



PROFIT MATTERS

HOW DO YOUR NUMBERS LINE UP? | BY CHRIS "CHUBBY" FREDERICK

Branding Your Service Center

If you want your shop to be perceived as the best shop in your area, you have to differentiate it from your competition. When your car count is stable, your profits will be stable and you won't have to lay off employees when you don't want to. The way you accomplish this is through branding your service center. Many of you already have started on this journey and don't realize it.

A strong brand, according to Head Coach Mike Haley, will:

- deliver the message clearly.
- confirm your credibility.
- connect your prospects emotionally.
- motivate the buyer to act.
- cement user loyalty.

One primary reason for creating a brand of your own is to differentiate your shop from your competitors. So, how do you go about creating a brand for your shop?

Create a Logo

When it comes to marketing and brand recall, a unique logo works best. By making your logo the main theme of your marketing and advertising materials, its image soon will be associated with your business. While some logos characterize the shop, some will not. Think of BMW, Mercedes or Toyota; each of these brands is familiar all over the globe. A well-recognized logo often is the best branding strategy you can have.

Create a Slogan

While a well-recognized logo works well, you also will need to impact the prospect

with a catchy slogan. A few words saying exactly what your business is about can be a very effective branding tool. Think of these: Nike – Just Do It; Under Armour – Protect This House; Budweiser – The King of Beers; Staples – That Was Easy; Kellogg's Rice Krispies – Snap, Crackle, Pop; Toyota – Moving Forward; Automotive Training Institute – Driving Profits and Dreams Home.

Use Colors

Similar to logos, particular colors can become associated with your identity. Colors are used to evoke a specific emotion. Look at the colors below and how we respond to them.

Most successful logos use three or fewer colors, and one of the colors is white.

Black	Mystery	Secrecy	Tradition	Death	
White	Simplicity	Cleanliness	Innocence	Life	
Blue	Calmness	Success	Trustworthiness	Power	
Red	Action and Excitement	Adventure	Love	Passion	Food
Green	Health and Healing	Nature and Animals	Money	Harmony	
Orange	Fun	Youth	Creativity	Celebration	Affordability
Maroon	Justice	Royalty	Fantasy and Dreams		
Yellow	Playfulness	Curiosity	Amusement	Cheerfulness	

Use Effective Photos

The old saying goes, "a picture is worth a thousand words." By following these few tips you can be sure your photo is engaging and says the message you want to deliver.

- Show areas that are interesting to customers. Show polished and assembled vehicles. Pictures of cars torn apart on a lift are like showing a birth in a hospital. No one wants to see the labor, they just want to see the beautiful baby.
- Show people smiling and enjoying their experience.
- Don't use models. Use real customers that the prospect can identify with.
- Be sure people in the picture face the center of your photo. Prospects want to see eyes in a picture that involves people.

Your Customer Experience

The way your employees appear and conduct themselves also is a part of your overall brand: the uniforms they wear, whether they look professional or look like they just rolled out of bed. Are they polite, courteous and helpful? A person will make a decision in seconds whether they approve of the individual they are conducting business with. Brand and culture intertwine. You can't fake it. Your team must believe and display your brand at all times. It is very important the employees live the brand and are not trying to be something they are not.

Now that you have invested time and energy in creating the perfect brand, how do you market it? One of the biggest mistakes made by small business owners is

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

QUESTION:

How do you know if your brand is working?

Ask your customers. A brand cannot and will not exist separately from your customer experience.

Do you have a question for Chubby? Email him at cfrederick@autotraining.net.

not staying consistent with their brand in advertising and marketing. Most companies will use a variety of vendors for print, website and now social media. They will not ensure that their brand is relevant on all the medias consistently. A group of researchers was asked, "How many times must a prospect see a marketing message to take them from a state of apathy to purchase readiness?"

Following a year-long study, the researchers concluded that a marketing message must penetrate the mind of a prospect a total of nine times before that prospect becomes a customer. That's the good news! The bad news is that for every three times you expose your prospect to your brand or marketing message, it gets missed or ignored two of those times. So you have to put out the brand and marketing message a total of 27 times in order to make those nine impressions.

Relevance no longer is enough. Consumers are overwhelmed with information coming at them from all directions. They see it all around them: It

comes in their mail, email, cell phones, televisions, radios, magazines, billboards, Facebook and Twitter. We live in a society of information overload.

Consumers are looking for something that makes them feel rewarded because they paid attention to it. They look for:

- something that inspires them.
- something that improves them.
- something that entertains them.
- something that provokes them.
- something that eases their burden.

Your brand and marketing must achieve this nine times before your prospect will take action.

You are not just competing against your competition down the street. You are competing for short attention spans that are overloaded with other messages.

Once you have established your brand and are marketing your brand successfully, don't stop being relevant. The brand you developed 20 years ago as the place to go for diagnosing might need an upgrade if you are in fact a complete automotive shop. I speak with shop owners who have

a fear of changing their brand. I would say to them if the old brand is not producing the results you need and therefore is not relevant, a change is absolutely needed.

It could be as small as a slight change in the logo and colors to a complete revamp. It's important to create an identity and an emotion when consumers see your brand.

While branding successfully can take money, effort and time, your business certainly will be rewarded for it. If you would like a easy do-it-yourself Branding Worksheet, send your contact information to me at cfrederick@autotraining.net and I will help you get started. *ML*

Chris "Chubby" Frederick is CEO and president of the Automotive Training Institute. He is thankful for assistance from George Zeeks, Brian Hunnicutt, Bryan Stasch and Matt Winslow in preparing his monthly column. Contact him at cfrederick@autotraining.net.

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