



# Branding Iron

► by **Eric Grant**, general manager

## A Blockbuster premise

*It wasn't too long ago that a Blockbuster video store was a short drive away, and a visit to one of its locations was a routine ritual practiced by consumers across the country.*

*At one time, the company boasted an employment of 60,000 people and a total of 9,000 stores. Its position in the marketplace, heralded by the distinctive blue-and-yellow logo, was virtually unchallenged in the entertainment-distribution business.*

### The mighty fall

However, in 2000 all of that began to change. Blockbuster executives turned down an offer to purchase the then-fledgling Netflix for \$50 million. The move, in retrospect, would have positioned the brick-and-mortar movie-rental company for the rise of Internet streaming and perhaps one of the most profound shifts in the way consumers purchase entertainment.

Today, Netflix annual revenue exceeds \$5.5 billion, and the company is considered a worldwide leader in video-streaming services and online content.

Blockbuster — with its stores once dotting main streets across America — completely closed its doors in 2013.

The road is littered with similar examples.

Kodak, Hummer and Circuit City are examples of companies that banked their futures on the premise that things would remain the same forever; that technology and the digital age wouldn't change consumer behavior.

Just ask the execs at Borders, who bet

**Balance is key  
when it comes to  
Angus marketing  
and advertising.**

big that *Amazon.com* was destined for the margins of the marketplace and no one would ever buy enough books online to threaten their retail position.

The reality is that the digital age has created an era of uncertainty — and unprecedented opportunities — for every

business in every marketplace, including the Angus business.

Chances are, there's a youth right now on a ranch in South Dakota who's making an app that could transform the way we buy and sell registered

seedstock on our smartphones. There might even be an ag student in Wyoming who's building software for drones, something that could help his family reduce their costs of labor and provide 24-hour monitoring of their range cattle.

A generation ago, these youth would have spent their summers bucking bales and fixing fence. Now, they're writing software and engineering technology.

The transformational power of something unknown, something yet undefined, is greater than it ever has been in the past. The pace of technological change only promises to accelerate in the future.

The challenge is that, as registered-Angus breeders, we no longer have the luxury of choosing which marketing world we want to operate in. We can't just be in print, because that excludes a big percentage of the potential marketplace that prefers information in digital form. We can't be solely dedicated to digital, because that ignores the traditional marketplace where the established buyers reside.

Advancing your brand today requires a balance of both. Traditional advertising is about existing customers, and digital is about the next generation of buyers.

Ignoring this simple premise can place your brand at risk and put it on track for a Blockbuster loss in long-term market relevance.

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