

Managing Your Brand Is an Intangible Investment That Pays Off Big

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We live in a return-on-investment-driven society that is obsessed with instant gratification. Whenever we implement a new product feature, make a pitch to investors, launch a **marketing** campaign, interview a key job candidate or make a sales call, we want to see *tangible* and immediate results.

Our obsession with seeing measurable **business** results can make it easy to forget the most important intangible investment we can make: managing our *brands*.

When you do things to manage your company's brand (or your own personal **brand**), the investments tend to eventually pay off tremendously. Journalists start randomly writing about your company. You start getting *inbound* emails from investors. Your product goes viral because of traditional "word of mouth" rather than because of any of the social features you've been deliberately pushing. Or your [1 year-old startup can raise \\$100 million and buy a 100-year-old manufacturing company](#).

The challenge is that the individual tasks needed to build your brand are often thankless. Collectively, however, they create exponential benefits. The only way to achieve a high level of brand strength is by making **brand** management a recurring part of your job. The following are some activities that can help you build your **brand** in the eyes of key people in your industry:

- **Skype** (or have coffee) with your top customers often.
- Write blog posts about your company's lessons.
- Attend industry events (and be social).
- Mentor other founders.
- Mail free company swag to your top customers.
- Be active on **Twitter**.
- Introduce like-minded friends to each other.
- Do favors for journalists.
- Send handwritten thank-you notes after a key meeting.
- Mail holiday cards to clients, partners and co-workers.
- Host a dinner for awesome people.

While none of these activities produce immediate or measurable results, they plant seeds of credibility that tend to grow exponentially over time. Building a strong brand means getting people to *talk* about your company and spread the word on your behalf. These things may not seem like the most tangibly profitable way for you to spend your time right *now*, but much of your future success springs from having made these cumulative small brand investments over several years.

Of course, it's often hard for a **CEO** to make time for **brand** management when there are so many other tangible concerns that require our day-to-day attention. I, myself, can be guilty of forgetting to invest in non-measurable activities for [Brainscape](#), especially considering that I teach a class on building a metrics-driven culture.

But I need to remind myself that the strongest **brands** do not build themselves with metrics alone. By investing in thought leadership and intangible personal relationships, we can set ourselves up to reap large tangible rewards down the road.

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