

The Importance of Branding in Small Businesses

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A Senior Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for graduation
in the Honors Program
Liberty University
Spring 2017

Acceptance of Senior Honors Thesis

This Senior Honors Thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the Honors Program of Liberty University.

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Abstract

The Land of Milk & Honey Farm exists to provide quality food produced in facilities that practice good stewardship to the Earth. It is a small business devoted to loving, careful stewardship and the production of quality goods. The mission of The Land of Milk & Honey is to combine traditional farming practices with a sustainable and environment-friendly approach to agriculture. It aims to provide customer satisfaction by being respectful and responsible over animals and the earth, and by producing quality products. To reach this objective, the farm intends to educate consumers and provide an alternative source for truly farm-fresh goods. The Land of Milk & Honey works towards these goals by following a Christian model of stewardship, emphasizing the importance of utilizing wholesome, natural resources and producing food humanely. In order to help The Land of Milk & Honey in their mission, this project aims to create a brand identity and tools for the farm to extend the range of their customer base, and have more meaningful relations with their patrons. In the process, this project aims to demonstrate the value and importance of establishing a successful brand for a small business. The creation of a clear brand identity, effective packaging, and the formation of an online presence allows The Land of Milk & Honey Farm to better reach and educate its consumers, so that they can implement good stewardship practices in their own lives.

The Importance of Branding in Small Businesses

Creating a Brand Identity for The Land of Milk & Honey Farm

The modern consumer is offered more varieties from which to select than ever before. In a setting where there are so many choices with similar functions and descriptions, customers often make purchases based on the visual appeal of the product alone. Accordingly, the packaging of a product is vitally important in establishing positive first impressions with consumers. What many people don't realize is that the creative design behind the packaging of a product is much more extensive than what the consumer sees on the shelf. Hours are spent researching, designing, prototyping, and refining a product's appearance so that it will catch the attention of the intended consumer market. At the core of successful packaging is a solid brand. This is not just a logo or a color scheme, but what the consumer thinks of and associates with a product when they see it. The logo and packaging should communicate and identify a product clearly to the consumer, while aiming to establish a positive perception in the mind consumer. Successful brands help achieve the marketing goals of the business, establish stability for the business, and, above all, foster a relationship of credibility and quality with the customer.

The Mission of The Land of Milk & Honey Farm

The Land of Milk & Honey Farm is a small business in need of a strong quality reliable solid brand identity. It is a family-owned and operated farm which

specializes in home-grown produce, dairy, eggs, honey, and various naturally-derived cosmetics. The Land of Milk & Honey Farm strives to provide affordable, environmentally friendly alternatives to the average consumer through a careful blend of time-tested traditional methods and modern, more conscientious farming practices. The Land of Milk & Honey Farm also stresses the need for humane treatment of livestock, as well as using a biblical model of stewardship to make sure that natural resources are being used responsibly and sustainably. In addition, The Land of Milk & Honey seeks to inform and educate consumers about where their food comes from. In the advent of factory farming and industrial food supply models, there seems to be a vast disconnect between the farm and the table, especially in urban areas (Holthaus, 2009). This is found especially in communities which are considered “food deserts”, where fresh produce is not easily accessible. Many people lack awareness or understanding of the origin of food which they eat and products which they use. According to the Alice Ferguson Foundation (a non-profit organization which educates and provides farm goods for the community) when students from inner city Washington, DC visit on field trips, many of them had never actually considered where their food originated, and they are often surprised to find out that it starts somewhere other than the grocery store. The Land of Milk & Honey Farm is of the mindset that the unique experiences they offer are more valuable than the products they sell. For example, customers have the opportunity to feed chickens and collect their own eggs to take home, or milk a goat and use that milk to make fresh cheese. With

educational classes and events, The Land of Milk & Honey hopes to provide a new experience for the community through means of “agritourism”. This is the term used for those who visit rural communities or specific farms in order to learn and glean knowledge that can’t be comprehended the same way without first-hand experience (Sznajder, Przezbórska, & Scrimgeour, 2009). Typically, the extent of an individual’s experience on farms is limited to picking out a pumpkin for carving, or exploring a corn maze in the autumn. The Land of Milk & Honey hopes to expand the knowledge and first-hand experience of the average consumer, so that their involvement with food production can extend beyond a trip to the grocery store.

