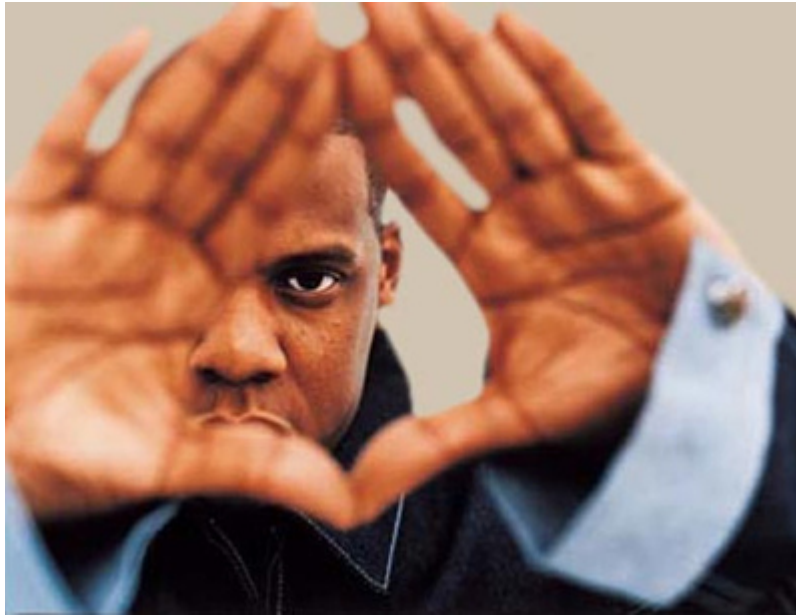


THE ART OF PERPETUAL PROMOTION



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I'm not a businessman, I'm a business, man!

- **Jay-Z™**

What's really in a name anyway? If anyone knows the answer to this question, it is definitely Shawn Corey Carter. The Hip-Hop mogul, multi-industry entrepreneur, and business-in-himself clearly understands the value of branding and self-promotion. Known widely for his uncanny ability to put together words and deals that generate considerable profits for the various ventures synonymous with his name, Jay-Z says, "My brands are an extension of me. They're close to me. It's not like running GM, where there's no emotional attachment." Superstar status or not, if you're an entrepreneur, Jay's perspective is right on; this aspect of business is personal. You are your brand and, like Jay-Z, your name should be synonymous with your company.

In *The Purpose is Profit*, Ed talks about the importance of establishing your brand early-on in the life of your company. "Entrepreneurial Branding," as Ed and Wyn explain, "is the highly personal process of creating a lasting imprint of your business vision in the mind of your customer." This phase of your startup's life includes several elements, the most crucial of which are your business idea and your value proposition. That is, an articulation of this idea as a unique solution to a problem or need with which your customers identify. Nailing this down will make it easier to come up with a company name and the appropriate words and graphics to complement your branding with clear and consistent messaging for the marketplace.

One of the hallmarks of Hip-Hop culture that Jay-Z's business empire embodies is the genre's roots as an underground art form that relied on the constant application of creative, event-based marketing strategies to survive and grow. My early professional experience writing press and staging creative (guerilla) marketing events for indie bands and solo-artists taught me about the power of face-to-face interaction with consumers. As any Hip-Hop hype (wo)man or rock roadie might tell you, there is no medium quite like event marketing for cultivating solid bonds with your consumer base. Obviously you can only reach so many people per event, but the ones you manage to touch personally can be readily converted to committed customers if your brand – and your promotion of it – is strong.

Another brand name that found fame with the help of event marketing, is Famous Amos; you know, the cookies. Wally Amos, creator of the cookie company, was a natural promoter – and a literal one too – that happened to make a mighty fine homemade cookie. Working as an entertainment agent in Hollywood, Wally would make his chocolate chip cookies and send them out as deal sweeteners and gifts. His clients went crazy over them and so did anyone else who tasted them. When his career went south, he decided to open a single store in Hollywood dedicated to making and selling just his chocolate chip cookies. Starting with \$25,000 and no outside funding, Mr. Amos's company opened in 1975 with modest expectations.

Without enough money for a sophisticated ad campaign (and no Internet) Mr. Amos capitalized on his natural charisma and the promotional skills he developed in Hollywood to fill in the gaps in his young company's approach to making and marketing the Famous Amos brand. As he describes himself, "I am a perpetual promotion." Wally and his team settled on what they call, "cause marketing" – an event marketing strategy that ties the company's image and resources to a charitable organization – or "cause" – when expanding the product line or into new markets. For instance, Famous Amos launched a new ice cream product in Philadelphia where the snack brand donated 1% of its 3% royalty to a literacy program there for the life of the product. Soon after, the company noticed a 38% increase in sales after several promotional events in the area.

In the process of establishing the Famous Amos brand, Wally Amos said he realized how important it was to the venture itself for him to remain open to expanding his original vision for the business. As he tells it, "the company has a life of its own. The cookie has a life of its own." Considering that an entrepreneurial brand is an expression of your company's values and the value it creates for customers all at once, building it can (and will) be painstaking. Its successful creation requires you to consider all aspects of its development at the outset of starting up. Just remember, branding is a process that's also a sustained campaign. If you force or rush it, you run the risk of wasting time and money by having to do it all over again.

Whether you boast a high profile like Jay-Z or just the highly motivated, amazingly talented, contagiously energetic personality that you are, when you're the most visible champion of your brand, your company is better suited for success. So plan it. Build it. Trust it. And let it speak for itself.