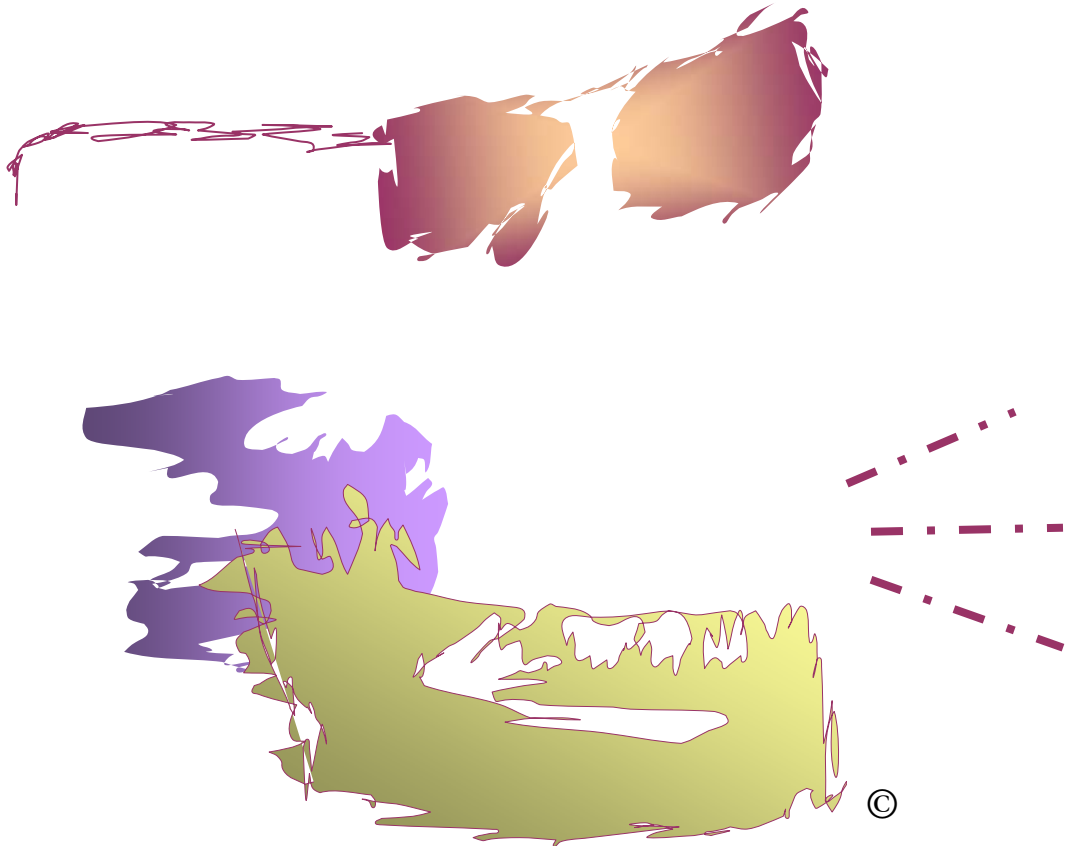


PARTIAL VERSION

Jaw Branding™

*Branding's Missing Link: Managing Conversations for
Brand Differentiation and More Sales*



By
Stephen Melanson

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About the Author

Stephen Melanson

Stephen Melanson is the President of Melanson Consulting, a Massachusetts-based branding consultancy, which was founded in 2004. He is a professional teacher, consultant, and verbal branding expert.

Mr. Melanson's branding philosophies are literally unique in the branding marketplace, filling the gap of a verbal, conversational application for brand positioning.

The immediate result of development and training is higher sales, better internal understanding of and confidence in a brand, and the ability to apply in business conversations.

Typically delivered in a live classroom setting, training can be for a single group or for dozens.

Mr. Melanson has twenty-five years experience in sales, marketing, management, and business ownership in industries such as software, telecommunications, management consulting, business-to-consumer service, and training.

In all, Mr. Melanson has run three companies: a branding instruction company – his current business – a business coaching company, and a prior branding services company.

As a former sales professional of over twenty years, his own productivity averaged 150% of quota. As an executive sales manager in both the training and staffing solutions industries, he managed teams to produce consistent results of 30%+ increased revenue over projections.

His background also includes being a trained non-practicing Psychotherapist, professional tennis player, and on-air talk radio host.

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Dear Diary...

What a day

I'm completely fried!

Sales STINK this month

No one on the team knows what they're talking about

No one's on the same page

The sales trainer's been back seven times; can you believe it?

I heard one of our engineers answer the phone today...what a nightmare

It sounded like he was speaking in tongues!

My god - I thought being a manager would be fun

I'd give my right arm to figure out how to scare up some market share

Nothing's working

Hmm...what if I fled the country...ah...that's not a solution

But nothing's working

Nothing's working!



Quote:

Conformity is the jailer of freedom and the enemy of growth.

