

Standing out

How success in gaining new business is changing in an increasingly noisy market

Plus

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Pricing as one of the 4 'P's
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Social Human: a leap of faith

In a controversial extract from her new book *Tomorrow's Naked Lawyer*, Chrissie Lightfoot believes that branding isn't everything. But everything is branding.

This article originally appeared in *professional marketing* magazine. For further details go to www.pmforumglobal.com

As I say in my book, I believe marketing to be dead. But branding isn't... It's time to share and bring together my thoughts, ideas, successes, and examples with regard to a critical subject with reference to companies, 'things', and people across the globe, and no doubt a topic which perplexes and, sometimes vexes, the majority of businesses of law and lawyers; namely, branding.

We're going to look at company brand ('Brand,Firm'), personal brand ('Brand,Me/You'), and product brand ('Brand,Product').

You may be asking yourself, 'why these three?' Well, many people have asked me in the past few years:

"Chrissie, how did you do it? How have you gone from a no-body into a 'somebody' who works with top companies all around the world?"

How did you do it from a standing start with no money, no network and no connections at the start of the worst recession the world has ever experienced?

What's your secret?"

"My secret?", I reply, "It's a leap of brand."

The secret lies in the brand trio, and the order in which you build the brand in this Digital Age.'

So here's the trio and here is the order in which I built a viable, feasible and sustainable six-figure company and lifestyle these past few years, from



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absolutely nothing:

- Brand,Me;
- Brand,Product; and
- Brand,Firm.

Why did I do it this way and why does it work?

- 'Brand,Me' and 'Brand,Product' build the profile and reputation of 'Brand,Firm' by volume and in stages giving depth and breadth to the power of THE BRAND, the SOCIAL BRAND, and SOCIALHUMAN;
- It's highly cost-effective and has the most impact this way, fast;
- 'Brand,Me' and 'Brand,Product' generate the income (provide the funding) for creating 'Brand,Firm' and/or re-branding 'Brand,Firm'. This is hugely important for companies with limited financial clout, which is the reality for the majority of businesses of law that simply do not have a Daddy Warbucks Branding War Chest; and
- It's because THIS is the ORDER your clients and prospects relate to your company. It's what clients/customers/consumers want in this Digital and Robotic Age. They buy due to emotion and justify the purchase with logic. It therefore seems logical that you focus building a brand starting with humanness ('Brand,Me') and share something of benefit/value with the customer ('Brand,Product') whereby 'Brand,Firm' is naturally borne from these two.

This is not pie in the sky theoretical waffle, or mumbo-jumbo. This brand trio order works. It works extremely well. It worked for me. It works for my customers. It will work for you too.

And now that various highly credible reports and research have provided proof of what my gut, logic, and entrepreneurial spirit told me, no doubt there will be fewer naysayers and more of you willing to take 'a leap of brand'.

Every interaction you have with someone outside (and inside) your company is an instance of 'relating' – or, if you prefer, 'branding in lights'. Ask yourself these questions:

- Is each interaction good, bad, or indifferent?
- Effective or ineffective?
- Positive or negative?
- Brand-building or brand-destroying?

These are important questions – because branding is not everything, but everything is branding. Do you have what it takes to make 'a leap of brand'?

'Brand,Me', 'Brand,Product', 'Brand,Firm'

This brand triage is like magic. It's not about which trumps which, by the way, it's about making sure you work on all three 'brand horizons' at the same time; a bit like your company-wide strategy and operational focus: horizons 1,2, and 3...

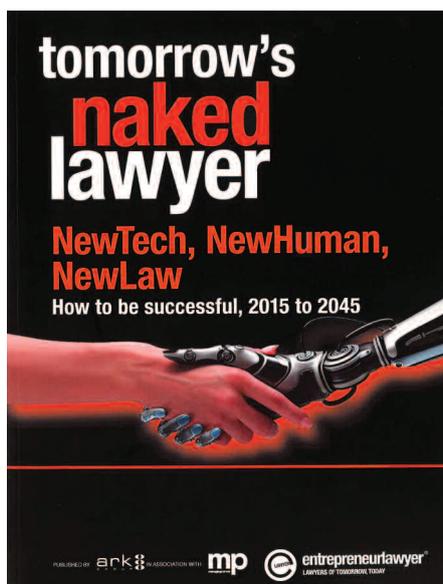
Brand,Product

Do your colleagues have a choice word for you? If not, here's why you want them to. Sometimes one word can make all the difference. It's how people will instantly recall and remember you. For example:

- Iron = Margaret Thatcher (the 'iron lady')
- Dream = Martin Luther-King ('I have a dream' speech)
- Best = Mohammad Ali ('I'm the best')

But you don't have to be a celebrity, mega sports star, a leading politician, or any guise of famous for that matter. Let me tell you a wee story...

I was at an awards dinner (legal conference) recently. It was coming to a close and I had wandered into the reception area arm in arm with my fella. We collected our coats and then I popped to the ladies while he wandered outside to make a phone call in peace away from all the noise and hoi polloi to hail a taxi. On my returning to the spot where we had



parted a rather tall, handsome, suave-looking guy walked confidently toward me with hand outstretched in readiness to greet me, bellowing an enthusiastic 'HEY...NAKED!'

Co-incidentally, while this scene unfolded, my fella had just entered the reception area and was making his way back to me; only a few meters away, he would have definitely heard the shout of 'hey...naked'. Everyone else in the room did. 90 per cent of the gathering turned and glanced toward me and 'Mr Handsome'.

Now, most of us would be embarrassed/curl up and die/hope the ground would open up and swallow us whole, if this situation was unfolding, but I smiled

sweetly and duly pressed the flesh when he sidled up beside me and planted a kiss on my cheek, beaming like Top Cat. The gentleman (I still didn't have a Scooby-doo of an idea who he was) continued with 'How are you? Great to see you here. I saw you last at the Claims Conference where you went down a storm and gave a really stunning speech about getting naked'.

My guy arrived at this point, placed his arm around me and held out a hand to 'this guy' and the usual pleasantries occurred. Phew.

In all innocence, I didn't know the gentleman at all. He was a delegate at one of the many conferences I attended this year. Turns out he was an employee of the event organiser company when he explained himself further to the both of us during the short conversation. But he felt he knew me, through my message, and the one word... NAKED... resonated with him. (And now, 90 per cent of the 500+ delegates attending the dinner that evening do too!)

The lesson here is, authentic positioning and just one word matters – especially for individuals. 'Mr Handsome' couldn't remember my first and last name, or the name of my company, but he remembered the brand essence of the message I live, breath, and teach (and the brand product book catchy title of the naked lawyer). That is, we need to get: NAKED.

This dovetails nicely with helping you understand, no doubt, the importance of having a powerful 'Brand, Product', such as a book, or equivalent.

If you share something of benefit/value with the (potential or existing) customer, such as, the naked lawyer book and achieve conveying your message powerfully with one word, the likelihood is that your SOCIAL BRAND will be amplified through your personal brand and product brand. Meaning, there is no need to market, in the traditional sense. The power of the word, the association, the resonance, does it for you.

To order a copy of *Tomorrow's Naked Lawyer*, email publishing@ark-group.com or call +44(0) 207 566 5792.



Chrissie Lightfoot is CEO of EntrepreneurLawyer Limited. She is also a legal futurist, speaker, consultant and writer – and author of *Tomorrow's Naked Lawyer*.