

It's Not Just Business, It's Personal

by Ann N. Gatty, Ph.D.

Many of our clients are finding that the corporations for which they work are requiring that the different franchise facilities, branch offices, and business suites be constructed to look identical so that consumer recognition of the corporate brand is established. However, each individual business owner still must present a unique selling message that urges people to patronize them rather than their look alike competitor. What sets one business apart from another business in the eyes of the public?

There are some obvious answers—price comparison and specific product details, but the paramount factor that brings clients into a business is the treatment they receive within. The business employees' behavior toward the consumer must match a unique business “brand” that the owner presents.

How do businesses create their own unique “brand”? Why will people choose to buy from you rather than your competitor? It's personal. People buy from people they know, like and trust. That's important to remember. Ask yourself these three questions:

1. ***Do people know you and your employees?*** How have they met you and learned about your business? Where are they finding out about you—web, advertising, community events? Have you gotten their attention to listen to what you say?
2. ***Do people trust you?*** How have you created credibility? How have you proven your expertise in your industry niche?
3. ***Why do people like you and your company?*** Be honest with this one! People will do business with a friend. People trust and believe someone they like.

It's time to be different! But being a little bit better or different isn't enough. Consumers need to clearly know how you're different and why they should support your company. Review these questions and determine what your personality can add to your business. How are you intentionally making your business personal?

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