

## **How branding can help advertising sales**

Bob Berting

A brand is intangible. It's how you feel about a product—how a product is perceived, particularly by the customers of a newspaper. These customers must see a multi-dimensional publication that owns the news market, owns the information market and owns the advertising market. This publication must realize that branding is a quantifiable, long-term strategic marketing process of building and overseeing the perceived value of itself.

### **Four ways to build your brand**

1. Evaluation—decide on the position of your brand in the marketplace.
2. Get management involved to facilitate a strategic plan.
3. Create an integrated marketing plan that ties in all strategies, marketing vehicles, and objectives into a long-range program.
4. Check on the campaign's progress after it has been under way for a reasonable length of time.

### **A hard look at changing needs and behaviors**

The vision by management is to build the community. This means the branding model must be for the long term—to see the big picture—to see the total forest, not just the trees. This also means we must move our thinking from being totally dependent on sales promotions. Particularly from one-time sales promotions to thinking that is real marketing. This means a much greater emphasis on the newspaper customers—where the customers become totally primary—and all products and services are adapted to fit the changing needs and behaviors of these primary customers. It's easy to forget the changing needs and behaviors of customers, and that's the reason why many publications lose out to competing media.

### **Future of branding for publications**

Branding pre-sells the product or service. The endorsement of the publication is represented by the branding process, not always by the personal recommendation of a salesperson. If your publication is branded properly, it will be at the heart of the community and be a great help to the publication sales force. Actually the salespeople must be like an evangelism or missionary team, constantly getting more involved in community building activities, which will further the branding process.

These things aren't just public relations and they're not charity—it's real life service that needs to be done regularly by a publication that understands the importance of branding.

### **Branding summary**

Publications aren't just about journalism or advertising sales—or maintaining new equipment. These are only the ingredients of a basic foundation platform. Branding brings out agenda setting leadership and community involvement. Publications should be focused on branding and not so much direct sales. Publications need to start thinking more about what they represent and less on what they produce. © Bob Berting 2010