

FIRE UP YOUR CAREER



The Importance of Brand Identity in Corporate Communications

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Creating a visual identity for your company's brand is crucial to competing and surviving in today's global marketplace. Even large companies with defined corporate images do not always take into consideration the visual aspects of their brands and the different levels that their brands are being communicated to, including executives, associates, consumers, vendors, etc.

The following outline describes key elements for readers to think about when developing visual brand identities that are used particularly for training and in general corporate communications.

Creating a Visual Brand Identity for Corporate Communications in Three Steps

Close your eyes and think of the images you want to communicate about your company. What would you see if you could put your ideas on the big screen? What would they look like and sound like?

In today's market, competition is tough, and from airlines to apparel companies, grocery stores to investment firms, creating a visual identity for your executives, associates, consumers, vendors, etc., is crucial. It is the internal and external voice that is being heard by staff, consumers, and investors. Creating a visual brand identity is essential for developing training programs that allow executives and associates to speak with one voice that embodies the company's image.

Even large companies with training programs often overlook their visual brand identity when training associates. Why is it so important? Audiences need something to relate to and a model "giving them the corporate attitude." If the training program does not resonate with key audiences, the end result will not be successful.

Sounds easy? Deciding what your company looks and sounds like can be a challenge. Here are some steps to take:

1. Know Your Audience.

Who is the target audience? Company executives? Sales associates? (This is one of the most important things to determine.) What are their demographics? Are they your customers?

Is the training program for associates? What are their demographics? For example, take a high-end grocery store. The average customer is in his or her mid-40s with a high household income. Is your associate in the same demographic pool? Probably not, since many grocery stores hire students and other part-timers. When developing a training program for associates, you have to keep the viewer in mind that is not necessarily in the mindset of the consumer.

On the other hand, a high-end designer apparel company probably has associates who receive high commissions and have a demographic closer to that of their customers. Their training would be approached differently, but in both cases the visual brand identity should be consistent.

2. Create a Program That Resonates.

One of the biggest challenges is creating a program that educates associates in a way that resonates with them. For example, when

dealing with a younger audience, you might want to use a music-video style with quick cuts, fast-paced music, and cool graphics. You want to "edutain" — educate and entertain at the same time.

With more sophisticated associates, you want to take a different approach by implementing a program whose pace is more soothing and relaxing. Keep in mind the visual brand (i.e., electronics store — fast-paced and exciting; high-end apparel boutique — more soothing, slower pace).

3. The Talent, Music, and Visuals Should Reflect the Brand.

Keep in mind the pace of editing, the number of cuts, the visual dynamics, and the color palette that you use. Employees should feel that the program they are watching fits with the identity of their company. If you incorporate existing imagery and colors that relate to store concepts, the viewer can "let go" and learn from the program instead of nitpicking over the details.

For example, when you are in the preproduction stages, make sure your on-screen talent fits the demographic. They should be dressed in the attire you expect your viewer to be wearing. The titles should all be in the correct font and used according to standards set forth by the company, and the marketing and music selections should tie everything together.

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