

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."

We're Number Two

This month's newsletter comes from Arizona, where Instinct Founding Partner Ted Matthews is currently building his winter home:



"Do you know who I am?"

These are words that sum up an old pet peeve of mine. They demonstrate the all-too-common snooty attitude of management and staff at companies that are number one in their market – like Nike, Bank of America and Home Depot.

Unfortunately for market leaders like Home Depot, the number two player often tries harder. On a recent visit to Lowe's Home Improvement here in Phoenix, my wife Marsha remarked that Lowe's staff acted like they were (surprise!) "happy to have me there." Every staffer – every one of them – said a genuine hello and asked how they could help. Versus the eye avoidance and "I'm doin' you a favor" body language at Home Depot.

It's a sign that Lowe's has figured out that the most powerful factor in differentiating your Brand (which we define as *what people think of you*) is those very employees, and supports them accordingly. That support begins with this tough-love statement of expectations in the recruitment section of Lowe's website, which Home Depot's leaders would be well-advised to read: *"Careers in retail are not for everyone. You have to be driven, want to work hard, deal with and be with people."*

Employees are the most powerful factor in differentiating your Brand

Lowe's support for its people is further demonstrated in a battery of programs that include not only stock-buying assistance (common among the Fortune 500) but help buying homes and cars. This number two player wraps it all up in a positioning statement that's great because it rings true for both employees and customers: *Let's build something together.*

What does the Brand Coach coach?

Employees are often called a company's most important asset, but are rarely supported as such. Even if you're number one in your market, adopt the hunger of those nipping at your heels. Vigorously support employees to become your living, breathing Brand and you'll attract even more people – in the form of staff and customers both.

Brand: It Ain't the Logo* (**It's what people think of you™*) is **now available** at www.lulu.com.

"Ted Matthews wraps a persuasive argument in a lively read. This book is packed with fascinating examples that back up its clear-sighted analysis of how to build your brand—and, just as important—how not to."

Jim McElgunn - Senior Editor - PROFIT Magazine

"Matthews and his team are champions of Brand actualization. They validate the business rationale for emancipating Brand from the confines of market fads, cyclical ad budgets and management whim. Thus, Brand is justly positioned as a cornerstone in corporate strategy, organizational behavior and leadership. The impact? The amorphous definition of Brand evolves into a tangible, actionable set of behaviors for individuals throughout any organization to embrace and strengthen, or dismiss and destroy, with their every interaction."

Michael Boydell - Former Vice President - Yahoo!