

CLUB NETWORK

Increasing your club's success
AUTUMN 2006



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The value of brand

There are over tens of thousands of gyms worldwide. And to each of them, hundreds of different names are attached. So many choices, so many claims and so many fitness experts. So who do our potential members listen to? Who do they believe? Which health club will they choose? And on what basis do they make their decision?

Facts? Instinct? Word of mouth? Or brand?

The answer is, all of the above, but particularly, brand.

With all things being equal, brand is usually the deciding factor as to why someone might select between Larry's Lifting Palace or Fitness First? Todd's Muscle Shack or David Lloyd. Billy Bob's Fitness Extravaganza or Gold's Gym? The value of branding seems obvious in these

examples; it puts you on the shopping list for prospective members.

So what is the value of brands? Think Starbucks coffee. Mercedes. Harley Davidson. Google. Federal Express. Coca-Cola. McDonald's. We all know these brands and

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The value of brand

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most of us have tried their products and services. Why? We are familiar with them and we identify with them in some way, shape or form.

Brands give us a comfort level, like an old friend; we trust them. If you venture to a foreign country and you see a McDonald's or a Ron's Burgers, which one do you choose? If there's no hospital around or any equipment nearby to pump your stomach, which piece of meat are you going to order? Give me Ronald and a Big Mac over something unknown, anyway.

When it comes to health, whom do you trust with your most precious commodity? Health has never been a fad and it will never lose its importance in our lives unless we cheapen it by focusing on price instead of the experience and benefits. Therefore, the fitness industry will live on and be healthy. And so will you, if you make the right decisions.

Everyone loves a Top 10 list. So here are my Top 10 Branding Tips.

1. The market is a confusing place. Everyday, more and more companies are entering it, each sending out more and more messages. A brand needs to be a 'sign post' that gives you direction.
2. Brands are like people. When you meet them, either you like them or you don't. Your brand needs to invite consumers to interact with them on an emotional level. You need to start a dialog with them, something you can base a relationship on.
3. A brand is your promise to the consumer. So don't change it every six months! If your brand was a person and you broke your promise, nobody would trust you again.



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4. Brands need to define themselves in terms of what they own, be that a core value or belief, an attitude or a look. It can also be a symbol or slogan that is innate to your product or service. They are all elements in defining a brand's personality.
5. If you are a leader, then lead. If you are a challenger, challenge. But don't just go along with the pack. In a world of competition, figure out who you are and stick to it.
6. If you want consumers to be loyal to your brand, your brand needs to be faithful to consumers. Treat them with respect. Entertain them. Inform them. Make them think differently. Let them know that 'you get it.'
7. Ultimately, the identity the customer attaches to you will determine the level of your success.
8. In order for an identity to have impact, it must be consistently reinforced until it is anchored within the culture. Great marketing is the key.
9. You must create an identity that makes people WANT to do business with you.
10. A brand is an extension of who you are. Make sure you have the four P's: Passion, Personality, Perception and Persistence.

By taking these tips into consideration when operating your business, you can establish a reputable brand in your local community that will provide you with an edge over the competition. Persist, be consistent and good luck! ♦



Derek Barton

Derek is a much sought after public speaker on advertising, public relations, branding and customer service and now runs his own consulting and entertainment production company. He is the former Senior Vice President of Marketing for Gold's Gym International and was responsible for helping build Gold's Gym into one of the most respected and recognised brands in the fitness industry. During his tenure, Gold's Gym received numerous awards and accolades for its innovative marketing, with many ads being reprinted in advertising and educational textbooks. In mid 2005, marking Derek's 20th year of building and protecting an American Icon, Gold's Gym was listed in America's Greatest Brands book.

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At **FILEX 2006** you can learn more about branding and the other proven strategies to take your club to a new level of success. Read pages 4 and 8-11 in the **FILEX 2006** brochure or go to www.fitnessnetwork.com.au/FILEX for program information and to register online.

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