



Stand for Something

Just like a pair of boots formed to the curvature of your feet from many miles spent together, marketing has a similar feel. Although, it's the brand you create serving as the boot in this analogy. Your brand is the vehicle essentially transporting your products and services around the globe.

by Lindsay King, assistant editor

Your brand has nothing to do with a hot iron, instead it has everything to do with the process of branding and working your animals on a typical spring day. From your crew to your facility, the tells of what's important to a producer are subtly everywhere on an operation.

“Your brand is what you say and how you behave coupled with your reputation,” says Tim Hammerich, founder of *AgGrad.com* and host of the Future of Agriculture podcast. “Your reputation is what others say about you based on shared

perceptions. Building your brand requires standing for something and being able to articulate that so other people understand it, and that is also how you drive your reputation.”

A speaker at the 2019 Cattle Industry Convention and National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Trade Show, Hammerich addressed the best strategies for branding a program or individual. His approach suggested ranches might brand and market their program much like someone seeking a job would.

“The agricultural industry is based more on relationships than transactions, that pertains to companies and individuals,” Hammerich adds. “There are more tools than ever to build your brand: LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, etc.”

The game of marketing and branding is a progressive process thanks to the quick rate technology continues to evolve. The power of an operation once lived solely in word-of-mouth brand building. Though this approach is still important, it also balances precariously on fingers hovering over a keyboard.

“We try to use advertising to attract customers and then build honest relationships with them to keep them coming back.” — John Dickinson

Be your own man

Individuality: it’s what employees strive for in a job hunt and how producers can set their operation apart from the pack.

“The intersection between what is most important to you and who you want to serve is uniquely you,” Hammerich says. “If nobody knows about it, it won’t impact your reputation or brand.”

Finding this intersection is the first step in identifying your brand. Many operations get their physical brand handed down; sometimes they are centuries old, even. However, the brand you build around it can change as quickly as the weather in a Midwestern state.

The legacy of the EZ Angus Ranch brand first graced the hides of more than 2,000 head of commercial cattle. Established in the 1870s, the EZ brand quickly came to be known for the honorable characteristics its owner, Ezekiel Callison, emitted through his herd and firm handshake.

“When Tim and Marilyn Callison got into the registered Angus business about three years ago, they were able to acquire the EZ brand for this herd

also,” says Chad Davis, the Callisons’ son-in-law and ranch manager. Preserving the reputation of the original EZ brand in the seedstock business is an essential component for future success.

Still located in southern California — Porterville — EZ Angus Ranch is one of the largest registered herds in the state and their marketing played a big role in reaching this status in the past few years.

“The Callisons started with a moderately sized registered herd and then they had the opportunity to acquire a larger one,” says John Dickinson, marketing specialist for EZ Angus Ranch. “Almost overnight,

they went from around 100 head to 600 registered Angus cattle.”

Upholding the family name

An influx of animals meant EZ Angus needed to extend their reach across the nation to find new customers. The only place to go was east.

“Taking care of people and building a brand on relationships starts with Tim and Marilyn, trickling down through the employees and flowing out to the customers,” Dickinson explains. It’s the norm in cattle country, but the difference comes from the personal touch the EZ brand puts on their business.

“We try to use advertising to attract customers and then build honest relationships with them to keep them coming back,” Dickinson says. “Most of those customers are great friends.”

Traveling is a staple element of working at EZ Angus, managers regularly find themselves at other operations building the equity of their business.

“Equity of any kind is building ownership, you can and should build business equity,” Hammerich says. “As you build business or career equity, you build your influence and power in it.”

Continued on page 50

Part of building that equity, and your brand, is a sometimes-overlooked trait — integrity. Doing what you say is an underutilized tool of any industry, but it makes the biggest difference.

“If you say you are going to follow up with a phone call or email, make sure you do it,” Hammerich says. “You might think people will forget about it, but they don't. Integrity is as simple as that.”

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If a picture is worth 1,000 words, then one advertising Angus cattle or a sale could mean the difference between a year of profit or one of loss. It's a gamble producers should heed wisely.

