



presents

The Right Times

Marketing Wisdom About "Image Building Advertising"

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ULTIMATE PROSPECTING TOOL, a newsletter for real estate professionals to send to California clients and potential clients

WEDNESDAY WRAP FOR THE WEB, weekly "hot off the press" economic updates for your web site, or for broadcast fax &/or e-mail to clients and referral sources.

NEWSPAPER COLUMNS for Realtors® and Lenders. Weekly informational columns for local papers.

WEDNESDAY WRAP by "The Wrap Man" for title reps to send to real estate professionals.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A BRAND NAME?



Pass me a Kleenex, would you?" "I don't know the answer to that one. I'll Google it."

"Don't worry. I'll FedEx it to you."

How grand if, when people want the best possible help in a real estate or real estate financing transaction, they would immediately decide to [insert your name here] the deal. "Difficult transaction? I'll just Johnson it."

Of course, none of us will become such an effective brand name. Nonetheless, "branding" has become one of the most commonly used terms in marketing these days. The concept isn't that you should become an actual day-to-day term like Kleenex; it's that you can and should develop a brand-image name-style identity so that people will automatically associate professional, compassionate, ethical real estate and mortgage practice with little old YOU.

Does this approach tell us something new, something beyond the fact that we should develop a good logo, slogan, mission statement and, through all of these and the rest of our marketing, position ourselves advantageously in our market? Not exactly. It seems to be a marketing term that, on the one hand, lacks universal clarity and yet, on the other, has the great virtue of making us focus on how well we've made our target market aware of exactly who we are and how we do business.

To become a brand name like, say, Coke, is to have a lock on one specific product or service, usually by becoming

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POSITIONING YOURSELF IN YOUR MARKET



The word "positioning," when used regarding marketing, may actually mean nearly the same thing as "branding." However, it conveys a far more coherent, real-world concept to me, like the difference between diving into the pool and philosophizing about diving.

"Positioning" is something every one of us needs to pay attention to. Exactly who are you in the real estate profession? What do you specialize in? What do you do best?

Perhaps you are a seasoned expert at handling 1031 tax-deferred exchanges for clients. Perhaps you have particular ability to help first-time buyers, and know about the various programs that can assist with down payments and sur

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Guess Where We Are Now?

Al, Irina, Jill and Rand are at the slopes. Located about two hours from San Diego, the view from the top of the mountain looks over a beautiful lake. *Guess Where We Are Now* and win a **\$25** free lunch!



Parables of Wisdom From the Experts

The Law of Sacrifice

"You have to give up something in order to get something.

If you want to be successful today, you should give something up.

First the product line. Where is it written that the more you have to sell, the more you sell?

If you want to be successful, you have to reduce your product line, not expand it. Take Emery Air Freight. Emery was in the air freight business. Anything you wanted to ship you could ship via Emery. Small or large packages, overnight service, delayed service.

From a marketing point of view, what did Federal Express do? It concentrated on one service: small pack-

ages overnight. Today Federal Express is a much bigger company than Emery.

The generalist is weak. Take Kraft for example. Everybody thinks Kraft is a strong brand name. In jellies and jams, Kraft has 9 percent of the market. But Smucker's has 35 percent. Kraft means everything, but with a name like Smuckers, it has to be jelly or jam because that's all Smuckers makes. In mayonnaise, Kraft has 18 percent of the market. But Hellmann's has 42 percent."

The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing, Al Ries & Jack Trout, Harper Business



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A BRAND NAME?...

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My Next Door Neighbor

If you ask my next-door neighbor what he does for a living, he will tell you that he is a professional gambler involved in organized crime. In truth, he is an insurance agent. He has a healthy disrespect for his business, and extends that skeptical mode into his philosophy of life.

He has these sayings mounted on his office wall:

Always trust your fellow man. And always cut the cards.

Always trust God. And always build your house on high ground.

Always love thy neighbor. And always pick a good neighborhood to live in.

The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but you better bet that way.

Place your bet somewhere between turning-the-other-cheek and enough-is-enough already.

Place your bet somewhere between haste-makes-waste and he-who-hesitates-is-lost.

About winning: It isn't important. What really counts is how you play the game.

About losing: It isn't important. What really counts is how you play the game.

About playing the game. Play to *win!*

Robert Fulghum, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned In Kindergarten*, Villard Books

the first person to offer that product or service and by being able to convince your customers that what you offer is truly unique. We don't generally say we're going to UPS a package, but we do say we're going to FedEx it. Why? Because FedEx didn't offer an array of services; it hammered away at its own unique market niche. It got stuff wherever you needed it to go, overnight.

Becoming *THE* Person To Call

Very few of us have that unique of a role in real estate transactions. Nonetheless, you can establish something with all the power of more familiar brand-name identities. You need to concentrate on developing the following: An appealing photograph, a very pleasing and memorable personal logo, a slogan that stays in people's brains like a wonderful line from a song, and a mission statement that encapsulates who you are and how you operate in your business. And you need to work hard to make sure the connotations of the logo, slogan, mission statement and other elements of your marketing program are

all accurate... to nurture your reputation as the person to call for assistance in real estate matters.

Speeding Up Your Learning Curve

The fact is, successful branding is made up of a variety of important elements, many of which are totally overlooked by most real estate and mortgage professionals. Our professions, however, are gradually catching up with the advances in marketing techniques other industries have pioneered. Indeed, we seem to be pioneering a few of our own...like how to market successfully to someone who may not need our services for another five years.

