

# ROI Branding

by Martin Lindstrom

# The Secret Branding Weapon.

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*Some years ago, an Australian takeout pizza place used the Internet in an attempt to boost sales. Traffic was slow. Hardly anyone visited the site. The need for an increase in traffic was urgent....*

If traditional online media planning had been used, banners and links would have been purchased and the URL added to the shop's phone-book entry. It might even have invested in some traditional ads.

The pizza place went a different route. Instead of spreading money between off- and online ads, it spent the entire budget on radio. The spots were simple but extremely effective. So effective, the restaurant's increased business caused most of the local competition to shut down.

How'd it do it?

Instead of offering discounts or merely promoting its URL, the pizza place's radio ads asked listeners to tear out all the pizza-restaurant pages from their yellow pages and bring them in. In return for the pages, customers received a free pizza of their choice and a sticker with the restaurant's URL.

Very clever!

Because the contact information for all the other pizza joints in town disappeared from customers' primary reference source, only one set of contact details was left in households that complied: the URL for the restaurant that dreamed up the promotion. That single outlet is now a franchise.

Creating traffic is not necessarily a matter of buying ads or taking a traditional approach. Of course, there's always room for traditional thinking. It works and always will. But if you really want to build effective traffic and branding, go one step further. That is, unless you're a Microsoft with an almost unlimited marketing budget.

Generating traffic combines traditional thinking with three idea-based elements. The idea is crucial. First, create the idea as the local pizza place did. Develop an idea that not only generates attention but also generates appropriate attention -- attention that enables people to remember the information that engaged them and to act on it.

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You'll never forget the pizza story, right? The idea (removing the pizza pages from the yellow pages) is simple, clever, cheap, and audacious. Second, promote the idea via traditional off- and online channels and via new channels. The effectiveness of every piece of your communication is increased tenfold if each promotes that pivotal idea rather than simply touting some special offer, new taste sensation, or new product. Third, optimize any channel you use and ensure the message points in your direction.

I don't need to remind you more than half of today's brands have yet to optimize the way search engines secure consumer awareness of their existence. A quarter of the world's brands have not incorporated their URLs into the message customers hear on the phone while on hold. Nor have they added standard signature lines to emails that include the company URL. These details amount to *free branding*.

What's more important: the chicken or the egg? Both. Far too many brand builders believe traffic is secondary to site development. Wrong. Unless you have an unlimited budget, you can't afford not to think creatively. You risk ending up like all those vanquished pizza competitors.

### About the author.



Martin Lindstrom is recognized as one of the world's primary branding experts. A leading thinker in his field, a visionary and an educator in the rapidly growing field of wireless, on- and offline branding, Lindstrom has authored several best-selling books in partnership with industry

icons such as Don Peppers, Martha Rogers and Patricia B. Seybold on the use of emerging techniques for building strong, international brands.

Lindstrom is sought after as a advisor and speaker by companies and organizations throughout the world advising brands such as Yellow Pages, Nokia, LEGO, American Express, Mercedes-Benz, Pepsi and Mars. He energizes audiences with his creative genius and dynamic, unpredictable style. In addition, his acute insights have been featured in The Times, Fortune, BBC Radio, BBC World, BBC 1, The Daily Telegraph, The Observer, USA Today, The Australian and The Independent.

**For more information visit [MartinLindstrom.com](http://MartinLindstrom.com) or email [Info@MartinLindstrom.com](mailto:Info@MartinLindstrom.com)**