

# Business Behind the Breed

*Marketing tips and tricks give Angus breeders a leg-up in the competitive cattle industry.*

*by Megan Silveira*

“People can breed great cattle and get average prices, and people can breed average cattle but get great prices,” said Rick Cozzitorto, former Angus Media president, at an Angus University session during the 2018 Angus Convention. “The difference lies with the marketing.

He defined marketing as the action or business of promoting and selling products or services. While the term is one all ranchers are likely familiar, the ability to effectively market one’s operation is not quite as well-known.

## Secret to success

Cozzitorto said the most important thing about marketing is awareness. He describes the marketing process as a chain of events, flowing from awareness to eventual loyalty.

Luckily for Angus breeder, Cozzitorto said “commercial cattlemen are the most loyal people you’ll ever see.” People are constantly on the hunt for new information, and he said it’s seedstock breeders’ job as marketers of herds to provide them with it.

Even though customers aim to acquire new information, Cozzitorto said it can be difficult to provide data to them in an effective manner. He informed breeders the attention span of the average consumer is only eight seconds, less than that of a goldfish.

With this in mind, Cozzitorto said ranchers should always be willing to improve their marketing methods.

And he believes sources provided by the Association are a great place to get started.

“[The Association] is invested,” he explained. “The Association is going to invest in this organization and this business to help you be more prepared for the future.”

**“A brand is the way a product or imagery makes you feel.”  
— Sara Reardon**

In regards to advertisements, Cozzitorto urged ranchers to look at the actual number of individuals affected by the ad, a measurement he referred to as “cost per touch.” He said a successful ad will impact a large number of potential consumers from the desired audience at the lowest price possible.

Cozzitorto promoted publications by the Association, such as the *Angus Journal* and the *Angus Beef Bulletin*, as accessible and effective marketing outlets for Angus breeders.

He said the *Angus Journal* reaches more than 13,000 readers. If that isn’t convincing enough, the *Angus Beef Bulletin* is sent exclusively to individuals who have purchased a registered Angus bull within the past three years.

With these two options, Cozzitorto said the Association is striving to provide an outlet for Angus breeders to put their marketing skills to work.

## Defining a brand

As members of the cattle industry, branding is not an unfamiliar process. However, Sara Reardon, Angus Media general manager, introduced Convention attendees to the idea of personal branding.

She said personal branding requires more than just a logo. Brands are capable of helping buyers relate to a company and persuading them to take part in your business.

“A brand is the way a product or imagery makes you feel,” Reardon said. She described a brand as showcasing the unique value of a business while also defining the company’s purpose.

With consistent marketing of an operation’s image and message, Reardon said revenue can be increased by roughly 23%.

According Reardon, the first step of “consistent branding” is to create a mission statement or a description of what your company is going to do.

By keeping advertisements and marketing across all forms of media (website, print publications, social media, sales books, etc.) consistent, Reardon said businesses are set apart from their competition. This helps the business stand out in a positive way to their potential customers.

Reardon stressed the importance of frequency. By keeping marketing consistent, operations are able to make a larger impact on their audience. In fact, Reardon said it takes seven separate views of an

advertisement before the consumer even begins to notice it.

But at the end of the day, Reardon explained one operation “cannot be everything to everyone.” As much as cattle breeders want to cater to the needs and wants of every buyer, Reardon encouraged operations to create a brand that is focused.

Reardon believes the best brands are established through marketing research which reveals the needs and preferences of desired consumers. By reading publications within the industry, competitive analysis and surveys, Reardon said ranchers are able to determine the characteristics of consumers and shape marketing to match their profile.

The last few steps of successful branding are laid out by Reardon: learn circulation price, confirm advertisement is reaching the correct audience and set a budget for the branding program.

Branding plans can be revised as necessary, Reardon explained. She said the most important thing is to sit down and map out a branding plan, revisiting it as your operation grows and as feedback is received from consumers.

In a world of competitive breeders, cattlemen and women are only as good as their ability to run a business. While the Angus breed certainly speaks for itself in both the quality of breeders and cattle, it did

not become the “Business Breed” overnight. With a goal of marketing an operation and the help of the Association, all Angus cattlemen and women can begin to understand the business behind the breed. **AJ**

*Editor's note: Megan Silveira is a freelance writer from Denair, Calif.*

