

Title:

Be Courageous

Word Count:

642

Summary:

Let's get one thing straight from the very beginning. No company ever dominated its industry by operating with a philosophy of fear. And, ultimately, no company can survive if it doesn't learn to conquer its fear and take chances, make changes.

Keywords:

advertising, marketing, branding, advertising campaign, copywriting

Article Body:

For such a simple statement, this is one of the hardest things for people to do. It goes back to that damn survival instinct each of us is born with. If an animal draws attention to itself in the wild, it might soon find itself the main course of a larger animal's next meal. That fear of being chewed up and spit out has survived all our millions of years of evolution and is alive and well in today's business environment.

Fight or flight is another instinct many of us haven't yet learned to manipulate. It's easier to run away from a new idea than it is to stay and fight for it. With today's leadership-by-committee mentality and intense public scrutiny, the easiest solution is unfortunately the most popular. Companies today often miss the forest through the trees. They tend to concentrate so much on short-term profit that they fail to make investments or take advantages of opportunities that promise long-term profit simply because they require a short-term loss.

It may also be argued that fighting for a new idea—whether that means pushing for the development of a new product, staving off competitors or supporting a slumping brand rather than letting it die—is usually undesirable because of such costs.

Certainly that might be true in the short term, but in the long run, giving up too soon may actually cost your company far more in lost revenues, public outrage or shrinking market share. It requires a different way of thinking. Advertising and promoting your business is an investment in your business' future.

Investments are not mere costs. They come with a benefit.

Let's get one thing straight from the very beginning. No company ever dominated its industry by operating with a philosophy of fear. And, ultimately, no company can survive if it doesn't learn to conquer its fear and take chances, make changes.

It is the ability to see past any short-term problems to the bigger, long-term picture that has fueled the meteoric rise of the world's most successful companies. Nobody knew what Apple was before its history making 1985 Super Bowl commercial.

Apple paid to run that commercial only once, but it ran again hundreds of times around the country and the world during local and national news broadcasts. Stories about Apple and its commercial were front-page news for weeks.

When it comes to advertising, you might wonder what kinds of changes are needed. After all, it's just advertising. If your ads look like your competitors' ads, if your messages are strikingly similar, if you talk to yourself instead of your customers, if you worry more about your logo being large enough than the message being attention-getting enough, you need to change.

Now this is just the first step, so we won't get into any more detail here. The object of this step is to let you know that you need to screw up your courage and prepare to make some changes in your advertising that will have a profound effect on your bottom line.

Fear is the greatest motivator. However, instead of motivating people to act, it usually causes people to freeze or retreat. It takes courage to make the kinds of changes that are needed to survive in today's crowded, complicated and competitive business environment.

Conquer your fear. Be courageous. •

This article introduced the first of Jeff Berney's "Twelve Steps to Creating Breakthrough Advertising Campaigns: A creative philosophy to help companies recover from years of playing it safe." Challenge yourself, your staff and your advertising agency to make a revolutionary transformation of your advertising program. And, remember, even the largest revolution begins with just one step—the first.

Jeff Berney is a freelance idealist, brand evangelist and writer. He can be reached at 816-507-2124 or jeff@jberney.com.

