

instincts

instincts is a monthly publication on Branding for clients, associates and friends.

Our Mission: Support and challenge business leaders to maximize the potential within their Brand.



Rise of the Panic Brands?

The global economic crisis has everyone scared. It could be that in the Branding world, corporations and design firms are responding to the crisis by birthing a new species: the Panic Brand.

Take Tropicana orange juice, for instance. For years, their carton has easily been the most recognizable on the shelf. Its bright graphics – of a big juicy orange with a straw stuck in it – clearly convey Tropicana’s premium position and fundamental difference from the “from concentrate” competition. The orange and straw comprise what we call a *core idea*: like the Energizer Bunny, the Maytag Man and TD’s green chair, a core idea speaks volumes about a Brand’s position in a way that is meaningful and compelling to the target audience.

And yet, in the United States, Tropicana recently took the graphics on its instantly recognizable carton and changed them to something utterly different and downright generic, suggesting a product as far from premium as could be. Gone was the iconic orange with straw. Gone were legions of loyal customers, who couldn’t find their favourite Brand anymore.

Core ideas speak volumes about a Brand’s position

Oops.

Sales dropped, and after only two months, Tropicana is making the costly move of reverting to its old packaging. That cost, of course, on top of the money spent changing the carton in the first place.

What were they thinking? It could be that they’ve surrendered to the panic sweeping other iconic Brands – Wal-Mart, Kraft and Pepsi among them. Much in the way that these giants have just changed their logos to appear (in their opinion) more consumer-friendly in frightening times, Tropicana might have thought that softening their categorically premium position would hold sales steady.



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and Books for Business

“**Brand: It Ain’t the Logo*** should be required reading for anyone who sits around the ‘big table’ and for anyone who seeks to influence their decisions.”

Ken Wong
Associate Professor, Business
and Marketing Strategy
Queen’s School of Business

Instinct in the media

LEADER-POST
Division of Canwest Publishing Inc.

Greg De Koker comments on
identity changes by Tropicana,
Wal-Mart and Kraft

Go to our [In the Media](#) page.

What does the Brand Coach coach?

Ensure your package designers are not operating in silos. Without complete information on what the Brand means, they are understandably more likely to discard vital core ideas. And guard against Old Friends, those internal stakeholders long tired with the Brand’s messaging. All it takes is a roomful of them to change the Brand’s identity without taking into account the millions of customers who are comforted – especially in panicked times – by consistency.