



Private Label Power

We've worked closely with Joshua Boyt in designing private label brands for single and mid-size independently owned retail coffee businesses over the years. We soon realized that he has a gift in being able to draw out a rich story from owners that gave soul to a private label brand. We asked Joshua to share one of these brand discovery and development stories, Seattle-based Caffé Ladro, with our bi-monthly column readers. We think you'll love it. **By Joshua Boyt & Lon L. LaFlamme**

It seems like everyone is selling private label coffee these days to promote his or her business. Local shops market coffee with their own name on the bag, grocery chains with their own coffee

brand, even my neighbor makes tiny batch roasts in his garage and slaps a label on one-pound bags he gives out as gifts to friends and family!

It so commonplace to have a product

that has your name plastered all over it. The problem is, many people have taken the idea of making a custom label, while taking no time to think about the soul of the brand they are trying to promote. If you want to bring substance to your business, you need a heartfelt story and purpose behind that private label. What's in a name? Nothing, until you make it as original as you.

Smothered With Brands

We live in a world completely smothered by brands and company promotions. Scientists Michael Brower, PhD, and Warren Leon, PhD stated in a recent article, "The average American is exposed to about 3,000 advertising messages a day. Globally, corporations spend over \$620 billion each year to make their products seem desirable to get us to buy them."

Lon L. LaFlamme



David J. Morris



Tea & Coffee columnists Lon and David provide brand and profit building consultation to a number of coffee, retail and b2b businesses across North America. For more information on the Brand Coaches go to:

www.thebrandcoaches.com

With such a torrent of hype bombarding us every day, how do you make your specialty coffee business stand out? Is it even worth the investment to try and create a brand image amidst such a fog of green mermaids and golden arches? I say YES, and so do your customers. Your brand tells people who you are. If you were to think of your business as a person, your brand would be the face. It is the first thing that others recognize, and also what attracts them with a desire to engage — or to walk on by. Once a potential customer decides they want to “meet” your brand, you have to have the heart and vision to create an engaged and caring face. Otherwise, you will be added to the pile of infomercials and “as seen on TV” sales people. Let’s say you started out in the specialty coffee industry within the last ten years. You had a love for coffee and saw the opportunity to make a living “slinging Joe.” In the golden years of specialty coffee, all you had to do was prop up an open sign with some witty coffee-related name, like Java Jack’s or Joe-to-Go (not real coffee shop names, I wouldn’t imagine), and the dollars and profit would soon begin to pile up.

Fast forward to a maturing of the industry, meltdown of the economy and compe-



Interior of Seattle-based Caffe Ladro

tion coming from every corner of foodservice. Unimaginable just three years ago, but nobody’s laughing or dismissing McDonald’s war-like launch into the specialty coffee market. Today, more than ever, it is easy for someone to get a caffeine fix and “have it their way.”




When McDonald’s launched their McCafe line, they spent over \$100 million dollars in TV, online, print and outdoor advertising in 2009. With corporate giants literally pouring tremendous dollars into their coffee programs, how does an inde-






pendent not only weather the storm, but literally thrive?





Owner’s Pride


You may feel like you are the only one who cares if your business stays open or not, but you have to remember that you have a built-in support system with your employees. Not only are they looking to you for leadership and a proactive view of tomorrow, they want — and need — to be given freedom to grow in their own unique way.

Too often a café manager is viewed

	<p>PRE-CLEANER Varios Cleaners for preconditioning before drying or grading</p>
	<p>SIZE GRADER for high quality cleaning (air and thickness) of green coffee from 2.5 to 11 t/h</p>
	<p>DE-STONER-TS for separation of heavy materials such as stones, metallic particles from 3.8 to 15 t/h</p>
	<p>GRAVITY SEPARATOR-GA for separation according to specific weight from 0.2 to 12 t/h</p>
	<p>HULLER POLISHER for Parchment and Green Coffee SKP Huller: from 4.5 to 5 t/h Hansa 10 and 14: from 1 to 2.5 t/h Cross beat Huller SSM from 1.8 to 2.7 t/h</p>


	<p>COMPACT HULLER - KSE with cross beat Huller, Pre-Cleaner, De-Stoner, husk Separator, dust extraction device and Catador, 0.8 to 1.2 t/h</p>
	<p>CONVEYING EQUIPMENT - Elevators / Z-Elevators - Screw/Belt Conveyors - Drag Conveyors</p>
	<p>DUST SYSTEMS dust control system with bag filters, cyclofans, fan and cyclofan system</p>
	<p>UNIVERSAL BSL green Coffee washing and refining machine to clean, recondition and polishing - 1.8 t/h</p>
	<p>DRYERS Dryers for all kind of free flowing grains as well as fluid bed dryers for non flowing material</p>







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and treated by the owner as no more or less than a lead barista. You, as an owner, and the people you have put in positions of leadership, should focus your energies away from just working in the business to working on the business.

