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How to light a fire
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Q&A: DUSTIN LONGSTRETH

Branding expert

BOILERPLATE



If you truly believe that we live, learn and grow by the chances we take, isn't it time you start thinking out of the box?

Michael J. Pallerino, Editor
 @mpallerino

MAKING IT COUNT

"As a director, I have the greatest job in the world, but if I don't push the boundaries, then what's the point of having it?"

That is Casey Neistat's story, and he's sticking to it. Along with the 95-plus movie shorts he has uploaded to YouTube, the film director and producer might best be known as the man who took the money from Nike and ran – literally.

The story goes like this: In 2012, Nike contracted Neistat to create a series of ads for its FuelBand, which helps measure everyday activities by tracking each step and calorie burned. The ads were designed to show how everyday people "make it count" in their daily lives. After delivering the first two spots, Nike blessed off on the third script. But as Neistat would later admit, he and his editor, Max Joseph, felt a little "Nike'd" out.

What they decided to do instead was take the money and travel around the world filming their escapades. In 10 days, Neistat and Joseph traveled 34,000 miles, visiting 16 cities in 13 countries on three continents. The footage, which Neistat said was enough for 10 feature films, eventually was edited into a four-and-a-half-

minute ad that reached viral status on YouTube and beyond.

The last mad creative act of a talented, yet rogue director? Depends on your perspective.

When CNN approached Neistat about his mad dash with Nike's money, he simply said,

"I thought, 'If I could do anything in the world and make it count, what would I do?'"

In your quest to build a brand that makes people want to get involved, that's a question worth asking. What are you willing to do to make your brand stand apart? Is the safe approach always the best one?

While going rogue isn't for everyone, pushing the boundaries every once in a while is a strategy worth exploring. If you truly believe that we live, learn and grow by the chances we take, isn't it time you start thinking out of the box?

In our cover story, "Reignite Your Brand – How to Light a Fire Within Your Business," MSCO CEO Mark Stevens talks about the importance of holding your current strategy to the fire of sustainability. In other words, are you making every move, every day, count?

If not, it might be time to find a new strategy.

ALSO INSIDE

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Mobile & Social



Fill it out already
Survey says mobile dominating email openings

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

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Imagine yourself sitting in a little row boat without a paddle approximately 20 feet from the dock. There is no wind and the water is bone-chilling cold, which makes the boat dormant and swimming a no-go. The rope at your feet represents the only possible way to safely reach the dock.

So you form the rope into a lasso and begin to twirl it above your head. Once you secure it to the cleat on the dock, you begin to pull yourself in closer and closer, eventually reaching the shore.

Notice that once you secured the rope, you pulled yourself toward the dock – not the other way around. The hope of pulling the dock toward you would prove to be futile. That would require too much energy.

The power of true connection is anchored to the idea that we must pull ourselves closer to others. As professionals, our goal is not to pull people to our way of doing things, but to open our hearts and minds and become part of our clients' lives.

As many of you know, Daniel Pink is one of my favorite authors these days. In his most recent book, "To Sell is Human," he emphasizes that we are all in sales. More specifically, he believes we are all moving people in some way. And while I completely concur, I'd like to add that in order to move people you must first move toward them.

Today, most of the world is focused on selling products and solutions. Unfortunately, the key element in long-term, sustainable success is not solutions, but problem identification. It follows that in order to accurately identify problems, you must pull yourself closer to your clients, as opposed to pulling them closer to you.

The power
of true
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anchored to the
idea that we
must pull
ourselves closer
to others.

