

3 Affordable Ways to Build Your Brand Image Online

By: Evan Mangan

At the heart of every successful small business is a brand. What a brand is and how to build it is something that a lot of small business owners are keen to understand.

There are different aspects of a brand such as:

- The brand identity. This is how your company looks and is achieved through the logo and brand colours.
- The brand promise. This is the essence of what the company offers customers and how it positions itself. For example, the brand promise could be an offer of superb customer service or to offer the best value.
- The brand experience. This is what customers or prospects experience when they interact with your company or your product.
- The brand image. This is the internal and emotional reaction consumers have to your brand. It is impacted by what they see in your brand identity, where they see your brand, how they perceive your brand promise and if they have had a brand experience.

There are a number of ways that small businesses can use the internet to build their brand image. In this guide, we will focus on three;

1. Put Your Business on the iPod

A video advert is the ideal medium in which to showcase your brand identity and to give consumers a feel for your brand promise and experience. Imagery and music in a video can immediately bring your brand to life in a way that email or printed communications struggle to do.

The problem for small businesses is that the cost of adverts starts at least £5,000. However, a Movie Brochure, costing a few hundred pounds, is a far more affordable way for small businesses to bring the business or product to life. Everyday Biographies is a gift company specialising in

ghost writing childhood memories and autobiographies. It is a service which is a popular 60th or 70th birthday gift.

To bring their service to life, the agency, Marketing Small Business created a movie brochure <http://www.everydaybiographies.co.uk/infopack.htm> so that customers could:

- view on the site in order to experience the brand and the brand promise
- email the link to family and friends who would be interested in buying the service as a gift
- download an mp4 version to video iPod to enable customers to show friends and family away from the PC

Associating the brand with the latest technology has created a positive brand image. While enabling customers to show the service to others via their iPod made it easy for others to market the company via word of mouth and recommendation.

2. YouTube

Once you have a movie brochure for your business or your product, you can tap into the enormous video community on You Tube. Visitors to You Tube search for content across a wide range of topics. You can upload your movie brochure and assign relevant “tags” to it, which means it will appear to people who are searching for content similar to your movie brochure.

Everyday Biographies uses YouTube as a means of increasing awareness and interaction with its brand. This video on You Tube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsIISQcZx98> showcases the Wedding DVD service they provide and You Tube users can link through to the website to see more examples.

Thousands of YouTube users have viewed the Everyday Biographies movie brochures, therefore achieving wider brand awareness at minimal cost.

In addition to You Tube, small businesses can submit movie brochures to www.MySpace.com and Google Video.

3. Stumble Upon

The ideal way to promote your brand is through word of mouth recommendation. www.stumbleupon.com is a network of several million users who are interested in sites that are recommended by like minded people or are interested in making recommendations themselves.

The users download a toolbar and when they find a site that they like, they register it. This site is then recommended to others in the network. If your site is recommended, then you will receive large increases in traffic as the network guides people to your site. So how do you get recommended?

- Luck. Someone on the network visits your site and recommends you
- Promote your site. You can kickstart your presence by promoting it.
- Register your site at stumbleupon.com and pay for people to find it. It costs around 3p a visit so an investment of £30 will send around 1000 people to your site. If 30 - 40 of these people bookmark your site as one of their favourites on [stumbleupon](http://stumbleupon.com), this will result in free referrals to you as people regularly visit the sites that others have bookmarked.

Many sites registered with Stumbleupon.com report receiving between 10 and 15% of its traffic from that source. If your small business has a compelling product and a website that users like, stumbleupon.com can dramatically increase your web traffic overnight and improve your brand image via word of mouth recommendation

About The Author

Evan Mangan is a former Head of European Marketing for Yahoo! Mobile and was Head of International Operational Marketing for Orange. He is

founder and Managing Director of The Marketing Crowd (www.TheMarketingCrowd.com), a full service marketing agency which makes the marketing techniques employed by major brands available and affordable to smaller companies.

More Information:

- To receive a monthly e-Zine full of Marketing tips and links to new Marketing Guides, simply send an email to ezine@marketingsmallbusiness.co.uk
- To see examples of Movie Brochures visit www.MarketingSmallBusiness.co.uk
- To receive free marketing advice specific to your business simply email info@marketingsmallbusiness.co.uk