

Brand Alchemy

Turning ideas into gold

BY NANCY CLEARY

The alchemist magically combines elements, imbues them with spirit, adds time and space, and attempts to transmute them into gold. I like to think of entrepreneurs as modern-day alchemists and **branding** is the secret formula for success and creating golden opportunities.

Branding your business

Education
Experience

Dreams
Goals



We take the core of our being, our soul, our nucleus ... and we tap into it, we delve deep to find what it is that makes us tick, what we love, what we feel passionate about, to find our purpose. Around a glowing mass of energy, of passion, is a God-given talent that helps us to fulfill this purpose. When that talent is "put out there in the ether" – everything that results becomes like electrons, spinning around the nucleus, increasing the power of the overall mass, and creating a magnetic pull toward others with the same purpose.

So how do you create this magnetic pull – for your company, your products, your ideas? How do you define your purpose

and build your brand? How do you turn your ideas into gold? I see the alchemic equation for **branding gold** is striving to use your talent in as many ways as possible for the betterment of your market – defined as all those in need of the value of your purpose.

According to our favorite marketing consultant, Kristie Tamsevicius, "*an underlying assumption of branding philosophy is that each of us has unique gifts and a distinct purpose in life,*" Kristie says, "*by connecting to those gifts and purpose, we open ourselves up to greater happiness and material success.*"



Let's use Wyatt-MacKenzie Publishing as an example to illustrate this alchemic branding equation. At the core – my purpose is building a legacy for my children through the products of my company, my passion is helping other mothers to do the same, my God-given talent is for design.

How did I define my brand?

It's important to tell you, I didn't start with this definition, but rather, it was a process that took a few years. I started with one much more generalized – using my talent to help manifest dreams. It took paying attention to what was circling around me, to what tugged on my heart strings, to what I was writing in my journal throughout the first two years of running my publishing company for me to define the market which would find the most value out of my fulfilling my purpose.

STARTED SMALL ... AND LOCAL

My first publishing projects were the result of my desire to use my design to fulfill the dreams of some local clients.

Wyatt and MacKenzie's father comes from a long line of loggers. Our little town of Deadwood, Oregon, and many of the surrounding towns are populated by loggers and mill workers. Needless to say, the timber economy has seen some rough times the last five years. When I heard about this local

“Alchemy is the dimension of meaning in the deep sense: the meaning of life, the meaning of my life, questions about the relationship of spirit to matter, of the purpose and value of my own actions – the questions, “Where did I come from?”, “Why am I here?”, “Who am I?”

- FRANCOIS TROJANI

band's desire to make a CD I jumped in ... with plans to use a technique I had learned from a design client in 1992 of custom cutting CDs. The resulting Saw-shaped CD was a parade stopper ... literally. I had the crazy idea to run out in the middle of our local parade and hand the Grand Marshall, our news anchor, a package with the CD. Three days later we had a TV crew in Deadwood taping a piece on logging for our news.

Would you believe our little logging story was run as a clip on NBC World News Tonight? It was introduced by Dan Rather! I wish I could have gotten a sample of the saw-shaped CD in his hands (missed opportunity there!) but we had no way of knowing our story would be broadcast world wide.

The “L” Award!

The first two books I published were written by Oregon native, Monza Naff, a professor at University of Oregon for 25 years. Monza gave me a copy of the manuscript for “Healing the Womanheart” seven years before I published it. I loved it, fantasizing I would be able to help her some day.

Before Ellen and Rosie came out on national TV, before Will & Grace and The Queer Eye for the Straight Guys were hit phenomenons our book “Healing the Womanheart” won a Gay & Lesbian Award. Our title won a prestigious Benjamin Franklin Award, in a very special category, one that has been dear to my heart since art school.

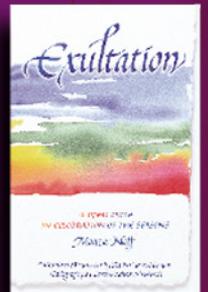
DEFINING ... AND REDEFINING

There's a spectrum for you! I have journal entries defining, and redefining my mission and a product line to fulfill it. “Nurture the entrepreneurial spirit then provide product development and promotions” is at the heart of my next production, my BOX-is product line.

January 1999



June 2000



“The kindest poetry a heart could imagine this is indeed a book of healing.”

URSULA K. LE GUIN



I was attempting to create a space for people to “define who they were” by journaling, meditating, reading, researching and collecting items which inspire and motivate them.

Lessons Learned

With my first 3 products I learned about the music industry and the publishing industry. With the BOX-is product line I learned about overseas manufacturing, international tariffs, freight forwarding fees, warehousing, storage fees and the real costs of order fulfillment. I also learned a very hard, very expensive lesson in PR when the company I hired (for a \$10,000 year-long contract!) folded under a law suit. I was left with nothing and had spent everything. I was relying on this PR company to “go” where I could not, to get to producers and to sell my story - as they had promised to do when I signed on.