If all of your time and energy is tied up in keeping the day-to-day operations running "efficiently," i.e. shopping for supplies, paying bills and making coffee concoctions, who is going to focus on employee and customer satisfaction, let alone a profitable growth plan?

Start at the Heart

Here are 10 pointers to help you find the heart of your business:

Commit to success. It is so often said that if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. You are the factor that makes or breaks your business. Set in your heart that you know you will be a success before you even start. Every action, thereafter, brings you to overall goals and measurable objectives.

Identify your assets. What is it that makes your business great? Do you have



Enjoying the ambience...and a cup of Joe

energetic, motivated employees? Do you have connected customers who could help you promote throughout their social and work circles? Do you have a great location that is living up to its full potential?

Create income events. Who do you want to affect with your business? What is your niche/target customer? Get your community and staff involved in the growth

and daily movement of your business. You are not an island; take advantage of your space and give people a reason to come in. Maybe you could host a music event, or a local college or art class, or youth group.

Create multiple profit centers. Do you offer food items for breakfast and lunch, as well as coffee items? Natural fruit smoothies are a great idea in spring and summer months, capitalizing on the skyrocketing trend toward healthy beverage and food menu choices, as well as hot weather cold drinks. Whatever you decide to do, make each breakfast, lunch and smoothie menu offering strong enough it could stand alone, even if you didn't serve coffee.

Be different, unique, better. Sometimes customers just need to experience something better than what they have always known. If you serve a better product, with more heart, and more value, customers will choose you 100% of the time. Never lose sight of being the best at coffee and great, not just good, at everything else.

Build value for customers and employees. Are you creating an opportunity for



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your staff to grow in their skills and connect to the specialty coffee community? Have you found ways to make your café more of a home to your customers? If you give the people who work and invest in your business immediate- and long-term benefits to partner with you, loyalty and profits will follow.

Surround yourself with professionals. Find time to have mentors on a business level, personal and spiritual level. There are a myriad of proven leaders in the specialty coffee business who will share their time and vision with you, helping provide what you need to succeed. People who listen and are humble enough to ask good questions typically get good answers, and better results.

Stand out in your market. Make a statement! Separate yourself and your business by standing up for what you believe, and letting everyone know about it.

Delegate effectively. Are you spending time counting cups or taking out the trash? I'm not saying this is a job that is beneath you, but you are the heart of your business. Spend time energizing your staff and customers to advance your circle of influence with your crystal-clear company mission.

Keep close to the pulse. Make sure your partnerships are strong with your staff and your customers. As the owner, you are the brand ambassador who never lets the flame of passion go out. Regardless of your personal or business worries, keep it fun while accomplishing your mission, while always setting clear, specific team goals.

The "Thief" that gives back

A perfect example of a private label and brand with meaning beyond its name is



A logo is worth a thousand words

Caffè Ladro (translation: "The Coffee Thief"), based in Seattle, Washington with 13 locations. Founder Jack Kelly spent some time with me to share the secret to creating a business and brand with a soul as distinctive as the coffee they serve.

"Living from your heart is key to the way we do business," said Kelly. "When we started we weren't looking to open a chain of stores. We just wanted to open a shop with friends and have fun hanging out!"

In 1987 Jack Kelly was integral to the birth of the Seattle specialty coffee boom, starting one of first coffee cafes in the city with a couple of partners. Fast forward seven years. He opened the first Caffè Ladro location with it a new look, vision and commitment to integrity at every level of the business. Kelly pointed out that a company must be in tune with its role as a necessary and meaningful addition to its community. Then, every person involved feels a confidence to live with their hearts wide open.

Walk into any Caffè Ladro location in Seattle you will be greeted by people who are enraptured by the energy and pride that comes from a commitment at a heart level.

He believes that there are three foundational elements that keep the business in line with the heart of Caffè Ladro's mission:

- 1) Integrity with staff
- 2) Integrity with their customers
- 3) Integrity in the global coffee community

Caffè Ladro as a brand is as understated as any brand I have seen. You are drawn in by the mystery of a black silhouette on a vibrant yellow background. Everything in the branding is subtle with an urban and coffee centric edge. You will find very little pomp and circumstance in any of Caffè Ladro's marketing, barring the one statement written on every cup with bold resolve: 100% Fair Trade, Shade Grown, Organic. This is a statement that was made in 2002, well before sustainability was the "cool" thing to do as "green" brand positioning. In Kelly's mind, his businesses mission far outweighed the added coffee expense to ensure that everyone in Caffè Ladro's supply chain was reaping the benefit of his business's success.

As always, Jack Kelly remains on the cutting edge of the retail specialty coffee industry, as he has passionately committed to forge farm-direct relationships. He does this via his roasters, and taking Caffè Ladro's commitment to humanity and premier quality coffee to the next level. Kelly didn't want a store, he wanted a story. He inherently understands the unique opportunity every independent coffee business owner has to truly live and work in a way that creates a better world.

May your story begin today! ☕

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