



Do you have a brand horn?

I must admit, one can learn a lot from the friendly neighborhood portable green grocer, better known as Thelawala. While his daily morning vocal exploits may not be entirely palatable to those with inclinations to tuck in late, he sure knows how to make an announcement. Perhaps our railway announcers should take a page or two from his book. So what does he do to get his products noticed? He announces them quite efficiently, and different vendors stake claim to different pitch bands. Positioning, eh?

Lets picture the common entrepreneur at a business meet. Are you able to make a good announcement? Does your company really get noticed at once, or do you find yourself struggling to make a presence? While you are still trying, the likes of “I want to jump into every single networking dinner” to log in the numbers are constantly edging you out wasting precious time uttering pleasantries that are as contemporary as a fog horn on the Titanic.

So where is your personal announcer? I call this a brand horn. Take for instance, an important dinner meeting where you are likely to bump into the prospects that you have been looking to meet. In the 10 seconds someone (by this I mean, someone important) gets to have a look at your business and more importantly, you, there could be significant spoils to be gained provided you make an impact. Here is a dummies approach to 5 brand horns that may do the trick for you.

1: Get yourself a fancy title: Gone are the days when prospective mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law would drool at a “director” title. Not cool anymore in business circles unless you want to target the wedding set. Or for that matter, the film set. Get yourself a title that can evoke a little conversation. One of my friends responds to “Chief Catalyst”. Whether the title reveals inherent matchmaking abilities during chemistry class during his school days or a strong desire to change the world, only he knows. But the title does stick to the mind of someone receiving his card.

2: No cheesy pick-up lines, please: You may have heard this one. “Hi, I am Swami from XYZ company. Here is my card, can I have yours?”. Swami may think his direct approach accompanied by serious finger cruncher hand-shakes are killer, but ask the others. “Is that a visiting card collector?” is more likely their response. Get introduced only to prospects whom you feel are absolutely necessary and spend more time understanding their business, there is a good chance they may ask you in detail about yours.

3: Differentiate your communication material: Do you have a standard A4 brochure, which follows a set template? If so, it may be time to have a good serious look at the brochure from the perspective of a user. Standard sized promotion material tends to get clubbed with similar sized material to be conveniently dumped at the next dust bin. Get into a format that helps differentiate your product. One of our clients uses a foldable accordion-style brochure that reportedly gets picked up more often. Why? The size perhaps, since it fits into a pocket easily.

4: Challenge the mind of the user with your business card: Think of a puzzle, use of folded paper, use cut-outs; anything that can engage the receiver of your card. Does your card stand out or does it get lost in the crowd? Think, and it can make a difference.

5: Attire that stands out: It may be a great idea to have smartly designed T-shirts or shirts that have your brand emblazoned right at the front. With advances in printing technology, it is now possible to get even a single T-shirt customized to your brand. Wacky is good if it works for the industry in which you are in. A more serious satirical approach can build humor in just the right dose. Yes, good humor does work with everyone, without exception.

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