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MAGAZINE
QUARTERLY ISSUE

from the editor

4 Principles for Building a Strong Brand

the last word

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4 principles FOR BUILDING A STRONG BRAND

kelly lucente
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Branding your business is one of the most important steps in building a company. Branding ensures your company is in a differentiated position in the market so that it attracts the right customers. And differentiation is key in order to establish a strong brand. So how does a brand “really” differentiate and own something unique that people would miss if it didn’t exist?

re-tool® follows four distinct principles to help curate differentiators to position you and your company as a **re-markable** brand.

PLAN



You’ve heard this before... establishing goals and objectives, past and future milestones and taking a good hard look at your competition will help you in the business planning process. What we are suggesting is that you consider doing that again. Yep. Again. Only this time put a branding spin on the process. What brand goals and objectives are you trying to reach both short and long term? What have you done in the

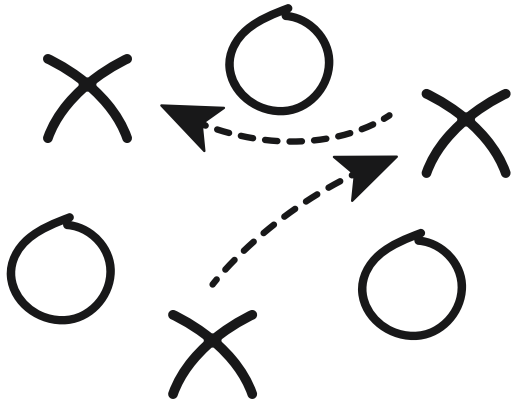
past that really set you apart and got your brand noticed? Any trends today that might impact your perception in the future? And how about that competition. Have you ever audited their website as though you were a potential customer? What is the user experience? How is their brand “perceived” digitally? You want to weigh the pros/cons so you can position your brand differently so you stand out (of course).

PLOT



So what makes you different anyway? And we aren’t just talking vanilla differences. We’re talking **re-markably** different. Because choosing to play it safe isn’t difficult. Many don’t have slush budgets to make a mistake or take a risk in trying something that’s “out there” but you must because boring is dull and it won’t attract much criticism. In almost every market, the boring slot is filled. Defining what makes you **re-markably** different offers huge opportunity allowing you to market with less effort. Consider figuring out your WHY... why you’re even in business. Why your team gets up every day to do this work. That’s a great start and will segue into the next two sections.

POSITION



The 7 P’s of Marketing is worked by many in theory, but we suggest a deeper dive... way deeper. As a refresher we review the seven and offer an alternative look at how we go for the edges... those disruptive areas that feel risky.

PRODUCT Are there any product details around the product itself that you would consider **re-markable**? What language could you use to exemplify those unique features?

PLACE Are there any specific touch points that could be modified in a **re-markable** way?

PRICE Is there anything with a pricing strategy that could be considered **re-markable**? There is a huge chasm between the pricing strategy of Walmart versus Tiffany. Where do you fit? How can you leverage that visually and verbally?

PROMOTION In what ways could you disrupt how you’ve been getting the word out about your business? What **re-markable** narrative could you be using?

PEOPLE Who could you spotlight as the face of the brand? Is there anyone on the team (or individual departments) who could author content and/or videos, podcasts, and the like? How could you position them as a thought leader/innovator/influencer?

PROCESSES Can you think of any additions or modifications on how you deliver your products/services that could be considered **re-markable**?

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE Here’s where you would look at your website, collateral, and physical location closely. Are there any attributes that could be enhanced to be viewed as **re-markable**?

By looking at these seven with a different vantage point will help you get into the psyche of your ideal client a bit differently.

PROMISE



When we work with clients, one of the first things I ask is, “What are the top 10 things you are asked consistently by your customer/prospect?” What we find is that they either ask questions for clarity or to see if you can solve their problem. We want to assess if there is a trend and how we can create a narrative that will help connect more dots. Then, we craft an **only-ness** statement. This is the BIG A-HA statement that will get your audience to stand up and take notice. It’s a positioning phrase that radically differentiates your brand from the competition. It should give everyone chills and answer the question, “What would your customer miss if you didn’t exist?”

Sound like a tall order? Are you a bit overwhelmed? Well, don’t be because you have options. Either take each step a bite at a time or outsource to a team who specializes in this area, like **re-tool®**. If you invest in this piece of branding you will be pleasantly surprised how you’ll be able to maintain your marketing spend, yet convert exponentially more sales as a result.



WHY *your business* NEEDS A CTO

shannon oakes
CEO, Creative Apogee

Technology has taken over every aspect of our lives and your business is not immune. Whether you're in startup mode or have been in business for years, you've seen the changes from the way you reach your audience to how you interact with your customers and everything in between.

Twenty years ago, the idea that your customers would hold an entire computer in their hand, take it everywhere with them, and utilize it to instantly research businesses and make buying decisions was a bit out there. Personal computers were still clunky and were mostly for students writing papers and playing games and cellular phones were flip phones with a tiny screen that only showed the name and number of who was calling.

Today, we have everything at our fingertips and are a society that wants everything instantly. Yet, even with all that advancement, many companies were still behind when it came to tech and some thought it would never affect them or their bottom line.