The Psychology of Branding

With the aforementioned goals in mind, creating a brand identity for The Land of Milk & Honey Farm is a multifaceted project. It requires a broad knowledge of studio art, graphic design, marketing, and social media. The use of various mediums in the development of the logo allows a visual communication of the farm’s ideals. Oil paint, which is one of the oldest paint mediums, conveys The Land of Milk & Honey’s commitment to traditional farming values (Mollica, 2009). In order to appeal to the modern consumer, this project implements the use of contemporary aesthetic trends, design principles, and technologies to create an attractive and appealing array of products, giving the collection what is known as “shelf appeal”.

Consumers in a store often do not make decisions based off intellect, but

emotion (Parker & Parker, 2013). After all, a brand can be concisely summarized as the one way a business wants the customer to feel about them. The logo, packaging, and every other aspect of what the customer sees is not itself the brand, rather, the brand is the entirety of the impression the product makes upon them. The mental concept of what a business is and the emotions evoked by that concept is what is colloquially referred to as the brand. In this case, the goal for what that brand should be is the feeling that The Land of Milk & Honey Farm's is traditional, natural, and beneficial to one's well-being.

After the consumer has made an emotional connection with a product, his brain will rationalize why he now needs the product. All the separate elements of what is presented to the consumer contribute to the schema of what that brand is in the consumer's mind. A consumer might see one of The Land of Milk & Honey's products and make an impression based on the label which establishes it as something old fashioned and natural. He might look further to read the packaging and see that the business uses natural ingredients, humane treatment practices, old-fashioned farming techniques, and holistic approaches to their goods, and then the gears in his mind will begin to turn, justifying why that product is something he needs. These are the psychological principals of sales, and they can be used in an ethical way to make a business more successful (Parker & Parker, 2013). A large part of the challenge of creating a brand and packaging for products is finding a way to evoke a certain emotional reaction from consumers that will encourage them to make a purchase.

To contribute to The Land of Milk & Honey's environment-friendly standards, the business's packaging implements the use of recycled materials, and is developed with the goal to minimize waste. The packaging is printed from an environment-friendly paper goods company, which specializes in recycled packaging. The use of a professional printer allows the possibility for expansion and creates a more credible image for the farm. This component of establishing a brand is important, because in a way, it is a chance for The Land of Milk & Honey Farm to practice what they preach. Environmentalism, after all, is really nothing more than idealism if it is not put into practice. The packaging will be minimalistic to reduce waste, and the label will encourage customers to recycle or reuse the packaging. In some cases, like with egg cartons or glass canning jars, the packaging can even be returned to the farm to be refilled. This can also be a marketing technique. By offering a discount when the customer returns the container to be filled, they will be more likely to become regulars.

Customers prefer brands with consistent content and products. While some large businesses have gone through multiple rebrands, coming up with new catchphrases and color schemes and changing their logos, the most successful brands are those which keep the idea of who and what they are consistent in the mind of the customer. If a business changes its persona too frequently, the customer will not know what they stand for.

Therefore, many large companies hire graphic designers and advertising firms to conduct their marketing for them, so that the content is reliable and

establishes a specific brand that they intend their customer to perceive. In many cases, businesses create branding guides, which outline certain colors, fonts, textures, and guidelines for how publications are to be produced for a company. This allows a consistent idea to be replicated and a dependable brand to form.

