

# Wisdom for Wednesday

*Positive messages for daily living. Pass on the good feeling – forward this to your clients so they can reap the benefits as well.*

## **Branding .... Hopefully you're clear about what you're selling and why .... BUT is everybody else??**

More and more, in today's environment, consumers are becoming aware of the values represented by a brand. They take the time to read the small print and where there is a choice to be made (provided the price differentiation is not too excessive) they will opt for the one which has an environmental impact or supports a worthwhile cause.

Before you launch any new product (or business) onto the market place you need to have a strong sense of what it represents and a very clear message which reflects this philosophy consistently. Get it wrong OR don't give it the thought and attention it demands and you will find it difficult and possibly impossible to overcome the initial damage. If your product were a person you wouldn't consider sending them into the unknown poorly prepared, ill-equipped or without backup.

Obviously you believe in your product, brand or business or you wouldn't be putting all this effort into launching it. So the bottom line is that you need to be aware of what you are selling; why you are selling it; your values; and how your potential customers are likely to respond to all the messages, both deliberate and subtle - open to interpretation - you are sending out. Imagine your product as a person with its own personality and characteristics and determine how it will fit into your proposed market, and how it will be perceived. Now is the time to make any necessary adjustments: tone it down; jazz it up; say more – say less; and survey potential customers to be sure you're hitting your proposed target, before you sign off on the completed package.

To ensure you never, EVER deviate from your own guiding principles, write them down and leave them somewhere very visible so you don't forget them. Using the following headings as suggestions, begin with at least 5 important things under each subject heading and prioritize:

- Price
- Quality
- Visual Appeal
- Reliability
- Safe
- Environmentally sustainable
- Safe
- Biodegradable
- Customer Service

Once you've done all the preparation and signed off on your guiding principles let your brand have its own voice and look the part so that it appeals to your intended customers. And, last but by no means least, make sure everyone in your business knows these principles and is committed to following through with consistency.

*Lynette Davies*