

ONBRAND

ideas, thoughts & commentary

#01

The second in our series of OnBrand commentaries on the wonderful world of communication sets out to demystify the often over- hyped complementary disciplines of advertising and branding to help you decide if you need branding, advertising or both!

Communication professionals fighting over who does what and stumbling over terminology that they sometimes don't even understand is far too common!

august is a brand focused communications consultancy offering high level strategic and creative brand building and maintenance advice to build and sustain effective brands with style and substance.

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Brand Strategy & Corporate Design
Perfecting Branding with Style & Substance

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Advertising or branding agency?

#02

Plain or spiced with Jargon?

Classy advertising and branding agencies don't compete with each other because they know their complementary services are essential to building and sustaining successful brands. So why is it that at times, even 'experts' forget this and allow their sales pitches and jargon to leave clients wondering?

If you've ever been confused by pitches and baffling jargon from people (who may never even have heard of David Ogilvy, Walter Landor or Lester Wunderman) and who can't tell a strategy from a tactic.

Relax!

Let's scratch the surface and see what's really going.

The communications industry may now have as much spin as politics. Try stakeholder engagement, enablement experience, above, below and now 'beside the line!' And here's a few to see if you know your Cs from you Ps; CPM, PPC PPL and PPSs! For good measure throw in site stickiness, affiliate marketer and a best of all, a meme?!

By now you're either mighty impressed, confused or have heard enough!

These days it's no longer a case of either advertising or branding. Fact is, brands do need advertising and branding support but do very well without the jargon!

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#03

“ Lyle’s Golden Syrup (1885) the world’s oldest brand.”

When did marketing become so complicated and how did brands get along before advertising and branding agencies were invented?

The Guinness Book of Records lists Lyle’s Golden Syrup (1885) as the world’s oldest brand. But Beretta (1526), famous for handguns, and Coleman’s Mustard (1814) to name but a few, have been around even longer. Maybe there wasn’t a lot of competition back then and maybe these smart marketers simply didn’t need expert advice on how to build long relationships with customers. And they did all of this when, ‘to brand’, was still only a verb!

That’s a long, long time before the world’s first advertising agency in the 1840s and the first branding agency a full hundred years later!

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Advertising

#04

For well over 100 years most advertising agencies relied totally on the media commission system, effectively making them agents of the media and not their clients. Many still operate this way but despite this, advertising agencies built many brands that have lasted a lifetime.

With media convergence (there you go, more jargon!), the shift of packaged goods budgets to sales promotion, and the growing political incorrectness of tobacco and alcohol (the backbone of modern advertising); agencies were starting to lose their grip. And 'new media', which traditional agencies embraced far too late, made things even worse!

“
Media commission funded creative work means it's a 'free' add-on
”

The result? Specialist niche players got a bigger slice of the pie. Sadly, media commission funded creative work means it's effectively a 'free' add-on in an industry notoriously short on real transparency - not the best environment in which to build value into your single biggest long term intangible asset; your brand.

Whether traditionally structured advertising agencies will continue to deliver advertising that is 'the foot on the accelerator that keeps the economy surging' or remain an industry delivering '85% confusion and 15% commission' remains to be seen.

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Branding

#05

Brand was once just a verb relating to cowboys branding animals. Today, a brand is a noun and recognized, even by accountants, as a highly valuable intangible balance sheet asset. But it's also a widely used, misused and misunderstood term. And in the hands of the badly informed, unfortunately just another piece of jargon often used to describe a logo – really only the tip of the branding iceberg!

“
The biggest single issue is a focus on the logo, equating it with the entire branding process.”

The biggest single issue branding agencies face worldwide is a total focus by many on the logo, equating it with the entire branding process. Of course, the logo or visual identity is a crucial part of a company's corporate identity, at times even thrown in by advertising agencies as part of a wider deal.

Branding covers a wide range of disciplines and in reality is the sum total of many creative, marketing and media actions including of course; advertising.

So it's no surprise that advertising agencies in a scramble to regain a slice of the pie increasingly prefer to 'brand' rather than 'advertise' and have ditched 'products' in favour of 'brands'.

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#06

“ General medical practitioners don't perform heart surgery. Good health in people and brands relies on short and long terms actions ”

Marketers want brands built with style and substance. Do they really care who does it?

Probably not. And why should they?

It's a 'given' that while all doctors are medical professionals, a general medical practitioner doesn't perform heart surgery. Their complementary but different skills keep people healthy with the right approaches to acute (short term) and chronic (longer term) health issues.

Branding also relies on taking the right tactical and strategic actions; a lot like the medical profession.

The convenience of a fully bundled communication solution is often highly appealing, convenient and utterly convincing. But will it really give you the long term strategic, competitive and creative edge you need to build emotionally based connections with your customer base?

Your brand needs solid, well planned foundations that capture it's essence and very DNA. And no matter what you have heard, been told or may currently believe, branding is a lot more than a new logo and corporate identity package.

Branding is a fascinating subject and in our next **OnBrand** newsletter we'll take a look at the notorious 'RFP' and shot in the dark creative pitches.

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