

For a Healthy Brand...



The Advertising Diet



**Slim down your marketing message...
... and increase your Sales**

We are all so conscious of our own health - working out, eating correctly.... but have we stopped to think for a minute of our company's marketing health or corporate image?

Katherine Mc Adam, Managing Director JDA takes a look at creating a healthy brand.

These days it would seem that anyone with a pc is creating their own design and advertising leaflets. When I look at the result of these cheap and cheerful marketing messages, I wonder incredulously about the damage that is being done to the brand. Sure, the campaign doesn't cost much to produce and the message is "out there" but a bigger cost is being sacrificed.

There is just too much fat – The use of too many fonts, colours, different shapes and sizes is a one way ticket to design obesity. These elements translate into an unhealthy brand that's perceived as tired and weak.

Another important fact to consider when self designing, is that consumers see thousands of messages on a daily basis, no one has the time or energy to sift through the 'cluttered' advert to decipher what you are selling. Most potential clients - the ones you want, won't want to work that hard to receive your message!

Tip the scales in your favor -

It is essential to remember a few basic rules when designing:

Firstly - LESS IS MORE!

[Yes, you've heard it before – and it still is!] Don't be afraid to leave out tiny bits of information, One clear message should stop the potential client in their tracks and incite them to find out more about your brand and services or products that you offer. This phenomenon is known as 'stopping power', does your advert have it?

Secondly, you need to create a "PROFILE" for your brand.

Treat the brand as though it were a person. Ask yourself questions like: If your brand were a person, what would he/she look like? What car would they drive? Where would they shop, eat or live? Your brand is a living, breathing organism - any marketing material should be the "mug shot" of your company's identity and reflect the life force of the brand. Designed elements give a 'face' to the name. They send a clear message to consumers who will then relate to the brand, for example: "I'm a serious business, and will take your business as seriously as you do", or "I'm interesting, I will make you feel special if you buy me".

Thirdly, take the brand fitness challenge.

I understand that developing and sustaining your brand is as scary as putting your foot on the treadmill for the first time. Marketing messages can

be a similar phenomenon, deciding which message to send out to the public, what you stand for, and who your target audience is, are all part of the necessary ground work to build a healthy brand. Remember that the right creative headline will speak for itself, inciting people to check out your web site, or delve into the content of your brochure, hungry for the information you provide.

The first step to getting in shape is always the hardest – If you are worried about getting it right, set up a workshop with your agency, start with the core criteria of your company's products and services - establish clear ideas of who and what your company stands for (company profile) and create a clear brief to move forward from. Your agency should then be able to portray your message both visually and literally and deliver a strong and memorable marketing message.

Finally, Exercise your brand on a daily basis, and enjoy the rewards and benefits of a well toned, healthy and dynamic image.

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