

# MARKETINGMAN



BY LARRY SIEGEL

## Building the power of your brand

**W**ould you like to find out what people in your community know about your cleaners without hiring a research firm?

Next time you're in the check-out line at a local market, ask the person next to you if they're familiar with your business. Here are some likely responses from "Great!" to "Uh, oh."

- "I've been coming to you for years! I love that you...."

- "Oh, that's the place on the corner/in the mall at..."

- "I see your \*descriptive term here\* delivery vans all over town."

- "I've never heard of you. Did you just open?"

For that last one, unless you did just open or they just moved into town, you may have some identity issues.

The things that people "know" about a business make

up its "brand." In a nutshell, a brand is a consolidation of images and ideas they think about and associate with a company and its products and services.

You are probably a brand expert and don't realize it: if you see Golden Arches in the distance while driving on the highway and start craving a Big Mac and fries at a McDonald's you know is coming up, you know what branding is all about.

Brands like McDonald's, Coke, Absolut Vodka and Nike didn't become "iconic" overnight; no, they had a "brand strategy" they developed and evolved over a long period of time to differentiate themselves from their competition. And the building blocks they used included logos, slogans, typefaces, colors, smells, jingles, spokespeople, etc.



CD One Price built their signature pricing strategy right into their name backed by a distinctive logo and a signature color on their signage.

Consistency was vital, whether on packaging, a business card or a van, in an ad or the signage of a sponsored event, the "look" and "feel" had to be the same so that everything contributed to the overall perception of the

brand.

Let's go a little deeper into the power of branding with an example you've probably heard of: Tide.

Recognizing that the Tide "brand" was exceptionally strong in the consumer packaged goods environment, Procter & Gamble saw opportunities in the drycleaning market and decided to extend the brand into the service-based industry in 2008, literally "putting a face" (smiling CSRs) on it.

To date, there are more than 800 Tide locations, including locker-based facilities, in more than half the country. One recent conversion of an existing drycleaners to a Tide-branded business took place in Texas and I thought you might like to hear what someone directly involved had to say about the branding aspects of the

process. Here are excerpts of a brief Q&A with Kyle Nesbit, VP of Business Development, Compliance at Edit TX LLC, a franchisee of Tide Dry Cleaners:

**NCL:** What was most appealing about the Tide brand that made Edit TX decide to convert its 36 MW Cleaners to Tide Dry Cleaners?

**Kyle:** The Tide brand "bullseye" itself was the main reason along with Tide brand awareness being 95 percent and 100 million users. We assumed that the Tide brand would capture a larger piece of a shrinking market, garner higher new trial rates, and provide us with the greatest chance of success in the future due to its ability to attract a younger consumer and its ability to be a market leader over any competition.

**NCL:** Since you converted existing businesses, how did your existing customer base react?

**Kyle:** Our management team has been through three rebrands since 2003. In the first two rebrands, we experienced an immediate decrease in year-to-year sales that lasted for about six months before we saw a rebound; in the rebrand to Tide Dry Cleaners, the decline in sales was non-existent. Our guest reviews show a higher satisfaction level after the rebrand and new trial rates (new customer counts) are up dramatically after rebranding.

**NCL:** I understand "smell" is part of the Tide brand. How do you use it?

**Kyle:** The smell of Tide detergent correlates strongly with perceptions of cleanliness that "is stimulating and creates an instantaneous mood of being happy." Our guests smell the Tide scent when they enter our lobbies and the scent permeates the production facility. Also, we inject a Tide-scented



The Tide brand "bullseye" and a widespread recognition of the brand were two key reasons for converting MW Cleaners to Tide last year according to Kyle Nesbit.

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Larry Siegel

# Building the power of your brand

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perfume in the drycleaning cycle. Edit TX believes these three scent tactics are very nice points of difference between Tide Dry Cleaners and our competitors.

While Tide Dry Cleaners is evidence of a nationally-known brand entering markets on the local level, many local cleaners can create strong brands within their communities.

For instance, everyone in the Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties of South Florida is familiar with the blue and yellow delivery vans with the trademark bubbles and the registered slogan, “Your clothes will love us,” of Sudsies Dry Cleaners & Laun-

dry. With 30-plus stores in Illinois, Minnesota, Indiana and Missouri offering one price per garment for drycleaning, one price for laundered shirts, and one price per pound for clean-and-fold laundry, CD One Price built their signature pricing strategy right into their name. They also created a distinctive logo and use a signature color on their signage.

Of course, I’m very familiar with Burbank-based Milt & Edie’s Drycleaners & Tailoring Center’s branding since I’ve worked with them since the mid-1990s. Not only is their signature color magenta on the awnings, it is also prevalent on delivery vehicles, signage, advertising, polybags, hanger

covers, and everywhere appropriate. Whenever I tell people I work with Milt & Edie’s, it’s amazing how often they mention the colorful awnings and say “that’s the place at the corner of Pass and Alameda!”

Sometimes one brand can empower another. Case in point: GreenEarth® Cleaning. GreenEarth has been building its “environmentally-friendly alternative to petrochemicals” brand since its beginnings in a lab in 1998, currently capturing the attention of eco-conscious customers at 6,000 locations worldwide.

As the brand has matured, GreenEarth is seeing its graphics and messaging being utilized more and more on in-store packaging, collateral



Sudsies’ blue and yellow delivery vans with the trademark bubbles and the registered slogan, “Your clothes will love us” are a common sight in South Florida.

materials and websites, something that Kyle Nesbit can attest to since Tide Dry Cleaners are GreenEarth affiliates: “We

ensure the use of the GreenEarth logo on ALL advertising — in store, on van wraps, on all print, on our website, and in every email sent.”

I find it very disappointing to see a generic “CLEANERS” sign in a strip mall or a basic white delivery van. Blast your name and a selling point! Be bold with color! Put a giant hanger on top of your delivery van! Perhaps do some of the following to build your brand:

- If you don’t have a stylized logo yet, either invest in a professional graphic designer to create one, or, if you have the time, run a contest with the public or at a local college. Play with initials that can tie into iconic symbols of our industry — hangers, needles, thread, buttons, zippers, etc.
- Google “color wheel” to find inspiration for selecting a signature color. The wheel will also give you complementary and contrasting color schemes to add variety to your signage, advertising, packaging, etc.
- Create a template for Instagram posts that incorporate your signature color along with your logo, which doesn’t have to be big but does need to be visible.
- Slogans are nice but can be tricky and expensive to create and protect, so, if you have a specialty, be the “Home of...” it and say it on everything you print.

The biggest tip I can give is this: be consistent and repetitious! Your name, phone number and/or website need to go on everything! Signature colors need to be woven into everything from brochures to polybags to your website. Hammer away until people see you wearing your company uniform and hat in the check-out line at the market and say, “I know \*your cleaners name\*! I go there all the time!” Larry Siegel is a marketing consultant/graphic designer and believes that “marketing is everything!” He specializes in helping businesses with branding, bringing in new customers and loyalty programs. He can be reached at (818) 241-3042 and larrysiegel@charter.net.



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