John F. Kennedy
35th US President



Before the beginning:

Pre-
face

JB

Everyone has pet peeves; things that are so irritating they make the hair on the back of your neck stand up.

In business, my biggest pet peeve is *impractical* activity. And what's more impractical than the large corporate initiative?

Everyone runs around acting like their hair is on fire, on some apparent deadline no one else knows about, telling everyone how stressed out they are.

Sounds familiar, right?

We've all seen these projects come and go; many become complete failures. Sometimes, they're so bad they put certain executives right out of their jobs.

Why? Because the projects were too complex, first of all; and took so much time, effort, and money that it was nearly impossible for them to meet the expectation.

Let me ask you this: Does the thought of implementing an enterprise software application make your eyes twitch? How about a branding project; or launching a corporate merger? How about the re-conceptualization of your advertising strategy? You know...just saying "re-conceptualization" puts me in a bad mood.

By the end of these projects (if they ever come), everyone is so tired of the newness and hype – hanging over them when they have *real* work to do – they become fatigued, de-motivated, and even angry about the whole thing.

...it's not a pretty picture!

And of course, training will be horrible, and nobody cares by then anyway.

Quote:

M&A veterans trade war stories among themselves. What went wrong with all these deals? Their conclusions: M&A failure can be attributed to poor synergy, bad timing, incompatible cultures, off-strategy decision-making, hubris, and greed.

Strategy & Leadership
Journal Article published in 2004

In reality, the writing is usually on the wall before the effort even begins, except the project sponsors don't seem to realize it.

I could have told them. The chances of a large project having the impact everyone hopes for are practically zero. And guess what: the same is true for many branding projects.

Let me give you some advice: if you've been in charge of a big project like this, and get even half the return you were planning on, count your lucky stars and retire, because it's probably not a good idea to tempt the fates ever again.

Look...after all the work is done, how practical will the result really be? Will everyone in the organization understand what was done? Will they be able to apply it to their everyday thought process and activity?

If not, you're probably in for a rough ride, especially at the end, when everyone's opinion of *you* has ceased to have that soft underbelly of good will you're used to.

With this sad state of affairs as a backdrop, I decided to write this book about branding's totally misunderstood and virtually ignored verbal element. And this book has two general goals. First, I want to help bring the branding and re-branding of organizations further into the realm of the "highly practical".

...I want to help bring the branding and re-branding of organizations further into the realm of the "highly practical".

Second, and intimately related, I'm introducing a key component that, when implemented correctly, will not only bring much needed practicality to branding, but will give you a more complete vision for the execution of any branding project.

It's called Jaw Branding. You don't know what it means, even if you think you might.

Jaw Branding is the melding of branding, marketing, sales, and psychology. It's a missing link in every branding project you've ever heard of, or been part of.

And as you'll soon see, it's different and superior, by the way, to the message, elevator pitch, or talking point training that sometimes comes with branding initiatives.

Here's what I think: branding must now go to the next level, account also for what people say, and the dynamics and management of direct interactions.

After all, we've still got far too many executives wondering where all the time, money, and effort went after yet *another* project under performed or went horribly wrong; maybe this time, a branding project.

You've begun avoiding this result, and taking branding to the next level, simply by listening to this book.

Landscape:

1



Quote:

We're told never to cross a bridge until we come to it, but this world is owned by [those] who've 'crossed bridges' in their imagination far ahead of the crowd.

Anonymous





MICRO EXAMPLE:

An actual phone conversation; identities protected (except for me!)

- **Me:** *Hello Mr. CEO, I noticed you quoted in the paper and thought I'd call to let you know what I do. I'm a branding consultant and I specialize in positioning development and teaching verbal branding.*
- **The CEO:** *Hmmph!*
- **Me:** *Well...it immediately increases sales – the article said you're about to expand your sales team.*
- **The CEO:** *It sounds interesting, I guess; but it wouldn't have any application here, so I wouldn't be interested. Thanks anyway. (Click!)*

■ **Being wrong about important stuff.**

Fascinating. Apparently no one inside this company speaks with anyone outside it. But that can't be true, because they're about to expand their sales team.

I'm confused; who doesn't need a differentiated brand and the best things to say when going after sales?

Well...maybe, this executive is a little off kilter on this important point; apparently not really understanding how things get sold or much interested in finding out.

This is sort of important, I'm thinking; but maybe it's just me.

■ What goes on out there, and it being a shame.

☑ **Rule #1: Develop a verbal strategy, or your branding initiatives will under-perform, only without anyone realizing.**

You don't hear marketing, public relations, advertising, or even branding professionals talking much about verbal branding. That's because they don't know what it is.

It's not their fault. The background of people in these professions is usually marketing and advertising. That means they don't really pay attention to direct interactions per se; meaning, the front line conversations that happen every day with prospects and clients.

