Identity crisis

Who are you? Why are you here?

Lots of people ask themselves these questions, especially around milestone birthdays and during the “mid-life crisis.” For individuals, there is no one right answer. Some people spend their whole lives seeking for the answers and some people just go for “one day at a time” philosophy.

But what do you do if your business has an identity crisis? First, determine if your business does have an identity crisis. Here are some signs:

- You offer many types of services or products that can’t easily be grouped together
- Your company name and tagline do not readily communicate what you do/everything you do
- You have several different logos/different taglines
- You don’t have clear-cut branding (no signature color, font, tagline, key messages)
- If someone asks you what you do, it takes several sentences to explain (you just can summarize it in one phrase)

If you answered yes to even one of these descriptors, you probably are suffering from an identity crisis. You brand is not strong and your business mission is not clear.

Having a business identity crisis can result in your business going under. Just down the street from where I live was a “wellness center.” It was a retail outlet that sold vitamins and baby clothes made from organic cotton. They offered massages and facials. They held yoga and qi gong classes. They probably would have described themselves as a lifestyle store, which is generic. They weren’t known for any of these offerings. And they closed. To me, this was a classic example of an identity crisis. Too many products and service

offerings. No clear differentiation. And a vague description that can mean different things to different people.

In a crowded marketplace, differentiation can make the difference (I am so punny). You won't be able to differentiate if you have an identity crisis.

Does your business suffer from an identity crisis? Time to ask yourself some hard, existential questions.

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