

5 Ways to Save Your Brand From an Early Death

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An effective brand strategy gives you a major edge in increasingly competitive markets. But what exactly does branding mean? Your brand is your promise to your customer. It tells them what they can expect from your products and services, and it differentiates your offering from that of your competitors.

But creating your brand to reflect who you are, who you want to be and who people perceive you to be can be tricky. YPO members share their advice on the sometimes difficult, time-consuming but critical journey of defining your company's brand.

Authenticity is key

"Building a brand is really an inside-out story," says Free Taylor, President at [Pacific Office Interiors](#). "Differentiation is only as good as it is authentic, so your team should come together and really look at who they are, what they stand for and where they are going. This will define how they are authentically special. Our brand became a strong set of values that everyone in the company could stand behind."

Beyond a logo

"The logo is not the brand. Think interface behavior, the thing that you touch which becomes the habit," says Jamee Natella, President of [Blueyed Pictures Inc.](#) Natella sites Apple as an example. "It's not the icon that makes Apple a brand, it's the interface with iOS. The interface is what increasingly we do to experience brands."

Tell your story

As a CEO, you are one important element of the brand. "Tell your story. People always remember a good story more than facts," says CEO of [Dietiker AG](#) Nathalie Felber. "A story will make a lasting impression of the brand for your audience."

Use your customer to evolve your message

"Today, your brand is controlled by the consumer and social media has become more of the contextual part of what your brand is," explains Michael Smith, President of [Linx Communications](#). Smith encourages companies to utilize their customer to evolve their

message. “You need to create the personality of your brand and what value it delivers to your customer by looking at it as if it was an individual. Identify and assign particular adjectives to describe this person — your brand.”

Know your core values

“Too many times companies get lost in the idea of artful creation of the marketing rather than the execution of what they are truly trying to do,” explains Tim Gentry, President Clique Inc. “They’re unique brand fits into a niche, they get a lot of likes on social media and they’ve got fun commercials people enjoy watching.” Gentry advises companies to truly understand the core value of what they do, sell or produce and put a brand around that. “This ensures a high perception value of the brand and one that drives the customer’s willingness to purchase that brand.”

marketing and branding