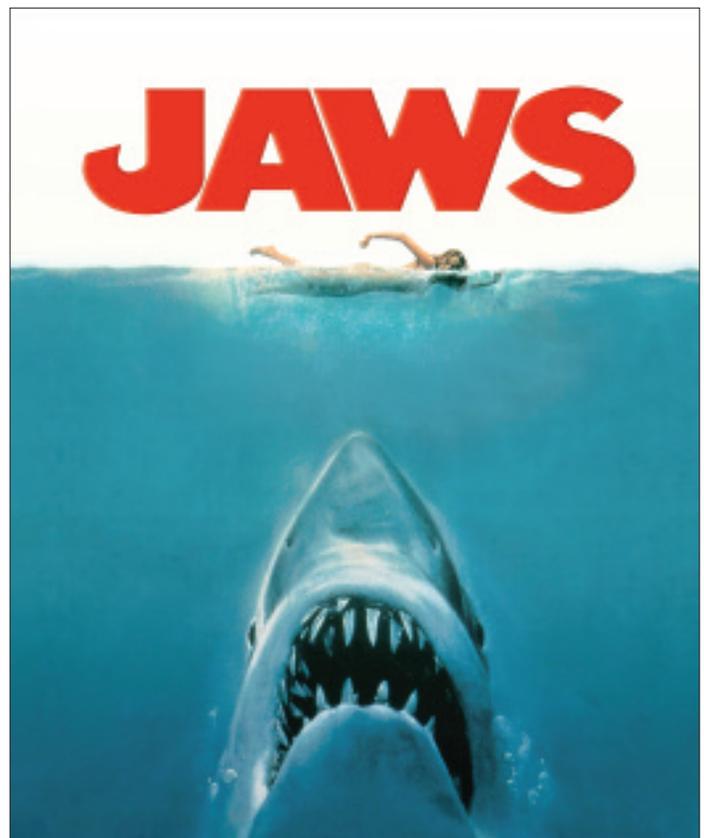
For example, if you saw only the words "Don't go into the water," flashed on a screen, there is a good chance you would see the gaping jaw of a shark in your mind's eye, an image straight from the poster for the movie, *Jaws*. That phrase just happened to be the movie's tag line and it worked so well that when *Jaws 2* was released, it was accompanied by the tag line "Just when you thought it was

safe to go back into the water..." The *Jaws* tag line worked because it summarized the entire movie in five words and left an indelible mark on the memory of anyone who saw the movie.

Similarly, the phrase, "Like a rock," expresses what Chevrolet wants people to think about their trucks.

Consistent Visual Identity is Key.

If you are going to capture that prime piece of real estate in the customer's mind, you must provide not only a compelling image, but a consistent one. The Statue of Liberty just may be one of the most compelling images in the world. But what if you



1 MEMORABLE LOGO

2 DISTINCTIVE TAG LINE

3 CONSISTENT IDENTITY

owned the rights to that image, put it on your business card, then put the image of an American Bald Eagle on your stationery and the Liberty Bell on your Website. The American Bald Eagle and the Liberty Bell are also compelling images, but as a group, each dilutes the impact of the other.

Each of the three images has its own distinct personality. You may be tempted to give your stationery, Website, business

card, brochures, and other marketing materials different visual personalities, but to do so risks the equivalent of having the Statue of Liberty competing with American Bald Eagle and Liberty Bell.

Likewise, if Chevrolet used the famous image of Rosie the Riveter as a design element to sell their trucks, it would certainly convey toughness, but it would be inconsistent with their logo, tag line, and the product itself.

They stick to images of trucks eating up dirt roads, along with their famous logo and tag line. It works, in part, because it is consistent.

All of the materials that represent you, from business cards to brochures, need to have image consistency in order to be immediately recognizable by your customers ... and potential customers ... as being related to the unique brand that is your company. Logo, color scheme, fonts, and layout that are consistent from letterhead to business card and from envelope to ad suggest credibility and stability, in addition to taking up more of that prime mental real estate by virtue of repetition. Inconsistency of graphic elements among materials not only suggests uncertainty and sloppiness, it is just plain forgettable.

Creating a great logo, writing a distinctive tag line, and maintaining consistency among all your marketing materials will take you a long way towards creating a brand that just might be memorable enough to give your company the beach front property in the minds of your customers that leaves them thinking only of you. **N**

Karen Saunders is the owner of MacGraphics Services, a unique design firm for today's entrepreneur. Whether you outsource your promotional pieces or are a do-it-yourselfer, Karen takes the mystery out of marketing. Learn the Top 5 Mistakes that can cost you money by signing up for her FREE e-course, available for a limited time. To take advantage of this e-course and find out how easy it can be to attract more clients, macgraphics.net/FreeStuff.php. You can contact her at karen@macgraphics.net. Karen Saunders ©2006.

