

MARKETRENDS

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Communicating Your Brand Internally

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Branding has been defined as the active development of a personal relationship between the client and the product or service. The ultimate goal is to create identification between you and the brand.

Positioning is the theory that drives brand strategy. Ultimately, a market position is a promise between the firm and the client. If you drive that promise through all of your communications so that clients identify your service based on that promise, you have created a brand.

There are many ways to execute your firm's brand, including advertising, public relations, promotions, packaging, trade shows, Web sites, direct mail, event sponsorships, and publicity stunts.

The keys are to break through the clutter, implement the positioning strategy, and connect that implementation to the brand name.

Developing Your Brand

A critical component of developing and promoting your firm's brand is your internal audience — your partners and staff. As David Maister said in an interview, "Your brand is not what you claim. Your brand is what you enforce."

Therefore, your firm brand is not what you would like to be but what you are, what your partners and staff can "live and breathe."

A February 2001 Harvard Business Review article, "Are the Strategic Stars Aligned for Your Corporate Brand?,"

asserts that to get the most out of a corporate branding strategy three

essential elements must be aligned: vision, culture, and image. Vision is top management's aspirations for the company. Culture is the organization's values, behaviors, and attitudes — that is, the way employees all through the ranks feel about the company. Image is the outside world's overall impression of the company. This includes all stakeholders — clients, the media, the general public, and so on.

