



MARKETSHARE Through MINDSHARE™

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We see things differentlySM

Of Bootlaces & Branding

Observations by **Jamie Stanco**

Marketing theories and terminology waltz in and out of vogue

with alarming frequency. It's a process spawned by a healthy competitive business environment. Staying power is another story. What happened to those magical concepts that so recently dominated the lips of seminar gurus and keynote speakers alike? What happened to...

reengineering...empowerment... positioning...proactivity?

The words never really go away, they just become jargon, accepted as part of the raindance for greater business or marketshare.

And then there's the case of "branding." It's the buzzword that thunders in think tanks and resonates in boardroom presentations. It's bedrock in AMA seminars and is embedded in marketing texts with thought-numbing frequency. But what exactly is branding in de facto real world applications...and why should any smart marketing professional consider it?

First things first.

We define branding as:

"a delineating presence that differentiates versus the competition, proliferates customer loyalty, and turns prospects into new customers."

The upside.

Properly conceived, applied and maintained, branding is a business process with legs and a powerful pulse. It can be the lifeline for you to follow as you navigate competitive marketing mine fields that promise to become even more competitive in the next decade. It's a process that:

- brings business to you with almost unparalleled economics...low overall cost, high potential returns, great volumes.
- bears less risk than most marketing initiatives.
- is idyllically malleable and can be applied to products, services, companies and people alike.
- offers potentially great longevity, to pay dividends for years...decades...generations.
- is very difficult, expensive and time consuming for competitors to dismantle, once it has been established in the collective mindset of your customer base.

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Of Bootlaces & Branding *continued*

Applying branding.

Branding isn't for everyone. It can be risky and it can be expensive. It is always time consuming because it demands a total commitment. Failure to properly brand (anti-branding) is about as attractive as asbestos. And initially, branding can be hard to measure, so it's not for the faint of heart. Therefore, before embarking, ask yourself:

1 Are you dependent upon immediate returns?

Yes, branding grows business and it grows businesses. Yes, the rewards can be prodigious. However, it needs time to establish meaning with your audiences, something we at PMG call "*Marketshare through Mindshare.*" Branding is designed so that the fruits of that growth will be harvested more fully and more profitably over time. Give your strategic branding initiative time to work.

2 Do you have a readily identifiable position?

In most successful initiatives, positioning precedes branding. Why? Because you must be accurate in what you are saying. Because you need to be precise in who and what you are, companies can no more exaggerate the foundation for a brand (its position) than they can make false product claims. Some do, but it is only a matter of time before the walls come a-tumbling down. Hammer out your position before you spend a cent on branding.

3 Are you are prepared to believe?

Branding, like charity, starts at home. You have to believe it. Your people have to believe it. Your organization has to understand it, believe it, and convey it, inside and outside of the office. It has to be part of your culture. Wherever your people go, they must be emissaries of the brand. If they don't believe it, if they aren't convinced to the nth degree, how can anyone else be expected to fall into line?

So don't even dream of branding unless you have a plan for it to be applied across the board.



▶ **Jamie Stanco**, President of Progressive Marketing Group, Inc. is a recognized authority on strategic marketing and branding.

▶ The *ballerina linebacker* symbolizes PMG. We pride ourselves on the ability to provide strategic marketing services with the creative finesse of a ballerina and the tactical marketing power of a linebacker.



Yadda Yadda

There are millions of words written about branding just about every day. Print media, Internet, multimedia, mass media etc., all thrive on the inhalation of branding's exotic vapors. And there will be millions more words written about it in the next few days. As a marketing application, branding will become de rigueur and then metamorphose...but properly applied, it will always be a powerful part of the marketing arsenal.

Branding makes excellent business sense...from air hammers to aerospace...from rodeos to rock stars...because it also creates predictability...is eminently extendable...and if handled properly, readily managed.



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Is strategic branding right for you?

Call us at 631-756-7160.

Or email at news@pmgstrategic.com and let's discover the right answer for you.