



21 Moepel Str, Dalpark X5, Brakpan
Tel : (011) 915-8833
Web : www.silverlizzard.co.za
email : franchising@silverlizzard.co.za

Why does my Business need a Corporate Identity & Branding Strategy?

This article is a condensed extraction from the book 'So you want to start a business?' by Nolan Clark (www.silverlizzard.co.za) and is subject to Copyright.

What is corporate identity and corporate branding?

Let's start with a picture :



Chances are you instantly recognized all four of these companies even though you were only shown part of their logo. Wow, imagine everybody knew your business / product that well. You would be making mega bucks, just like them!

The amazing thing is you can have your company / product that well known if your corporate identity and corporate branding strategies are in place and working.

The companies above have succeeded, so can you. They also started off as tiny, even one man businesses.

That still doesn't really tell us what corporate identity and corporate branding are, but it shows us the result that can be achieved. We can now look at their definitions :

Identity : Individuality or personality.

Branding : Particular product; particular kind or variety.

Now things make a little more sense.

Your corporate identity is what makes your company unique, it gives your company it's own individuality to make it stand out from the rest of your competition.

Many people think that creating a corporate identity means designing a cool logo, but that is only one small part of a businesses corporate identity. Your product packaging, corporate clothing, shop fitting, signage, exhibition stand layout, etc., all convey a certain image to your customers. Even subtle things like colour and the music you play in your store are

all creating a certain look and feel which identifies your business and gives it, it's own individuality and personality.

If your company's corporate identity as a whole is not right, it can portray the wrong image to your customers.

As you can see there is way more to your corporate identity than just your company's logo.

Once you have created the correct identity you need to market that identity to your customers and potential customers.
This is called corporate branding.

I often get asked what is the difference between corporate branding and marketing. Marketing is used to promote a business' products / sell it's goods DIRECTLY. Examples of this would be television adverts and flyers. The marketing strategy is the plan on how this marketing will be conducted and when and where. The goal is to create immediate sales as a direct result of each marketing effort.

On the other hand your corporate branding strategy is where / how you present your corporate identity to your customers. The goal being not to sell a product then and there, but rather to tell / show customers who you are, how you do things, what values your business follows, etc.

An example of branding in it's simplest form is the business logos you see displayed at sporting events. There are no actual products being advertised, just business (brand) names and logos. Eventually when you do need a product like theirs, you will think of that company first as their branding efforts have imprinted their business name into your mind.

Where your marketing campaign serves short term goals – sell products now, your branding campaign is used to sell your business, and ultimately it's products for a long time in the future. In other words – if you are serious about your business and want your business to outlast, and in the long run outsell, your competition then you better create yourself a good corporate identity and get an effective branding campaign going today.

If you would like help in creating an effective and coherent corporate identity or need to structure a sustainable branding campaign, then contact Nolan Clark at Silverlizzard.co.za or +27(11) 915-8833 today.

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Your Business is Our Business**