

## building better business by branding

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Quick, what's your business's claim to fame? If there isn't one, then it's time to think about building a reputation through branding.

Branding can be traced to ancient times when livestock was marked to claim ownership, and has evolved to the ownership of a bond with the customer. Today, coffee equals Starbucks, photocopies equal Xerox, and soup equals Campbell's. The goal of branding is to own a competitive advantage in the marketplace through a claim of distinction and uniqueness.

The benefits of branding include differentiation. This is what makes your service or product distinctive in your customer's mind. Without differentiation, your product is just a commodity. Consider the difference between buying a washing machine and buying a Maytag. With the Maytag, you're buying the perception of a product that never breaks.

Another branding benefit is value. Valid or not, brand name products are perceived as higher quality and more reliable than others. A company can charge more for a product that costs the same to produce. An added benefit of value is that a company with strong brand recognition is itself more valuable than another company producing similar goods.

Yet a third benefit is loyalty. Customer loyalty to a brand can greatly reduce the cost of advertising by as much as 90 percent! That's money to invest in equipment or new product research.

One more benefit is ego. Who wouldn't want to work for Sony, DreamWorks or the Washington Post? "Brand-building" is "company building" too. If your employees believe in the company behind the product, the product will be better as well.

What's your business's claim to fame? Let us help you answer that question. Visit us on the web at [www.viamarketing.net](http://www.viamarketing.net) or call 219.769.2299.



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