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BrandAnimation: Reaching an Audience Doesn't Mean Anywhere and Everywhere

By Erik Hauser



Over the weekend I sat down to work on the column, thinking about the meaning of names. I was stuck, so I did what any other like-minded, so-called creative person might do. I Googled "what's in a name" to see what might show up, expecting a bunch of Shakespeare and Romeo and Juliet references.

Well, it turns out that the first result (as of Sunday) was the *Kabalarians'* Website. For those of you who aren't familiar, the Kabalarian Philosophy, according to my very limited understanding, is similar to [numerology](#) or other mathematical principles of names.

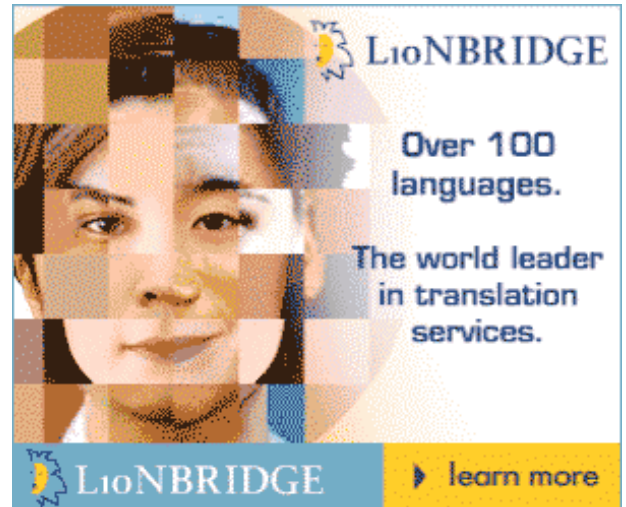
According to the Website, "One's mental characteristics, state of well-being, and experiences in life are shown to be determined by one's name." While I'm not exactly sure how that really applies to people, it certainly got me started. Thanks, Google.

So what is the meaning of "BrandAnimation"? The unofficial marketing lexicon of Erik Hauser defines it as the insertion of a brand into a lifestyle to give the brand immediate relevancy with the intended audience. Translation: We place the brand anywhere the audience is most receptive.

Seems simple enough. But to me, its not the word or the definition that is so important. It is the marketing methodology needed to truly be anywhere the audience is most receptive.

To be anywhere, marketers must use what I call a "world as our canvas" methodology to effectively engage customers. In the past, agencies and brands have thought that being anywhere primarily meant ads on TV, in print, and on radio. Thanks to Al Gore and a few academic nerds, most marketers have added the Internet to that mix. Although I will argue that many brands still have no idea how to best use the Internet; I'll save that one for another time.

Our communication strategies have been designed within these mediums much as food programs have been designed around the food pyramid. Except the traditional marketing communication paradigms have crumbled. On the ground where they once stood are the new mediums of communications needed to effectively engage consumers. In today's world "impressions" as a metric should no longer be accepted. Engagement and

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sensory appeal should be the new gold standards to measure effectiveness of campaigns. The ability to be anywhere allows brands to achieve that engagement.

Now this shift in the marketing world that puts brands anywhere can be both good and bad. Remaining true to the authenticity of a brand's story and its DNA is extremely vital when implementing the "world as our canvas" approach.

A reporter once asked me if I thought that it was a good idea that a brand was advertised on a urinal. My reply was simple: Depends on the brand. Then she clarified and said that she was talking about advertising on the urinal cake. To that I simply said, "If you think your brand's story has a chapter about that, and if you find one, let me know." The same holds true about advertising on people's foreheads and posteriors. My educated guess tells me that there aren't many chapters in brand's stories that help carry those tactics off--but who knows?

The point is that being "anywhere the audience is most receptive" does not mean "anywhere," and it certainly does not mean "everywhere." And it's the where, when, and how the brand is inserted anywhere that separates the good marketers from the rest. My friend Bill, an equities trader, loves coming up with peculiar places to advertise after a few beers. And even I'll admit he can be quite inventive. But being odd and peculiar just for the sake of being so is not good marketing. It's simply odd and peculiar.

So then, the next question, assuming anyone is still reading, is how BrandAnimation and experiential marketing are interconnected. Well, that just so happens to be the topic of my next column.

That's it for now. I look forward to chatting with you soon! Keep those e-mails coming. It's a crazy world out there, and if you aren't living on the edge you might be taking up too much space.

By the way, please be sure to pick up a copy of my buddy [Max Lenderman's](#) book "[Experience the Message.](#)" Until we meet again.

Erik Hauser is creative director/founder of San Francisco-based marketing firm [Swivel Media](#) and founder of [IXMA](#), the International Experiential Marketing Association. He pens "BrandAnimation" once a month for CHIEF MARKETER.

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