



Hinge®

Identifying Real Firm Differentiators to Create a Confident Brand

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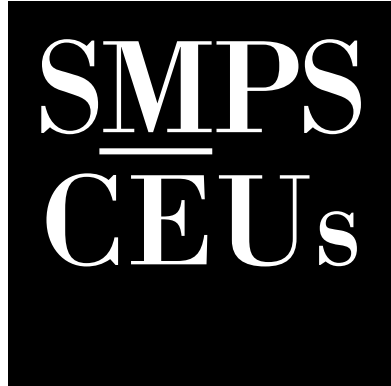
Today's Hashtag:



#hingebrand

SMPS CEUs

Hinge is an SMPS Approved Provider of continuing education units (CEUs)!



Steps:

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3. Email: ceu@hingemarketing.com --
Subject Line: SMPS CEUs webinar credit
4. Receive Certificate of Completion after attending webinar
5. Report your CEUs to SMPS

Today's Speaker



Sylvia Montgomery, CPSM
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Connect with me on LinkedIn:
in/sylviamontgomery

Connect on Twitter: **@BrandStrong**



Online Marketing for Professional Services

Available at
www.hingemarketing.com/library

Agenda

- › Rules of brand differentiation
- › Different approaches to differentiating
- › Differentiators that never work
- › Ways your clients can help differentiate you
- › Relationship between differentiators and your marketplace positioning
- › Examples of brand differentiation for professional services



Background



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2 Books, 6 Major Studies

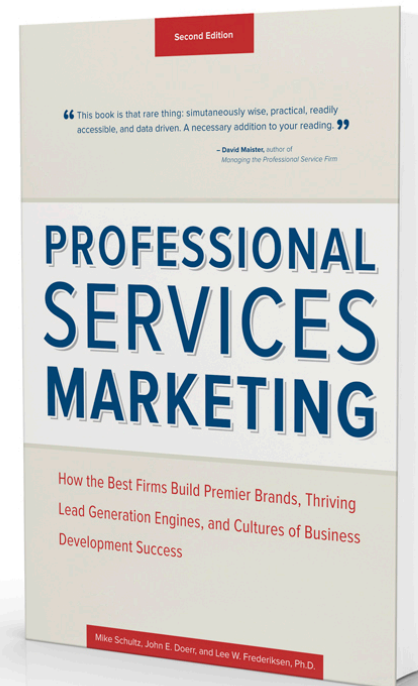
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Professional Services Marketing Book

New Book: Professional Services Marketing, Second Edition

Get the most up-to-date and comprehensive guide to marketing professional services.

www.hingemarketing.com/psm

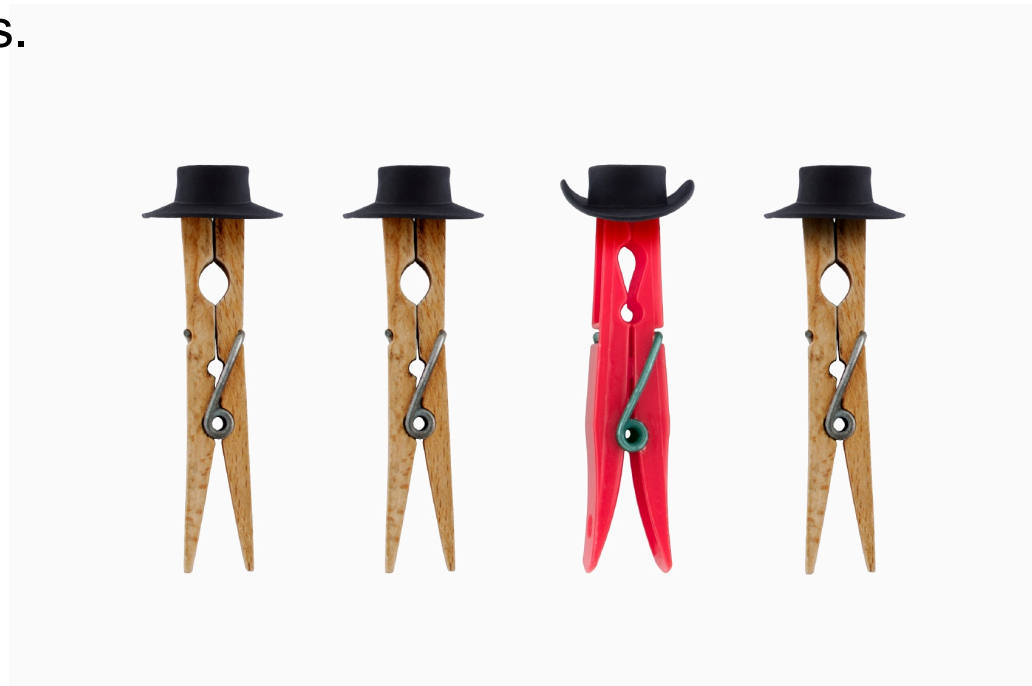


What is a Confident Brand?

