

instincts

Instincts is a monthly publication on branding for clients, associates and friends.

Our Vision: to be recognized as the organization responsible for teaching the broader understanding and appreciation of "Brand."

Tutus, chain saws and emotional connections

A friend recently had two drastically different experiences with dramatically different Brands – reminding us that there are no products or services, just experiences. And that a Brand isn't a logo or advertising as so many leaders, Karen Kain apparently among them, believe.



Our first Brand, you may have figured, is the National Ballet of Canada. Soft, gracious and caring, right? Maybe not. Our friend paid \$1,500 for season tickets, a big purchase for his young family. But two months go by and there was no graceful thank you or any contact at all from Karen Kain and company. Save and except for the charge to our friend's Visa card.

Frustrated, he sent the Ballet an email with the subject line: "National Ballet, where are you??" It drew only a curt, form-lettered response saying that the tickets would arrive in due course.

STIHL, the chain saw maker, is our supposedly bare-knuckled second Brand, that, it turns out, managed to out-love a ballet company! Our same friend recently bought a \$400 chain saw at Home Hardware. The dealer gave a full demonstration of the saw out back, offered a generous trade-in allowance and a free storage case, entry to a draw for a new Harley and finally, invited our friend to bring back his saw for free winterizing and storage on-site. All while his little daughter was given a toy STIHL chain saw to play with!

Three weeks later, a wonderful thank you letter arrived in the mail. Signed by both the Home Hardware dealer and the president of STIHL, the letter promised their future support and assured that the warranty had been duly registered.

What would the Brand Coach coach?

Ms. Kain recently spent tens of thousands on a visually stunning print ad campaign (see photo). The money would have been better spent on letterhead, envelopes and stamps. Then the Ballet could go about making lasting emotional connections with customers who expect some attention after paying big for an elite experience. A Brand is what people think of you – and our friend's family has already decided that the National Ballet, in contrast to a chain saw company, doesn't care about them.

"National Ballet, where are you??"

In print this fall – BRAND: It Ain't the Logo (It's what people think of you™). – [Read an excerpt.](#)