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Six Ways You Can Begin Strengthening Your Branding Tomorrow:

1) Firm up your tag line/niche/30 second commercial:

What do your employees say when asked, "What do you do?" Do they respond with a one word answer? Or do they describe WHO your business helps and HOW you help them and what major BENEFIT you provide to your customers? Role play with the employees who have the most contact with potential customers so your 30 second commercial feels natural.

2) Reinforce your positioning:

Your phone message should reinforce your business' positioning. Make sure it matches your branding. Your web site – both the front page and all other pages should include your positioning. Even your email signature and your business card can help.

3) Fix your logo:

If you're like many business owners, your logo has evolved over time. Print out every variation, every color. Vertical, horizontal, reversed. Contact your graphic designer and work with them to select the main logo. Put it on the server. Tell all your employees that this is the preferred version. Appoint a "keeper". Write a usage do's & don'ts sheet.

4) Write down your communications plan:

Who is your target market? Your referral network? Make a list of the top 10 of them. Remind them of your positioning by reinforcing your tag line/30 second commercial. Think of a reason to contact them once a quarter. List these contacts out for the first month of each quarter.

5) Build awareness with PR:

Plan on 4 press releases in the next year. One about a contest. One about an award (either you get one or you give one). One about your improved product or new service. One about a human interest story of one of your employees that ties to your benefits? Post the releases on www.NEOhioNews.com for free.

6) Remember these three branding secrets:

Consistency in branding works. Keep your message consistent across all communication forms. A **niche** focus on the target market helps potential customers to immediately identify with your business, your products and your services. They will recognize the benefits immediately. Continuous **investment** in branding is like planting seeds for harvesting in the future.