Respectfully,

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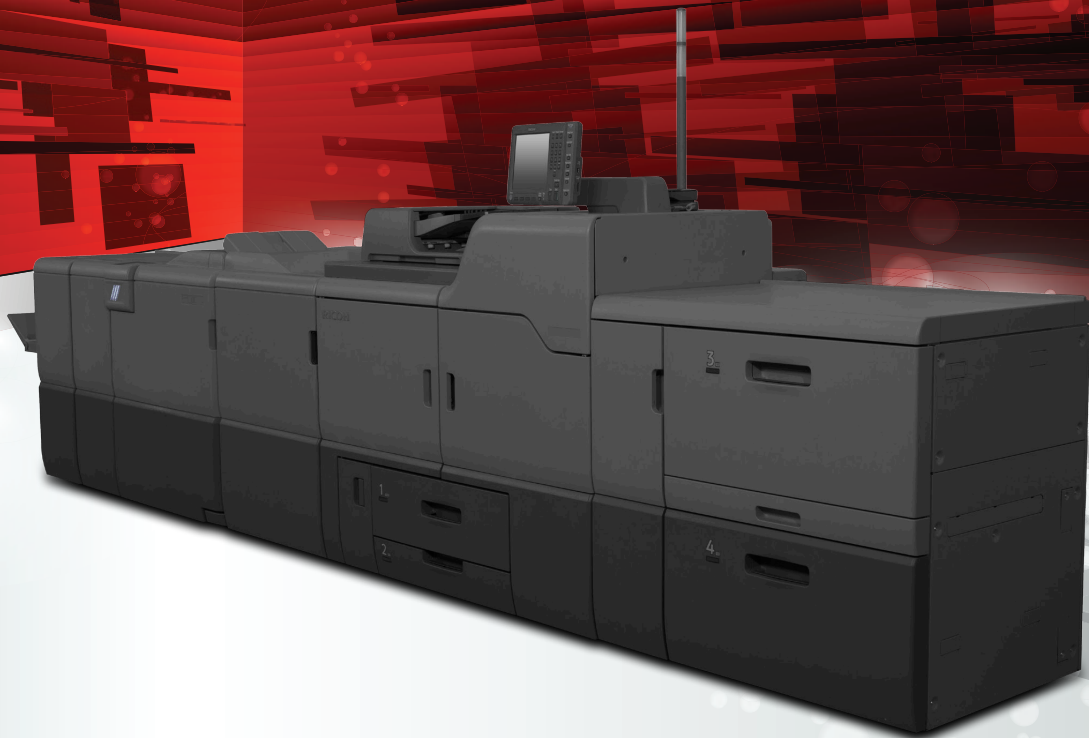
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STAT PACK

MOBILE ON MY MIND

Survey: Consumers reaching for smartphones first

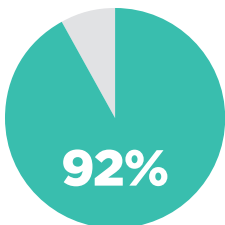
Attention all marketers: Start thinking mobile now. According to Forrester's "The Mobile Technology Firms Use For Consumers" report, 21 percent of U.S. consumers have made the mobile mind shift, meaning they expect to get anything they want on their mobile device in their moment of need. While 53 percent of digital business executives cite increasing customer engagement as a top mobile priority, 46 percent have \$500,000 or less to spend on digital initiatives. Sixty eight percent don't have the budget to support successful mobile initiatives. In addition, more than 60 percent have developed a native Android or iOS app, with 19 percent planning to build one, the report found.



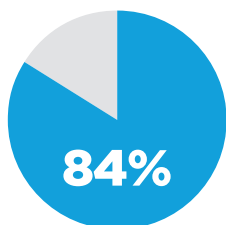
SOCIALLY SOUND

Why B2B sellers and buyers are so smitten

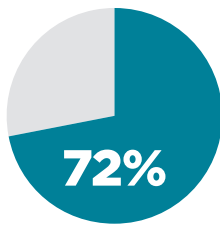
Okay, write this down if you don't already have it committed to memory. According to research by Leadspace, social data is going beyond B2C to influence B2B sellers and buyers. As today's brands continue to invest heavily to find and nurture B2B leads, the dependence on these findings is growing, too. Here's a look at how social data is enhancing B2B lead targeting and guiding the buyer's journey.



The percent of buyers who use social media to engage with sales industry thought leaders



The percent of B2B executives who use social media as a source for making purchase decisions



The percent of buyers who use social media to research solutions

“The central issue for a marketer will be winning a battle for cultural relevance. The winners will make marketing as valuable as the product or service he or she is selling. Great marketers will find a brand story that is worth following, and will create chapters to this story that evolve over time. They will embrace brands that evolve.”

- Spencer Baim, chief strategic officer of Vice Media, on what marketing will look like in 2020

DID YOU KNOW?

Millennials are clocking an average of 11.3 hours weekly consuming online video content and about 8.3 hours weekly watching broadcast TV. According to research by Defy Media, the primary driver of online video consumption isn't just ease in availability — it's how it makes them feel, with 62 percent saying digital content makes them "feel good" about themselves and 40 percent citing TV. More millennials also say digital content is more relatable than TV — 67 percent for digital content versus 41 percent for TV.