Maintaining a Brand Identity Online

In addition to the logo design, branding, and packaging, an online presence established for The Land of Milk & Honey can be used to connect with a broader community of customers. This provides opportunities for communication, education, and the formation of relationships with a greater potential for significant impact. By employing the use of social media and online marketing, The Land of Milk & Honey can more easily promote goods to the modern-day consumer. What social media allows for businesses is the chance to have unhindered communication between the consumer and the business (Gobé, 2010). It is also a way for businesses to establish their authenticity and credibility. Maintaining an online presence increases the reach of their mission, and allows more people to gain valuable education and experiences. It also acts as a platform through which their products can be sold to consumers. Through various social media outlets, consumers have the chance to stay informed about classes and events offered by The Land of Milk & Honey Farm. Live classes and online publications made available online can teach consumers gardening, incubation, canning, cheese and yogurt making, using native wild plants for food or medicine, composting, recycling, and various other traditional farm skills. The careful

curation of social media accounts demonstrates the importance of having an online presence in the modern era. It also helps to further The Land of Milk & Honey's mission of merging traditional and modern approaches to farming. Additionally, since The Land of Milk & Honey aims to foster experiential learning and unique ways for consumers to get involved in the process of agriculture, certain types of social media will act attract interest because of the ability to tag one's self in locations. For instance, on Facebook, individuals can "check in", and on Snapchat, there are "geofilters" which are only available in certain locations. These are useful tools both for interactions with a broad consumer age range, and in a sense, free advertising.

Social media is a wonderful medium for advertisements when used effectively. If a business deliberately plans their approach to online marketing, they can greatly boost the credibility of their brand. Nowadays, one of the most common ways consumers research or investigate the quality of a product is by reading online reviews and ratings. Social media can be an outlet for positive business and customer interaction, contributing to their brand identity as a business that cares about the good of the customer.

Social media can also be used to evaluate the trends and success of certain marketing strategies over others. With the tools provided to business through social media, businesses can now measure and evaluate data surrounding the reach and engagement of potential customers with their online content. By examining which types of advertisements evoke the best and most effective

responses, The Land of Milk & Honey Farm can reduce risk and invest in the most effective forms of online advertising. This type of marketing, known as direct response advertising, is crucial for small businesses (Kern, 2001) It allows the business to measure what bests generates sales, which a small industry like The Land of Milk & Honey must take into consideration before they invest in to advertising campaigns.

Bridging the Gap

Interwoven throughout all of the publications and products being made for The Land of Milk & Honey is their overarching goal to be good stewards to the land. On a fundamental level, The Land of Milk & Honey seeks to ensure that nature and man are working together harmoniously. Without respect and appreciation for the resources we use, we cannot be faithful stewards of creation. The model of agriculture which The Land of Milk & Honey Farm seeks to establish is one in which the consumer can become an active participant and gain a better appreciation for where their food comes from. This contrasts the modern system of agriculture, of which the epitome is American factory farming. Animals and natural resources are used and abused, with very little regard for sustainable practices or respectful treatment of living creatures. Many people never see where their food is produced. The disengagement between agriculture and the typical consumer has led to the cheapening and diminished value of food over time.

The Land of Milk & Honey's vision is to repair the damage that decades of unsustainable and environmentally catastrophic practices have left on our

cultural consciousness. Through education, positive experiences, and quality products, they hope to bridge the gap between the farm and the average consumer. Through effective branding and establishment of a business identity, this project enables The Land of Milk & Honey to best achieve this goal. The tools provided give consumers the chance to take active role in agriculture, and gives The Land of Milk & Honey a more persuasive and credible voice to compete with the conventional way of thinking about food and agriculture. This project provides a proper identity, effective informational tools, and user-friendly networking abilities in order to enable others to join in their mission to become conscientious and responsible stewards of the earth.



THE LAND OF
MILK &
HONEY

BRANDING GUIDE

COLORS & PATTERNS



C - 63	C - 43
M - 10	M - 4
Y - 39	Y - 26
K - 0	K - 0
#5CB2A7	#92CCC2



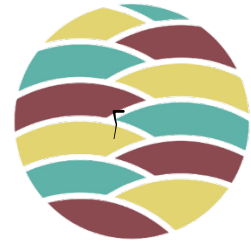
C - 36	C - 37
M - 27	M - 55
Y - 58	Y - 41
K - 24	K - 5
#8A484E	#A0787D



