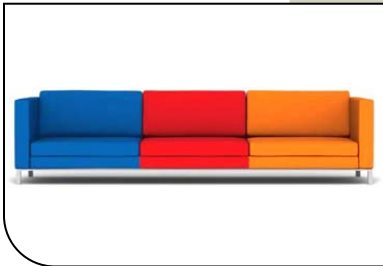


instincts

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.



Bell's Branding Blunders

Are you a Walmart? Assuming you don't have their unprecedented scale, don't fool yourself into believing you can stake out a Brand position on the basis of low prices. It's a major Branding mistake. You'll just be undercut by the next guy. And your customers – the ones you trained to buy based on price – will drop you cold.

Bell has put itself in jeopardy of exactly this scenario by committing a second big Branding error: acknowledging your competition when you're the leader. In this case, the rival is Rogers, which launched a frontal assault on Bell's landline business with TV spots and billboards sporting a couch – half Rogers red, half Bell blue – meant to illustrate that Rogers' home phone quality was equal to Bell's: "The only difference? The price," went the copy.

Bell fired back with a bigger couch – elongated and with much more blue than red – and the words "Get more than Rogers for less than Rogers."

Ever heard of Telehop?

It's poor Brand strategy. Bell could once posture that Rogers was a mere wannabe. Now they have acknowledged them as near-equals. Plus, Rogers now knows they've hit Bell where it hurts: why else would Bell respond with a copycat campaign?

Why didn't Bell instead respond with an aspect of their hugely expensive "Today just got better" strategy, thereby ignoring Rogers' price challenge? Maybe it's because Bell's customer service remains truly bad, exposing "Today just got better" as a farce.

What does the Brand Coach coach?

If you are the market leader, never acknowledge your competition in your advertising and promotion, and never compete on price alone. By copying your competitors' ads, you stoop to their level and give even lesser players ammunition to enter the fray.

Ever heard of Telehop? Now you have: this tiny outfit has been running print ads with a couch of their own – in three colours, of course – promoting home phone service on par with Bell and Rogers, but at a *quarter* of the price.



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"**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

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on "What
Makes the
United States
Special"



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