

## Becoming Name Brand

Developing a strong brand helps potential customers know more about you.

Staying competitive in the livestock industry, or in any realm, requires a strong brand. Recognizing the value of a solid marketing plan can optimize sales and results, according to livestock marketing specialists.

“In the livestock industry, there is so much competition that it’s really important that your marketing be absolutely on point because that is when people are going to start noticing you,” says Jace Tarbell, owner of Tarbell Marketing and Design.

### What is a brand?

Perception is reality — plain and simple. Whether in the cattle business or another industry, a company’s brand is based on perception.

“A brand is defined as a potential customer’s perception of a company,” says Kerbe Fuchs, vice president of brand development for Ranch House Designs. “Creating a brand for your operation is critical when it comes to effective marketing.”

While developing a logo may seem simple, building a brand is a lot more complex than designing a logo. However, when breaking down the basics of a brand, the concept is simple: Share your story.

“When it comes to building someone’s brand, it’s really important that there is a story behind it ... The livestock world is so competitive, and everything is so closely tied together that a logo isn’t necessarily enough,” Tarbell shares.

### What makes a brand strong?

A brand is essential for good business, but there is one golden question: What makes a brand strong?

Tarbell says the graphic portion and logo are the strongest and most important features of a brand. These

elements are best utilized when displayed on different mediums. An eye-catching logo can help make your business more recognizable, especially when it is “concise and flexible.”

“I think that what makes a good brand is being able to think clearly ahead and plan for what you might anticipate to come,” he explains.

Both Tarbell and Fuchs advise thinking about where you want to be in the next few years with your operation.

“Having a brand identity or personality doesn’t just make you or your operation more memorable — it creates credibility and trust,” Fuchs says. “Start by asking yourself, ‘What is important to me and how can I let people know?’”

Identifying the core values and mission of your operation is essential to build an authentic brand. In turn, authenticity will build credibility and trust in your brand.

### Rebranding

Like many in the business, you may already have an established brand. If this is the case, rebranding may be an option, although not always necessary.

“Often times, I think companies get a little ahead of themselves when it comes to their rebranding and jump the gun — resulting in a failed attempt. You want a rebranding strategy to be very well thought out and supported by facts and statistics,” Fuchs explains.

When considering rebranding, Tarbell says there are no clear-cut guidelines as to when it is time to rebrand. However, it is in your best interest if your brand does not represent your business values.

### A fresh set of eyes

There comes a time when every business is looking to freshen their



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brand. Rebranding is an option, but Tarbell recommends a brand audit as an alternative.

“A brand audit is essentially getting another set of eyes on everything you’re doing,” he explains. “So, whether that be social media, a website, your email signature or your business cards, it means having somebody else come in to look it over.”

Tying back to perception, a brand audit really does make a difference. Bringing in a fresh set of eyes to review your brand and marketing materials can identify where to improve or it can confirm your current strategies.

### Know your audience

Whether developing a brand or rebranding, it is important to conduct market research.

“Consider the competition and the current market trends. It is important to understand who your target audience is and how to reach them,” Fuchs says.

Fuchs considers researching your target market the most important aspect of creating a strong brand. While it is complex and requires a lot of time and work, it pays off. Identifying whom you want to reach and establishing your goals are crucial steps in the right direction.

The Ranch House Designs vice president offers this piece of advice:

“Start by asking yourself, ‘What is important to me and how can I let people know?’ From there think, ‘Who are these people and where can I find them, or how do I reach them?’”

### What do you represent?

At the end of the day, your brand not only represents your business; it represents you. How do you want people to perceive you?

“Your brand philosophy should tell the world who you are, what you are about and how you operate. It should outline your operation as a whole — what you stand for, your values and the purpose of your work,” Fuchs says.

Good branding is invaluable. As Tarbell says, “You can have the best animal in the world, but if you don’t have the brand to put it behind, it’s really hard to assure quality. It’s the same reason people buy name brands versus generic.”

As you begin the New Year, set aside some time to truly evaluate your brand. Identify the steps you can take to get to the next level or, as some would say, from generic to name brand. **HW**

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