

MASTERING MARKETING



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Ginger S. Myers

MARKETING SPECIALIST,
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
EXTENSION

DIRECTOR, MARYLAND
RURAL ENTERPRISE
DEVELOPMENT CENTER

PRINCIPAL AGENT
ASSOCIATE

gsmyers@umd.edu
301-432-2767 x338



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Brand Voice—Make It Speak Loudly

You've worked hard to have a timely and attractive website. You have a distinctive logo and promotional materials. Your social media marketing plan for the season is in place. Your products or services are top quality and will be available in sufficient supplies. You're all ready for a great sales season. But do customers know your brand?

Let's start with a few marketing terms to help call out the differences.

- 1) Selling is a onetime business transaction.
- 2) Marketing is **EVERYTHING** you do to promote your business from the moment you conceive of it to the point at which customers buy your product or service and begin to patronize your business on a **REGULAR** basis.
- 3) Promotion differs from marketing in its function to create product awareness.
- 4) Branding is having your product own a space in the customer's mind.

We often think our brand as our logo, business cards, labels, and printed promotional items. A true brand impacts every single interaction that your farm has, from a website visit to a conversation with a farmers market customer. Your brand is not "just one more thing" to spend money on. People assign values, attitudes, and images to your farm and products whether you like it or not. Branding is the promise you make to your audience and the one that you keep. It does include visual elements such as the brand logo design, brand identity, brand website, marketing materials etc. but, they are only a part of the brand experience.

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Brand voice and messaging are critical to distinguishing your brand from its competitors by conveying its purpose, promise, and personality. In every instance in which your brand’s voice is heard, whether via marketing materials, advertising copy, or website content, your customers should be able to recognize it immediately.

For example, we say we are going to Xerox copies not photo copy them. Xerox is a brand of copier. You need a Coke or Pepsi, not just a carbonated beverage, a Kleenex, not just a tissue,... you get the idea.

So what is a Brand voice? Brand voice is the uniformity in selection of words, the attitude and values of the brand while addressing the target audience or others. It is how a brand conveys its brand personality to others. The development of your brand's voice and branding strategy must include these four marketing components:

- ⇒ Primary Target Customer and/or Client
- ⇒ Competition
- ⇒ Product and Service Mix
- ⇒ Unique Selling Proposition

Here are some questions to help you develop your own brand voice:

- ▶ People love stories and everyone has one. What’s yours? Why are you doing what you do?
- ▶ What is your brand vision? Your ultimate goal? Can this be part of your name or URL?
- ▶ What are your non-negotiable core values?
- ▶ Who will care about what you’re doing? Who are your target customers?
- ▶ People love stories and everyone has one. What’s yours? Why are you doing what you do?
- ▶ What is your brand vision? Your ultimate goal? Can this be part of your name or URL?
- ▶ What are your non-negotiable core values?
- ▶ Who will care about what you’re doing? Who are your target customers?
- ▶ Your competitors; who do your target customers buy from now?
- ▶ What do you want others to feel about you?
- ▶ What do you want others to remember about you? What is most important?
- ▶ What is your brand promise to customers? Could this become your tagline?

Use the answers to these questions to develop web content, in writing newsletters, while talking with customers, to train your staff in customer service, and to develop your social media content. Make your brand speak loudly and clearly to your target customers and you will increase your sales.