

PR and Brand Building

As a designer, it's all about how your brand is presented. Is your message, identity and logo incorporated in a clear, concise and consistent manner? Do you have business cards, web sites and marketing materials that have the same look and feel? There is nothing more satisfying than helping a company and their brand build their identity from scratch. But getting your company to this point is only half the battle. Once all your marketing materials are created, how are you planning to share your image and product to your clients? Marketing plans call for a variety of action items that range pending budget and goals, but typically include paid advertisements and print and online materials such as newsletters and brochures. Another form of marketing that is important to remember - and often overlooked - in brand development is public relations.

Although I am not a public relations professional, I feel it is important to touch upon this point, just like online and of-line marketing, and share my experience. Public relations professionals are hired to manage the internal and external communications of an organization. As much as you work to build a brand that consumers and clients connect with and want to be associated with, public relations is the avenue to share your message with the public. They work to position your company in a positive light in the public. PR and brand building is very closely intertwined. One can say that PR is doing work behind the scenes, encouraging third parties such as radio, newspapers and newscasts to deliver your message. They ensure that your identity and message is something friendly and positive that the public will like. While advertising and marketing materials work to garner the attention of your consumers, PR creates that consistent message of trust and reliability to extend your brand even further.

So why is it important to think about PR when you are developing your identity and marketing pieces? Take into consideration the big picture - if you are utilizing PR where services and messages are entering the public realm, are you ready to answer them? If you are announcing your web site address in articles, is your web site up to date with current materials and refreshed every couple of weeks? If you are a guest speaker positioning yourself as the expert in your industry, do your take away materials represent your message and are consistent with your identity?

All marketing efforts work hand in hand to produce one result: a positive brand image. So if you have put a lot of time and effort into creating your logo, your business card, it is only as good as what is shared with the public. But on the other side, if you put yourself out there in the public without having consistent materials, your credibility and reputation could be at risk. Plan ahead and utilize all avenues that are available and know that putting a logo on a letterhead is only the beginning.