

Your brand could be your competitive advantage

By  Gary van Zyl

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Everyone out there is struggling in the current economy. It also seems that we are all being called upon to adapt and do things differently to survive. Having said that, the economy has been restarted and business activity in the private sector is picking up nicely. So there is business out there, and we simply have to find our path towards getting it!



Gary van Zyl

I would like to take this opportunity to put forward our case that your brand could be the competitive advantage you need. Differentiating yourself from your competitors could set you apart from them and put your nose in front.

I have been working with many brands and businesses, particularly in the private sector, over the last six years. What has always amazed me is how successful and accomplished some businesses are, but their brand image does not reflect this.

What I mean is that if a potential customer of one of these businesses were to formulate an opinion of them by looking at their logo, business card, website or company profile, they would not get the 'best' possible impression.



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This is because most of these businesses start small and so does their brand image. Then over time, the business grows but the brand stays behind. The result is the business is on a much higher level than the brand image. It is also likely that this business has not invested consistently in brand awareness.

The problem with this is that when this business is trying to increase market share and grow its client base, especially in a tough economy, their brand image is not creating a great first impression. So the only one who knows how accomplished and authentic they are is them! Their target customer who does not know them, nor cares about them, makes their impression on all they can 'see', i.e.: the logo, company profile, website, email signature etc.

Your brand should reflect your business

So, the question you need to ask yourself as a business owner is: "Does my logo, business card, email signature, company profile and website convey an image that is on the same level as my business?"

Are you James Bond rocking up at a black-tie event in jeans and tackies, or worse and auditor arriving at a client dressed as a plumber? These are radical and humorous examples, but this is what businesses are doing by not 'dressing' their brand image correctly, relevantly and appropriately.



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That is why we say your brand could be your competitive advantage. In a challenging economy, where everyone is pushing for new business and where there seems less of it going around, businesses need to put their best foot forward, or should we rather say their 'best dressed' foot forward.

One of the greatest graphic and brand designers of our era, Paul Rand said: "Design is the silent ambassador of your brand". We have worked extensively with businesses in the private sector, taking their brand images to the next level and we can help you with yours! Read more on 'The five Brand Essentials' on our website.

ABOUT GARY VAN ZYL

I began my career in 1998 having qualified with my National Diploma in Graphic Design at Technikon Natal in Durban. Over a 16 consecutive year stretch I have worked in Agencies, starting as a Junior Designer to Senior Designer to Art Director, in Durban and Johannesburg on clients ranging from the smallest SMEs to large Corporates. Email: gary@designcapitalsa.co.za

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