



In this Issue

Page 1)
The Game of Branding

Page 2-3)
Get in the Creative Groove

Page 4)
How Buff Is Your Brand?
Pumping up your Brand Moi™

Feature Product



The Game of Branding

Wow. It's hard to believe another Wimbledon, the Tournament of Champions, England's Grand Slam, is in the history books. Bravo to Roger Federer and Serena Williams and all the players who competed. What a great display of discipline, dedication and passion.

If you know me well, you know that next to my branding evangelist work, tennis is my passion. I'm crazy about the sport and love to play.

After watching today's Wimbledon finals and reflecting on my games this week, I realize that a tennis match and branding have a lot in common.

First they have both been around a long time. I don't know the exact date of the first tennis match, but I do know Wimbledon started in 1877 with a few hundred spectators watching the sport in a garden party atmosphere. Today Wimbledon is a powerful international brand and professional tournament attracting more than 500,000 people and through the press and Internet a following of millions throughout the world.

Branding actually makes tennis look like a kid, considering it's been around for more than 4,000 years. Civilizations around the globe have been branding inscriptions on livestock and humans throughout history.

They say the term *brand name* originated among American distillers, who branded their names and emblems on their kegs before shipment.

Some even say President Lincoln, when informed that General Grant drank whiskey while leading his troops, reportedly replied, "Find out the name of the brand so I can give it to my other generals."

Today in business the term *branding* has a much grander role than a mark. It is the sum of what a brand does.

It is an emotional relationship between the buyer and a marketed product or service—a bond of loyalty, a connection of relevance and earned trust.

To win in branding, you must play the game well or your competition will get the prize.

Focus on the brand.

Without it, there is no game. Take your eyes off it and, bam, there's an error.

Mental stamina and attitude are everything.

Believe in your brand; believe in yourself. Believe.

Branding is intuitive. Follow your gut.

Keep up with technology.

There are no wooden racquets at Wimbledon.

Don't dwell on a missed point.

Recover quickly and move on.

Remember underdogs can win.

Don't give up. Resiliency and perseverance pay off.

If it's not working, adjust the strategy.

Market conditions change; be flexible.

The final score is an accumulation of points.

Like in a tennis match, your brand is a sum of all your moves, misses, and aces.

Have fun.

"If you are not willing to give 110%, find a new game."





“If you always think the way you’ve always thought, you’ll always get what you’ve always gotten—the same old ideas.”

Michael Michalko, an internationally acclaimed expert on creativity

Get in the Creative Groove, Now!

In 1997 Mike Myers created Austin Powers™: International Man of Mystery as the lead character in the smash movie. Six years later this psychedelic, mogo-driven Brit with bad teeth and all is an ultimate international brand stud. His brand name is worth a ton and his namesake not only adorns merchandise from flip-flops to stationery he is part of pop culture.

What did it take to get that brand and every other successful brand on the minds of the market?

It’s what I call getting in the creative groove—entering a mental zone where leaders soar, are not scared to make mistakes, or travel to unknown places.

These bravo brands, the big ones we all know and buy, are packed with punch. They are managed and led by fearless, brand warriors. These folks let their creativity flow!

People don’t respond to boring and when they don’t respond, they don’t buy!

Branding is about being noticed, being heard, and standing for something pretty darn cool. Closed minds, sleeping brain cells, and lack of creative thinking and stimuli are dangerous if not deadly!

Are your promotional and communication materials ho-hum and boring? Do they have strong similarities to your competitors’ in look, feel, and content?

Do you spend good money on bad, boring brochures that yap for days about features and things your customers don’t even care about?

Are your products and services just like your competitor’s?

Do your PR efforts consist purely of new-hire releases and saying “no comment” when the media calls?

Are your business cards about as exciting as a phone bill?

Could your ads serve as sleeping medication?

Does your Web site look like a yellow page ad?

Please tell me, it just ain’t so.

If it is, this is your wake-up call!!!!

It costs organizations more to make an impact on a mind when they sing the same song as everyone else. Buyers get confused and they don’t see you or your brand as special. They see you as another dumb commodity. Not good.

**Conformity will eat your lunch.
Creativity will land your brand.**

Your brand needs to break away from the pack and lose the “me too” mindset. This fictional safe zone will just dilute a brand. A brand that delivers value to a company is strong, solid, and not watered down by streams of sameness.

You can do this.

It takes just a little brand will and some creative ways of approaching your business. I asked Michael Michalko, an internationally acclaimed expert on creativity,

Can creativity be learned?

Yes. It's a myth that creativity cannot be learned and that you are either born creative or you are not. Creativity is not genetically determined. You can learn to become creative by learning how to become a productive thinker.

Most people of average intelligence, given data or some problem, can figure out the expected conventional response. Typically we think reproductively, that is, on the basis of similar problems encountered in the past. When confronted with problems, we fixate on something in our past that has worked before. We ask, "What have I been taught in life, education, or work on how to solve the problem?" Then we analytically select the most promising approach based on past experiences, excluding all other approaches, and work within a clearly defined direction towards the solution of the problem. Because of the soundness of the steps based on past experiences, we become arrogantly certain of the correctness of our conclusion.

