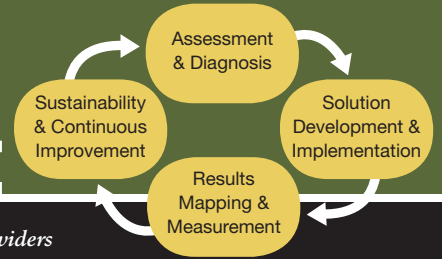




SCI VisionQuest

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Marketing is not a “nice to have” anymore. It’s a must have. With the recent market turmoil and turnover, your sales team can’t rely on just their long-standing relationships. And the vendors that remain are more sophisticated, diversified, and hungry. Added to this increased competitive mix is the additional government scrutiny. Lenders and servicers are under more pressure to be transparent, so they are searching the Web to send RFPs to more competitors and measuring their vendors’ performance against stricter scorecards. They also must be sensitive to a more informed consumer with greater preferences because they realize they can have a voice in choosing an appraiser, title agent or settlement firm.

More than ever, you must differentiate and distinguish yourself in the eyes of the lenders and servicers by building awareness and credibility in the marketplace. Today’s networking and vendor reviews are taking place online, with more exposure and access to your organization and your



Must-Have Marketing: Branding & Digital Media by Bob Skalstad

employees. All size businesses, especially small businesses, need to leverage digital media including Websites, email, and social media such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and even Facebook.

Additionally, because our industry is very knowledge-focused, general services from a local ad agency will not get you where you want to go. In fact, it could even get you in trouble because agencies don’t understand the complexities of our industry and its regulatory challenges.

That’s why SCI is so excited to welcome Raelin Musuraca to our team. You may know her by reputation — she was an insider with a national vendor management firm and she’s worked with a variety of financial services companies.

Raelin has the insight and experience to help you develop the tools and templates to enhance your marketing and Web-cred, such as:

- Sales Kits with printed and digital components
- Websites and search engine optimization (SEO)
- PPC search engine ads and banner ads
- LinkedIn corporate profile and employee training
- Trade show booth and show support materials
- Trade, print and digital, advertising
- Customer and employee (or vendor) e-newsletters
- Direct email campaigns and webinars

Now SCI can bring you the resources to make your growth virtually unlimited.

Historians believe the longboats were lighter and more economical to build. Also, the diversity in the design, allowed the boats to maneuver both open seas and shoreline channels and rivers. These advantages made the Vikings a force to be reckoned with in warfare, trade and politics.

Today, building a solid foundation with ingenious tools will also give you the maneuverability it takes to weather financial waters. (And getting a little help with your battle plans from a Viking descendent? It can’t hurt.)

Wake up and Smell the Starbucks by Raelin Musuraca

Do you want to be Folgers or Starbucks? They sell the same product. But thanks to value-added differentiators, Starbucks elevates coffee to a premium product.

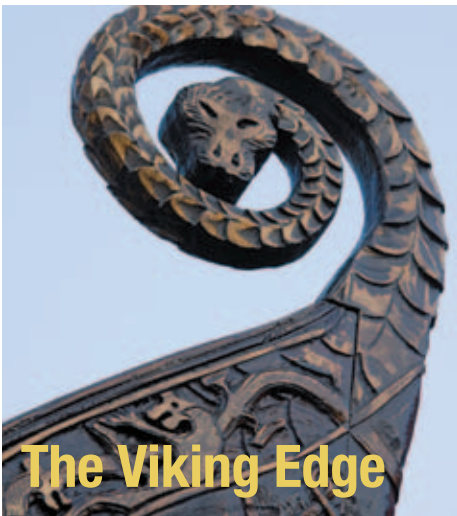
It takes more than branding built on cool graphics and hip locations. Starbucks also listens to customers and responds with offerings that build loyalty, such as organic coffee in recycled cups.

There are three key Starbucks’ strategies you should borrow to perk up your own sales:

- Educate your customers to become more sophisticated buyers. Starbucks gets their story out to coffee-drinkers, from their support of small growers in South America to its recycling efforts. Well-educated customers will understand the value and therefore accept the true cost of appraisal, title and settlement services.
- Stop leading with price. You’ll never get a volume discount at Starbucks. They don’t advertise based on price. They monitor the marketplace and adjust accordingly, but never charge less than competitors. Their marketing always leads with experience, quality and customer service. Use your marketing to reset the expectations of your lenders and consumers.
- Clearly differentiate your company, products and services. Starbucks knows how to do this. Most mortgage services companies do not. They tend to rely on three generic brand messages: we’re fast ... we have better technology...we deliver great customer service. Find your niche and identify how your company truly adds value to your products and services. Then create marketing tools that demonstrate that value (not just state it).

If by doing these three things, Starbucks gets people to pay \$3.25 for a cup of coffee, what will a clear message; educational outreach and better products and services do for your business? I’d like to help you find out. I’ll even treat you to the Starbucks beverage of your choice.

How does your brand compare? Do you differentiate yourself enough from the competition? Email us at analysis@skalstadconsulting.com and we’ll perform a free, competitive analysis that will give you an independent, third-party perspective on your marketing efforts.



The Viking Edge

It wasn’t just the dragons on the prow that struck fear into the hearts of all who saw the longboats. During the Viking Era, technological advantages gave these ships the stability and speed that allowed them to dominate medieval seas.

Vikings cut the planks for their ships using a broad ax rather than saws. They fastened these long, thin planks to a sturdy keel and plank-to-plank, with iron nails. The Europeans opted to build an inner skeleton for the hull and a larger, heavier vertical keel.