**The difference between a brand and a campaign.**

We all know that one campaign: the campaign that completely nails it. The campaign that lands at the right time, in the right place, has the perfect messaging and execution, and reaches your target audience through all the right vehicles. You love it so much that you want to extend it, run it for another year, print out large posters for your office, your home…in fact, you’re even considering having your agency redesign your corporate website to match the campaign.

.It’s tempting, to want to “reconfigure” your brand to match a successful campaign. Sometimes we tire of our own brand, because we live and breathe it, day in and day out. But is it a good idea to snag that flashy campaign headline and turn it into your corporate tagline? It has definitely worked for some. The famous Nike “Just Do It” slogan was part of an ad campaign. The company felt it was so aligned with their core values, they re-built their brand around it.

But it doesn’t work for everybody. It’s good to question whether your brand needs a refresh, but it’s a big decision that should be made for the right reasons. First, let’s look at the difference between a brand and a campaign.

**Your brand communicates who you are.**

Your brand is your identity. It represents what you stand for as a business–at the core–and it does so broadly, to a wide audience. A brand has longevity and lives beyond trends and fads. A well-developed brand will also have a flexible visual identity system (called brand guidelines) that guides all communication so that it looks and feels cohesive no matter who is creating it.

**A campaign communicates what you do.**

A campaign is a short-term initiative that promotes your organization’s service or product. It is designed to elicit action from a narrower, targeted audience, and it should have measurable results. Campaigns often take their cue from current trends. Much like a new hairstyle or new suit, it’s a fresh expression of what you have to offer; it’s timely and current, but it doesn’t change who you are (or your brand) at the core.

**The brand campaign blends the two.**

There can also be overlap of these two communication platforms, known as a brand campaign: a focused effort to remind people of “who you are” in addition to your product or service. There are companies who promote both simultaneously, and do it very successfully. Nike and Apple are prime examples: both companies communicate broader ideals that reflect who they are, while selling their services at the same time. But both of these companies also boast an established, well-known brand, something that is vital to have first before a brand campaign can work.

**Learn what a branding campaign is.**

The branding banner ad campaign is similar to a traditional print, radio, or TV campaign. The core concept behind a branding campaign is that if you put a positive message about your company in front of enough people for enough time, they will think about you when it comes time to make a purchase. To really understand what a branding campaign can do for your business, you'll want to review these basic branding concepts.

**Understand Basic Branding Concepts**

Brand: A brand is more than simply a logo; it encompasses the entire experience that a person has with a company. Simply defined, the brand is the immediate image, emotion, or message that people experience when they think of a company or product.

**Brand association:** The attributes (ideally positive) that people think of when they hear or see a brand name. For example, most people think of safety when they think of Volvo, so "safety" is Volvo's brand association.

**Brand name:** The word(s) by which a company or product is known. An effective brand name gives a good first impression and evokes positive associations. This can be done subtly ("Adobe" or "Maxima") or not so subtly ("Happy Meal" or "Yahoo!").

**Brand personality:** The emotional connotations of a brand. Companies often use a spokesperson (for instance, Cindy Crawford for L'Oreal), an animal (the Taco Bell chihuahua), or even an inanimate object (the Prudential rock) to give their product the desired personality - glamour, cute quirkiness, or reliability/longevity, respectively, in the preceding examples.

**Logo:** A textual and/or graphic image that identifies a company or product while also communicating the brand. Sometimes the logo becomes more than just letters or shapes and is actually inseparable from the brand association. For example, the McDonald's golden arches are more than a big yellow "M"; they impart a sense of place (arches representing an entry to something grand) and product (golden evoking images of fries and other fast food).

**Positioning:** Where a company or product fits in the marketplace. Position is determined by a company's core business or product offering, the benefits it provides to consumers and society, and the advantages it has over its competition. For example, Honda's position may be summarized as "we manufacture motor vehicles in a wide range of models that provide comfort, reliability, and fuel efficiency at competitive prices."

