Branding Your Way to Success

Today’s businesses are operating in an increasingly competitive global market, where product improvements and price movements can be easily matched by competitors. Hence, brand differentiation has become more critical. By setting yourself apart from the competition, you move from being a “me-too” brand, to become a “go-to” brand.

Effective branding can help you grow your business and stand out from the crowd.

Starting Off on the Right Foot
Established in 2009, Enviably Me Pte Ltd began as a multi-brand retailer selling eco-friendly designer products. While sourcing for new brands, Mr Terence Yow, CEO, learnt about a Brazilian brand of plastic shoes called Melissa.

Melissa shoes are made using the patented Melflex® plastic, a hypoallergenic and extremely flexible PVC material that is 100% recyclable.

Explained Mr Yow, “We want to sell products that people would love and want to buy without even realising that the products are eco-friendly,” Melissa soon became a success in Singapore.

Keen to take Melissa to the next level, Enviably Me sought help from the UOB-SMU AEI to find out more about customers’ perception of Melissa.

Smaller companies like us struggle with managing our bottom line. This is where assistance on brand development can come in, by giving us valuable feedback at an affordable fee.

Mr Terence Yow
CEO, Enviably Me Pte Ltd

The results of the brand audit validated the company’s hunch: Melissa’s brand of fun, vibrant, sexy and young-at-heart shoes appealed to fashion-forward working women, aged 25-40.

The audit also turned up some surprising findings. “We realised there was low customer awareness of the material used to make Melissa shoes. Some thought our shoes were made of rubber. Others thought that we used cheap, lousy plastic in our products,” noted Mr Yow.

To correct these misconceptions, Enviably Me has plans to include more information on the plastic material used in Melissa shoes in its marketing efforts.

He was also quick to add, “However, branding is not a miracle pill. SMEs need to be clear about their products, target market and strategy to get the most out of branding advisory.”

Finding the Right Positioning
Even though branding is often associated with consumer brands, B2B businesses can also benefit from better brand management.

Take Excel Hardware for instance. The company began in 1998 and has grown to become a leading local homeware and hardware solution provider with a wide range of products.

“We used to distribute our products to contractors and interior designers through dealers. To better cater to the needs of our customers, we began marketing our products directly to contractors and interior designers,” said Mr Kaden Choa, Operations Manager of Excel Hardware.

Mr Choa sought assistance from the UOB-SMU AEI to understand the business needs of interior designers (IDs), who are Excel Hardware’s key target market. The market study yielded some unexpected results.

“In the past, when we worked with dealers, we were always told that price was a main factor in choosing hardware products. But the feedback from the IDs tells us that they are more concerned with customer service, and the design and availability of products.”

To help SMEs build strong brands, SPRING Singapore is partnering UOB-SMU Asian Enterprise Institute (UOB-SMU AEI) to make marketing and branding assistance available via the SME Consulting Programme. Valuable marketing and branding advisory is offered by student teams and experienced project advisors.

A Branding Seminar for SMEs: The 13 Killer Differentiators
Thursday, 25 April 2013, 3.00pm - 6.00pm
Singapore Management University
Administration Building
Function Room 4.1, Level 4
81 Victoria Street
Singapore 188065

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