

Title:

Branding Your Ebiz - Creating A Name Your Customers Trust

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405

Summary:

If you want customers to spend money with you online, you have to make them feel confident they're dealing with a legitimate business. They're giving you their personal information, as well as their credit card number. If your website sends a clear message you run your business from home, they may not feel comfortable entrusting you with that kind of info. That's why it's important to create a brand your customers recognize and trust.

What's a Brand?

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What's a Brand?

A brand is what differentiates you from every other eBiz out there:

- A brand is a set of expectations you create in your customers' minds in regards to your business. It comprises everything from the quality of your website to your customer service to your actual merchandise. More than just a name and logo, it's your buyer's entire experience with your company.
- A brand is a reputation. A good brand adds value to your product—buyers expect a certain quality based on the brand name. If they recognize your brand and have a good association with it, they're likely to choose it over other similar

products, even if it costs a little more.

Your Branding Should Be Consistent

Explains Eileen Parzek, of <http://SohoItGoes.com>, "Consistently use a brand design throughout all your different marketing material... It gives a sense you're bigger than you really are." You need to figure out what your marketing message is and carry that message through all your promotional materials. If you have business cards, press kits, and print materials, they should reflect the design of your website from the fonts and color palette to the logo and tagline.

Your format should also persist through all of your web pages—the layout, the tone of your copy, even your navigation. Having a unified, professional-looking web store can go a long way towards building a customer's confidence in you. A well-designed site gives your business credibility—customers associate the quality of your site with the quality of service and merchandise they expect from you.

Your Branding Should Be Continuous

Your brand should evolve to reflect the changing needs of your target market—branding's an ongoing process. It begins, ideally, in your business' startup phase and continues through the life cycle of your business. Says Parzek, "[Branding] is not something you ever stop doing. You have to be conscious of it at all times."