

A New Twist on Taglines

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As more and more professionals discover the value of running their careers as a business, the need for high-impact personal branding becomes a necessity, not a luxury. The judicious use of taglines can be a powerful tool for helping ME, Inc. professionals broadcast their unique value to the business world.

Good things come in small packages. This is especially true of taglines, those often-overlooked word groups strategically placed near corporate logos to announce the unique value and benefits of a brand. As such, taglines have what Eric Swartz ([The Tagline Guru](#)) calls “marquee value.”

Taglines have been around ever since businesses started using advertising to generate sales. Over the years, some have actually become memorable, e.g., Morton Salt (“*When It Rains, It Pours*”), Hallmark Cards (“*When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best*”), and American Express (“*Don’t Leave Home Without It*”).

In the world of marketing, branding and advertising, taglines often get a bad rap. That’s because development of a “winning” tagline is an unusually daunting task; it must convey the essence of a brand in a powerful, concise way without being vague, pretentious, or excessively trendy. Copywriters often spend long, tedious hours developing the perfect tagline.

And while the graphics team can misfire on a precise shade of lavender in a brand’s logo and still deliver powerful visual appeal, copywriters have no comparable margin of error. They either nail the one, indisputable winning tagline to the thunderous ovation of a wildly approving crowd — or give it a quiet, nondescript burial. Mediocre taglines — and even some better-than-average ones — never see the light of day.

TAGLINES FOR PEOPLE?

OK, now for the twist.

Most of us have been conditioned to associate taglines with products or services provided by companies to keep their brands resonating in the minds of clients and would-be customers. But a growing number of professionals — especially those in transition — are latching on to the 21st century paradigm of managing their careers as a business. As CEOs of their own “ME, Inc.” enterprise, they become responsible for all functions carried out by actual CEOs (e.g., R & D, Sales & Marketing, Public Relations, Finance, Legal, etc.) and that, in turn, means they must be just as well-branded as any other viable commodity in the marketplace. (1)

(1) For those who have adopted this model, described fully in the new book “Win The Race for 21st Century Jobs” (Rod Colón and Chip Hartman, etp press, © 2010), the primary reason this must be done is because the actual product of a ME, Inc. business is the business-owner himself/herself.

Is it far-fetched to think of an individual branding herself with a clever and succinct tagline? Not at all. Most ME, Inc. business owners can benefit greatly by creating a genuinely memorable tagline following their names — electronically and in print — everywhere it appears. If the tagline successfully captures an individual’s unique value, then the consistent use of this phrase becomes a mantra that reinforces the value *promise* in an exceptionally powerful and creative way.

SOME ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

It’s easy to write about an idea such as “ME, Inc. taglines” or “vanity taglines” but it’s a totally different task to develop a sufficient number of plausible examples to illustrate the message.

The chart below presents the **concept** of personalized taglines. If you understand the basic idea, find a copywriter to help you craft your message to achieve realistic brand quality. *Since the examples below are for illustrative purposes only, they should be regarded only as branding fiction, not standards of excellence in tagline development.*

FOR THIS SPECIFIC CAREER ...	A POSSIBLE “ME, INC.” TAGLINE MIGHT BE SOMETHING LIKE ...
GRAPHIC ARTIST	Graphically agile, creatively nimble Formidable imagery ... unbeatable value A full spectrum of ideas and solutions We visually translate your most complex thoughts. We remove the need to airbrush your bottom line!
TAX ACCOUNTANT	In taxing times, count on us. Find an error in our calculations and we’ll pay your fee! We axe the tax so you can relax. Think Positive. Think Refund.
FORENSIC SCIENTIST	We will unravel evidence of underperforming personnel Our solutions are the chalk outlines around your biggest problems We’d appreciate your fingerprints, signature, and DNA on a contract
DENTAL HYGIENIST	Invest in your smile ... call us today! Your gentle dental health engineers Enjoy life: Get the crud out of your mouth! Your frontline defense against Toxic Mouth Syndrome
INVESTMENT MANAGER	Think of us as your money’s personal day care center. Our idea of fun is dollar-cost-averaging the night away Our portfolio of ideas will expand your portfolio of investments
WEB DEVELOPER	You need a web site. We need a contract. Let’s talk. We eat, breathe, and dream HTML 24 by 7 We build web sites to die for ... although it’s quite unnecessary to do so. ROI-driven, business-savvy, technical artistry. But enough about me ...

PROCEED WITH EXTREME CAUTION

While the idea of a personalized tagline may sound like a great idea, you'd be well advised to discuss your ideas and examples with a branding professional before making the commitment to publish. If you fail to capture the unique essence of your ME, Inc. business in a catchy, concise way, your titanic branding efforts could easily be headed for one very large iceberg.

Getting expert guidance is necessary because there is a veritable obstacle course of language and semantic pitfalls just waiting to sabotage your best efforts in devising that perfect personal tagline. The fact that the tagline must speak for you when you are unable to do so makes it all the more risky. The branding expert will have a masterful command of language to navigate the obstacles successfully.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME, INC.?

As a ME, Inc. business owner, you have an obligation to brand yourself, recognizing that if you fail to do so, others will inevitably do it for you — and their perceptions may fall far short of yours.

You say you're an aspiring event planner but haven't been able to land the position of your dreams? If you're signing your name as "Very truly yours, Mary Smith", you've completed the basics of closing out your cover letter but you've also missed a terrific opportunity to distinguish yourself from the other 829,000 individuals going after the same position.

By contrast, what if your closing went something like this: "Very truly yours, Mary Smith, Inc. : Event Planners to Make All Your Moments Memorable" — do you think that might garner some extra attention? Or maybe just a little curiosity to find out more?

Let's put it this way: In an era marked by an ever-increasing need to stand apart boldly from your competition, the wisely-developed and judiciously selected personal tagline can clearly promote your CEO of ME, Inc. business. As the global marketplace becomes larger and more complex each day, it's vital for the survival of your business to stake out every possible opportunity to differentiate yourself from the masses.

A personalized tagline may be just the answer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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