**Tag line:** A catchy, memorable phrase or sentence that expands on the logo concept to further describe the company or product brand. Successful tag lines are so catchy that people can recognize the company by the tag line alone, without a name or logo (think of "Just do it" or "Don't leave home without it").

**Branded hashtags:** The more popular your hashtag gets, the more people become aware of your brand. It’s often hard to make a new branded hashtag popular, but if you manage to pull it off, your brand owns it forever and enjoys all the benefits.

Besides Coke, a great example of a branded hashtag that’s become really popular and has driven awareness for its brand is Hyatt’s #World Of Hyatt. The hotel brand uses the hashtag to encourage its customers to share pictures of their personal experiences with Hyatt hotels or resorts.

The brand gets all the awareness juice since the organization launched their own unique hashtag.

**How Do You Create a Brand Campaign?**

There are a few key considerations to keep in mind when creating a brand campaign, and depending on the needs of your organization, these will vary from campaign to campaign. Here are seven tips for launching an effective brand campaign:

**1. Money Can’t Replace Time!**

When you set off on a large brand re-positioning campaign, you know it’s going to take a lot of weight to get your message across. One mistake to avoid is trying to accelerate that change by investing too much money at the very start of a campaign. Although frequency is critical in driving change, so is message duration. Instead of wasting money by building frequency too fast, use that money to build a consistent message over time, giving consumers time to absorb your new positioning.

**2: Understand Your Target Audience**

One of the easiest ways to waste your ad spend is by not taking the time to figure out your target audience. When you don’t know who you’re talking to, then you won’t know how to craft a message that people will actually resonate with. Create buyer personas that can be used to help guide decisions throughout the campaign. This will allow you to create more specific messages that can effectively be used for varying audiences.

**3. Make It Easy for Consumers**

Consumers cannot take away multiple messages from one ad. At best, they will walk away with the explicit primary message or call to action. But don’t expect consumers to pick up on a secondary message, or make the connection between an abstract concept and your brand. Successful brand campaigns make it easy for consumers to know something is new. Advertisers must connect the dots for consumers.

**4. Plan for Multiple Touch-points!**

In the case of advertising brand campaigns, synergy works. Consumers who are exposed to multiple touch-points and types of media (e.g. television, print, digital, social, out of home) are more likely to be positively influenced by your campaign. By ensuring that you spread your spend across a couple of different media vehicles, you not only drive the message home to consumers, but you also lessen the risk of hitting saturation with any single media type.

**5. Think Efficiency Before Effectiveness!**

It’s going to take a lot of exposure to your campaign for a consumer’s perception to change. Generating adequate frequency over time is a key reason that campaigns are successful. Before you buy those high-profile sports events or prime time premieres, make sure you have a steady foundation of frequency building media. Cable TV is a great vehicle to accumulate exposures at a lower cost across a broad audience. Adding sports or high-impact prime can help you reach a wider audience once that foundation is set.

**6. Don’t just set it and forget it!**

In order to have the confidence that your campaign is working, put in place a measurement mechanism that can give you real time feedback. You will be able to let key stakeholders know the campaign is making progress. You can also use those learnings to improve the campaign while it is still running. You have invested tens of millions of dollars to create and run the campaign. Real-time knowledge related to brand tracking can give you the conviction to see it through.

The factors that determine whether or not a brand campaign was successful are going to vary across initiatives depending on the overarching goal of the organization. Additionally, considering that the goal of a brand campaign usually is to create awareness more than it is to generate sales, the typical marketing metrics and KPIs used by marketers may not be an accurate representation of a campaign’s efficacy. That said, it’s critical that you track the results of your efforts so that you can optimize your message and media channels in the future based on the results.

**7. Set Clear Metrics for Success**

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**Final Thoughts**

A brand campaign is your organization’s opportunity to build, or rebuild, its image in the mind of the consumer. Through these initiatives, your product or service can become not only a household name, but the go-to product whenever your audience is ready to make a purchase. By keeping these tips in mind, you’ll be able to create an effective brand campaign that can be used to guide your overall marketing efforts for years to come.