

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.

Make them want you- before you want them

There is an exciting new frontier for Brands that I think will be the most critical for your business in the coming years. It is their power to attract and retain the best employees in the face of our worsening labour shortage.



Canada's workforce is rapidly shrinking because the boomers are hitting 60 and our birthrate is decreasing. PricewaterhouseCoopers reports that 62% of Canadian CEOs say a shortage of skilled workers "is slowing the growth of their business." How is your organization dealing with it?

What would the Brand Coach coach?

First of all, you must recognize that a Brand isn't the logo, the website or the advertising. The only synonym for "Brand" is "Culture." Attracting and retaining the best employees is a matter of communicating an inspiring Brand Vision of what that Culture is, of where you're going as an organization, and how you'll know when you get there. Then tell your employees, over and over again, how their everyday work contributes to reaching the Vision.

Consider Starbucks. Their employees buy-in to the Starbucks Purpose: To provide *an uplifting experience that enriches people's daily lives*. They proudly tell others where they work, and why – attracting like-minded new employees in the process. A critical mass of Vision-aligned employees takes shape, building awareness of the Brand outside the company. Now, workers are proud to say they work at Starbucks because the people they tell are impressed by it. Recall that the Starbucks Brand has been built in Canada with very little advertising. It's mostly been word-of-mouth – from customer to customer, worker to worker.

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Starbucks plans to open 40,000 stores worldwide (10,000 more than McDonald's has today!). They'll only get – and keep – all the warm bodies they need by continuing to live and breathe their Brand to potential employees, as they now do with *Love what you do. Share it with others*. These words appear on recruitment signage, at the bottom of your receipt and in employees' Green Apron Book, a passport-sized document that is the barista's bible.

Southwest Airlines, the only US airline to turn a profit for 34 consecutive years, has its own version of the Starbucks approach: *Make them want you before you want them*.

Stay tuned for two things: My article in *Marketing* magazine (on newsstands March 19) and upcoming book – BRAND: It Ain't the Logo (*It's what people think of you™*).