

instincts

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

Leading and inspiring all those who touch the enterprise to understand, embrace and enhance the power of your brand.

Act in unison with your parent Brand.

Congratulations to Tim Hortons. For the third year in a row, they've been recognized in a survey of 1,000 executives from across Canada as this country's best-managed Brand. Tim's understands that to be a strong Brand, their 2,651 stores have to act like a single unit.



Sheraton? Not so much.

Last September, I gave a talk on Branding to a conference of 500 Financial Advisors in Niagara Falls. When I talk to a big audience – one I've been told will be Brand skeptics – I might get just a wee case of the butterflies. So to prevent any other issues from getting in the way of a memorable presentation, I hired a car to whisk me calmly from Toronto to the Sheraton on the Falls where the gathering was being held. Beautiful.

The driver knew exactly where the Sheraton on the Falls was – or so he thought. But when he left me at the hotel with a few minutes to spare, there was no trace of my audience. Inquiring at the front desk, the put-out "Guest Services" rep clearly considered me a blithering moron for being, as it turns out, at the wrong hotel. I wasn't at the "Sheraton at the Falls," but rather at the "Sheraton on Fallsview." She flung me a poorly photocopied strip of paper with a map to the right hotel. Obviously there had been other morons.

Did I mention my nerves? Did I mention the car had left?

And have you ever talked to Bell Mobility on the phone about a special offer only to have the Bell store tell you that just isn't the way it is? Same issue as Sheraton.

What does the Brand Coach coach?

Hey folks: You can't have it both ways. If you want your business to enjoy the benefits of a strong parent Brand, then you have to act in unison with that strong parent Brand. Either you're in the Sheraton brotherhood or you shouldn't be. Either you're in the Bell sisterhood or you shouldn't be. A Brand is what people think of you - and with membership in a parent Brand you're banking that people will think you're part of something bigger and better than just your lonesome. So when you act independently of the parent by not thinking through what people are actually experiencing, you undermine, bad experience by bad experience, the very benefit you're trying to leverage.

Either you're in the Sheraton brotherhood or you shouldn't be.