



My Career

### **Harnessing brand power**

CLAIRE HALLIDAY

505 words

9 November 2005

[The Age](#)

First

36

English

© 2005 Copyright John Fairfax Holdings Limited. [www.theage.com.au](http://www.theage.com.au) Not available for re-distribution.

### Sales & Marketing

INNOVATIVE marketing done well can be more efficient as a business tool than product and brand innovation, and can benefit any business, according to Stefan Grafe, director of brand consultancy specialist Mext.

Mr Grafe, who has more than 15 years of experience in brand consultancy, advertising and communication, believes a successful brand strategy should be continuously questioned and adjusted as the business or product evolves.

"People often think of brands as something magic that defy normal rules. But although brands are the most exciting part of a business . . . they work to the same rules as everything else. Set your goal, prepare properly, define your steps and go."

Mr Grafe advises that if the client's requirement for their brand is a nice look, "they should go to a design firm".

"If they think of their brand as the next TV commercial, they are best off with the ad agencies," he says. "If they consider their brand a business tool to develop measurable growth along clearly defined strategies, they should talk to us."

He says brand creation requires people who are "visionary and anticipate what can and will be".

And the mistakes?

"They think 'liking' equates to business success," Mr Grafe says. "They think a brand can hide inadequacies in product or service and organisation. They think of the brand as 'the nice add-on to their marketing plan'."

"If we talk about brand in a marketing context, then the brand should actually determine the use of the marketing tools and serve as a yardstick to ensure strategic consistency," he says.

At boutique graphic design consultancy Girling Design, director Nick Girling brings a graphic design degree and more than a decade of branding experience to the business he formed in 1999.

With clients including Hewlett-Packard, Deakin University, Mitch Dowd and Myer GraceBros, Mr Girling says "business image is very important".

"A business should contact a branding specialist when they want to grow and operate more effectively," Mr Girling says.

With a belief that the anchor point for a strong brand stems from the company philosophy, Mr Girling says "the values should be front of mind and message, rather than hidden".

"A good philosophy will inspire you, attract customers and provide your employees with a sense of a deeper purpose than simply making money."

He says a good logo and brand is distinctive, instantly recognisable when physically large or small, is clear when presented on coloured or textured backgrounds, is memorable and engaging, and is seen as positive, in line with the target market's needs.

Clever branding, Mr Girling says, is critical for growing businesses. Successful branding doesn't just mean pretty design, though.

"As a marketing tool, the brand is more than the logo," he says. "To us the brand is everything that makes contact with the target audience. The brand is in the detail and consistency across the broad range of items." -- CLAIRE HALLIDAY