Remain Flexible and Generous

If I measure my success by the success of those I am helping, I am doing great! If I measure it by my bank account over those first 3 years - more money went out than went in. I learned with my BOX-is experience to remain flexible and be creative, and generous. Give when there is nothing left to give. By donating Box-is to writing workshops, creativity seminars, and women’s groups I found I was able to fulfill my mission. Note the word “donating.”



BUILDING THE BRANDING ATOM

While those first products were successful in their own right, they did not fall into the “orbit” of my branding atom. Opportunities didn’t appear out of thin air. People did not call out-of-the blue to ask about my expertise. Columnists did not email to ask me about...the logging industry or feminist poetry or empty boxes.

And then, in March of 2000, it suddenly became clear. As hokey as it sounds, it was an Oprah show that started a chain of events, meetings, and opportunities which defined my brand.

I noted the word “donate” earlier because I believe that was key to defining my brand - the willingness to give it all away for the betterment of the whole. Who comprised this “whole” was defined the day I heard Ellen Parlapiano, co-founder of Mompreneurs®, on Oprah. I had never heard Ellen’s term “mompreneur” and resonated with the idea immediately - after all, I was branding a publishing company named after my children - and the fact that I work at home with them at my feet, well that was just a natural part of my life. I had



Feature CUSTOM BOX-IS
Healing the Womenheart Award-winning collection of poetry
Brand New 2002 EDITION

Feature CUSTOM BOX-IS
How to Get the Love You Want BOX-IS
Brand New 2002 EDITION
BONUS - Free Consultation with Dr. Rose!

Feature CUSTOM BOX-IS
Brand New 2002 EDITION
Steps on the Way to Your Dream Come True

Feature CUSTOM BOX-IS
NEW!
Let's Get It Together™ Organization Strategies for the real world

Feature CUSTOM BOX-IS
Work Yourself Happy™
INCLUDES \$100 in Work Yourself Happy Money



always envisioned it just that way. I always knew I would have my own business and have a studio in my home which my kids could play in while I worked.

Ellen and Oprah defined a market and a movement, *work-at-home moms*, that *defined me*. For the first time I recognized my peers. I joined an online group of mom entrepreneurs mentioned on the show. Throughout 2000 I offered my design services to members of the group individually, and worked to get the group media attention as a whole. One such project was the "MOO: Mother Owned & Operated" InfoCatalog I published promoting 80 work-at-home moms which ended up on every seat in the *Rosie Show* audience!

That catalog led to my attending the "Working Woman Magazine Entrepreneurial Excellence Awards" in Dallas, TX that Spring. There I met Ellen Parlapiano in person, though I didn't have the courage say more than "hello" to her! I did talk to Lesley Spencer, founder of HBWM.com (which I knew was the leading site for home-based working moms), and showed her an example of my catalog and my Box-is. Thus began my first successful Box-is collaboration. The Mom's Work-at-Home Kit was deemed "ingenious" by Dr. Laura Schlessinger, heralded tons of media interest, and has sold several hundred to date.

Seek and Seize all Opportunities

When Ellen Parlapiano asked to use the story of my MOO Catalog in her business presentations I quickly sent off a slide show and visuals to help her tell the story! What I paid a PR firm \$10,000 for – and never received – began falling into my lap when I donated my talent, time, and energy to my market. Membership in HBWM presented me with media opportunities I would have never known existed. Jeanette Benway (cozyrosie.com) turned me on to Joan Stewart's Publicity Hound which is a goldmine of opportunities.

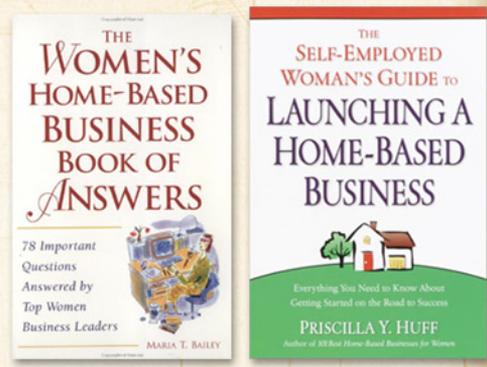
I responded to every query to which I could apply my experience. Suddenly the media was calling me, experts were quoting me, authors were writing about me. I was a work-at-home mom helping other moms to be home with their children and create an income.

The "electrons" spinning around me suddenly became more and more powerful. Over the next 12 months I was in two *major* newspapers, numerous magazines, and in two books.

