

# KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

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SCHINDLER MARKETING GROUP, INC.

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While it seems that the web has empowered travel advertisers to better “measure” their advertising results, the reality is that tracking business to advertising activities remains a challenge. For many, the solution has been simple but ultimately short-sided. That is, forgo traditional advertising and instead depend solely on your Internet presence to drive business. This strategy is not entirely surprising when you consider how hotel owners are driving managers to legitimize the value of every expenditure, and particularly those marketing related.

Let’s face it. Most businesses believe their sales can be improved and would like to increase profits but aren’t sure how to reach new prospects or keep existing customers. We are the first to recommend various Internet-based strategies for our clients’ communications programs. But we are quick to add that being visible on the web alone will not provide the results of a cohesive marketing program. In short, an Internet strategy does not supplant a Brand strategy.

Every business is a Brand. Your brand and its acceptance by your customers and prospects is the strongest weapon in your marketing arsenal. People love their brands. And today’s most effective brand managers have extended their products to take advantage of this trend. Westin Hotels, for example, developed and subsequently branded their Heavenly Bed. This Brand-within-a-Brand spawned a whole collection of Heavenly products, including a Heavenly Dog Bed, shower curtain and cold cream soap! Did you know that Starbucks has Branded 14 of their coffee bean collection, not including drinks? How important is the value of your Brand? Take it from these marketing leaders; an effective Brand strategy is essential to your ultimate marketing success.

Identifying the unique character of your company and its products and services is the first step in creating your Brand franchise, those unique deliverables that are the basis for your Claim of Distinction. While this may sound simple, the fact is that many companies promote a claim of distinction without being distinctive. It’s no wonder the hotel business is battling commoditization. In order to rise above a price-only position it’s time to go back to basics, to look inward and ask what makes your brand unique.

There are many things we can do to assist you in developing intelligent and thoughtful marketing initiatives. But reaching out to existing and potential customers, regardless of the medium and our ability to measure, is no longer enough to remain ahead of the competition. We must begin by being introspective, to identify the special qualities of your business and why this is important to your customer.

Your Brand is your business’s most important asset. We can help you evaluate and develop this asset so that all of your marketing activities, whether traditional or Internet-based, provide your business with the greatest return on investment possible.

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