- › Clean and concise messages
- › Well articulated target audiences
- › Thoughtful visual expression
- › Meaningful value proposition
- › Clear differentiators

What is Brand Differentiation?

- › A differentiator is something that makes your firm different from other firms in some meaningful way.
- › Your goal is to set your firm apart from the pack of competitors.



Now What About Brand?

- › Professional services brand is the combination of your *reputation* and your *visibility*.
- › Brand differentiation is simply making your firm's brand different.





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How Does Your Firm Get There?

- › When all competitors head in one direction, you go the other way.

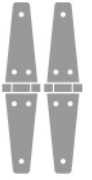


Don't Make the “Me Too” Mistake

- › Using differentiators used by your competition “because it’s safe” is not a sound strategy.
- › If you can’t be completely different, at least look and sound different.

Research Can Help

- › There are many intangible benefits of market research on your current and prospective clients, such as better targeting and a more accurate understanding of how your firm is perceived.
- › Research of internal and external audiences can help crystalize differentiators.
- › Strong differentiators = strong brand.



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How strong is your brand?

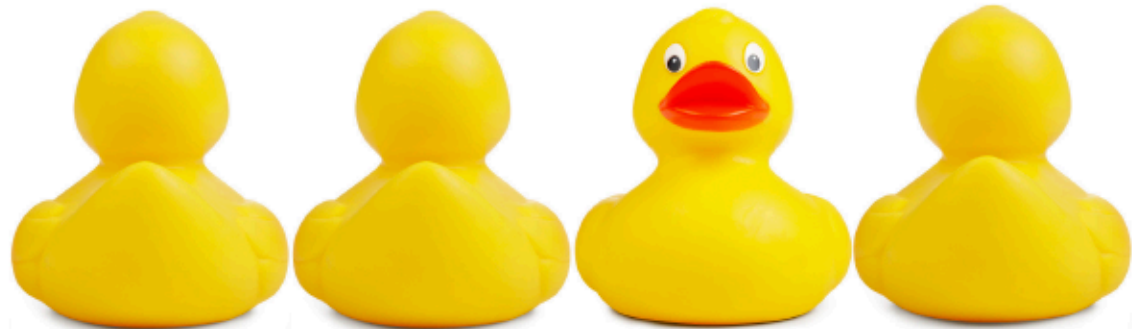
Reputation x Visibility = Brand Strength



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Differentiator Must Do's

- › Must Be True
- › Must Be Provable
- › Must Be Important to Client



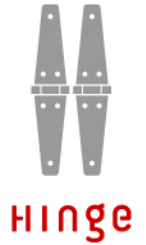
Rules of Brand Differentiation

1. Your differentiator must be true.

You have to live it.

If you promise a differentiator but fail to deliver, you will damage your brand.

PCM Services



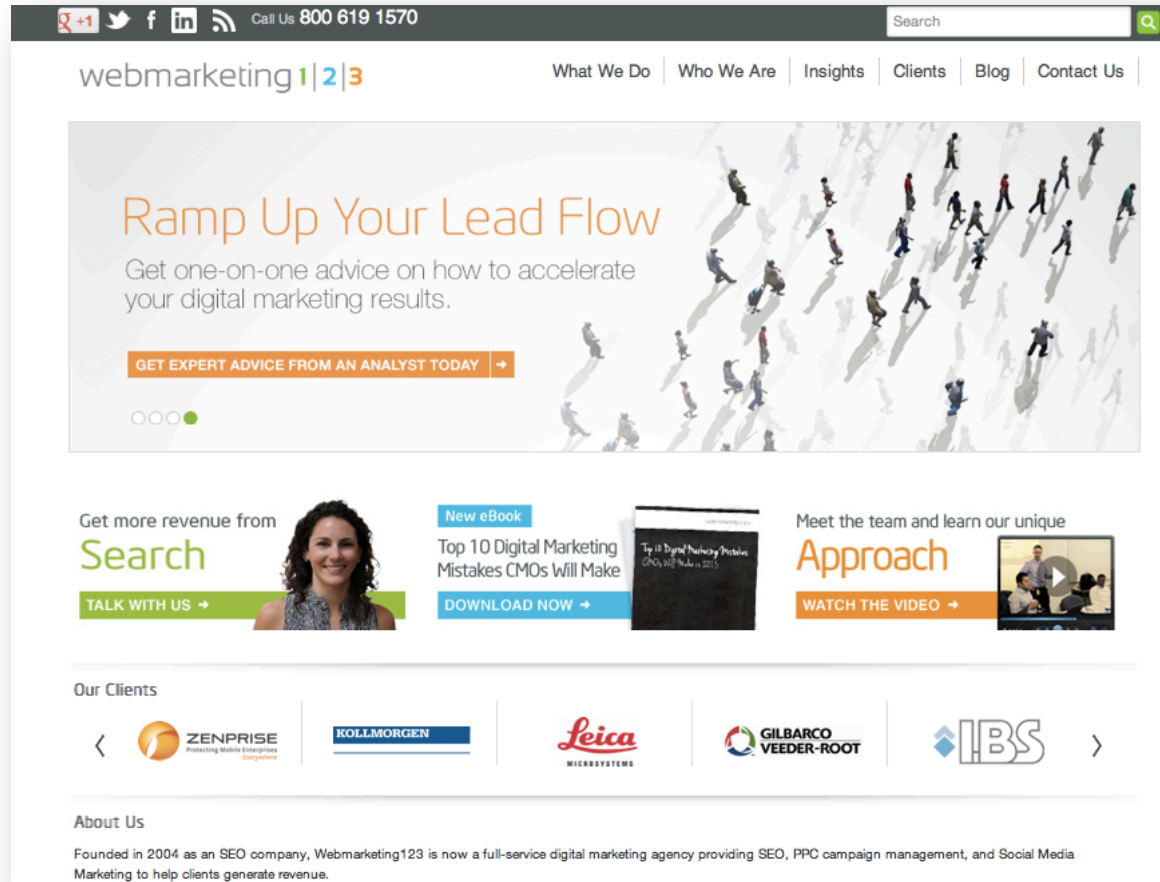
Focus is on property managers – messaging, content, tools.

