

February 2016

## WHAT DOES A GREAT LOGO SAY TO YOUR CUSTOMERS?



Last year, Idea Custom Solutions saw a lot of new concepts in marketing. Business news seemed like an endless stream of brand reboots, new logos and innovative, eye-catching ideas.

Ultimately 2015's visual wonders got many of us talking. We asked ourselves things like "What is great logo?" and "What makes a brand?"

We know that a brand is not simply a name. And that your company's brand is not *just* a logo. Experts at the *Harvard Business Review* went so far as to declare a few years ago that a logo is not a brand. Rather, it's everything your customers come into contact with and perceive about your company.

What most of us do agree is that a brand — if truly powerful — stands on its own. When you conjure up a brand visually or verbally, you know exactly what it is, what the underlying product or service is and what it stands for.

But let's face it. A logo that stands out, whether it represents a global mega-brand or a savvy local business, carves out a place in customers' minds. When crafting your new company logo or helping others with their logo re-designs, you should think about what the brand should say.

### Who are You?

To find out a little more about who you or your clients are, you could sit

## UPCOMING EVENTS

If you are attending any of these conferences, please feel free to reach out to set up an appointment or connect with Jay Busselle, Business Development,  
[jbusselle@ideacustom.com](mailto:jbusselle@ideacustom.com)  
or [602-690-2595](tel:602-690-2595).

### NBM

Arlington, TX  
March 10-12  
Exhibiting and Education Session,  
Booth 527

### PPAI Expo East / ISS

Atlantic City, NJ  
March 16-19  
Exhibiting and Education Session.  
Booth 500

### NBM

Indianapolis, IN  
June 2-4  
Exhibiting and Education Session

### ASI Show!

Chicago, IL  
July 13-14  
Exhibiting, Booth 1138

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



down with an ad agency and pay them to build a campaign. But it might be more useful to ask yourself simply “Who are we?”

That’s what [one business writer at Industrial Distribution magazine](#) did. In attempting to answer this question (which might not be as easy as you think), you and the stakeholders of your business can discover quite a bit.

Don't be afraid to dig deep, tell your story, and identify what you're made of — and ultimately what value and results you deliver to your customers. It is important to be real, consistent and predictable.

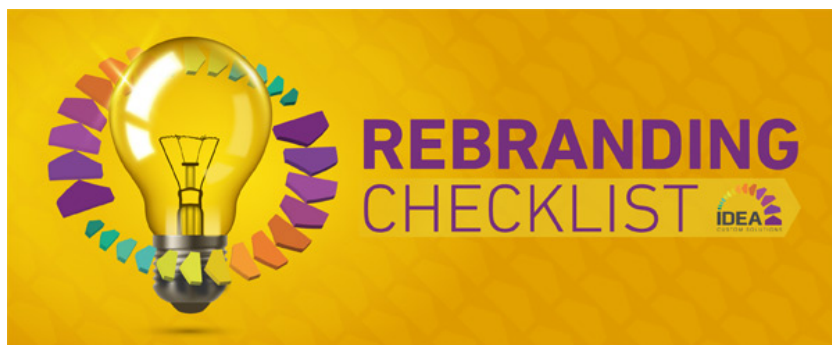
### Work with an Expert

There are intensive studies on the way that [colors influence consumer choices](#) and our judgments about brands. Specifically, experts have distinguished that [color does speak to people](#). For example, blue evokes trust, red identifies passion and green says your brand is eco-friendly.

Whatever your brand says to customers and whichever direction you choose, remember that your logo must represent your business by engaging your audience with [color and good design](#), while evoking positive, memorable thoughts about the quality of your products and services.

Translating values and the words that describe your company into a logo requires talent and expertise. That’s why [we are here to help](#). Logo design is one of our Custom Creative services, available under Artwork in our IDEA order management system. Or contact us to learn more at [847-930-3209](tel:847-930-3209) or [marketing@ideacustom.com](mailto:marketing@ideacustom.com).