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The percent that social media budgets are expected to grow over the next five years (from 9.9 percent to 22.4 percent), according to "The CMO Survey," commissioned by the American Marketing Association, Duke University's Fuqua School of Business and McKinsey. The study also found that only 13 percent of chief marketing officers are able to prove the impact of social media quantitatively, even though 61 percent feel pressure from CEOs and boards to do so.



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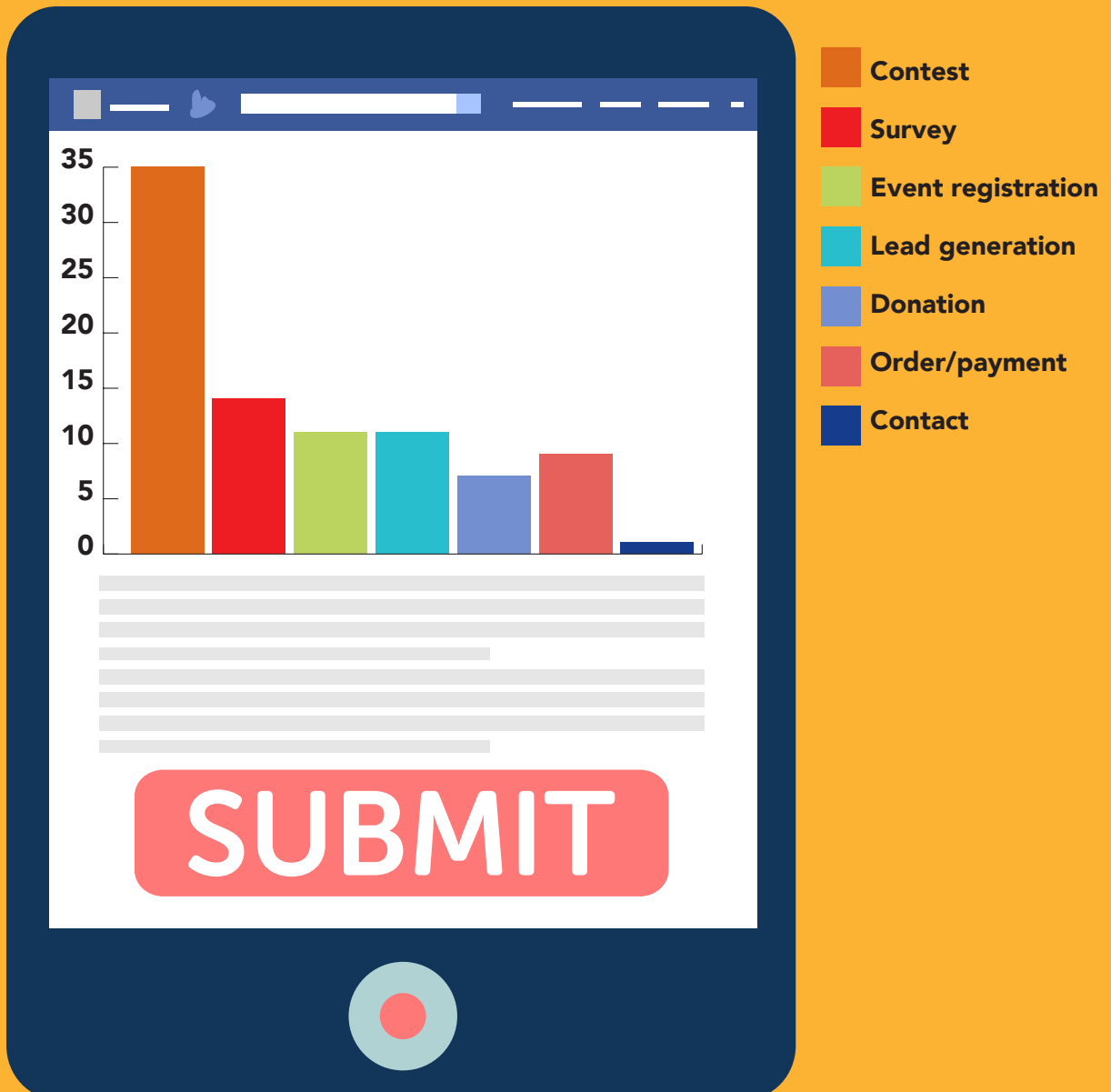
FILL IT OUT ALREADY

Survey shows conversion benchmarks for online forms

So, you get your customer to your website, but can you get any data out of them? According to research by Formstack, the conversion rates for forms included on web pages vary widely by the type of form being used.