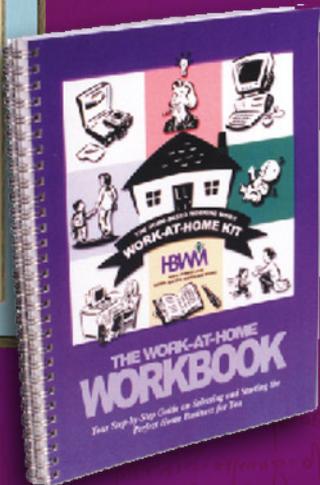
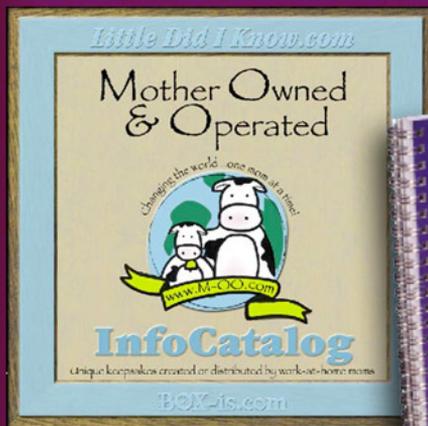
In late 2002 the magnetism of my "branding atom" kept growing and attracting others who were also devoted to mom entrepreneurship.

I was fascinated with the successes of the women I had met. The opportunity to acknowledge their efforts, to use their stories to create an atmosphere of accomplishment for other moms to see, led me to launch this Magazine.

As I was seeking every opportunity to build my brand, one name kept appearing, it was stuck in my orbit...



"Mom's Work-at-Home Kit offers moms an excellent way to select and start the perfect home business for their individual personality and needs. If you are considering working at home, we highly recommend checking out Mom's Work-at-Home Kit." - Dr. Laura Schlessinger





While I couldn't pronounce her name, I loved everything she wrote and was extremely impressed with her online group of "web-momz." When I heard she was putting on a conference I called, introduced myself, and offered to sponsor the event with my design services. There was a spark and immediate connection. What transpired was pure alchemy!

Over the course of a few weeks I learned how to pronounce Kristie "Tom-savages," became her friend, and published her book. Magically everything fell into place. Not only did I help her with the March conference, but we turned it into a book launch party for our collaboration, "I Love My Life: A Mom's Guide to Working from Home." I also invited a few of my newly found friends in the industry – Lesley Spencer, Maria Bailey and Priscilla Huff, to be presenters and we all met up in Chicago. My atom was approaching combustion.

Sparks were flying. I assisted Kristie with book promotions and landed a major Madison Avenue book distributor deal. In September "I Love My Life" was a featured book in 111 Barnes & Nobles across the nation. In October, Maria Bailey asked me to publish her new print magazine. In January of 2004 we received our first 5-digit check from our book distributor! I can actually see the gold beginning to form. I am printing the best of our online archives and prepare to reach a mass audience on amazon in April 2004. We entered "I Love my Life" in numerous book competitions and await the Ben Franklin Book-of-the-Year nominations.



The Alchemy of Branding

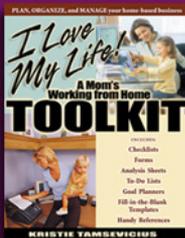
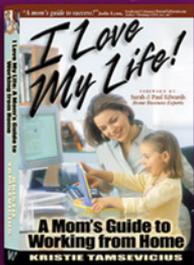
See... it took years of defining, weeks straight of contributing, hours to respond to some of the media requests, important seconds of sound bytes, days of traveling to give workshops, and painstakingly nerve-wracking minutes on radio interviews ... it took all of these efforts spiraling around to begin colliding, to begin attracting the right combination of elements needed to transmute my brand into gold.

Similar to the theory of "Six Degrees of Separation," the orbiting strands keep crossing one another, one leads to the next, leads to the next, and so on, until a nuclear reaction occurs and something bigger is created. Each time the orbits cross - a connection is made and an opportunity presented.

Super Novas and the Price of Gold

The "Super Nova" for me, and many other work-at-home moms, is, without a doubt, Oprah. A mention on her show is like the *Big-Bang Theory of Branding*. But how does this happen? Pure luck? You have to create this luck, and the opportunity, by building such a powerfully magnetic brand that the Oprah producers can't help but be drawn to you! In the last 3 months I have been circled by women who have been in the trajectory of the Harpo meteor. A girl can keep dreaming... and keep branding. This past weekend Hillary Clinton, Katie Couric, and hundreds of successful business-women held my first print magazine in their hands ... who knows where that may lead!

January 2003



February 2004



Office DEPOT
Success Strategies
FOR BUSINESSWOMEN

Today's Challenge ... Tomorrow's Triumph

FEBRUARY 22-24, 2004



KASEY BOURNE
Co-Anchor/Host
Contributing Author,
Dinner NBC



THE HONORABLE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
U.S. Senator and Former
First Lady

