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Recommended Reading: Primal branding

Welcome to the very first issue of **The Branding Beat**.

I want to thank you all for signing up. I hope that you find the content to be helpful and entertaining. And please don't be shy about asking questions or making suggestions for future topics.

Sincerely,

David



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## Equation Arts, LLC

# The Branding Beat

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### The 3 R's

Everyone has heard of the 3 R's of education: "Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic", but have you heard of the 3 R's of branding? They are **Recognition, Reputation and Reaction**.

**Recognition:** We want our products to be recognized. We want the hard work that goes into packaging our products and services, the money we spend on advertising, and all the planning we do in marketing, to benefit our brand, not the competition. This why logos are important. This why we craft tag lines and slogans. This why Coke is so fussy about the exact shade and hue of red in their packaging. This is why McDonald's is so aggressive about controlling the use of "Mc\_\_\_\_" wherever it can.

**Reputation:** In the end your branding is a suggestion that your company makes about relevance and meaning, and it is your customers, prospects and partners who get to decide what your brand truly means to them. You can be well recognized, but if your reputation is bad the recognition can hurt you. On the other hand, if your product is undistinguished from your competition, a well recognized brand alone may not be helping you as much as you think. How often have you sneezed, asked for a Kleenex, and been handed a Puff? Did you notice the difference? Did you care? Recognition is naturally associated with reputation, but the reputation is strongest when it encompasses a unique value or serves the needs of a particular niche.

**Reaction:** This where the money is made, or lost. You want your brand to provoke a positive reaction, to get people to choose your product over the competition's. You want a reaction so positive and strong that it can beat a sale price on a similar item or have a customer choose your service over another solution. But a negative reaction can be brutal. Whether you are being ignored on the shelf, or actively boycotted, a negative reaction cycle can be ruinous to your business.

So how do you tune your branding to get the reaction you want? Well the magic won't happen if the recognition and reputation aren't right. You have to take Recognition beyond merely locating yourself in an industry or slapping a logo on your business card. You have to approach Reputation in a mindful way - don't just let it happen, participate. Align your values with the expectation you set for your brand. Know the boundaries of your message and the expectations you are setting with your brand promises. Be prepared to walk your talk and fix it when you stumble. You are in the business of

developing and maintaining trust.

Here a few more R's for you: Repetition, Reinforcement and Rigor. Consistent and attentive behavior, clearly communicated value, and a track record of disciplined delivery will support the 3 R's of Branding and will get you seeing the Reactions the matter.

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"Don't be humble, you're not good enough."

No, I'm not picking on you, I'm quoting an old mentor of mine, Archie Rand.

Archie is an artist and teacher and walking encyclopedia of art history (and music history for that matter). I don't know if the line is his originally, but it is a gem that I've hung on to for over 17 years, since I was a long-haired MFA candidate with more paint on my clothes than on my canvases. And no, Archie wasn't picking on me either - he was giving me a gift, and in a way paying me a compliment. His point was that none of us is so good that we should just rest on our laurels or risk being passed over for the sake of mere modesty. Think about the most talented, successful people on the planet - what do they have in common? A publicist.

"Build a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door." That's a risky strategy when Inferior-Mousetraps-R-Us has a weekly newsletter, a larger sales force, better distribution, and a keynote at the next cheddar cheese conference. No matter how talented you are, no matter how top-notch your team, or how world-beating your business process is, a little self-promotion, a gentle reminder, even a bit of selective bragging can do you a world of good. Think first: think about who you are, how you want to be perceived, how you bring value and can genuinely benefit the customers you serve, but don't think you're doing anything wrong by telling people about your skills, experience and successes.

And if you find yourself the target of praise (lavish or otherwise) don't be the one "who dost protest too much." Instead, take the advice of another sage, my late grandmother: "Say thank you, and sit down."

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Recommended Reading: [Primal branding](#)

Are you wrestling with your brand? Trying to get a handle on why some companies seem to inspire magical, fanatical loyalty, while others fail at even stirring up a grunt or a nod? Well there is a terrific book that I recommend to all my customers: [Primal Branding: Create Zealots for Your Brand, Your Company, and Your Future](#) by Patrick Hanlon, that can help.

Mr. Hanlon does a superb job of deconstructing loyalty-inducing brands to uncover 7 primary attributes for brand success. Using companies like Apple and Nike as examples he makes complex concepts of participation, defining the "other" and communicating brand purpose, accessible no matter what the size of your marketing budget.

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