



## WHITE PAPER

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## What's your Brand?

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## What's your brand?

With so many similar products and services out on the market today, it's difficult for small businesses to differentiate themselves from their larger competitors. So how can a small business gain a competitive edge against larger businesses? Great branding!

Branding isn't just about having a catchy slogan or a unique company logo. Those are important, yet even more important is the way that those branding tools help create a relationship between a brand and a consumer. Larger companies like Nike and Starbucks are superior at creating relationships with their customers. Branding isn't just for big companies with huge advertising budgets. The same tools and techniques can be used by small businesses.

Consider this scenario. A small business is suddenly threatened by the appearance of a large business sure to drive in customers with its lower prices and higher volume. The small business is perceived as the underdog likely to go under in a few short months. However, the small business survives--and in some cases, closes down the larger one. What happened?

The smaller business branded itself more effectively! They sold more than their products--they sold their concept to their customers. They advertised in local papers, put their logos on everything from key chains to pens to company invoices and participated in several community outreach events. Customers formed an attachment to the smaller business' products as a result of an aggressive branding strategy.

## Tapping Emotions

The most successful branding is done by businesses that appeal to their customers' emotions. You may be selling a product that is very similar to one of your larger competitors. It's your job to reach out to customers on an emotional level to make them want to buy your product over your competitors.

## Connecting to Customers

Let's say for example, you own a store that sells fresh produce. Inevitably, a supermarket opens around the corner that offers exotic fruit from all over the world at discounted prices. Most people would throw their hands up in the air and put a For Sale sign up in their window. Not you! Why not? From day one, you've branded your produce store.

Customers patronize your store because they get the best quality fruit and superior customer service. You remember all your customers by their first names and help them pick out their fruit. Your customers refuse to go to your competitor because they don't get the attention that you give them. And you stress this commitment to quality when you promote or advertise your store. That's good branding - it's an emotional connection between your store and your customers.

## **Creating Character**

Great company branding reveals the true character of a company. Image is just as important as your product and service. Image is the reason why a customer is going to do business with you and not a larger competitor. What perception would you like your customers to have of your business?

Keep in mind that successful branding doesn't revolve around one product or service. It encompasses a company's mission statement. What makes your company different from your competitors? Your brand should carry the answer. Implementing that brand strategy is the way you crystallize your message in the mind of your customers--and NEBS offers a [full range of products](#) to help you get started.