Rules of Brand Differentiation

2. Your differentiator must be important to your client.

Being different doesn't mean your client cares.

WebMarketing123



The screenshot shows the WebMarketing123 website. The header includes social media icons, a phone number (800 619 1570), and a search bar. The main navigation menu lists: What We Do, Who We Are, Insights, Clients, Blog, and Contact Us. The hero section features the headline "Ramp Up Your Lead Flow" with a subtext "Get one-on-one advice on how to accelerate your digital marketing results." and a call-to-action button "GET EXPERT ADVICE FROM AN ANALYST TODAY". Below this, there are three promotional blocks: "Get more revenue from Search" with a "TALK WITH US" button and a woman's photo; "New eBook: Top 10 Digital Marketing Mistakes CMOs Will Make" with a "DOWNLOAD NOW" button and an eBook cover; and "Meet the team and learn our unique Approach" with a "WATCH THE VIDEO" button and a video player. The "Our Clients" section displays logos for Zenprise, Kollmorgen, Leica Microsystems, Gilbarco Veeder-Root, and IBS. The footer contains an "About Us" section stating the company was founded in 2004 and is a full-service digital marketing agency.

Serves technology and manufacturing client group.

Have developed a unique approach based on Kazan and 6Sigma Principles.

Mazuma



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**We do accounts.
We don't charge the earth.**

What do you do?

- I run a small business >
- I'm self employed >
- I'm a contractor >
- I'm a freelancer >
- I've just started my own business! >

Hassle-free accountancy - No spreadsheets. No software. No fuss

- 1 Fill**
Put in your accounts paperwork
- 2 Post**
Pop your envelope in the post
- 3 Relax**
We'll do the bookkeeping & accounts
- 4 Receive**
Get your accounts back in a matter of days

Why not...

See what people say
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Click here for a free quote >>

Try us out for FREE
Free trial with Mazuma >>

Specialized target (young independent professionals and small firms).

Has unique strategy (centralized processing) and a very friendly brand image.

Rules of Brand Differentiation

3. It must be supportable. Prove it.

This is a challenge that every differentiator must overcome.

It may be true and it may even matter to your clients, but if no one believes you it will never fly.

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Behind exciting long-term growth is a boring CPA.

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Stimulating Thoughts.
Quick updates on financial issues and tips from our thought leaders. You may find them dull, but we feel they're important (and fascinating).
Read more >

Exciting News.
The latest news about our firm. Please try not to snore.
Read more >

