



# Marketing Blog

## ARTICLE ON BRANDING WRITTEN FOR REAL ESTATE AGENTS

Written by David Amack

What's the No. 1 arrow you can have in your quiver of marketing tools? Your very own branding.

Just so we're clear, branding is the package of color, text, and art that sets apart an entity, whether a person or corporation, from any other entity in the world. Now, how powerful is that?

Great branding not only sets you apart, but it conveys who you are and what you're about. Heavy black text says one thing while script says another. Black and yellow convey one tone, while pink and violet convey another. Understated branding is suitable for professionals more likely to wear a business suit. Bungee jumpers and graphic designers can get away with more. You get the idea.

At the heart of all branding is the logo. Some logos contain artwork, while others do not. If artwork is used, it's important to keep it simple. Gradient fills and fine detail may look good at a large size, but how will it look at business card size? Seasoned designers will tell you there are two rules for logos: they should look good before any color is added, and they should be distinctive enough to be recognized on a business card across the room. It's also nice when a logo can be taken apart, and only one or two elements used.

For logos consisting solely of text, there needs to be some part of the text that has been tweaked. This concept became more important after the introduction of the personal computer and our increased awareness of so many typefaces. In the logo sampler above, you can see that SONY, unchanged for at least 40 years, is nothing more than one upper-case font. Dell, on the other hand, made one simple yet dramatic change to the E and produced one of the most recognizable logos out there today.

A few comments on the logo sampler: These are some of the most recognizable logos in the world. All share some common attributes that make them so powerful (other than costing a freaking fortune and taking months to develop). Most important is simplicity. Only Apple's logo uses a gradient, but even that is very understated. Nike can use the swoosh, the text, or both. Same goes for Lexus and Boeing. All logos do or would look good in black and white. The simplicity and color of Oprah Magazine make it compelling, and probably one of the first your eye went to. Notice how many have been around for decades, unchanged.

And finally, pay attention to your emotional attachment to some of these logos. Tell me that's not power.

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## TELLING THE STORY WITH WORDS AND PICTURES

Written by David Amack

Whether you promote your listings via a property brochure, your website, or HTML email, you need to find just the right combination words and pictures to motivate your audience. The trick is to appeal to the reader's emotion and then get out of the way. That calls for a strategy and plenty of creativity. Who is likely to buy this home? What are the most compelling features? Which photos best illustrate them? How many photos should be used? Which words will appeal to the buyer?

Putting everything together is easier said than done, but the good news is that once you've got your strategy, photos, and wording, you can use them in all your marketing efforts for that property.

Now, you already know that the best motivator is to sell the sizzle, not the steak. Here are some tips to sell that sizzle.

- Have a professional shoot "dream shots" of the property. The chilled wine, poolside with the great view. The bubbling spa at sunset with wine glasses and pupus ready to go. The gourmet kitchen, tastefully staged. The grand entryway. The secluded garden, with an open book and bowl of fruit on the lanai table. Every property has a few such opportunities.
- When space is limited (and when isn't it?), use fewer photos. One great shot is better than three small ones where details are hard to make out. Think big.
- Each photo must have a purpose. Yes, you'd like to show the guest bedroom, but not if all you can really see is the furniture. This is an issue for smaller rooms, but that's ok; smaller rooms aren't likely to have the emotional impact of the big glamour shot.
- Accept the fact that some photos, even those taken by a pro, just won't work. One jaw-dropping shot will be worth the price of the whole shoot, anyway.
- Once you've got the killer shot, say the poolside at sunset, remember to sell the sizzle. That means *don't describe the photo*. Instead of stating the obvious with "Breath-taking Sunset," go right for the jugular and sell the sizzle: "Could You Call This Home?"
- Closely related to the point above, do everything you can to help the buyers picture themselves in the spa or sitting by the pool or doing something that makes this home worth the price.
- When describing a feature, work in a benefit. *Cool tile flooring* is better than *tile floor*.
- If you want your audience to learn about all those great home features, use bullets. Bulleted items take no more space than a paragraph, especially if you use two columns. Want your audience to miss the features? Use one big long boring paragraph.

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