## FREE REBRANDING CHECKLIST



If you are creating a new logo for your company or helping your customers develop a new look, [here's a great resource](#), which reminds you all of the areas to cover so that rebranding initiative is thorough and professional!

## REV UP FOR 2016 TRADE SHOWS

Sometimes it seems that everything has gone digital. In 2016, we think of our [smartphones and internet service](#) as life necessities. You can purchase almost anything online, from groceries to office technology to the latest fashions. You can even shop for cars virtually.

### Parag Thorat

Associate Vice President, Operations

“It’s been a wonderful experience to be part of the Idea Custom Solutions team for almost four years,” Parag Thorat tells us. He started with the company as the manager of operations for the promotional products sector. In April of 2013, he was promoted to senior manager and, later, he became associate vice president of operations, meaning he also oversees the fulfillment for office superstore clients. He explains, “A person who feels appreciated will always do more than what is expected. It gives me immense joy working with and grooming my team for success.”

On a typical day, Parag creates a thorough to-do list. His approach is to tackle harder tasks earlier in the day when his brain is fresh. He often communicates with a diverse range of colleagues and clients, scheduling calls appropriately. He believes his biggest accomplishment since joining Idea Custom Solutions has been the opportunity to work in a professional environment with experienced senior team members, which has been very educational for him.

Parag's favorite things about Idea Custom Solutions are the team bonding activities, rewards and recognition programs and step-up training. To anyone thinking of joining Idea Custom Solutions, he advises: “When you want to achieve as badly as you want to breathe, you will be successful.”

Prior to joining Idea Custom Solutions, Parag says that every job he had previously gave him an opportunity to learn and grow. He started his career in 1996 as an administrative assistant in the International Operations division of Mascon Computer Services Pvt. Ltd. and was promoted to production admin-in-charge. In March of 2000, he moved onto Versaware Technologies (Merlion Conversion Labs Pvt. Ltd.) and worked there until April 2012. In this role, he was recognized frequently and promoted to manager of logistics and later head of India KPO Operations.

Yet both consumers and business-to-business buyers [still value human interaction](#). Plus, getting the look and feel of the product you are buying is something you can't get from the screen of your tablet. *Huffington Post* business writer Hervé Sedky points out that, because of this need for the tangible and human interaction, trade shows are still where it's at for both buyers and sellers.

"Forget email, Skype, go-to-meeting, video conferences or social media. The real FaceTime is actually 'face time,' where you can shake hands and look someone in the eye." Sedky wrote. "It's not enough to know the company that makes the things we buy. We need to know the people who make them — their values, not just their value."

Just like any other marketing method for business, trade shows are what businesses make of them. Showing up is not enough. Whether they attend [ASI Chicago](#), or even one more focused on technology and startups like [South By Southwest](#), people must connect with other attendees.

With this principle in mind, the trade show is a great place for you and your customers to promote businesses and brands. Some experts like to say that trade shows are "all about the swag", noting that attendees often come to trade shows of all types hoping to take home fun and useful giveaways.

Regardless of what giveaways you choose or recommend to others — whether you go with branded drinkware, writing instruments, convenience items [like lip balm and pens](#), or even something more quirky and memorable like [fanny packs](#) — consider who is coming.

The Better Business Bureau recommends, if companies are attending "a convention with a [specific theme](#) — pet owners, for example — consider bringing leashes or pet bowls branded with your company name. If it's an education fair, bring notebooks, backpacks, pencils and erasers emblazoned with your company logo."

Last month, ZD Net brought up some vital points about how businesses can get the most out of each trade show they attend as exhibitors. What ZD Net said is simple but useful wisdom. At trade shows, attendees should make sure to meet new people. They should not lunch with folks they already know. And, if they have some ideal people in mind they want to meet (such as people they know of but haven't met in person), it's effective to [set up meetings or interviews prior to arrival](#).

