



You can't be a national competitor with a local attitude

Tuesday, October 11, 2022 06:30 AM EDT

By [Deborah Daily](#), Co-founder & President, Buckaroo Marketing | New Media



You've landed two big contracts in nearby states and have three hot prospects. It looks like the small company you started three years ago is ready to become a regional or even national player. It's too bad your brand is going to limit your growth opportunities.

I recently spoke with an industrial company that saw itself on the threshold of national prominence. Its growth confirmed it could be on the way up. But when I looked at their website, I saw it would be a tough climb. Why? When starting the business and shepherding it through the early growth stages, they had never given serious thought to competing at a national level.

As an example, the founder was proud of his past military service, so like many other business owners who have worn the uniform, he chose the name American for his company. It's a word that sends a positive message, as most of us feel a debt to our nation's armed forces. Unfortunately for the owner, it's an extremely common business name. He made it even more generic by simply tacking on the word "services." Care to guess how many "American Services" companies there are? Or how many other companies in his vertical alone use that name? There are other words businesses use that are too similar and overused — like quality, economy, discount, comprehensive, or (ironically) custom.

He compounded the name problem by grabbing a piece of popular clip art as the company's logo: an abstract image of an American flag. A logo is supposed to provide a visual representation of a company's unique attributes. That's tough for clip art to do — and even tougher when you choose an often-used image like the flag ... or that striped pyramid from Microsoft Office ... or a tree ... or a block letter. Sure, it's a lot cheaper than developing a custom logo, but there's a reason for that. Unfortunately, it's your brand that suffers.

If he kept his business local, that probably wouldn't be a problem. But as he expands into other markets, he can bump up against similarly named companies using similar patriotic clip art for logos. Prospects will be confused, and his "new" competitors will be furious he's "stealing" their name and look.

Another factor to consider is the quality of your marketing materials, especially your website. A high-quality web presence is critical for a business that's entering a new market, because prospects don't know who you are. Like the rest of us, when a prospect hears about you, the first thing they'll do is look for your website. If your company name and URL make it hard to find, or discern which one you are, they're not likely to view your business as legitimate. Or, if they get to the site, and it looks like your seventh-grade nephew put it together, they're going to wonder about the quality of your work (even if you've named your business "Quality").

What if your name isn't descriptive? "A&A Services" seemed like a great choice when you started the company, because your name is Amanda and your spouse and business partner is Andy, but would a prospective customer know what you do? That's less of a problem at the local level, where people are willing to take the time to get to know you.

You may have the ideal business model and all the right resources to take your company national, but you can't afford to let your branding and marketing materials hold you back. That's why it pays to get everything ready before you make that effort to grow bigger. A valued marketing partner can give you a candid assessment of your company's image and whether it will play well in a broader market.

Discovering your company's name is too common or your branding is like everyone else's can be disappointing, but it's easier to address while your business is still small. Your marketing partner can offer suggestions that lay the groundwork for future growth. For example, you might not need to change the company's name completely. Going from "A&A Services" to "A&A Railcar Cleaning Services" will make it easier to establish yourself in your new markets.

Your marketing partner can also do research to give you a better sense of the competition you'll encounter in those other markets, too. A cursory trip through Google might convince you that you'll be alone in that new area, but marketing partners know how to conduct more intensive research that may reveal formidable competitors you didn't even know existed.

It's extremely satisfying to see your business take off on a broader scale. With some advance preparation and an honest look at your company's current brand, you'll make much better first impressions with your newest prospects.

Deborah Daily is co-owner of Buckaroo Marketing | New Media, a Fishers-based advertising agency established in 1999. She can be reached at dldaily@gobuckaroo.com or click here to schedule a Zoom or phone call: <https://calendly.com/debdailybuckaroo/discovery-phone-call>

MOST POPULAR STORIES

- [\\$360M fieldhouse makeover could be just beginning](#)
- [\\$57M renovation plan for Purdue buildings approved](#)
- [Logistics firm to open Whitestown fulfillment center](#)
- [Cummins expanding hydrogen power efforts](#)
- [Angola's Tradition Transportation Group to be acquired](#)
- [What to know about Indiana's latest college completion gains](#)

PERSPECTIVES




You can't be a national competitor with a local attitude

You've landed two big contracts in nearby states and have three hot prospects. It looks like the small company you started three years ago is ready to become a regional or even national player. It's too bad your brand is going to limit your growth opportunities....

EVENTS


TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25

**Future of Indiana's Workforce Summit**

Oct 25 @ 8:30am

The Indiana Chamber is proud to partner with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development to bring you the 2022...

MONDAY, OCTOBER 31

**Power Up Your Strengths certification program**

Oct 31 — Tue Dec 13

Power Up Your Strengths is a

View Full Calendar

Submit An Event \$25

Inside Indiana Business
A division of IBJ Media

1 Monument Circle, Suite 300
Indianapolis, IN 46204
PHONE: (317) 634-6200
FAX: (317) 263-5060
NEWSLETTER@IIBNEWS.COM

[HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [VIDEOS](#) [GERRY DICK](#) [NEWSLETTERS](#) [ON-AIR](#) [CONTACT](#)

Copyright © 2022 All Rights Reserved [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)