

The *absolute truth* is a monthly newsletter published by Absolute Marketing Group. The goal of *the absolute truth* is to assist businesses in marketing their company effectively. Please email info@absolutemg.com to have *the absolute truth* emailed to you.

Old-School Hot-Iron Branding

By: MacDalton Berns

I am burnt out on articles about **brand** management, **brand** evolution, **brand** identity, **brand** strategy, **brand** hijacking, **brand** positioning and other terms that sound trendy next to the word **brand**. What's next **brand** muffin? When I think about the **brand** concept, I choose to go old school.

My great-grandfather Dalton Brown launched his brand almost 100 years ago in eastern Montana. His mark, Quarter Circle DB, was seared into the hides of thousands of cattle and workhorses. The brand still resonates today even though he passed away 15 years ago. He was the best brand manager that I had ever met, yet he didn't even have a minute of marketing education.



He taught me about the value of brand perception of the Quarter Circle DB Ranch without referring to a business journal article; instead demonstrating it with a hot iron and consistent actions. His brand (mark) not only meant that his cattle were his property, but signified the perception of his brand's qualities (mental associations) as follows:

Good Neighbor - Dalton always maintained the ranch's fences so that his cattle didn't stray into other fields. He pitched in when neighbors needed assistance, no questions asked. He welcomed strangers in for a cup of coffee. Like a good neighbor, Dalton was there.

Respectful Employer - Dalton had a good reputation for treating hired hands with respect. This helped with recruiting efforts. How do you spell respect, D-A-L-T-O-N.

Product Quality - Dalton specialized in raising Herefords, a specific type of cattle. This reputation helped sell his bulls at a higher rate. Butchers who know, trust Dalton.

Community Leader - Dalton was a chairman for the Stockman's Association. His efforts both on and off the ranch were for the long-term benefit of every rancher. Dalton - he's everywhere you want him to be.

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Honest Work Ethic - Dalton and his staff worked tirelessly. He did not participate in cattle rustling (stealing of cattle). He treated his land, his family, and his community with respect. Dalton- the best a man can get.

Personality - Dalton was not involved with family feuds. He was extremely modest in every area of his life. His character lives on because of the relationships he fostered. Dalton keeps going, and going, and going.

Many companies have attempted to generate the same brand perceptions as the Quarter Circle DB Ranch. Whether a brand is on the side of livestock or on the side of a coffee mug, the brand reflects perceptions that contribute to business success. When exploring solutions to challenging brand problems, sometimes it is progressive to think simple; to think back to when branding was just branding.

Now, ride off into the sunset with your trusty brand at your side. Maybe have bowl of **brand** flakes tomorrow morning with your **brand** muffin.

Upcoming Events

Dec. 7	4:30pm	Business After Hours at Ramada
Dec. 13	5:00pm	FM Chamber YPN Happy Hour at Grazies
Dec. 19		MacDalton Berns Birthday
Dec. 19	11:30am	FM Ad Fed Luncheon at Doublewood
Dec. 21	5:15pm	FM Ad Fed Alive After 5 at Speak Easy