



Creating a Tagline That Your Client Will Fall in Love With

By Paul Regensburg



The CEO of a client for whom we recently created a brand was what I would call a "mildly supportive observer" throughout a comprehensive branding process we led his company through. When he heard the tagline, it all clicked for him and he became an effective brand evangelist to his customers and employees. It takes Tiger Woods thousands of putts to sink that 10 footer when it matters. The right tagline follows that same logic.

In much of the work we do crafting brand identities, marketing campaigns and interactive experiences, words are strategic elements of design. Strong messaging is the warp and weft in the fabric of a strong brand. As part of our brand engagements, we develop a lot of taglines for our clients. The term "tagline" has always bothered me because it has such a trivial sound, bringing to mind the in-house competitions companies often have, especially in lean times.

When done right a tagline can catch the imagination of a company and drive home the key differentiator. If the underlying brand positioning is authentic, "a tagline is worth a thousand pictures."

Here are five tips for creating a tagline that your client will fall in love with.

SIMPLICITY

Though it lacks soul, salesforce.com's "No Software" icon is an effective tagline. This is an idea simple enough for anyone to understand. Salesforce.com has not only built a brand around this simple tagline, they started a category, SAAS. Simplicity sells.

CLARITY

The tagline process forces you to be clear. If you're like most companies, you have a number of things you'd like customers to know about you. You need to decide which is first among equals, or don't bother with a tagline. If you are better, faster and stronger, decide which attribute is least prevalent among your competitors and emphasize that.

BRANDED

If you've conducted a brand exercise, then a tagline should flow naturally from that. A tagline is a distillation of your brand into its simplest, most memorable form. Our recent brand work for Unica Corporation is a strong example of a branded tagline. We built a customer-focused brand around the tagline, "Marketing Success Starts with U," which employs the double meaning,

- a) That "U," the customer are ultimately in control of your marketing and
- b) That the "U" also stands for Unica, the catalyst for that success.

UNIQUE

Volkswagen's "Drivers Wanted" is one of my favorite taglines. In just two words (yes, forget for a moment the multi-million dollar ad campaign) it implied the kind of customer they were targeting and made one want to be that customer. Two little words uniquely raised the perception of quality and brand leadership. "Drivers Wanted" actually embodies all of the characteristics of a great tagline.

BENEFIT-DRIVEN

A good tagline is benefit-driven. The work we did for medical device maker NxStage Medical, is a good example of a benefit-driven tagline. NxStage is revolutionizing kidney dialysis (renal care) by providing a simple, compact home dialysis solution. Our tagline is "Renal Care, Pure and Simple." This understated tagline actually embodies a revolutionary concept for this market, which is "simplicity," and combines it with a requirement of dialysis, which is purification of blood.

These 5 tips will give you a great start for crafting a tagline your clients will fall in love with... or at least begin to develop a romantic inclination.

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