Research found that contest forms have the highest average conversion rate, with 35 percent of all visitors successfully completing the submission process. Contact forms were the worst, with 1 percent.

Here's a look at the overall findings:



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REIGNITE YOUR BRAND

**How to light a fire
within your business**

By Mark Stevens

Congratulations: You have a brand. So does every company on the planet. The question is, does your brand have teeth? Is it red hot? Does it sing? Is it an aphrodisiac? Does it move people or put them to sleep? Is it internally wired to go viral or is it lost in the static constraints of the pre-Google Stone Age?

There is much more at stake here than an academic Q&A: It goes right to the heart and soul of business success – or failure. That's because today a powerful brand – an electric one – is more than a color and a logo design. It meets the acid tests of generating measurable business results, seizing a competitive advantage and driving genuine brand equity.



Is your brand performing at these high levels or is it a useless and dated piece of quasi art? Does it shoot with real bullets? Is it battle ready every day or hiding in a cubicle ready for the long-overdue pink slip?

In other words, is it time to reignite your brand?

Let's put this all-important branding issue into greater context: The time has come for branding to catch up with the 21st century cyber world that surrounds it. For generations, branding was an aesthetic exercise focused on logo designs and PMS colors. It worked fine for the likes of Coca Cola, Ford, McDonald's, Disney, and thousands of local companies.

All would design a pleasing look, back it with millions of dollars in advertising, command mind share and often build global enterprises in the process. What often passed as "ingenious branding" really was just evidence of the power of colossal-budget advertising. Create a Marlboro man or a Microsoft Windows, paint it all over the media, bring it into millions of households nightly and whammo, the branding (or so it appeared) created an iconic presence and a geyser of black ink.

**The artist-driven
legacy process of brand
development and
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360-degree asymmetrical
and highly
viral marketplace.**

But that was before the world in which the brand performed its magic act underwent a revolutionary change. Over the course of a few brief decades, and in rapid succession, brands were bombarded by a tidal wave of sweeping changes:

- The rise of the internet
- The emergence of e-commerce
- The tsunami of social media
- The speed, spontaneity, immediacy and unpredictability of communications
- The omnipresence of mobile platforms

Suddenly, the brand could no longer remain a static symbol, simply plastered onto print pages and TV screens. In the 21st century of viral fever, it would have to be:

- flexible
- elastic
- malleable
- agile
- built for multimedia
- multigenerational
- increasingly bullet proof
- protected from hackers, hostile critics with a secret agenda and competitors who seek to manipulate, embarrass or destroy it

Quietly, but powerfully and inevitably, all of the practices that went into establishing pre-viral age brands had to change, creating in their place living, liquid and battle-tested icons for the businesses they represent. Today, the gloves are off. Companies of all sizes must adapt to the viral age, firing or radically changing and expanding what their brand signifies, how it communicates, the languages that it speaks and the firewalls designed to protect it.

One thing is certain: The artist-driven legacy process of brand development and guardianship cannot survive in today's 360-degree asymmetrical and highly viral marketplace.

The art of Viral Branding

Viral Branding requires that companies place their brands through a set of filters that serve as challenges to see how they perform, not only when they can be tightly controlled (as in broadcast campaigns), but even more important, when they are subject to the vagaries of ever-changing formats, viral dissemination, social abuse and even sabotage by hostile bloggers and product/service rating sites.

In the polite and respectable era when brand guardianship ruled the day, marketers simply needed to be certain the proscribed aesthetics of their brand guidelines were uniformly applied.





The time has come for branding to catch up with the 21st century cyber world that surrounds it.

In the polite and respectable era when brand guardianship ruled the day, marketers simply needed to be certain the proscribed aesthetics of their brand guidelines were uniformly applied – as in the blue border surrounding IBM ads, and the familiar blue box and white ribbon that is Tiffany's imprimatur.

Today, guarding the brand is not nearly as important as infusing it with the brains – the electrodes, the wireless sensors to make certain that it constantly can read its environment and make continuous changes in the space of seconds. The fact is that everyone says they want their brands to go viral – until Yelp smacks them in the face. Then what?

Welcome to the challenging, fascinating, high-speed world of Viral Branding, where science trumps art and red hot brands prevail, vanquishing the competition.