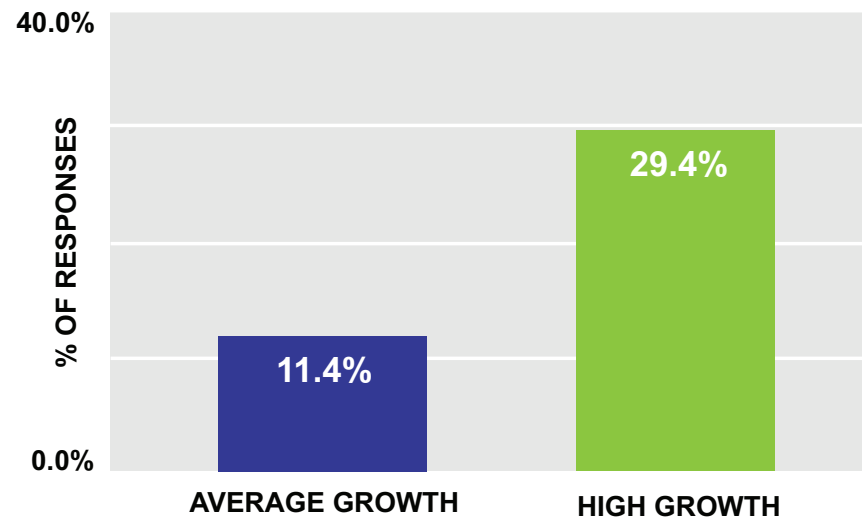
Boring Accountants.
Here are some spotlights on our boring professionals who don't like the spotlight.
Read more >

Sacramento-based accounting firm, has embraced "boring."

They have built a differentiation strategy around an engaging brand personality.

Is Brand Differentiation Important?

3x Strong
Differentiator.





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Top Differentiators

- › People/Process
- › Industries Served
- › Type of Client
- › Unique Service
- › Business Model





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How Do You Differentiate?

Focus on an industry.

When you serve a single industry, by definition you become a specialist.

Case in Point: Industrial III, Inc. – now one of the top two or three firms in their niche





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How Do You Differentiate?

Focus on a service.

Specializing in a service area offers the same benefits as an industry focus.

Case in Point: Cavium Solutions and Services – their laser focus gives it an advantage over its competitors.



How Do You Differentiate?

Publish research studies.

Research provides your clients and prospects with invaluable insights and information. And the credibility is priceless.

Case in Point: Hinge – spurred our firm's rapid growth into markets across the nation.



How Do You Differentiate?

Interview leaders in the industries you serve.

You will become known to the most influential individuals in the business.

Case in Point: San Francisco-based [Mariposa Leadership](#) – their stellar reputation has spread its name well beyond the Bay area.

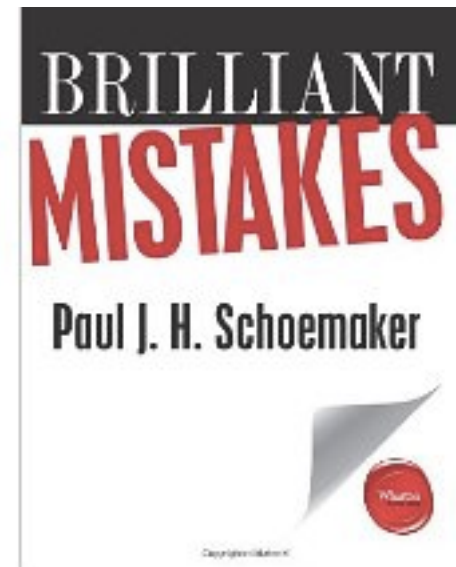


How Do You Differentiate?

Write the definitive book on a topic.

A book that addresses a topic relevant to your clients can be a tangible differentiator.

Case in Point: Decision Strategies International – many of their books are standard reading for executives around the world



How Do You Differentiate?

Create an award

Create an annual award to recognize outstanding individuals or companies in your target audience?

Case in Point: Helios HR, a human resources management and outsourcing firm, established Apollo awards in 2005 to honor organizations that promote employee growth and development.



How Do You Differentiate?

Organize an annual conference

Organize an industry-focused conference to attract influential speakers of interest to your target audience – while building awareness and credibility.

Case in Point: Rusk O'Brien Gido and Partners holds a yearly growth and ownership strategies conference for A/E firm executives

Growth & OwnershipTM
Strategies *conference*

How Do You Differentiate?

Change the rules

Zag while everyone else is zigging.

Case in Point: Summit Executive Resources CEO saw a need that was unaddressed. traditional search did not really address the needs of executive-level candidates. Represents C-level executives as they seek new employment — much like a high-end sports agent.



How Do You Differentiate?

Deploy multiple differentiators.

Many of the most successful firms put two or more differentiators to work.

Case in Point: Hubspot – their groundbreaking research has stimulated interest in a unique marketing automation software





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Benefits of Strong Differentiators

- › Growth
- › Profitability
- › Strategy
- › Productivity
- › Loyalty

Think Your Firm Has a Confident Brand?

✓ Free consultation for webinar registrants only!

› **We'll discuss:**

- Your firm differentiators
- Your current marketplace positioning
- Missed opportunities
- Suggestions for building your brand

Simply respond to our follow up email.



Thank you! Questions?

Sylvia Montgomery, CPSM

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Connect on Twitter:
@BrandStrong

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