“We always start with clean, accurate pictures,” Dickinson explains. “We spend a lot of extra time prepping our cattle to look nice for those pictures.”

Flipping through a cattle publication and noting what elements have stopping power for you is a great way to find the direction to take your marketing scheme. Dickinson recommends looking for what catches your eye and keeps you from glossing over a particular ad.

“When we talk to buyers, we can give them 18 different reasons why they should buy our lot,” Dickinson adds, “and they will still come up with one reason not to buy and walk away. We try to make our ads foolproof for exactly that scenario.”

Part of the “foolproof” aspect of building an ad is showcasing the best of the sale, using the previously mentioned clean, accurate pictures. Top-of-the-line pedigrees and big numbers on the expected progeny differences (EPDs) are also a major selling point.

“When selling females, we take a very aggressive advertising approach,” Dickinson says. “With our geography, we can't sell cattle in four directions, we need more reach out east. We

have to do things that generate enough interest for someone to travel across the country to our sale.”

Part of capturing new attention is utilizing local sources, even the newspapers.

“Eighty percent of bull buyers are from within 150 miles of the sale site,” Dickinson says. “Even with this dynamic, we still utilize a strong blend of local and regional advertising to reach that demographic.”

EZ Angus is simply using every avenue at their disposal to increase their reach in the industry.

or fall for anything

“It is 10 times easier to keep a customer than it is to get new ones,” Dickinson explains of how important communication after the sale is to a successful business and marketing plan.

A follow-up call after the sale date goes a long way. A customer might not let you know the animal you sold them is not working in their program.

“A lot of times producers will not let you know a product is not working unless you ask them,” Dickinson says. “Waiting until the next sale

When you have them, big-number EPDs coupled with high-profile pedigrees are a surefire way to catch some eyes while thumbing through a sale book.

Establishing a “look” creates a brain pin for producers when they consistently see your advertising. When done well, an advertisement is recognizable by the color scheme or look, making the name almost unnecessary on the page.

Keep it simple, but significant. Avoid filling a page completely full just because you can. Only put the most pertinent information on an advertisement.

season to ask how the animal is working for them isn't a good strategy. During sale season, everyone is trying to call them."

It's this type of professionalism seen throughout EZ Angus endeavors setting them apart. A ranch logo printed on a cookie at a cattle sale is a seemingly minor aspect of their marketing plan, but

it's this attention to detail in every aspect of their operation that is making the difference.

Once EZ Angus proved their worth to their customers, they had the ability to spread their wings. Expanding your reach through innovative marketing strategies just might be what your operation needs to reach the next level. **AJ**

Every great cattle ad starts with a superb picture. The animal is clean; background is contrasting, but not distracting; and the animal is standing accurately to express its true form to function.



EZAR Stud 7151 - Lot 1

1 EZAR STUD 7151

CEP	EP	WW	YW	BWG	MM	ST	DOC	ECM
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100



Basin Lady Ida 2029 - Dam of Lot 1



EZAR Lady Ida 7159 - Flush sister to Lot 1

RECEIVING A ONE-THIRD SEMEN INTEREST
 Sire of this bull was the \$175,000 half interest top-selling bull of the 2015 Express Fall Bull Sale in Oklahoma. Featured at DRBarn, he is a calving-ease and mending specialist that already produced a \$200,000 son in his very first calf crop at the 2017 Express Fall Bull Sale.
 This best sire prospect has a dominant genomic profile ranking in the favorable 20% of the breed for 10 different DNA traits, many of which are antagonistic in value. This balance and consistency create outlier genetic potential and coupled with his pedigree information provide breed leading EPDs for growth and carcass value while maintaining calving-ease package.
 Dam of this bull is a model cow that is deep sided, wide based, with excellent structural soundness. She rejects tremendous and product merit in her offspring with progeny ratios of 200/100 for IMF and 200/100 for Ribeye. She will be featured in the 2018 EZ Angus Inaugural Female Sale along with many daughters.

Showing proof of successful progeny is also a marketing tool for building an effective advertisement.