It is time to fire artsy brands in favor of brands that actually can drive the growth of business. To achieve this, key components must be wired into a brand's structure:

1. Anticipate attacks from cranks, hackers and legitimately or serially unhappy customers, and build a legion of loyalists, in advance, to fend off the assault. This can be accomplished by cultivating a core fan base that is kept close to your business

through friends and family discounts, loyalty rewards and sneak previews.

2. Play war game scenarios anticipating all manner of viral threats that can materialize to jeopardize your brand. Not for the sake of gamesmanship, per se, but to uncover possibilities that would not otherwise come to light. And most important, develop plans to address each eventuality. In doing so, you are prepared to act ahead of the curve.
3. Bundle your marketing initiatives, such as PR, advertising and webinars, so that they reinforce one another and converge on key social media platforms.
4. Recognize that a winning viral strategy is based on a fusion of discipline and opportunism. This requires the establishment of a compelling umbrella theme – and the determination to keep all of the cyber content aligned with the theme – instead of engaging in the slap-dash postings that are driven by daily events, as opposed to the holistic brand vision. Be assured that if you and/or your team cannot define your viral strategy in a single sentence, your customer base will be equally flummoxed.

Is it time to reignite your passive brand and go viral? ■

Mark Stevens is the CEO of MSCO, a management and marketing firm based in New York. He also is the author of "Your Marketing Sucks," "God Is a Salesman" and the marketing blog, Unconventional Thinking. In addition, Stevens is a regular media commentator on business matters such as marketing, management and sales.



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Mohawk has promoted John P. Macy to senior VP and CFO. Macy will be responsible for directing Mohawk's financial function,

including management of treasury activities, banking relations, cash management, insurance coverage, ERISA/pension, credit agreements, and internal and external financial reporting. The company also named Bob Smusz as its sales and marketing manager, Retail Channel.

GLS Companies has named Scott Richardson as its CFO.

Perez Trading Company has named Jaime M. Escudero as VP of its Miami-based Printing Technology Group.

Mac Papers has named Jeff Harris as VP of Mac National, the national accounts segment of its Paper & Print business. Reporting to David McGehee, president, Harris will be responsible for growing Mac Papers' franchise and multi-location business. He will be based in the company's headquarters in Jacksonville, Fla.

Doxee named Ron Friedman its COO. Friedman, who was chief sales and marketing officer, will assume responsibility for global strategy and operations, ensuring companywide alignment with a partner-centric business model.

Around the industry

Ricoh has become the Miami Marlins' Official Document Solutions Partner. As part of the three-year agreement, Ricoh will equip the team's Diamond Club's exclusive conference room, now known as the Ricoh Business Center, with the resources it needs to help its accounts payable workflows and achieve increasing levels of information mobility. Use of the Ricoh Business Center will be a new feature offered to Ricoh Diamond Club season ticket holders and Marlins' partners. Ricoh also became a title sponsor in Marlins Park.



CANON SOLUTIONS AMERICA

Canon Solutions America Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of **Canon U.S.A. Inc.**, has created a Higher Education Advisory Team consisting of senior strategy and operations experts within its Enterprise Managed Services division. Advisors will work closely with each customer to identify critical and pertinent business goals to be achieved across production centers, distributed fleet and student print programs. This all-encompassing approach gives the customer a program that is designed to integrate community goals and philanthropic priorities, in addition to a multifaceted business outline. In other Canon Solutions news, it has opened a new sales and service office in Las Vegas.



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Awards & Recognition

Philip Mentzer, president of **Color & Coating Services** in Omaha, Neb., has been named the 2015 recipient of the "Nebraska Distinguished Printer of the Year Award" by **The Printing Industry Midwest** (PIM). Mentzer was chosen for his commitment and generous industry contributions.

SGIA has been listed as one of the **Trade Show News Network's** (TSNN) "Top 250 Trade Shows in the U.S." for 2014. At 236,750 net square feet, the 2014 SGIA Expo ranked No. 93 on the Top 250 list. The Expo surpassed more than half of the top trade shows spanning across all industries, solidifying its ranking as the largest specialty imaging event in the United States. The 2015 Expo will be held in Atlanta, Nov. 4-6.

