

# in a name?

consistent if they are to be remembered by consumers. Are you consistent in the story you are telling about your brand?

In the service industry, the products you are marketing are often intangible. A haircut, a pedicure or a spa treatment are products that happen to us as we purchase them. They don't have a logo stuck on them and it's harder to make that brand stick in people's minds. Yet, there is a huge amount of loyalty to the salons and spas that we love. You are marketing an experience. Your customers will come to expect a consistent type of experience. From the music you play and the way your treatment room smells to the way you answer the phone. These are all part of your brand. Set standards and stick to them, it will help you define your business and your brand.

When branding your business, obviously your business name is extremely important to the message and to its ability to be effectively branded. If you were a high-end salon in a high-end part of town with a high-end clientele, I'd venture to say *Cheap Cuts* would be a very ineffective name for your business. Likewise businesses whose name, or brand, seem too high-end for their market or client base may send a negative message to someone looking for a less expensive stylist. A strong name that means something is one of the best weapons you can have in the battle of the brands. Choose your weapon wisely.

Okay, so what does all this mean to you and your business? Let's talk about how you can ensure that your business can become a stronger brand that stands out to new and existing customers as something they want to be a part of. It's important to realise that your brand, your story, won't suit everyone. You shouldn't expect it to, nor should you want it to, it's too difficult to try to be all things to all people; eventually it will fail you.

Determine what your personal story is and then build your brand around it, and stick with it. Don't lose sight of who you are and what you are trying to be to your customers.

Next, be sure to tell your story, and tell it often. Knowing that you have a story does you no good if you haven't told it to anyone. First start by being sure that your staff all know your story, the message you want your brand to be about. Then shout it loud and clear, in the way your business looks, in the energy and attitude of yourself and your team, in the consistency of the quality of your work, and in print. Put your logo, and thus your story, in print, and make sure it's the same everywhere you put it. Use consistent fonts and colours across the board. Use them on your website, on your business cards, on your letterhead, on your front door. Put it in clear view of potential new customers. Create curiosity about you and your brand.

So as you begin to focus on creating a stronger brand ask yourself the following questions: How am I telling my story? Is my story consistent with how I want my brand to be perceived? Are my brand and logo recognisable and consistent? Does our team know what our brand means and are they telling the story? And the all important, if I wasn't a part of the brand already, would I want to be? If the answer to the last question is *no*, you have some rethinking to do. If it's *yes*, you're well on your way, maybe even to being the next *Coca Cola*. **PB**

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