



Director of Communications
and Public Relations

What They Think of You Does Matter

"I don't care what they call me so long as they spell my name correctly." This has been the rallying cry of the nation's publicists and self promoters and even a few advertisers over the years. Like many an old saw, it is simply not true.

In fact, there is good evidence that how a business is regarded is more important to its profitability than the number of people who recognize the name of the company and its product.

A San Francisco strategic-design consulting firm, Landor Associates, recently surveyed consumers in the United States and around the world. They wanted to find out what brands people recognize most, and whether they hold these brands in low or high esteem. Then they used a formula to combine the recognition and esteem scores to determine the most powerful brands in the United States and the world.

The top five most powerful brands in the United States are:

1. Coca-Cola
2. Campbell's
3. Disney
4. Pepsi-Cola
5. Kodak.

The five most powerful brands in the World are:

1. Coca-Cola
2. Sony
3. Mercedes-Benz
4. Kodak
5. Disney

These companies rank high in both esteem and recognition.

On the other hand, Sears, which ranked fifth in the United States in recognition, ranked 79th in esteem. This put it 13th in the United States. Sears has been losing market share in recent years, not because it isn't well known, but because many people don't like them as much as they once did. They have a real problem.

A brand like WD-40 is in the opposite situation. Though it has a very low name recognition it ranks 88th in the U.S. in esteem. Being well liked but not so well known means the company has a real opportunity. They obviously have a reputation and a product that they can capitalize on. All it might take is a stepped-up advertising program.

As far as Angus marketing is concerned, all this says is that your goal should be to become well known within your selected market area and also well thought of as a producer of registered Angus seedstock. You want to develop top-of-the-mind awareness so that when people think of buying seedstock they think of you first and favorably.

Becoming well known is probably the easiest. A blitz of advertising and promotion can implant a breeder's name in the minds of potential buyers in a relatively short time, say a year or two. You have seen it happen. A person with more than adequate money to invest in both cattle and promotion gets into the Angus business. Within a couple of years they hold an auction sale; they are extremely disappointed by the results.

What they fail to realize is that successful businesses are built upon both name recognition and esteem. In fact, research shows that in the cattle business people usually insist

on doing business with those they know, trust and feel comfortable with. So it is seldom if ever possible to become an "overnight" success in the beef cattle seedstock business.

On the other hand, there are many Angus breeders who are held in very high esteem. Their problem is that not very many potential customers know them or their reputation. They are a little like WD-40. They are in a good position to capitalize upon their reputation and their good product. They just need to become more widely known.

Gaining awareness in the market place is usually easier than gaining esteem. Awareness can be bought, but esteem has to be earned. It doesn't come fast or easy.

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