In terms of conversations, suggest that your customers ask people why they are there and what they've seen so far. This will provide perspective on future customers' needs, values and motivations. Meanwhile, they can discover things in common and the benefits of working together.

Lastly, when you or your customers are at these events, [other smart trade show tips](#) are to be welcoming and use any relevant hashtags when posting blurbs on company LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook pages.

Of course, our favorite tip is to use Idea Custom Solutions for the [vector artwork and embroidery digitizing](#) you need for all those

Parag was born in Mumbai and completed his studies in Pune. His wife, Cheryl, is a process-trainer for SunCorp Insurance. "She has been supporting our family, juggling her days between work and home chores." A proud father, Parag tells us he is blessed with two beautiful and loving daughters: Nishita and Tanisha, who are studying at Mount Carmel Convent High School in Pune.

"After a week at the office, my angels give me a hundred reasons to smile. I like to spend time with family and friends, go on long drives and relax in the countryside." He also enjoys morning walks and playing indoor games including chess and carrom. His favorite book is *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo and his all-time favorite movie is "Top Gun" (Of course, he is looking forward to the sequel).

His dad has always been his inspiration and hero. Parag says his mother has also been a great support, blessing and mentor at every stage of his life. Ultimately, Parag would like to be known for his smile and personality, as well as the trust and respect in his team.

## NOTABLE QUOTES



"When people use your [brand name as a verb](#), that is remarkable."

— Meg Whitman



"[Mediocrity](#) drives me crazy."

— Debi Mazar, actress



promotional products and wearables that will set your business and your customers apart! And don't forget the design of brochures, product spec sheets and other collateral!

## SOCIAL MEDIA CAN STRENGTHEN YOUR REACH



The promotional products business is one in which distributors help SMBs place their brands in the hands of customers and prospects. While SMBs are certainly pouring more resources into digital marketing, we know that classic marketing tools also work.

Even in 2016, [pens and writing instruments](#) are on the rise. Meanwhile, wearables like caps and outerwear, continue to provide [comfort and style](#) that you can't get from apps or websites! Even today's techies love useful things — like as tote bags and fanny packs to carry their digital wares.

With that in mind don't forget the power of the digital word, and how you can use your social media channels to boost your business. By using social media to talk up new products and strategies in SMB marketing, you will keep your customer base abreast of what's new... and what you offer.

### Social Media isn't Just for the Big Brands

According to business/entrepreneurship author Patrick Sitkins, social media is an essential part of any entrepreneur's strategy. "Marketing is one of those areas that make or break many small businesses," he wrote in a recent article. "One thing that has leveled the playing field with larger corporations is [the power of social media marketing](#)," Sitkins added.

Small businesses [continue to innovate](#) and drive the economy. And regardless of the size of their marketing budgets, SMBs can drive conversations with social media. The [Advertising Specialty Institute](#) advises joining groups related to promotional products, marketing and industries that you sell into, [posting content that is relevant](#) to prospects and clients and encouraging participation.



"Obsession is the biggest driver of innovation. It gnaws at you. It pushes you beyond what other people have tried."

— Ayah Bdeir, CEO of littlebits



"The strongest logos tell simple stories."

— Sol Sender, visionary graphic designer



"Simplicity is the trademark of genius."

— Robin Sharma



"Never assume someone is smarter than you."

— Bethenny Frankel



"Having fun is a very particular skill. And not everyone has that skill."

— Jerry Seinfeld

Some firms like [Idea Custom Solutions](#) use combinations of [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) to keep connected with customers, while others are strong users of Facebook for business. Figure out what works for you and your target markets, based on where your contacts spend time online.

In terms of frequency and timing, “According to LinkedIn, posting 20 times a month will allow you to reach 60 percent of your unique audience with one or more updates,” ASI wrote recently. “While LinkedIn’s busiest hours are morning and midday during the workweek, it’s smart to experiment with different times to see what works best for you.”