It's a bit like the disconnect we see between in-house marketing and a sales force. They acknowledge each others existence, sort of; but only for long enough to make strange grunting noises and then some jokes about how lame each other is.

It's a shame though; mostly because it's so unbelievably wrong-headed and self-defeating. In fact, I'm surprised more people don't write books about this specifically. But, I digress.

Here's the thing: Every person within an organization, regardless of their role or level, needs to be on the exact same page when it comes their company's positioning and value in the marketplace.

Unfortunately, this is almost never the case.

Fortunately for you, I have the solution. It's called Jaw Branding.

Unless you sell online, or you're in a relatively passive selling environment, like a supermarket or bookstore, Jaw Branding – my verbal branding philosophy – could be the most important, untapped resource to simultaneously improve sales, marketing, and internal culture you're likely to come across anytime soon.

The reason? Because applying Jaw Branding is to clarify a brand to the point where everyone in an organization can understand it, speak about it, and prioritize their activity around it, all while maintaining complete simplicity.

Sounds pretty good, huh?

And after reading this book, you should integrate these ideas with anything you implement, or think to implement, that's even remotely related to communications and the selling of your products and services.

In other words, just about everything.

With that said, I have good and bad news. The bad news first: there's a learning curve to anything new. I'll teach you the easiest way to have more productive conversations, but you'll still have to practice!

The good news is...doing so will benefit you and those around you for the rest of your careers.

But only if you want to be highly effective; and as far as I can tell, not everyone is really into that sort of thing. Some are just looking to pass the time, if you know what I mean.

Jaw Branding: A Definition!

A set of verbal branding philosophies to help individuals differentiate their organizations during conversations, and then "manage" those interactions, regardless of their length, so brand differentiation is what impacts people and is most easily remembered

Quote:

Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.

Thomas Edison
Inventor

Truth be told, the overall concept behind Jaw Branding makes so much sense that it just has to be more widely recognized and implemented. That's why I wrote this book. In its simplest form, it proposes how to convey and maintain a differentiated brand in direct, verbal communications.

If you don't realize you need this, I suggest you reassess.

I just spoke to a six-hundred person company (who shall remain nameless) that went through a branding project; a multi-month, multi-hundreds of thousands of dollars effort, only to come to the finish with a beautiful logo and web site, a new tag line and materials, but still no simple, memorable positioning concepts for what they were offering the marketplace.

In other words, after all the work, they still had nothing good to say. This isn't the result I'd be looking for.



ATOMIC EXAMPLE:

A construction tool manufacturer.

- **Previous Approach:** *Longest lasting tool; sell on durability.*
- **Prospects' Perspective:** *Has heard it all before, no validation in place.*
- **New Positioning:** *Differentiate as the supplier who will 'partner' with distributors to market and train retailers.*
- **Change Rationale:** *Distributors haven't time to develop marketing for every product or time to educate retailers.*
- **Opening Statement:** *"A partner on marketing and training."*

The problem usually comes from the confusion between brand *identity* and brand *positioning*.

When people think of branding, they very often default to the identity part: tag lines, logos, design standards, or visual imagery among other things.

Actually, these ought to come *from* a foundation of brand “positioning” – which I’ll go into shortly. Instead, the brand identity often represents at least ninety percent of the time and effort put into development, while positioning doesn’t get its just due, and verbal branding – which should be a translation of positioning – goes completely un-addressed.

This is the wrong way to proceed. This represents an unfinished branding project.

It means as much as ninety percent of the branding work done is devoted to things a salesperson, for instance, can’t use when they’re trying to sell. How crazy is that? It also means all this work doesn’t help anyone else in the organization answer the simplest of questions, like, “What do you guys do and why in the world should anyone care?”

That’s a huge problem, and it’s costing most companies bunches of revenue.

Am I saying much of branding work is in danger of being “impractical”? Yes, as a matter of fact, I am. From the start, someone has got to raise their hand and ask, “*What’s our brand gonna be based on, will everyone understand it, and what are we supposed to say about ourselves when we’re done?*”

In the end, it’s a matter of translating your brand positioning into something usable on the front lines of prospect and client interactions. This issue should be elevated to a core strategic concern at every company, no matter its size or industry.

Putting a negative spin on branding without a verbal strategy would be the near certainty that the brand would be diminished every day, during every conversation.

How’s scary is that?

Instead, imagine every single conversation – across an entire organization – yielding higher productivity toward the goals of the organization and in support of a brand. Then you'll begin to understand the vision of Jaw Branding.

As you read, see if you don't have at least a few "*d'oh!*" moments (like Homer Simpson), when something seems surprisingly obvious, like you should have thought of it already.

After all, it doesn't have to feel like rocket science; we're just making use of a hidden resource – one that's been lurking all along – so I can help you fulfill the total potential of your brand.

Quote:

If you don't get noticed, you don't have anything.

Leo Burnett
Pioneering advertising executive

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