

Michael Doyle, president of Brand Iron NGWA Ground Water Expo presenter

Water Well Journal interviews a groundwater professional every month. However, since this month's issue focuses on business management, we decided to speak with Michael Doyle, president of Brand Iron, a Denver-based branding and marketing consulting firm. He will speak at the 2010 NGWA Ground Water Expo, December 7-10 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Doyle has been shaping successful brands on a national level for more than 20 years. After building a leading Denver advertising agency into a multi-million dollar company, Doyle sold it to a national integrated-solutions provider in 2000. He then served as their national senior brand director and prepared the company to go public.

This invaluable experience has been the basis for effectively guiding other companies to reach their goals and objectives—and ultimately—their success. At Brand Iron, the company applies a seven-step proprietary system of "Forging Brands, Driving Revenue®." The process helps companies achieve their big picture goals and objectives through building brand awareness and improving bottom line results.

In addition to working with clients, Doyle participates in community activities and public speaking to educate others on the power and importance of branding and their relation to business



Michael Doyle,
president of
Brand Iron

"I have seen many firms that think they don't need to worry about their brand until they get some steep competition or they realize it is too late."

development. Through his speaking, he aims to engage business audiences to discover how their brands can truly influence their revenue.

Water Well Journal: In these difficult economic times, how important is it for business owners to set realistic goals for themselves? How many more years do you see them having to ride out this economy?

Michael Doyle: Realistic goals are important for business planning purposes, but I think the key is being proactive and seeking out every business opportunity that is out there. It is tough to say when the economy will start to improve. Obviously, the challenge is ongoing as we continue to see many companies fail to survive through this recession. That is why it is so important to be proactive and make sure your business is best positioned to win as much new business as possible.

WWJ: Many of the drilling firms in the groundwater industry are multigenerational who may not think they need to care about their brand because they've been around for years. What do you tell these business owners?

Michael: I have seen many firms that think they don't need to worry about their brand until they get some steep competition or they realize it is too late to do anything about their deteriorating

To read more about business management and business-related articles, visit *WWJ*'s page on the National Ground Water Association's Web site at www.ngwa.org/publication/wwj/index.aspx.

brand, position, market share, and sales. I tell all companies that no one is safe in any industry unless you have a protected monopoly, and I don't know too many companies with that type of situation.

WWJ: There are many reports telling businesses owners what to expect in the coming years, and some are conflicting. Even those which might have been relied on for their input in the past seem unsure as well. So how does one decide which direction to take their business in today's business world?

Michael: I like to tell company owners to take a critical look at their business, clearly monitor the marketplace, and see where opportunities lie. It's important for companies to see how and why they are better than the competition so that they can properly position themselves as the best in the industry and communicate it effectively.

WWJ: If business owners can afford to reinvest in their business (new equipment, expansion, etc.), when in this business cycle will be the best time to do it?

Michael: When times are tight, the competitive landscape may get smaller. However, it becomes more and more competitive. This is one of the best opportunities to aggressively position your company for growth. When many competitors decide to cut back on marketing themselves, it opens up a great chance for you to separate yourself from them. Your efforts will stand out and the relationships built will better position you for growth.



Mike Price is the associate editor of *Water Well Journal*. He can be reached at mprice@ngwa.org.

WWJ: Some of today's drilling firms are diversifying their business to generate new revenue. Do these companies run the risk of straying too far from their main service they provide to customers?

Michael: Diversification can be positive for companies, provided they don't stray too far from their core business. Definitely seek out opportunity where you can complement your core service offerings. Straying too far, however, can confuse your target market about what you do and the services you provide. My advice is to stay focused and true to what you do.

WWJ: In the meantime, as this slow economy drags on, what do you recommend that business owners do? Most have tightened their belts and become pretty tight-fisted with the checkbook, minimized inventory, and tried to control costs wherever possible. Do you have other suggestions?

Michael: One of the best things to do during these times is position you and your company as an expert in your space, utilizing cost-effective strategies like PR (public relations), online marketing, blogging, and social media. All of these things can be utilized to educate target markets, partners, and potential referral sources, demonstrating your expertise in the marketplace.

WWJ: When you spoke at the 2010 NGWA Ground Water Summit and 2010 Ground Water Protection Council Spring Meeting this past April in Denver, you mentioned to those in attendance to examine who their "partners" are in business. Can you explain what you meant by this to our readership?

Michael: Tapping into partners is critical to your success. This philosophy is all about building relationships with other individuals and firms who have the propensity to refer business to you. It may be architects, realtors, builders, bankers/lenders, and the like. Strong partners are an important asset to any business, especially during tough business times.

WWJ: With how competitive the marketplace is today, how important is it for owners to search out new business "partners"?

Michael: If done properly and aggressively, the majority of any company's

Michael Doyle is scheduled to speak at the 2010 NGWA Ground Water Expo from 8 to 10 a.m. on December 8. The title of Doyle's presentation is "Strengthening Your Brand During Tough Economic Times." For more information about the Expo, visit www.ngwa.org/2010expo/index.aspx.

To watch a video clip of Doyle speaking, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ukMfKrO5PO. Visit www.MichaelDoyleTalks.com to learn more about Doyle.

new business can come from business partner referrals. It is so important to cultivate these relationships. The best companies build relationships, give and get referrals, and get the majority of their business from business partners.

WWJ: You are scheduled to speak at the 2010 NGWA Ground Water Expo, with the title of your presentation "Strengthening Your Brand During Tough Economic Times." Can you give us a preview of what you plan to talk about to attendees at the Ground Water Expo?

Michael: The primary focus will center on forging strong company brands that ultimately drive revenue. In the face of this economic challenge, I will discuss the importance of positioning your company as the best in your "space" or market. We will uncover ways on how best

Through his speaking, Michael Doyle aims to engage business audiences to discover how their brands can truly influence their revenue.



to communicate your company's value as well as how to get everyone within your company to deliver upon that value. We will talk specifically about being proactive in building business partnerships, generating new leads, and turning those leads into sales.

WWJ: Lastly, in your eyes, how do you define "brand" and what forms can they take? Why are certain brands more enduring than others?

Michael: Your brand is how customers view you as well as the experience they have when they do business with you. Your brand comes alive through your marketing, sales, and operational efforts, and ultimately how you deliver your services. The best companies realize that brands come alive, thrive, and survive by addressing them consistently through both the good times and bad.

WWJ