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The Essential Elements of Brand Building

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By George Pyne

Every day, new businesses launch and established companies make the decision to re-brand in order to stay culturally relevant. So how do you ensure your brand has a strong voice and compelling content that best reflects your key messaging? How do you convince consumers to actually *care* about your product or service in this highly competitive climate? The first step is to decide what your brand story is, be consistent in telling it and consider three vital elements:

Brand Building

1. Provide an excellent consumer experience.

If your brand fails to meet expectations, consumers will become confused and abandon your brand for another that does, so it is important to continually deliver messages across multiple platforms that support your brand promise.

Take Warby Parker, for example. The company hit its first-year sales targets in three weeks and has continued to grow. In a recent interview with *Fast Company*, Co-CEO David Gilboa said that the company is growing at a rate of 150 percent per year. The secret?

Warby Parker sells glasses for approximately \$95 per frame, including anti-reflective lenses, which is far less than the \$300-\$500 price point of other brands. Most of the sales are online. They make use of a 'virtual try on technology' that allows potential customers to upload a photo and get an idea of how the glasses will fit. You can also order five sample frames to be delivered to you for free to try on at home for a few days. Warby Parker's attention to detail – both online and in stores – creates a positive experience that turns curious shoppers into loyal advocates.

2. Build your brand with quality promotional content.

In 1996, Bill Gates famously stated, "Content is King." He emphasized using interactive media along with quality content, saying that people "must be rewarded with deep and extremely up-to-date information."

This statement is even more relevant today in brand building, whether it means having professional, eye-catching imagery or thoughtfully written content in news blasts, media pitches, websites and social media platforms. Brands have only a few seconds to catch someone's attention, so double check to make sure your images are not pixelated and that there are no spelling errors. Always ask yourself, "Does this make sense and is it on-brand?" before pressing that 'send' button.

All of your brand building messaging must consistently communicate and represent your brand promise, whether it involves interacting with consumers, joining relevant conversations with the use of hashtags, collaborating with influencers or sharing company news and product images.

The importance of social media in business and in brand building has developed well past the point of debate, but it is really only effective when it is used cross platform, cross channel, and tightly integrated with the branding. The mistake some brands make is to set up social media channels because they feel they need to have a presence, but without the resources to maintain them. But by taking that approach, they are committing to a mediocre social strategy.

3. Start with the outcome in mind, then work backwards.

Strong content promotion starts before you even begin the process of brand building. If you create the content first and then think about ways to promote it later, you run the risk of missing out (i.e. a celebrity ambassador who signs a deal with the competition before you have a chance to approach them). So start with your goals first: Who are the relevant influencers with which you want to collaborate? Which media publications do you want to target and what kind of stories do they cover to which you can adapt your content?

A 360-degree approach to brand building is vital. You need to have a road map of your journey when driving the proverbial car. Strategy, a consistent voice and detailed attention as to what you are putting out into the world will eventually lead you down the path to success.

About George Pyne

George Pyne is president of IMG Sports and Entertainment, and the former Chief Operating Officer of NASCAR. Visit www.img.com to learn more.

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