

THE TECH BEAT | BY JAMES HARDING

Brand Back Together

If I sing, “Ba Da Ba Bah, I’m lovin’ it!” which company am I singing about? What if I say, “Have it Your Way?” What do you ask for when you want a facial tissue or an adhesive bandage?

The most successful companies in the world spend millions each year burning their brands into our minds. Why? Because they know buyers are more likely to purchase items that feel familiar and easy to understand. It’s called “cognitive fluency.” Luckily for us, cognitive fluency can be an independent retailer’s secret weapon.

If we can make our stores feel familiar, we can pull customers from big-box retailers and build solid brand recognition in our communities.

When was the last time *you* did an unbiased business branding review? Here are five simple ways you can refocus and get the brand back together:



Consistency across all channels is key to building a strong brand identity

to online shoppers. If they find your website helpful, they’ll contact you. If they don’t, they’ll contact your competition.

REMERCHANDISE YOUR STORE. Make sure your store “looks” like your website and promo material. If you’re featuring certain products online, place them in strategic locations around your store and include “as seen online” signs to further unify the experience.

Your store should fulfill all of the promises your website makes and demonstrate your business’s “personality” everywhere.

CLEAN UP YOUR INVENTORY. Make sure your inventory mix is consistent with your company’s mission. If you carry pianos, all your pianos should be clean, in tune and ready to demonstrate. If that’s not feasible, consider carrying fewer instruments to make sure the in-store experience meets your customers’ expectations. It’s better to carry fewer brands with integrity than to carry a ton of instrument brands that don’t make sense together.

INSPIRE YOUR TEAM. People are the heart of every branding effort. Make sure your team is inspired to wear company colors, name tags and the smile you’d expect from a store that wanted to earn your business. By just inspiring your team, you’d be surprised how much your business will grow!

Always think about your brand — especially when you’re trying to stretch your advertising dollars. Review your branding efforts this summer and make sure your clients are ready to “turn on the fun” with you. **MI**

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