

HOW TO brand YOUR CLEANING BUSINESS

By Annette Welsford*

Branding relates to the first impression we have of your company, and the impression we have formed about you every time we see your name or logo.

People judge others on their overall look in the first seven seconds. They make an instant assessment - whether it's right or not - based on style, colour, cleanliness, professionalism, etc.

So why is it that some businesses don't take much care when it comes to the presentation of their company?

A lot of the business cards, websites, emails, ads and brochures I've seen are poorly designed and produced. Often staff are dressed shabbily in grungy stained clothes with dirty shoes and greasy hair. It's really off-putting and screams "We don't care about ourselves, and we're not going to care about you the customer either."

Now I know that the process of cleaning up other's people's messes makes it hard to stay clean yourself! However a uniform - even if it's hard wearing shorts and a branded tshirt or polo neck shirt - will look a lot better soiled than a clean but grungy and torn pair of jeans and singlet.

TIP 1 - USE A GOOD GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Make sure you use a graphic designer to produce your logo and design all your branded material. Just because you have Photoshop on your computer, doesn't mean you're a good graphic designer. You haven't been taught typography, web colours, the rule of thirds etc. Leave it to the professional, brief them properly, and get them to design everything. You don't have to pay a fortune. There are plenty of fantastic resources online where you can get this done quite cheaply.

TIP 2 - DEVELOP YOUR UNIQUE ADVANTAGE TO ENHANCE YOUR BRAND

Your business name, your logo, the colours, the fonts, your Unique Advantage message - all this is part of your branding, and should be used on everything you send out; everywhere your name appears. Your Unique Advantage message is your tag line or service descriptor and should immediately portray the benefits you offer and the market niche in which you operate.

This might be something like 'Housework Services for Busy Executives' or 'Chemical Free Home Cleaning Service for Sensitive People' or 'Spring Clean Makeovers for Property Investors' or 'Fussy Office Cleaning Experts'. Each of these either identifies a niche or creates a competitive differentiator.



The idea is to define and differentiate yourself so it's immediately clear who you are and what you do that makes you stand out.

TIP 3 - EXTEND YOUR BRANDING TO EVERY FORM OF COMMUNICATION

Put your 'brand' on everything. Make sure it's consistent, so when people see it they can immediately identify you. The 'look' is clear and related to your industry; it's

modern and easy to read in any colour; and the message is always the same.

- Business cards
- Email footers
- Website
- Letterhead
- Compliments Slips
- Quotes
- Invoices
- Books
- Banners and Signs
- Uniforms
- Vehicles

TIP 4 - ENSURE YOUR BUSINESS CARD WORKS HARD FOR YOU

I have a collection of business cards which are eclectic to say the least. Some have had a bit of thought put into them. A catchy business name, a colour scheme, perhaps a logo and contact details. But most of them haven't. Here's some tips to ensure your business card works for you as marketing collateral.

Print on both sides - why waste the valuable real estate on the back? This is the perfect place to print your Elevator Speech - the short sentence or two which expresses how you help people and why you're different. 'Joe Brown, Cleaning Services' as the only descriptor of your service doesn't say much at all.

Why not say something like..

'Are you houseproud and fussy? So are we. If you think there's no-one out there that can clean your house as thoroughly as you do, then you've >>

>> just met your match! We undertake a thorough cleaning audit with every one of our highly valued clients to ensure we know exactly what you want and how you like things done, because everyone has their own particular likes and dislikes. Our security checked team then follow your personal Cleaning Blueprint to ensure everything is scrubbed to your specification. Our services are 100% guaranteed. If at any time you are not satisfied with the quality of clean, we'll inspect it and fix it or refund your fee. Call today for your free Cleaning Audit and Blueprint.'

All of a sudden you've provided answers to people's questions on your service level, you've reduced their risk with a guarantee and you've asked for action. It's enticing, it's friendly and it's now earning it's keep as a sales tool.

The finish - don't go for a high gloss or cello finish. It's hard to write on, and people will often want to write on your card with a note to remind them of your conversation. Use good quality stock (thickness and finish of paper). Cards printed through your laser printer should only ever be a temporary emergency stock. Reverse printing (white on a dark colour) is very hard to read. Don't do it.

TIP 5 - USE THIS STUFF!

Give your business card with pride to everyone you meet. Leave your flyers everywhere, ensure your website address is printed on everything. Never miss an opportunity to build brand awareness.

The branding recommendations above are low cost and effective for small business owners. You don't need expensive branding advertising campaigns in the media.

That's for the big boys with huge advertising budgets. There are quite a number of low cost, highly effective marketing techniques we recommend for generating leads and building business from loyal customers.

With branding, you just need to ensure that everything that has your brand on it is professional and consistent. And it needs to be out there!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

With over 30 years marketing experience and several marketing qualifications, Annette Welsford, CEO of Commonsense Marketing, specialises in coaching trade business owners in effective, inexpensive marketing techniques. Her popular marketing mentoring program provides all the strategies, skills, techniques, systems and advertising templates they need to build their business quickly and profitably.

Her experienced team also provides a range of offline and online marketing services for business owners who want help with graphic design, copywriting, publicity and strategy.

Visit www.tradiemarketingsecrets.com for a copy of her Free Report - 12 Common Mistakes Most Tradies Make With Their Marketing.



Annette Welsford

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