C - 13	C - 10
M - 9	M - 9
Y - 69	Y - 33
K - 0	K - 0
#E2D570	#E5DDB3



LOGO VARIATIONS



THE LAND OF
MILK &
HONEY

FONT

PORTER BOLD
PORTER MEDIUM
PORTER LIGHT



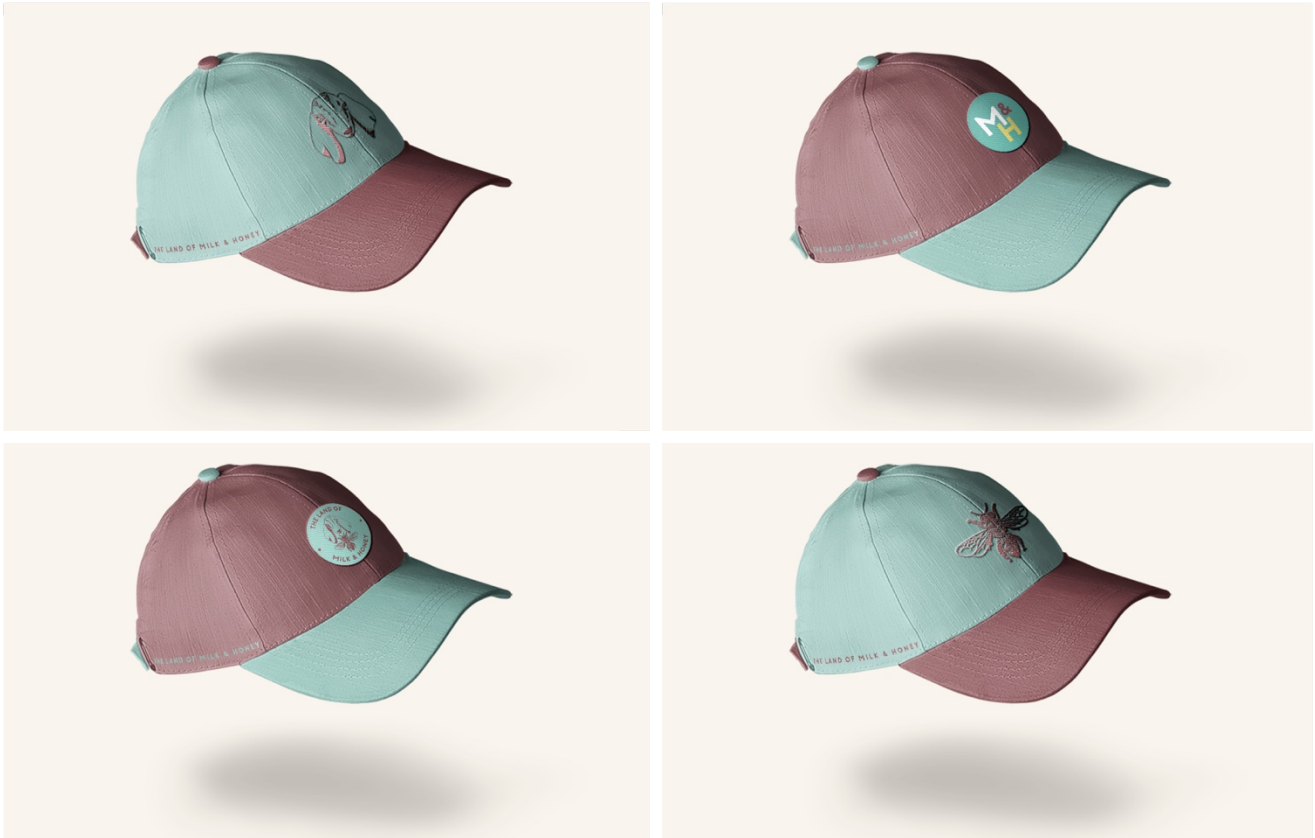
Logo



Business Card, front and back



Mock-up of a reusable produce bag



Mockups of hats that might be sold as merchandise



Mockup of reusable goat's milk jar



Mockup of reusable Honey Jars



Images were formatted for the new Facebook page in order to professionally establish an online presence.



A Mockup of an actual Snapchat Filter, submitted online to Snapchat

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