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Contact Information:

www.nebs.ca

1 800 461 7572

WHITE PAPER

Branding Case Study

Find Out How One Business Owner Used Branding Strategies
To Carve Out A Successful Niche

Working To Gain Competitive Advantage In A Tough Market

This case study is a composite sketch based on many businesses today who are working to gain a competitive advantage in tough markets.

Meet business owner Juniper Shepard. Six years ago, she started "Write Words", an independent bookstore located in the center of town. Write Words carries fewer books than its competitors and it doesn't offer price reductions. Juniper knew that her bookstore needed an effective branding strategy to compete with the larger bookstore chains.

Thinking About Identity

Juniper made sure that Write Words established an identity from the get-go. She knew that her small bookstore had to offer things to her customers that her competitors didn't. Juniper wanted to create a sense of community, integrity and personalization that seemed to be lacking in the bigger bookstores. Branding these intangible characteristics was part of her branding strategy.

Taking the First Steps

What did Juniper do to begin branding her bookstore? For starters, she made sure that every single bag that left her store had her logo on it. In addition, every receipt that went into a customer's bag contained the Write Words logo. The payoff for Juniper was that her customers were advertising the store every time they left with Write Words bags.

Moving Ahead with Branding

Juniper decided that branding on bags and receipts was just the tip of the iceberg. One of the reasons customers liked coming to Juniper's bookstore was the knowledgeable staff, who were more than willing to give their recommendations. She decided that her employees should be branded with the Write Words logo and decided to customize her employee workwear. Each Write Words employee was asked to wear a hat and t-shirt with the company logo. Her customers started to associate the Write Words logo with the stellar staff. That's exactly what Juniper wanted to achieve. Write Words was more than a bookstore to customers and the positive feelings associated with Write Words kept customers coming back.

Adding Value for Customers

Juniper looked for ways to give back to her customers and let them know that she appreciated their business. Every summer, she sent out "Beach Reading Cards" for her frequent book buyers. The cards were part of a direct marketing campaign that encouraged customers to pick out five books from the summer reading section. The sixth book was given to the card holders for free.

Branding the Right Way

Branding Write Words paid off in a big way for Juniper. Over the years, her customers felt that her independent bookstore had more to offer than the chains. Juniper's consistent branding messages created emotions in her customers. Whenever customers saw a truck with the Write Words logo, used a Write Words pen or saw a Write Words employee in uniform, they thought of the store's core values – honesty, integrity and superior customer service. Without a successful branding strategy, Juniper's bookstore would have lost out to her competitors' larger selection and discounted book prices.Δ