We want you—your name, your face, your logo, slogan and, above all, your reputation – to come immediately to potential clients' minds the moment they think of anything related to

real estate that they need assistance with. We want you to be the brand against which all others are measured. And we want to do our part, with our marketing materials and assistance, in making that so.

JANUARY'S CONTEST WINNER!



Bill and Robyn were in Hood River, OR.. Congratulations to Linda Oeth, a frequent contest entrant who won this month's drawing from the correct guesses. Enjoy your \$25 lunch, Linda!

nother Side of Bill Fisher..

Robyn and I volunteered to provide background guitars for a production titled “Faerie Little,” put on with 3- to 6-year-olds and one or two 8-year-olds at our local community theater. Throwing together a play is always a tremendous effort; throwing it together with 4-year-old stars is tantamount to herding Whooping Monkeys.

The first day of rehearsals, a small girl named Lena caught my eye (rather forcefully: She began strumming my guitar very hard). I’ll admit it, watching Lena, I immediately thought, “This one is going to drive me nuts.” Lena believed in the kick-in-the-shins approach to getting your attention and elevated her feeling of personal power by refusing to do anything the director or any other adult asked her to do.

“Get off the floor and come and sing your line, Lena.”

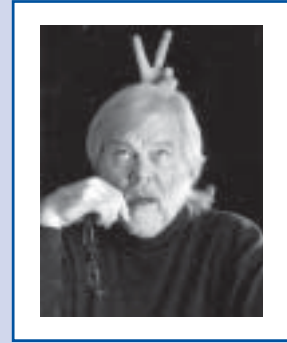
“No!”

Who needs this?, I thought. But things are often far more complex than they appear at first. Lena went through most of the rehearsals either with much of her tee shirt in her mouth or with most of her tongue dangling out. This gave her a unique vocal quality when she sang or spoke her few lines. And all the while, I kept my eye jealously on my guitar.

But I let her play the guitar. I formed chords with my left hand while she strummed with her right, and we talked about guitars and music and other philosophical issues. I also began to rehearse Lena’s verses in a couple of songs one-on-one with her...a bit like playing Pin the Tail on the Humming Bird, but after a time, we were actually making progress together.

After the first performance, in which her portrayal of a beaver with a Radio Flyer wagon inspired happy laughter, Lena approached me and said she was cold. I was wearing a jacket, so I let her inside, and soon she had crawled up into my lap. I was touched. Her mom said, “She really likes you. I think you look like a grandfather to her.” Okay, I thought. Whatever.

After the second and final performance, she was out the door in a flash. “Bye, Lena!” I called after her. “Bye,” she called back, devoid of the slightest emotion, probably dropping out of my life with the same kind of style evident when she entered it...but leaving, nonetheless, a barely visible little trail of love.



RSM is privileged to have Dr. Bill Fisher write our columns, newsletters, economic updates and marketing tips. Bill has been writing real estate and mortgage-related materials for more than twenty years and spent many years as a Broker/Owner of his own real estate office. In addition to these obvious talents, Bill is also an accomplished musician, song-writer, singer and writer of fiction. We are delighted to showcase another facet of this very gifted, humorous & loving man.

Please visit Bill’s website at www.billandrobbyn.com.

POSITIONING YOURSELF IN YOUR MARKET...

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mounting other potential hurdles. Perhaps you specialize in a particular type of property...beach front, golf course, or a specific development in your area. Perhaps you have a gift for matching the vaguely articulated desires of right-brained homebuyers with precisely the right home.

Demonstrate What You Do Best

In your marketing, you should be demonstrating whatever it is in your profession that you do best, whatever your clients will benefit the most from. That is, you should take care to “position” yourself in a way that accurately reflects who you are and what you do well and what sets you apart from others in the business. Your “position,” ideally, should be evident in your slogan, your logo, your mission statement and in your on-going marketing. If you are using a newsletter, for example, you will do very well to get this message out

constantly in the back page area of your letter.

“Positioning” can actually be a matter of making sure people get the point of who you are and what you can do. It can even be light. (“Who do you call?” “Ghostbusters!”) We want people to have a knee-jerk response to specific real estate-related questions. “Got a question about homes along the river?” “Who you gonna’ call?” [Insert your name here!]

Does this limit the number of people who will call you? No!! Trust us on this one. Bottom line, you are still a broadly-experienced professional in real estate and/or mortgage. But if you try to be all things to all people, you’ll most likely end up being nothing to anyone. If you are the expert in certain areas, that will bring on the people who need your specific expertise...and they will then call you to help with ALL of their real estate concerns, based on their experience of your knowledge, energy and effectiveness.



BRANDING 101

Dr. Bill Fisher and I have had many interesting and enjoyable discussions about an aspect of marketing that can be confusing—branding.

Bill tackles the topic and a related subject—positioning—in this issue of the *Right Times*. In addition to learning more about the nuts and bolts of marketing Bill shares a heart-warming story of an encounter of a special kind in his “Another Side of Bill Fisher.”

We get feedback from many of our clients and very much appreciate when you take moment to let us know how we’re doing. Only by hearing about areas that we are not perfect in can we continue to improve. So thanks, and keep on calling, writing, emailing, etc.

Rand & Jill

INSIDE THIS MONTH’S ISSUE:

Branding Yourself

Positioning Yourself

ALSO:

Bill Makes a Connection

AND:

“Guess where we are now,” and win a \$25 Free Lunch

NOTHER VERY SATISFIED CLIENT
“One of my clients uses your monthly newsletter (Ultimate Prospecting Tool) to reach his farm in addition to the custom mailings our office designs for him. I’ve found to the level of professionalism that the newsletters convey to my client’s target audience.”
Michele Kephart, Trahepek Advertising Creative Director



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