Then, there was COVID.

The virus that sent the world into a tailspin both socially and economically, propelled businesses into a new era of technology at warp speed. Those companies that had put off utilizing technology suddenly had no choice and were completely out of time. The days of being able to succeed in business without tech such as an up-to-date computer, communications systems like Zoom, a fully functional website, active social media pages, email marketing

systems, etc. are over. COVID created a new world where technology is no longer an option, even for our schools. It has gone from a high priority to an absolute necessity.

What does this new era of technology mean for your business?

It means if you are not easy to find on the web, you're not relevant. It means if you aren't keeping in touch with your customers through email, text, or social media on a regular basis, you're forgotten. **It means that if you aren't using technology in your business, the likelihood of being successful is very low.**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 51% of new businesses will make it past their fifth year. If you want your business to not only last but grow, having the capability to reach your customers where they are and when they need your service is essential. It is also easier than ever before to accomplish this.

Services and platforms that help you market your business and connect with your customers are everywhere. Unfortunately, that may be part of the problem. Understanding how to navigate all the offerings and deciding which is best for your business can be daunting and the wrong choice can cost you lots of time and money. More importantly, knowing how to implement, integrate, and utilize these services in your business requires more than just a general knowledge of how to send a mass marketing email.

Systems and automations require someone who understands and is capable of managing the technology as well as having the strategic thinking that connects all the dots. Take email marketing for a general newsletter as an example. The basic steps are:

- 1. Create an account** with a service such as Active Campaign, Mailchimp or Infusionsoft.
- 2. Setup the backend** of this account with your logo, brand elements and details.
- 3. Create a list** in your email marketing account that will receive your newsletter.
- 4. Create a signup form** in your account.
- 5. Create an automated email** that someone will receive when they sign up.
- 6. Integrate the signup form** with your website.
- 7. Create a stylized form on your site** to match your brand and get the attention of your visitors.
- 8. Create a page on your site specifically for the signup** and integrate the form there so you have a link directly to the signup to share on social media.
- 9. Maintain and manage your list** and send regular emails.

Note the word "basic". These are the simplest steps to getting started with an email marketing system on your site and do not include industry standards like providing a free gift on signup, offering a trial run of a product or service, or encouraging a discovery call. Generally by Step 2, entrepreneurs and business owners get lost and give up.

All this technology and implementation can be so overwhelming.

This is where it's important to know your skills and limitations and be prepared to ask for help. Fortune 500 companies have a CTO (Chief Technology Officer) who manages these things and you should too. Of course, you probably don't have a couple hundred thousand dollars to pay one and the good news is, you don't have to. Help is out there.

Working with an independently contracted CTO or an entrepreneur or small business that offers these services is affordable and allows you the flexibility of having someone on hand to help when you're in over your head. It's one of the smartest investments you can make in your business.

Get a custom CTO plan for your business by contacting Shannon: shannon@creativeapogee.com or via her website at creativeapogee.com.



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**Your very
own *virtual*
Chief Marketing
Officer on
speed dial.**

Who’s driving your brand and marketing strategy?

Consider outsourcing to the team at Think-osophy™ who will give you the leadership you need to know exactly what brand and marketing tactics to do in 2022 and when you should do them.

Email kelly@retoolmarketing.com to schedule a 10 minute FREE discovery call to get your brand noticed and your marketing ball rolling!

think.osophy™

**think *BIG*
believe *BIG*
act *BIG*
and the results
will be *BIG***

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Got a brand or marketing question you want us to take a bite out of in a future issue? Email kelly@retoolmarketing.com and tell us where you need answers.



the last word

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LAST BUSINESS RISK

They say, "You have to spend money to make money." Who are they? Who knows, but we took that to heart, investing a significant amount of money to go after a new market for ugo® included as a main sponsor of The Sport Fishing Championship. The sponsorship includes our first ever television commercial to be aired several times on CBS Sports Network. In addition we will be attending 5 of the 12 tournament events, our brand will be exposed to the many participants and spectators with a goal of significantly growing our ugo® crew through the sale of our products.

LAST BUSINESS OBSTACLE

As a small business we are always looking for more funding. Once you go beyond friends and family to angel investors you must provide them with detailed financial reports and projections. It took us several months with the help of some of our amazing mentors to put together very detailed cash flow and projection reports. Digging deep into our finances was not only an eye opening and challenging experience, it was necessary to grow our business. Obstacles are only problems that haven't been solved yet so don't let them derail you. Simply move them out of your way.

BEST BUSINESS ADVICE

Do it right the first time and avoid re-work at all cost possible (sounds like something Kelly Lucente would say).

OUR GREATEST BUSINESS MENTOR WAS/IS

As we mentioned earlier, we are blessed to have an incredible team of mentors who are invaluable to us. We are happy to say that our team of mentors continues to grow, and the kindness shown by all has been incredible. Never underestimate the power of positivity, hard work and genuine love and respect for those in your circle.

LAST BOOK WE READ

Traction – Get a Grip on Your Business by Gino Wickman. From traction I would say be sure to stay focused on your big rocks, don't get distracted or weighed down by the little things! Work on your business not in it!