## Visuals Build Familiarity

Some businesses have gone as far as to include the more visual platforms of social media into their marketing such as [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#). Surely, businesses that sell with images, including [photographers](#) or [florists](#), might seem to be the obvious winners on social media. But the truth is that captivating visual content can be your [social media secret weapon](#), while also making your business familiar to prospects.

Post images of exciting new products. Upload photos of important industry events and [trade shows](#) you’ve attended. Or tell your story by introducing the people in your company. And don’t be afraid to share your [sense of humor](#).

## Coordinate Your Efforts

While photos and images on social platforms like Instagram start conversations, [visual posts can have a bigger effect](#) when coordinated with similar content on your LinkedIn and Facebook business profiles.

Remember that your customers come to you for advice and help. Keep them supplied not only with compelling images, but also with [great social media content](#) and recommendations about promotional products and specialty advertising.

By sharing your latest ideas and expertise on social media, you’re not only keeping the conversation going about your business. You’re also engaging you’re customers, helping them and building trust.

## CLIENTS ARE RAVING



Hi, I just found this guy and he is fabulous. I am so



“A brand for a company is like a reputation for a person. You earn reputation by [trying to do hard things well](#).”

— Jeff Bezos



“Life isn’t about finding yourself. [Life is about creating yourself](#).”

— George Bernard Shaw



“Great advertising is the [expression of deep emotional sincerity](#).”

— Storm Jameson

## TWEET THAT!

Let Idea Custom Solutions help you find content for social media:

### PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

[#PromoProducts](#) like water bottles, wearables bring people to your booth. How else do you kill it at [#TradeShows](#)? <http://goo.gl/BKQyE9>

[Tweet That!](#)

Product samples, [#wearables](#), bottled drinks grab guests at [#TradeShows](#) and help win customers. <http://goo.gl/rrzmv7>

[Tweet That!](#)

When it comes to [#wearables](#) with [#logos](#), “less is more” to

“excited. He is going to do my logo for me. He’s going to give me great options. I am ready to see my new logo. It’s going to be perfect!”

### Video from ASI Show Dallas

Leslie McGoey, Second-line Handkerchiefs



## DESIGN SHOWCASE

### Embroidery Digitizing



### Vector Artwork



[#millennials](#). Adapt giveaways to reach new lifelong customers.

<https://goo.gl/5t2wUn>

[Tweet That!](#)

Convenience food giant Hot Pockets is cooking up [#BrandLoyalty](#) with contests and [#PromoProducts](#)  
<http://goo.gl/fjB8VQ>

[Tweet That!](#)

### LOGO DESIGN

According to Inc., the 10 best-ever [#logos](#) were both iconic and functional.

<http://goo.gl/jwtVWo>

[Tweet That!](#)

The 1990s saw coffee go from basic to chic. Since, sellers from Illy to Wawa have brewed up tasty [#logos](#).

<http://goo.gl/PsvD0M>

[Tweet That!](#)

BMW is the “Ultimate Driving Machine”. Yet the origin of its iconic [#logo](#) may surprise you.

<http://goo.gl/CESKU9>

[Tweet That!](#)

Baseball’s [#MilwaukeeBrewers](#) bring back an old fan favorite, the iconic “glove” [#logo](#).

<http://goo.gl/kDyY0V>

[Tweet That!](#)

### BRANDING

Are you reliable? Experienced Innovative? If your brand could speak how would it describe you?

<http://goo.gl/9nthL7>

[Tweet That!](#)

Successful [#brands](#) win attention from [#millennials](#). Focus on friends, social relationships and transparency.

<http://goo.gl/42rv3i>

[Tweet That!](#)

If you have any designs created by our team that you would like to share in this newsletter, send them to us at [marketing@ideacustom.com](mailto:marketing@ideacustom.com)



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