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FEATURE: Build a global brand without advertising

Copywriter/ brand consultant Steve Strid and market strategist Claes Andréasson have some news for you – paid advertising isn't especially effective. If you're in marketing, this should be the best news you've heard in ages.



Once, all you needed to sell a product or service was visibility. If your logo was seen, it sold. Then, it was all about how many times your more or less clever 30-second spot ran. With the bombardment of media from all sides, this sort of traditional advertising, however, is makes less of an impact.

The world is shifting from "The medium is the message" to "The message is the medium", from hype and repetition back to the product and the brand.

What this means for the marketer is quite simple: the better your story, the less you need to pay to get it told. The story is a combination of the product, the people who make it, the attitude, the tone and, above all, the honesty of the message. Here are a few rules of thumb:

Make the product its own spokesman

Put your advertising money into the making the product and its packaging unique. Even if you've never seen an iPod commercial or ad, you'd probably buy it anyway – the packaging and design are simply irresistible.



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All too often, press releases are just wanna be ads. Instead, ask yourself what you can do to make the journalist a hero. He or she is looking for news, an interesting angle, a few good quotes and some good pictures.

Keep your website real

Go easy on Flash, animations and sound. Concentrate on simplicity, elegance, user-friendliness and a touch of humour. Press releases and high-resolution visuals should be easy to find and download. The killer ad you're dying to write – put it here, but make it subordinate to the practical features.

Network, make alliances

Think up, down and across the food chain. Attract consultants, copywriters, graphic artists, web programmers and others by making them part of your dynamic and growing company. Create alliances with organizations, companies and bloggers with interests that complement yours. Think mutual benefit.

Distribution and sales are the world's most effective media

A good distributor is the best advertising you can get. Devote your promotional materials to attracting the best. Put some time and effort into your brochures, POS, etc. The same goes for your salespeople – give them whatever they need to communicate your message and make them look good in front of the buyer/customer.

Word of mouth means lots of mouth

Live your brand. Talk to everyone, everywhere, all the time. Have a message and repeat it often. If your product is small enough to fit into your pocket or bag, carry it with you wherever you go.

If you would like to see a global brand that was built without paid advertising go to www.light-my-fire.com. In 7 years, Light My Fire has gone from family garage to one of the hottest newcomers in the outdoor and design world with distribution in 30 countries.

Steve Strid (pictured) and Claes Andréasson are authors of the new book, *The Viking Manifesto*, published by Cyan Books.

www.vikingmanifesto.com

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