Mark your calendars



GRAPH EXPO 16 will be held Sept. 25-28, 2016, in the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla. In 2017, the EXPOP will return to Chicago for the global PRINT 17 show, slated for Sept. 10-14.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

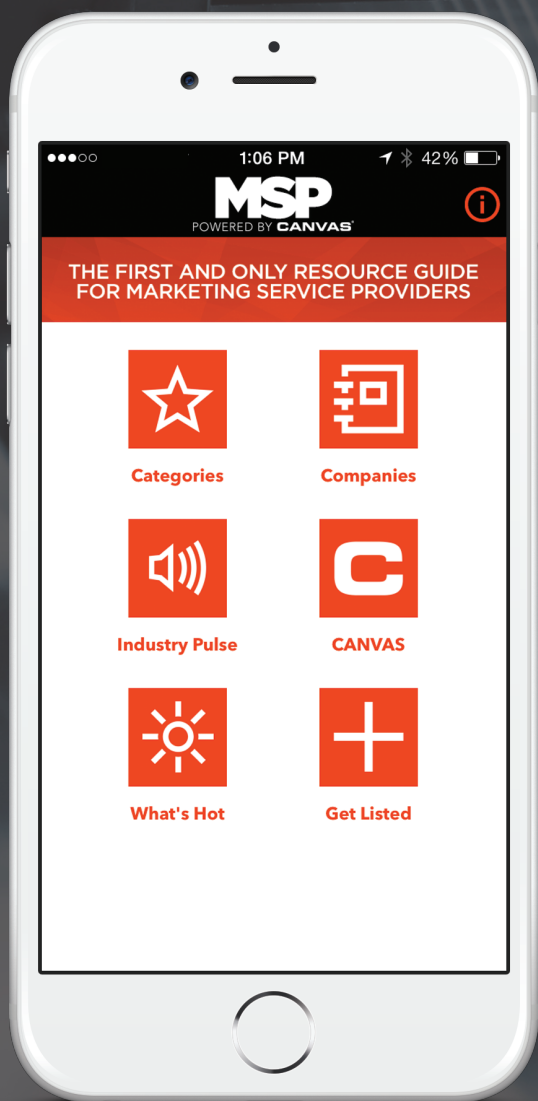
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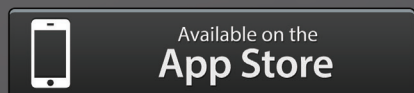
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DUSTIN LONGSTRETH

Dustin Longstreth doesn't believe you should just build brands – it's about relationships, too. Ask the VP and strategy group director for New York City branding agency CBX, and he'll tell you that connecting with people in this ever-evolving world of branding is the true key to success today. For the last 10 years, Longstreth has helped innovate and re-energize consumer-facing and internal brands such as Del Monte, General Mills, PepsiCo, Scotts Miracle-Gro and Arby's. Here he shares some secrets on the art of branding today.

What's happening in the branding world today?

The biggest shift is in the nature of media. We now live in a 24/7, always-on world, where media is a means of utility and connection. As a brand, you must move past the "if all assets look consistent, I have a brand," to a cohesion of actions and behaviors. Today, brands are as brands do – it's all about the actions you take to fulfill its purpose and make life better for the people it seeks to serve. Stop obsessing about standing out and focus instead on leading, delivering value and being understood. The greater clarity you have about why you do what you do, the more you understand the needs and motivations of your constituents and the value you bring. This will help you stand out from the cacophony of meaningless platitudes and make it easier for your constituents to "pick" you.



> Branding expert
Dustin Longstreth

There is a new breed of “autonomous” marketing platforms that is creating unique experiences where both brands and consumers have an opportunity to invent, create and connect.

Is it possible to stand out today?

Yes, but only if you have a clarity of purpose. Historically, brands only needed to ensure the consistency of a message and an image across a limited number of mediums (print, TV, retail, etc.). In today's digital world, the number of mediums is exponentially more, and the nature of those mediums is fundamentally different. It's more about engaging in a conversation and providing utility than simply blasting a message. Therefore, coherence of behavior and action becomes just as important, if not more, than consistency of image. Clarity of purpose is the thread that provides the necessary coherence of behavior and actions.

How important is it to be agile today?

Agility – size, speed, positioning, benefits, style – is the single most sustainable competitive advantage for brands today. Agility is defined as the power of moving quickly and easily. Being nimble. It's the ability to think and draw conclusions quickly. For brands, the flat, hyper-connected world is more reflective of pick-up ball at the playground than the controlled environments of league play. The brands that can thrive in this new environment, the brands with agility, will win. ■

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