In contrast, creative thinkers think productively, not reproductively. When confronted with a problem, they ask, "How many different ways can I look at it?" "How can I rethink the way I see it?" and "How many different ways can I solve it?" instead of "What have I been taught by someone else on how to solve this?" They tend to come up with many different responses, some of which are unconventional and possibly unique.

With productive thinking, you generate as many alternative approaches as you can. You consider the least obvious as well as the most likely approaches. It is the willingness to explore all approaches that is important, even after you have found a promising one.

So how does one go from "not feeling particularly creative" to "a creative genius"?

A number of scholars are offering evidence that characterizes the way geniuses think, explained Michael. By studying the notebooks, correspondence, conversations, and ideas of the world's greatest thinkers, they have teased out common thinking strategies and styles of thought that enabled geniuses to generate volumes of novel and great ideas.

The following strategies are common to the thinking styles of creative geniuses throughout history:

- **Geniuses look at problems in many different ways.**
- **Geniuses make their thoughts visible.**
- **Geniuses produce.**
- **Geniuses make novel combinations.**
- **Geniuses force relationships.**
- **Geniuses think in opposites.**
- **Geniuses think metaphorically.**
- **Geniuses prepare themselves for chance.**

Recognizing the common thinking strategies of creative geniuses and applying them will make you more creative in your life. Creative geniuses are geniuses because they know *how* to think instead of *what* to think.

Branding is your opportunity to tell your story, keep your promise, and stand for something remarkable. To do this, you must GET CREATIVE and open your mind to vast reaching and new possibilities in all parts of your brand. This includes but of course is not limited to your product, your name, your promotion, your positioning and point of difference, your distribution channels, and your packaging.

Michael suggests pumping up your mind.

Like building a new muscle in the gym, the more you exercise your mind using these techniques, the stronger your creativity is. Following each "rep" are specific ideas that can open up a big brand storm of new opportunities.

- A. Set an idea quota.**
- B. Get tone.**
- C. Don't be a Duke of Habit.**
- D. Feed your head.**
- E. Do a content analysis. Scan the world around you.**
- F. Build a brain bank.**
- G. Be a travel junkie.**
- H. Capture your thoughts.**
- I. Think right.**
- J. Keep an idea log.**

Creativity and innovation make the world go round. Take a huge step from brand bland to brand brilliance by unleashing your mind to "Big Idea Nirvana" bliss.

For more on the subject of creativity visit Michael's Web site at <http://www.creativethinking.net> and check out his great book *Thinkertoys, a Handbook on Business Creativity* available at book stores.



How Buff Is Your Brand?

Yeh, You, Your Personal Brand

We are all in a sense “a product” ready to brand.

We sell, we pitch, we persuade, and we advocate for stuff that is a part of a greater plan, that will hopefully fulfill a dream or take us across a finish line.

A Brand Moi™ is your personal mark that symbolizes who you are and what you stand for and defines your unique contribution to the world. It does not matter whether you are in sales, a community leader, a business expert, an industry professional, or a college student. A personal brand can be your ticket to greater success.

The power of branding perception creates a stature of leadership and competency in the minds of your market. Personal brands start at the core of one's existence and spread throughout every point of contact with your target audience.

Personal branding is a smart, powerful thing. Bottom line—it's about being more of who you really are. It's simply defining and communicating your purpose, personality, and passions.

As people, just like with commercial products, we have a natural brand—the one we are born with, the one we earn over time. It's the sum of how the market perceives us, our actions, our behavior, and our level of integrity.

As we grow up and set career and life goals, we now have a choice. We can “go with the flow” on our natural brand or we can create a conscious, strategic, personal brand.

Branded people tend to make more money. They receive stronger support from peers and business associates, allowing them to get more accomplished, conjure more authority, increase credence in their decisions, and enjoy “top of mind” visibility and status.

Are you a buff brand or barely a brand?

1) Did you just finish a project and calculated that you were paid about three bucks an hour? (Your compensation stinks.)

2) Did you work your butt off for 6 months and nobody even noticed? (You're invisible.)

3) Are you sick of your competition getting all the new clients? (Your job is on the line.)

4) Is a major change taking place in your life and you're thinking the nut ward would be a nice vacation place? (Your life is falling apart.)

Get on the personal brand wagon today.

Visit brandingdiva.com to order Brand Moi™ Building Package.

For just \$19.95 you get a personal brand assessment, a CD with practical branding strategies, and a branding workout template to create your individual Brand Moi™.

Visit brandingdiva.com to order Brand Moi™ PLUS.

For just \$150. you get a personal brand assessment, a CD with practical branding strategies, the branding workout template to create your individual Brand Moi™ and a one hour consulting session with Karen.

Price does not include shipping or long distance phone charges.

About the Branding Diva™

Karen Post, The Branding Diva™, is an author, national speaker and consultant on branding/marketing issues.

For more than 20 years she has provided branding counsel and communication programs for individuals; start-ups; local, regional, and national companies; politicians; and nonprofit organizations.

For more information contact Karen Post at 813.250.1730 or email her at kp@brandingdiva.com or visit her at www.brandingdiva.com.

Copyright 2003. No part of this publication can be reproduced without written consent.