



# Silo Busting – New Approaches to Brand Development

Transcript of a PharmaVOICE Webcast Network podcast, hosted by Dan Linbach, with Camille DeSantis, BS, MT (ASCP), Co-President & Managing Partner, Brand Strategy & Client Services, **Guard Dog Brand Development, LLC**

*In this episode, I meet with Camille DeSantis, BS, MT (ASCP). Camille is, Co-President & Managing Partner, Brand Strategy & Client Services, at Guard Dog Brand Development. We talk about client services and how agencies and life science companies can partner to achieve optimal results, including breaking down the silos between disciplines. We also cover market research and branding ROI, particularly in dealing with soft measurables. And finally, we give you three takeaways toward improving your brand value through communications.*

**Dan:** Camille, we're here to talk about client services for brand development; so why don't you start out by telling us why client services are so important today.

**Camille:** You know, Dan, I would say that client services have always been important; after all, we run a service-based business. But I feel the role of the client services manager has shifted. Dynamics in the market have created leaner brand teams on the client side with increased pressures to perform successfully with less. So the need for client service leaders who can act as a true extension of the client's brand team and quite frankly, less like a salesperson for their own agency, has grown significantly.

**Dan:** Over the years Camille, there has been a lot of discussion about agencies acting as true strategic partners. Today, how would you define what a true strategic partner is and what qualities should a client look for in such a partner?

**Camille:** A true strategic partner today needs to be one who is very comfortable in a cross functional model and is not constrained by his or her own discipline. So the strategic partner must, in some ways, be more like an account planner, well versed in all channels of communication and familiar with the needs, wants and desires of all key stakeholders of the brand. He or she also needs to remain objective at all times, be resourceful; again, as I said before, doing a lot with sometimes very little, and collaborative, because today we know that collaborative cross functional teams serve brands best.

**Dan:** I couldn't agree more. Let's move on. We're all aware of what silos are from a business perspective. Talk about the concept of extending client services beyond the silo, in essence, tearing down the walls between disciplines to bring the best services to bear for the brand.

**Camille:** Sure. As I alluded to in the last question, the silo model really does need to be blown up whenever possible as working in silos does create the risk of being off message. It also creates unnecessary, time consuming, and costly redundancies in the brand development process. Let's look at this issue another way.

A brand's identity transcends any one discipline. It's ubiquitous, literally infused into every communication channel across all key stakeholder groups. It creates a consistent, cohesive and relevant experience of that brand, no matter how one encounters it. And when someone realizes the impact of these dynamics on communications, it really does become difficult then to justify managing the brand with a siloed approach.

**Dan:** Good point. Silos are kind of like the weather; everybody complains, but no one seems to do anything about them. Let's shift to the topic of market research.

Market research, as a discipline, needs to keep up with the times. What are your thoughts, Camille, on improving or changing the market research model?

**Camille:** Well Dan, I feel that market research is a discipline that is

critical to every other discipline. It validates rational arguments in favor of brands, and it determines unmet needs and unspoken motivations that drive brand building behaviors. However, the way one utilizes market research in healthcare needs to be updated.

You know, in the consumer brand world, neuromarketing is being rapidly adopted, using functional MRIs of the brain to actually measure the science behind brand preference. But that technique is too cumbersome and costly for most pharma brands. Yet, we can extrapolate learnings from these techniques and apply them to a healthcare model in pharma.

For example, interactive and iterative methods conducted online that provide rapid cost effective and projectable results really do need to be explored more. Also critical is utilizing techniques which delve deeper into the psychological and unique motivational underpinnings of the key stakeholder groups, and this is essential to creating a truly relevant brand experience.

**Dan:** How common is this technique?

**Camille:** This type of research is underutilized in my opinion, and yet, to me, is probably one of the most important first steps in building a brand.

**Dan:** Now let's move onto ROI, a topic near and dear to many business people. What are your thoughts on addressing the return on investment for various strategies that have soft measurables and what, if anything, can be done to change the conversation around ROI?

**Camille:** Well Dan, the term 'soft measurable' often refers to brand image, equity, and overall value. And brand value is created when stakeholders exhibit five dimensions: a high level of awareness, strong favorable and unique brand associations, positive brand attitudes, intense brand attachment and loyalty, and a high degree of brand activity. And these folks are the ones we call brand champions.

These five dimensions can be, and should be, measured regularly first, as perceptual research in the pre-launch phase, and then at periodic junctures post launch to gauge how effectively the brand building initiatives being utilized are contributing to the overall brand value.

**Dan:** So how do you quantify a soft measurable, such as brand value?

**Camille:** It's absolutely critical to the sustainability of a brand image to have a legitimate ongoing means of measuring the quality of that image. And sometimes what we find is that measuring the value of a brand's image can be as simple as asking a single question; would you recommend this brand to a colleague? And we always need to acknowledge that a strong singular brand identity will differentiate, motivate, and ultimately engender trust in that brand, and that's a brand's inherent value.

In having this consistent cohesive and relevant environment for all disciplines – advertising, public relations, marketing, education, sales – so they can do their jobs effectively, will produce greater ROI, no matter how you measure it.

**Dan:** And finally, Camille, the communications landscape is always evolving; I think we can all agree on that. What are some best practices that brand and product managers can employ to make sure that they are making the most of the available communications opportunities?

**Camille:** Well Dan, I would like to offer up these three key take-aways for any brand or product manager who is interested in addressing the needs of his or her brand in the best way possible.

First, we have to acknowledge that in today's exceedingly competitive marketplace, you must ensure your brand stays on message across all disciplines. Be consistent, be cohesive, and be relevant to all your key stakeholders, not just your physicians. And don't let traditional silos deter you.

Next, develop a strong singular brand identity that balances functional assets of the brand with psychological motivational drivers. You should use the latest market research and strategy techniques to ensure that you achieve this delicate balance.

And lastly, you should select strategic partners who can provide you with an objective unbiased point of view on what are the best ways to establish your brand strategy and messages and what channels are the most optimal to get those messages to your key stakeholders.

**Dan:** And that wraps up this episode. Special thanks to Camille DeSantis for sharing her thoughts and expertise with us today. Until next time, I'm Dan Limbach.

The article is available at [PharmaVOICE.com](http://PharmaVOICE.com). To listen to the podcast, visit [www.pharmavoices.com/podcasts](http://www.pharmavoices.com/podcasts). You can visit Guard Dog Brand Development's website at [www.guarddogbd.com](http://www.guarddogbd.com).

## Improving business strategy starts with improving brand development

For a brand to yield maximum benefit, its identity must be developed as a high-level strategy supporting business-wide goals—and the process needs to begin as soon as there is a molecule or medical device technology to talk about.

Guard Dog Brand Development® (GDBD) blends brand strategy with strategic brand design to create the consistent, cohesive, and relevant images that drive awareness, valuation, and growth of brands in the pharmaceutical/life sciences/device industries starting as early as Phase II.

**To start improving brand development at your company, please contact Camille DeSantis at 212.529.0292 or email [cdesantis@GuardDogBD.com](mailto:cdesantis@GuardDogBD.com)**



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