

Seven Rules for Brand Revitalization

By Rick Pontz

Brands do not die natural deaths. However, brands can be murdered through mismanagement. Some brands are beyond hope -- but others can be put through branding rehab and recover their mojo.

Of course, it's not easy. Everyone needs to be on the same page for a brand to be successfully revitalized. Then they must follow the seven rules of brand revitalization listed here. This "Plan to Win," is built around the basics and is a surefooted way of rebuilding.

Rule 1: Pick the right brand to save.

Not all brands should be saved. Some brands have run their course and are best left alone to wither and die. It's probably not a good idea to try to resurrect the "Edsel" brand or Ford "Pinto". The problem seems to be that many times we just can't let go because we don't want the "failures" label being associated with a lost brand. You may think that your failures become part of your reputation, however, if you want successful brands you must pick your targets of opportunity and let the failed brands that can't be revitalized go.

Rule 2: Refocus the organization

Refocusing the organization begins with redefining the brand and business purpose and goals. The brand purpose should be clearly defined with only a few words or a single phrase like Cutters® "*protection for the whole family*" or Fiskars® "*innovative consumer products renowned for their functionality and cutting-edge design*". The simpler the better.

Rule 3: Restore brand relevance

The brand promise is an articulation of the relevant and differentiating experience that the brand will deliver to every customer, every time. Brand revitalization means defining where you want the brand to be and then deciding how to get there.

Rule 4: Reinvent the brand experience

To revitalize a brand, you need to bring the redefined brand promise to life. Your brands "face" should tell your brands message in a few seconds. Its size, shape, color, packaging, verbiage and point-of-sale material is your Brands "face". The place is the face of the brand. Whether a store, a website, a retail display, a trade show like last week's **National Hardware Show** or wherever the "place" may be, the experience must be consistent with the intended brand direction. For example, Sterling International's new Rescue® Bio-pesticide EPA registered insect traps scream research and efficacy in their sales material, packaging, point-of-sale material and trade show booth design while Winged Weeders' name alone communicates the products purpose.

Whether advertising, special industry events, public relations, online, displays, merchandising material or other forms of communication, the goal is to be consistent with the brand promise. Disconnected messages and tactics destroy brands.

Rule 5: Reinforce a results culture

Measuring and managing brand performance is as critical as setting the brands goals. It takes about three years for a brand in our industry to penetrate any serious distribution. Creating a three year brand awareness measurement program and getting your corporate culture to sign off on it results culture is important to produce the right results the right way. A balanced brand-business scorecard should include measurable elements such as brand familiarity, brand reputation, customer-perceived value, brand loyalty, sales, share and profit.

Rule 6: Rebuild brand trust

One of my least favorite traits is I am a cynic by nature. For me, like most consumers, to be brand loyal I must trust the brand. As part of revitalizing a brand, rebuilding trust is critical. Investment in rebuilding trust is an important, challenging marketing must-do. Today, there is new demand for more openness, more social responsibility more transparency, and more integrity.

Rule 7: Get everyone on the same page.

The power of alignment is awesome. During brand revitalization, there is often talk about the need to get everyone on the same page. But we rarely, if ever, define the

page we want everyone to be on. That's the purpose of the one-page Plan-to-Win, the one-page document that summarizes the Brands message and the desired goals.

The one page Brand message and desired goals need to be clearly communicated to every person in your organization and then bled out to reach manufacturer representatives, distributors, retailers and the consumer.

To get your Brand mojo back keep it simple, keep it clear, keep your message consistent and follow the seven steps.