



The Paradox: Small Ideas Are Big

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Entrepreneurs and Intrapreneurs Transform a
Small Idea Into a Big Brand***

Every new business begins with an idea. In the branding business, people talk a lot about the “big idea.”

But I say, “Forget the big idea, go for a small idea.” There’s a fundamental paradox of business ideas: The bigger the idea, the simpler and more focused it will be.

Big ideas are small - simple, focused, and specific - so that they can occupy a unique niche and dominate their category. The best business and product ideas come from drilling down and being very targeted and specific. Drill down until you come up with a way that your brand can be superlative.

That way, you’re building a business on something that’s small enough to own and create a brand identity around, and that will get you big results. You and your business will stand for something, rather than being a mashup of who knows what. All good branding involves sacrifice— you must sacrifice the things that don’t belong to the core business idea.



Too many entrepreneurs stumble over this simple reality. When expressing their business idea, they ramble on and on for fifteen minutes, leaving their listeners (investors, potential clients, potential employees) scratching their heads. Either they haven't zeroed in on what they want to accomplish or they haven't figured out how to express it simply. Whatever the case - they are not yet ready for business.

So get a clearly focused business idea. There's no "and" in brand. Of course, there is an "and" in brand literally, but you don't want to be an apple and orange business. You want a clear-cut business that you can define easily and effortlessly.

Your brand idea is your tagline or mantra for your business that expresses the core concept. It's the promise of what your brand will offer customers that others don't. For example, FedEx's brand promise is its advertising tagline, "Your package will get there overnight. Guaranteed."

In branding, you'll find that you always convey the most when you say the least. So make it simple. You must figure out a way to articulate clearly, for yourself and others, what the business is, who it's for, why it's needed, and why it will be a success.

Your business idea should be short enough to write on the back of a business card. You want a phrase or sentence, not an elaborate paragraph. Another way of looking at it is, if you can't explain your business idea successfully to a ten-year-old, you don't have a clear-cut idea for your business.

You need to be able to sum up what your business is and why it matters. As Einstein said, "Everything must be as simple as possible, but not simpler."

In a sentence of 10 words or less, write down your business idea:

My business does _____ for _____.