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*Brand-Aids™ are practical, easy-to-use tools you can apply to brand building and messaging through ads, PR, literature, websites, and so forth. Just like Band-Aids® stop the bleeding from annoying cuts, Brand-Aids stop the pain and cost of branding confusion.*

## Brand-Aids™ ...not just another treatise on branding



*Just like great tools help you build great things, Brand-Aids help you build your brand or enhance your brand's message. And just like Band-Aids are handy ways to stop the bleeding from annoying cuts, Brand-Aids are handy for stopping the drain on your marcom resources due to lack of clarity.*

**By John Favalo, CBC, Managing Partner  
Eric Mower and Associates Group B2B**

Much has been written, spoken, and taught about brands and branding. More will be. I could easily fill every page of this publication with thesis-level brand theory. But for most of us souls who fight the marketing fight every day...who have too much to do and too little time to do it...applying theoretical concepts to the work we need to produce by next week seems at best a distant wish. And then, when you do have the chance, aren't you always surrounded by nay-sayers who think branding is so much "soft stuff?"

Brand-Aids™ are not steaming piles of "soft stuff." They're not "stuff" at all.

Brand-Aids are tools. They're simple, black-and-white, easy-to-use tools that you

can apply to your everyday work. They're designed to improve the things that build your brand, such as advertising, PR, brochures, websites, and so on and the backbone messaging they deliver.

Just like Band-Aids® stop the bleeding from annoying cuts, Brand-Aids stop the pain of branding confusion. And the poor marketing communications that inevitably result.

### **Brand-Aid #1—Build brand messages that connect with audiences**

What is a brand? What is your brand and how do you talk about it in a way that gets people to care?

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Well, brand gurus like David Acker and Al Ries would probably cringe, but here's my simple definition:

A brand is an ongoing, differentiating promise or promises, made about an offering and to someone, that when kept creates satisfaction, trust, loyalty, and referral.

Simple enough? Think about it. A brand is a promise to someone (I italicized one, because you need to keep your relationship personal) who is important to you and your business. The promise needs to be different from what your competitors promise and it needs to have legs. And, when you have the opportunity to deliver on your promise, the experience must satisfy that special someone to the point where there's trust, repeat purchasing, and sincere recommendation (or at the very least positive comments).

You may already have a formal brand definition for your business. Or if you don't, you can spend money on research to get to one. When done right, it's worth every

penny. But if you don't have your brand defined and you don't see lots of research in the cards, use the simple definition above as a model. Understand who is important to you, what about your offering is important to them, and what stands out compared to the competition.

Now figure out what promise you can make—and keep making over time—that'll really make your favorite someone happy or provide him or her with a reward.

Bingo... you've identified your brand or brand essence. Now how do you tell people about it in a way that'll make them care? What's your brand message? Use the Brand-Aid Message Builder (see below).

Couldn't you build advertising or literature or an article or whatever from this? Does this express important facts and feelings about the organization sending the message? Does it make a connection with the audience? Do you think you could apply this tool to work you might do in the future?

If you said "yes" to any of these, consider the bleeding stopped. And look for more Brand-Aids in upcoming issues.



**Brand-Aid Message Builder**

<b>Audience</b>	Who is important and why?	Example: Plant Engineer—he or she does not sign the order but can be primary champion.
<b>Problem or Issue</b>	What's keeping him or her up at night?	Example: Threat of losing critical power.
<b>Solution</b>	How can your offering solve the problem or address the issue uniquely and consistently over time?	Example: We are the only player with the proven experience and the integrated systems necessary to keep power flowing, even if there is a service interruption, and keep key personnel advised of status multi-modally.
<b>Reward</b>	What's in it for your audience, personally and professionally?	Example: Peace of mind and recognition for mitigating the risk of crippling downtime costs.

OK, given the situation plotted above, what's the brand message?

<b>Message</b>	Your power system is the lifeblood of your plant. When you partner with us, you'll feel secure in knowing you're up and running from every angle, anywhere, all the time. And, when there are problems, you'll know about them instantly and be able to lead the charge to address them...before they become big-cost headaches.
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